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THE URBAN SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENT: 1880-1900

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THE URBAN SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENT: 1880-1900

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## ABSTRACT

### THE URBAN SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENT: 1880-1900

By Patricia Brewster Lebkuecher

This study is an analysis of why and how late nineteenth century reformers demanded urban social change. A survey of conditions in large cities between 1880 and 1900 is presented to help the reader better understand the reformers' zeal. This information was gathered from numerous historical works pertaining to urbanization and related topics, as well as from the reformers' own observations of conditions in their cities.

Journalists, settlement house workers, religious spokesmen, and novelists influenced the reform movement. Important written works by representatives of these diverse groups are analyzed in this study. Many similarities concerning influences on the writers are discussed, including their reactions to European social movements, the reformist tradition that was particularly strong in New England, beliefs in controlled social evolution, the agrarian myth, and Christian humanitarianism. Themes in reform publications are also detected. Among the recurring

themes are discussions of the effects of poverty and neglect on the young, the plight of women and children wage earners, and the helpless condition of the unemployed.

Opposition to the reform movement, which was centered around a belief in Social Darwinism and traditional values of economic nationalism, is also considered. The works of many important social conservatives are used to analyze why advocates of reform did not always succeed in convincing Americans that they should change what appeared to many as dangerous and inhumane characteristics of life in large metropolitan areas. If an individual failed to take advantage of the glorious opportunities this nation offered and remained in a poverty stricken condition, it was his own fault. Andrew Carnegie's rise from poverty seemed to be proof of what was possible under laissez-faire capitalism.

Since a study of the demand for social reform and the opposition to such change is not obsolete, one chapter of this dissertation is devoted to designing and teaching an interdisciplinary course for college undergraduates enrolled in a general education curriculum. The subject of urban social reform in the late nineteenth century is ideally suited for relating historical problems to the present and for demonstrating to students the complex forces which are involved in bringing about social change. The subject is also well suited for interdisciplinary study because it is

related to problems considered in disciplines such as sociology, religion, political science, health, science, and journalism. The proposed course is broken down into suggested teaching topics, with practical guidelines as to teaching aids and available resource materials. Though the ideas of some educators are utilized to justify the inclusion of such a course in a general education program, primary emphasis is given to developing course objectives, organizing the topics to utilize a teaching team, and identifying suitable material for student reading. Two appendixes contain guidelines for research in each of the suggested topics and a list of suitable audiovisual materials which might be considered useful in teaching about urban social reform.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

In the early years of the twentieth century a new political impulse, known as progressivism, aroused a large number of Americans. Because of their concern, the progressives pressured lawmakers in municipal governments, state legislatures, and the Congress into attacking many governmental and social problems. Significant changes in the status quo occurred as a result of their efforts. Governmental reforms included such measures as elimination of graft on the local and state level. The sixteenth and seventeenth amendments, which provided for income taxes and direct election of United States Senators, were progressive measures that affected the national government.

Important reforms in government reflect only one aspect of the progressive period. Reformers were also concerned with enacting such social legislation as providing safety codes for industrial workers and sanitation codes for housing, closing dangerous trades to minors, regulating the hours of labor for women, and opening public health facilities to the poor. This tide of social legislation was inspired by a small, but vocal, group of humanitarians who brought certain social disorders to public attention during

the two decades before enactment of the progressive legislation. Social evils were most apparent in the large American cities where ever-growing numbers of ill-fed and poorly clothed were crowded into rapidly expanding slum districts. It is, therefore, not surprising that it was in the cities that much of the demand for social reform originated.

One purpose of this study is to examine why and how reformers exerted pressure to change what they considered dangerous, ugly, and inhumane features of American cities in the twenty years before 1900, and to investigate the forces of resistance to the reform movement. It is outside the scope of this dissertation to give a definitive appraisal of any one of the complex movements which are related to urban reform in the late nineteenth century. Such work has already been done and can be found in numerous volumes by historian-specialists on the subjects of immigration, religion, labor disputes, social welfare, and urbanization. What is attempted here is a synthesis of the significant facts, organized and narrated in such a way that the activities of the reformers and the conditions which motivated them can be readily related to developments in sociology, journalism, social work, literature and religion in the late nineteenth century. The narrative may serve as



a short synthesis of historical material useful to teachers who wish to develop an interdisciplinary course based on the topic of urban social reform. A second purpose of this study is to formulate guidelines for such a unit of instruction wherein students may learn to analyze the various factors which perpetrate change. A third objective is to integrate the content of the unit with the content of various other disciplines in order that the course can be more meaningful to undergraduate college students in general education programs.

Information for this analysis has been partially secured by reading numerous secondary works by historians who have specialized in subjects related to urban reform. Books about such diverse topics as Darwinism, American religious movements, immigration, the growth of cities, and social welfare have supplied valuable facts for this synthesis. Arthur M. Schlesinger's comprehensive study, The Rise of the City, was particularly useful as a source of information on the industrial changes which took place in the period under consideration. Several edited volumes which contain contemporary discussions pertinent to this study were utilized, both for identifying effective primary material and as a source of such material by the less important reformers. Works by the major reform writers,

such as Jane Addams, Jacob Riis, and Henry George, available in most college libraries, provided valuable primary source material. The easy availability of these sources and the large number of volumes with material related to the topic of urban reform make this subject particularly suitable for an interdisciplinary approach to teaching. Material for the portion of this study which relates to the instructional unit was gathered with the idea of practicality in mind. Though the thoughts of various educators were utilized in justifying the educational objectives and methods of teaching the course, most attention was given to the practical questions of how to organize the content, where to find suitable materials, and how to evaluate the unit's effectiveness.

Certain terms used in this study need clarification. There may be, for example, some difficulty in determining what is meant by the term "city." In the United States some areas of less than 1,000 in population are incorporated and considered a city. For the purpose of this study, however, the term refers only to urban areas consisting of 100,000 or more in population. In 1890, the mid-point in the two decades of concern, there were twenty-eight urban areas in the United States which conformed to the above definition. Other terms which should be defined are "conservative" and

"liberal." As used in this paper, a liberal was one who favored reform. The terms liberal and reformer are used interchangeably. Conservative is used here to distinguish a person who wished to preserve established institutions and who resisted any changes in these institutions. Another source of confusion may be in the use of the term "socialist." Unless otherwise clarified in the text, a socialist was one who advocated the public ownership of the means of production and distribution of goods, with all members of society sharing in the work and the products. The term socialist, as used in this study, does not connote membership in a political party. "Settlement house" refers to a community center which offered free social and educational activities to the underprivileged element of society.

## CHAPTER I

### STIMULI FOR URBAN REFORM

A significant characteristic of the late nineteenth century was the phenomenal growth of American cities. In the decade 1880-1890 the twelve largest cities experienced greater than a 36 percent increase in population, while lesser cities experienced even more alarming growth rates.<sup>1</sup> The urban population mounted rapidly as the prospects of high wages in the offices and factories of prosperous business enterprises drew thousands of immigrants from Europe and other thousands of native-born Americans from farms and villages. As labor markets became glutted, however, unemployment and lower wages ensued. Poverty and despair, rather than the anticipated new prosperity, were often the lot of city dwellers. Rapid urbanization created serious problems in housing as the demand outgrew the supply, forcing the lower income classes into old buildings converted into tenements. Water and sewer systems were

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<sup>1</sup>Adna Ferrin Weber, The Growth of the Cities in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Statistics (Ithica, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 27. (Hereinafter cited as Weber, Growth of the Cities.)

overtaxed, filth collected and disease spread, and the danger of fire and crime added to the problems created by the disorderly growth of the cities. The resulting urban squalor received increasing attention in the last two decades of the century, as Americans confronted unprecedented conditions in their industrial and commercial centers. The period 1880-1900 produced a number of individual reformers who strove mightily, if not always effectively, to prick the conscience of Americans about the social disintegration seen in the cities and to solicit their support in an attack on poverty, crime, poor housing, child neglect, and other social evils characteristic of life in the slums.

Americans had little experience in adjusting to problems created by urbanization, for the specter of the huge metropolis was new to the United States. Though Americans throughout their history have observed rapid physical alterations in their nation, earlier generations had witnessed the east to west migrations on the frontier. As late as the decade 1870-1880 the rural western states experienced a larger percentage of population growth than did the older North Atlantic states wherein large cities were most numerous. After 1880, however, new patterns of internal migration were discernable: more Americans were

moving to the cities than to the West.<sup>2</sup> The West, which had previously absorbed much American energy, was fast disappearing, a fact observed in 1893 by historian Frederick Jackson Turner. By the time Turner's essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," was read before the American Historical Association, the West as previously known had disappeared, and the United States was already experiencing transformation from a predominantly agrarian society to an industrial urban society. The by-products of that transition were the great cities, for in the half century following the American Civil War urban population increased sevenfold.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, a new frontier, perhaps even more challenging than Turner's West, confronted Americans.

The challenges were many and diverse. In New York City's tenements during the period 1865-1898, one-third of the children died before they were one year old, and one-half before they were five. Epidemics took their toll, but many of the deaths could be attributed to neglect stemming from the fact that infants were often left unattended by mothers forced to work in factories to make ends meet.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, A History of Urban America (New York: Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 153.

Crimes committed by children in American cities increased by several hundred percent in the same period. Women who found it difficult to feed and clothe their families turned to crime in large numbers. Most often they chose prostitution as an alternative to starvation, but they sometimes committed robbery and murder when they grew desperate. American homicide rates soared while the rates declined in nearly every other civilized country in the world. In 1881, there were 24.7 homicides for each million Americans, but there were 107.2 per million by 1898.<sup>4</sup>

Observers of these evils asked themselves and others what precipitated this social disintegration which they believed was uncharacteristic of American society. To some, the answer was the disproportionate amount of riches accumulated by the wealthy. Inequalities in wealth had always existed in this country, but the concentration of population in the cities magnified the inequalities. To many observers, it seemed that industrialization and urbanization had created two social classes new to American society, the millionaire and the tramp.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the

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<sup>4</sup>Lyle W. Dorsett, "The Early American City," Monograph FA028 of Forums in History, ed. by Harold D. Woodman (St. Louis: Forum Press, 1973), pp. 1-10; Arthur Meier Schlesinger, The Rise of the City, 1878-1898 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 114. (Hereinafter cited as Schlesinger, Rise of the City.)

<sup>5</sup>The "tramp evil" appeared in the United States following the depression of 1873, diminished during periods of prosperity, and reappeared during years of unemployment and industrial conflict. See Schlesinger, Rise of the City, pp. 117-118.

distribution of wealth was shockingly unequal. It has been estimated that, in 1889, some 200,000 people controlled 70 percent of the nation's wealth, and that, by 1900, 80 percent of Americans lived on the margin of subsistence, while the remaining 20 percent controlled almost the entire wealth of the country.<sup>6</sup> Though these figures may be somewhat exaggerated, since they give no account of the middle class, recognition of inequality in the distribution of wealth was a recurrent theme in reform literature during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. In the great cities millionaires lived like royalty in proximity to slums which housed unspeakable squalor. Such squalor in the midst of opulence prompted one reformer to write in 1885, "It is the city where wealth is massed; . . . Dives and Lazarus are brought face to face."<sup>7</sup>

Those of Lazarus' class lived in city tenements, bleak structures five or six stories high, honeycombed with dark rooms, each of which often housed more than one family. These stark structures lacked privacy and proper sanitation, and thus bred vermin and disease. Indeed, so horrible were conditions in Pittsburgh that in 1899 more people died in

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<sup>6</sup>Harold U. Faulkner, Politics, Reform and Expansion, 1890-1900 (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 91.

<sup>7</sup>Josiah Strong, Our Country, ed. by Jurgen Herbst (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 174.



that city of typhoid than in any other city in the world. By 1899, 1.3 persons per thousand in that Pennsylvania city succumbed to the dreaded disease.<sup>8</sup> The specter of the living conditions among the urban poor prompted explosions of outrage from idealistic men and women who, in giving their efforts to exposing and condemning these conditions, believed they could solve some of the problems of the sprawling cities. In the two decades before the appearance of the tide of progressive reform in the period 1901-1917, humanitarian reformers were exposing the bitter living circumstances of the urban poor and were often attacking the economic and political system which had created these conditions. The pre-progressives were "muckraking" more than twenty years before that term was coined.<sup>9</sup>

In his exhaustive study of late nineteenth century urbanization, The Rise of the City, Arthur M. Schlesinger has vividly described the "lure of the city" during that period. Isolation and loneliness had been an almost inescapable condition of farm existence. Even in the older agricultural districts, in the East as well as in the West,

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<sup>8</sup>Dorsett, "Early American City," p. 6. Numerous descriptions of conditions in urban tenement districts may be found in the literature of this period and are cited in the following chapters.

<sup>9</sup>President Theodore Roosevelt, in 1907, branded the writers of fiery reformist literature "muckrakers." See George E. Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912 (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 206.

families usually lived out of sight of their nearest neighbors. The cheerlessness, solitude, and hardships of farm life were drawbacks which many rural youths were anxious to exchange for the attractions of the city. The drudgery of monotonous farm labor offered the prospects of a bleak future compared to the real and imagined promises of work opportunities in urban areas. Young men and women, migrating from the farm to a local hamlet, then to a town or regional city, and then often to a metropolis like New York or Chicago, caused a reduction in non-urban population of some states. As a result, large numbers of native Americans of rural origins poured into the cities and faced the problems of adjusting to an alien and rapidly changing environment.<sup>10</sup> Though the attractions of the city had drawn them from their farm or village home, many would have occasion to look back with nostalgia on their rural origins and to idealize the pastoral virtues and primitive simplicity that could not survive in the city.

While native Americans marched toward the city, an increasing influx of foreigners added to the swell of urban population. The immigrant families, in quest for a better life than they had known in Europe, were drawn to the United States by the prospect of high wages. The extent of the

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<sup>10</sup>Schlesinger, Rise of the City, pp. 1-77; Glaab and Brown, A History of Urban America, p. 136. Glaab and Brown estimate that about one-third of the urban dwellers in 1910 had moved from farms after 1880.

foreign influx has been synthesized by Adna Ferrin Weber in his classic pioneer study of urbanization which first was published in 1899. Weber utilized his skills as a statistician in compiling figures published by the Bureau of the Census in order to determine the extent of urban growth in the nineteenth century. The number of immigrants in the decade 1880-1890 was unprecedentedly large, and was, according to Weber, double the average of the three preceding decades. Large cities received more than their share of the foreign influx, a circumstance which is demonstrated by the fact that only 15.5 percent of the entire population lived in cities of over 100,000 in 1890, but 33.4 percent of the immigrants crowded into the same areas. The foreigners' tendency to settle in the largest cities was not restricted to the seaports; Chicago had a larger percentage of foreigners than did either New York or Boston.<sup>11</sup>

Since the vast majority of immigrants were untrained laborers, most of them sought jobs in the large cities where the greater concentration of industry demanded a supply of unskilled labor. Ignorant of the language and culture of their new home, detached from old values and family roots, the newcomers often found that all their previous experience and knowledge were irrelevant in the American city.

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<sup>11</sup>Weber, Growth of the Cities, pp. 304-307.

Nationality groups tended to live together in distinct regions of the city where the ethnic clusters or "Little Europes" provided some protection from the shock and alienation the immigrants experienced. Every major city had its Polish, Russian, and Lithuanian community, as well as its "Little Italy" and pockets of Irish newcomers. The sub-committees which developed in the rapidly changing city offered an exciting diversity in language, customs, values, food, and entertainment.<sup>12</sup>

The growth of urban ethnic colonies often provoked fear that the cities were becoming "un-American." Native Protestants were often fascinated by the spectacle of those colonists with their strange cultures, but they feared the influence of the foreign masses, particularly those from Eastern and Central Europe who were predominantly Roman Catholic and Jewish.

Patterns of European immigration were changing. In 1880, nearly 65 percent of the newcomers came from countries of Northwest Europe which had supplied the bulk of earlier waves of immigrants; but by 1885 the influx from that region had decreased to 46.5 percent. A corresponding increase in the number of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe

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<sup>12</sup>Dorsett, "The Early American City," pp. 7-10; Glaab and Brown, A History of Urban America, pp. 139-142. For a poignant description of the plight of the immigrants, see Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1951).

occurred during the same period. In 1880, only 31 percent arrived from that region, but, by 1885, the figure had risen to nearly 50 percent.<sup>13</sup> Faced with the ever-increasing influx of non-Protestant foreigners, some reform-minded citizens began to worry that traditional American values would be weakened.

Critics had conflicting views with respect to foreigners. Xenophobia was paramount in the mind of Josiah Strong, who saw the new wave of immigrants as a causative factor in the social disintegration occurring within American cities. In Our Country, published in 1885, he wrote that the foreign "invasion" was hastening the occasion of a terrible upheaval in American society.<sup>14</sup> Strong's anti-foreign publication is one example of reform journalism which sought to halt foreign immigration as a preventive to expanding urban social problems. Other reformers, however, welcomed the new arrivals and devoted their energies to improving the immigrants' living conditions and to aiding them in their Americanization. Jane Addams welcomed foreigners to her famous Chicago settlement, Hull-House, where she worked tirelessly to ameliorate the harsh living conditions of the newcomers. In addition, she provided

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<sup>13</sup>Jergen Herbst, Editor's Introduction, in Strong, Our Country, p. xxiv.

<sup>14</sup>Strong, Our Country, pp. 41-58.

opportunities to learn the English language, thus hastening the immigrants' adaptation to American society.<sup>15</sup>

In reviewing the reformist literature of the late nineteenth century, it becomes apparent that not all areas of the United States have contributed equally in producing reformers who urged ameliorative action. There is a logical explanation for this phenomenon. In 1890, one-half of the entire urban population of the country was concentrated in five states: New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Illinois, and Ohio; four-fifths of the urban dwellers resided north of the Ohio and Missouri Rivers.<sup>16</sup> The social and economic significance of these statistics is revealed in the fact that the most outspoken demands for urban social reform were written and published in these areas.

It is not surprising that New York City prompted more reform interest and activity than did any other American city. Schlesinger has indicated that in the late nineteenth century New York was in the foremost position among American cities. This leading industrial center exhibited the tremendous contrasts of splendor on Fifth Avenue compared to squalor in the wretched tenement districts. Such contrasts were found in all cities--great

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<sup>15</sup>See Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House: With Autobiographical Notes (New York: New American Library, 1961), pp. 169-185. (Hereinafter cited as Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House.)

<sup>16</sup>Weber, Growth of the Cities, p. 28.

and small--but more so in New York. All the social problems and discontent which plagued lesser metropolises could be found, in greater degree, in this city which had grown in population from less than 661,000 in 1850 to more than 2,740,000 by 1890.<sup>17</sup> Because of its size and rapid growth, problems of overcrowding, disease, poverty, and unemployment were more acute there than in most other cities. New York was a seed bed of reformist activity.

Boston also had more than its share of urban problems, and all sorts of schemes for social betterment were launched there. Gamblers, pimps, prostitutes, sailors out on a spree, paupers, and human wrecks of all description were attracted to the notorious North End district, where filthy, evil-smelling tenements dominated large portions of the inner city. The Hub City, like New York, produced critics who publicized the urban scene. Arthur Mann, in his study of Boston reformers, states that it was the city's intellectual vitality which attracted reformers. Not necessarily native Bostonians, the urban critics who observed this New England city commiserated with the oppressed and felt compelled to propose schemes of social reconstruction. Boston's social critics carried on the reformist tradition which had earlier responded to the

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 450; Schlesinger, Rise of the City, p. 82.

question of Negro slavery in the Old South.<sup>18</sup> The new generation of Bostonians who prided themselves in their sensitivity to evil included a number of distinguished men. Edward Bellamy, William Dean Howells, Benjamin Orange Flower, and Hamlin Garland were only a few of the reformers who identified at some time with Boston. Though they set forth their philosophies in Boston, their doctrines were often meant to be modifications of the existing social order which would be applicable on a nation-wide or world-wide scale.

Philadelphia was unique in that the city was less scarred by slums than most urban areas of comparable size. Though the city trebled its population in the half century following the Civil War, the most crowded districts in the inner city actually lost population between 1870-1890. This is explained by the fact that the city encompassed an area of 83,000 acres, compared to only 25,000 acres for New York City.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the concentration of population was not as dense. Urban problems in the City of Brotherly Love were serious enough that Philadelphia was selected by Congress in

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<sup>18</sup> Arthur Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 20-23.

<sup>19</sup> Glaab and Brown, A History of Urban America, p. 109; Weber, Growth of the Cities, pp. 139, 459.



1892 as one of the cities to be investigated concerning conditions in city slums. It is therefore surprising that little of the humanitarian reformist literature originated in the cultural center. It should be noted, however, that Philadelphians were leaders in organizing municipal leagues and in advocating municipal reforms such as street paving, garbage disposal, and fire fighting.<sup>20</sup>

Farther to the west lay Chicago. Like New York, Chicago was a city of contrasts. Events in the Windy City of the late nineteenth century stimulated both despair and hope among those concerned with urban change. Chicago was the angry scene of the tumultuous Haymarket riot of 1886, and next door to the violent Pullman strike of 1894. Torn by labor disputes which claimed national attention, the troubled city became associated with anarchy and violence; yet Chicago pioneered in the concept of city planning. The World's Columbian Exposition staged at Chicago in 1893 featured the spectacular "White City" that thousands viewed and which became for many a revelation of what the ideal

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<sup>20</sup>Glaab and Brown, A History of Urban America, pp. 242-243; Schlesinger, Rise of the City, p. 85. For information on the organization of municipal leagues, see Blake McKelvey's Introduction to his edited volume, The City in American History (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1969), pp. 70-72.

city might be.<sup>21</sup> The "White City," the idealized hope of the municipal center in the twentieth century, was located only blocks away from the reality of urban wretchedness in the nineteenth century. The response to Chicago's crowded living conditions, poverty, crime, high rate of unemployment during periods of depression, and large immigrant population made the greatest city of the Midwest a center of activity for urban reformers.

San Francisco, which dominated the far West just as Chicago dominated the Midwest, also had its urban problems. Just emerging from the lawlessness of its frontier stage, this western metropolis was rapidly acquiring social problems characteristic of the eastern cities. An immigrant population of penniless Mexicans and thousands of Chinese lived in hovels which rivaled the wretchedness of the worst slums in the tenement districts of Chicago or New York.<sup>22</sup> Yet this city did not produce any notable urban critics of national prominence in the last two decades of the century. It should be noted, however, that one of the most outspoken economic reformers, Henry George, while not a native of the

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<sup>21</sup>Roy Lubove, The Progressive and the Slums: Tenement House Reform in New York City, 1890-1917 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962), pp. 217-238.

<sup>22</sup>Schlesinger, Rise of the City, pp. 33-34, 112, 355, 392.

city, did begin his career as a newspaper reporter in San Francisco.

Because of its slower industrial development and consequently fewer employment opportunities, the South to a great extent escaped the crushing influx of European immigrants. Though southern cities were growing rapidly because of internal migration, there were in 1890 only two which had attained a population of 100,000, Louisville and New Orleans. Louisville's location midway between the North and South, with good transportation by both land and water, made the city a trade and industrial center. New Orleans at the mouth of the great Mississippi River had long been a major port city. Though conditions of poverty among both black and white and inadequate housing plagued these southern cities, there were no preeminent social critics in the last two decades of the century to challenge these evils. Southerners found more pressing reformist causes in alleviating rural poverty than in searching urban areas for social problems, for the South was the most rural portion of the nation. Although no new social schemes or original responses to meet urban problems were generated in the South, the settlement house movement did spread to the slums of both Louisville and New Orleans.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Schlesinger lists the principal southern cities and their populations in Rise of the City, p. 13n. For a discussion of poverty in southern towns and cities, see C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913

It is difficult to assess the motives of reformers in those cities which produced the majority of urban social critics. Richard Hofstadter in The Age of Reform has written that many reform-minded citizens during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were motivated by a class consciousness, stimulated by a loss of prestige among the old-family, college educated class to the new class of millionaires. Compared to the Vanderbilts, Harrimans, Goulds, Carnegies, Rockefellers, and Morgans, the once influential teachers, ministers, publishers, and other professionals seemed insignificant. As the rich got richer, the resentment of the middle class became greater, stimulating an urge to reform the system which had altered their social status.<sup>24</sup> Though Hofstadter's theory of the status revolution as a stimulant of progressive reform is intriguing, especially since much of the demand for urban reform did originate with the middle class, the status revolution can not fully explain the motivation of so diverse a group as was involved in the movement for urban improvement. There were several factors at work in the last

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(Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), pp. 205-234. Settlement houses in southern cities are discussed in Allen Freeman Davis, Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 23. (Hereinafter cited as Davis, Spearheads for Reform.)

<sup>24</sup>Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York: Random House, 1955), pp. 135-166. (Hereinafter cited as Hofstadter, Age of Reform.)

decades of the past century which help to explain the interest in regenerating the social order in American cities.

Those who advocated relief for social conditions in large urban areas almost invariably demonstrated in their writing a profound respect for the new scientific theories which were so thoroughly discussed in late nineteenth century America. The theories of the English scientist, Charles Darwin, were hotly debated. Darwin's publication of The Origin of Species in 1859, and his even more controversial 1871 book, The Descent of Man, helped create a crisis in religion and philosophy which carried over into the realm of social studies. The controversy over Darwinism reached its most critical point in the 1880's when most American scientists supported the theory of biological evolution.<sup>25</sup>

Richard Hofstadter in another significant volume, Social Darwinism in American Thought, gives evidence that, although earlier scientific theories have more profoundly affected ways of living, no scientific theories have had greater impact on man's ways of thinking than did Darwin's theories.<sup>26</sup> Anthropologists, sociologists, historians,

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<sup>25</sup>Schlesinger, Rise of the City, p. 322.

<sup>26</sup>Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (rev. ed.; New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1959).

political theorists, and economists explored Darwin's scientific works in attempts to apply the theory of evolution to their own disciplines. An English philosopher and writer, Herbert Spencer, did more to systematize the implications of evolution, in fields other than biology, than did any other person. Applying the concept of "the survival of the fittest" to social affairs, the ultra-conservative Spencer opposed all state aid to the poor because "the whole effort of nature is to get rid of such, to clear the world of them, and make room for better."<sup>27</sup> Spencer also deplored state-supported education, sanitary supervision, and regulation of housing. Accused of inhumanity in his application of biological concepts to social principles, Spencer proclaimed that he was not opposed to private charity because it had an elevating effect on the character of the donor.<sup>28</sup>

The political and economic climate of the United States in the latter decades of the nineteenth century was responsive to Spencer's doctrines. American conservatives were quick to seize upon Darwinism to reconcile the social system which brought a wealth of benefits to some while many of their fellow men suffered hardships. The most often

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<sup>27</sup>As quoted, ibid., p. 41.

<sup>28</sup>See Herbert Spencer, Social Statics (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1893), pp. 144-187, for examples of the philosopher's attitudes toward charity and reform.

heard catchwords of Darwinism were "struggle for existence" and "survival of the fittest." Applied to man in society, these terms suggested that attempts to reform social conditions were efforts to remedy what could not be changed, and that such attempts at remedy were against the laws of nature. William Graham Sumner, the most prominent Social Darwinist in America and a student of Spencer, expressed the conservative rationale against social reform with logic which the reformers did not dare to ignore. Social critics were forced to deal with the negative and deterministic implications of Spencer's teachings, but they found more solace in the writings of the more optimistic Lester Frank Ward. Ward's book, Dynamic Sociology, appeared in 1883. Though the pioneer sociologist was anti-religious, Ward's optimism that man could purposely control and direct society's evolution toward its ideal state was probably an incentive to the study of sociology by religious leaders who had not yet responded to social issues.<sup>29</sup> In the literature of numerous secular reformers, especially in the utopian novels, there are proposals for controlled sociological evolution. Technological progress might solve all society's problems if man would only act with foresight and wisdom.

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<sup>29</sup>Lester Frank Ward, Dynamic Sociology (2 vols.; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883); James Dombrowski, The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), p. 31.

Morton and Lucia White, in The Intellectual Versus the City, suggest that few of the urban critics offered complaints that rested on reflections of a scientific basis and that the most effective anti-urban writing was based on esthetic, psychological, and moral ideas.<sup>30</sup> Urban reformers certainly stressed these considerations, but a survey of urban reform literature reveals that many of the reformists acknowledged the prevailing preoccupation with science. The novelists Edward Bellamy and William Dean Howells, for example, exhibited a belief in controlled evolution of society, much as did the sociologist, Lester Frank Ward.

In addition to science, another important influence on urban moral crusaders was what has come to be known as the agrarian myth. The myth embodies the conviction that there are special virtues to the rural life which can not possibly be attained in the populous cities, and that agricultural pursuits produce the morally superior, healthy, honest, independent rugged individualist that American society demands. The myth, which is older than the nation, became by the nineteenth century a credo of almost religious intensity.<sup>31</sup> That the self-sufficient agrarian life was not

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<sup>30</sup> Morton White and Lucia White, The Intellectual Versus the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright (Cambridge: Harvard University Press and Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1962), pp. 230-232.

<sup>31</sup> Hofstadter, Age of Reform, pp. 23-59.



all that it was assessed as being is obvious in that farm youths were abandoning the idyllic country life and pouring into the cities at an unprecedented rate. Yet the myth persisted, and many of the reformers' ideas were founded on a desire to reassert agrarian virtues and values which they believed had been lost in the city where the sturdy yeoman had become a factory hand or an unemployed tramp. Reformers as diverse as Henry George, Jane Addams, and Charles Loring Brace bemoaned the fact that city dwellers were denied the advantages of direct communication with nature. John Lancaster Spalding, a churchman who had been brought up on a Kentucky plantation, wrote in 1880 that "The higher moral purity of the farmer is beyond question," while in the city, "the immediate contact of great multitudes does, indeed, tend to develop the lower and more animal side of man's nature."<sup>32</sup>

While numerous Americans still believed that the authentic America was rural and pre-industrial, their cities were growing to rival the largest European metropolises. Europeans had long contended with social problems in urban areas which were just beginning to develop in the United States. It is, therefore, not surprising that reform-minded

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<sup>32</sup> John Lancaster Spalding, "The Contrast Between Country and City," in The Church and the City, 1865-1910, ed. by Robert D. Cross (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 13, 15.

Americans were influenced by ideas that originated in Europe, and they sometimes attempted to apply those ideas to American social situations.

The American settlement house movement was an outgrowth of an English experiment in developing a community center for the poor. Americans who wished to improve urban housing were influenced by the English humanitarian, Octavia Hill, who experimented with designing model tenements. American social critics did not look to England alone as a source of ideas for importation and implementation. Marxian socialism attracted a handful of Americans, but its chief importance was to spur reformers to find alternate solutions more suitable to Americans. The Russian writer, Leo Tolstoy, influenced novelists William Dean Howells and Stephen Crane, and settlement house workers Jane Addams and Vida Scudder. Though Tolstoy's works were studied by reformers and few would deny that he was an inspirational figure, his espousal of poverty and his literal interpretation of Christ's teachings made him more influential as a literary figure than as a social reformer. Pragmatic Americans failed to take the Russian count's writings seriously, although they could admire his personal sacrifices.<sup>33</sup> What was needed was an American response to American social problems.

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<sup>33</sup>Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp. 1-25; Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age, pp. 149, 224, 232; Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House, pp. 186-199. For more information on the influence of Europeans, see Chapters III, IV, and V of this study.

Not least among the influences on Americans who wished to improve conditions among the poor in great cities were the ethical and social teachings of the New Testament. The American churches' preoccupation with theology gradually lessened as the churches came under an increasing number of attacks for their lack of response to the suffering of the poor. Criticism from labor leaders, socialists, and reformers, as well as alienation from the church of a large number of workers, put religious institutions on the defensive.<sup>34</sup> The attacks on organized religion were reformist literature, for the critics of the churches endeavored to bring about a change in denominational attitudes. The changed attitudes toward the urban poor marked a movement among American churches that came to be called the "Social Gospel." Late in the century some religious organizations began to stress social service, not only as a prelude to evangelical work but also in its own right. Urban congregations became conscious of the underprivileged in their midst and strove to make the church a community center rather than merely a place of worship. The Social Gospel was not merely a reaction to contemporary negative criticism from reformers, for the social element of Christianity is as old as the teachings of Jesus. As early

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<sup>34</sup>Dombrowski, The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America, p. 4.

as 1850, writers had expressed dissatisfaction with American Christianity's preoccupation with creeds and doctrine rather than with true Christian charity.<sup>35</sup> Beginning in the 1880's and increasing rapidly into the 1890's and into the new century, many urban churches ceased to divorce religion from everyday social affairs and exhibited an increased concern for the plight of the poor.

The various influences on American urban reformers were many: the sudden urban growth which confounded rural-minded Americans and which prompted them to seek answers to questions and problems new to this country; the reformist tradition, particularly strong in New England where reformers had met earlier American problems with liberal, intellectual, and self-righteous indignation; the social application of new scientific theories stimulating optimism that man could, through controlled sociological evolution, perfect society; and Christian humanitarianism which sought salvation for society as well as for the individual. Perhaps the greatest promoter of reform was the sad spectacle of human degeneracy that the cities offered and which could not help but stimulate human kindness. Influenced by these factors, a group of writers, through books, newspapers, and popular journals, informed Americans of the social evils existing in their cities.

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<sup>35</sup> Charles Howard Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 5.

## CHAPTER II

### REFORM PUBLICATIONS: EARLY MUCKRAKING BOOKS AND JOURNALISTIC PUBLICATIONS

During the latter decades of the nineteenth century, a succession of reformers published works purporting to expose the miseries of urban life. Some of the writers, such as Loring Brace, assumed an attitude of piety toward the problems of the metropolitan poor. Others, most notably Jacob Riis, stated their observations with a sense of outrage; while still another group, including Henry George and Lawrence Gronlund, described the social problems in the cities as evil symptoms of the general social disorder which they proposed to change. In addition to the above authors of reformist literature, there were writers for publications of charitable organizations, the most famous of which was Lend-a-Hand. The names of many of these writers are only of passing interest, for few of them attained more than local prominence. These men and women were, however, important in disseminating information which provoked public interest in the poor. More influential were the contributors to reform oriented journals.

Several themes frequently occurred in urban reform writing of the late nineteenth century. Discussions of vice and crime were usually included, but the authors showed most concern for the children of the poor. They seemed to imply that the older generations often could not be rescued from depravity and that children were the most pitiable products of urban squalor. Reformers regretted crowded living conditions, the evils of saloons and whore houses, and the unsanitary aspects of life in urban poverty for their effects on the young. Another theme recurrent in reform literature was the plight of the unemployed. The sympathy of the social critics almost invariably included the jobless laborers for whom no work was available. In the recurring periods of extensive unemployment between 1880-1900, and particularly during the depression which began in 1893, armies of unemployed men were forced to accept charity.<sup>1</sup> These unfortunates received the kindly sentiment of reformers who often had little sympathy for the lazy or "undeserving" poor. Some of the critics, however, did question the virtue of a society which produced such a depraved class.

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<sup>1</sup>Leah Hannah Feder, Unemployment Relief in Periods of Depression: A Study of Measures Adopted in Certain American Cities, 1857 Through 1922 (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1936), pp. 98-188. (Hereinafter cited as Feder, Unemployment Relief.)

One of the most outspoken men who called for the redemption of the urban poor was Charles Loring Brace. Brace, who had waged his own personal campaign against poverty in New York before the Civil War, wrote his most influential book in 1872. In The Dangerous Classes of New York the Congregationalist minister gave a detailed account of the constituents of the "dangerous classes" and his twenty years of effort in their behalf. Describing the tenement population as "weak," "brutal," and "ignorant," Brace expressed his fear that the poor classes, if not broken up, would destroy civilization. His object in writing was to prove to society that the most efficacious way of dealing with the problem was to rescue the destitute youth of the cities, thus insuring that the danger posed by the threatening element of society would not be perpetuated in New York. He urged the citizens of other large cities to inaugurate comprehensive organized educational, disciplinary, and religious movements for the improvement of their "dangerous classes."<sup>2</sup>

The Dangerous Classes of New York is an excellent example of early urban reformist literature. Abundant evidence indicates that the author observed the perils of an

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<sup>2</sup>Charles Loring Brace, The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years Work Among Them (3rd ed. with Addenda; New York: Wynkoop and Hallenbeck, Publishers, 1880), pp. i-iii.

unfavorable environment upon city youth. Brace recognized the fact that many of the children of the poor, under more favorable material circumstances, could become useful members of society. As a crusader who advocated social salvation as well as individual religious regeneration, Brace was an important progenitor of the Social Gospel. Brace demonstrated, nevertheless, a distaste for the adult poor which was consistent with contemporary prevailing attitudes, and he expressed contempt for the growing immigrant population in much the same terms as did the later reformer, Josiah Strong.<sup>3</sup>

Another mark of Brace's traditional attitude toward the problems of the city poor may be found in his espousal of the virtues of country living. One of his favorite "remedies" for the distressing conditions in which urban children lived was to take them from their families and dispatch them to the West. During the forty years of his reform activity, Brace supervised the resettlement of about ninety thousand children in western homes.<sup>4</sup> His proposal to disperse urban children to the West was unrealistic. The

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>4</sup>Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, A History of Urban America (New York: Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 235. For Brace's opinions on the advantages of western settlement, see The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years Work Among Them, pp. 246-270.



eighteen years between the publication in 1872 of Brace's exposé and the appearance of Jacob Riis' famous publication, How the Other Half Lives, were marked by rapid proliferation of urban ills as the cities experienced unprecedented growth. By 1890, few could believe in wholesale emigration from the city as a feasible solution.

The Dangerous Classes of New York called for no reorganization of society and espoused no new economic theories. In fact, the author's fears were that the presence of the urban poor endangered the civilization enjoyed by the more fortunate--and more moral--classes. Yet Brace did advocate a few reforms which were forward looking and which helped to alleviate some of the miseries of the indigent in New York. The author was absolutely convinced that something had to be done for the children. In 1853, the Congregationalist, Brace, and several Presbyterian, Unitarian, and Episcopal ministers organized the Children's Aid Society of New York, which was instrumental in establishing industrial schools and lodging houses and in providing homes for young waifs who otherwise had none. The first lodging house for street boys, which opened in 1854 largely because of Brace's efforts, housed more than ninety thousand boys in the period between its opening and the date of publication of The Dangerous Classes.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Brace, The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years Work Among Them, pp. 84-96, 101-109.

By the 1880's, Brace had modified some of his earlier traditional attitudes toward the poor. Besides appealing for an expansion of charitable work, the author called for a more just distribution of wealth. Like other reformers writing during the decade, Brace found much in common between Christianity and socialism, and he spoke in favor of greater economic equality. Though he was no radical and was never converted to socialism, by the 1880's Brace showed a sympathy for striking laborers which was not expressed in his 1872 publication.<sup>6</sup>

The eighteen years which passed between the publications of The Dangerous Classes of New York and How the Other Half Lives, by Jacob Riis, were years of change in attitudes, if not a time of improvement in conditions. As poverty and the crime rate increased, more writers called attention to the immediate need of reforming efforts. In the early years of the nineteenth century most urbanites believed poverty and failure were evidence of personal shortcomings. They condemned the saloon as the favorite villain in producing slums, vice, and other city miseries, as earlier reformers had done. Brace and many other writers explored this subject.<sup>7</sup> By the end of the century, however,

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<sup>6</sup>Henry F. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 113.

<sup>7</sup>Brace, The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years Work Among Them, pp. 64-73.

many Americans were more of the opinion that poverty was an active cause, while shortcomings and vice were a result.<sup>8</sup> Jacob Riis did much to popularize this notion in his career as a reformer.

More than any other person, Jacob Riis made Americans aware of urban squalor. Early warnings of slum conditions in large cities had been sounded in many places, but few non-urban Americans were truly aware of the facts until the publication in 1890 of How the Other Half Lives.<sup>9</sup> Riis first met the slums of New York as a young penniless emigrant from Denmark in the lean days before he began his journalistic career as a police reporter for the New York Tribune and the New York Evening Sun. He knew from personal experience the plight of the homeless immigrant in search of work and on the verge of starvation. In his autobiography, The Making of an American, Riis tells how, as a police reporter, he was in a position to investigate the deplorable conditions to which he had personally been subjected. He spent the rest of his life crusading for improvements. As a result of his labors, he promoted tenement house reform and the building of parks and play areas for children. Riis

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<sup>8</sup>Glaab and Brown, A History of Urban America, p. 247.

<sup>9</sup>Blake McKelvey, ed., The City in American History (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1969), p. 74.

also was instrumental in proving the contamination of city water supplied to a large area of New York.<sup>10</sup>

Riis' greatest influence was as a writer. In his moving account of How the Other Half Lives, he described the character of the slums of New York with compassion and understanding. His book made its appeal to the conscience of many who would have been bored by espousals of social or economic theory. Riis personally had little use for theorists. In response to a critic who had attacked Riis' crusade against the slum as "necessarily abortive," the reformer replied that he did not care "two pins" for social theories unless they actually bettered the lot of human beings. "I have had cranks of that order. . . . tell me that I was doing harm rather than good by helping improve the lot of the poor. . . . they make me tired."<sup>11</sup> He expressed an optimism about his adopted country which reassured native Americans who tended to distrust "foreign doctrines" preached by some newcomers such as Lawrence Gronlund who, like Riis, had emigrated from Denmark.

Riis, the man of action rather than theory, made an appeal for reform in his work which, even now, provokes compassion from the reader. In his description of tenement

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<sup>10</sup>Jacob Riis, The Making of an American, ed., with an Introduction and Notes, by Roy Lubove (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 200-390.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 67-69.

life, Riis exhibited particular concern for the luckless children for whom "kicks and cuffs" were the "daily diet." The crusading reformer was well aware that the environment of the slums often doomed the children of the poor to early graves.<sup>12</sup>

Though he did not approve of intemperance, Riis understood the drawing power of the saloon. In buildings where pumps in hallway sinks were worked in vain, the saloon was always there. "The smell of it permeates the tenement," Riis remarked, "when a thousand thirsty throats pant for a cooling drink." The odor of stale beer, the reformer explained, does not detract from air already tainted by the smell of boiling cabbage, dirty rags, and clogged sinks in buildings housing dozens of people without toilet facilities.<sup>13</sup> The terms Riis employed in writing the dramatic exposé were so authentic that his readers were compelled to take notice of the conditions he described.

Three years after the appearance of How the Other Half Lives, Riis published a tiny volume, containing three short stories, in which the author continued his crusade. In "What the Christmas Sun Saw," Riis used sarcasm to make his point about conditions in the tenements. The author's

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<sup>12</sup>Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890), pp. 43-44.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

concern for children and his contempt for traditionalists who haughtily condemned the drinking habits of the poor can be discerned in his description of a typical "dinner party" attended by four unkempt children and their parents. The Christmas fare consisted of a meat bone, green pickles, stale bread, and beer, "a sup all around, the baby included." "Why not?" asked Riis, for the beer was the one "relish" to be found on the table. Riis sarcastically commented that in New York "only those starve who can not get work and who have not the courage to beg."<sup>14</sup>

In addition to his concern for children, Jacob Riis was particularly sympathetic to the plight of the immigrants. Perhaps because of his own foreign origins, the journalist exhibited a more humanitarian interest in the many foreigners who occupied the slums of New York than did most of his contemporaries. Riis spoke of the "loss of reckoning which follows uprooting" and the "cutting loose from all sense of responsibility, with the old standards gone" in describing the troubles of the immigrant population; and he explained the Irish and Italian juvenile delinquents as creatures shaped by the slum.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Jacob Riis, "What the Christmas Sun Saw," in Jacob Riis, Nisby's Christmas (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), pp. 25-26.

<sup>15</sup>Riis, The Making of an American, pp. 36-37.

Since the reformer stressed the importance of environment rather than heredity, he did not exhibit the racism which marks the writing of some of his contemporaries. His commitment to human brotherhood stopped short of inclusion of the Chinese, perhaps because they exhibited an unwillingness to assimilate. This distinguished the Chinese, in Riis' estimation, from all other immigrants. Historian Roy Lubove suggests that Riis believed the Chinese subverted America's national heritage because their rootlessness seemed to mock all those American middle class norms with which the Danish immigrant identified.<sup>16</sup> The prejudice against the non-Christian Chinese was not based on religious intolerance, for Riis was not critical of the Jews. He described the Jewish tenement house reformer, Felix Adler, as "among the strongest of moral forces in Christian New York."<sup>17</sup>

The benevolent influence of Jacob Riis extended far beyond the immediate area of his research and reform efforts in New York City. Not only did he lecture on social betterment in other parts of the country but he also pressed the New York State Legislature to enact housing codes which

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<sup>16</sup>Roy Lubove, in Introduction to Riis, The Making of an American, pp. xv-xvi.

<sup>17</sup>Riis, The Making of an American, p. 247.

were copied in other areas. As a personal friend of Theodore Roosevelt in his early career as Police Commissioner in New York, Riis greatly influenced the future president. He personally conducted Roosevelt through some of the most wretched of the tenement districts in order that Roosevelt might have a first-hand knowledge of conditions there.<sup>18</sup>

Helen Campbell was another New Yorker, a contemporary of Jacob Riis, who used her writing skill to awaken the American middle classes to the situation in the city. In Prisoners of Poverty (1887), Campbell attacked hard-hearted clergymen who blamed poverty on vice. Like other reformers, she was particularly moved by the spectacle of slum children who were often forced to become wage earners at an early age. She also exhibited a practical concern for the welfare of thousands of women sweatshop workers in New York who were engaged in sewing clothing during busy seasons, but who had no resources when sewing was not available in the factories. Some of the unemployed women filled their hours by rolling cigars in their tenement homes. Children as young as five or six could be taught to

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 325-359; Arthur Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 172; Arthur Meier Schlesinger, The Rise of the City, 1878-1898 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1933), pp. 110-111. (Hereinafter cited as Schlesinger, Rise of the City.)



strip the leaves of tobacco and thus add to the week's income. Campbell described one tenement apartment, a room twelve by fourteen feet, holding a family of seven persons wherein cigars were rolled. Three of the children were under ten years of age, and all had sores on their lips, cheeks, and on their hands from sleeping on and working with the leaves ten or more hours a day. The reformer pointed out that the women and children thus engaged speedily became victims of consumption, throat diseases, and nervous disorders from nicotine poisoning.<sup>19</sup> Campbell appealed not only to the humanitarian interest of her reader but also to the self-interest, at least of cigar smokers. "It is doubtful," she wrote, "if the most inveterate cigar smoker would feel much relish for the cigar manufactured under such conditions, yet hundreds of thousands go out yearly from these houses, bearing in every leaf the poison of their preparation." Helen Campbell did not call for charity or for a new social order, but simply for laws to control the evils she observed. She wrote that the whole matter had "reached a stage where legislative interference is absolutely indispensable." Only in forbidding tenement

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<sup>19</sup>Helen Campbell, Prisoners of Poverty: Women Wage-Workers, Their Trades and Their Lives (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1889), pp. 199-209.

house manufacturing could there be any safety for consumer or producer.<sup>20</sup>

Problems in other urban areas prompted reformists to publicize their local conditions. Although Riis' exposé of New York slum conditions was not equalled as a promoter of social reform, The City Wilderness, a study of settlement work in Boston edited by Robert A. Woods, was effective in arousing public interest in reform work in that city.<sup>21</sup> Conditions in Chicago provoked an English visitor to the Columbian Exposition in 1893 to write If Christ Came to Chicago, a volume which placed much of the blame for that city's misery on the rotten municipal political machine. If Christ Came to Chicago attracted so much nation-wide, and even worldwide, attention that the author, W. T. Stead, a London Review of Reviews reporter, wrote a sequel the following year. In Chicago Today, he lambasted the laissez-faire economics of American capitalism and stated that the Americans were fifty years behind the English in matters of social evolution.<sup>22</sup> Like many native born reformers, Stead saw increased Christian social concern as the answer to the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 205-206.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter V of this study.

<sup>22</sup> W. T. Stead, Chicago Today: The Labour War in America (London: William Clowse and Sons, Limited, 1894), p. 22.

problems of poverty, poor housing, and unemployment. But it was political activism, not charity, through which these problems could be solved. Stead, like Campbell and Riis, believed that Christian ethics, applied to the existent system, could solve many social ills.

Other reformers questioned the existent capitalistic system which created, or at least allowed, poverty. These social theorists believed that the urban conditions which so concerned Brace and Riis were only symptoms of an illness in society itself. The first of these theorists, whose wide audience made him important to the cause of reform, was Henry George.

Henry George grew up in a religious Philadelphia family and received only brief and irregular schooling. As a young man he traveled to San Francisco, where he engaged in a brief newspaper career and began to concern himself with religion and social justice.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately his dissatisfaction with monopoly and fraud in western land negotiations led him to publish, in 1879, Progress and Poverty, a book that was read throughout the world and which thrust the author into a leadership role in reform movements of the last two decades of the century. Historian Lewis Filler states that George's "shocked" view of conditions in

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<sup>23</sup>James Dombrowski, The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), pp. 35-39.

the New York tenements must be taken into account as an explanatory factor in the author's work. Filler draws attention to the fact that George's reform theories had a remarkable effect on urban thought and especially on middle western city reformers--Tom Johnson of Cleveland, Samuel Jones of Toledo, and Hayden Pingree of Detroit.<sup>24</sup>

Though not specifically an urban reformer, George had a prejudice toward great cities typical of an agrarian mind, and he looked upon cities as destructive of health and morality. In his famous book he stated his belief that squalor, misery, and the vices and crimes that spring from them increase as the village becomes a city. It was in the older and richer sections of the nation that pauperism and distress among the working classes were most apparent. "If there is less deep poverty in San Francisco than in New York," wrote George, "is it not because San Francisco is yet behind New York in all that both cities are striving for?" The author was certain that ragged and barefooted children would be seen on the streets of San Francisco when its population was as great as that of New York. George wrote that "this association of poverty with progress is the great

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<sup>24</sup>Lewis Filler, ed., Late Nineteenth Century American Liberalism: Representative Selections, 1880-1900 (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1962), pp. xxxi-xxxii.

enigma of our time." He could not believe that this was the natural order of things.<sup>25</sup>

The specter of city poverty and crime was seen as symptomatic of an illness in society which George hoped to cure with his "single tax" theory. The writer proposed that all taxes be abolished "save that upon land values." City landlords would pay to the state all the profits which crowded urban living conditions had assured them. To appropriate rent by taxation would, according to the reformer, "raise wages, extirpate pauperism, abolish poverty, afford free scope to human powers, lessen crime, elevate morals, and taste, and intelligence, purify government and carry civilization to yet nobler heights."<sup>26</sup> George believed no single individual should benefit from the increased value which land assumed because of social conditions. Elimination of profiteering by landlords, through the single tax on rent, would return the wealth to the entire community to which it rightfully belonged. George avoided using the term "socialism." In fact, he praised free competition and suggested that the single tax would promote individualization.

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<sup>25</sup>Henry George, Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Causes of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth--The Remedy (New York: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1971), pp. 9-10.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 11, 405-406.

In an essay published in 1898, George continued his crusade and wrote that the "life of great cities is not the natural life of man." He explained that the concentration of people in large urban centers of population, like the unequal distribution of wealth that makes one man a millionaire and another one a tramp, was the result of new industrial forces in a society unable to cope with them. The writer gave a vague explanation of how the single tax would dissolve the great cities through eliminating profiteering in land as private property. This done, according to George, "there would ensue a natural distribution of population."<sup>27</sup>

Henry George's theories had great appeal among many elements of society. By 1900, Progress and Poverty had already gone through a hundred editions.<sup>28</sup> The book deeply influenced all of the principal exponents of the Social Gospel movement, the novelists, Bellamy and Howells, and the socialists who hoped that the values of socialism might be realized through the single tax. Though published in 1879, Progress and Poverty was not on the market until January of

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<sup>27</sup> Henry George, "City and Country," in The Challenge of the City, 1860-1910, ed., with an Introduction, by Lyle Dorsett (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath Company, 1968), pp. 6-7.

<sup>28</sup> George E. Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912 (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 30.

1880, the first month in a decade which witnessed the appearance of volumes of economic reform literature by George's followers and by those who wished to propose their own economic panaceas. Among those who published in the 1880's was Lawrence Gronlund, a Marxian socialist, who found George's proposals "Utopian" and proceeded to advance his own program for a socialist commonwealth in his 1884 guide-book for social order, The Cooperative Commonwealth.<sup>29</sup>

Gronlund, like George, was not specifically an urban reformer. His importance to the urban reform movement rests on the influence he exerted in popularizing Marxian criticism of the evils of industrial capitalism. This native of Denmark immigrated to the United States in 1865 and was admitted to the bar in Chicago in 1869. Later he moved to New York City and took up journalism and political lecturing. In New York he became well known among those who favored extreme social change.<sup>30</sup>

In outlining his plan for the Cooperative Commonwealth, Gronlund explained how the evils of prostitution, child labor, poor housing, and crime would disappear under a socialist system which, he believed, would remove the provocation of such evils. Like the other reformers of his

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<sup>29</sup> Lawrence Gronlund, The Cooperative Commonwealth, ed., with an Introduction, by Stow Persons (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 81.

<sup>30</sup> Stow Persons, Introduction, ibid., p. x.

time, Gronlund attacked the cities: "Every civilized country, with its overgrown cities may fairly be compared to a man whose belly is steadily increasing in bulk, out of all proportion to the body, and whose legs are constantly growing thinner." According to Gronlund, after the advent of socialism, when the cities' purposes have been served, the population will return to the country.<sup>31</sup> Gronlund, like George, believed that the evil and unnatural city should be dissolved. Whereas Brace had proposed to remove children from the corrupting influence of the city, George and Gronlund proposed to remove the city. Each of the three was convinced that urban areas were conducive to a proliferation of social problems.

Gronlund's writings are now almost forgotten. The socialist realized that his work did not have a great impact, for he noted that the "happiest effect" of his book was that it led directly to Edward Bellamy's novel Looking Backward, a book of much more importance to the reform movement than Cooperative Commonwealth.<sup>32</sup> Lawrence Gronlund was not a successful reformer in commanding the attention of many readers. Perhaps the explanation for this fact is that Gronlund consistently used the term "socialism." The more

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<sup>31</sup>Gronlund, The Cooperative Commonwealth, p. 105.

<sup>32</sup>Gronlund, Introduction to the Revised Edition, 1890, ibid., p. 4.



successful reformers, George and Bellamy, avoided the term. Not as well read as the works of George and Bellamy, Cooperative Commonwealth was, nevertheless, a source of ideas for the Social Gospel advocates who applied their energies to urban problems in the last years of the century. It also served as a guidebook for American socialists.<sup>33</sup>

George and Gronlund ultimately failed to convince Americans that they must reorganize society in such a way that the cities would disappear. Reform literature which stressed change in economic and political conditions, however, provoked much attention during the last twenty years of the century. Literature which advocated charitable activity was less thought provoking than the political and economic reform literature; yet, as urban social conditions worsened, more attention was given to traditional benevolent work. In the past, charity to the distressed had been distributed on a piecemeal basis which had provoked criticism for the wastefulness and fraud often involved. Organization was needed to prevent some recipients from exploiting the charitable impulse by secretly capitalizing from various charity funds, while the needs of some of the poor never came to the attention of charitable societies. The first effort at organization was made in London in 1869.

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<sup>33</sup>Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (rev. ed.; New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1959), pp. 114-115.

The idea spread to the United States and, by 1880, Boston, Buffalo, New Haven, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, Detroit, and Cincinnati had established charity organization societies. Baltimore, Washington, Newark, and Terre Haute had organized societies by 1882.<sup>34</sup>

The charity organizations early began a widespread dissemination of literature to promote the needs of their relief activities. In 1880, the Philadelphia Society began publication of the Monthly Register to stir up a deeper interest in benevolent works. For six years the Monthly Register was the only organ of the movement throughout the country, but, in 1886, leaders in the societies of various cities cooperated in launching Lend-a-Hand as a truly official organ for the spread of proper principles in charitable work. The editor of Lend-a-Hand was Edward Everett Hale, the well known author of A Man Without a Country. In 1897, Hale's Boston-based Lend-a-Hand was merged with New York's The Charities Review, and the publication attained nation-wide significance in publicizing problems of poverty, disease, crime, and retardation.<sup>35</sup>

Newspapers, too, participated in the process of informing the public concerning the problems of the poor,

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<sup>34</sup>Frank Dekker Watson, The Charity Organization Movement in the United States (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971), p. 53.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 234-237.

particularly in periods of distress caused by unemployment due to depression. Often sensational newspaper stories of distress, rather than authentic statistics, actually complicated the problem of relief. Local charity organizations would request newspaper coverage of their activities and, receiving such advertisement, would be swamped with so many applicants that it was impossible to determine their real needs. Newspapers of large cities also participated in money-raising activities which greatly aided the charitable organizations by confronting comfortable urban dwellers with the need for their efforts on behalf of the poor.<sup>36</sup> Though the journalists might have had little interest in promoting reform, their role in disseminating knowledge of the plight of the suffering poor in the city was important in enlightening the literate middle classes.

The influence of the reporter, Jacob Riis, and the fact that numerous other reformers had some journalistic experience, leads one to believe that the news media was an important instrument in promoting urban reform activities. A content analysis, however, of three important metropolitan dailies, the New York Tribune, the Chicago Tribune, and the Boston Transcript, for each of the years 1878, 1888, and 1898, revealed a very small percentage of space devoted to problems of social welfare and related subjects. In the

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<sup>36</sup>Feder, Unemployment Relief, pp. 92-93, 134.

combined categories of social welfare, labor, crimes, disasters, and religion, only 10.1 percent of space was devoted in 1878, with a slight increase to 10.7 percent in 1888, and a sharp decline to 5.4 percent ten years later.<sup>37</sup> The urban tabloids, therefore, demonstrated much less interest in subjects related to urban reform activity in 1898 than in previous years. Arthur Schlesinger suggests that a growing alliance of the press with the employing class explained the lack of newspaper attention given to labor unrest, while the newspaper readers' concern for their own material welfare, comfort, and pleasure explained the lack of interest in humanitarian reform.<sup>38</sup>

Of all the journalistic literature published in the last decades of the nineteenth century, no one journal was more instrumental in advocating reformist causes than Arena, published in Boston by Benjamin Orange Flower. The first volume of the journal left little doubt that Arena would be devoted to discussions of important social questions. Articles by Helen Campbell and Henry George were included, as well as comments about Edward Bellamy's reform novel, urban poverty and crime, and the problem of child

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<sup>37</sup>Based on an unpublished study by B. B. Bouton, reprinted in Schlesinger, Rise of the City, p. 199.

<sup>38</sup>Schlesinger, Rise of the City, p. 203.

labor.<sup>39</sup> Between the time it was launched in 1889 and the turn of the century, Arena printed as many articles of criticism and exposure as the muckraking journals published in the first decade of the new century.<sup>40</sup> The editor, Flower, and the young intellectuals he successfully attracted to his staff muckraked against all of the conspicuous evils they detected in the nation, and the social conditions in the cities received their share of the magazine's attention. The Arena staff painted, in the blackest colors, pictures of city life that were becoming increasingly familiar to Americans.

Flower actively solicited articles from reformers, notably Leo Tolstoy, Felix Adler, Robert Ingersoll, Edward Bellamy, and Lawrence Gronlund. Hamlin Garland, who is best remembered for his fictional attacks on the indignities of rural life, Main Travelled Roads and A Son of the Middle Border, was taken in tow by Flower and began producing fiction which exposed the poverty in Boston's North End as well as poverty on the farm. Garland became Arena's specialist in literature and, in that capacity, the writer

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<sup>39</sup>Helen Campbell, "Certain Convictions to Poverty," Arena, I (Dec., 1889-May, 1890), 101-113; Henry George, "To Destroy the 'Rum Power'," Ibid., 196-208; J. Rancon Bridge, "Nationalistic Socialism," Ibid., 184-195; N. P. Gilman, "Poverty and Crime in Our Great Cities," Ibid., 114-115; Helen Campbell, "White Child Slavery, A Symposium," Ibid., 589-603.

<sup>40</sup>Harold U. Faulkner, Politics, Reform and Expansion, 1890-1900 (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 19.

favorably reviewed any new literature which might prompt reformist sentiment. Flower and Garland were advocates of Henry George's single tax, but the pages of Arena were also open to reformers of many convictions. The editor and his aides believed that improvement came through free discussion, and so Arena published articles presenting new ideas which were unacceptable to more conventional journals.<sup>41</sup>

Flower's ability to organize and attract the reform-minded made Arena the outstanding liberal magazine in the nation with a wide circulation among the middle classes. The influence of the magazine was such that nearly a hundred Arena clubs rapidly sprang up in cities throughout the country, wherein civic-minded citizens gathered to discuss problems of social justice. Such topics as intemperance, sweatshops, women wage workers, "child slavery," and urban housing reform were discussed. Sometimes these groups exerted pressures on local politicians to address these problems.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age, pp. 167-169; John Chamberlain, Farewell to Reform: The Rise, Life and Decay of the Progressive Mind in America (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1932), pp. 100-101.

<sup>42</sup>Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age, p. 170; Benjamin O. Flower, Progressive Men, Women, and Movements of the Past Twenty-five Years (Boston: New Arena, 1914), pp. 128-133.

The Arena editor's shock at the manifestation of evils was, as previously noted, particularly aroused by the conditions of cities. In an 1893 publication, Flower compared the city to Hell:

In this underworld vice and crime mingle with poverty; bestial passion is the goddess of its denizens; here the acme of pleasure is reached in sensual gratification; here men do not look you in the eye. . . . This is the real inferno.

The victims of the "inferno" did not come voluntarily, but were driven there by the "avarice of powerful individuals, the selfishness of a short-sighted and indifferent civilization, reinforced by the intangible but potent influence of heredity on the one hand, and the still more irresistible power of environment on the other."<sup>43</sup> Flower, therefore, joined other reformers in blaming environmental factors, rather than individual weaknesses, for the social decay he witnessed in the cities.

Other important journals, not as influential as Arena but dedicated to reform, were Edward Bellamy's Nationalist and W. D. P. Bliss' Christian Socialist Dawn. The popular magazines of the late nineteenth century were hesitant to take up reformist causes, perhaps for the same reasons that newspapers were reluctant to become involved in reform activities. Fiction, poetry, literary criticism,

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<sup>43</sup> Benjamin O. Flower, Civilization's Inferno (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Company, 1893), p. 100.

history, and travel were the subjects which claimed the lion's share of attention in Harper's, Atlantic Monthly, North American Review, Lippencott's Magazine, Scribner's Monthly, Century, and Overland Monthly in the last decades of the century.<sup>44</sup>

Social critics gained attention through their books and through reform-oriented journals, and gradually they prepared the American public for change. Their importance as educators and molders of opinion can not be denied. But with the exception of Brace and Riis, the reformers had little contact with the masses they hoped to uplift. More often, the men and women who hoped to eliminate conditions of distress in the cities through reform literature spoke for the inhabitants of city slums and not to them. Even Brace and Riis, each of whom spent years in direct contact with the slums, addressed themselves to the middle and upper classes. There were other reformers, however, of more practical persuasion who responded to the social problems of the city by ministering directly to the urban masses. The city settlement house workers not only campaigned for change, but they actually participated in efforts to alleviate human misery.

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<sup>44</sup>Schlesinger, Rise of the City, pp. 200-201.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE SETTLEMENT HOUSE WORKERS' RESPONSE TO THE CITY

The settlement house idea originated in London. Samuel A. Barnett, an Anglican clergyman, recognized the needs of restless college students who were searching for some meaningful and useful role in life. Oxford and Cambridge students, at Barnett's suggestion, moved into a building in 1884 which became Toynbee Hall, the first settlement house. The purpose of Toynbee Hall, which was located in the worst of the East London slums, was to reduce the gulf between the rich and poor classes and to give something more than charity to the needy. The settlement was designed to be an outpost of education and culture where the university men learned from the poor while they spread culture to the laboring classes. Toynbee Hall had far-reaching influence. Though it was criticized for its nonsectarian nature, and scoffed for its attempts at regenerating working men through art shows, lectures, and other cultural projects, the idea spread. In less than thirty years there were forty-six settlements in Great Britain, and even more in the United States. Jane Addams,

Stanton Coit, Ellen Gates Starr, and Robert A. Woods were among the more noted American settlement workers who visited Toynbee Hall and returned to this country to conduct their own experiments in this type of work.<sup>1</sup>

The American settlement movement began almost simultaneously in several large cities. In 1886, Stanton Coit, a young graduate of Andover Theological Seminary, returned to the United States after a three months residence at Toynbee Hall and established Neighborhood Guild (later renamed University Settlement) in the Lower East Side of New York City. A small group of ministers, labor leaders, a socialist, and a Russian Jew were among the residents of this first American settlement.<sup>2</sup> The diverse nature of Neighborhood Guild's early residents indicated the flexibility which was characteristic of the most noted settlements. There was an absence of religious indoctrination, and no one type of political or social propaganda was associated with the movement. The year after Coit's move to New York, a group of young women graduates of Smith College, who knew nothing of Coit's venture, engaged in plans which

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<sup>1</sup>Allen Freeman Davis, Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 6-8. (Hereinafter cited as Davis, Spearheads for Reform.) The number of settlements in the United States by 1900 was fifty, according to information in Harold U. Faulkner, Politics, Reform and Expansion, 1880-1900 (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp. 9-10.

culminated in the establishment of Rivington Street House Settlement in 1889, the organization of the College Settlements Association the following year, and the founding of Boston's Denison House in 1892. Vida Scudder was the most outstanding leader in this group of remarkable young women. Scudder was a wealthy, intellectual Bostonian who had been influenced in her graduate studies at Oxford by John Ruskin, an anti-urban English art critic and social reformer. She felt, as did other first generation college women, the necessity to justify her education through social services. While these young women in Boston were organizing their plans, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr were preparing in 1889 to open the doors of Hull-House to Chicago residents of South Halstead Street. Four years later, Lillian Wald, who had not yet heard of Hull-House, began the important Henry Street Settlement in New York.<sup>3</sup>

It is easy to confuse settlement work with charity. In his important account of the settlements' activities, Allen F. Davis explained the important differences in approach between charity and settlement work. Settlement workers emphasized social and economic conditions that made people poor, while those engaged in charity emphasized individual causes of poverty. Unlike the charitable

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-14; Arthur Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 217-218.

societies that were based on a belief that the fortunate have an obligation to help the poor, the settlement movement was based on an idea that all classes are reciprocally dependent.<sup>4</sup> One settlement resident wrote in 1899 that "What every conscientious settlement worker is anxious to have understood by the public is that the neighborhood work is not charity, but a recognition of a sociological fact that we are, none of us, mere atoms independent and apart from each other."<sup>5</sup> This attitude prompted reformist action, rather than mere philanthropy, though the residents necessarily became involved in some charitable activities, particularly in times of great distress due to unemployment.

Since the purpose of the settlement workers was not to promote charitable endeavors, what did the educated and refined young people who went to live in the slums of the great cities have as their goal? Jane Addams, the co-founder of Chicago's Hull-House and the best remembered of the settlement workers, outlined the purposes of the movement. Addams spoke in 1892 of the necessity for providing a proper outlet for social activity for young college graduates, particularly women, before she spoke of the Christian impulse for social service or the effort to aid in the solution of the social and industrial problems

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<sup>4</sup>Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp. 18-19.

<sup>5</sup>Leonora O'Reilly, as quoted in Ibid., p. 19.

engendered by modern conditions in the city.<sup>6</sup> This is not to imply that Addams, in particular, or all settlement workers in general, were motivated only by individualistic desires to lead full and useful lives, but that aspect of settlement work was important. The settlement movement, Addams further stated, was an attempt to relieve "the overaccumulation at one end of society and the destitution at the other; but it assumes that this overaccumulation and destitution is [sic] most sorely felt in the things that pertain to social and educational privileges."<sup>7</sup> The naive and idealistic young settlement workers who shared their lives with the poor soon learned that the destitute class had problems which could not be solved by a sharing of "educational and social privileges." Devoted to educational and social purposes in the beginning, the movement became by the turn of the century one of the greatest sources of agitation for legislative reforms pertinent to urban areas. Idealism was transformed into pragmatism as the settlement workers found it necessary to deal with conditions more basic than the lack of cultural advantages among the poor. They turned their attention to questions of unemployment, housing

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<sup>6</sup>Jane Addams, "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements," in Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House: With Autobiographical Notes (New York: New American Library, 1961), pp. 91-100. (Hereinafter cited as Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House.)

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

reform, street repair, garbage collection, labor organization, city park construction, industrial education, and city planning. The genteel and refined young workers who found themselves ministering to the needs of struggling immigrant families and to the sordid problems of alcoholics, pimps, and prostitutes became hardened agitators for social reform through political action.<sup>8</sup>

In his history of the settlement house movement, Allen F. Davis explains that the workers had many characteristics in common. They were young, as the median age for entry in the field of settlement work was twenty-five. These men and women were also well educated; nearly 90 percent had attended college. Most of the settlement workers were from old-stock American families in cities of the Northeast or Midwest and were at least moderately well-to-do. Many of the women had been teachers before their decision to live in the slums, and many of the men had been ministers. The majority of the residents in settlements inherited a tradition of service.<sup>9</sup>

The respectable origins and the high level of educational attainment among the workers as a group are significant factors in determining the causes for the influence of the settlements in the reform movement. Though

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<sup>8</sup>Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp. 65-70, 123-132, 138-146.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-39.

the settlements were sometimes considered "nests of anarchy" by conservatives, the fact is that most of the residents had no quarrel with the basic capitalistic system of government. A few of the workers were socialists, but the majority simply intended to improve the American system.<sup>10</sup> The well educated, middle class group of native American men and women devoted to settlement work were unlikely suspects as proponents of revolution or violence.

The limitations of this study do not permit even a brief account of the reforming activities of each of the important settlements. The accomplishments, however, of two of the most noted of the workers, Jane Addams of Chicago's Hull-House, and Robert A. Woods of Boston's South End House, serve as examples of what these dedicated men and women, at their best, could achieve. A comparison of the two serves also to illustrate some of the differences among the people who gave themselves to this work.

Jane Addams' autobiographical Twenty Years at Hull-House gives many insights into the character of the author who had decided, even before graduation from college, that she would devote her life to useful service. She had believed in her college days that she would study medicine, but her physical frailty forced her to withdraw from medical

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. xiii. The term "nests of anarchy" was used by several Chicago newspapers to attack the settlements. See p. 110.

school after the first year. Shortly thereafter she embarked for Europe, where she was struck with the poverty in European capitals. On a second trip to Europe in 1888, Addams visited London's Toynbee Hall and came away with confidence as to the course her life would take. She was only twenty-nine years old. Since college days she had read many of Leo Tolstoy's works and, perhaps because of their influence, she felt a vague obligation to share her life with the poor. The influence of the Russian count persisted throughout her career, although when Addams actually met the famous writer, she found herself "at difference with the great authority."<sup>11</sup> She shared Tolstoy's convictions on peace and his concern for the poor. Jane Addams was, however, much too practical to devote her talent and energies to physical labor as the Russian count advocated. She used instead her persuasive and organizational abilities to launch an institution which would eventually bring her a reputation in the United States equal to that of Tolstoy.

After much preliminary planning, Addams and her former college classmate and European travelling companion, Ellen Gates Starr, opened the doors of Hull-House in

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<sup>11</sup> Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House, p. 195. Unless otherwise noted, information on Miss Addams is drawn from this autobiographical work. For Tolstoy's influence on Addams, see John C. Farrell, Beloved Lady: A History of Jane Addams' Ideas on Reform and Peace (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), pp. 82, 141-142, 202. (Hereinafter cited as Farrell, Beloved Lady.)



September, 1889. It was established in a fine old home which had been engulfed in the sprawl of Chicago's slums. Volunteers came quickly to the new undertaking, each hoping to contribute his talents to the effort to eradicate the dreary life style of their immigrant neighbors. A kindergarten was opened; boys' clubs were established; and reading classes for the area's immigrants were arranged. Some of the other activities in the cultural and educational program of Hull-House included college extension courses, art classes and exhibits, a music school, and a drama group. Because the residents of Hull-House proved themselves anxious to serve the needs of the neighborhood, they often found themselves nursing the sick, preparing the dead for burial, and caring for newborn babies, in addition to spreading the benefits of culture and college-bred refinement. Art classes and lectures were fine, but they did not pertain to the most immediate needs of the community.

The settlement's residents were increasingly called upon to exert their energies in many directions. During the first Christmas season at Hull-House, they gave a party to which a number of little girls came. Curious as to why the girls refused to accept the Christmas candy, the residents discovered that the children had worked for six weeks in a candy factory from seven in the morning until nine at night. Clearly, this was a case which did not call

for Christmas good cheer in the form of candy at a party. During the same winter, three members of the Hull-House Boys' Club were injured at one machine in a neighboring factory. To their horror, the settlement's residents discovered that the factory owners were unwilling to spend the few dollars necessary for a guard to prevent a recurrence of the tragedy. As a result of these and similar experiences, Hull-House launched an investigation which resulted in the passage of the first factory law in Illinois; that law set fourteen as the minimum employment age. This was the first experience Jane Addams and the other residents had at lobbying, a procedure which was quite distasteful to the refined Addams. She later threw herself into an effort to limit to eight the number of hours for working women. This legislation was enacted, but later declared unconstitutional by the Illinois Supreme Court. The Hull-House campaign for remedial labor legislation and its work in arousing public attention against child labor abuse are examples of two of the most important activities of many settlements: agitation for political action, and preparation of public opinion in order to make legislation possible.

Living as they did in the heart of Chicago's industrial district, Hull-House residents witnessed the degrading misery caused by unemployment. A lecture or an

art exhibit was little consolation to offer a man who could not feed his family. During periods of economic depression, many unemployed immigrant peasants were fleeced unmercifully by private employment agencies. Hull-House residents energetically launched an investigation of the unscrupulous agencies, and threw themselves into a movement to establish free state-controlled employment bureaus and state regulation of private employment agencies.

The lot of the unemployed in the neighborhood of Hull-House was little worse than the circumstances of some of the wage earners. The neighborhood was largely made up of immigrant workers in the garment industry, which was so subdivided that the sewing could be accomplished by unskilled labor. A Hull-House investigation revealed that a widow sewing from six in the morning until eleven at night could earn only enough to feed and clothe her children, while she depended on charity for fuel and rent. The horde of unskilled foreign born laborers enabled the employers to successively lower wages, for many workers were desperate for any job they could find. An investigation of these conditions led the settlement's residents to begin union organization in the Chicago garment industry.<sup>12</sup> Hull-House

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<sup>12</sup>Jane Addams, "The Settlement as a Factor in the Labor Movement," in Hull-House Maps and Papers, by Residents of Hull-House, a Social Settlement, a Presentation of Nationalities and Wages in a Congested District of Chicago, Together with Comments and Essays on Problems Growing Out of the Social Conditions (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1895), pp. 183-204.

moved rapidly away from its original purpose of culturally uplifting the district. This work on behalf of labor is yet another example of activity typical to other settlements.

The ward in which Hull-House was situated had a persistently high death rate. Open garbage boxes filled with decaying fruits and vegetables discarded by Greek and Italian peddlers, along with the normal amount of waste, gave off foul odors which permeated the whole neighborhood. Hull-House residents inaugurated a systematic investigation of the city system of garbage collection in an attempt to discover any possible connection with the death rate. During a two-month period, women residents of the neighborhood who had been organized at the settlement conducted investigations that resulted in one thousand thirty-seven substantiated reports to the health department concerning violations of the existing health ordinances. "In sheer desperation," Jane Addams induced the mayor to appoint her to the post of garbage inspector of the ward.<sup>13</sup> The genteel Miss Addams, who had planned to bring the benefits of art and culture to the depressed classes, found herself following loaded garbage wagons to the dump, taking landlords into court for not providing proper receptacles for garbage, and attempting to get dead animals removed from the street. She discovered that one narrow street, presumed by

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<sup>13</sup>Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House, p. 203.

its residents to be unpaved, actually had pavement which was covered, through years of neglect, with eighteen inches of garbage. Through Jane Addams' efforts, neighborhood garbage collection improved. The Hull-House concern for sanitary conditions was matched by other settlements, both in Chicago and in other major cities.

Jane Addams believed in progressive social legislation in the name of democracy and advocated no drastic change in the American economic system. Because Hull-House was associated with reforms, labor organization, and with various campaigns for factory legislation, the settlement, however, earned a reputation for radicalism.<sup>14</sup> It was openly sympathetic to striking workers during violent labor controversies and thus lost many friends. The decade between 1890-1900 was a period of intense economic discussion, and was in Chicago a period of extensive propaganda for diverse social theories. Socialists, anarchists, and Single-taxers found a forum in "The Working People's Social Science Club" organized at Hull-House, and the propagandists of various theories tried every method of persuasion to convert Hull-House to their doctrines. Addams wrote that a favorite method of attack used by socialists was to tell her that she really was a socialist, but "too much of a coward to say so." At one time a Single-tax

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<sup>14</sup>Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp. 110-111.

advocate fell on his knees before the astonished Jane Addams, begging and praying that "the sister might see the beneficent results it would bring to the poor who live in the awful congested districts around this very house."<sup>15</sup> But the serene woman never wavered from her conviction that a settlement should not espouse any particular doctrine. Hull-House was open to reformers as diverse as Henry George, W. T. Stead, John Dewey, and W. E. B. DuBois.

The residents also became involved in housing reform, studies on truancy, investigations of sewage disposal, and many other activities too numerous to list. They were led, in Jane Addams' words, "from the concrete to the abstract."<sup>16</sup> In their efforts on behalf of their neighbors, Jane Addams and her staff learned a valuable lesson. It is much more effective to prevent disease, immorality, and poverty than it is to cure the victims of these disorders. Their activities necessarily thrust the settlement's workers into the broader sphere of reform on city, state, and national levels. Though no other settlement house gained the distinction accorded to Hull-House, and no other settlement worker gained as great a reputation as Jane Addams, many emulated the success of Hull-House and

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<sup>15</sup>Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House, pp. 54-55.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

actively engaged in the same reform programs which were first sponsored by this organization.<sup>17</sup>

Settlement house leaders throughout the country corresponded with each other in regard to their programs, successes, and failures. Perhaps this continual contact explains the similarities in purpose within the movement. Personal differences and diverse urban conditions explain the dissimilarities. Robert Archie Woods, who was called by one historian "Boston's male Jane Addams,"<sup>18</sup> was one of the many leaders in settlement work with whom Addams had contact. The careers of each of these individuals illustrate both the similarity and the diversity found within this reform endeavor.

Upon graduation in 1886 from Amherst College, young Robert Woods was at loose ends. Though he was deeply religious, he did not want to enter the ministry. Instead, he entered Andover Seminary for graduate work, and there he came under the influence of William Jewett Tucker, who had just introduced a pioneer social science course at the seminary. Tucker emphasized to his students the importance of Christianity in a world confused by industrial problems. He recognized that almsgiving was insufficient in dealing

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<sup>17</sup>For more information concerning Jane Addams' influence, see Allen Freeman Davis, American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 92-109.

<sup>18</sup>Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Area, p. 115.

with human problems in urban areas; to Tucker "The fundamental idea [of the church] was still that of charity, and the whole trend of events was showing the insufficiency of the idea for social reform and advance."<sup>19</sup> In 1891, the professor sent his student, Robert Woods, to observe Toynbee Hall so that Woods would gain the necessary knowledge to begin a similar endeavor in Boston.

While he was in London, Robert Woods visited Samuel Barnett's famous settlement, studied labor organization, and generally acquainted himself with English social movements. He met and talked to W. T. Stead (who had not yet startled the United States with his book, If Christ Came to Chicago) about the social work being conducted in London by the Salvation Army. Woods' encounter with the slums led him to observe that "in London the faces of the poor have the familiar Anglo-Saxon lineaments" which were not often seen in the immigrant slums of the United States. Perhaps the familiar Anglo-Saxon faces moved young Woods as he had never been impressed by the faces of the immigrant poor in America. He wrote that, in London, Americans "are able to see themselves in tatters."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>William Jewett Tucker, as quoted in Eleanor H. Woods, Robert A. Woods: Champion of Democracy (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1929), p. 25. (Hereinafter cited as Eleanor Woods, Robert A. Woods.)

<sup>20</sup>Robert Woods, as quoted in ibid., p. 35.



When he returned to Boston, Woods began a series of lectures which were later published under the title English Social Movements, wherein he informed his readers of the progress in social reforms made by the British and in which he condemned Americans for their hesitancy to move in this direction. He remarked that the American aristocracy was more powerful than the English and that its class system was just as cruel. He scoffed at the idea that working men were better off in the United States than in England. Woods pointed out that English workers had strong unions and worked eight or fewer hours a day. As for the extent of slums, Woods stated that New York had problems in some respects more serious than those of London. "We do not, therefore, any longer need to go over the sea to learn about evil conditions," Woods concluded.<sup>21</sup>

For his own fight against the slums, Robert Woods, at age twenty-six, settled in the South End of Boston as the chief resident of a new settlement, Andover House. Though his religious convictions were undiminished, he found that he increasingly cared less about theological questions as he turned his attention more to social conditions. Like Jane Addams, Woods realized that in predominantly immigrant Catholic or Jewish neighborhoods the settlement lost influence if it had a Protestant religious label. In 1895, Woods changed the settlement's name, which was associated

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 43-44.

with Congregationalist Andover Seminary, to South End House, a name more descriptive of its location. "Let us have aggressive religious propaganda," wrote Woods, "but as long as it is socially devisive, let us keep it separate from certain other noble interests in life."<sup>22</sup>

Beginning with motives similar to those expressed by the residents at Hull-House, Woods and the volunteers in the Boston settlement were soon led in much the same direction as was the Chicago group. During the crushing depression which began in 1893, Woods urged a plan for employment in public works. But he had little sympathy for jobless tramps who would not take jobs created for them. His opinion in this matter did not carry over to his attitudes toward labor interests for, like Jane Addams, he was actively involved in promoting the interests of labor organization.<sup>23</sup>

South End House residents worked for housing reform and other city improvements. Harold Estabrook, a young resident of South End House, made a detailed study of Boston's tenement district which was published in Some Slums of Boston. His book paved the way for giving the Board of Health more powers in condemning tenements. Various other projects of South End's workers involved successful efforts

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>23</sup>Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp. 105-107.

leading to municipal construction of playgrounds, public baths, and parks.<sup>24</sup>

South End's relationship with the city of Boston was generally friendly. Robert Woods and his associates, in their attitudes toward municipal affairs, differed from Jane Addams and the residents of Hull-House. Whereas Addams conducted personal campaigns against corrupt municipal government in Chicago, Robert Woods decided to work with Boston's political bosses, rather than against them. In the biography of her husband, Eleanor Woods explains that "he was soon aware that more was to be gained by providing a working conception of the purposes of city government than by merely 'turning the rascals out'."<sup>25</sup> Apparently, the pragmatic Woods believed he could best help the constituents of his chosen neighborhood by using his own growing political influence to extend city services to the poor.

Another important difference between the founders of Hull-House and South End House may be discerned. Whereas Jane Addams' efforts and sympathies went out to reclaim the most wretched of her neighbors, including prostitutes, drunkards, and paupers, Woods did not care to work with this element. In The City Wilderness, Woods wrote that "no

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<sup>24</sup>Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Area, p. 72.

<sup>25</sup>Eleanor Woods, Robert A. Woods, p. 24.

civilized community undertakes to carry within its corporate life the criminal and the lunatic." He believed that the "social wreckage must be dredged out" of the community and that any other course was hopeless. Only a "laggard social sense" would not have confirmed prostitutes, paupers, and drunkards institutionalized.<sup>26</sup> Woods believed that the degraded element in the district served only to drag down the more numerous element which represented respectable poverty.

Otherwise, South End's program and purposes were almost identical to the practical reform efforts proposed by Jane Addams. Development of facilities for relief of distress, removal of unsanitary conditions, care of neglected children, provision of the means for cleanliness, physical exercise and recreation, and attempts to educate the public concerning the needs of the poor were included in Woods' programs. The City Wilderness, prepared by South End House residents and edited by Woods, was important in educating the public on the settlement's activities and thereby insuring this project, and other forms of social work promoted by Woods, of adequate financial support. This 1898 publication, like Jane Addams' Hull-House Maps and Papers, issued three years earlier, advertised the

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<sup>26</sup>Robert A. Woods, ed., The City Wilderness: A Settlement Study (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1898), pp. 289-295.

settlement and attracted many people who wanted to study urban life.<sup>27</sup>

The differences in attitudes between Addams and Woods are noteworthy, but not unexpected when consideration is made of the fact that each of these early leaders in settlement house work possessed strong personalities. Woods disagreed with his senior in the settlement movement on several occasions.<sup>28</sup> Yet the similarities in activities initiated at the two famous settlements are remarkable and the discrimination in attitudes is only indicative of the fact that settlement houses across the country used various rationales and methods of attacking a common enemy--the evil of city slums.

Differences can be found in the settlement workers' attitudes in matters of race. As Allen Davis points out, settlements were usually located in neighborhoods filled with immigrants and sometimes Negroes. Not all settlement workers were free of prejudice, but as a group the workers

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<sup>27</sup>Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp. 30, 51; Eleanor Woods, Robert A. Woods, p. 135.

<sup>28</sup>Woods believed the relationship between a settlement and its neighbors was an artificial one. In this he disagreed with Addams who believed the settlement was a natural component of the neighborhood. Another dispute between the two involved the settlement's relation to the city. Addams believed the settlement should relate to the whole city, whereas Woods preached the idea of neighborhood revival without regard for the city as a whole. See Davis, Spearheads for Reform, p. 76, and Eleanor Woods, Robert A. Woods, p. 82.

had more tolerance and sympathy for immigrants and Negroes than did most of their contemporaries. Davis states that they probably "erred on the side of sentimentality rather than of bigotry."<sup>29</sup> The prevailing American attitude of contempt for slum dwelling immigrants was taken as a challenge by some settlement workers, most notably Jane Addams. She encouraged immigrants to conserve their native customs, folk songs, and holidays--first as a means of enhancing the foreigners' self-respect, and later as a defense of the immigrants against nativist attacks. On the other hand, Woods favored some restrictions on immigration because he realized that the influx of immigrants was closely related to problems of unemployment and crowded housing.<sup>30</sup>

Not only did Addams oppose the agitation for restrictions on immigration, she was publicly concerned about the plight of Negroes as early as 1892 and was later one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.<sup>31</sup> In contrast to Addams' position on racial issues, one of Woods' associates at

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<sup>29</sup>Davis, Spearheads for Reform, p. 86.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 91-92; John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925 (New York: Atheneum, 1971), p. 121.

<sup>31</sup>Farrell, Beloved Lady, p. 22.

Boston's South End House exhibited racial bigotry typical of the age when he wrote in The City Wilderness that the typical Boston Negro was "low and coarse, revealing much more of the animal qualities than the spiritual."<sup>32</sup> Though a few of the settlements welcomed both white and black guests, most believed it was better to establish separate branch settlements for Negroes. The most important activity on behalf of black Americans (with the exception of the role played by Jane Addams and other settlement workers in the organization of the N.A.A.C.P.) was the sponsorship of investigations and studies concerning the problems of urban Negroes. W. E. B. DuBois, an historian, educator, and Negro leader, conducted in 1899 what became the first and most important investigation of the urban Negro because the need for such a study was noted by a resident at a Philadelphia settlement.<sup>33</sup> Assuming that availability of adequate statistics is a prerequisite of social reform, DuBois' survey and others conducted by settlement workers were at least a small step in the direction toward bringing about better conditions for Negroes.

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<sup>32</sup>Frederick Bushee, "Population," in The City Wilderness: A Settlement Study, ed. by Woods, p. 44.

<sup>33</sup>Davis, Spearheads for Reform, p. 96. See W. E. Burghardt DuBois, The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1967), for the results of that study.

Typical settlement surveys and investigations dealt with specific issues, such as the incomes of certain nationality groups in a given district. Many of the residents also voluntarily engaged in such activities as sanitary inspection of tenements. After completing the studies, the results of their investigations were made known to the public. In his study of poverty in the United States, historian Robert H. Bremner states that the knowledge and understanding which the settlement workers gained concerning the urban masses was the most important single contribution of the settlement movement. The attitudes and understanding of the workers, wrote Bremner, exerted a great influence on both social reform and social work in the twentieth century.<sup>34</sup>

After the Progressive era, most people who engaged in settlement activity thought of themselves as social workers rather than social reformers. The new generation, often graduates of professional schools of social work, looked at settlement work as a job rather than as a way of life. Many of the new generation were the sons and daughters of immigrants, and they preferred to move out of the poor neighborhoods of their childhoods. Professionalization in the field of social work undermined the ideas of the

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<sup>34</sup>Robert H. Bremner, From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States (New York: New York University Press, 1967), pp. 64-66.



early residents who had chosen to remain members of the community. By stripping away the sentimental and emotional traditions which characterized the movement in its young phase, the professional settlement workers lost much of the reforming zeal which had earlier marked settlement work.<sup>35</sup>

Two collaborating historians described an early settlement as "an antidote against social ignorance, inaction, and apathy, an experiment to aid in the solution of the social and industrial problems produced by modern conditions in the great city."<sup>36</sup> By the turn of the century, the settlements' attempt to control what society had created was recognized as being one of the most positive factors in overcoming indifference to the suffering of the poor in great cities. Adna Weber wrote in 1889 in his statistical study on urbanization that the settlement movement was the most promising of all social movements because "it signifies charity in the highest sense--not the selfish opening of the pocket to free oneself from the annoyance of a beggar or to buy entrance into Paradise." Weber believed personal contact between classes was the solution to

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<sup>35</sup> Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp. 231-232.

<sup>36</sup> Morton White and Lucia White, The Intellectual Versus the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright (Cambridge: Harvard University Press and Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1962), p. 150.

indifference.<sup>37</sup> Unlike charity organization society workers of the higher class who paid "friendly visits" to the homes of the poor, settlement residents lived among the less fortunate and learned to know realistically how poverty was not necessarily the effect of personal shortcomings, but was often the result of inequities in society. The movement, which one historian defined as the "conscience of America,"<sup>38</sup> won significant victories in changing Americans' attitudes toward poverty. The followers of Addams, Woods, and others continued some of their activities well into the twentieth century, despite growing professionalization in social work. They were especially important in advocating labor and housing reform during the Progressive era. As late as the New Deal, the settlements were still exerting a strong influence for reform. Harry Hopkins, Frances Perkins, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and Raymond Fosdick were among the prominent New Dealers whose ideals were altered by a term of residence in a settlement house.<sup>39</sup>

Since many involved in this reform were devoutly Christian and most were Protestant, it is easy to lose the

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<sup>37</sup>Adna Ferrin Weber, The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Statistics (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp. 436-437.

<sup>38</sup>Frank J. Bruno, Trends in Social Work, 1874-1956 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), p. 119.

<sup>39</sup>Davis, Spearheads for Reform, pp. 239-245.

distinction between a settlement house and an institutional church, that is, a church which promotes philanthropic and educational work among the poor. As previously noted, however, the most successful settlements divorced themselves from any religious labels. Jews and Catholics, as well as Protestants, entered settlement work. The social, physical, and economic status, rather than the religious condition, of the urban poor was the foremost consideration of the residents. But the urban scene stimulated a social emphasis in American Christianity and promoted reformist efforts outside the churches. Eventually the churches themselves responded to the same stimulus.

## CHAPTER IV

### CHRISTIANITY AND URBAN SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Many Christian churches faced a crisis in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Darwinism struck the first blow. Not all thinking Christians embraced the new scientific theories, but many were subjected to critical discussions of topics never before considered debatable. Adherents of Darwinism seemed to question the account of the creation in Genesis and thus seemed to undermine the authority of the entire Bible. The decade between 1870-1880 witnessed an effort by scientists to reconcile the new biological theories with their religious beliefs. Some came through the crisis believing, as one Darwinist put it, that "evolution is God's way of doing things."<sup>1</sup> This compromise was satisfactory to many men of science. Another threat to Christian orthodoxy, however, was raised by new scholarly and scientific study of the Bible. In the last quarter of the century, Biblical scholars confused the faithful by demonstrating conflicts and contradictions within the Bible itself. Some ministers, such as Washington Gladden, began

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<sup>1</sup>John Fiske, as quoted in Clifton E. Olmstead, Religion in America Past and Present (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 118.

to abandon emphasis on the Bible as an infallible book and began, instead, to emphasize basic Christian truths in terms which would be compatible to the new intellectual currents.<sup>2</sup> In this climate the Social Gospel replaced traditional Christianity in the religious life of many Americans.

It was becoming apparent that American Christianity would survive the scientific revolution when the churches confronted another damaging situation. Numerous social reformers, most of whom were devout Christians, launched an attack on organized religion. They claimed that the churches had forsaken their duties to humanity. The writing of the popular Henry George, designer of the single tax, is an excellent example of such criticism. George, who believed that no other scripture was more cruelly abused than "The poor ye have always with you," attacked complacent churchmen who attributed poverty to God's providence. He asked his reader what sort of God would allow extreme poverty to exist in American cities. Answering his own question, the reformer wrote that the bitter struggle among humans to live, and the vice and crime which grew out of the struggle, were not the result of God's neglect, but they should be

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<sup>2</sup>See, for example, Washington Gladden, Who Wrote the Bible? A Book for the People (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891). In Chapter XIII, "How Much is the Bible Worth," pp. 351-381, Gladden pointed out that the doctrine of Biblical infallibility was doing great harm, especially among educated young people.

attributed to man's violation of God's will. "It is blasphemy that attributes to the inscrutable decrees of Providence the suffering and brutishness that come from poverty," according to the famous reformer.<sup>3</sup>

Henry George was a devoutly religious man who believed that equality in social, economic, and political realms was a religious requirement. His attack on socially conservative Christians was only one among many such criticisms by a growing number of reformers who came to believe that sin was sociological rather than theological. Edward Bellamy, author of the reform novel, Looking Backward, became so dissatisfied with organized religion that he would not attend church and even forbade his family to go.<sup>4</sup> Articles in reform journals, such as Arena, indicted the churches for a laggard social sense.<sup>5</sup> Such writings were instrumental in redirecting the thoughts of many clergymen in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

Not only did social critics find fault with the church, but masses of city dwellers were turning away from

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<sup>3</sup>Henry George, Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Causes of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth--The Remedy (New York: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1971), p. 549.

<sup>4</sup>George E. Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912 (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 25.

<sup>5</sup>T. Parker Edwards, "Social Progress and Spiritual Development," Arena, I (Dec., 1889-May, 1890), 487-489.

organized religion. A survey conducted in 1888 revealed that business, professional, and salaried men, who made up less than 10 percent of the population in Pittsburgh, comprised more than 60 percent of the male membership in Protestant churches.<sup>6</sup> Evidence indicates that workers were becoming hostile to Protestantism. Since Catholic clergymen were somewhat more sympathetic to the cause of the urban laborer, Catholicism did not experience as great a decline in urban areas. But in spite of the fact that the influx of European immigrants increased the Catholic population of the cities, the church lost influence over many of its flock.<sup>7</sup>

Both Protestant and Catholic clergy witnessed the declining influence of organized Christianity within the city and listened to the attacks made by reformists. Was organized Christianity deserving of such criticism and desertion? Henry F. May, author of Protestant Churches and Industrial America, has relied heavily on religious publications in the late nineteenth century to support his statement that "Protestantism presented a massive, almost

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<sup>6</sup>The results of this study are found in Aaron I. Abell, The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943), p. 62. (Hereinafter cited as Abell, Urban Impact on American Protestantism.)

<sup>7</sup>Aaron I. Abell, American Catholicism and Social Action: A Search for Social Justice, 1865-1950 (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1960), p. 90. (Hereinafter cited as Abell, American Catholicism.)

unbroken front in its defense of the social status quo."<sup>8</sup>  
 In their reactions to the problems of the poor, Protestant publications often insisted that poverty was generally deserved, and that its elimination was not only impossible but undesirable. May quotes a passage from an 1874 edition of the Independent, a weekly nondenominational publication, as an example of traditional religious social sentiment:

The poor we have with us always; and this is not the greatest of our hardships, but the choicest of our blessings. If there is anything that a Christian may feel thankful for, it is the privilege of lifting a little of the load of some of his heavily burdened neighbors.<sup>9</sup>

Urban distress was closely related to the recurring labor conflicts of the period. Protestant churches showed little concern for the plight of the working man. Henry Ward Beecher, the most prominent minister of his time and pastor of Brooklyn's Plymouth Church where he drew a salary of 20,000 dollars a year, smugly reassured his well-to-do congregation that "God has intended the great to be great and the little to be little." Trade unions, remarked Beecher, originated under European tradition and were dangerous to American liberty. The minister asserted his belief that wages of a dollar a day were sufficient to support a man if the man did not insist on smoking and

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<sup>8</sup>Henry F. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 91.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 54.



drinking beer.<sup>10</sup> Such sentiment issuing from the lips of the most prominent clergyman in America serves to illustrate why the oppressed classes in the cities cared little to count themselves among the church attendants.

The defense of laissez-faire economics, which was expounded in Protestant pulpits, found great favor among wealthy businessmen.<sup>11</sup> Jay Gould, John Pierpont Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, Cyrus McCormick, Marshall Field, James J. Hill, William H. Vanderbilt, Phillip D. Armour, Gustavus Swift, and many other wealthy industrialists were prominent churchmen and were frequently Sunday school teachers.<sup>12</sup> Since their respective churches often received large bequests from these rich capitalists, it is not surprising that many churches were opponents of reforms that seemed to threaten the established social order. A survey conducted in 1900 revealed, not unexpectedly, that almost unanimously laborers believed that the Protestant church was

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<sup>10</sup>As quoted in James Dombrowski, The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), p. 5.

<sup>11</sup>Those who advocated maintaining laissez-faire principles believed that the owners of industry and business should fix the rules of competition and labor as they pleased without government interference.

<sup>12</sup>Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), pp. 294-295.

administered by and for the rich.<sup>13</sup> In some cases the individual churches actually profited from the poor urban housing situation. Trinity Church in New York, for example, profitably owned some of the worst tenement houses in the city, and in 1887 went to court to avoid having to improve sanitary facilities in the tenements.<sup>14</sup> It appears that many of the Protestant churches richly deserved to be criticized and to be deserted.

Organized religion, though initially blind to the rapid changes in society, gradually responded to the new demands of industrial America. The saloon problem was one of the first manifestations of city evil which received wide attention. As most nineteenth century middle-class church members believed that poverty was well deserved and was the result of imprudence and usually intemperance, they thought that a strike at the saloons was a strike at the very heart of urban social problems. To meet this problem, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.), which later became an important voice in the urban reform movement, was founded in

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<sup>13</sup>The Rev. Charles Stultze sent out a nation-wide questionnaire to inquire why workers did not go to church. The results of this survey are recorded in Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912, p. 25.

<sup>14</sup>Ray Stannard Baker, "The Downtown Church Arraigned: A Study of Trinity--The Richest Church in America, 1910," in The Church and the City, 1865-1910, ed. by Robert D. Cross (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, Inc., 1967), p. 80. (Hereinafter cited as Cross, Church and City.)

1874. According to Arthur Schlesinger, this organization was based on rural sentiment against city saloons.<sup>15</sup> At first, the activities of the W.C.T.U. were aimed at obtaining pledges from the victims of intemperance; but later, because of the high rate of backsliding, the organization devoted much of its energy in an effort to secure prohibition legislation. The activities of the W.C.T.U., under the able leadership of Frances E. Willard, evolved according to the changing mode of thought in the last years of the century. From its original purpose of obtaining pledges, it turned to promoting prohibition, then to founding rescue missions. Willard shifted her approach from one that stressed individual salvation to one that stressed the need to change the environment in order to redeem the individual. Before 1890, the founder of the W.C.T.U. was advocating not only sobriety, but labor reform. She became convinced that social justice, rather than charity or legislative restrictions, would go far toward solving the problems of intemperance victims.<sup>16</sup>

The Protestant supported W.C.T.U. had no counterpart in the Catholic Church during the 1880's and 1890's.

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<sup>15</sup> Arthur Meier Schlesinger, The Rise of the City, 1878-1898 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 353. (Hereinafter cited as Schlesinger, Rise of the City.)

<sup>16</sup> Abell, Urban Impact on American Protestantism, pp. 143-147.

Initially, Catholic churchmen attempted to combat intemperance through moral suasion, but they had little more success in preventing backsliding than did the W.C.T.U. Since Catholics operated many of the saloons in large cities, the Church received a great deal of criticism from Protestants. Catholic leaders decided in 1895 that cooperation with non-Catholic citizens to restrict the evils of intemperance should be undertaken in order to remove the odium inflicted upon Catholicism by Protestants. Not only did some Catholics support prohibition legislation, but several priests threatened to deny absolution in confessional to any of their flock who continued a traffic in liquor or continued as saloon-keepers.<sup>17</sup>

The Salvation Army, an English importation to this country, was one Christian organization that responded quickly to the social problems in large American cities. William Booth, a former Methodist minister who was moved by the suffering he witnessed in London, organized the Army in 1878. The Amos Shirley family, which had recently moved from England to Philadelphia, wrote to Booth and asked him to dispatch members of the Army to the United States. Accordingly, one commissioner and seven women assistants, "Hallelujah lasses," set up American headquarters in Philadelphia in 1880. From its earliest days, social

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<sup>17</sup>Abell, American Catholicism, pp. 127-130.

service was a distinguishing characteristic of the organization whose founder realized that purely spiritual religion had little appeal to cold and hungry men. Booth's plan for social regeneration of slum dwellers in London involved an elaborate plan for extending immediate relief to needy and degenerate men within the city. Food, shelter, and work in a Salvation Army Shelter were first provided; then the men were sent to a rural colony, an industrial farm on a cooperative plan, where habits of self-reliance and resourcefulness were cultivated. When a man was deemed to be free from his old habits and capable of self-support, Booth's plan allowed for the restored man to be shipped to an overseas colony where land would be available. The social scheme appealed to many Americans as a humane method of eliminating the worst features of urban poverty.<sup>18</sup>

The Salvation Army soon spread to every principal city in the United States. The military uniforms, the noisy street meetings, the loud public prayers, and the brass bands used by the Army to attract attention provoked ridicule from numerous American churchmen. Lyman Abbott's early reaction to the spectacle of the Army was probably a typical American clergyman's response. Abbott found the

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<sup>18</sup>Abell, Urban Impact on American Protestantism, pp. 118-121; Charles Howard Hopkins, Rise of Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 155. (Hereinafter cited as Hopkins, Rise of Social Gospel.)

organization to be "against my Puritan tastes, my temperamental reserve." To Abbott, the Army's theology seemed crude, the preaching emotional and pretentious. The street parades and the pious words of Salvation Army workers did not impress the minister. What did impress Abbott was the fact that generally where the organization went saloon habitues and drunken brawls decreased in number. This "outweighed all criticisms of its offenses against taste," remarked the churchman.<sup>19</sup>

Objections to the Army never entirely subsided, but the organization's successes in the cities' slums forced representative Protestants to admit that the Army succeeded in doing what the churches did not or would not do. Army officers organized slum brigades to conduct religious services in halls and saloons, as well as to perform relief missions. Rescue homes for wayward women were established. Orphanages and training schools were opened for homeless children. The colonization scheme successfully settled hundreds of formerly destitute families in western colonies before 1900. Colonization success seemed limited only by the prohibitive expense of the venture.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Lyman Abbott, Silhouettes of My Contemporaries (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1921), p. 155.

<sup>20</sup>Abell, Urban Impact on American Protestantism, pp. 123, 132.

The Salvation Army should not be confused with a church. The organization's founder had little interest in theological concerns; he sought to change human lives. Booth believed that revolt against God was the source of poverty and degradation. By working to relieve the physical needs of the poor, the Army tried to impress sinners with God's love, and thereby to bring about conversion. Booth intended for the organization to work with the churches in certain aspects of their work for which the church organizations were not equipped. He did not intend to create a sect. The Army's success in working with down-fallen individuals stimulated the Protestant churches to adopt their own social programs in order to minister to the religious and physical needs of the poor. In a similar manner, Catholics reassessed their programs among the city poor as a result of the Army's success.<sup>21</sup>

The Army was not a reform oriented organization in the strictest sense of the word. Unlike settlement workers, who also worked directly with the people of the urban slums, Salvation Army personnel did not take their crusades into legislative chambers. Intellectually, the Army staff was not as sophisticated as were the highly educated settlement

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 156-176; Hopkins, Rise of Social Gospel, p. 155; Robert D. Cross, The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1968), pp. 64, 113-114. (Hereinafter cited as Cross, Liberal Catholicism.)

workers. Neither was the Army simply a charitable organization. It not only administered relief, the organization had a real passion for regenerating sinners through religious conversion. Single-taxers and socialists, who criticized the Army for seeking only to alleviate what society ought to cure, did not fully understand the Army's ultimate purpose of curing through individual religious conversion. Economic or political change was irrelevant to the organization.<sup>22</sup> Unlike the W.C.T.U. which gradually adopted the belief that legal measures should be enacted to improve the environment, the Army continued to stress individual conversion.

The Salvation Army was the only Christian organization which existed in some city slum areas. Since many of the older downtown churches had followed the flight of their wealthy congregations to the suburbs, large areas were without churches at all. Historian Arthur Schlesinger verifies the extent to which this desertion occurred by citing figures from contemporary studies of the phenomenon. In the twenty years before 1888, seventeen Protestant churches moved out of a poor district of New York while two hundred thousand people moved into the district during the

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<sup>22</sup>Lyman Abbott explained that the Army's founder was declared to be "untruthful, an exaggerator, an alarmist, a visionary, impracticable, demanding the impossible, seeking to cure the incurable," as well as being denounced by the economic and political theorists. Abbott, Silhouettes of My Contemporaries, pp. 170-171.



same period; between 1878-1888, twenty-two thousand residents of one of Boston's poorer wards had no Protestant church whatsoever; and in Chicago's slum district sixty thousand had neither Protestant nor Catholic church.<sup>23</sup>

Gradually, however, especially in the decade of the nineties, urban churches began to respond to the social, economic, and religious needs of the downtown communities. In 1892, Jacob Riis optimistically commented that the church was finally "coming up, no longer down to its work among the poor."<sup>24</sup> The institutional church was the result of the reintegration of church and community.

Riis' comment referred to the city mission work which had long been a program in many Protestant churches. But missions were mostly relief agencies where charity was distributed to slum occupants who would not have been welcomed in the sponsoring churches. Missions provided a safe way for wealthy or middle-class church members to practice Christian stewardship without moving in close personal contact among the poor. Institutional churches, however, attempted to meet the needs of all in their community. They engaged in many programs similar to those of the settlements; cultural, educational, and social

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<sup>23</sup>Schlesinger, Rise of the City, p. 331.

<sup>24</sup>Jacob Riis, The Children of the Poor (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), p. 286.

functions designed to appeal to the community's occupants were incorporated into church programs, often in costly new buildings constructed specifically for these purposes. St. George's Episcopal Church in New York City, whose minister, William S. Rainsford, desired a community church, was one of numerous institutional churches which experienced remarkable success in adapting the church program to the changing nature of the community. Under his leadership the new church, whose enrollment had dwindled to 200 as its neighborhood became crowded with immigrants, experienced an increase in membership to 4,000. Wealthy members of the church, including J. P. Morgan, contributed to the institution's expanded program of social Christianity.<sup>25</sup>

Most of the institutional churches grew out of Congregational and Episcopal churches of high social standing but with dwindling membership. Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, and Catholics, however, often modified their urban churches to become more responsive to their communities. The renewed social consciousness which prompted the creation of institutional churches led a growing number of clergymen to conclude that the churches should not simply respond to the urban scene,

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<sup>25</sup> Abell, Urban Impact on American Protestantism, pp. 27-29; Cross, ed., Church and City, p. xxxvi. For Rainsford's explanation of how he changed St. George's Church, see W. S. Rainsford, "A New Type of Pastorate: Three Episodes in the Reconstruction of a Downtown Church," in Church and City, ed. by Robert D. Cross.

but should take an active part in reshaping urban society. The Social Gospel reform movement was the outgrowth of this sentiment. As a reformist movement, the Social Gospel may be divided into three related but intellectually diverse categories: the conservative Social Gospel movement, the liberal Social Gospel movement, and the radical Christian Socialist movement. Advocates of each position had in common a desire to promote changes in American society. Spokesmen of these three categories differed in the method and degree of desired change.

Conservative Social Gospel advocates wanted to reshape American urban society, not on any radically new basis but on the basis of pre-industrial American society. Nostalgia for the agrarian past and for the vanished village life led this group of Christian reformers in an attempt to eliminate the processes which had created the city. It will be recalled that Charles Loring Brace, editor of The Dangerous Classes of New York (1872), had advocated resettling city children in the West, and the author had been engaged in this activity for years before 1872 when his book was published. It was still possible to look to the West as the logical outlet for the huddled city masses. But rapid changes were taking place which made Brace's anticipated solution an impossibility. Josiah Strong, a Congregationalist minister who developed intense social

Christian views, shared Brace's distaste for urban life, but he realized that the cities could not be eliminated and were, in fact, a part of the world's progress. Strong proposed, however, that the rate of urban growth was unnatural and should be slowed by restricting foreign immigration.<sup>26</sup>

Strong skillfully used statistics in Our Country (1885) to press his opinion that European immigrants were the source of most of the cities' social and religious ills and that the foreign element was twelve times as much disposed to crime as the native inhabitants. In his indictment of foreigners, he stated that immigrants were "debauching public morals" and bringing "continental ideas of the Sabbath" to the United States. Obviously, Strong believed that immigration restriction would not only slow urban growth rates but would also do much toward improving the spiritual life of the cities. The modern reader can not fail to notice the Cincinnati pastor's nativism and belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority, but evidence indicates that Strong's bias against foreigners was based more on a fear for the future of traditional American Protestant values than on hatred for Europeans. Immigrants clustered in the cities "where moral and religious influences [were]

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<sup>26</sup>Josiah Strong, Our Country, ed. by Jurgen Herbst (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 41-58, 171-186.

peculiarly weak." Many were Roman Catholics, a religion which Strong considered to be a dangerous peril to American Protestantism and thus, by his implication, dangerous to American liberty.<sup>27</sup>

The fact that 130,000 copies of Our Country were sold within five years of its initial publication indicates that Strong expressed convictions sympathetically received by a large number of Americans. More important than the author's stand against immigration was the fact that his book sounded a note of crisis which awakened many ministers to social deterioration in American cities. Writing for the Protestant Home Missionary Society, the reformer urged Protestants to Americanize and to Christianize the urban multitudes. Strong proposed an interdenominational meeting for the purpose of discussing the urban situation in the same year his book was published. Socialism, the indifference of the working classes toward the churches, a Protestant religious program for immigrants, and plans for a religious census were among the topics discussed. The most prominent non-Catholic spokesmen for social Christianity in the nation attended the successful meeting. The conference stimulated the revitalization of the Evangelical Alliance of the United States.

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 54-55, 59-88.

The Evangelical Alliance was organized in 1867 but for twenty years experienced only nominal existence. The Alliance had ignored social reform to fight Roman Catholicism. After the interdenominational congress in Cincinnati, however, the Alliance redirected its purposes to stimulating the conscience of Americans and to closing the chasm between the churches and working men. The organization insisted that the churches deal less with human creeds and more with the needs of men. It revealed religious and social evils, suggested remedies, and stimulated individual churches to work together in arriving at solutions. Seemingly, social Christianity had developed a strong national organization, but Josiah Strong grew impatient with the Alliance when the organization refused to follow his proposal for an ambitious nation-wide program for popular education in social issues. The Congregationalist minister resigned and formed another organization called the League.<sup>28</sup>

The League set as its goal the accumulation of data regarding everything concerning the social betterment of humanity. By 1900, the organization was publishing a monthly journal, Social Service, with a circulation of 37,500. The League's lecture bureau contained fourteen

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<sup>28</sup>Hopkins, Rise of Social Gospel, pp. 113-116, 260-261, 303; Abell, Urban Impact on American Protestantism, pp. 90-117.

hundred slides used by women's clubs, labor unions, charity organization societies, and various churches to demonstrate how their respective communities could be improved. Strong and others in the League lectured widely on the need for public baths, street cleaning, public parks, and churches. In 1902, the League was reorganized as the American Institute of Social Service with similar aims, but with an augmented group of sponsors, including Mrs. Andrew Carnegie, Grover Cleveland, and Woodrow Wilson.<sup>29</sup> The prestigious support given Strong's Institute of Social Service indicates that social Christianity had become a respectable movement by 1902.

Josiah Strong's influence as a theologian who advocated Protestant interdenominational cooperation in social affairs was far-reaching. Theologically progressive, Strong was, however, economically and politically conservative. His sincere desire to Christianize the urban masses was influenced by his fear that city conditions threatened long established American-rural-Protestant values. He proposed no economic changes, nor did he stress any basic political reform. This strain of conservatism in Strong was matched and even surpassed within the Catholic Church.

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<sup>29</sup>Hopkins, Rise of Social Gospel, pp. 260-261.

The majority of reformist Protestants either ignored Catholic social reform efforts or, like Strong, believed that the words "Catholic" and "reform" were contradictory terms. But the American Catholic Church, after all, was the one religious institution which was most vitally affected by the growth of the cities, and its spokesmen were more directly involved with the city poor than were Protestant ministers. Arch-conservatives within the Church continued to believe, as did many Protestants, that spiritual consolations were so great that they justified earthly hardships. As one historian wrote, "to the Catholic conservatives, the most proper response to social difficulties was devout passivity." Individual and church-sponsored charities on behalf of the poor were God-given opportunities to demonstrate Christian virtue.<sup>30</sup> Some socially conscious Catholic churchmen, however, began speaking out for reform at about the same time that social Christianity became a recognizable movement among Protestants.

Conservative Catholic reformers, like their Protestant counterparts, recognized the need to change urban social conditions, but they were unwilling to propose drastic economic or political innovations. The career of John Lancaster Spalding, bishop of Peoria, Illinois, may be

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<sup>30</sup>Cross, Liberal Catholicism, p. 107.



seen as an example of this basically conservative, yet reformist, movement within the Catholic Church. Spalding was depressed by the economic failure and educational limitations of many of the pious Catholic immigrants. He had a tremendous faith in the promise of American life and wanted Catholics to share in the benefits. The bishop published The Religious Mission of the Irish People and Catholic Colonization in 1880, wherein he stressed the desirability of Catholic emigration from the cities to the West. Spalding contrasted the city life, with its higher death, divorce, and illegitimate birth rates, to the idyllic life in the country. Like so many Protestants, Spalding expressed the prevailing belief that authentic America was rural and that urban life was unnatural.<sup>31</sup> After repeated appeals to middle class and wealthy Catholics, Spalding was able to raise 100,000 dollars that were used to colonize urban Catholics on 10,000 acres in Minnesota and 25,000 acres in Nebraska during the early 1880's.<sup>32</sup> Like the Protestant, Charles Loring Brace, Spalding learned that immigration to the West would never cure the ills of urban society.

Spalding shared a number of characteristics with contemporary Protestant churchmen. Not only did he dislike

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<sup>31</sup>John Lancaster Spalding, The Religious Mission of the Irish People and Catholic Colonization (New York: Catholic Colonization Society, 1880), pp. 64-100.

<sup>32</sup>Abell, American Catholicism, pp. 50-51.

the city and idealize the agrarian way of life but he also stressed traditional American values of individualism, hard work, and sobriety. Though he agreed that urban laborers had some legitimate claims against employers, Spalding believed that much of the working man's distress was caused by liquor and laziness. He established parochial schools, but he stressed the importance of secular education to improve the lives of urban Catholics. According to the bishop, secular as well as religious knowledge was a necessity for poor Catholics who hoped to attain the good life in America.<sup>33</sup>

Strong and Spalding each idealized America and were only mildly reformist in their approach to social Christianity. More liberal, though not radical, was another group of socially conscious Christians who stressed the need for basic reforms in order to redeem society and, thus, to cure the ills of industrial America. The liberal Social Gospel movement was inspired by recurring violent labor conflicts during the period, rather than by the existence of urban poverty. Liberal social Christians, however, noted the relationship between these two problems and often blamed urban poverty on the unstable conditions of wage laborers.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Cross, Liberal Catholicism, pp. 40-41.

<sup>34</sup>The best discussion of the labor movement's impact on social Christianity is in May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America, pp. 91-111.

The individual reformers were each to some degree receptive to the ideas of Henry George, and in a similar manner they looked for a viable alternative to political socialism in their search for social justice. The Congregationalist minister, Washington Gladden; the Presbyterian economist, Richard T. Ely; the Baptist minister, Walter Rauschenbusch; and the Catholic priest, Dr. Edward McGlynn, were representatives of this group.<sup>35</sup>

Gladden, Ely, and Rauschenbusch were responsible for aligning Protestant Christianity with the movement for social reform which matured in the Progressive period. Each was urging the churches toward support of reform measures by the decade of the 1890's, though their influence was felt more during the twentieth century. Walter Rauschenbusch, who was practically unknown until after the turn of the century, wrote in 1897 that "one of the special tasks of our generation is the work of wedding Christianity and the social movement."<sup>36</sup> He regretted the fact that political

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<sup>35</sup>Gladden, Ely, and Rauschenbusch each acknowledged George's influence in their writing. See Washington Gladden, Applied Christianity: Moral Aspects of Social Questions (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Company, 1886); Richard T. Ely, Social Aspects of Christianity, and Other Essays (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1889); and Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order (New York: Macmillan Company, 1912).

<sup>36</sup>Walter Rauschenbusch, "The Ideals of Social Reformers," in The Social Gospel in America, 1870-1920, ed. by Robert T. Handy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 274. (Hereinafter cited as Handy, ed., Social Gospel in America.)

socialists were more outspoken on the subject of social justice than were the churches. In the early 1890's, Rauschenbusch joined with other Baptist ministers in the formation of the Brotherhood of the Kingdom, a group which met annually for two decades. The Brotherhood gradually became an interdenominational organization which was dedicated to social Christianity. Its purpose was to achieve the kingdom of God on earth.<sup>37</sup>

A belief in the possibility of developing the kingdom of God, or earthly perfection and harmony among men of all classes, can be detected in the writing of each of these spokesmen for social Christianity. Rauschenbusch, Gladden, and Ely were optimistic in their appraisal of man. Unlike Josiah Strong, who played on the fears of Americans and warned them that society was decaying, this optimistic trio combined scientific evolutionary thought with their religious principles to develop the idea that society could be reformed and regenerated if humanity organized according to the will of God. The kingdom of God on earth would be the ultimate outcome of planned social evolution in a Christian world. These concerned Christians preached, lectured, and wrote numerous books and short articles during the 1890's and throughout the Progressive era, in which they

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<sup>37</sup> Handy, ed., Social Gospel in America, pp. 257-258.

urged Christians to exert their political influence on behalf of reform measures.<sup>38</sup>

Richard T. Ely urged the churches to respond to the commandment that "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The economist believed that following this commandment required Christians to support labor's demands for livable wages and shorter working hours.<sup>39</sup> The American Economic Association, which was founded in 1885 under his leadership, was dedicated to developing legislative policy for addressing social problems.<sup>40</sup> Washington Gladden, whose personality and oratorical eloquence made him one of the most effective interpreters of applied Christianity, spoke out early on behalf of social justice. Like Rauschenbusch and Ely, he called for an application of Christian principles to social problems. He, too, was particularly concerned with the conflicts between capital and labor.<sup>41</sup>

Gladden, Ely, and Rauschenbusch differed from more conservative social Christians in that they perceived a need for a reappraisal of laissez-faire economics. They did not

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<sup>38</sup>The best discussion of the kingdom is found in Hopkins, Rise of Social Gospel, pp. 123-124. Representative lectures and sermons by Gladden, Ely, and Rauschenbusch, many of which are difficult to locate elsewhere, are found in Handy, ed., Social Gospel in America.

<sup>39</sup>Ely, Social Aspects of Christianity, and Other Essays, pp. 1-48.

<sup>40</sup>Handy, ed., Social Gospel in America, p. 180.

<sup>41</sup>Gladden, Applied Christianity: Moral Aspects of Social Questions, pp. 102-149.

disavow capitalism, but each found that socialism had much in common with social Christianity. The Catholic priest, Father Edward McGlynn was also stirred to action by the industrial conflicts that marked the age. McGlynn could not agree with his immediate superior in the Church that poor laboring men should be content in poverty. He happily cooperated with the Knights of Labor in support of Henry George in his campaign for the mayor's seat of New York City in 1886. When the priest persisted in his espousals of Georgism, he was censured, removed from his position in St. Stephen's Church, and eventually excommunicated for insubordination. McGlynn was known to be a friend to the poor in New York, and St. Stephen's Church, under his leadership, had early established agencies to meet the human needs of its poor congregation. Because McGlynn had spent a considerable part of his personal fortune on charitable work, the popular priest's dismissal and excommunication promised to create broad repercussions in the Catholic community. Warned by several priests that McGlynn's dismissal and excommunication would turn the entire labor movement and many of the Catholic poor against the Church, Pope Leo restored McGlynn to his former position. The unrepentant priest continued his campaigns for reform.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>The McGlynn controversy is discussed in Abell, American Catholicism, pp. 31, 64-74, and in Cross, Liberal Catholicism, pp. 119-124.

McGlynn's defiance of Church tradition stemmed basically from the same social Christian urges which had prompted the Protestant Social Gospellers to deviate from traditional Protestant thought. Though a small number of churchmen considered themselves socialists, each of these liberal reformers advocated basic political and economic reforms. None went so far, at least in the nineteenth century, as to embrace political socialism. Few Christians did.

In America, the first Christian Socialist organization grew out of the Boston Nationalist Club which had been inspired by Edward Bellamy's reformist novel, Looking Backward. In 1889, a number of Boston clergymen founded the Society of Christian Socialists, an organization that had more in common with Henry George and Edward Bellamy than with Karl Marx. Most of the nineteenth century Christian Socialists in the Boston organization and in the other cities to which the movement spread maintained close contact with the Bellamy Nationalist Clubs.<sup>43</sup> The Christian Socialists believed that political socialism was the only means by which industrial ills, including the labor situation and urban poverty, could be alleviated in accordance with the teachings of Christ. The prophets of a new order persuaded few Christians to agree with their rejection of American society, and, as Henry F. May has

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<sup>43</sup>Dombrowski, Early Days of Christian Socialism, pp. 95-107.

indicated, some church members were probably repelled from all social Christianity by the radicals.<sup>44</sup> The small and short-lived group that contended that capitalism was inconsistent with Christianity was at the extreme edge of the Social Gospel movement.

Fear that the churches were losing their traditional role in the nation's moral leadership seems to have been the most powerful stimulus to social Christianity. That fear, however, apparently awakened a genuine humanitarian impulse. Many socially conscious Christians abandoned their traditional emphasis on the sins of the individual and redirected their interests toward the sins of society. The result of this change in emphasis was a humanitarian rationale for social reform. By 1900, the victims of rapid urbanization and industrialization had sympathetic friends speaking out on their behalf in some of the nation's most influential pulpits. The espousal of reform by a number of the most articulate clergymen in the nation had great impact on churchgoing people who feared the radicalism of men like Bellamy and George. Growing popular support for social Christianity can be detected in the fiction written between 1880 and 1900. Some of the novels, particularly Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward and Charles M. Sheldon's In His

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<sup>44</sup>May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America, p. 257.



Steps, were perhaps more a stimulus to social Christianity than they were results of the new religious impulse.

## CHAPTER V

### URBAN POVERTY AND AMERICAN NOVELISTS

In his study of the Progressive movement, John Chamberlain states that American novelists were "slow to reflect the altering tempo of life in America." The influence of moralistic Sunday-school fiction persisted long after the horrors of urban living became a reality.<sup>1</sup> However slow the novelists were in beginning to adapt themselves to new realities of American life, the process of change, once begun in the 1880's, accelerated rapidly in the years before the turn of the century. A deep and growing awareness of urban social problems is found in numerous novels, especially those written during the last decade of the century. Several of the books have little artistic merit and have been ignored by literary historians. These novels were, however, read by a large number of Americans, many of whom had never heard of the prominent social theorists. Consequently, the novels were important in

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<sup>1</sup>John Chamberlain, Farewell to Reform: The Rise, Life, and Decay of the Progressive Mind in America (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1932), p. 86. (Hereinafter cited as Chamberlain, Farewell to Reform.)

attracting public attention to urban problems. The character and variety of the books demonstrate that the American masses, as products of the common schools, had become literate though not necessarily discriminating in their taste for fiction.

Novelists, whose works portrayed the decaying cities, were consistent in that they demonstrated a concern for the quality of life in the great urban centers. The writers' techniques vary from the crude simplicity of Horatio Alger, through the wordiness of William Dean Howells, to the irony and stark realism of Stephen Crane. They offer solutions, sound warnings, advocate change, or simply record for the enlightenment of the reader all of the horrors of urban life. Some writers promote or condemn the advantages of various theories and economic philosophies. An increasing number of violent strikes, the depression of the nineties with its consequent increased rate of unemployment, growing disparities between the haves and have-nots--all of these conditions seemed to have an effect upon American writers.

Morton and Lucia White, in The Intellectual Versus the City, observed that, since the Revolution, intellectuals have typically feared the city. Thomas Jefferson's urban bias is well known; Ralph Waldo Emerson remarked that he shuddered when he approached New York; Thoreau fled to the

woods to escape urban life; and Melville, Hawthorne, and Poe all feared that the American city would degenerate into European conditions.<sup>2</sup> It is conceded that many American writers have never been enamored of the characteristics of urban areas, but novelists never expressed so much dissatisfaction with this aspect of society before the 1880's.

The new literature, some of which had an immediate social purpose, not only utilized conventional themes but it also exploited subjects never previously touched by American novelists. Some fiction writers dealt with subjects such as Darwinism, the rising appreciation for science and technology, and environment as a deterministic factor in shaping man's life. Edward Bellamy, William Dean Howells, and Stephen Crane each explored these ideas. Other novelists, such as Horatio Alger and Charles M. Sheldon, did not deviate appreciably from traditional themes in American popular literature. Alger and Sheldon stressed material success, individuality, and morality in their novels. Regardless of the theme, each novelist exhibited an awareness of the city's social problems.

The much read novels of Horatio Alger glorified the theme of material success. Beginning in 1867 and continuing

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<sup>2</sup>Morton White and Lucia White, The Intellectual Versus the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright (Cambridge: Harvard University Press and Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1962), pp. 1-53. (Hereinafter cited as White and White, Intellectual Versus the City.)

until his death in 1899, Alger produced volume after volume of popular novels narrating with few variations how a poor boy with honesty and perseverance can attain fame and fortune. Alger was born in Massachusetts, the son of a Unitarian minister, and was educated at Harvard. He moved to New York in 1866 and devoted himself to a literary career. His account of the life of a New York street boy, Ragged Dick: Or Street Life in New York, brought the author into contact with the superintendent of the Newsboys' Lodging House, the occupants of which inspired numerous Alger tales of boy heroes. The author was quite lonely because of his tragic personal life. As a result, he moved into the Lodging House, befriended the boys, gave them money, and counseled them about moral hazards.<sup>3</sup>

While reading an Alger novel, one is not immediately impressed with any notion that the writer concerned himself with social reform. Yet, in a typical Alger tale, Adrift in New York (1889), the author superficially entertains some of the same ideas which are seriously discussed by Alger's more talented contemporaries. The hero of the book encounters a woman and her child who are starving because they are unable to live on her earnings from taking in

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<sup>3</sup>John Tebbell, From Rags to Riches: Horatio Alger, Jr., and The American Dream (New York: Macmillan Company, 1963), pp. 10-11, 114, 125-126. (Hereinafter cited as Tebbell, From Rags to Riches.)

sewing; the tenement district, in which the hero and heroine are forced to live because of a series of unfortunate circumstances, is considered too pestilent for contact by the more affluent persons in Alger's story; and the saloon is seen as one of the causes of suffering in the city. Perhaps not reforming, but certainly moralizing, Alger places the following words in the mouth of a tenement wretch who is offered a free drink: "No . . . not a drop! It has ruined my happiness and broken up my home! Not a drop!"<sup>4</sup>

Horatio Alger was moved by the plight of the poor immigrant and orphan children with whom he lived in the Lodging House. He was particularly disturbed about the Padrone system, whereby contractors for Italian laborers in America bought boys from their parents in Italy and sent them out on the streets as beggar-musicians. To protest and expose the evils of this system, Alger wrote Phil, the Fiddler about the hard times of such a boy. For publicly speaking out against the Padrone system, Alger was beaten up by thugs.<sup>5</sup> Horatio Alger was one of the first American novelists to concern himself directly with the unfortunate circumstances of the poor in New York.

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<sup>4</sup>Horatio Alger, Jr., Adrift in New York, ed. by William Coyle (New York: Odyssey Press, Inc., 1966), p. 51.

<sup>5</sup>Tebbell, From Rags to Riches, pp. 86-96.

More able writers were soon involved with the urban problems and social ideas with which Alger was concerned. Between 1880 and 1900, there were forty-eight utopian novels written in the United States.<sup>6</sup> This fact alone seems to indicate that many authors were disenchanted with the American political and social system and had idealistic visionary hopes for a more humane social order. Most important, though not first, of the utopian novels of the period was Looking Backward by Edward Bellamy, published in 1888.

Bellamy's book, in some aspects a fanciful romance, is nevertheless one of the most influential novels ever written in the United States. It was accepted for publication by Houghton Mifflin and Company because the publishers believed the book would be successful as summer reading by light fiction lovers. Instead, the novel rapidly became the inspiration of thousands of men and women dedicated to the work of reshaping American society to conform with Bellamy's ideal.<sup>7</sup> The author, just as in the

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<sup>6</sup>Vernon L. Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought: An Interpretation of American Literature from the Beginnings to 1920, Vol. III: The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1927), p. 301. (Hereinafter cited as Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought.)

<sup>7</sup>Benjamin O. Flower, Progressive Men, Women and Movements of the Past Twenty-Five Years (Boston: New Arena, 1914), p. 81 (Hereinafter cited as Flower, Progressive Men); Arthur Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 155. (Hereinafter cited as Flower, Yankee Reformers.)

case of Henry George, found himself in the middle of a national reform movement.

Like many of the reformers mentioned, Bellamy was from an old New England family of clerical background. During a trip to Europe in 1867, he encountered poverty for the first time, was awakened to economic inequality, and thereafter was devoted to social change. Bellamy also shared in common with numerous other reformers a background in newspaper work. But poor health, that eventually led to his death at forty-eight, forced him to give up this work, and he became a free-lance writer.<sup>8</sup>

In the year following publication of Looking Backward, the author commented on the origins of his already famous novel. He explained that he did not intend to make a serious contribution to the social reform movement. "There was no thought of contriving a house which practical men might live in," wrote Bellamy. The book was designed as a "mere literary fantasy, a fairy tale of social felicity."<sup>9</sup> This explanation was contradicted by the author only five years later when Bellamy declared that his purpose was to solve the industrial problems which confronted American

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<sup>8</sup>Erich Fromm, "Foreword," in Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward, 2000-1887 (New York: New American Library, 1960), p. ix. (Hereinafter cited as Bellamy, Looking Backward.)

<sup>9</sup>As quoted in Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, III, p. 303.



society.<sup>10</sup> For whatever purpose the novel was conceived, it is obvious that Bellamy was intensely aware of injustices in the economic and social systems. Whether or not it was intended, Looking Backward is a novel with a social message.

The setting of this famous novel is the Boston of 1887, with all of the squalor and human misery that the socially sensitive author had observed in the city, compared to the Boston of his visionary dream in the year 2000. The hero narrator of the story, Julian West, asleep in 1887, wakes to the new social order in which there are no jails, no criminals, no poor, and no social inequalities. A twenty-first century Bostonian explains to Julian West that the new order was the logical sequence to the monopolistic trends of the late nineteenth century. Larger and larger aggregations of capital competed against each other until only one giant monopoly existed. Control of the monopoly was entrusted to a single syndicate representing the common interests of the people, and the nation was thus organized into one great corporation which replaced all capitalists. Labor strife disappeared; each enjoyed the prosperity made possible by advanced technology; and poverty, crime, and drunkenness ceased to exist under the new system.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Mann, Yankee Reformers, p. 155.

<sup>11</sup>Bellamy, Looking Backward, pp. 52-53.

In interpreting the old order to his curious friends in the Boston of 2000, the hero compares the relationship between the nineteenth century poor and the rich to a coach dragged by the masses of humanity and ridden by a select few passengers. There was intense competition for the pleasant seats and, once established there, the fortunate few passengers had little compassion for the many who dragged the coach. The author's attitude toward wealthy philanthropists and private charity is demonstrated in the hero's explanation that some of the passengers contributed funds for liniment and bandages for the injured toilers but they never got off their seats to help pull the coach over rough spots in the road. Christianity was used by the passengers to exhort the workers to patience and to hold out hopes of compensation in Heaven for their hard lot on earth.<sup>12</sup>

After enjoying the absence of social disorders in the new city, Julian West returns to the slum district of old Boston in a dream. The hero emotionally cries out against what he observes in the city of 1887, where "multitudes of men and women" spend their lives as "one agony from birth to death." Employing some of the same terms that would be used by Jacob Riis when he later wrote How the Other Half Lives, Bellamy's character agonizes over

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-29.

"the piteous crying of the little ones that suckle poverty," the drunken men, and the army of women selling themselves for bread. The hero could hear nothing but the sounds of intolerable suffering.<sup>13</sup> The conditions which prompted this emotional outburst are described numerous times in other socially-oriented novels of this period. The physical proximity of rich and poor, the suffering of children, the drunkenness of men, the hunger of the destitute, and the prostitution of women--all are conditions which attracted the attention of the novelists as they surveyed the urban scene in the late nineteenth century.

Bellamy's novel does not stress Christianity as an answer to society's ills, though it does have allusions to Biblical passages such as Julian West's self-incriminating reflection, "What hast thou done with thy brother, Abel?", when he views the squalor of the tenement district of Boston in 1887. It is actually on the basis of humanity that the author envisions the new order. When the hero of the novel asks for an explanation of individual shares of wealth, he is told, "His title . . . is his humanity. The basis of his claim is the fact that he is a man."<sup>14</sup>

One reason that Looking Backward gained such popularity is that many readers, including many intellectuals,

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 214, 75.

were convinced of the feasibility of Bellamy's ideal society. The novelist was influenced by Darwinism and believed his utopia was forecast in accordance with the principles of evolution.<sup>15</sup> Because Bellamy's ideal seemed to many to be in accord with the principles of science, the author almost immediately found himself a leader in a new movement to effect social reform. Beginning in Boston, Nationalist Clubs based on Bellamy's utopian dreams spread from coast to coast and by 1891 numbered one hundred sixty-one.<sup>16</sup> The Nationalist Club and its magazine, The Nationalist, established as the organ of the movement, had great influence on many of the reformers mentioned in this study. Benjamin O. Flower, in discussing the leading Progressives with whom he had been acquainted, equates Bellamy's Looking Backward with Henry George's Progress and Poverty as important in arousing the American people to the need for reform.<sup>17</sup>

None of William Dean Howells' novels were as popular as Looking Backward. However, Howells enjoyed a long and successful career as a novelist, poet, essayist, editor, and social critic. As a literary critic for Harper's, he

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<sup>15</sup>Bellamy, "Postscript," in ibid., p. 220.

<sup>16</sup>Daniel Bell, "The Background and Development of Marxian Socialism in the United States," in Socialism and American Life, ed., by Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 270.

<sup>17</sup>Flower, Progressive Men, p. 81.

exerted more influence on other American writers than did any other contemporary figure. Born in a small Ohio town and reared in a family involved in the newspaper business and anti-slavery reform, Howells was both attracted and repelled by what he observed in the urban areas in which he spent many of his adult years. Perhaps his family background of rural, journalistic, reformist nature affected the personality of the author of two of the most anti-urban novels produced in this country. The socialist and utopian literature of his contemporaries also influenced Howells. Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin, and William Morris, among the European writers, and Edward Bellamy, Henry George, and Lawrence Gronlund, among Americans, exerted the greatest influence.<sup>18</sup>

During the 1880's, Howells became increasingly concerned with the economic and social maladjustments he witnessed. His social conscience gradually began to register the concern which transformed him from a detached observer of the American scene into an ardent reformist. Howells had been disturbed at least six years before he published his most important economic novel, A Hazard of New Fortunes (1890). In a letter to his father, the novelist

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<sup>18</sup>Harvey Wish, Society and Thought in Modern America (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1952), p. 17; Clara M. Kirk and Rudolf Kirk, William Dean Howells (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1962), p. 25; White and White, Intellectual Versus the City, p. 108.

expressed his uneasiness about the disparity between the wealthy of Boston's Beacon Street and the squalor nearby. "How unequally things are divided in this world," he mused.<sup>19</sup> Howells had already begun to observe the same factors in Boston which influenced Bellamy to write Looking Backward.

Throughout his long career, the author became increasingly disenchanted with the two cities with which he was most familiar--Boston and New York. Ironically, however, Howells often found the cities fascinating. In A Hazard of New Fortunes, an excellent example of the writer's ambivalence toward cities, Howells did not yet express the absolute disgust with the American city which is apparent in his later utopian romance. According to Morton and Lucia White, the novelist still found large cities attractive enough to reform.<sup>20</sup> Howells left Boston in 1889 for New York, the setting for his novel. There he began to study the urban social structure consisting of the old and the new rich, the professional and middle classes, the poor and the immigrants.<sup>21</sup> Though he was tolerant of the middle

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<sup>19</sup>Letter, William Dean Howells to William Cooper Howells, August 10, 1884, as quoted in Kirk and Kirk, William Dean Howells, p. 105.

<sup>20</sup>See the chapter, "Ambivalent Urbanite," in White and White, Intellectual Versus the City, pp. 95-116, for an explanation of Howells' mixed feelings toward Boston and New York.

<sup>21</sup>Mann, Yankee Reformers, p. 149.

class and the business man, and even somewhat understanding of the new rich, his sympathy was with the poor and the immigrants.

Within the course of the novel, Howells gives expression to the social thoughts from members of the various levels of New York society. Basil March, the primary figure, is an editor who has been enticed to leave Boston for New York to take the editorship of a new magazine. While searching for an apartment, March and his wife accidentally find themselves in a poor section of the city. After viewing a man eating garbage from the pavement, Mrs. March expresses shock that anyone should need help so badly. Her husband replies, "Such things are possible everywhere in our conditions!" The genteel, middle class Marches are not unmoved by the misery they witnessed. Rather, they simply have no answer, other than to place a coin in the starving man's hand. A sense of complicity, however, haunts Basil March.<sup>22</sup>

The fair-minded Marches become involved in a violent labor dispute. The crisis of Howells' sad novel, a strike of streetcar workers, is actually based on a New York City strike in January and February, 1889, the year in which the book was written. Howells, who had made a famous defense in

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<sup>22</sup>William Dean Howells, A Hazard of New Fortunes (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1952), p. 73.

Harper's of the Chicago anarchists after the Haymarket Riot of 1886, followed the events of the New York strike carefully.<sup>23</sup> The result, as demonstrated in the philosophy expressed in this novel, was that Howells sympathized with the oppressed group. Basil March, the fictional editor in the novel, sides with the workers.

George Warren Arms, in an introduction to A Hazard of New Fortunes, suggests that the German socialist, known simply as Lindau in the novel, is the spokesman of Howells' beliefs.<sup>24</sup> Undoubtedly, some of the author's perceptions and distaste for inequality were expressed by the violent Lindau. Basil March, however, seems best to represent the thoughts of the author. March comes very close to expressing the genteel novelist's own attitude when he muses that, "somehow it ought to be a law . . . that if a man will work he shall both rest and eat."<sup>25</sup> Howells was too devoted to his literature to become a member of the Socialist party.

If there is a hero in Howells' book, it must be Conrad Dryfoos, the idealistic and religious son of a wealthy capitalist. Denied by his father the opportunity to

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<sup>23</sup>George Warren Arms, Introduction, ibid., p. xiii.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. xiv.

<sup>25</sup>Howells, A Hazard of New Fortunes, p. 486.



become a minister, Conrad comes to work for March hoping that the magazine can "do some good" by making the "comfortable people understand how the uncomfortable people live." March, the editor, had thought of the magazine in terms of "doing good" only through uplifting the peoples' tastes. Because of his concern with the oppressed of the city, Conrad joins one of the Episcopalian institutional churches of the city. His sympathy for the poor leads him to take part in the streetcar strike in which he loses his life for his efforts on behalf of the strikers.<sup>26</sup>

There are no villains in New Fortunes. Howells allowed spokesmen of every class to logically defend their position. Neither are there proposals for any remedies to the "economic chance-world" described in the sad novel.<sup>27</sup> Though the author demonstrates his awareness of social problems, he does not crusade for economic change. Such is not the case in his later novel, A Traveller from Altruria (1894). During the four years that lapsed between publication of these two volumes, Howells became a member of Bellamy's Nationalist Club in Boston, referred to himself as a Christian socialist, and advocated a return to the beliefs of primitive Christianity.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 72-73.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>28</sup>Kirk and Kirk, William Dean Howells, pp. 131-132.

A Traveller from Altruria was written during the worst depression the nation had experienced. In the utopian romance, Howells delivers a merciless broadside attack on the American system of capitalism which he believed was responsible for the fact that four million men walked the streets in search of work. The author also deals fairly with the businessmen in the novel, allowing them to defend the system in logical terms. The visiting Altrurian's society, being in line with Christian socialism, however, is always shown to be the morally superior system.

Howells, like Bellamy, utilizes the contemporary fascination with Darwinism to demonstrate that Altruria is not only morally superior to American capitalism but its basis is also scientifically sound. Speaking of the social system in Altruria to his curious American listeners, the visiting Aristides Homos describes "the Evolution" as a period in which capitalism died and the ideal socialist "Commonwealth" emerged.<sup>29</sup> One literary historian, Vernon L. Parrington, classifies Howells as a Marxian Socialist.<sup>30</sup> The novelist describes his ideal, however, as being accomplished, not by class warfare or revolution, but through gradual evolution to a state of democratic socialism based on Christian principles.

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<sup>29</sup>William Dean Howells, A Traveller from Altruria (New York: Sagamore Press, 1957), pp. 185-189.

<sup>30</sup>Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, III, pp. 244-247.

Although the action of the novel takes place at a resort in the woods of New Hampshire, and there are none of the miserable city scenes depicted in the earlier novel, A Traveller from Altruria is, nevertheless, more anti-urban. From Aristides Homos, the visitor from Altruria, comes a scathing description of cities during the capitalistic period which he calls "the Accumulation." The cities "were not fit dwelling-places for men, either in the complicated and luxurious palaces where the rich fenced themselves from their kind," or in the tenements, "where the swarming poor festered in vice and sickness and crime!" In the ideal Altrurian commonwealth, portions of the old cities are maintained by antiquarians and moralists only "for the admonition it affords." Howells was so dissatisfied with cities by the time he wrote the novel that his ideal social order has none. Instead, there are capitals in each region of Altruria, clean and quiet areas which enclosed universities, theatres, galleries, museums, and laboratories, easily accessible to the villages in which the Altrurians reside.<sup>31</sup>

The last two decades of the nineteenth century provoked a number of utopian literary adventures, but, aside from Bellamy, Howells, and Ignatius Donnelly, the authors

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<sup>31</sup>Howells, A Traveller from Altruria, pp. 188-189.

are not well remembered. Looking Backward and A Traveller from Altruria are the most important of the utopian books, but Ignatius Donnelly's novel, Caesar's Column, is also worthy of examination to determine his interest in urban social conditions.

Ignatius Donnelly is best known not as a novelist, but as a highly vocal Populist. The Philadelphia lawyer, who had made a fortune in Minnesota land, had a passion for social justice and conceived of himself as the champion of the have-nots against the haves.<sup>32</sup> As author of the Preamble to the Populist Party platform of July, 1892, Donnelly spoke pointedly and emotionally concerning the ills of America. He lamented the fact that urban workmen were not allowed to organize and that this situation bred "the two great classes--tramps and millionaires." Embodied in Donnelly's speech are several characteristic aspects of Populist thought: a dislike of immigrants, an insinuation that some great conspiracy is at work to rob the people, and an attempt to wed the woes of the urban workers to those of the troubled farmers by suggesting that the United States was proceeding to produce only two classes--the very rich

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<sup>32</sup>Martin Ridge, Ignatius Donnelly: Portrait of a Politician (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); Walter B. Rideout, Introduction to Ignatius Donnelly, Caesar's Column (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), p. ix. Vernon L. Parrington dismissed Donnelly as a "crank." See Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, III, pp. 244-247.

and the very poor.<sup>33</sup> Donnelly's fears of a trend toward an absolute and rigid class structure were projected one hundred years into the future.

Caesar's Column was written in 1889, the year after the publication of Looking Backward. Walter B. Rideout, in an introduction to a reprint of the novel, suggests that Donnelly was trying to cash in on Bellamy's fame.<sup>34</sup> Though the novel never reached the popularity of Bellamy's book, Caesar's Column was a best seller. The Populist author chose New York, with all its technological wonders of the future, as the setting for his melodramatic fiction. The urban slums, the debased workers, the unemployed, the wealthy capitalists--all highly concentrated in one area--had an ominous fascination for the agrarian reformer who, like other Populists, distrusted and feared the big city.<sup>35</sup>

Though often categorized as a utopian novel, Caesar's Column actually depicts an anti-utopia. In the future hell with which the novel is concerned, urban workers have evolved to a mongrel race of amoral, miserable degenerates completely dominated by the immoral Jewish capitalists. The brutality of the plutocracy is so complete

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<sup>33</sup>Donnelly, Preamble to Populist Party Platform, reproduced in Arms, "Introduction" to Donnelly, Caesar's Column, p. xi.

<sup>34</sup>Arms, "Introduction" to Donnelly, Caesar's Column, p. xvii.

<sup>35</sup>John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), pp. 162-164.

that only a worldwide violent upheaval can displace the elite, inevitably resulting in the destruction of civilization. The future catastrophe is the result of the unchecked economic trends in the late nineteenth century which Donnelly witnessed and warned against the outcome. The future proletarians' existence is an "endless, mirthless, hopeless round" until the time of their death when their bodies are carted off to furnaces and consumed by flames "even as their lives have been eaten up by society."<sup>36</sup>

Donnelly's contempt for Social Darwinism is made strikingly obvious by his chapter entitled "A Sermon of the Twentieth Century," wherein the author allows a fictional minister to use all of the conventional Social Darwinist ideas to "justify" scientifically the horrors the author forecasts. The minister's arguments are made to sound ridiculous, cruel, and un-Christian.<sup>37</sup> It is likely that thousands of Donnelly's readers compared and equated the "Sermon of the Twentieth Century" to the writings of William Graham Sumner.

According to historian Richard Hofstadter, this story of the destruction of civilization by the debased worker whom society had brutalized, is a frightening glimpse

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<sup>36</sup>Donnelly, Caesar's Column, pp. 40-41.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 178-190.

into the ugly potential of frustrated popular revolt. Issuing from the angry Populist at a time when apocalypse seemed entirely possible to many Americans, the frightening warning of what could become reality became one of the most widely read books of the 1890's.<sup>38</sup> Whereas Bellamy and Howells made positive attempts to demonstrate what was possible with controlled sociological evolution, Donnelly negatively warned his readers about the dangers of social inaction.

Not all novelists were as sympathetic to the urban poor as were Bellamy, Howells, and Donnelly. Paul Leicester Ford, an historian who tried his hand at writing a novel, exhibits a more conservative opinion of the poor classes. In The Honorable Peter Stirling and What People Thought of Him (1894), Ford describes the tenement district of New York, but there is no indication that the capitalistic system is responsible for the situation. Private philanthropy and well meaning political bosses, not dreamy visions of the future, are seen as saviors of the poor.

The fictional Peter Stirling is said to be patterned after the early life of Democrat Grover Cleveland.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York: Random House, 1955), pp. 67, 70.

<sup>39</sup>Chamberlain, Farewell to Reform, p. 90. Ford is the author of biographies of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. He also edited the writings of Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. "Ford, Paul Leicester," Who Was Who: 1897-1915, 1962, I, 252.

Stirling is a political "boss," but he is depicted as a courageous man who works with the poor of the city to better their lot. The hero's solution to the sociological illness of poverty is a greater dose of capitalism: banks which offer loans to the out-of-luck poor and loans made carefully to the "deserving" so that the interest more than pays for the occasional loss. Even though Ford's hero in the novel expresses social ideas which would have been thought hopelessly immoral, antiquated, and conservative by reforming novelists, the author did, nevertheless, address himself to many of the same problems, particularly in relationship to the environment of slum children.

Ford's hero first gained political notice in a crusade against the producers of contaminated milk who were responsible for many deaths of tenement children. Stirling's concern for the young does not diminish throughout the novel. Though the hero politician does not think charities do much good, it is different with the children who "don't feel the stigma and are not humiliated or made indolent by their help."<sup>40</sup> Apparently, the author, like Charles Loring Brace, Robert A. Woods, and many other social reformers, could not ignore the plight of the young. Ford expressed condescension and obvious distaste for the older

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<sup>40</sup>Paul Leicester Ford, The Honorable Peter Stirling and What People Thought of Him (Ridgewood, N.J.: Gregg Press, 1968), p. 259.



inhabitants of the tenements in such observations as "how little the really poor care for their offspring."<sup>41</sup>

The decade of the nineties, which witnessed the publication of utopian stories and political novels such as Ford's The Honorable Peter Stirling, also produced fictional "sermon" literature that was addressed to the urban situation. The sentimental In His Steps by Charles M. Sheldon is a Social Gospel novel which eventually sold thirty million copies in twenty languages.<sup>42</sup> The overwhelming popularity of this ministerial fiction demonstrates the wide public interest in a Christian solution to social problems. It is the most important book in an avalanche of fiction promoting the Social Gospel.

Charles M. Sheldon knew poverty and unemployment from close observation. A Congregational minister, Sheldon experienced deep emotion when he first encountered urban misery in his move to Topeka, Kansas, from Vermont. He spent a week disguised as an unemployed laborer looking for work. Based on his experiences, Sheldon wrote a series of novels depicting Christianity as the solution for social ills. The best known of these novels, In His Steps,

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>42</sup>Charles M. Sheldon, In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do? (Chicago: John C. Winston Co., 1937). The figures concerning the book's sales are found on an anonymously written fly leaf covering this edition.

presents the story of a town in which various leaders consider all their actions for a year on the basis of the question, "What Would Jesus Do?" The movement eventually spreads to Chicago where a meeting is held in which a socialist, a trade unionist, and a single tax advocate all express their views. All programs appear superficial in comparison to the reform and redemption which, according to Sheldon, only Christ's influence can bring.<sup>43</sup>

The economically comfortable characters in Sheldon's book are called upon to give up the complacent Sunday religion which has characterized their earlier lives. Individually, they engage in revival movements among the tenements, campaign against the saloons and political bosses, live among the poor, and buy slum property for redevelopment. Each who chooses to follow in His steps attempts to convince city tenement dwellers that Christ will make their lives magnificent. Social and economic problems diminish as the influence of Christ increases.

According to Sheldon, the influence of Jesus will solve all the ills of urban society. In delivering this simple Christian message, the author unwittingly allows tell-tale clues of his conservative Puritan heritage to permeate the novel. Sin is closely related with poverty. Concerning the religious conversion of some of the poor,

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 251-263.

Sheldon speaks of the miraculous "transformation of these coarse, brutal, sottish lives into praying, rapturous lovers of Christ." He describes men out of work as "wretched creatures who had lost faith in God and man, anarchists and infidels, freethinkers and no-thinkers." The "decent" professionals, members of the middle and upper classes, must rescue the wretches of the tenements and see to it that the temptation of the saloon no longer continues to wreck their lives. Sheldon's economic conservatism is obvious. The wealthy businessman who asks himself "What Would Jesus Do?" with all of his money decides that Jesus would regard himself as a trustee of the funds "to be used for the good of humanity."<sup>44</sup> Andrew Carnegie could not have been more explicit in describing his own benevolent practices. Certainly Sheldon was no socialist.

Stephen Crane's first novel, Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (1893), was not read by as many people as In His Steps, nor was it as influential as Looking Backward. Nevertheless, Crane, the son of a minister and a mission house charity worker, gave a somber fictional account of slum degeneracy which was unmatched by any of his novelist contemporaries. Maggie is a story about a helpless, essentially honest, but lonely young woman of the New York tenements who ultimately becomes a prostitute and drowns

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

herself. The scene of the novel is the Bowery, where Crane had worked as a newspaper reporter.<sup>45</sup>

The stark realism with which Crane describes the brute struggle for existence in the Bowery shocked Victorian readers. The realism is enhanced by the author's able use of street dialect. Such expressions as "damn," "curse yeh," and "Ah, what d'hell" made the novel appear profane to some and is probably why Crane experienced great difficulty in finding a publisher.<sup>46</sup> The theme of a girl who is brought to ruin and who destroys herself was not, however, an original or shocking one. The minister, Charles Loring Brace, included in his famous book, The Dangerous Classes of New York, a drawing of a street girl about to end her sinful life with a plunge into the river.<sup>47</sup> What was offensive to Crane's readers was not the sentimental plot in Maggie, but the unsentimental style of the author.

Maggie is depicted as a girl who "blossomed in a mud puddle."<sup>48</sup> Crane describes her family life in a tenement

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<sup>45</sup>Robert W. Stallman, ed., Stephen Crane: An Omnibus (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. 4-10. Crane is best known to modern readers for his Civil War novel, Red Badge of Courage, first published in 1896.

<sup>46</sup>Robert W. Stallman, Stephen Crane: A Biography (New York: George Braziller, 1968), p. 69.

<sup>47</sup>Charles Loring Brace, The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years' Work Among Them (3rd ed. with Addenda; New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, Publishers, 1880), p. 123.

<sup>48</sup>Stephen Crane, Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (New York: Washington Square Press, 1960), p. 16.

house in such a way that his reader can not fail to note the effects of a slum environment. In a note to his friend Hamlin Garland, Crane wrote that his novel was intended to show "that environment is a tremendous thing . . . and frequently shapes lives regardless."<sup>49</sup> Yet Crane refuses to preach and there is no moral, message, or lesson in Maggie. The author thought that preaching is fatal to literature. The novelist's responsibility, according to Crane, is to offer "a slice out of life" and if there is any moral lesson in it, "I let the reader find it out for himself."<sup>50</sup>

Crane might have entertained thoughts that his novel would serve the cause of social reform. He sent copies of Maggie to a number of reform-minded ministers in New York, but they all ignored the book.<sup>51</sup> The fact that Crane expresses an obvious distaste for ministers in Maggie may account for their neglect. A minister passed Maggie on the streets. The troubled and abandoned girl, remembering mission sermons about the grace of God, timidly approached this man whose "eyes shone of good will." He "made a convulsive movement and saved his respectability by a

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<sup>49</sup>Letter, Stephen Crane to Hamlin Garland, 1893, in Stallman, ed., Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, pp. 594-595.

<sup>50</sup>Letter, Stephen Crane to John N. Hilliard, 1897, in ibid., pp. 595-596.

<sup>51</sup>Stallman, Stephen Crane: A Biography, p. 79.

vigorous sidestep." The author demonstrates his low opinion of mission workers in the scene where the girl's mother is informed of Maggie's death. A woman dressed in a black gown rushed into the mother's apartment and gushed, "her [Maggie's] life was a curse an' her days were black, an' yeh'll fergive yer bad girl? She's gone where her sins will be judged!" The noisy woman's vocabulary, remarks the author, "was derived from mission churches."<sup>52</sup>

For a while Stephen Crane lived in the Bowery and studied life as it existed there. His grim description of tenement life in Maggie and his sad portrayal of homeless tramps in a later short story, "An Experiment in Misery," leave no doubt that the novelist's sympathy was with the unfortunate. His refusal to moralize within his stories does not deny that Crane was interested in the cancerous urban problems which disturbed his contemporaries. Robert W. Stallman, Crane's biographer, states that the young novelist's social philosophy was identical to that of Howells. Another writer indicates that Crane was a socialist.<sup>53</sup> Whether or not he embraced socialism, Crane concerned himself with the same subject matter which socialist and non-socialist reformers depicted. He studied,

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<sup>52</sup>Crane, Maggie: A Girl of the Streets, pp. 57, 64.

<sup>53</sup>Stallman, ed., Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, p. xi; Austin M. Fox, in "Introduction" to Crane, Maggie: A Girl of the Streets, p. x.

recorded, and passed on to his readers heartbreaking descriptions such as that of a downtrodden "wretch" who "cries with an impersonal eloquence, with a strength not from him, giving voice to the wail of a whole section, a class, a people."<sup>54</sup> Crane obviously concluded that sin and misery were sociological, not theological.

Young Stephen Crane died in 1900 at the age of twenty-eight. He was not alone in the new generation of writers who were fascinated by, yet disapproved of, urban America. The early years of the new century witnessed the development of other writers who were aware that urban America was not living up to American ideals. Theodore Dreiser's first novel, Sister Carrie, appeared in 1900. Frank Norris had published his San Francisco novel, McTeague, the previous year, but his more socially conscious novel, The Octopus, did not appear until after the new century had begun. The naturalistic novels of Crane, Dreiser, and Norris form a separate category of fiction which stands between the protest novels of the late nineteenth century and the muckraking novels of the Progressive period.

Novelists did contribute, to some extent, to the nineteenth century movement for urban social reform.

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<sup>54</sup>Stephen Crane, "An Experiment in Misery," in Stallman, ed., Stephen Crane: An Omnibus, p. 34.

Perhaps Horatio Alger's novels aroused curiosity about city slum life but, except for his role in fighting the Padrone system, his influence on social reform was small. Edward Bellamy experienced remarkable success with Looking Backward, and the extent of his influence on the reform movement is well documented. The importance of his novel is that it stimulated many Americans to envision a future free of social disorder. Ignatius Donnelly's Caesar's Column sounded an impressive warning of the dire consequences of inaction to his contemporaries, while Paul Leicester Ford's The Honorable Peter Stirling was added to the tide of literature concerned with urban poverty. Ford's novel suggested that political action could be addressed to social problems. In His Steps, by Charles Sheldon, treats urban poverty as a religious problem and, thus, the influence of the popular work was limited primarily to its impact on the Social Gospel. Although Maggie is a powerful comment on urban poverty and the book demonstrates the compassion of Stephen Crane, the author's early death prevented him from exerting significant influence on the reform movement. Crane's work is more representative of the new generation of writers who gained prominence in the twentieth century than it is representative of nineteenth century reform literature. Yet, the publication of Maggie demonstrates that, by the 1890's, slum life was being subjected to ever increasing attention and analysis.



As Crane is representative of a new generation, William Dean Howells, among the novelists, may be considered most representative of reformers in the period 1880-1900. Howells experienced changes in his economic and political outlook which reflect the social unrest of his generation. He was no born rebel; few of the reformers were. But after observing the misery that surrounded him in Boston and New York, Howells became uncomfortable and, perhaps because of his own secure position, he experienced a sense of complicity. "Let fiction cease to lie about life," wrote the disturbed dean of American letters.<sup>55</sup> Howells became increasingly involved in social criticism and his fiction was added to a growing number of reform publications.

Clarence Darrow, the liberal attorney who would later become famous for his role in the Dayton, Tennessee, "monkey trial," wrote what is perhaps the most telling expression of the new spirit in late nineteenth century literature. Darrow remarked in 1893 that the greatest artists of the world look on life as it exists, both its beauty and its horror. They relate facts "that cause humanity to stop and think"; and the artists ask why some "should toil and spin, should wear away their strength and

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<sup>55</sup>William Dean Howells, as quoted in Kirk and Kirk, William Dean Howells, p. 125.

lives, and the rest may live in idleness and ease."<sup>56</sup>

Darrow, already a controversial figure years before his dramatic role in Dayton, did not speak for the majority of Americans in 1893. Socially sensitive novelists and others who wanted "humanity to stop and think" encountered strong resistance to reformist measures.

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<sup>56</sup>Clarence S. Darrow, "Realism in Literature and Art," in Neil Harris, ed., The Land of Contrasts, 1880-1901 (New York: George Braziller, 1970), p. 286.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONSERVATIVE RESPONSE TO  
REFORM AGITATION

It would be a mistake to assume that all, or even most, thoughtful Americans in the late nineteenth century believed that a massive reform movement was necessary to cure the ills of modern industrial society. The growth of large urban areas and the human problems which existed in these areas could not easily be ignored, but they were condoned by a large segment of the American public. In spite of two decades of agitation and the popularity of some reformers, the American intellectual climate did not take an abrupt about-face. Vestiges of conservatism remained even among the most outstanding advocates of reform. Josiah Strong, for example, spoke convincingly for urban reform because he was fearful that traditional American values were endangered in the cities. He did not speak of progress in order to alter social values. Many of the changes which the theologian advocated were intended to restore the old American social order which was Protestant and agrarian.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Josiah Strong, Our Country, ed. by Jurgen Herbst (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963).

It is apparent that the word "progress" had different connotations. Most patriotic Americans wanted progress, but they differed on what improvements could, or should, be made and why they should be undertaken.

Radical reformers like Lawrence Gronlund, Henry George, and Edward Bellamy wanted to alter drastically the American economic and political systems. This group, however, was a small, though highly vocal, minority. The growth of industrial problems warranted attention and the extremists attracted a considerable following, but even a peaceful revolution was not forthcoming. The fleeting popularity of Bellamy and George, however, served the reformist cause well. Fear of revolution, rather than a desire for revolution, conditioned many Americans to accept the orderly changes made within the American political system in the Progressive era.

Advocates of the status quo became apologists for laissez-faire capitalism during the onslaught of reformers' attacks. The United States had assumed a position of economic leadership in the world by 1900 and most Americans were proud of their nation's industrial progress.<sup>2</sup> Reformers such as Henry George and Edward Bellamy suggested that progress accompanied by increasing poverty was a

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<sup>2</sup>Henry Nash Smith, ed., Popular Culture and Industrialism, 1865-1890 (New York: New York University Press, 1967), p. xiv.

paradox which must be corrected. Their suggested corrections undermined, or seemed to question, the very system by which this progress had been achieved. Most Americans, many of whom believed in their nation's moral superiority, were not willing to abandon their traditional belief in capitalism and individualism to embrace plans which seemed to be flavored with "alien" doctrines. The reformers seemed to attack the system of values which Americans cherished and believed to be based on natural law or intent of the Creator. Inevitably, economic reformers created a climate receptive to a reasoned, or at least appealing, defense of the established order.

Traditional American economic values centered on the doctrine of individualism, which implies that the common good will best be served if each individual pursues his self-interest with minimal interference. This philosophy was admirably suited to freedom-loving rugged individualists in the frontier stages of American history. Businessmen argued that to preserve individualism a free market is necessary. A free market theoretically guarantees that the demand, supply, and price of goods will work themselves out with little or no interference by government.<sup>3</sup> The bitter

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<sup>3</sup>Walter Friedlander, Introduction to Social Welfare (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 94; Harold L. Wilensky and Charles N. Lebeaux, Industrial Society and Social Welfare (New York: Free Press, 1965), p. 33.

labor struggles and periods of extensive unemployment in the late nineteenth century demonstrated that the governmental policy of non-interference did not guarantee proper adjustments. Nevertheless, to proposals for corrective legislation, conservatives replied that governmental tampering in economic or social matters could only damage society. This defense of the status quo was used to prevent regulation of business operations and to prevent labor reforms. The glorification of individualism was also used as an argument against government sponsored, humanitarian reforms. The defense against reformers who asked for legislative changes in the name of urban social reform was often based on ideas popularized by the English philosopher, Herbert Spencer.

Even before the appearance of Darwin's The Origin of Species (1859), Herbert Spencer had developed the phrase "survival of the fittest." Spencer's evolutionary ideas, expressed in Social Statics (1850), were optimistic; society would eventually evolve into a state of maximum human happiness without governmental interference on behalf of any group. The state, therefore, must not interfere in social processes. Included among the restrictions on the power of the state were warnings that it must not assist the poor, improve sanitation, maintain schools, or minister to the public health. The poverty of the incapable, the distresses

that come upon the imprudent, and the starvation of the idle are the decrees of a large, far-seeing benevolence that kindly brings to early graves the children of inferior parents, and singles out the low-spirited, the intemperate, and the debilitated. Governmental interference in this benevolent process would not only endanger the future of society but it would also punish the hard-working man who must be taxed to support the good-for-nothing.<sup>4</sup>

Spencer's social thoughts seemed to have the ring of truth in the latter decade of the nineteenth century. Many of the "incapable" did starve and even more of their children went to early graves. Should mere man or his government meddle in the natural order of things simply to perpetuate inferiority? Far better to let nature take her course toward the eventual betterment of society. To many who accepted Darwin's later theories of biological evolution as probable truth, it seemed that all science verified Spencer's teaching. Attempts to remedy human distress were, therefore, folly.

The economist and sociologist, William Graham Sumner, enthusiastically took up Spencer's theories and

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<sup>4</sup>Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1893), pp. 144-187; 334-375. For a thorough discussion of Spencer's influence, see Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (rev. ed.; New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1959), pp. 31-50.

became the outstanding American spokesman of what came to be known as Social Darwinism. Sumner's brand of Social Darwinism was less optimistic than were Spencer's theories. The American sociologist concluded that social evolution held no guarantees that society would progress; Darwinism only taught men the necessity to accept the jungle brutality of life. He wrote in 1883 that attempts to escape these hardships were futile because they were opposed to natural law. "Certain ills belong to the hardships of human life. They are natural," declared Sumner. "They are a part of the struggle with nature for existence."<sup>5</sup>

The appeal of Social Darwinism in America far outweighed its popularity in England.<sup>6</sup> In a series of widely read books and articles which furnished a philosophical base in defense of the American status quo, Sumner attacked reformers for their "absurd effort to make the world over." The former Episcopalian minister's doctrine was in basic harmony with the traditional Calvinist-Protestant ethic which, with its emphasis on moral individuality and economic

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<sup>5</sup>William Graham Sumner, What Social Classes Owe to Each Other (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1954), p. 17.

<sup>6</sup>Samuel Mencher, Poor Law to Poverty Program: Economic Security Policy in Britain and the United States (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967), p. 245. (Hereinafter cited as Mencher, Poor Law.)



virtues, was much a part of American consciousness.<sup>7</sup> The belief that industry and morality would necessarily be rewarded materially was a comfortable doctrine for the middle class, and Sumner wrote convincingly in its behalf. For the poor and their spokesmen he had only contempt. Remarking on the writings of humanitarians and reformers, Sumner acidly commented that after reading certain of the reformers' works he thought that "it must be quite disreputable to be respectable, quite dishonest to own property, quite unjust to go one's own way and earn one's own living, and that the only really admirable person was the good-for-nothing." According to Sumner, "a drunkard in the gutter is just where he ought to be." Emphasizing his Darwinist view of the social order, the scholar noted that "nature has set upon him [the drunkard] the process of decline and dissolution by which she removes things which have survived their usefulness." Sumner labeled the honest, sober, and industrious citizen the "forgotten man." He is the worker who pays his debts and supports the schools and churches, and he owes the drunkard nothing. In fact, the wretch impedes upon the rights of the "forgotten man" whose

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<sup>7</sup>See Sumner's essay, "The Absurd Effort to Make the World Over," in Social Darwinism: Selected Essays by William Graham Sumner, ed. by Stow Persons (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pp. 168-180.

taxes are used to pay the policeman to drag him from the gutter.<sup>8</sup>

Sumner's words were well received in the 1880's. In the decade which produced the controversial works of Henry George and Edward Bellamy, conservatives were grateful that there was one man at least who was talking sense. Sumner's theories gave a scientific rationale to support prevailing American social callousness; his doctrines were, therefore, assured acceptance as words of wisdom. His influence was not strictly limited to his students and readers. Laissez-faire economists whose ideas were influenced by Sumner held many key positions in the academic world.<sup>9</sup>

Not all Social Darwinists lectured and wrote from a university chair. There were some on the urban scene working directly among the same people for whom the reformers labored. One such Social Darwinist, typical of many others, was Josephine Shaw Lowell. Like Jane Addams, she wished to spend her life in worthwhile pursuits. But Lowell and Addams differed in their attitudes toward the urban unfortunates. Jane Addams came to believe that the

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<sup>8</sup>Sumner, What Social Classes Owe to Each Other, pp. 21, 114.

<sup>9</sup>Sidney Fine, Laissez Faire and the General-Welfare State: A Study of Conflict in American Thought, 1865-1901 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956), p. 49. (Hereinafter cited as Fine, Laissez Faire and the General Welfare State.)

poorest wretch in her immigrant community possessed positive attributes which might enrich society, and she felt that society should be changed in order that the poor could have the opportunities to develop their talents. Lowell, who founded in 1882 the Charity Organization Society in New York City, was of the opinion that personal weakness of body, mind, or character was responsible for an individual's condition of poverty.<sup>10</sup>

In an essay written in 1890 for the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, Lowell stated that relief for the destitute weakens character and excites extravagance. Echoing Spencer's philosophy, she asked why a hard working man who earns his money and needs it for his family should be asked to give publicly through taxes or privately through charity to support a man who won't work. Unlike Spencer, however, Lowell admitted that charity was necessary in dire circumstances to prevent starvation. She believed that relief should be given in such a way that only the desperate would be willing to accept it. Paupers, if they would not support themselves, would be supported, but in a manner designed to discourage their continuing to receive such subsistence. Public relief should be offered

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<sup>10</sup> Kathleen Woodroffe, From Charity to Social Work in England and the United States (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 83, 87; Mencher, Poor Law, pp. 270-295.

inside institutions where education for self-control and self-independence can be taught. Such institutions should be so unattractive as to make people want to get out of them.<sup>11</sup>

Josephine Shaw Lowell's attitude toward the poor was in harmony with Social Darwinism. Though she remained active in the New York Charity Organization Society for years, her disdain for paupers grew until she could no longer tolerate the sight of one.<sup>12</sup> She could not perceive the worth of the poor, yet neither could she ignore them. This was the paradox which eventually discredited Social Darwinism in American thought. The followers of Spencer and Sumner taught that unworthy, impoverished individuals should be disregarded at the time in American history when their destitution was becoming most apparent due to the concentration of the poor in large cities. It was becoming increasingly difficult simply to ignore social problems. Most Americans, like Lowell, did not love the unfortunates.

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<sup>11</sup>Josephine Shaw Lowell, "The Economic and Moral Effects of Public Outdoor Relief," in The Heritage of American Social Work: Readings in Its Philosophical and Institutional Development, ed. by Ralph E. Pumphrey and Muriel W. Pumphrey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), pp. 221-229. Lowell's attitude toward the poor may be detected frequently in her 1889 publication, Public Relief and Private Charity (New York: Arno Press, 1971).

<sup>12</sup>Donald Fleming, "Social Darwinism," in Paths of American Thought, ed. by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and Morton White (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963), pp. 130-132, 144.

Neither could they follow the advice of Spencer and Sumner and allow starvation. Disdain and resentment of paupers continued, but the principle of at least minimal public relief received some support from middle class Americans.

However endearing Social Darwinism was to Sumner's "forgotten man" of the tax-paying middle class, it was even more readily received by the captains of industry who, according to Darwinian social thought, were obviously the most capable and fit to survive. It is little wonder that the steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie, became Herbert Spencer's most avid American adherent. Carnegie realized that the "law" of competition often exacted a high price from society, but "whether the law be benign or not . . . it is here." Writing for the North American Review in 1889, he remarked that competition "is best for the race, because it ensures the survival of the fittest in every department."<sup>13</sup>

Carnegie optimistically believed that the industrious of the poor class could rise from the ranks of the needy into the class of the wealthy. "To abolish honest, self-denying poverty would be to destroy the soil upon which mankind produces the virtues which enable our race to reach a still higher civilization than it now possesses," he

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<sup>13</sup> Andrew Carnegie, "The Gospel of Wealth," in The Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays by Andrew Carnegie, ed. by Edward C. Kirkland (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 16. (Hereinafter cited as Carnegie, Gospel of Wealth.)

admonished.<sup>14</sup> Far from being a handicap, a background of poverty offered the greatest opportunity for the individual to prove his worth. Once acquiring wealth the individual should not be tempted to rob his fellow man of the treasured opportunities found in poverty, "for one of the serious obstacles to the improvement of our race is indiscriminate charity." It would be better for mankind, wrote Carnegie, for the money of the rich to be "thrown into the sea than so spent as to encourage the slothful, the drunken, the unworthy."<sup>15</sup>

Carnegie rose from poverty. His career was a verification of the Horatio Alger myth which even now influences the aspirations of young American men. The steel magnate's success seemed to be proof that the race does go to the swift and the poor need only look to Carnegie to see what is possible under laissez-faire capitalism. Conservatives of the middle and upper classes thought, or at least hoped, this was true. Social reformers might point out that Carnegie had built a considerable fortune by the 1860's and this was becoming increasingly unlikely. But the dream lived on.

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<sup>14</sup>Carnegie, "How I Served My Apprenticeship," in Gospel of Wealth, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup>Carnegie, "Gospel of Wealth," in ibid., p. 26.

Because of Carnegie's philosophy that it was a sin to die without using one's personal fortune for the betterment of mankind, it would be unfair to label him a "conservative." His "Gospel of Wealth" as explained in numerous essays published in popular magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a considerable departure from tradition. His attitudes toward social reform were, however, in accord with the prevailing thought of the day. In 1891, after more than a decade of agitation by urban social reformers, Carnegie wrote that he noticed too much attention was being given to the "unfortunate wretches into whom the virtues necessary for improvement can not be instilled." The honest poor should be protected by placing "social lepers" in state supported workhouses. Expressing much the same thoughts as did Josephine Shaw Lowell and the settlement house worker, Robert A. Woods, Carnegie warned that a drunken vagabond or lazy idler is a "moral infection to a neighborhood." The wealthy steel magnate feared that generous public relief was dangerous. It will not do, he wrote, "to teach the hard-working industrious man that there is an easier path by which his wants may be supplied."<sup>16</sup>

The fact that Carnegie voiced the same thoughts concerning "social lepers" as did one of the best known

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<sup>16</sup>Carnegie, "The Advantages of Poverty," in Gospel of Wealth, pp. 68-69.

reforming settlement workers demonstrates the fact that a "conservative" or "liberal" label is a serious oversimplification. Both the conservatism of Sumner and a reformist's concern for the effects of environment may be detected in Carnegie's writings. Though Social Darwinist thought greatly influenced Carnegie, his essays show almost imperceptible strains of liberalism. He softened the harshness of Social Darwinism by suggesting that the wealthy were obligated to use their wealth for the benefit of all classes.<sup>17</sup>

Social Darwinism was often the forte of Carnegie and other spokesmen for laissez-faire capitalism, but some prominent American businessmen who believed that there was nothing basically wrong in American society depended on older American ideas in their opposition to social reform. The West as a safety valve for the homeless urban poor was a recurrent idea which had been expressed by early reformists, like Charles Loring Brace. The same idea was later voiced by cynical capitalists, such as Jay Gould, who wished to preserve the system by which he made his fortune. In 1883,

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<sup>17</sup>Carnegie's "Gospel of Wealth" embodied the notion that the wealthy should expend their fortunes for benevolent purposes. Before his death in 1919, he gave away 311,000,000 dollars, but the money did not go to traditional charitable organizations. Instead, his donations went to establish libraries, promote research, and to finance educational and technical training. See Edward C. Kirkland's Introduction to Carnegie, Gospel of Wealth, pp. vii-xx.



the railroad manipulator was called for testimony before a Senate Committee on Education and Labor in New York. The committee asked Gould for his opinion on a series of questions concerning industrial strife and the economic conditions of the laboring poor in the cities of the East. He confidently told the committee that opportunities abounded in the Western states for the surplus workers in the East. When asked how a poor man with a family and nothing else but his hands and his health could get out West, Gould's answer was that the poor man could make it if he wanted badly enough to go, but that "most of those parties here won't go; they say they would 'rather live in New York and be a beggar, than live out West and be a Nabob.' I have had lots of them tell me that."<sup>18</sup> Gould's point was that poverty and unemployment were the result of personal shortcomings rather than lack of opportunity. He believed, or wanted others to believe, that in 1883 the West still held forth golden opportunities of wealth for any of the poor or unemployed city dwellers who were willing to go. That they did not go meant that they deserved what they got.

Other businessmen believed that treks to the West were unnecessary to relieve urban poverty. One witness before the same Senate Committee stated that poor

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<sup>18</sup>Jay Gould, Testimony before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, New York, Sept., 1883, Doc. 63, in Popular Culture and Industrialism, 1865-1890, ed. by Henry Nash Smith (New York: New York University Press, 1967), p. 370.

individuals were to blame for their condition because they failed to "take advantage of the benefits of capitalism by educating themselves out of poverty." Commenting on Henry George's theory that conditions of poverty had grown worse because the rich had grown richer, the prosperous witness remarked that individual lack of intelligence was to blame for individual cases of poverty in this country.<sup>19</sup> It is readily apparent that this witness embraced the popular belief that the United States held out glorious opportunities for success to all who would merely take the advantages which were offered.

In the nation's pulpits, social and economic conservatism also found its defense. The Social Gospel reform movement, though it had its beginnings in the nineteenth century, did not really flower until after the turn of the century. Throughout the latter decades of the nineteenth century, social conservatism was more typical than progressivism in Christian thought. "Conservatism," however, is a misleading label. Henry Ward Beecher of Brooklyn's Plymouth Church, who said that "It is true that \$1 a day is not enough to support a man and five children, if the man insists on smoking and drinking beer," did more than any other American clergyman in reconciling the gulf

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<sup>19</sup>Edward A. Atkinson, Testimony before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, New York, Oct., 1883, Doc. 61, in Popular Culture and Industrialism, 1865-1890, ed. by Nash.

between American religious traditionalism and the new sciences. Theologically progressive, Beecher was sociologically conservative.<sup>20</sup> Other ministers and writers shared this paradox. They expressed their conservatism in statements which reveal a curious blend of Social Darwinism and traditional Puritan morality. An anonymous writer for the Christian Advocate, one of the most widely circulated religious publications, celebrated the wisdom and glory of "Him who selects, approves, rewards, conserves the best." In Spencerian terms the writer explained that it is a blessing "to let the unreformed drunkard and his children die."<sup>21</sup>

Preaching that misery is the deserved punishment for vice or intemperance, many ministers had little patience with social reformers. William Hays Ward told his congregation that, if one-half the money given for relief were given for preaching the Gospel, the poor would be better off than if ten times that amount were bestowed upon them in charity. The poor were poor because they were not receptive to the Gospel.<sup>22</sup> Faith in the power of religion

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<sup>20</sup>See Chapter III of this study.

<sup>21</sup>Anonymous, "Survival of the Fittest," The Christian Advocate, March 20, 1879, in Darwinism Comes to America, ed. by George Daniels (Waltham, Mass.: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 113-114.

<sup>22</sup>Henry F. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 120.

as a cure to problematic social issues marked the writing of conservatives and reformers. Ward's beliefs differed little from those of Charles M. Sheldon. The author of In His Steps did, however, call upon members of all classes to do their part in ridding their community of social problems through instigating needed reforms. Sheldon did not simply blame the poor for not being receptive to religious instruction.<sup>23</sup>

Those who opposed humanitarian reforms cited both God and the founding fathers to support their opinions. Judicial conservatism marked most Supreme Court decisions against social legislation in the last years of the nineteenth century. The Court's interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment provided the Sumnerian legal logic to support arguments that statutes outlawing child labor or starvation wages invade contractual freedom of both employer and laborer.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, legal interpretation of due process supported the American ideal of individualism. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., had to remind his colleagues on the Court that the Constitution was not a paraphrase of Herbert Spencer.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Charles M. Sheldon, In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do? (Chicago: John C. Winston Company, 1937).

<sup>24</sup>Robert G. McCloskey, American Conservatism in the Age of Enterprise (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 104-126.

<sup>25</sup>Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, p. 47.

It was not unusual for advocates of the mildest reforms to be attacked as radicals. Social reform frequently was discredited by linking it with socialism. Yet the most significant attacks on laissez-faire in the nineteenth century came not from the socialists, who had little following, but from those who merely wanted to expand government's role to allow for a more socially just society.<sup>26</sup> Jane Addams, perhaps more than any other reformer, succeeded in promoting humanitarian urban reforms within the established system of government. Her efforts proved that the existing American democratic process is well adapted to accommodate changed conditions, though the pace of change might seem maddeningly slow and inadequate. Yet Jane Addams was accused of being a socialist.<sup>27</sup>

Arthur Schlesinger has pointed out that the words "socialist" and "communist" were used by Southerners to describe the unpopular abolitionist crusaders.<sup>28</sup> The same epithets were later ascribed to the New Dealers and, more recently, to civil rights workers in the 1960's. The practice of using catchwords to label and discredit social reform advocates continues to the present day, and stems

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<sup>26</sup>Mencher, Poor Law, pp. 252-254.

<sup>27</sup>See Chapter III of this study.

<sup>28</sup>Arthur Meier Schlesinger, The American as Reformer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 83.

from the same mentality which leads the reformists to label as "fascist" anyone of conservative mind. The conservative defense of late nineteenth century America sometimes lapsed into this shabby pattern, but the threat of socialism was a very real concern to conservatives who observed the popularity of Henry George and Edward Bellamy with alarm. Even Henry George was in some ways antagonistic to governmental action. He wished to free society from the injustice of land monopoly but he was opposed to other regulatory actions. His proposed land reform would dispense with "an immense and complicated network of governmental machinery."<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, Bellamy conceived of a scheme in which governmental authority was unlimited.

In spite of conservative opposition, governmental regulations pertaining to wages, hours, child labor, and housing were numerous by 1900. Twenty-seven states had enacted pure food laws by 1895, and thirty-six states provided institutions for their blind, deaf, and feeble-minded citizens by that time. State and local governments were less reluctant to extend the scope of their activities than the national government.<sup>30</sup> As James Bryce, the perceptive British observer of Americans noted, state

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<sup>29</sup>Henry George, Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Causes of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth--The Remedy (New York: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1971), pp. 254-256.

<sup>30</sup>Fine, Laissez Faire and the General-Welfare State, pp. 353-363.

legislatures were often filled by men who were not burdened by traditional allegiance to laissez-faire ideology. These legislators were "even more sensitive to the wretchedness of their fellows, and to the mischiefs which vice and ignorance breed" than their English contemporaries.<sup>31</sup>

The late nineteenth century urban reformers utilized science, religion, imaginary utopian visions, and humane sentiment in their attempts to promote social change. Their case was thrust before the American public with logic or with emotion, and sometimes with a hint of threat. The same tools of persuasion were used by conservatives to defend the status quo. Many of those who wished to preserve the existing social order were not unaware of the squalid urban environment, nor did they relish human suffering. There were humanitarians, philanthropists, and charity workers, as well as callous politicians and businessmen, who deplored the misery so conspicuous in the cities. They saw poverty, unemployment, vice, and crime either as being caused by personal weakness or as the result of unalterable laws of nature. A simple disregard for the effects of environment was sometimes all that separated the earnest social conservative from the reformer.

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<sup>31</sup>James Bryce, The American Commonwealth (New York: Macmillan Company, 1924), p. 593.

The American preference for gradual evolution over revolution doomed extremists in liberal and conservative camps. A tour of any major American city reveals convincing evidence that the reformists failed to solve the problems of poverty and miserable living conditions in congested areas. Nor have vice and crime disappeared from the cities' streets. It is sadly obvious that late nineteenth century reformers failed to erase urban problems, but they succeeded in creating the climate of public opinion necessary for the enactment of legislation that provided for improved housing and restrictions on child labor. Governmental agencies to deal with unemployment, municipal welfare offices, and health departments were among the improvements established during the Progressive movement as a result of the public interest in urban progress created by reformers. Though the battle to wipe out the slums was not won, the reformers succeeded in discrediting Social Darwinism to the extent that local, state, and national governments were forced to give increasing attention to pressing human problems in the twentieth century. The growth in range and scale of governmental activity in the area of social reform has been maintained, with some significant setbacks in the 1920's, until the present. Governmental authority has grown because it obviously met a desperate need. Urban reformers of the late nineteenth century first brought these needs to



public attention, while a strong tradition of conservatism assured that change to meet these needs would be gradual and orderly.

A study of the demand for humanitarian urban reform and the reaction against it provides a frame of reference for understanding the complex nature of social change. Many of the issues, trends, and ideologies which prevailed in the last decades of the nineteenth century are not obsolete. The problem of urban poverty is seemingly ageless, and the definition of what constitutes "progress" in meeting this problem is still subject to interpretation. Those who attempt to understand the social problems of poverty, crime, poor housing, and effects of environment in modern cities should undertake a study of what previous generations have done in helping people to meet their needs. College students exposed to an interdisciplinary unit of study about the urban social reform movement between 1880 and 1900 will be better prepared to understand social issues of the present day. Moreover, they will benefit from a history course that offers a connecting thread to many other disciplines.

## CHAPTER VII

### TEACHING A COURSE ENTITLED "THE URBAN SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENT, 1880-1900"

The general education curriculum in colleges and universities is usually constructed around courses in the major disciplinary areas of the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. Although professional educators have debated contrasting philosophies concerning the purpose of a general education curriculum since the nineteenth century, most supporters of the concept believe that a program of study should be centered on the needs of students and society.<sup>1</sup> This mission, according to one study, should be designed to provide the following:

1. A search for the unifying elements of our culture.
2. The preparation of youth for the common life of our time.
3. An effort to substitute a new unity for the scattered fragments of knowledge into which the curriculum has disintegrated.

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<sup>1</sup>Bobby Gordon Bell, "The Social Sciences in General Education Programs of Colleges and Universities in the Southeast" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1971), pp. 1-3.

4. An attempt to identify the common aims which must bind together our whole educational system.
5. The common learnings needed for effective living.<sup>2</sup>

Though educators may quibble over the wording of several of the specific terms listed above, and many would wish to add their own suggestions to the list, nearly all would agree to the basic premises that a general education program should give emphasis to common elements and to unity in learning. Yet, few courses offered to students in their first two years of college are actually designed to substitute unity for the scattered fragments of knowledge which characterize the general education curriculum. In fact, the program has been compartmentalized into academic subjects and often taught to undergraduates as though there were no interrelationship between the "pure" disciplines. One educator suggests that students might even surmise that:

English is not History and History is not Science and Science is not Art and Art is not Music and Art and Music are minor subjects and English, History and Science are major subjects, and a subject is something you "take," and when you have "taken" it, you have "had" it, and if you have "had" it, you are immune and need not take it again. (The Vaccination Theory of Education?)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>B. Lamar Johnson, Ralph Leyden, and Zay Rusk Sullens, "Individualization: A Must in General Education," in Accent on Teaching: Experiments in General Education, ed. by Sidney J. French (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), p. 92.

<sup>3</sup>Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, Teaching as a Subversive Activity (New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1969), p. 21.

The above witty observation about what students sometimes learn in their different classrooms is only one of many indications that the approach to general education which is currently in vogue has neither satisfied student needs nor won the unanimous enthusiasm of educators.<sup>4</sup> The intense specialized graduate study considered necessary to prepare teachers in higher education with an adequate knowledge of their discipline tends to reenforce the inclination to emphasize "pure" history, literature, or science in classroom teaching, thus defeating the integrating purpose of a general education program. Yet one of the virtues inherent in all disciplines, and particularly in history, is that the body of knowledge exists in close relationship with the subject matter of other disciplines. History as it is generally taught to undergraduates, however, often fails to serve a unifying purpose. Unsophisticated undergraduates sometimes fail to grasp the interrelatedness between history and their other required studies.

It has been suggested, though certainly not verified, that history teachers do not teach anything which contributes toward meeting basic general education goals which could not be better taught outside the history

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<sup>4</sup>Lewis B. Mayhew, "The Future of General Education," in General Education: An Account and Appraisal, ed. by Lewis B. Mayhew (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 10.

classroom. Fortunately, few history teachers will ever be at a loss for words when their discipline is thus directly challenged. Nevertheless, there is increasing anxiety among professional historians and professional teachers of history concerning the justification to those outside the discipline for inclusion of their subject in college general education requirements.

A natural desire to defend the discipline from an onslaught of criticism has led many history teachers toward experimentation and change. Many are demonstrating a willingness to reorganize their courses to meet more effectively the goals of general education. Some have experimented with interdisciplinary courses, thereby including knowledge from many disciplines and avoiding the artificial isolation characteristic of the traditional areas of study. Others have worked in team teaching projects with teachers from other disciplines.<sup>5</sup>

A limited survey of literature pertaining to college teaching reveals that interdisciplinary programs are becoming

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<sup>5</sup>David Pratt, "The Functions of Teaching History," History Teacher, VII (May, 1974), 410-425; Paul L. Ward, "Why History," History Teacher, VII (February, 1974), 183-191; Samuel Berner, "The Relevance of History," History Teacher, VII (November, 1973), 30-36; James W. Hurst, "Alternatives to the Survey History Courses," Community College Social Science Quarterly, III (Summer, 1973), 37-39; J. H.exter, "The Historian and His Day," in The Craft of American History: Selected Essays, ed. by A. S. Eisenstadt (2 vols.; New York: Harper & Row, 1966), I, 88-101.

increasingly popular. In recent years experimental courses have been offered with varying results in a number of colleges throughout the nation. One history teacher at a small college in Ohio claims that she has increased student interest and involvement by adapting the use of novels in a history course which she entitles "Images of Society."<sup>6</sup> A professor at Grossmont College in California also claims success while using political novels in his political science and government classes. He justifies this practice by contending that literature being produced by a political system can reveal much information about social trends within that system.<sup>7</sup> Though these courses add a new dimension to the traditional disciplines in which they are offered, they cross only two traditional areas of study. One multi-disciplinary course, "The Nature of Man," has been taught by a teaching team with some success at Jamestown Community College in New York.<sup>8</sup> A course with the nebulous title, "The Nature of Man," could, however, encompass

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<sup>6</sup> Sharon Bannister, "Images of Society: An Experimental Interdisciplinary Course Using Historical Novels," History Teacher, VI (May, 1973), 365-374.

<sup>7</sup> Lee Brown, "Political Analysis Through Political Novels: A Note on Teaching and Research," Community College Social Science Quarterly, III (Summer, 1973), 1-5.

<sup>8</sup> John J. Collins, "Some Applications of Social Science in an Interdisciplinary Program," Community College Social Science Quarterly, III (Spring, 1973), 23-24.

practically anything the teacher wanted to include. This would make the course useless as a guideline for those who wish to design a workable model which is something more than an ill-assorted collection of facts without a coherent unifying theme.

An interdisciplinary course at its worst, according to Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, can be "an alibi for lack of intellectual discipline."<sup>9</sup> The concerned teacher may avoid this pitfall by developing a course with an in-depth theme, suitable for interdisciplinary study and with limited content which can be thoroughly analyzed in a given amount of time. Teachers could develop an unlimited number of appropriate themes which would be useful in designing such a course. Developing appropriate course materials, however, involves extensive research. Perhaps general models for interdisciplinary college courses are for this reason scarce or non-existent.<sup>10</sup> The topic explored in the first six chapters of this dissertation is ideally suited for designing a model interdisciplinary course using a team of teachers from several specialized areas of study, but with a foundation in the discipline of history. The

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<sup>9</sup>Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, The Academic Revolution (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 498.

<sup>10</sup>James Steve Counellis, "What is an Interdisciplinary Course in the Social Sciences?", Community College Social Science Quarterly, III (Winter, 1973), 29.

following framework for such a course offers needed practical guidelines and sources of information.

This proposed course, entitled "The Urban Social Reform Movement: 1880-1900," is designed to provide three hours of credit toward meeting the social sciences, humanities, or free elective requirements in a general education program at a college which offers courses on a quarter, rather than a semester, basis.<sup>11</sup> The theme of urban social reform may be considerably expanded to be adapted for teaching on a semester basis, or it may be curtailed to serve as one unit in an interdisciplinary course of much broader scope. Participating teachers may want to shift the emphasis from urban social reform in the late nineteenth century to the need for such reform in the present. Such changes may be made without significantly altering many of the suggested teaching units.

A team of teachers from nine specialized areas of study (including history, geography, economics, political science, English, philosophy, sociology, health, and biology) are utilized in this proposed course, thus necessitating extensive coordinating efforts. Coordination and planning might be initiated in unofficial meetings among faculty members who wish to participate, but formal planning

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<sup>11</sup>For the purpose of this study, three quarter hours of credit entails thirty hours of classroom instruction. Time for examinations is not included.



sessions are necessary to finalize ideas so that each participant is aware of his role in meeting course goals. To avoid confusion, only the history, English, and sociology teachers should participate in formal planning and the other teachers should serve as guest lecturers.

Questions to be posed in the planning sessions should include: How does the subject matter of this course relate to general education objectives? What specific topics should be developed to reach those objectives? What can be accomplished through teacher lectures? What can best be accomplished through student reading assignments or independent study? How can best use be made of films and filmstrips? How can the team staff be deployed to get maximum contributions from each individual? How can the time available be organized to optimum advantage? What materials best meet each course objective and where can these materials be found? What methods of evaluating student performance are most effective in testing to meet stated objectives?

In formulating objectives for this course, the general education mission which emphasizes unity and community at the undergraduate level may be sought without prostituting the discipline of history. In fact, the word "history" takes on a richer meaning when it is explored in a context which enhances its scope through the contributions

of other disciplines. Specific goals for the course are suggested here within the larger scope of the categories previously outlined as general education objectives.<sup>12</sup>

1. A search for the unifying elements of our culture
  - a. The student will learn that demands for change come from many quarters. Journalists, novelists, religious leaders, economists, political scientists, social workers, and scientists may all address the same situation and use their special skills in searching for a solution to a mutual problem.
  - b. The student will learn that, though each situation or event is in part unique, each is also related to foregoing and succeeding events by a web of interdependence.
2. The preparation of youth for the common life of our time
  - a. The student will learn how individuals of various interests may use their abilities to redress a common grievance.

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<sup>12</sup>For valuable suggestions in formulating other obtainable objectives, see Deane C. Thompson, "What to Do Until Bloom Comes: Behavioral Objectives that Work," History Teacher, VII (February, 1974), 216-219. For a more comprehensive discussion of educational objectives, examine Benjamin S. Bloom, ed., Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1964).

- b. The student will become aware of the conflicts between capitalism and alternative systems and learn of the benefits and disadvantages of competing social and political systems.
  - c. He will determine how and why some tactics in promoting change have been effective and why others have not.
- 3. An effort to substitute a new unity for the scattered fragments of knowledge into which the curriculum has disintegrated
  - a. The student will be qualified to make an analysis of interrelations among the disciplines he will study in college.
  - b. The pupil will become aware of the unifying function of history in his diagnosis of why change takes place during a given period of time.
- 4. An attempt to identify the common aims which must bind together our whole educational system
  - a. The student will discern the difficulty in identifying a "common aim."
  - b. He will become aware that legitimate and intellectually sound differences in the

meaning of words such as "progress" and "improvement" have existed which make abstract common aims almost impossible to identify.

5. The common learnings needed for effective living
  - a. The student will learn how social change may be initiated by a non-politician.
  - b. He will learn that the realm of politics is governed somewhat by social demands.
  - c. The pupil will gain experience in determining the difference between propaganda and fact while reading the reformists' literature.
  - d. The student will be exposed to the analytical tools which are used in organizing vast amounts of knowledge.

Once objectives have been established, specific topics related to the course must be identified and assigned to appropriate staff members. The following breakdown of suggested topics may be a useful guide in organizing the course according to teaching responsibilities and number of classroom hours spent on each presentation:

#### History Teacher

Introduction to the Course (one hour)

Conditions in American Cities in the Late Nineteenth Century (two hours)

Comparison of American Cities to European Cities (one hour)

Geography Teacher

Geographical Factors in the Development of  
Cities and the Distribution of People (one hour)

Economics Teacher

Economic Factors in the Development of Cities:  
Industrialization and Immigration (two hours)

History Teacher

Conflict Between Urban Realities and Traditional  
Agrarian Values (one-half hour)

Conflicts in Values Lead to Questioning American  
Capitalism (one-half hour)

Political Science Teacher

A Brief Analysis of Nineteenth Century Laissez-  
faire Capitalism (one hour)

The Varieties of Socialism and the Differences  
Between Them (one hour)

English Teacher

Socialism as a Solution to Urban Problems in  
Utopian Novels (two hours)

The Social Impact of Novels with a Message  
(one hour)

Philosophy Teacher

The Relationship Between Socialism and  
Christianity as Related to Urban Reform (one  
hour)

The Christian Response to Urban Problems (two  
hours)

Sociology Teacher

Delinquency, Crime, and Prostitution and Their  
Relationship to City Poverty (two hours)

Settlements and Social Work (one hour)

Health Teacher or Environmentalist

Improvements in Methods of Sewage Disposal,  
Garbage Collection, and Water Purification (one  
hour)

The Beginning of Public Health Programs (one  
hour)

Biology Teacher

The Relationship Between Science and Society  
(one-half hour)

Darwinian Theory Applied to Society (one-half  
hour)

History Teacher

Darwin's Influence on Reformers (one hour)

The Social Darwinists' Response to Urban  
Reformers (one hour)

English Teacher

The Influence of Darwinism in Social Novels  
(one hour)

Journalism Teacher

Early Muckraking: Reporting or Distorting?  
(two hours)

History Teacher

Synthesis: The Success of Reformers in  
Effecting Change (three hours)

Teachers planning to participate in the inter-disciplinary project may find it necessary to do some advance study in order to fulfill competently their responsibilities for each topic. Politics, Reform, and Expansion, by Harold Faulkner; The Age of Reform, by Richard Hofstadter; Farewell to Reform, by John Chamberlain; The Age of Energy, by

Howard Mumford Jones; and Laissez Faire and the General-Welfare State, by Sidney Fine, are some general works which contain information to aid in putting topical information into proper historical context. Late Nineteenth Century American Liberalism, edited by Louis Filler, and The Land of Contrasts, edited by Neil Harris, are compilations of contemporary sources which will acquaint the reader with representative samples of writings on important issues of the times.<sup>13</sup> Appendix I contains a list of titles related to the individual teaching topics in order to guide the prospective instructor in preparing for his specific teaching unit. The books suggested above and the works listed in Appendix I do not represent an exhaustive list. Rather, the purpose of these suggestions is to provide teachers with a good general knowledge of the topics listed and to introduce them to some of the materials they might find most useful.

Students, too, should be introduced to the vast amount of reading material which relates to this topic. Although no comprehensive text is available for the proposed course, an excellent short monograph, "The Early American City," by Lyle W. Dorsett, is appropriate for students as

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<sup>13</sup>For complete data pertaining to the suggested books, see the attached formal bibliography.

introductory reading matter.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Late Nineteenth Century American Liberalism, edited by Louis Filler, and available in paperback, is strongly recommended as assigned reading. Filler's introduction prepares the student for understanding the representative selections from many of the urban reformers and their antagonists. Included are selections from the writings of Ignatius Donnelly, William Graham Sumner, Lawrence Gronlund, Henry Demerest Lloyd, Jane Addams, Jacob Riis, Henry George, and Edward Bellamy. Readings from this volume, assigned at appropriate intervals throughout the course, will acquaint the student with the actual words of the reformists and their adversaries.

The novel recommended for student reading is Looking Backward, by Edward Bellamy. This recommendation is based on the fact that familiarity with the novel will allow the student to relate to the discussions on socialism, Darwinism, the Social Gospel, and the economic atmosphere of the late nineteenth century, as well as to the topics of socialism in utopian novels and novels with a social message. If more than one novel is chosen, Stephen Crane's Maggie: A Girl of the Streets should be considered for its vivid descriptions of slum life as well as for its artistic merit.

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<sup>14</sup>For complete data pertaining to suggested resources for student reading, see the attached formal bibliography.



Some history teachers have found that classroom use of appropriate films and filmstrips often serves to increase student interest in assigned reading and to stimulate class discussions, although college historians have often considered audiovisual teaching aids as "high school stuff" rather than as important teaching tools. A survey conducted in 1971 revealed that most college history teachers use film only occasionally, probably due as much to the problems of cost and poor quality of the available materials as to a prejudice against audiovisual teaching. Practical problems of obtaining audiovisual sources and of using them effectively are troublesome, since merely looking through the maze of film guides and catalogues is enough to discourage many teachers.<sup>15</sup>

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the proposed course, a number of quality audiovisual teaching aids are available. Many materials related to the teaching of sociology, city planning, economics, geography, ecology, social work, and history are well suited for use in this course. The fact that most of these teaching aids are suitable for use in teaching many disciplines means that

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<sup>15</sup> John E. O'Connor, "Historians and Film: Some Problems and Prospects," History Teacher, VI (August, 1973), 543-552; Michael T. Isenberg, "A Relationship of Constrained Anxiety," Ibid., 553-568; and R. C. Raack and Alan M. Smith, "The Documentary Film in History Teaching: An Experimental Course," History Teacher, VI (February, 1973), 281-294.

the expense of purchase or rental, as well as the use of the equipment, may be shared by several departments or academic divisions.

Appendix II contains a list of 16mm films and 35mm educational filmstrips and slide frames, suitable for college students, which are adaptable as supplements to lectures and stimulants to classroom discussions. Though this list has been carefully constructed to include only those materials which are pertinent to the topics in the proposed course, additional information concerning the films and filmstrips and slides is available.<sup>16</sup> The names of the producers and the addresses of the distributors are included in Appendix II to aid teachers in seeking information concerning the content of individual films and filmstrips and their rental or purchase price.

Use of audiovisual materials is only one of many ways to alter traditional teaching methodology. Instructors planning to offer a course about urban social reform may provide their students with valuable learning experiences by inviting social workers, city planners, ghetto educators, public health officials, or community center directors into the classroom. A field trip to a slum

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<sup>16</sup>See National Information Center for Educational Media (NICEM), Index to 16mm Educational Films, 3 vols., and Index to 35mm Educational Filmstrips, 2 vols. (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1973).

area might stimulate and enlighten a middle class student far more than could any lecture, book, discussion, or film.

If use of supplementary teaching materials and experiences is to be something other than a mere "time filler," the students must be given advance preparation for the experience and told that they will be expected to relate the information gained to other knowledge learned in the course. Ultimately they must relate all of the information to the course objectives. Their ability to do this is the real test of whether or not the course is successful. The task of determining this ability, or lack of it, calls for some system of evaluating student performance in meeting the stated goals.

The common policy of assigning grades requires that students somehow be evaluated and, therefore, some system of testing must be devised. Many teachers, if they think about objectives at all, write their course goals in terms which reflect general education behavioral objectives. Yet, in the final analysis--when they are testing students--instructors often make their evaluations based on the students' abilities simply to memorize and to regurgitate volumes of information read in books and heard in lectures. Within the objectives listed for this proposed course, there is no statement that students will be expected to memorize a specific body of knowledge. The entire essence of the

course, however, is based on understanding certain concepts and on knowing about the activities of key individuals. This information should be readily available in the student's mind in order that he understand the broad outlines of the subject.

It is the instructor's task to teach undergraduates which specific points of detail are important enough to be memorized, and what their significance is, and which points are included in the course for their illustrative value. Students, once they understand the significance of the material, are unlikely to forget the important facts.<sup>17</sup> Since student comprehension of significant factual details is necessary to meet the overall course objectives, it is suggested that weekly multiple choice quizzes be developed which test for recognition of significant information, ideas, and definitions. Because knowing these facts is necessary to the eventual realization of the objectives, the weekly quizzes should be a determining factor in the final evaluation. The students' attainment of stated aims can best be evaluated through responses to interpretive essay questions which may be administered in the middle and at completion of the course.

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<sup>17</sup> Robert V. Daniels, Studying History: How and Why (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), pp. 34-37.

Educators Robert L. Thorndike and Elizabeth Hagen suggest that, generally, essay questions should start with such phrases as "Compare," "Contrast," "Give the reasons for," "Present the arguments for and against," and "Explain how and why." These phrases require students to select, organize, and apply their knowledge. Essay questions which begin with "What," "Who," "When," or "List" are likely to present tasks requiring only recall, or memorization of material.<sup>18</sup> This advice is particularly pertinent to testing for the achievement of the aims in this proposed course. One of the stated goals is that students will learn how individuals of various interests may use their abilities to redress a common grievance. The essay questions, "Who were the novelists interested in urban social reform?" or "List the different ideas expressed in the works of important social novelists," merely test the students' ability to recall facts. Whereas, the problem "Compare the methods used by some important reforming journalists" is much more demanding. To write this essay requires that the students recall specific information, but, more importantly, the problem also demands that students be aware of how individuals of various abilities attack the same social

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<sup>18</sup>Robert L. Thorndike and Elizabeth Hagen, Measurement and Evaluation in Psychology and Education (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1961), pp. 43-56.

situation. Successful completion of this essay indicates that one course objective has been met.

Scoring an essay question such as the above example presents difficulties, since answers to such questions are subject to the interpretation of the reader. Individual teachers within the program should be responsible for constructing and evaluating the questions which pertain to their instructional topic. The students should be informed by the individual instructors exactly as to what the testing objectives are. Students can then spend their time studying to meet these goals rather than merely memorizing lists. When teachers and students know in advance what factors are to be measured, student performance will improve and evaluation is more precise. In presenting a course to undergraduates, the teachers involved should be aware that, by testing student performance, they are also testing teaching effectiveness. Therefore, every effort should be made to ensure that students have the proper tools for demonstrating that they have met the goals of the course.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Helpful suggestions about teaching students how to perform well on essay tests may be found in Frances A. Hess, "Teaching Students to Write Essay Examinations," in Teaching the New Social Studies in Secondary Schools: An Inductive Approach, ed. by Edwin Fenton (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966), pp. 283-287. Although the suggestions in the above book were made specifically for teaching secondary school students, the principles discussed are equally applicable for college undergraduates. For another guide for improving the quality of student essays, see J. Frederick MacDonald, "The Challenge of Those Essay Examinations: A Guide for Students," History Teacher, VI (May, 1973), 393-398.

When the student succeeds, the teachers have been successful and the purposes for designing the interdisciplinary course have been met.

It does not follow that successful teacher and student performance in realizing the objectives for one course means that many courses should be reorganized to be interdisciplinary. There is a definite place for courses purely within one discipline in a general education program. An interdisciplinary approach to teaching all subject matter would require a massive and difficult, if not impossible, process of changing existing college curriculums and methods of teacher training.<sup>20</sup> The desirability of this type of educational overhaul in the foreseeable future is highly questionable. Practical steps toward unifying the fragmented content of the various disciplines, however, may be undertaken in at least one course within the existing programs prevalent in higher education.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Jencks and Riesman, The Academic Revolution, p. 498.

<sup>21</sup>For a provocative discussion of interdisciplinary studies with suggestions concerning solutions to problems concerning budget allocations, faculty and administrative responsibilities, and interdepartmental cooperation, see Kenneth J. Grieb, "Area Studies and the Traditional Disciplines," History Teacher, VII (February, 1974), 228-238.

## APPENDIXES



## APPENDIX I

### SOME USEFUL BOOKS FOR PREPARING TO TEACH THE SUGGESTED TOPICS

Conditions in American Cities in the  
Late Nineteenth Century

The best general volume and a book which details much of the substance of industrial change is Arthur Meier Schlesinger's The Rise of the City, 1878-1898. The City in American History, by Blake McKelvey, and A History of Urban America, by Charles Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, are useful in relating late nineteenth century city problems to the comprehensive picture of American urbanization. Eric Lampard has written an excellent bibliographical essay, "American Historians and the Study of Urbanization," American Historical Review (October, 1961), which is useful to the teacher who wishes to explore more literature pertaining to urbanization. The Challenge of the City, 1860-1910, edited by Lyle Dorsett, is a convenient compilation of documents and essays pertaining to urban problems.

Comparison of Problems in American Cities  
to Problems in European Cities

Adna Ferrin Weber's study, The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century, gives a statistical analysis of urban growth in the nineteenth century for major cities throughout the world. See Trends in Social Work, by Frank Bruno, for information concerning the English reform movement and its impact on Americans. Information on the

development of problems in cities throughout the world may be found in The City in History by Lewis Mumford.

Geographic and Economic Factors in the  
Development of Cities and the  
Distribution of People

In Chapter II of Introductory Economic Geography, by Lester E. Klimm and Otis Starkey, the reader will find discussions of the human factor in geography, the carrying power of urban sites, and the influence of technology in determining where people live. Richard M. Highsmith, Jr., and Ray M. Northam, in World Economic Activities: A Geographic Analysis, offer insight into the influence of transportation, trade, production, and material needs upon population density. Another useful volume is Human Geography by Emrys Jones. This book has discussions of historic patterns of western cities, population structure, and ethnic groups in cities, along with an analysis of the geographic and economic factors which contribute to urban growth.

Conflict Between Urban Realities and  
Traditional Agrarian Values

The Intellectual Versus the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright, by Morton and Lucia White, and Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age, by Arthur Mann, are

excellent sources of information concerning many notable Americans' revulsion for the cities. A good discussion of the agrarian myth in literature may be found in The American Novel and Its Tradition by Richard Chase. In addition, most general works on urbanization contain some discussion of the conflict between Americans' expressed love for rural values and their expressed distaste for urban life.

#### Conflicts in Values Lead to Questioning American Capitalism

Laurence Gronlund's attack on capitalism which is found in The Cooperative Commonwealth provides a useful starting point for this topic. Also, see Socialism and American Life, edited by Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons, and The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America by James Dombrowski. William Ebstein's work, Today's Isms, includes discussions of the philosophical differences between socialism and capitalism.

#### The Varieties of Socialism and the Conflicts Between Them

Socialism and American Life, edited by Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons, is the source of ample material to demonstrate the various methods of socialists in the United States. Interesting comparisons may be pointed out to

students about the differences between many American socialist schemes and classical Marxism by referring to Marx's work.

### Socialism as a Solution to Urban Problems in Utopian Novels

The most important of the utopian novels is Looking Backward, 2000-1887 by Edward Bellamy. Just as interesting, though not so influential as Bellamy's novel, is William Dean Howells' A Traveler from Altruria. Caesar's Column, by Ignatius Donnelly, can give the reader insight into the interesting variety of utopian literature which was produced during the period. American Dreams: A Study of American Utopia, by Vernon L. Parrington, Jr., is a good general study of utopian literature.

### The Social Impact of Novels with a Message

Charles M. Sheldon's novel, In His Steps, is an excellent example of fictional literature with a purpose. Also, Bellamy's Looking Backward should be examined as a novel of social intent. Howells' A Traveler from Altruria and A Hazard of New Fortunes are message novels, although neither was as widely read as were Sheldon's and Bellamy's books.

The Relationship Between Socialism and  
Christianity as Related to Urban  
Reform and the Christian  
Response to Urban  
Problems

Information for each of these topics is available in The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900, by Aaron Abell; Protestant Churches in Industrial America, by Henry May; and The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, by Charles Howard Hopkins. Particularly rich in information concerning Christian Socialism is The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America by James Dombrowski. For insight into Catholic social thought, see Aaron Abell's book, American Catholicism and Social Action, and The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America by Robert Cross.

Delinquency, Crime and Prostitution and  
Their Relationship to City Poverty

Most of the general works listed above have good discussions of the social problems which developed in areas of poor housing and dense population. More specific information may be attained from the writings of the settlement workers, for example, Twenty Years at Hull-House, by Jane Addams, and The City Wilderness, edited by Robert A. Woods. Pendulum Press has issued a series of ten short works in the Urban America Series which are valuable in drawing parallels between the historical problem of city

poverty and conditions existing today. Jacob Riis' famous work, How the Other Half Lives, is an excellent source of information which reflects the writer's concern with environment as a factor in producing social degeneration.

### Settlements and Social Work

Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914, by Allen Freeman Davis, is the most definitive study of the settlement workers. Beloved Lady, a biography of Jane Addams, by John C. Farrell, and Eleanor H. Woods' biography of her husband, Robert A. Woods, are useful in determining the nature of the reformists' backgrounds. Perspectives on Social Welfare, by Paul Weinburger, contains valuable information which relates the efforts of early reformers to the development of the field of social work. Also, see Trends in Social Work, 1874-1956, by Frank J. Bruno; From the Depths, by Robert H. Bremner; and The Professional Altruist, by Roy Lubove.

### Improvements in Methods of Sewage Disposal, Garbage Collection, and Water Purifica- tion and the Beginning of Public Health Programs

The best source of information on these topics may be found in Health Progress in the United States by Monroe Lerner and Odin W. Anderson. Though the volume is primarily

concerned with public health in the twentieth century, the health situation at the turn of the century is well documented. Environmental and biological aspects of public health are discussed in Public Health Engineering by Earle B. Phelps. The Relationship Between Science and Society: Science and the Social Order, by Bernard Barber, and The Scientist's Role in Society, by Joseph Ben-David, are useful in relating the significance of scientific matters to the social order.

#### Darwinian Theory Applied to Society

Lester Frank Ward's Dynamic Sociology and nearly all of William Graham Sumner's writings, found in Social Darwinism: Selected Essays of William Graham Sumner, edited by Stow Persons, are excellent examples of contrasting contemporary thought on this topic. Additional sources may be found in Darwinism Comes to America by George Daniels. Social Darwinism in American Thought, by Richard Hofstadter, should be examined for insight into this topic.

#### Darwin's Influence on Reformers

The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, by Charles Howard Hopkins, and The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America, by James Dombrowski, are good sources of material concerning Darwin's influence in



the Social Gospel movement. Also, see Eric Goldman's Rendezvous with Destiny. Some of Darwin's impact on reformers was negative in that they spent much time in refuting the evolutionary sociology of William Graham Sumner. See, for example, Progress and Poverty by Henry George. Laurence Gronlund, in The Cooperative Commonwealth, also persistently tried to show that evolutionary biology does not justify competitive individualism.

### The Social Darwinists' Response to Urban Reformers

Richard Hofstadter's Social Darwinism in American Thought is the best volume for information on this topic. In addition, all of the general works cited have discussions pertaining to Social Darwinism. Furthermore, Sumner's essay, "What Social Classes Owe to Each Other," and The Gospel of Wealth, by Andrew Carnegie, are excellent examples of nineteenth century Social Darwinist tracts.

### The Influence of Darwinism in Social Novels

An evolutionary view of the social order is depicted in Looking Backward, by Edward Bellamy, as well as in both of Howells' novels, A Traveler from Altruria and A Hazard of New Fortunes. In Maggie, by Stephen Crane, there is no specific reference to an evolutionary society, but the

author gives evidence that his view of society was influenced by scientific determinism. A good general history of American literature is Main Currents in American Thought: An Interpretation of American Literature from the Beginnings to 1920 by Vernon L. Parrington.

#### Early Muckraking: Reporting or Distorting?

In a sense, all of the reformist writing of the period was muckraking. How the Other Half Lives, by Jacob Riis; Our Country, by Josiah Strong; and The Dangerous Classes of New York, by Charles Loring Brace, furnish valuable examples of reporting style that are useful to a discussion of this topic. Muckrakers and American Society, edited by Herbert Shapiro, provides additional examples of muckraking.

#### Synthesis: The Success of Reformers in Effecting Change

The Age of Reform, by Richard Hofstadter, and The American as Reformer, by Arthur M. Schlesinger, are excellent sources of summary information. Allen F. Davis' Spearheads for Reform, The Progressive and the Slums, by Roy Lubove, and Robert Bremner's From the Depths also contain material from which to draw conclusions.

## APPENDIX II

### USEFUL AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL FOR CLASSROOM USE WITH SUGGESTED TEACHING TOPICS

### Introduction to the Course

"Urban Centers and Historical Background" (50 color frames, with audio tape) 1970, produced and distributed by Society for Visual Education, Inc., 1345 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614

"The City in United States History" (42 color frames with captions) 1969, produced and distributed by Popular Science Publishing Company, 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10017

"Growth of the City" (29 minute black and white film) 1957, produced by WCBS Television, distributed by National Educational TV, Inc., Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47401

### Conditions in American Cities in the Late Nineteenth Century

"The Tenement" (40 minute black and white film) 1967, produced by Columbia Broadcasting System, distributed by Carousel Films, Inc., 1501 Broadway, New York, New York 10036

### Comparison of American Cities to European Cities

"Urban Patterns" (16 minute color film) 1971, produced and distributed by Austl News and Information Bureau, 636 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10020

"The City Explosion: Urban Growth in the Developing Nations" (32 black and white frames, no sound) 1969, produced and distributed by Visual Education Consultants, Box 52, 2066 Helena Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53701

### Geographical Factors in the Development of Cities and the Distribution of People

"Altered Environments: An Inquiry into the Growth of American Cities" (10 minute color film) 1971, produced by Bert Kempers, distributed by BFA Educational Media, 2211 Michigan Avenue, Santa Monica, California 90404

"The Changing City" (28 minute color film) 1964, produced by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, distributed by National Film Board of Canada, 680 Fifth Avenue, Suite 819, New York, New York 10019

Economic Factors in the Development of  
Cities: Industrialization  
and Immigration

"The Uprooted" (30 minute black and white film) 1962, produced by Granada TV, distributed by Films, Inc., 1144 Wilmette, Wilmette, Illinois 60091

"The Newcomers" (25 minute black and white film) 1967, produced by Methodist Church, Board of Missions, distributed by Cokesbury, Service Department, 100 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002

"Immigrants in the Cities" (29 minute black and white film in A National of Immigrants Series) 1972, produced and distributed by Films, Inc., 1144 Wilmette, Wilmette, Illinois 60091

Conflict Between Urban Realities and  
Traditional Agrarian Values

"Cities: The Dream" (85 color frames, sound) and "Cities: The Reality" (92 color frames, with record) 1971, produced and distributed by Filmstrip House, 432 Park Avenue, South, New York, New York 10016

"America, the Melting Pot: Myth or Reality" (66 color frames, with record) 1971, produced and distributed by Current Affairs Films, 527 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022

Conflicts in Values Lead to Questioning  
American Capitalism

"Poverty in the City" (45 black and white frames, no sound) 1968, produced and distributed by Visual Education Consultants, Box 52, 2066 Helena Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53701

"The Problems of the Cities" (72 black and white frames, with record) 1968, produced and distributed by New York Times, Office of Educational Activities, Times Square, New York, New York 10036

The Varieties of Socialism and the  
Differences Between Them

"Socialism in the United States" (55 color frames, with record) 1966, produced and distributed by Flick-Reedy Education Enterprises, York and Thorndale, Box 562, Bensenville, Illinois 60106

"Socialism in Europe and England" (48 color frames, with record) 1966, produced and distributed by Flick-Reedy Educational Enterprises, York and Thorndale, Box 562, Bensenville, Illinois 60106

The Relationship Between Socialism and  
Christianity as Related to Urban  
Reform and The Christian  
Response to Urban  
Problems

"Your Church: Christian Social Concerns" (46 color frames, with record) no date, produced and distributed by Cokesbury, Service Department, 100 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002

"The Changing City Challenges the Church" (50 color frames, no sound) produced and distributed by Cokesbury, Service Department, 100 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002

Delinquency, Crime, and Prostitution and  
Their Relationship to City Poverty

"Cities: Crime in the Streets" (60 minute black and white film) 1966, produced by National Educational TV, Inc., distributed by Indiana University, Audio-visual Center, Bloomington, Indiana 47401

"The Hidden Face of Poverty" (27 minute black and white film) 1965, produced and distributed by Columbia Broadcasting System, 383 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10017

"Cities and the Poor" (2 parts, each 60 minute black and white films) 1966, produced by National Educational TV, Inc., distributed by Indiana University, Audio-visual Center, Bloomington, Indiana 47401

Improvements in Methods of Sewage Disposal,  
Garbage Collection, and  
Water Purification

"Ecology of the Urban Environment: Housing Patterns," and "Ecology of the Urban Environment: Population" (each 35 color frames with captions) 1972, produced and distributed by Urban Media Materials, P.O. Box 133, Fresh Meadows, New York 11365

"The Challenge of Urban Renewal" (29 minute, color film) 1966, produced by National Broadcasting Company, Inc., distributed by Films, Inc., 1144 Wilmette, Wilmette, Illinois 60091

"Slum Rehabilitation" (54 black and white frames, no sound) 1948, produced and distributed by the National Association of Home Builders, 140 South Dearborn, Chicago, Illinois 60603

Early Muckraking: Reporting or Distorting?

"Jacob Riis: The Fight for Better Cities" (42 color frames with record) 1968, produced and distributed by McGraw-Hill Textfilms, 330 West 42nd Street, New York, New York 10036

"Jacob Riis: Social Crusader" (42 color frames with record) 1969, produced and distributed by Popular Science Publishing Company, 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10017

Synthesis: The Success of Reformers in  
Effecting Change

"Social Changes: 1865-1900" (26 color frames with captions, no sound) 1956, produced and distributed by Eye Gate House, Inc., 146-01 Archer Avenue, Jamaica, New York 11435



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