

MANPOWER AND TRAINING PROBLEMS IN COMBATING POVERTY

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Poverty in the United States has been the target of successive efforts to contain it, to mitigate its effects, and finally to eradicate it. In this country the first efforts were conducted under the auspices of religious organizations which used “charity” and volunteers and the philanthropic largesse of families of substance to help “the deserving poor.” In the early 1900s, the combination of social reformers, educators, and enlightened religious and lay leaders responding to mass emigration, individual exploitation, and inadequate social conditions gave impetus to the social welfare approach to poverty. During this period, private social instruments of all kinds were developed to serve the poor and mitigate their condition. For example, voluntary agencies like legal aid clinics, settlement houses, orphanages, homes for the aged, citizenship and adult education programs, mutual benefit societies and labor unions were initiated and provided many with the drive required to move out of the poverty culture.

In addition, as the economy of the United States fluctuated and threw hard-working people out of the working class and into economic poverty, public agencies developed in the areas of housing, welfare, education, employment and health. These tried to lessen the shock of dependency and to develop those services which would soften the impact of recurring depressions or hard times. During this period, the social welfare field gave birth to the social work profession which either by design or by default was assigned major responsibility for caring for the social and economic failures in our American open society.

The convergence of the “Civil Rights” movement with the growing inability of the developed institutions to deal with social problems and their causes—for example, increasing juvenile and adult delinquency, illegitimacy, school drop-outs, unemployment especially in the Negro minority, growth of slums, and so on—gave rise to another approach to the long battle on poverty. This response came mainly from the government and led to substantial public funds being made available to initiate a new attempt to combat and control poverty. It is not at all clear what the net results will be, and the Viet Nam war may seriously cripple the attempt; but out of what has been done up to now have emerged several concepts or principles which are important in understanding the nature of the poverty effort and the implications for manpower and training. These concepts are:

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- (a) Economic poverty is no longer tolerable in the United States since we have an economy which can produce all the materials and services our population needs. It is no longer a production problem, but a moral problem—which if we solve in favor of eliminating poverty becomes a problem of distribution.
- (b) Further economic growth in the United States will not automatically raise the living standards of “the poor.” Special aid is necessary to bring the economic and socially alienated into the mainstream of American life. As a matter of fact, there is evidence to suggest that in our times the poor are getting relatively poorer.
- (c) Poverty is a complex syndrome and requires a complex solution. No single discipline or service can make a real impact. If real changes are going to be accomplished, the United States is going to have to make available material and manpower resources in unprecedented amounts and in new forms. Manpower requirements will be a problem for all professions and services.
- (d) In as simple terms as possible, many of our institutions and services, public and private, designed to serve people and especially “the poor” are largely irrelevant and do not in fact help the poor. All too often the courts and the law are stacked against the poor; the educational system organized to defeat the children from low-income, ghettoized communities; public and voluntary welfare structured so as to institutionalize poverty on both the material and psychological level; health services of such limited availability that the poor are often half sick and in complete despair. To some, these phenomena are a conspiracy of the “ins” against the “outs.” To others, this condition is the result of living with an accumulation of conventional wisdom and a failure to up-date our values and goals with the reality in the rural and urban areas of our communities. Regardless of which rationale one favors, it is obvious that the institutions will have to change and the personnel involved will need to be redirected and reoriented.
- (e) Social change cannot be effective unless there is complete involvement of those whose condition is to be changed. In many community development programs, it has become abundantly clear that people who live in the community must be involved in agreeing to participate in the planning, execution and evaluation of the programs. Politicians and experts from any of the designated fields can help but cannot alone effect social change. People who are of the poverty culture therefore must be involved in planning, in executing and in evaluating and modifying the services which they are to use—especially since no operating profession knows what it takes to destroy the poverty syndrome.

As a matter of fact, the manpower needs created by any serious attempt to reverse the poverty cycle are so immense that many of the personnel required

to staff the changed institutions will have to be drawn from the poor themselves. They and large numbers of semi-professionals will then need to work in conjunction with the short supply of professionals in such fields as law, education, health, employment, and social welfare.

Accepting these concepts as valid and related to the current battle on poverty, we would like to suggest a number of points which we believe are relevant to those concerned with staffing the antipoverty programs. At this point we shall briefly list them and then attempt to develop them somewhat more fully later on.

1. Citizen or professional groups which continue the debate on whether there is a choice of use of professionals or nonprofessionals are avoiding the real issues. Among these are: What is the nature of the program which a specific community needs? What is the technical nature of the work to be done? What parts of the work are nontechnical and unskilled and can be done by a less well trained person? Who can do the specific work best—*i.e.*, if a relatively untrained neighbor because of his contacts can help his neighbor in reading, shouldn't he do this under the supervision of a trained teacher? Or if lawyers could help more people if they were assisted by legal aides or investigators who could prepare and gather information—why not?

In view of the shortage of personnel in all of the helping professions, it is essential that all disciplines re-examine the tasks contained in their services and separate out the duties that can be performed by the less well trained. In some instances there is evidence that there are tasks which can be done more effectively by the untrained neighborhood worker. The homemaker aide and the health aide are only two of the perhaps fifty aide jobs which have been identified; and there is ample evidence to illustrate how well an aide who comes from the community can reach out, communicate, explain a service, and recruit candidates for a service or provide the initial service himself. There are no shortages in the services needed and in the personnel required. The problem is to respond to the needs by recruiting, training, and making use of personnel in such large numbers and in ways substantially different than have been true up to now. The human service fields have never been tooled up or manned by more than a skeleton staff. In these fields we must demonstrate the capacity to adapt to new employment needs and perhaps help solve some of the perplexing personnel problems.

2. The needs of the people to be served by the poverty programs are so diverse and the programs themselves so complex that there simply is no one group of experts qualified to assume leadership. Likewise, there appears to be no one profession with unique competence nor any one discipline or training program that can legitimately stake out any exclusive rights. Because of our failure to find individuals with unique and specific expertise, the "game" is wide open to almost any citizen, group, profession or discipline. Any accumulated experience in work in undeveloped

countries, in labor unions, in the church, in factories, in social welfare, in law, journalism, politics, and so on, may be appropriate to equip a person for a strategic role in a community action program. The field is indeed so wide open and so unconfined by professional lines that in the existing vacuum a new organization called the National Association for Community Development has been organized and now includes a substantial number of workers involved in the antipoverty program.

3. The introduction of personnel with a variety of backgrounds, experience and training has major implications for the established professions and for the professional associations. Much will depend on the response of such groups as the American Bar Association, the American Medical Association, the National Association of Social Workers, the National Education Association, the American Public Welfare Association, the American Nurses Association and, indeed, of a number of training institutions, unions, business groups, and the like. Will they see the new influx as a challenge and threat to their own hard-won roles, and will they define it as an assault on standards and quality of services? Or will they, on the other hand, be ready to provide the sanction and support for establishing these new service jobs on a basis which provides respect and dignity to the new working force which must be employed if any significant part of the job is to be done? If they do respond in this fashion, it may well turn out to be a major accomplishment of the war on poverty that it was able to confront the professions and their associations, the training institutions, the labor unions and employer groups with the need to re-examine their biases and regulations and to change them in order to face up to a more realistic approach to today's needs. In turn, we would expect these new workers to recognize that more experienced, professionally skilled and trained staff in education, employment, health, social work, and similar fields, are required both for rendering specialized services and to prepare, supervise, and direct the large numbers of people who will have been employed without benefit of formal training.

In our discussion of manpower needs related to poverty, we are focusing on the community action programs which to us are crucial and represent potentially the most meaningful approach in the antipoverty campaign. Of course, all the other programs and projects do have many significant manpower and training needs and add to the problem of shortage.

Any serious attempt to arrive at a definitive estimate of the total number of personnel likely to be required by the various poverty programs is so complicated and time-consuming as to raise the question whether it is productive. Even if such a figure could be arrived at, it would only be a partial story as there are also numerous demands for similar personnel in many other programs not part of the official poverty efforts. Despite these difficulties, the Office of Economic Opportunity and other organizations and groups are making some studies in order to project both short range and long range manpower needs. Most of these projections are not yet available and those that are known vary considerably. For example, we have seen

estimates of manpower need that range from an additional 400,000 to two million workers. One rule of thumb that has been suggested is that there is a need for one worker for about every forty poor persons, and that would mean that a poverty population of about 40,000,000 would require a working force of an additional 1,000,000 people to staff the poverty programs.

Dr. Leon Gilgoff, Director of the Information Center, Office of Economic Opportunity, said that "the Community Action Program's fiscal year 1965-66 staffing estimates call for about 390 positions (of which 265 are professional) in OEO's seven regional offices with a salary range of about \$5,000 to \$17,000." Dr. Gilgoff emphasizes the importance of these positions and then goes on to say that,

... to fill these sensitive positions CAP is recruiting "Generalists," flexible individuals with diverse academic and occupational backgrounds with special emphasis on superior academic achievement, outstanding work performance, previous involvement in social action or community service projects and intelligent awareness of political, economic and social trends.¹

Dr. Gilgoff further states that "the requirements for the estimated 150 professional positions in the central office of the Community Action Program are similar with a little more emphasis on administrative and management experience and specialized experience in such disciplines as education, manpower, health, community service"²

In the same letter, the Director of OEO's Information Center points out that,

The number and types of positions to be filled in local community action programs are difficult to determine. In fiscal 1965 approximately 800 CAP grants were approved. In the first five months of fiscal 1966, approximately 650 CAP grants have been approved. In 1965 a total of 405 Community Action Agencies have been funded. The staffing needs of these many grantees are numerous and diverse, ranging in scope from directors of local community action agencies to researchers and neighborhood workers.³

Whatever the ultimate estimate of personnel needs turns out to be, it is clear that the comprehensive service programs envisioned will require large numbers of personnel from fields long plagued by personnel shortages. Indeed, one might be easily tempted to give up when one thinks of adding poverty personnel needs to the major shortages of personnel in the more traditionally delivered services in education, health, social welfare, urban renewal and housing, employment, adult and youth programs, correctional agencies, legal services, and libraries and museums. If an additional criterion of "staff who are knowledgeable or experienced in working with the poor" is added, the manpower problem could well defeat the antipoverty program even if the other problems did not.

¹ Letter from Leon Gilgoff, Director, Information Center, Office of Economic Opportunity, to Mitchell I. Ginsberg, Jan. 4, 1966.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

What seems crystal clear is that there is no hope for doing anything significant about these personnel problems unless we can break down the tasks required into appropriate sub-roles and functions so that there can be much greater and more imaginative use of other than professionally trained staff. Without recognition and acceptance of this fundamental fact there simply is no possibility now or in the conceivable future of meeting manpower needs in any of the so-called human service professions. In our formulation of the differentiated use of manpower, we would suggest a model that includes the professional, the semi-professional and the non-professional or aide. We recognize that there is a problem of titles, and we know of none that have gained anything approaching a consensus. In the category of non-professional or aide we are including but not limiting it to the much discussed indigenous worker and the poor, although these differ in some important ways and are not mutually exclusive. The volunteer presents still other problems and perhaps ought to be put in a special category although he is often lumped in with the non-professional and the aide. Later on we will be discussing some of the issues involved in the very difficult tasks of defining specific roles and functions, developing a sound plan for the differentiated use of staff, and organizing appropriate training programs for each of these groups. Meanwhile, let us suggest some of the components and corresponding personnel needs that we see in community action programs that hopefully could be used in both rural and urban areas and that could be enlarged or reduced according to the specific nature and size of the community to be served.

All community action programs require an executive director, whatever the title, to direct the program, whether it be on a local, regional or state-wide basis and whether it be urban or rural. Such positions, particularly on the local level, have been among the most difficult to fill with persons of real competence. The responsibilities involved require versatile, flexible generalists with an ability to work with and make use of the political system. Such executives must have demonstrated a concern for and activity in social betterment. The capacity for problem-solving and the ability to administer an untidy organization are skills which they must have or must acquire. Empathy for the protection of civil rights and minority needs coupled with the knowledge and skill needed to be effective in working with such major institutions as those in education, health and welfare, are almost prerequisites for an effective community action leader.

Assuming that there will be continued emphasis on the poverty program despite the international situation, it is reasonable to estimate that there may well be 1,000-15,000 community action program directors needed by the end of 1966 with the future figure likely to be close to that of the total number of urban and rural units in the country. This is an expanding field both in size and in types of responsibilities, and this type of position may ultimately become something like a deputy mayor in charge of citizen participation and services. The idealistic nature of the work, the excitement and opportunities both for service and for personal advancement, and the salaries and

status connected with these positions, do attract a great many candidates, but finding those with real competence is considerably more difficult. There are no specific credentials or formalized training for these positions. Likewise, there is no one profession or occupation which has any exclusive claim, and many of the current directors come from politics, law, labor unions, social welfare and journalism. Salaries in general range from \$10,000 to \$30,000 a year.

In order for the director to use his time most effectively in problem-solving, in effecting organizational change and in developing meaningful relations with the many individuals and groups involved, he must have significant administrative and program support. This makes necessary a deputy or deputies who ideally complement the qualities which the director himself possesses. One such deputy is needed to assist in the housekeeping, business operations and budgeting generated by a large organization handling funds, employing personnel, entering contracts and using properties. Related to these responsibilities is the need for comprehending the appropriate federal, state and city legislation and preparing the projects for funding bodies, and the deputy or controller must maintain liaison with the various funding groups and their staffs. By and large, it is the business world which is one of the major developing grounds for deputies who can administer and carry on these business functions.

Another type of deputy is necessary to serve as an extension of the executive in the program area. Here the tasks are primarily to initiate, organize, direct and assess and evaluate a whole series of programs and projects. The ability to work with staff who come from a wide variety of professions and occupations is a highly important criterion for effective functioning. Up to now these program deputies have been drawn from many fields including law, social welfare, education, journalism and public administration.

As antipoverty teams multiply and programs move to the action stage, there will be an increased demand for both types of deputies. Salaries for such positions range from \$7,000 to \$20,000, depending on the size of the operation, prevailing salaries in a specific geographic area, degree of responsibility and previous background and experience. At the moment, it is anticipated that there is a need for up to 2,500 such deputies. These positions are attractive and widely sought after. In appointing such deputies many community action programs have also been keeping in mind such realistic criteria as politics, racial balance and the competition of community sub-groups to have their "interests and rights" protected. Use of such criteria does not rule out competence, but unfortunately it does not guarantee it either.

While every member of the antipoverty team should be sensitive to civil rights, cultural factors and minority group problems, the employment of an intergroup relations specialist is often essential especially in larger communities. In some areas

such a staff member is shared with the city's equal opportunity or civil rights office.

The specific team which any community would put together after establishing this basic unit depends on the size and nature of the community to be served and its relationship to the governing political unit, the urban renewal organization, the health services, the legal and police systems, and so forth. Clearly the community action program should not duplicate the systems through which a community provides essential services to its citizens. There are a number of important program areas which need to be included in any community action program. This does not mean that every community action program must have a staff member for each of these areas, but what is suggested is that the staff unit in aggregate should have some competence in these types of programs.

Among the programs or services which seem absolutely essential are those related to education, employment and training, neighborhood services and community organization activities. Depending on the community, social service and health consultants or specialists will be just about as essential or at least next in line. In addition, as the local community program moves toward developing a coordinated comprehensive approach, including the support of services required to help people take advantage of the newly created opportunities, there is need for the community social lawyer, the housing expeditor or specialist, the consumer education specialist, and the small business administrator. In programs of any significant size other supporting staff such as training or staff development specialists and persons carrying on action and evaluative research are essential. The conservative estimate is that there is now, or soon will be, the need for up to 15,000 such specialists or consultants.

Up to this point, we have been slowly developing the skeleton backbone of the local community or rural action program. As suggested earlier, the staff blend required to attack poverty is a mixture of technical and experience competence—the professionally trained technician, the college or high school graduate who wishes to participate in important work either as a VISTA volunteer, college work-study student or semi-professional, and the large group of aides who are looking for entry jobs in service to their community and who need to earn their way back to self-respect and independence. The community action programs can only succeed if they are successful in employing the mixture of professionals, semi-professionals and non-professionals or aides in the appropriate amounts so that there is adequate support to each participant as he moves out into the community to carry out his appropriate helping role. Thirty thousand semi-professionals could be utilized if there is a normal growth in financing. Also a minimum of 75,000 to 100,000 aides could easily be employed by the 1,500 community action programs which we have projected for the year 1966. Both of these last two estimates could be multiplied by ten if funds were available.

Particularly with respect to the use of the non-professional, the opportunities seem

unlimited. We will have more to say about this later on, but meanwhile a sample listing of some of the jobs identified for non-professional workers in the community action programs may give some idea of the potential. Such a list would include:

Recreation Aides or Leaders	Research Aides
Teacher Aides	Psychiatric Aides
Child Care Aides (Day Care & Nursery School)	Nurse's Aides
Home Management Aides; Homemaker Aides	Family Advisors
Guidance Counselor Aides	School Library Aides
Neighborhood Aides (Connector or Link)	Youth Workers Aides
Lunchroom Aides	Craft Instructors
Work Crew Foremen, Supervisors or Leaders	Assistant Librarians
Administrative Educational Aides	Health Instructor's Aides
Health Aides	Field Researchers
Legal Aides or Lawyer's Representatives	Neighborhood Coordinators
Camp Counselor Aides	Clerical Aides
Migrant Worker Aides	Neighborhood Organizers
Field Sanitation Aides	Study Hall Aides
Home Economist Aides	Administrative Aides
Parent Worker Aides	Consumer Education Aides
Interviewers	Cook Aides
Home Visitors	Bus Matrons
Casework Aides	Sanitarium Aides
Transportation Aides	Tutors
Project Leaders	Teacher Assistants
Assistant Program Developers	Training Director Aides
Vocational Counselor Aides	Maintenance Aides
Employment Aides	Pre-school Leaders or Aides

These aides, if used appropriately on duties they can perform and supported by supervision and relevant training, can enrich the professions and accomplish the tasks instead of watering down the contribution of the profession with which the aides are identified.

To conclude this section on existing and potential needs for personnel, it might be well to comment briefly on Community Progress, Inc., a community action project in New Haven. New Haven, a medium-sized New England city of 158,000, probably is illustrative of one attempt at a comprehensive approach to poverty. After beginning its program in 1962 with approximately twelve people,

by 1965 its staff numbered about 275 individuals. The Executive Director, Mitchell Sviridoff, in an off-the-cuff interview, stated that New Haven was meeting about one-third of the need. To do the total job, the community action project itself would need approximately 600 staff members. It should be noted that in New Haven while the new instrument was being developed to supplement on-going agencies and services, the existing systems—education, welfare, health, employment, recreation, group work—were adding another 200 personnel.

Given the above rough estimates of manpower needs it is clear that there can be no solution without the working out of a division of roles and a categorization of tasks that will make possible much more use of the non-professional. It is not suggested that the use of the non-professional is a new development stemming from the poverty program. In some fields they have long been used, but it does seem fair to say that in most such situations it has been out of necessity rather than choice. It is all to the good that in recent years there has been an increasing number of experiments and demonstrations in the use of non-professionals. While no one experiment can be considered an unqualified success, some including the Social Work Assistant Project, developed in the Veterans Administration under Delwin M. Anderson and Jean M. Dockhorn,⁴ seem to be having interesting results. As these experiments are continued and expanded, the end result must be a diagnosis of community and human needs and the differentiation of helping tasks so that the appropriate degree of skill is mobilized for the present problem. This means trying to make sure that professionals are not “under-helping” or “over-helping.” In all the service fields too many professionals are spending too much time on too many tasks that simply do not require manpower so highly skilled, expensive and scarce. Non-professionals must be used not only because of shortages but even more because they can make a positive contribution and because it is a waste of time, money and human resources to use highly trained personnel for tasks that do not require such skills and training.

An essential corollary to any successful differentiation of professional, semi-professional and non-professional tasks and functions, is the development of specific training for each of these categories. Just as it has been suggested that there is no one profession that can provide all the manpower with the unique competence to carry out all the responsibilities involved in working in poverty programs, so there is no one discipline or training program that can legitimately stake out any exclusive rights.

When one thinks back to the difficult and demanding tasks facing the top level professionals, it is clear that it is the rather rare and unusual individual who can come even close to having all the necessary skills and knowledge to fill these top positions. As has been pointed out, the number of such positions is undoubtedly in-

⁴ Anderson & Dockhorn, *Differential Use of Staff: An Exploration With Job-Trained Personnel*, National Ass'n of Social Workers, Personnel Information, Nov. 1965, p. 1, at 42-43.

creasing much faster than the supply of such gifted individuals, and the problem of bringing supply and demand closer together will become an increasingly serious one. Clearly, the need is for some kind of training program for such people, although we have already indicated our belief that there is no one existing training program that can do the job. What apparently has to be done is to recognize that inevitably much of the training will have to take place on the job, but that this needs to be supplemented by some high-level, short-term orientation and training programs developed and carried out on an inter-disciplinary basis. There has been some experience in bringing together relatively small numbers of local top personnel for limited periods to review common concerns and problems, and to suggest possible approaches. It does seem likely that similar programs for OEO Community Action national and regional staffs might also have some real value. In the Poverty Program, as in all others, there is some danger that the assumption may take root that because someone is on the job, he knows all there is to know and that training, including keeping up with current developments and thinking, is strictly for someone else. Indeed, this is an occupational danger which threatens all professional and top level personnel. In addition to these high level generalists and their deputies or assistants, there is the need for highly qualified professionals to carry out a variety of program responsibilities. It is essential to recognize that the key positions in health, education, welfare, employment and the other program areas do require a high level of professional competence. This is a fact that too often tends to get overlooked or even denied. There seems to be a growing trend within poverty programs to play down the role of the professional and often to eliminate it. In many cases there seems to be a feeling and attitude that the professional is somehow responsible for everything that goes wrong. Indeed, much of the current literature and not a few of our most eloquent speakers, including many a professional, seem to suggest that poverty itself is caused by these professionals, and getting rid of them would somehow solve the problem. This is not at all to suggest that there are not serious limitations in the ways many professionals have been functioning; but the need is to see what can be done to strengthen their performance and make them effective, not to eliminate them. The war on poverty is indeed too important to be left in the hands of the professionals, but it is most unlikely that it can be won without them. As we have said before, the task is to redefine those parts of the job that require the special competence of the professional. In many situations these functions are likely to include substantial components of supervision, consultation, program analysis, and planning. This does not for a moment mean that no professionals are to be involved in direct service, but it does suggest that much of the direct service may be carried out effectively by a team of personnel including but by no means limited to the professional. Acceptance of this would mean that some direct services to individuals and groups in all professional fields would be given

by the professional, and some by the semi-professional and aide under supervision, and that the division would be made on some logical basis related to people's needs.

If the above approach were followed, it would have direct implications for the training of these professionals. Preparation for direct service, whether in education, welfare, or other fields, would by no means be eliminated, but would have to share time and curriculum space with preparation for supervision, consultation, planning, program analysis, and the like. We recognize that major aspects of these skills can best come from experience and more advanced training either on a part time or full time basis, but we believe that more can and should be done in the basic training programs of each of the professions. Of course, current educational curricula are crowded and it is difficult to find room for substantial amounts of additional content and knowledge, but how much curriculum space would be available if the various professional schools really took a hard look at their programs and decided that tradition was not sufficient justification to continue much of what is now being taught. This is no new thought to any group of reasonably knowledgeable professionals, and it is just as true in our own area of social work education as we firmly believe it to be in the other professions. Our tendency to prepare for today's and tomorrow's battles with yesterday's weapons is not the result of any plot or even of ignorance or lack of knowledge. Rather, it stems primarily from resistance to change, a propensity unfortunately at least as common in the professions and in educational programs as in other institutions and agencies of our society.

Along with preparation for these additional responsibilities as part of professional training must come more emphasis for helping more professionals to work with low-income people. Again, we do not suggest that this relative lack of emphasis has come about mainly by conscious design, but whatever the reasons, much of professional education, regardless of discipline, has simply not done enough to prepare its graduate to work with the poor. It is not that we accept what seems to be a developing mystique about what it requires to work with the poor, or that we think there are any great mysteries as to how one works with them. Most of the skills and many of the key areas of knowledge now included in professional training apply to the poor as well as to anybody else. What is essential is to adapt them to the needs and life styles of the poor, to make more of an effort to understand them and their ways of life, and to help develop attitudes that will help insure that the poor get at least an even break in securing the attention and services of the most, rather than the least, qualified professionals.

In our discussion of differentiating tasks and roles, we have suggested that there is a need for another level of worker whom we have called the semi-professional. This type of position is by no means a new one although this particular title is rarely used. Actually, in the social welfare field the semi-professional is the largest single group and filled most of the approximately 115,000 positions available in 1960. Only twenty per cent of such positions at that time were held by individuals with social

work degrees from accredited schools of social work. One large segment of this semi-professional group is made up of young adults who are looking to "field test" their ideas and aspirations and to begin to make long range vocational decisions. Many of them see what they are doing as temporary until they can decide whether to go on to professional training or to move into another field. Still another large group is made up of middle-aged adults who in one way or another have established themselves in the field without any intention of seeking full professional status. All too often such semi-professionals are lumped together with professionals and given job assignments that do not take into account levels of skill and previous preparation.

This situation, although highlighted in social welfare, is by no means confined to it. In almost all fields, people with less than full professional qualifications are being employed either because the professional is not available or because he has too many things to do. Both of these reasons are understandable, but to us do not constitute a sound basis for having the semi-professional take over the professional role. Rather, what is needed is to factor out the tasks in terms of complexity and required levels of skill. On this basis it can then be determined what functions require one type of worker and which can make use of another. The two workers then are not seen as interchangeable but rather complement one another in getting the total task done. The semi-professional is seen as part of a team headed by the professional who generally serves as the supervisor of the other team members.

If one accepts the above formulation, then it follows that the training of the semi-professional should be related to but different from that of the professional. It should be geared to the type and complexity of the tasks and functions he will be carrying out. It should cover some of the same areas as professional training, but these can be done in less depth. It does not have to include the same breadth and range of knowledge and skill that are or should be included in professional training. The length of time spent in such training should be substantially less than that for the professional. Just how much less will vary, depending on the field and the nature of job assignments, but generally speaking six months to a year would seem to be enough and, in some cases, it can perhaps be done in less time. The training program should contain both theoretical and practice material and should include some practice or field experience. One of the major by-products of such training can be the possible impact on professional preparation. We believe that training for semi- and non-professional roles is bound to result in a recasting of professional training so as to put more emphasis on preparation for those tasks and functions that the professional is or should be uniquely qualified to carry out. We suspect that such a formulation will lead to the elimination of many areas of knowledge now considered sacred and the substitution of others much more related to current and future needs.

A crucial third member of the manpower team that we have suggested is the non-professional or aide, in which category we have included the poor and the in-

indigenous worker despite the fact that they may differ in some rather substantial ways. As has been indicated, this category covers a wide range of positions and responsibilities, but in our formulation these would be less complex and would require a lower level of skills than the other two. Here again, we do not see the non-professional as interchangeable with either of the other two categories; but again being different does not mean that it has less value and importance.

One of the more interesting phenomena of the emphasis on poverty and the development of antipoverty programs has been the discovery, or rediscovery as some would define it, that there is a place for poor people to work in many of these programs and projects. Although differences tend to develop rather quickly when one tries to get specific as to just how they are to be used and what types of responsibilities they are to carry, few voices are being raised against the principle of such employment. In fact, employment of the poor is coming to be seen by many as the favored approach to "maximum feasible participation." Many individuals and groups most opposed to what they consider over-emphasis on having the poor in policy making and board positions maintain very strongly that employment is the most meaningful form of involvement and that this is the way "maximum feasible participation" should be achieved. On the other hand, those who urge continued and expanded involvement of the poor in key policy-making roles are also in agreement on the desirability of employment, but see it as in addition to rather than instead of. With all the emphasis on the employment of the poor in poverty jobs there is a danger that the extent of such employment may be higher exaggerated. Whatever facts are available seem to indicate that up to now the total number employed, especially on full time jobs, is quite low. However, it does seem true that, at least for the time being, poverty programs themselves have provided more jobs for the poor than they have been able to create in other sectors of the economy.

Of all the voices raised in support of the employment of the poor and the indigenous in poverty and related programs, among the most persistent and forceful have been those of Frank Riessman and his colleagues. In frequent articles and speeches they have urged that there is need for literally millions of non-professionals (a term they use for the poor and indigenous worker). In fact, in their recent book, Pearl and Riessman argue that the needs of what they call the "helping services" are so great that they say "the central thesis of this book is that in an affluent automated society the number of persons needed to perform such tasks equals the number of persons for whom there are no other jobs."⁵ A review of this book, of the HARYOU proposal,⁶ and of a number of other articles, indicates that there are many advantages usually suggested for this large scale employment of the poor and indigenous workers in a wide variety of human service tasks. Among the advantages frequently advanced are:

⁵ ARTHUR PEARL & FRANK RIESSMAN, *NEW CAREERS FOR THE POOR* 6 (1965).

⁶ HARLEM YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED, INC., *YOUTH IN THE GHETTO* 607 (1964).

1. Such employment provides a very meaningful and appropriate form of participation which has almost universal acceptance.
2. Employment of the poor provides paying jobs. It helps reduce unemployment, provides a sense of satisfaction to the people involved, and cuts down on welfare costs. It makes it possible for poor people to earn money.
3. Bringing in the poor as workers will help reduce some of the serious and almost hopeless personnel shortages in all human service fields.
4. Employment of non-professionals in these ways can lead to badly needed clarification of what the real professional tasks are and what functions really do require professional skill and knowledge. In turn, this can serve to revitalize and strengthen professional education.
5. The use of poor and indigenous personnel in non-professional roles will tend to reduce the rigidity of the professions.
6. In addition to all the above, such use of the poor and the indigenous will provide better service to people. It is suggested that because they have the "know-how" and the "style" that comes from similar life experiences to those with whom they work, they can do things the professional cannot do and they can also provide the "bridge" between the professional and the poor.

Even if one does not subscribe fully to all of these contentions, it does seem clear that there are many advantages to the use of the poor and the indigenous as non-professionals. Once there is genuine acceptance of this idea and a willingness to be flexible as to how they are to be used, we are confident that they can take on many more tasks than have been assumed. Along with the significant contributions they can make to services, it is all to the good that they will get legitimate jobs for which they will receive pay. In addition to these major advantages, we are impressed with the contributions non-professionals can make to help meet the personnel shortages in the human service fields.

In our judgment, it is long overdue for these shortages to be faced up to with some degree of reality. It is not only that these major shortages exist now, but they will certainly get much worse if the approach continues to be "business as usual." Whatever the profession, these shortages cannot be met by simply recruiting more students, expanding or setting up new schools, providing more fellowships, raising professional pay, and the like. We are all in favor of these steps and believe they should be pushed vigorously; at the same time, we ought to recognize that they are not enough. By and large, the professions are competing mainly for the same people, and the supply is and will continue to be inadequate to meet the demand. We simply must find, train, employ and then develop career lines for non-professionals to take over many of the tasks that we have sometimes too casually defined as professional. Even if by some process not known to us, it were possible to find and prepare a large number of professionals to take on these tasks, we do not

believe it could be justified as sound policy. As has been said earlier in this paper, too many of these functions are not really professional in nature and do not require professional skills. Professionals in all fields have known and talked about this among themselves for a long time. It simply makes no sense to use scarce, relatively costly and highly trained personnel to do so many tasks that others who very much need employment can do in satisfactory and less costly fashion. At the same time, such a process would free the professional to take on the duties that do require professional skill and competence, and that now are not done at all, or at least do not get the professional time and attention they need.

The case for a greatly expanded use of the non-professional, particularly the poor and indigenous, is overwhelming; but it also has to be understood that it is not a panacea. Unless there is recognition of the potential pitfalls and problems, the result will inevitably be frustration and unhappiness for all—the professional, the non-professional and, most important, the people receiving the service. Just as it is true that non-professionals can take on many more tasks than has generally been accepted, so it is equally felt that there are some that they cannot do. We cannot stress too strongly the conviction that professionals and non-professionals are not interchangeable. Each functions best when his tasks are clearly defined and differentiated. Non-professionals must be given appropriate orientation and training, and continuing staff development is essential. Also, they will need supervision and supportive help from the professional. One has to be aware that there is no guarantee that workers coming from the ranks of the poor will necessarily be especially understanding and accepting of those service recipients whose backgrounds are similar to their own. In fact, a tendency to be punitive and demanding towards those from whose ranks the worker has been recruited is not at all uncommon nor, unfortunately, is it unusual for the non-professional to out-professionalize the professional in the worst sense of the term. Just as we believe that being poor should never disqualify one from being considered for any type of responsibility, equally does it have to be recognized that poverty does not automatically qualify anyone, nor is it a guarantee of effective functioning.

The fact that the use of non-professionals opens up work opportunities to people who need employment very badly is indeed a plus, but here, too, there is need for caution. We do not believe these jobs will solve the unemployment problem in this country, and for anyone to act on this assumption and thus see this as a substitute for the major steps necessary to create more jobs in the general economy could indeed be disastrous.

Another problem that is only now beginning to receive some discussion is the danger that most of the non-professional jobs may turn out to be dead end. What will happen after the non-professional learns how to do his job effectively, has made a meaningful contribution, and wants to move ahead? This will by no means be true of all, and many can continue to function for long periods in the initial roles,

provided they are given appropriate salary increments and other personnel benefits; but some will understandably look to move up the scale. Will there be opportunities for this? Failure to provide such opportunities can be frustrating and self-defeating and lead to an understandable feeling of hopelessness and bitterness. Certainly there ought to be a chance with increased skill and knowledge from experience and training to move ahead within the category in which one is placed. Thus, the aide or non-professional becomes a senior aide, or whatever the title may be, with increased responsibilities and salary. But what about moving from one category to another? How does the aide or non-professional become a semi-professional, and is there a route open to full professional status? The fact that many will not want to look for these possibilities does not eliminate the problem. For instance, how does a practical nurse become a registered nurse, a teaching aide a teacher, the welfare assistant a professional social worker, or one might even ask, the legal aide a lawyer, or the medical aide a doctor. It will not be enough to suggest that such people take the regular paths to professional status. Most of them won't have the formal qualifications or the time or the resources. What is essential is to find alternate routes with proper safeguards for those individuals with appropriate potential and capacities for professional functioning. Failure to develop such routes can be a seriously limiting factor to the use of non-professional personnel and can make something of a mockery of the much-discussed career concept.

Perhaps even more disastrous could be a continuation and acceleration of what appears to be a trend to convert the appropriate and badly needed emphasis on the use of non-professionals into a broadside and all out attack on professionals and professionalism. Of course there are problems in the ways some professionals function in their training, in their at times excessively purist notions of professionalism, in their rigidities, conservatism, and so forth. But of what individuals and groups can this not be said, and what justification is there for some of the sweeping generalizations about all professionals? Does the fact that some or many professionals have some or many of these limitations to greater or lesser degree mean that professionals as a group are to be disqualified from work with people? Being professional does not guarantee successful functioning, but we believe that being exposed to a disciplined body of knowledge and being subject to a code of ethics do provide some safeguards. The limitations one finds in professionals are not inherent in the professional role. Rather, they may be in the training, in the individual's capacities, in the way he is being used, and so on. While we have tried to make it patently clear that there is need for greatly expanded use of non-professionals, this is not because we believe professionals are not qualified. Generally speaking, it is our conviction, especially in the human services, that the good professional can do the job and, in most cases, do it better than anyone else. It is because we think he does have a high level of competence and preparation that we want him to stick

to those tasks that require his skills and not be diverted to those functions which are a waste of him and can be carried out in satisfactory fashion by others.

Essential to any realistic conception of the use of the non-professional personnel is the development and implementation of a carefully-thought-through and continuous training program. In that sense, non-professionals of any category and professionals are very much alike; neither will be able to do the job without effective training. In fact, without adequate training the non-professional is likely to be a liability rather than an asset, and the agency or institution, and particularly the people to be served, would be better off without him.

Once the conception of the necessity for training is accepted, all sorts of questions arise about when, what type, how long, what kinds of curricula and under whose auspices. Pearl and Riessman⁷ and MacLennan⁸ make a strong case that training must not be considered a prerequisite for employment and that the training should take place after the job is secured. In the words of Dr. MacLennan:

It is necessary to reverse current procedures and to make education and training an integral part of the job rather than conceive of employment as dependent on prior education and training. Thus, entry jobs become essentially one aspect of training for employment. . . . If training is to be meaningful, particularly to socially deprived youths, jobs have to be provided and work experience, training and education carried on concurrently so that work is considered one aspect of training.

This timing of training and making it part of the job are especially significant when we are considering using the poor and the indigenous in the non-professional roles. While there are individual exceptions, there is evidence to indicate how difficult it is to motivate them to involve themselves in the training unless they have already secured the job. Even when it is part of employment they tend to be impatient with the training aspects and want to "get on with the job." If the jobs are not provided in advance, there is also the danger that individuals taking the training in good faith may end up without a job—with all the frustrations and disappointments that this entails. Also, tying training to the job permits training to be made much more specific and concrete—qualities which are especially important in preparing non-professional personnel. In some situations it may not be possible to relate job and training in this way; but if this is so, it will still be highly important that commitments be made to a job provided the training period is completed satisfactorily. Basically, this is the approach followed by the Peace Corps and VISTA, although the trainees involved in these programs generally do not fall into the poor and indigenous groups. However, the trainees do know that they will get an assignment if they complete the training successfully. Also, our direct ex-

⁷ PEARL & RIESSMAN, *op. cit. supra* note 5, at 3-4.

⁸ MacLennan, *Training for New Careers*, in *NEW CAREERS: WAYS OUT OF POVERTY FOR DIS-ADVANTAGED YOUTH 109-10* (Center for Community Studies, Howard University, 1965).

perience with the Peace Corps and VISTA has convinced us that trainees are likely to do better in training when they have some reasonably specific ideas about the kinds of responsibilities they will be taking on after graduation. In the Peace Corps and VISTA training programs with which we have been associated or which we have observed, actual field work in community agencies has been an essential element in order to build in at least some simulated aspects of the job and to make the preparation as concrete and realistic as possible.

The issue of length of training is tied up with a whole series of factors such as nature of the job, type of training, and previous background of the trainee. There is certainly no one magic period, but again the Peace Corps and VISTA experience and other programs point to a period of between six weeks and three months. There are projects where the time has been less than that and some of them seem to have worked well, but we suspect that in those cases the trainees may have brought certain experiences and skills with them. When suggesting six weeks to three months, we are assuming that this is a combination of training and work or, as indicated above, that the training includes a very substantial component of field work, practice teaching, practical nursing, and so forth.

It appears to us that some combination of field work or guided job experience, both under supervision, along with some small group discussion opportunities, lectures or talks geared to the experience and background of the participants and the use of such devices as role playing are likely to be most helpful in training. A good deal of emphasis on "how to do it" seems essential although this, too, varies somewhat with the previous experience, education and sophistication of those involved in the training. Where one is carrying on a program for low-income people with limited educational backgrounds, it is important to be as detailed and specific as possible without taking anything for granted, although any indication of condescension is and ought to be disastrous. In Peace Corps and VISTA programs, where many of the trainees are likely to be college graduates, some more theoretical material can be introduced; but here too there is likely to be a demand for relating this to what is to be the job and for more emphasis on how and what to do.

In organizing and carrying out Peace Corps training programs for Colombia and Venezuela, the following objectives were suggested:

1. To have some impact on the trainees' philosophy and value systems about working with people.
2. To expose them to problems and sights with which they were unfamiliar.
3. To give them a beginning understanding of the complexity of the tasks involved in working with people.
4. To help them make a limited start in developing beginning skills in one or more areas.⁹

⁹ Ginsberg, *Short-Term Training for the Peace Corps*, Social Work, Jan. 1964, p. 62, at 68.

These appear to be important if limited objectives; and there is, of course, no guarantee that they can be achieved. On the whole, they seem applicable also to the training of low-income people for work in poverty and related programs, although unfortunately one does not have to worry in the same way about exposing them to the sights, sounds and smells of poverty. However, such low-income people can be helped to understand better what poverty does to people and how they react to it. Depending on the nature of the job to be carried out, help with specific skills is essential. The homemaker may not need any help with homemaking skills, but she may well need some assistance in how to teach her skills to someone else. The fact that she has been doing these things all her life may make it even harder for her to understand that others have difficulties with them, and indeed the fact that she is doing what comes naturally may make it all the more complicated for her to explain what she is trying to accomplish. The potential recreation worker has to know about games, the health aide about health problems, and so on down the line, regardless of the field. Many low-income people being prepared for non-professional roles may need help with basic education such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, and may need considerable assistance with what might be called the culture of work—what is involved in looking for, obtaining, and keeping a job.

Pearl and Riessman likewise suggest some other specific areas that have to be emphasized in training the poor. These include:

1. The problem of confidentiality—non-professionals, especially from low-income groups, on the one hand, do not always see the need for such confidentiality and, on the other, are sometimes hesitant to share pertinent information with the agency.
2. The problem of being able to accept and make use of authority.
3. The tendency to over-identify with the agency and “look down” upon the poor with whom he is working.
4. Extreme swings from overoptimism to overpessimism which, on the one hand, may lead to expecting too much and, on the other, to getting discouraged too quickly.
5. Working out roles and relationships with the professionals.¹⁰

Whether we are talking about Peace Corps and VISTA trainees or low-income and indigenous people, some pattern of initial and on-going training or staff development is essential. Whatever the variations from group to group and project to project, there are attitudes, values, areas of knowledge and skills that have to be included. Training is never an end in itself and much that has to be learned will be gained on the job and from experience; but the non-professional develops and functions best when what he learns on the job is linked up and supported by a

¹⁰ PEARL & RIESSMAN, *op. cit. supra* note 5, at 158-63.

meaningful and realistic program of on-going staff development. This is especially true when, as we have suggested, the beginning job is not an end in itself, but hopefully a step toward a more meaningful and satisfying career.

Several times reference has been made to the serious personnel shortages in the human service fields. Although everybody agrees that this is a major problem, there are different points of view as to its extent. We will focus on social work as the field we know best, but the picture here appears applicable across the board to all the service fields.

Although social work has been giving increasing attention to manpower needs and what can be done about them, nobody really knows just what is needed. In a speech at the Annual Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education in 1965, Wilbur Cohen, Undersecretary of Health, Education and Welfare, said:

It is a startling fact that nobody today can state with confidence how many social workers we need to staff the programs we have but the facts and estimates at our disposal paint a pretty woeful picture. If it is true, as we were told in 1963, that in recent years some 10,000 to 12,000 paid social work positions remain vacant for lack of qualified social workers to fill them, and another 12,000 to 15,000 new recruits are needed each year to replace workers leaving the field and to staff new and expanding services, and that our social work schools each year graduate fewer than 3,000 workers, we have a major crisis on the road ahead. Estimates of current and projected social work manpower needed to staff the public assistance and child welfare services alone exceed the total estimated output of trained workers between now and 1970.¹¹

It must also be kept in mind that these estimates for public assistance and child welfare cover only the projected need for professional social workers—the same estimate projects a need of twice as many more workers with less than full professional training.

Many other estimates of manpower needs are also available but in no significant way do they conflict with Secretary Cohen's figures. Miss Mary Baker, Director of Personnel Service, Family Service Association of America, in the *Encyclopedia of Social Work* states that "It is clear that even tripling or quadrupling . . . the number of professional social workers in the next ten years cannot meet the needs of this developing field."¹² This is true even though in the past ten years the schools of social work in the United States and Canada have had an annual increase in enrollment ranging between three and twelve per cent and there is every indication that the increase will continue and perhaps accelerate. All those who have looked into this question agree with Arnulf Pins, Associate Director, Council on Social Work Education, that:

¹¹ Cohen, *The Role of the Federal Government in the Expansion of Social Work Education*, in *SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE MANPOWER: PRESENT REALITIES AND FUTURE IMPERATIVES* 57 (Council on Social Work Education, No. 65-13-41, 1965).

¹² Baker, *Personnel in Social Work*, 15 *NATIONAL ASS'N OF SOCIAL WORK, ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOCIAL WORK* 532, 538 (1965).

The existing and growing needs for professional personnel in social welfare and the need for better qualified personnel demands active promotion of increased quality and expansion in social work education. To do so will necessitate increasing the capacity of existing schools, establishing new schools and considering and testing new patterns and methods in social work education.¹³

To these recommendations is often added the suggestion that there be a similar expansion of social work education on the undergraduate level to provide another group of personnel for social welfare positions.

In 1963, Secretary Cohen set up a Health, Education and Welfare Task Force on Social Work, Manpower, and Education, and in the speech mentioned above called for action toward a Social Work Manpower and Training Act in his words, "comparable in scope and objectives in social work personnel to the Health Professions Education Assistance Act in the medical field. The aim would be to secure general program support in social work education."¹⁴ If all the above were achieved—a somewhat formidable task—it would help but by no means solve the problem. To quote Miss Baker again, "Relatively little has been done, though much theoretical attention has recently been given, to defining different functions for the professional social worker and for the worker without professional education who can be trained to do jobs that do not require a professional worker."¹⁵ Miss Baker emphasizes the urgency of "the deployment of the total personnel in social work for the most effective use of their varying qualifications of education and experience."¹⁶

Along with the concern about manpower shortages and needs has been increasing uneasiness about the level and quality of the social worker's performance and especially the appropriateness of his training. Criticism of current training is widespread and comes from both within and without the profession. While the motivation behind some of the more violent attacks does seem questionable and some of the critics appear to us not to know what they are talking about, there are serious questions that social work education and the social work profession have to face. It is no secret that there is widespread concern about both the numbers and quality of social work faculty, and despite some growth in doctoral programs, there appears to be no reasonable solution in sight. Supervised field work placement is seen as an essential and major component of social work education, but there is probably not a school of social work in the country that is even reasonably satisfied with the number and quality of field work placements and with the level of field instruction.

Along with these questions are other widespread doubts about the adequacy of the social work curriculum especially in view of the development of the poverty and

¹³ Pins, *The Number, Size and Output of Programs of Schools of Social Work and the Need for Professional Manpower: Implications for Expansion of Graduate Social Work Education*, in *SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE MANPOWER: PRESENT REALITIES AND FUTURE IMPERATIVES* 39 (Council on Social Work Education, No. 65-13-41, 1965).

¹⁴ Cohen, *supra* note 11, at 69.

¹⁵ Baker, *supra* note 12, at 539.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

other new types of programs. Even though some progress is being made, there is insufficient attention being given to social and cultural factors and, perhaps even more important, to helping students make use of this material in their practice.

In addition, most people close to social work education and practice would agree that insufficient attention has been given to adapting training to prepare students for work with low-income individuals and families. As we have indicated, we believe this involves a change in emphasis and attitude rather than any fundamental reorganization of the curriculum. Expanded use of certain types of field work placements, substitution of records and illustrative material dealing with low-income people, and more emphasis on teaching the life styles and culture of the poor would make considerable difference. We are not suggesting that these changes will necessarily come easily; but it is not fundamental lack of knowledge that stands in the way.

And has not social work, like many other professions, carried the whole business of specialization to excess? People's needs rarely break down into such neat categories. While there is a great deal of talk about generic training, until very recently not much has actually been done. There are now a few interesting experiments in relating or even integrating two or even three major social work methods, and it seems inevitable that this trend will continue and be expanded. Of course, these changes in field work instruction will have to be paralleled by similar developments in class teaching. It is easier to urge this than to accomplish it, but the need seems to be obvious. A variety of agencies, both governmental and voluntary, the National Association of Social Workers, the Council on Social Work Education and a number of schools of social work are considering or testing out approaches in this area. One other development that we think offers promise and may make some interesting changes if it works out is the development by the Columbia University School of Social Work and a few other schools of teaching or training centers based on the medical model, where the school actually operates the service program in order to try to introduce a number of service and training innovations.

One other aspect relating to training must be mentioned. As has been said several times, the introduction of significantly larger numbers of non-professionals inevitably will require professionals to be involved more in supervision, consultation, program analysis, and the like. If this is to be the pattern, as we are urging, then these areas will have to be covered, at least to some extent, in social work educational programs. This further substantiates what has been suggested before—the development of new models of workers, whether professional or non-professional, inevitably means changes in the training for each of these categories.

As part of a review of manpower and training one ought to look briefly at the question of the relationship of the professions to the poverty programs, including the issue of the use of non-professional personnel. We have already touched on this

issue but here again, would like to focus on social work—both because of knowledge and our belief that it is reasonably typical of all the others.

It does seem fair to say that the reaction of the social work profession and the poverty programs to each other is very mixed and difficult to categorize. The profession has been widely attacked both for its supposed reluctance to participate in these programs and, perhaps even more, for its alleged inability to make a meaningful contribution. It is often suggested that welfare in general and social work in particular have had their chance, have messed things up and are simply not relevant to meeting the needs of the poor. In a widely discussed speech given at the National Conference on Social Welfare in May 1965, Sargent Shriver sharply criticized welfare and the profession as not having met their responsibilities to the poor and warned that they would inevitably be by-passed unless there were significant changes in their philosophy and approach. While the speech did seem to upset a substantial number of those present and those who heard about it, the reality is that much the same points and in stronger terms have been made by many in the profession itself. Thus, Professor Richard Cloward and others have time and again attacked the profession's "flight from the poor" and have emphasized what they consider the profession's turning away from its historic mission by what they consider to be an inappropriate and self-defeating concentration on the most narrow and rigid aspects of professionalism. Terms such as "social welfare colonialism" and the "social work establishment" are very much in current usage and relate to what are considered the profession's failure to respond to the needs of the poor. Articles and speeches on this theme appear regularly in the profession's and related publications and in all sorts of conferences and meetings. Not at all atypical is the point of view of Professors S. M. Miller and Martin Rein that "certain social service professionals would rather protect their power positions and control of funds and preserve the importance of their skills—however outdated—rather than undertake a program of change however promising for all concerned."¹⁷

In turn, many social workers and leaders in the welfare profession have attacked the poverty programs on a variety of grounds. Among their major criticisms which represent different points of view and thus are not necessarily consistent with one another are:

1. The programs reflect nothing new and they are simply pale copies of what has been done for many years.
2. They represent a gimmick rather than a carefully thought through approach to helping the poor.
3. They are mainly for publicity and political purposes.

¹⁷ See Shostak, *The Poverty of Welfare in America*, in *NEW PERSPECTIVES ON POVERTY* 94, at 103 n.19 (Shostak & Gomberg ed. 1965), citing S. M. Miller, *Stupidity and Power: Two Competing Modes of Explanation* (an unpublished paper, privately distributed), and Rein, *The Social Service Crisis*, *Transaction*, May 1964, pp. 5-7.

4. They are by-passing the existing agencies and setting up an unnecessary competing and highly expensive duplication of what is already available.
5. They are receiving and will receive an undue share of existing and potential funds, a result of which will be to waste a lot of money and to starve out those programs which have already proved their value.
6. By paying excessive salaries and by unfair recruitment tactics, they are taking badly needed personnel away from existing programs.

And finally

7. They are really not designed to achieve anything worthwhile and they simply represent a diversion away from focusing on real needs and meaningful change. The net result will not help the poor at all and may even make their lot worse by creating the delusion that something is really being done.

In addition, and probably for a variety of reasons, many professionals have been and are very skeptical about the major emphasis being placed on the use of non-professionals, particularly the poor and the indigenous. Doubts are widely expressed that these non-professionals can really accomplish anything worthwhile, and there is concern that the results may simply be a poorer level of service. Another point often made which may not be completely consistent with the preceding one is that non-professionals and volunteers have been used in the field for many years; and so what's all the current excitement about. While there is no doubt as to the sincerity and conviction of many who express the above points of view, it also seems clear that some of the responses are defensive reactions springing from the widespread and, as we believe, at times much too sweeping attacks on the profession and on welfare generally. At the same time, it seems to us equally true that some of the profession's responses and its attack on the poverty programs and their use of non-professionals have also been somewhat extreme and hysterical in tone, and do arise, at least partially, from perhaps excessive concern with professional status and how its own standing in the community will be affected. We believe, and to some extent it may be wishful thinking, that the profession and the poverty programs are beginning to make some effort to work out these difficulties. Certainly there is an increasing involvement of social workers and social agencies in the poverty effort, although some may see this as a not unmixed blessing. The National Association of Social Workers has had a special committee on poverty which has met with Mr. Shriver and some of his top aides to think through how the profession can be more helpful and what its role should be. Mr. Shriver himself, in a recent and very well received speech to the American Public Welfare Association, spoke very positively of welfare's contribution to the poor and called for mutual help and support in the future. Certainly poverty and the poverty program are very fashionable with social work and related groups. It is far and away the number one topic in conferences and meetings and ranks equally high as a subject for papers and articles.

For better or worse, and in our judgment it is for the better, the social work profession and the whole poverty effort are likely to move closer together, although at best the relationship will be an uneasy and uneven one. As has been suggested, the realities of the personnel situation are likely to force the social work profession to experiment more with the use of non-professionals entirely aside from the push of the poverty program. Also, even if there are substantial differences of opinion about the "flight from the poor," both as to whether it has really happened and whether the profession ever was much involved with this group, all the discussion has helped to focus the profession's attention on the needs of this group and the necessity for an appropriate response. It is likewise interesting that in recent weeks, as the international situation has brought about talk of cutting back or even eliminating the poverty program, there seems to be a growing tendency on the part of the social work profession to rise to its defense. This does not mean, nor should it, that the profession will put aside its right and duty to criticize, but it may be that the criticism will be somewhat more constructive. It also does seem likely, and we believe it will be helpful, that there will continue to be substantial concern expressed about the program's not going far enough and not doing enough to bring about badly needed and fundamental social change.

The most effective use of the non-professionals, particularly as they are drawn from the poor and the indigenous, will continue to be a problem. Reality will demand their use; but reality also requires that their jobs be clearly defined, that career opportunities be specific, that initial training and on-going staff development be more clearly formulated and improved, and that supervision be strengthened. We must recognize that these jobs require a combination of idealism and skill—that good intentions are important but insufficient, and that competence remains an essential factor.

We would like to repeat what has been said several times before. Our discussion of the profession and its relation to the poverty program has concentrated, for what we consider good and sufficient reasons, on social work and social welfare; but this is illustrative only. With what we believe are minor modifications any of the other human service professions and fields could have been substituted.

One of the most frequently expressed concerns about manpower and the poverty program is that these workers will be involved in politics and these jobs will be used as a source of patronage. There is no question that much of the political leadership does see these programs as a potential source of political power and leadership. One needs only to look at the responses of the mayors and of other local and state political leaders to see the pressure exerted, particularly in many of the larger urban communities, to make sure that the programs are centered in the mayor or local executive's office. Only recently the mayors have again demanded that all local programs be processed through the central community action organization, and it is not cynical to suggest that they feel it would be easier to exercise

control over one organization than over many. It is also true that there has been widespread publicity about alleged mismanagement, poor administration and dishonesty in programs in several of the large urban communities, and an assumption often made is that this comes about because of political interference and involvement.

Along with everybody else, we are opposed to mismanagement and dishonesty and to the appointment of unqualified political appointees on a patronage basis. At the same time, we consider it to be naïve, unrealistic, and probably self-defeating to talk about insulating these programs from politics. Indeed to suggest that poverty programs be kept completely separate from politics is probably a contradiction in terms. Programs such as these have been traditionally involved in the political structure of our country; and in a democratic system that is probably just as well. Many of the poverty programs are political in nature and are likely to affect political power and influence. Actually, not too many people seem to be troubled about this issue in general. Rather, it is more a question of whose power and influence will be affected, and which politicians will benefit and suffer as a result of these programs and of the ways in which people are involved. Aside from questions of political losses and gains, there are significant differences in point of view among many of the professionals about the relationships of these programs to the power structure; and these differences are reflected in the way programs have been developed in a number of communities. There is a point of view that suggests that these programs can be effective *only* to the degree that they are identified with the community political structure, and that this is the only way that meaningful change can come about. As evidence, they point to what has happened in a number of communities where the programs are not so connected.

On the other hand, the contrasting point of view is that the programs will be destroyed *to the degree* that they become identified with the political leadership. The proponents of this view argue that no real meaningful action will be permitted, that the interests of poor people do not coincide with those in control of the political structure, and that no city hall or other governmental unit is going to finance its own destruction. They point also to the danger that in programs under city sponsorship and leadership the representatives of the poor may too often be co-opted and bought off.

Whatever the merits of these points of view—and we think both of the suggested approaches should be experimented with—we would strongly urge some sense of perspective about these issues. It must be recognized that many of these programs are large in size, highly experimental, and are moving in relatively uncharted directions. Also, many of them have to be put together in a hurry and have had to call on inexperienced and untrained personnel. Mistakes are inevitable, particularly when one remembers how complex, complicated and enormous are the needs of the people whom they are trying to serve. There must be some margin

for error, just as there is in the nation's space efforts and in some other major national programs both past and present. We must maintain our right to criticize and do everything to avoid and certainly not repeat mistakes; but we must also recognize that there will be waste and failures, that at best progress will come slowly, and that success is by no means certain and in any case will not come easily. Those who would use these limitations or others to destroy these programs might do well to keep in mind the consequences. The poor and their needs are still with us and we cannot expect them to be patient forever.