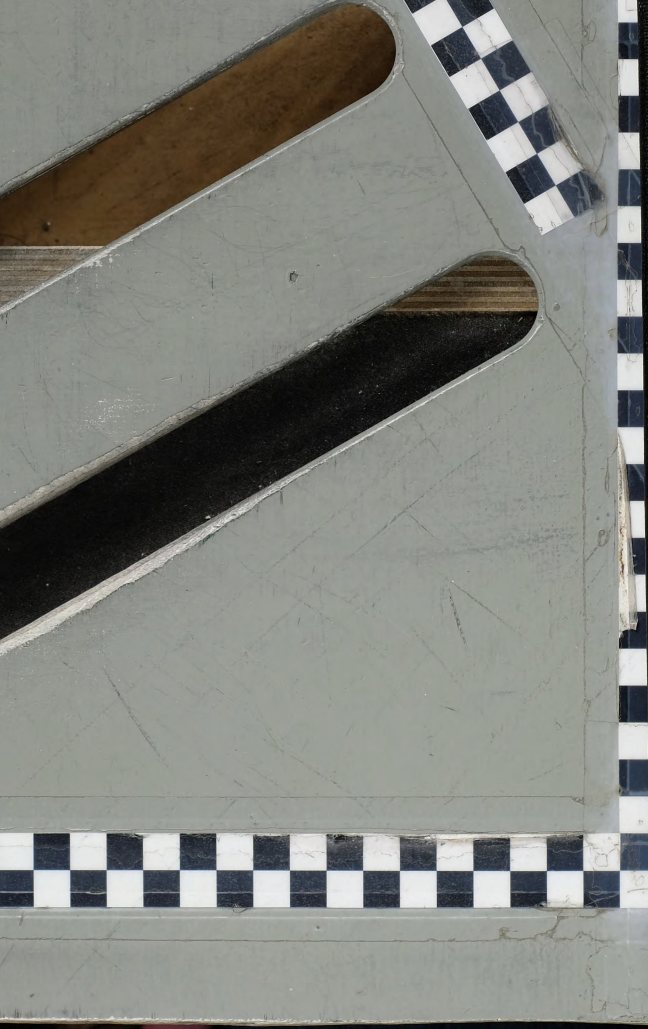


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LEISURE AS SOCIAL WORK  
IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY:  
THE PROGRESSIVE RECREATION  
MOVEMENT, 1890-1920

Dissertation for the Degree of Ph. D.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
LAWRENCE A. FINFER  
1974



This is to certify that the  
thesis entitled  
Leisure As Social Work In The Urban Community:  
The Progressive Recreation Movement, 1890-1920

presented by  
Lawrence A. Finfer

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

Ph. D. degree in History

*Douglas T. Miller*  
Major professor

Date October 31, 1974



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## ABSTRACT

### LEISURE AS SOCIAL WORK IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY: THE PROGRESSIVE RECREATION MOVEMENT, 1890-1920

By

Lawrence A. Finfer

This work is a study of the major phases of the public recreation movement in American cities from its inception in the 1890s through World War I. Largely ignored by historians, the recreation movement is in many ways a model of the course of progressive reform. Far from parochial in its membership and outlook, the public recreation cause drew the attention of political reformers, settlement workers, social scientists, and educators, all of whom saw organized leisure as an antidote to the social disorganization pervasive in city life.

The intensive psychological and sociological studies of children in the 1890s first showed the scientific importance of leisure time in character formation. The child study movement, led by G. Stanley Hall, asserted that children recapitulated the past experiences of the race in play, their primary activity throughout the years of growth. In his play the child learned, "by doing," those principles of ethics and proper conduct necessary for society to

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function properly. As analyses of urban life showed, however, the need for play was frustrated in the crowded districts of American cities, and therefore often expressed itself in lawless activities. Charity workers considered this fact, as well as what they perceived as the instability of the city child's home and neighborhood life, and argued that society had a duty to oversee the welfare of its offspring.

The 1890s and the first years of the new century, therefore, were marked by progressive-backed agitation for children's playgrounds and other recreational facilities for the young. Playground reformers said that supervised recreation countered both the evil influences of the street and those of the child's home. In the playground, through directed activities, the child learned to obey rules and an authority figure, thus minimizing his potential as a social nuisance. Providing play opportunities for children, ostensibly a humane venture, thereby fell within the boundaries of social control theory.

Urban reformers, however, soon realized that the recreation movement was unduly limited by the philosophical strictures of pre-progressive thought. The leisure problem, as innumerable social surveys of the period showed, involved

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the entire populace. Urban recreational patterns were dominated by commercialism, resulting in the growth of debasing institutions such as the cheap theater, saloon, and brothel. To progressives, the leisure time pursuits of city residents fragmented community life, thus encouraging disorder. As a result, the recreation movement expanded its activities to include adolescents and adults. Its most significant proposal involved the establishment of so-called "social centers" in public school buildings during the evening. The social centers offered political discussions, community pageantry, and other activities intended to attract entire families. Depicted as democratic in concept, the social centers were actually tightly managed by educators, social service professionals, and local business groups. Rather than promoting community self-government, they were designed to minimize social conflict by drawing disparate ethnic, economic, and political groups into a managed arena.

The recreation movement became, by World War I, a recognized sector of progressive reform. Its advocates from social workers to business "booster" groups, found a common ground in their desire for an efficient, conflict-free society. During the war, when the problem of the relations between military training camps and surrounding

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communities concerned the effects of soldier's leisure, governmental programs employed leaders of the recreation movement to coordinate the leisure-time activities of military personnel. In a matter of a generation then, public control and sponsorship of recreation was recognized as necessary to the maintenance of public order.

LEISURE AS SOCIAL WORK IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY:  
THE PROGRESSIVE RECREATION MOVEMENT, 1890-1920

By

Lawrence A. Finfer

A DISSERTATION

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

1974





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#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many persons aided me during the preparation of this work. Dr. Douglas T. Miller, my thesis director, first suggested leisure as a field of investigation. Dr. Norman Pollack and Dr. Russel Nye provided helpful comments during every stage of the research and writing, while Dr. William J. Brazill, who served on my guidance committee until the final stages, also rendered many important suggestions. Special thanks are also due to the staffs of numerous libraries, several friends and colleagues, and to Sally Sash, who typed the manuscript.

My greatest indebtedness, however, is to Judy--for all the reasons.



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## PREFACE

This study examines the concept of and response to leisure time as a social problem in American urban communities during a period of rapid industrial growth and development. The late-nineteenth-century city was a physical arena of crowded districts whose deficiencies in housing, health conditions, and public services were acute. In many ways, the impact of these problems was greatest where the city's children were concerned. Space utilization in large municipalities seldom provided for play areas for children, while those public parks that existed were usually too far from the crowded districts to relieve the situation. Social reformers considered the relationship between lack of play space and the growing rate of juvenile delinquency significant. Influenced by both the scientific studies of child nature and the sociological analyses of slum conditions, they became convinced that the inadequately supervised city child, frustrated in his desire for adventure and athletic contest, represented a threat to social order. When placed against the background of the intensive fear of the "dangerous classes" of the city existing at the time, the

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leisure problem suddenly became an important consideration of municipal reformers.

The first two chapters of this work are concerned with the background of the recreation movement in the period's studies of the lives of city children. They deal with the psychologist's conception of the child and the role of play in character formation, as well as the reformer's view of the city environment and its effects on the child's morals and character. Chapters III and IV discuss the growth of the movement for children's recreational facilities as a component of municipal reform programs of the 1890s and the early twentieth century. Both the publicly espoused rationale for playgrounds and other facilities and specific programs in major cities are considered as are developing patterns of leadership and control within the movement.

The latter part of this work examines the expansion of the public recreation movement. As will be shown, reformers soon concluded that the leisure problem was of lifelong duration and that it was intimately related to the task of building efficient communities. Progressivism's view of the ideal society considered it as an organic whole, in which differences of political persuasion, economic class, and ethnic group ought to be subordinated to the ideal of

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service to society. The city's leisure patterns, however, only aggravated these differences, and contaminated the populace morally. Through the evening usage of schools as community centers reformers hoped to win city residents away from debasing forms of amusement such as the saloon and brothel to a managed arena where the maintenance of social cohesion was paramount. Chapters V and VI discuss the rationale for the expansion of the recreation movement and the school center programs themselves, while the concluding chapter considers the recreation movement's impact on the wartime problem of military-community relations.

It is the intent of this work to show that the public recreation movement, in its ideology and actions, serves as a microcosm of the progressive movement as a whole. The social science professionals, educators, and businessmen who made up the movement agreed that "social efficiency" involved the maintenance of public order. Therefore, they felt that a custodial role had to be assumed by the public sector, wherein agencies and institutions were to undertake managerial duties. Regulation, in this sense, was directed at the mass below by the powered above. In the case of the recreation movement, the original distrust of the working-class parent led to an early focus on children, but this was

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later expanded to justify the monitoring of the leisure activities of adults. Desiring predictability and orderliness in social relations, progressives attacked the logic of leaving leisure time to chance influences such as children's playmates, saloonkeepers, and the physical city itself. The shaping of the citizenry, they reasoned, was a matter too crucial to be left to either individual inclinations or divisive forms of social organization. From this perspective, the public recreation movement functioned as a community reform venture that defined community in terms of the preservation of order. Hopefully, in this examination of an ignored but significant effort in early-twentieth-century reform, basic questions concerning the nature and goals of the reformist process that have seldom been addressed will be explored.

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## CHAPTER I

### "LITTLE SAVAGES": PSYCHOLOGY, PLAY, AND THE CHILD

"The first rash rush of the evolutionary invasion is past," proclaimed Henry Drummond, the English biological theorist in 1894.<sup>1</sup> Drummond wrote these words thirty-five years after the publication of The Origin of Species, assuming that the passage of time just then allowed for a consciously new perspective as to the meaning of evolutionary theory, one that called for a reorientation in the scientific community. The theory of evolution, said Drummond, had been in its very nature "misconceived" from the start and "remained out of focus to the present hour." The "whole mistake" of the naturalists, he said, was to study nature "simply as machinery," and the result had been a misdirected science. The true lesson of evolution was altogether different. It pointed to a developing communal consciousness, towards "ascent, not descent," and its deepest significance came in that evolutionary theory applied to a dimension

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Drummond, The Lowell Lectures on the Ascent of Man (New York: James Pott, 1894), p. 3.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.,

beyond that of the physical. The universe, said Drummond, as a result of the discovery of the theory of evolution, was now to be viewed as a "psychical" arena, where man could and ought to "take charge" of development, so as to "form the foundation of an inconceivably loftier super-organic order."<sup>2</sup>

Drummond spoke as a popularizer of feelings that were gaining strength among scientists and social theorists rather than as a lone dissenter. The feeling that evolutionary theory implied the growth of an organic community marked by cooperation and social interdependence rather than a bitter struggle for survival denoted the new sensibility in scientific thought. The new view thus asserted, however indirectly, that progress depended upon man's ability to harness the power of evolution and direct it towards the good. The historicist view of man necessarily emphasized the origins and development of things. In this case, this meant that the child would receive concentrated attention, since he became the key to individual and institutional survival for mankind as a whole.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. v-vi, 17, 114-17.

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The application of evolutionary theory to man's psychic as well as his physical existence suggested revision of the long-held view of children as "miniature," or flawed adults.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, even in its earlier phase, evolutionary thought tended to present a view of child development that contradicted, at least in the physical realm, popular notions concerning child nature and nurture. Fritz Mueller, a German biologist, published findings in 1864 that noted the similarity of human embryo's physical features to those of lower animals at various stages of the prenatal period. Ernst Haeckel, a comparative morphologist, had expanded this hypothesis into a cosmic scheme, arguing that the embryo "recapitulated" the entire route of evolution in the prenatal period. Laboratory studies indicated that the fetus began life as a simple form and passed ever upward through stages in which it resembled lower mammals and the apes, finally to reach the stage of man at its birth.<sup>4</sup> Herbert Spencer confirmed this notion, noting that observation

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<sup>3</sup>Bernard Wishy, The Child and the Republic: The Dawn of American Child Nurture (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), pp. 105-7.

<sup>4</sup>Dorothy Ross, G. Stanley Hall: The Psychologist as Prophet (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 90. Erik Nordenskiöld, History of Biology (New York: A. Knopf, 1928), pp. 514-20.

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would demonstrate that the human organism, in a relatively short time, went through changes that gave a "tolerably clear picture" of evolutionary processes that had unfolded over countless ages.<sup>5</sup> Later, biologists trained in the observation-oriented methods made popular in the post-Darwinian phase of scientific investigation noted that the child, even after birth was not wholly "man" in the modern sense. Young children had physical features that were out of proportion to what was considered normal in adult man. The head and upper extremities were abnormally developed, often in apelike fashion, and the vestigial organs were more prominent than those of adults.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the human infant was behind the higher apes in many areas of development, particularly in its lengthy period of physical helplessness.

Had the investigations stopped with the examination of physical man, this by itself probably would have caused

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<sup>5</sup> Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Biology, Vol. I (New York: D. Appleton, 1880), p. 349.

<sup>6</sup> Louis Robinson, "Darwinism in the Nursery," Nineteenth Century, XXX (November, 1891), pp. 831-42; S. S. Buckner, "Babies and Monkeys," Popular Science Monthly, XLVI (January, 1895), pp. 371-88; Cephias Guillet, "Recapitulation and Education," Pedagogical Seminary, VII (October, 1900), pp. 397-445.

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a reevaluation of child-rearing methods. However, anthropological and psychological investigations tended to raise speculation that the theory of recapitulation had broader applications than those envisioned by the early biological evolutionists. In part, this was due to the near-magical appeal of the evolutionary dogma itself, which invited the "cosmic" viewpoint, that is, a broad-based view of the universe as an arena governed in all its sectors--physical, mental, and spiritual--by evolutionary theory and practices. The long-held desire to explain man in both his physical and social persons as a creature governed by a set code of conduct was also a factor. The observational method, as it became popular in the emergent social sciences, tended to underscore these assumptions, and, as problem solving proceeded along parallel lines, problem selection was often limited accordingly by methodological demands.<sup>7</sup>

In observing societies of primitive men, late-nineteenth-century anthropologists noted a similarity between their activities and those of children in modern,

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<sup>7</sup>Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 10, 37, 126. Kuhn's concept of the "paradigm" is useful in understanding the impact and appeal of Darwinism and explains how the paradigm may limit the problem-solving processes to measurable phenomena defined by the paradigm.

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"civilized" societies. In particular, a resemblance between those activities that possessed sacred and religious connotations in primitive society and the seemingly superfluous play activities and pastimes of the children of western nations was apparent. Edward Tylor and other anthropologists of the Victorian period remarked on the closeness between primitive divinatory rites and modern childish games of chance and speculated that objects used as toys in the modern era, such as the rattle, had once (and still possessed, in some parts of the world) had mythic and sacred meanings.<sup>8</sup>

Sir John Lubbock, a contemporary of Tylor's, observed a "remarkable similarity" between the mental operations of adult savages and those of civilized children, of which the analogy between what was formerly sacred and what was now amusement was one. The exact significance this had in relation to modern child-rearing methods was not fully realized, as it was not the major concern of the anthropologists, yet Lubbock and others began to see the possible

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<sup>8</sup> Edward Tylor, Primitive Culture, Vol. I (London: John Murray, 1873), p. 80; John Lubbock, Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man (New York: D. Appleton, 1892), p. 526; James G. Frazier, The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1911), p. 90; J. G. Wood, The Natural History of Man: Being an Account of the Manners and Customs of the Uncivilized Races of Man (London: G. Routledge, 1874), pp. 242-47.

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utility of recapitulatory theory in explaining mental states:

The opinion is rapidly gaining ground among naturalists, that the development of the individual is an epitome of that of the species, a conclusion which, if fully borne out, will, evidently, prove most instructive. Already many facts are on the record which render it, to say the least, highly probable.<sup>9</sup>

The fitting of the play activities of human beings, and of young children in particular, into an evolutionary scheme was not necessarily a new development. Romantics (indeed, even their predecessors) in Europe and in America had emphasized children's activities as a nascent form of creativity, and thus necessary for the proper growth of the organism and the collective mind. They criticized society's attempts to force the child to accept a prematurely conceived structure of morals and ethics that he could not rightly comprehend, insisting that the path to proper conduct could and should be discovered by the child himself. Friedrich Schiller, in his Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man (1795), though not referring merely to children's activities, blamed the demands of the everyday world for creating a temper that left man unable to live in freedom without destroying himself and his fellows, as had occurred

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<sup>9</sup>Lubbock, Origin of Civilization, pp. 522-23, 528.

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in France during the Reign of Terror. In what he called the "play impulse," Schiller found a reconciling element between the individual and society that allowed man to perform his social duties and realize his connectedness with the whole community, and yet retain the ability to grow as an individual.<sup>10</sup> Play was not a "mere game," said Schiller, but a state of mind that ennobled man and left him free to create. Thus it underlay "the whole fabric of aesthetic art." Indeed, historical studies showed that the great nations had been characterized by "a disposition towards ornament and play." The higher end of play was the conferring on man of a "social character," as his heightened sense of the beautiful led to a realization of the interdependence of beings.<sup>11</sup> Schiller's message was nothing less than an indictment of civilization in the name of civilization.

Building on similar notions, the German educator Friedrich Froebel (1772-1852) set out to understand and aid the growth of young children through their natural activities--their plays. As the "Father of the Kindergarten,"

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<sup>10</sup> Friedrich Schiller, Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), pp. 4, 39, 46, 70.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 79-80.

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Froebel asserted that true education ought to show the child "the continuity and interconnection of all things in the universe,"<sup>12</sup> and that this was best accomplished by educational models emphasizing the self-activity of children rather than sedentary drill. Adopting a transcendental view of evolution that was, unlike later biological theories, based wholly on spiritualist notions (his followers constantly referred to him as a "Christian Evolutionist"<sup>13</sup>) and thus wholly beneficent, Froebel saw the importance of connecting the child's mental processes with natural objects. The child in the kindergarten was to be acquainted with what Froebelians called "gifts," natural shapes such as the cube and the sphere. These objects were to serve as symbols of the surrounding world of more complex forms, thus developing the pupil's senses and perceptive faculties to the point where he could create. In time, the organic-spiritual connection between all things in the universe would be demonstrated, and the child would come to know his place in

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<sup>12</sup>Baroness Marenholtz-Buelow, The Child and Child Nature (Syracuse, N.Y.: C. Bardeen, 1889), p. vi.

<sup>13</sup>Angeline Brooks, "Essential Principles of the Kindergarten System," in National Education Association, Journal of Proceedings and Addresses, 1894, pp. 696-701. Arnold Heinemann, ed. Froebel Letters (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1893), p. 44.

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nature without the need of abstract and incomprehensible moral lessons.<sup>14</sup> Children's play then, was a serious matter, nothing less than "the germinal leaves of all later life."<sup>15</sup> Froebel was thus extremely critical of the failure of parents and educators to understand the child on his own terms:

The young human being is looked upon as a piece of wax, a lump of clay, which man can mold into what he pleases. O man, who roamest through garden and fields, through meadow and grass, why dost thou close thy mind to the silent teaching of nature?<sup>16</sup>

Froebel and his followers evoked the spectre of possible future chaos for the race against those who forced on children, "in tender years, forms and aims against their nature." If faulty methods of education were retained, children were likely to have the "greatest difficulty" in growing into manhood. Regarding children's activities as nothing more than "misdirection of energies" would lead to a displaced sense of the self, a loss of confidence, and

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<sup>14</sup>Denton Snider, The Psychology of Froebel's Play-Gifts (St. Louis: Sigma Publishing Company, 1900), pp. 1-37; Lucy Wheelock, "They Have Eyes and Ears," in NEA, Proceedings, 1890, pp. 560-63.

<sup>15</sup>Friedrich Froebel, The Education of Man (New York: D. Appleton, 1889), pp. 55-71.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

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ultimately a feeling of disconnectedness from the larger community.<sup>17</sup>

Froebel's thought, when placed in the late-nineteenth-century American context, was evolutionary in a sense less "scientific" than it was cosmic or Emersonian.<sup>18</sup> Yet, in the post-Civil War period, a general trend toward the relaxation of rigid concepts of child-raising occurred that insured a sympathetic audience for an enlightened viewpoint. Bernard Wishy, who has examined child-rearing practices in America, notes that the new enlightenment was accelerated by the increase in popular printed material.<sup>19</sup> Froebelians, among others, benefited from this. Coinciding with the rise of the kindergarten movement, Froebel's writings were translated and popular, "distilled" versions of his ideas circulated. Proto-progressive concepts such as appealing to the child's interests in teaching and the utility of play activities received an extensive hearing in educational circles.

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 75; see also Irene Lilley, ed. Friedrich Froebel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 3-14.

<sup>18</sup>Compare Froebel's view of evolution with Emerson's essay on "Nature" in Ralph Waldo Emerson, Essays: Second Series (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1886), pp. 161-88.

<sup>19</sup>See Wishy, The Child and the Republic, pp. 94-107.

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Nevertheless, the benign view of evolutionary processes and the concern for children's activities as an integral part of race development might not have advanced further without the biological and social science re-orientation then taking place. This was prompted by the extension of the evolutionary hypothesis into the mental realm, buttressed with the authority of experimentation. It served to combat the view of the child's mind as a series of "water-tight compartments" into which knowledge could be drilled and moral lessons force fed, which was still predominant in American education for at least a generation after the Civil War.<sup>20</sup> Arguments such as those of the kindergarteners were often dismissed as visionary or sentimental musings of the ladies bountiful of the movement. In any case, doctrines without backing from the new science could not receive broad-based support. By the late 1880s, however, new viewpoints were beginning to attract attention that made many of the arguments of the proponents of the new child training scientifically credible. They involved the use of data garnered by observation and experiment-oriented methods similar to those employed by

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<sup>20</sup>Wilbur Harvey Dutton, "The Child Study Movement in America from its Origin (1880) to the Organization of the Progressive Education Association (1920)," (Ed. D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1945), pp. 10-13.

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biologists. The new science of psychology, as it was to develop in America, applied the evolutionary model to the mental realm in a manner countering those pessimistic implications of Darwinism that had prevented its full acceptance here. Long-held beliefs concerning man, will, and community were less threatened, as evolution became a scheme that promised to be both progressive and manageable by society. If man followed the "laws" of science, the control and direction of the future growth so desired by emerging industrial America was insured.<sup>21</sup>

Psychology as a scientific field with self-realized dimensions developed rapidly in America in the decade following 1887. In that period at least seventy-eight publications clearly identified as being within the field of psychology were published, as compared to only nine in 1877-1886 and one in 1867-1876.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, psychology

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<sup>21</sup> R. Jackson Wilson, In Search of Community: Social Philosophy in the United States 1860-1920 (New York: John Wiley, 1968), pp. 29-30; John Dewey, The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought (New York: Henry Holt, 1910) demonstrates the American usage of Darwinism in the social arena in the post-Spencerian period.

<sup>22</sup> Edwin G. Boring, "The Influence of Evolutionary Theory on American Psychological Thought," in Stow Persons ed. Evolutionary Thought in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), pp. 268-96; Joseph Ben-David and Randall Collins, "Social Factors in the Origins of a New Science: The Case of Psychology," American Sociological Review, XXXI (August, 1966), p. 453.

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as a recognized profession grew at a rapid rate in the period, as doctoral programs in the field were inaugurated at major universities and degrees conferred.<sup>23</sup> Faculties of psychology became commonplace whereas psychologists had failed to gain recognized positions in their field only a decade previously.<sup>24</sup> The demands placed upon the field to justify its importance as an independent science implied a more dynamic view of mental processes than had previously been adhered to. The theory of instinct, as it was to develop here, formed the basis for the pragmatic conception of the mind. Unlike the faculty psychologists who saw sensation and response as mutually exclusive, compartmentalized sectors, the new psychology merged concept and act into an organic whole. John Dewey found the earlier theory of the so-called "reflex arc" inadequate, as it accepted the dualism between sensation and idea, or thought and motor response. That division, he said, fragmented matter instead of seeing it as a series of overlapping and coordinated responses that formed a unified psychic existence.<sup>25</sup> William James provided the example

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<sup>23</sup>Ben-David and Collins, "Social Factors in the Origins of a New Science," pp. 457-65.

<sup>24</sup>Ross, G. Stanley Hall, pp. 103-04.

<sup>25</sup>John Dewey, "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," Psychological Review, III (July, 1896), pp. 357-70.

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Dewey used to demonstrate his point, citing the idea of the curious child who, confronting a lit candle, reaches out and is burned by it; obviously sensory and motor areas were coordinated in this instance.<sup>26</sup> Thus, if one accepted Deweyan logic, activity itself became a road to learning and, in fact, its necessary path:

The stimulus is something to be discovered; to be made out; if the activity affords its own adequate stimulation, there is no stimulus save in the objective sense already referred to.<sup>27</sup>

Evidence then, pointed to a new evaluation of the role of activity and its significance. At the very least, it explained why American education had been so ineffective. New methods of child raising, therefore, had to take into account the importance of play activities and the play group, which constituted the major interests and institution of children. This had long been clear to the Froebelians, but now it was scientifically applied to the study of children.

Previously, the post-Darwinian studies of play activities of men and children were guided by assumptions that were wholly mechanistic in regards to their appraisal of human nature and motivation. Herbert Spencer, in his

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<sup>26</sup>William James, The Principles of Psychology, Vol. I (New York: Henry Holt, 1890), p. 25.

<sup>27</sup>Dewey, "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," P. 370.

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Principles of Psychology had "agreed," in backhanded fashion, with Schiller's assertion that aesthetic feelings were the main product of play impulses. Yet, since Spencer tended to regard art itself as superfluous, the play of men and children fell into the same category. "Plays" he said, "neither subserve, in any direct way, the processes conducive to life," but merely derived from the fact that higher animals were not wholly occupied with the business of maintaining themselves owing to their superior intellect and nutrition. A "surplus of energy" resulted, and was expended by the play activity, a "superfluous and useless exercise of faculties that have been quiescent." By "simulated actions in place of real actions," according to Spencer, basal instincts were given immediate gratification.<sup>28</sup> A similar view, the "recreation" theory of Moritz Lazarus, defined play as "the aversion to remaining unoccupied," a desire to expend energy so as to allow for the regeneration of truly useful faculties.<sup>29</sup> Both theories rested upon the dualistic theory of instinct underlying

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<sup>28</sup> Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Psychology, Vol. II (New York: D. Appleton, 1897), pp. 627-32.

<sup>29</sup> See William James, Principles of Psychology, Vol. II (New York: Henry Holt, 1890), pp. 427-31 for a critique of the Lazarus theory, printed earlier in "Some Human Instincts," Popular Science Monthly, XXXI (September, 1887), pp. 670-72.

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<sup>30</sup> John  
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faculty psychology. As Dewey noted later, the idea of organisms as averse to activity, the so-called "myth of natural quiescence," dominated Spencerian man,<sup>30</sup> a critique similar to that applied by William James to the Lazarus theory.<sup>31</sup>

The way towards a reevaluation of child nature and activities on the theoretical plane was thus pointed to. Newly revised laws of mental development asserted the futility of teaching abstract principles and moral profundities to the disinterested, uncomprehending child. This was not necessarily a radical departure from previous ideas of proper individual and communal development. The notion that human growth followed a set pattern remained. Now, however, the closeness of the relationship between mental and physical processes was better understood, as was the dependence of race survival on psychic health. In the child, it was felt, the laws of growth for mankind as a whole were revealed, since developmental patterns in lower forms paralleled those of the more advanced. The vigor with which the new discipline of psychology grew

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<sup>30</sup>John Dewey, "Play," in Paul Monroe, ed. Cyclopedia of Education (New York: Macmillan, 1918), pp. 725-27.

<sup>31</sup>James, Principles of Psychology, II, p. 429.

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provided a body of knowledge that discerned, analyzed, and interpreted laws of mental development. Meanwhile, a sympathetic audience of intelligent laymen, composed largely of professionals in education and charity work applauded laboratory findings that justified their activities in "child-saving."<sup>32</sup> Child development was now established as the key to the existence of an organic sense of community. As one social worker put it, "the pliable period of early childhood is the most favorable to the eradication of vicious tendencies and to the development of latent possibilities for good."<sup>33</sup> The increased knowledge of and respect for the child's natural proclivities was, paradoxically, advocated for the purposes of exploiting these inclinations to the end of social control.

G. Stanley Hall was the "bulldog" of the scientific view of the child, a popularizer of new theories and the coin-er of catchwords that attracted the interests of laymen. One could conceivably doubt Hall's credentials as an

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<sup>32</sup> See Roy Lubove, The Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Career 1880-1930 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 3-60.

<sup>33</sup> Eva Harding, "The Place of the Kindergarten in Child-Saving," in National Conference of Charities and Correction, Proceedings, 1900, pp. 243-46.

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original thinker, yet his eclecticism was his greatest asset. He epitomized many of the anxieties of the late-nineteenth-century American mind in his writings, and his hopes for the child were advanced, yet analagous to those of modernizing America. Therefore, this scientist-turned-social philosopher became influential both as an educator and as a psychologist. Hall, who was born in 1846, played an integral part in some of the most profound developments in the field of psychology in the late nineteenth century. He studied in Germany at the laboratory of Wilhelm Wundt, and later worked with William James. In fact, Hall's Ph.D., which he received from Johns Hopkins in 1878, was the first American doctorate in psychology, and he later held one of the first professorships in the field at an American university. After completing the doctorate he returned to Germany for several more years of work, training himself thoroughly in new experimental methods.<sup>34</sup> He also became well-acquainted with the major theories of instinct. Indeed, his own dissertation pointed to an activist concept of sensory-motor processes, as he argued that the muscular sense linked mind and matter and

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<sup>34</sup>Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (Paterson, N.J.: Pageant Books, 1959), pp. 396-420.

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more advanced species through the course of evolution.<sup>35</sup>

More important, however, was Hall's broad-based  
ception of psychology, which widened the scope of its  
deal. Though opposed to abstract philosophizing and im-  
cient with "dreaminess," he asserted that psychology had  
piritual dimension and was not an ally of soulless ma-  
ialism.<sup>36</sup> He saw psychology as showing that man's inner  
igious sense of the unity of form of all things was  
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e more in tandem than they were at odds. Hall thereby  
yed a significant part in the movement to reconcile  
ence and religion that is a prominent trend in late-  
eteenth-century American thought.<sup>37</sup>

Hall's theory of recapitulation asserted that there  
a basic psychic matrix for future growth present in  
dren, which was identifiable and guidable. Through  
ensive experimentation and wide popularization of his  
ings in publications and in public appearances, he

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<sup>35</sup> Ross, G. Stanley Hall, pp. 70-72.

<sup>36</sup> G. Stanley Hall, "The New Psychology as a Basis  
ducation," Forum, XVII (August, 1894), pp. 710-20.

<sup>37</sup> See Paul Boller, American Thought in Transition:  
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made it a guiding principle of education in the 1890s. As was noted before, the recapitulatory hypothesis was not new to science. Hall, however, demonstrated its validity as no one had done previously, and asserted that its critical importance and most direct practical applications lay in child-raising. A confirmed evolutionist (he later remembered that he was "almost hypnotized" by the word "evolution" when he heard it<sup>38</sup>), he proceeded with investigations confident of the utility of his findings. His position after 1888, as head of the young and vigorous Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, afforded him both a testing arena for his theories and a training ground for students. Hall had long been interested in applying the evolutionary scheme to children's activities. Surveying the field of education in 1882, he labeled it a dismal failure in its announced objective of moral training. Given America's belief in education as the guarantor of race improvement and preservation, Hall said, it was disastrous that schoolmen concentrated their efforts on the "3 R's," which had little relation to moral training. Abstract discussions about the nature of God and Heaven made little sense to children, he said, and constituted

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<sup>38</sup>See G. Stanley Hall, Life and Confessions of a Psychologist (New York: D. Appleton, 1924), p. 357.

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"goody talks" that were "impertinent and stultifying."<sup>39</sup> Educators had missed the point of what child training was to accomplish. "Moral training," left unexamined, was nothing more than a vague and meaningless phrase unless it was understood to be a by-product of the development of man in both his individual and social senses, which Hall saw as the true end of education.<sup>40</sup> Instead, educators reversed the order, assuming that moral training would prompt development. This constituted, to Hall, a violation of natural law.

Proving this point with impressive credentials was Hall's use of the experimental method in his study, "The Contents of Children's Minds on Entering School," first published in the Princeton Review in 1883 and reprinted so often that by the 1890s it became required reading for teachers and all those concerned with children. Based on an 1869 study of the ideas of nature and self as comprehended by Berlin schoolchildren, Hall prepared a list of subjects in questionnaire form and secured the cooperation of Boston leaders of the kindergarten movement in finding

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<sup>39</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "The Moral and Religious Training of Children," Princeton Review, X (January, 1882), pp. 37-38.

<sup>40</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "New Departures in Education," North American Review, CXL (February, 1885), pp. 144-52.

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ust what the young child knew about himself and his surroundings before the beginning of formal education.<sup>41</sup> The study was significant, both in what it showed the child as understanding, and in what it showed him to be ignorant of. City children, it seemed, had little understanding of nature. Few were able to visualize with certainty such commonplace natural objects as trees, farm animals, or even parts of their own bodies. Instead, their perceptions of these objects were expressed in terms of associating natural phenomena with the artificial constructs of the city. For example, when asked to visualize "pond," a majority of the children envisioned an artificial water-container, and 92.5 percent had no mental picture whatsoever of "growing wheat."<sup>42</sup> Children who attended kindergarten, having the experience of Froebel's symbolic shapes, did better at identification but nevertheless Hall concluded that "the revelation of ignorance afforded by the results was great."<sup>43</sup> However, Hall did not take the findings as an indication

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<sup>41</sup>G. Stanley Hall, The Contents of Children's Minds on Entering School (New York: E. L. Kellogg, 1893), pp. 3-4, 13. Originally in Princeton Review, XI (May, 1883), pp. 249-252.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 18-20.

<sup>43</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "Pedagogical Inquiry," in NEA, Proceedings, 1885, pp. 506-11.

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that the mind of the child was a tabula rasa. Such an interpretation might have undercut his criticism of education by failing to confront faculty theory directly. Rather, he went on to note that the child's mind did contain shapes and images whose meaning was unclear. Concepts of sun, moon, God, thunder and other notions were visualized in mythical characterizations, the exact meaning of which was not easily discernable, but which seemed analagous to the percepts of primitive man as recorded by anthropologists. Thus the young child's comprehension of the world was analagous to that of his distant ancestors, with the difference that his understanding proceeded at an accelerated rate. These ideas, to Hall, represented "many strata of intelligence up through which the mind is passing very rapidly and with quite radical transformations."<sup>44</sup>

As head of a growing young university Hall was in a position to undertake major studies of child nature, and through his aggressive manner he made the movement known as "child study" a near cult by the mid-1890s. Innovative educators looked to him and his staff for guidance in conducting investigations into children's worlds. Internal

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<sup>44</sup>Hall, "The Contents of Children's Minds on Entering School," p. 41.

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troubles at Clark prevented him from fully systematizing the study of children and committing himself to it until the 1890s, but when these problems led to the loss of certain staff members to the University of Chicago "raids," they ironically helped Hall by assuring him of the service of a well-coordinated loyal remnant of faculty and students.<sup>45</sup> Hall's research methods helped to popularize his ideas as well. Opposing both "philosophizing" and the narrow confines of the laboratory, he actively sought the cooperation of lay personnel in his studies, the findings of which were disseminated in the two important journals he founded and edited, the American Journal of Psychology (1887), and Pedagogical Seminary (1890). Through these platforms he aggressively defended his ideas, with little concern for scholarly niceties; more than once he analogized the positions of his critics to the proven-wrong skepticism of Agassiz on Darwinism, implying that their ideas would soon be discarded as invalid.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Darnell Rucker, The Chicago Pragmatists (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), pp. 15-16; Hall, Life and Confessions of a Psychologist, pp. 290-96.

<sup>46</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "Child Study at Clark University," American Journal of Psychology, XIII (January, 1903), p. 97; G. Stanley Hall, Adolescence, Vol. I (New York: D. Appleton, 1904), p. vi.

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Child study yielded new findings that gave scientific backing to romantic and kindergarten theorists who saw the child as repeating the race cycle. Children, it was found, tended to congregate in groups, clubs, and associations whose reason for existence was, however, closer in idea to the groupings of primitive man than to the modern adult. Vague forms of government, bearing obvious similarity to tribal councils of savages and barbarians existed, along with rudimentary forms of justice and punishment, and unwritten but seriously attended to codes of loyalty and law.<sup>47</sup> Most important was that the basis of these associations was a common interest such as athletics, collections, or the play group. In these groups, rather than in school, said Hall, the child learned the great moral lessons of cooperation, industry, and right character that were the desired outcomes of the growth process. The fact that the play group usually provided the core interest for the groupings of children and assured their remarkable cohesion was particularly significant. In observing the boys of the town of "B" near Boston engaging in group play in a sand pile,

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<sup>47</sup> John Johnson, Jr., "Rudimentary Society Among Boys," Johns Hopkins Studies in Historical and Political Science, II (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1884), pp. 10-47. Henry Sheldon, "The Institutional Activities of American Children," American Journal of Psychology, IX (July, 1898), pp. 425-47.

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Hall found their activities, far from being useless, to be the means by which the children learned the values of industry and work by constructing miniature farms and buildings. Self-governance and the value of law was practiced by creating a "town government." Most important was the fact that ideas had been realized by action. The children could oversee their own creation, and in doing so see that "each element in this vast variety of interests is an organic part of a comprehensive whole."<sup>48</sup>

Education therefore, said Hall, ought to focus on the child's preoccupation with the play group. By doing so it would obey natural laws of what an early student of children preferred to call "social embryology." This allusion to recapitulation came to be accepted.<sup>49</sup> The child, said Henry Drummond, should be regarded as an "unfolding embryo," and his development guided accordingly.<sup>50</sup> Of course, Froebelians had asserted this all along, yet not in the same manner as Hall. While kindergarteners dealt with symbolic shapes to demonstrate organic unity and provide analogies to natural surroundings, Hall preferred to

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<sup>48</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "The Story of a Sandpile," Scribner's, III (June, 1888), pp. 690-96.

<sup>49</sup>Johnson, p. 18; "Notes," The Nation, XXXVIII (January 17, 1884), pp. 55-56.

<sup>50</sup>Drummond, The Lowell Lectures, p. 129.

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engage the child directly in nature itself, feeling that the use of symbolic shapes was based on faculty theories of mind.<sup>51</sup> This was not the sole reason, though, for like many in his age Hall felt that the passing of the agrarian-based society of earlier America had had negative consequences. Recalling his own childhood, he remembered the healthy outdoor life of the farm child, who learned the great moral lessons that insured race survival by way of day-to-day experience. The farm child had greater opportunity to play and explore in natural surroundings, exercise his body, and become acquainted with animal and plant life.<sup>52</sup> The farm developed the all-sidedness of the child through its representation of social life in miniature. Far from similar to the overly-specialized urban society, Hall's idealized boyhood farm was a community where one learned a wide variety of crafts and industries. The family too, was not fragmented as it had been by industrialization, as the hearth resembled both a symbolic and actual meeting

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<sup>51</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "Some Defects of the Kindergarten in America," Forum, XXVIII (January, 1900), pp. 579-86.

<sup>52</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "Boy Life in a Massachusetts Country Town Thirty Years Ago," in Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, n.s. VII (October, 1890), pp. 107-28.

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place. The loss of this "great laboratory" for development was thus regretted by Hall, who found himself gripped by a personal, "all pervading sense of sadness that all was gone and forever past recall."<sup>53</sup>

This did not mean that Hall wished to return to a mythic, unattainable state of nature. He accepted modernity and applauded "progress," but felt that social chaos must necessarily result if the bonds that had held humanity together in the past were broken. For this reason, he advocated the comprehension of the child on the basis of child nature and interests. In Jamesian fashion, he accepted and even celebrated the closeness of man to animal, and his tendency to link mind and body implied a new consideration of the irrational. By implication instinct, emotion, and action were the educator's tools most appropriate to the child's stage of the recapitulatory process. They were used well when the educator understood that the child's mind was not a tabula rasa but what a student of Hall's called "a page on which the ink will flow more readily in some directions than in others."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "Note on Early Memories," Pedagogical Seminary, VI (December, 1899), p. 496.

<sup>54</sup>Edmund C. Sanford, "Mental Growth and Decay," American Journal of Psychology, XIII (July, 1902), p. 430; See also Hall, "The Ideal School as Based on Child Study," in NEA, Proceedings, 1901, pp. 474-88.

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Though Hall said that childhood was "the paradise of the race from which adult life was a fall . . ." and criticized modern society for rushing the young into adulthood,<sup>55</sup> he did not advocate absolute freedom for the child. Instinct and emotion were the lawful basis of the child's behavior, yet ultimately inferior to adult rationality. Hall's message, therefore, was a crude form of the Freudian theory of repression. He asserted that the stifling of the child's basic impulses increased the chances of a "nervous," unsocialized adult becoming the end product. Play as a form of education fit into this design as a means of guidance toward "desirable" ends. Hall advocated strict discipline, and did not question putting down behavior considered antisocial or dangerous. He did, however, ask that educators react to such conduct by allowing it harmless or constructive outlets. Hall's view was distinctly antagonistic to intellectual training, which he never considered as crucial to growth as instinct and emotion. As a grown man investigating his own childhood memories of the western Massachusetts farm country, he stripped naked and rolled in the grass:

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<sup>55</sup>Hall, "Note on Early Memories," pp. 496-97.

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Hall and his followers in both academic and non-academic areas demonstrated the validity of recapitulatory theory in all sectors of child life. He and his students at Clark constructed observational experiments called "topical syllabi" which consisted of questionnaires and guides sent from there to teachers, educators, and others who were interested on such varied subjects as children's toys, collections, emotions, and concepts of self. Findings were published not only in the scholarly journals edited by Hall but also in the publications of the many local child-study groups that flourished throughout the 1890s.<sup>57</sup> The syllabi helped systematize child study and, by escaping the laboratory's confines, established its credentials as a practical science that was, as one scholar notes, followed by an "army of enthusiastic, if often amateur investigators providing what all hoped would be scientific implementation of the child-centered ideal."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 504.

<sup>57</sup>See, for example, Illinois Society for Child Study, Transactions, I (May, 1895), pp. 40-51.

<sup>58</sup>Quoted in "Introduction" to Charles Strickland and Charles Burgess, eds., Health, Growth, and Heredity: G. Stanley Hall on Natural Education (New York: Teachers College Press, 1965), p. 18.

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Typically, when data was collected and results analyzed, proof was given to the evolutionary view of child nature and the cruciality of interest in shaping growth. For instance, a generally ignored object such as a child's doll gave clues as to the direction of his mental operations. Children ascribed life qualities to their dolls, including emotions, sickness, and other qualities much in the manner of savage men. Curiously, if an adult pointed out to the child that the doll was not "alive," the child was undeterred and retained it as a confidant.<sup>59</sup> Likewise, children's lies were not always cases of pure deceit to be punished by an unsympathetic adult, but were connected to the "partial self-deception" caused by role playing in play, wherein the child imagined himself to be in another, generally primitive state and, in heroic fashion, would tell an untruth to protect a real comrade or a seemingly-real friend.<sup>60</sup> Childhood fears too, were often magnified in the semi-rational world of play, where imagined threats of thunder, the dark, and the like were similar to

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<sup>59</sup>James Sully, Children's Ways (New York: D. Appleton, 1897), p. 22; James Sully, "Dollatry," Contemporary Review, LXXV (January, 1899), pp. 58-72; A. Caswell Ellis and G. Stanley Hall, "A Study of Dolls," Pedagogical Seminary, IV (December, 1896), pp. 129-75.

<sup>60</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "Children's Lies," American Journal of Psychology, III (January, 1890), pp. 61-70.

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the fears of early man. The psychic qualities that children ascribed to natural objects such as trees and bodies of water, which generally occurred when the child was wrapped up in the private world of play, also were seen to have an element of primitivism. Likewise, the lack of sympathy and predatory behavior of some children could be explained by the fact that altruistic qualities of cooperation came late to man, who in his early days struggled for existence.<sup>61</sup> Children then, were complex beings whose behavior could not be explained by attending to conscious elements only. As mentioned, however, empathy for the child was tempered by the desire to direct the course of his actions.

Child study found verification for its beliefs in the ideology of Darwinian science itself, namely the peripheral fields of animal psychology and cultural anthropology, both of which were under the influence of historicism and recapitulatory theory. George John Romanes, a British biologist, demonstrated that emotions appeared in the children of man in the same order that they revealed themselves on the evolutionary scale in animals. Higher animals

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<sup>61</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "A Study of Fears," American Journal of Psychology, VIII (January, 1897), pp. 147-249; C. O. Quantz, "Dendro-Psychoses," American Journal of Psychology, IX (July, 1898), pp. 449-505; Frederick Bolton, "Hydro-Psychoses," American Journal of Psychology, X (January, 1899), pp. 169-227.

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possessed emotions that were more complex and social, in addition to the simpler, more individualistic emotions of lower beasts.<sup>62</sup> Thus, said one student of children, "moral precocity" was itself abnormal, and one could not expect higher virtues from young boys essentially still in the savage state.

Victorian anthropology, as has been noted, formulated the hypothesis of recapitulatory social development as it examined primitive societies. By the 1890s more specialized studies, particularly of the customs, interests, and games of primitive men, confirmed the belief in the relevance of recapitulation and pointed out the need to allow the child to re-experience the stages of growth through which social man had passed. Assuming this rather passive concept of cultural diffusion, historicist studies led to these conclusions, in a manner paralleling psychological investigations.<sup>63</sup> William Wells Newell, a prominent American anthropologist and editor of the Journal of American Folklore, found old childhood rhymes, games, and

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<sup>62</sup> Drummond, The Lowell Lectures, pp. 120-37; George John Romanes, Mental Evolution in Animals (New York: D. Appleton, 1884), pp. 1-75.

<sup>63</sup> See Robert E. L. Faris, "Evolution and American Sociology," in Stow Persons, ed., Evolutionary Thought in America (New Haven: Yale, 1950), pp. 160-80, for a discussion of the concept of cultural diffusion in the period.

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songs to be descended directly from ballads and games formerly played by adults, mostly in England. Newell respected their ingenuity, ruling a "threatened disappearance" in an age of industrialization.<sup>64</sup> British anthropologists of the period such as Henry Carrington Bolton, Alfred Haddon, and R. H. Codrington found the games of modern children analagous to once-sacred ceremonies, thus verifying the Tylor thesis that serious customs of primitive men became amusements with the passing of ages.<sup>65</sup> Stewart Culin, an American who directed the Museum of Archeology and Palaeontology at the University of Pennsylvania, became the best-known investigator of the genesis of games. His extremely meticulous and detailed observational studies asserted them to be "instruments of rites or . . . descended from ceremonial observances of a religious character."<sup>66</sup> Games of early men were not mere

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<sup>64</sup>William Wells Newell, Games and Songs of American Children (New York: Dover, 1962), pp. 7, 23-30 (originally published in 1883).

<sup>65</sup>Henry Carrington Bolton, The Counting-Out Rhymes of Children (New York: D. Appleton, 1888), pp. 1-3, 41, 57; Alfred Haddon, The Study of Man (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), pp. 174-269. R. H. Codrington, The Melanesians: Studies in Their Anthropology and Folk-Lore (London: Oxford, 1891), pp. 339-43.

<sup>66</sup>Stewart Culin, "Games of the North American Indians," in Bureau of American Ethnology, Twenty-Fourth Annual Report, 1902-3 (Washington: Government Printing

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amusements, but serious concerns that bound society together and, by implication, serious also to today's child who, through his play world learned his place in the community, and the laws and customs he would have to adhere to.

Using rather similar evidence, the German psychologist Karl Groos published two influential studies on the plays of animals and men following the formula of paralleling studies that was in favor in this period. Both were translated immediately and widely discussed. Animal play, as asserted Groos, was nothing more than an instinctual response developed through natural selection in order to guarantee the survival of the individual species. The role of play was rehearsal, essentially "preparation for life" in that the young animal exercised his mind and body in coordinated fashion, developing survival function while still under parental care. Play was not, he said, merely "blowing off steam" as Spencer maintained, but involved acts of experimentation and anticipatory responses that revealed to the

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Office, 1907), pp. 1-809; "Mancala, the National Game of Africa," in Smithsonian Institution, Report of the United States National Museum, 1894 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896), pp. 597-607. Korean Games, with Notes on the Corresponding Games of China and Japan (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1895), pp. 1-43; "Exhibit of Games in the Columbia Exposition," Journal of American Folklore, VI (July-September, 1893), pp. 205-27. "American Indian Games," in Journal of American Folklore, XI (October-December, 1898), pp. 245-52.

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animal its powers and capabilities. In one example, Groos cited the young kitten's play with string as a "prey." This play activity prepared the kitten for survival, for if no rehearsal occurred, the animal would be helpless when confronted with a "real" situation. In addition, Groos noted that the lines between work and play, and mental and physical response were not particularly distinguishable in the state of play, for the animal--or child--was absorbed in his activity with an earnestness that belied attempts to classify it as idle amusement or the discharge of use-less energy.<sup>67</sup> The higher animals tended to play more frequently, as Spencer conceded, and had tended to do so in a group, wherein lessons of co-operation, self-sacrifice for a cause, and obedience to law were learned. Anthropological evidence that showed how amusements and games of "savages" and "barbarians" prepared their young for adulthood was abundant and aided in the formation of the play-as-rehearsal theory.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Karl Groos, The Play of Animals (New York: D. Appleton, 1896), pp. xx, 4-7, 76-82; The Play of Man (New York: D. Appleton, 1898), pp. 2-11, 337-58.

<sup>68</sup> See, for example Charles Eastman, Indian Boyhood (Rapid City, S.D.: Fenwyn Press Books, 1970), pp. 63-89 (originally published in 1902).

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Obviously, the Groos theory of play differed from the theory of G. Stanley Hall. Hall's psychology was far more oriented to past developments while the preparation concept was futuristic in its outlook. Hall felt the rehearsal theory "superficial and perverse," pointing out that human progress had made the plays of children, while necessary preparation for adult life in the past, valuable for cathartic reasons today.<sup>69</sup> Yet the debate did not carry very far. Educators and child-workers found both theories useful, as both viewpoints asserted the importance of activity in child life and, as they were unconcerned with the intricate scientific debate, cited each of them in a juxtaposition that muted the conflict.<sup>70</sup> In any case, it is important to note that both theories shared the tendency to link the mental and physical realms in the study of growth. Their acceptance was reflective of a trend in American thought that made it receptive to a neo-Lamarckian viewpoint of man's activities and development. Gaining a foothold in the 1890s as an opposition theory

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<sup>69</sup>G. Stanley Hall, Adolescence, Vol. I (New York: D. Appleton, 1904), pp. 202-03.

<sup>70</sup>See Ernest N. Henderson, Text-Book in the Principles of Education (New York: Macmillan, 1910), pp. 383-98; E. A. Kirkpatrick, "Play as a Factor in Social and Educational Reforms," Review of Reviews, XX (August, 1899), pp. 192-96.

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to mechanistic evolution, a revived Lamarckianism, made rhetorically compatible with evolutionary theory in the emerging social sciences, became popularized in the thought of Lester Ward and others. It allowed evolution to be depicted as a cosmic scheme, seemingly compatible with free will, and without the overtones of Spencerian gloom.<sup>71</sup>

This tendency of American social science to develop along eclectic lines was illustrated by John Wesley Powell, who in an 1888 article for the American Anthropologist asserted that man, through the growth of his cultural and political institutions, had grown free of natural selection but remained tied to evolution, which proceeded in Lamarckian fashion in the mental realm, where the acquired wisdom of the past was passed on to posterity.<sup>72</sup> In reconciling Darwinism with the notion of acquired characteristics, practitioners of child study were only following dominant trends in American social philosophy, and they were self-consciously aware that they did so.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>George W. Stocking, Jr., "Lamarckianism in American Social Science 1890-1915," Journal of the History of Ideas XXIII (April-June, 1962), pp. 239-56.

<sup>72</sup>John Wesley Powell, "Competition as a Factor in Human Evolution," American Anthropologist, o.s. I (October, 1888), pp. 297-322.

<sup>73</sup>David Kinley, "Some Social Aspects of Child-Study," in Illinois Society for Child Study, Transactions, I (December, 1894), pp. 22-30.

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The nature and direction of child study then, explains its popularity. As Nathan G. Hale has noted, the movement proceeded from a dualistic conception of child nature: the child was impulsive, self-centered, and amoral yet to be worshipped as spontaneous and unsullied by the features of an "overcivilized, nervous" consciousness, seen in the 1890s as a developing phenomenon that threatened national growth.<sup>74</sup> Child studies implied that the child--the future adult--could be controlled without the loss of this cherished spontaneity, for the useable definition of "spontaneity" implied freedom within prescribed boundaries acceptable to society as a whole. American Froebelians had always insisted that "natural education," far from justifying "disagreeable romping," had pointed to the socialization of the individual.<sup>75</sup> Child study lent scientific authority to this idea, as it justified the importance of the commanding figure as a guide and setter of the limits of "spontaneity." Likewise,

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<sup>74</sup> Nathan G. Hale, Jr., Freud and the Americans: The Development of Psychoanalysis in the United States 1876-1917 (New York: Oxford, 1971), p. 105.

<sup>75</sup> Melvin Lazerson, "Urban Reform and the Schools: Kindergartens in Massachusetts 1870-1915," History of Education Quarterly, XI (Summer, 1971), pp. 115-42; Nora Smith, The Children of the Future (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1898), pp. 67-100.

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since it insisted that the child was a malleable being teachable by exploiting his imitative instincts, the movement asserted man's ability to control development.<sup>76</sup>

Child study was popularly depicted as a practical science, the knowledge of which was necessary for the teacher and child worker. Courses in psychology and child study appeared immediately in major universities and normal schools and publications multiplied accordingly,<sup>77</sup> while sessions on it drew large crowds at national meetings. Interest in the subject was so great that the National Education Association established a Department of Child Study in 1894.<sup>78</sup> Regional groups also attracted interested teachers, parents, and child workers who participated in the gathering of data for the topical syllabi.<sup>79</sup> This

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<sup>76</sup>James Mark Baldwin, Mental Development in the Child and the Race (New York: Macmillan, 1894), pp. 3-7; James Sully, "Studies of Childhood XI, Material of Morality," Popular Science Monthly, XLVII (October, 1895), pp. 808-17; Ellen Haskell, "Imitation in Children," Pedagogical Seminary, III (October, 1894), pp. 30-47.

<sup>77</sup>M. V. O'Shea, "Psychology for Normal Schools," in NEA, Proceedings, 1895, pp. 682-88.

<sup>78</sup>Constance McKenzie, "President's Address," in NEA, Proceedings, 1894, pp. 682-85; see also "Notes," Pedagogical Seminary, III (October, 1894), p. 173.

<sup>79</sup>Lewis S. Feuer, "John Dewey and the Back to the People Movement in American Thought," Journal of The History of Ideas, XX (October-December, 1959), pp. 545-68; "Handbook for the Use of Members and Round Tables," Illinois Society for Child Study, Transactions, I (May, 1895), pp. 1-86.

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self-consciously "modern" milieu created by the rise of science in education undoubtedly spurred the growth of progressive philosophies, and many students of children such as Hall, Dewey, and Francis A. Parker became influential in the period of progressivism in education.

Educators heard evidence from child studies that put the general theory of recapitulation into a practical context. Findings showed that large muscle control, such as is developed by physical exercise, came readily to children since it had been necessary for survival in primitive times. More intricate movements and finer mental or physical coordinations, such as those involved in writing or intellectual exercise were unnaturally difficult for young children, and attempts to force them on the young prematurely were condemned. Teachers were warned to avoid "blocking neural pathways" and the early cultivation of "motor-specialization."<sup>80</sup> "Fatigue" studies showed that the young child did not possess an attention span conducive to long periods of grueling mental work. Overtaxing the

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<sup>80</sup> Reuben Post Halleck, "The Bearings of the Laws of Cerebral Development and Modification in Child Study," NEA, Proceedings, 1897, pp. 833-43; Halleck, "The Education of the Motor Centers," Illinois Society for Child Study, Transactions, III (April, 1898), pp. 46-55.

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mental realm, warned the investigators, could lead to disease, maladjustment, and resentment of authority.<sup>81</sup> Physical activity and play then, were necessary allies of the educator, not antagonists promoting idleness. The notion that idleness and incorrigibility was promoted by play had long been popular, and had led to the popularization of a "no-recess" policy after the Civil War. Now, with the cruciality of activity in promoting educability and socialization demonstrated, the faultiness of such a policy was obviously nothing less than "an abomination," in G. Stanley Hall's words.<sup>82</sup> Play was, said one investigator, "a potent means for reducing the fatigue of the schoolroom" and helping maintain order.<sup>83</sup>

Perhaps more important than the value of activity and interests in preserving children's health was the fact that moral lessons were learned in physical activity.

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<sup>81</sup>Edward Shaw, "Fatigue," NEA, Proceedings, 1898, pp. 550-53; John Hancock, "The Motor Ability of Children--A Preliminary Study," NEA, Proceedings, 1894, pp. 1003-1009; S. E. Ware, "Nervousness and Fatigue in the Schoolroom," Child-Study Monthly, IV (March, 1899), pp. 517-21.

<sup>82</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "The Health of School Children as Affected by School Buildings," NEA, Proceedings, 1892, pp. 682-95. Committee on Hygiene in Education, "Recess or No Recess in Schools," NEA, Proceedings, 1885, pp. 414-28.

<sup>83</sup>H. E. Kratz, "How May Fatigue in the Schoolroom be Reduced to a Minimum?" NEA, Proceedings, 1899, pp. 1090-96.

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Child study insisted that the indirect methods of play and games were the "historically correct" and time-tested methods of inculcating social norms. As such, they filled a gap in American pedagogy that had worried the educator. John Dewey, while an instructor in philosophy at the University of Michigan, had been shocked to find that undergraduate students studying ethics could give no good reasons for right conduct, but instead cited guilt, fear, or parental authority as motivating forces. Moral training, said Dewey, needed a scientific basis, and could not assume any innate disposition towards the good on the part of children and youths.<sup>84</sup> Physical activity represented one means of molding nature through interests. It established, said one investigator, a series of "motor-remembrances" that helped in directing the child's energy to constructive ends.<sup>85</sup> Socially acceptable forms of conduct expected of the adult were rehearsed and assimilated by the young in play, which was described as the "master workman" by which youth's "apprenticeship to life" was guided.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> John Dewey, "The Chaos in Moral Training," Popular Science Monthly, XLV (August, 1894), pp. 433-43.

<sup>85</sup> Frederick Burk, "The Influence of Exercise Upon Growth," NEA, Proceedings, 1899, pp. 1067-73.

<sup>86</sup> Luther Gulick, "Psychological, Pedagogical, and Religious Aspects of Group Games," Pedagogical Seminary, VI (October, 1898), pp. 135-51.

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The influence of the new view of childhood on the field of education can scarcely be overestimated. Children were no longer regarded as miniature adults. Francis A. Parker, the pioneer educational progressive, asserted in an 1889 meeting of the National Education Association that "the little child is born a savage."<sup>87</sup> This did not mean that the child was born with a tabula rasa, but that he had to be comprehended as an organism with self-realizing laws of development. This provided an explanation for the failure of education and a promise that it might yet prove useful in the shaping of society. The new laws of growth convinced one educator to urge his colleagues to abandon their "nostrums, tonics, and pills" in favor of the observance of "the true sequence of cause and effect in the life of the child."<sup>88</sup>

The scientific view of child life looked well beyond the schoolroom, however. By emphasizing experience

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<sup>87</sup>Francis A. Parker, "The Child," NEA, Proceedings, 1889, pp. 479-82; see also Charlotte Powe, "Work and Play in the Primary and Grammar Grades," NEA, Proceedings, 1901, pp. 502-7; Nathan Oppenheim, The Development of the Child (New York: Macmillan, 1898), pp. 11-12; W. S. Christopher, "Our Future Leaders--The Children of To-Day," Child-Study Monthly, II (January, 1896), pp. 193-204.

<sup>88</sup>C. H. Henderson, "Cause and Effect in Education," Popular Science Monthly, XLV (May, 1894), pp. 51-61.

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as the key factor in growth and the need to shape and supervise it, a new definition of "freedom" as a state of consciousness acquired by the observance of set codes of behavior emerged.<sup>89</sup> As had been demonstrated, attention to the total sector of experience was necessary for the right development of freedom. Progress thus conceived depended upon controlling the growth processes of the young. Play was to serve as the means of control, by channeling the child's basic interests into socially acceptable channels rather than using them to effect societal transformation or as a means of adult education. As was the case with the "old" education, this view of learning treated society as a constant, and thereby turned learning into training rather than growth. "Taking charge" of evolution was therefore possessed of this darker dimension. In this way, developments in science paralleled those in the social arena, where a similar belief in the manageability of human conduct was emerging. Science was thus ready to confront the city, the prevailing sector of experience in late-nineteenth-century America, as a foe of disorderliness in the name of freedom.

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<sup>89</sup> James L. Hughes, "The Twentieth Century School," NEA, Proceedings, 1897, pp. 162-69.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE CITY ENVIRONMENT: PERIL AND OPPORTUNITY

A new confidence characterized social reform circles in the last decade of the nineteenth century and during the first part of the twentieth. At first, this might seem difficult to comprehend, since the social life of the period was not that of the idealized "good society." The real reasons for this ambience of optimism were the theoretical and methodological changes then taking place in the practical social sciences, which indicated that social strife was manageable or might even be prevented altogether. Social reform thus conceived involved the minimizing of disruption by the so-called "socially weak," a category that included the children of the urban working classes. Society's right to take an active role in the guidance of the conduct of its members became axiomatic, particularly where children were concerned. This newly-asserted custodial role assumed that institutional and social structures were to remain constant, and that atomized populations were to adjust accordingly.

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Jane Addams, some years later, recalled the effects of this changed sensibility on those involved in "regenerative" efforts:

I remember in those nineties and perhaps through the first decade of the present century how much we talked about social reform. We used to call it "social engineering," and it all seemed comparatively easy then, perhaps because we were younger and had hopes which persisted upon surrounding the efforts of youth.<sup>1</sup>

Social scientists, educators, philanthropists, and willing "amateurs," constituting the loose coalition of urban social reformers, had by this time recovered the initiative from the grimmer evolutionary prophets. This was not surprising, since the rigid mechanistic determinism of the Spencerian school ran counter to American intellectual traditions of free will, perfectability, and personal regeneration. Evolutionary theory itself promoted rather than closed discussions of human nature in general, one of them being the longtime debate concerning the relative influence of heredity and environment in development. The result of this debate was a new faith in human progress. It was, however, dissimilar to ante-bellum perfectionism in that it rested upon a scientific foundation.

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in "Addresses at Dinner in Honor of Dr. Graham Taylor," City Club (Chicago), May 27, 1930, typescript in Graham Taylor Mss., Newberry Library, Chicago.

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In addition, the new faith was characterized by its belief that society need not be hampered by its backward members.

One debate emerging from the evolutionary backwash concerned the origins and nature of abnormal man, particularly the so-called "criminal classes." The Italian School of criminology put forth the positivist view of the problem, asserting the existence of an easily-identifiable "criminal type," discernable by concrete measurement. While law-breakers could be identified before they began their careers, they were incurable and had to be segregated, since entry into the normal community was impossible for a naturally accursed class. In somewhat different form, these ideas were introduced into America in the 1877 volume, The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease and Heredity, the product of an investigation by Richard Dugdale done at the Elmira Reformatory in New York State. Dugdale concluded that there was a tendency for heredity to become "fixed" in the offspring of degenerative populations, resulting in a likelihood on the part of the descendants to become public charges, either as criminals, harlots, or beggars. The cost to society at large, both in terms of ruined lives and in financial waste, was great, and proceeded in geometric fashion, paralleling the growth of branch families.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Richard L. Dugdale, The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease and Heredity (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1877), pp. 43-68.

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The Jukes served as convenient material for those seeking "scientific" proof of the hopelessness of the unfit and the inevitable depravity of certain parts of the populace. It inspired many similar studies, some of them of an exotic nature, alleging the existence of cursed populations endangering good citizenry.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, a large body of scientists and reformers refused to consider the question closed. Adolf Meyer, one of the most prominent students of childhood, denounced theories of inherited degeneracy as a "Sword of Damocles" that invited pessimism and impotence on the part of those seeking to improve society, resulting in what Meyer called a "blind belief in predestination."<sup>4</sup> At the same time that theories of inherited degeneracy became popular there also arose counter-arguments depicting environmental factors as most critical in shaping human nature. Ironically, these seemingly opposed viewpoints had much in common. Furthermore, the problem was complicated when the question of children's conduct was involved, as generalized analyses of human

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<sup>3</sup>See O. C. McCulloch, "The Tribe of Ishmael: A Study in Social Degeneration," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1888, pp. 154-59.

<sup>4</sup>Adolf Meyer, "On the Observation of Abnormalities in Children," Child-Study Monthly, I (May, 1895), pp. 1-12.

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nature based on samplings of the adult population often proved irrelevant.

Illustrating the problems faced by those dealing with the heredity-environment conflict is an address at the 1887 National Conference of Charities and Correction on the topic of children in slum areas. According to the speaker, Reverend R. W. Hill, "diseased and enfeebled parents" inexorably produce children who tend to imitate the bad habits of their elders and eventually repeat their awful careers. This seemingly hereditarian argument is tempered by the speaker's feeling that society may step in to save the children. An "outside force," acting before the "hardening process" of nascent adulthood sets in, might result in the children of the "vicious" becoming decent citizens after all. The trouble with the young, he concluded, lay not in their inner natures but "in the conditions" they emerged from.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, early action could prevent the growth of a new generation of public pests. Hill's address shows that hereditarian and environmentalist proponents of the period agreed on a number of important questions. Both accepted the proposition that the poor and their offspring were "depraved" or

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<sup>5</sup>Reverend R. W. Hill, "The Children of 'Shinbone Alley,'" N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1887, pp. 229-35.

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icious," and therefore both saw existing society and its structures as a constant standard of measurement against which behavior was to be appraised. The environmentalist viewpoint became more popular, however, since it expressed an overt faith in the power of human effort and could be placed in the mainstream of American social analysis that had historical antecedents in Lockeianism and contemporary sources in such diverse types as Lester K. Berman and Horatio Alger.

William Douglas Morrison, a British penologist, was the most important individual involved in bringing environmentalist analysis to the study of crime in child life. Like his positivist predecessors in the Italian school, he emphasized the collection of minute data on the child's origins, but he drew different conclusions from the factual evidence.<sup>6</sup> Juvenile crime, he said, paralleled adult crime, but rather than indicating that an inexorable force gripped the child, it showed that such crime "arises out of the adverse individual and social condition of the juvenile offender,"<sup>7</sup> or a combination of

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<sup>6</sup>William Douglas Morrison, Crime and Its Causes (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1891), pp. 3-5.

<sup>7</sup>William Douglas Morrison, Juvenile Offenders (New York: D. Appleton, 1897), pp. ix, 42, 114.

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ese sets of circumstances. Standard methods of coping with the juvenile criminal, most notably punishment, would only "aggravate and intensify" the trouble, and perhaps cause the one-time or occasional problem child to become "habitual" offender or public charge. The reason for this was that punitive methods, as practiced, took little account of the child's surroundings, which had likely led him to crime in the first place. Improper upbringing, whether in the material or moral sense, tended to "vitiate the character, or unfit the combatant for the battle of life." Model citizenship, therefore, could not be expected of those who were "breathing a polluted moral atmosphere from birth upwards."<sup>8</sup> Morrison's views readily gained an audience here, especially with those concerned with legal aspects of "child-saving."<sup>9</sup>

Acceptance of environmental interpretations of crime did not imply a lack of regard for the extent of it. Juvenile delinquents were viewed as a distinct threat to themselves and to society, with the difference that environmentalists placed emphasis on the criminality of

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<sup>8</sup> Morrison, Crime and Its Causes, pp. vii, 87-88.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Platt, The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 27-31.

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"moral" defect. The "moral imbecile," according to one authority, was an individual whose growth processes had been artificially quickened via improper upbringing and emotional instability, and who thus constituted a threat to the community's welfare.<sup>10</sup> He could, however, be made into a useful citizen, belying the fatalistic interpretations of heredity. Those dealing with child problems were advised to "ignore the part that heredity plays, and to confine our efforts to improving the surrounding circumstances"<sup>11</sup> since, even if one felt that there was some validity to the hereditarian argument (and, indeed, environmentalists often subsumed heredity as one of the causes of social problems, though not the sole one), to accept it absolutely would render human action worthless:

For, if at birth the child's bodily and mental organization is complete, if the characteristics of parents are handed down to offspring, then there the matter ends.

All individual efforts at self-improvement would be worthless, every individual impulse would be incapable of realization, every effort of parent or teacher would be at an end.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Dr. I. N. Kerlin, "The Moral Imbecile," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1890, pp. 244-50.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in "News and Notes," Charities Review, (April, 1897), pp. 92-93.

<sup>12</sup> W. O. Krohn, "Minor Mental Abnormalities in children as Occasioned by Certain Erroneous School Methods," CA, Proceedings, 1898, pp. 163-64.

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"Heredity" then, came to be dismissed as an anti-sanitarian anachronism akin to "the old Calvinist fear pedagogy."<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, investigators found the conclusions of hereditarians to be tentative or even contradictory. Dugdale's work, on reexamination, stressed environmental factors as causing crime and pauperism and suggested that amelioration of the conditions producing variations of social codes led to race improvement.<sup>14</sup> It suggested that "heredity" had been depicted as the all-pervasive explanation for social ills, yet never defined in terms of its meaning and scope. Whether the term referred to the biological or to the social causes of problems, or to a combination of the two, had never been ascertained. Perhaps this indicated that the conflict of belief resulting from ideas of equal opportunity and unequal achievement had not been confronted.

Scientific debates on the problem did not, however, deflect attention to these basic questions. In reformist child-study publications the Italian School was

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.; see also Bayard Holmes, M.D., "Some Causes of the Dependent Classes," Child-Study Monthly, October, 1895), pp. 109-13.

<sup>14</sup> Dugdale, pp. 64-66; see also Mark H. Haller, Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought (Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963), pp. 15-16; Nathan Oppenheim, The Development of the Child (New York: Macmillan, 1898), pp. 185-88.

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denounced regularly for failing to look at "causes" of problems, as it mistook the results of social folly for instigators.<sup>15</sup> Hereditarians, meanwhile, had consolidated their position by the late nineties to an argument very similar to environmentalists. Arthur MacDonald, a criminologist who deferred to the Italian School, nevertheless characterized the problem of crime's origins as being "at its foundations an educational one," and insisted that those degenerate through inheritance could be saved.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the fact that both camps shared a faith in positivist methodology led them to an understanding, in the sense that each could collect rather similar data, and interpret that data differently, yet in a manner sufficiently ambiguous as to cause the merging of once "opposed" viewpoints. For example, the Chicago Board of Education in 1899 established a "Department of Child-Study," which conducted an investigation of the physical

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<sup>15</sup> "Book Notices and Reviews," Charities Review, VI (March, 1897), pp. 48-50; Maximilian P. E. Grossman, "Perversion Through Environment," Child-Study Monthly, VI (September, 1900), pp. 116-17.

<sup>16</sup> Arthur MacDonald, Juvenile Crime and Reformation Including Stigma of Degeneration (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898), pp. 14, 24; MacDonald, "Abnormal Man," U.S. Bureau of Education Circular of Information No. 4, 1893 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898), pp. 10-11, 45.

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and mental status of inmates of the John Worthy School, a reformatory that was part of the juvenile court administrative machinery. In terms of height, weight, and intelligence the delinquent boys were judged as "below normal." Rather than citing this as evidence of hereditary disorders of an uncorrectable variety, nutritive deficiencies and bad home surroundings were blamed, and the possibility of improvement held out.<sup>17</sup>

The advent of the science of genetics only confused matters more, though it ultimately proved that the "scientific" debate had been conducted via questionable premises. While it would appear that the geneticist argument would lend credence to the hereditarian viewpoint, it was actually abused with impunity by environmentalists. Recent discoveries, they insisted, afforded "proof" that poverty, degeneracy, and crime were not inexorably handed down to future generations, but were acquired characteristics.<sup>18</sup> Thus, they

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<sup>17</sup>Chicago Public Schools, Report on Child-Study Investigation (Chicago: Board of Education, 1899), pp. 1-2, 25-45; Chicago Public Schools, Report of the Department of Child-Study and Pedagogical Investigation (Chicago, Board of Education, 1901), pp. 11-13; see also Edward Marshall, "Scientific Child Study," Leslie's Popular Monthly, I (March, 1901), pp. 419-30.

<sup>18</sup>Oscar Craig, "Agencies for the Prevention of Pauperism," in Robert A. Woods, ed. The Poor in Great Cities (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), pp. 363-4; Bernard Wishy, p. 114.

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said, each generation could be "remade." These storms and stresses in the biological and social sciences were perhaps due to the rapidity with which discoveries were being made. They also suggest, however, a self-imposed directive to avoid a challenge to the dominant ideology of unlimited opportunity.

Regardless of the position favored by an individual, all addressed the problem of child-rearing. The importance of the early years of life in the forming of adult character was established as a major concern for social analysts. Demanding in its urgency, its regulation seemed to be the key to problems arising from "diseased" backgrounds of a biological or social nature. Moreover, the definition of social problems as a whole in terms of the child led to a focus of attention on the duty to protect society from its aberrant members, a logical development of the crisis atmosphere of the eighties and nineties. Environmentalists speaking of "getting at the causes" of ills usually indicated a desire to protect the community from its outcasts rather than to right social wrongs. Thus a view of the problems of inheritance and surroundings that considered both gained a readily sympathetic audience. Most scholars, by 1900, saw the merit in the argument of the follower of G. Stanley Hall who

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suggested studying heredity as "in the strain of cattle with which the farmer would stock his acres" and surroundings, so as to either develop or control hereditary tendency, thus giving assistance to "any predispositions to moral rectitude."<sup>19</sup> As Charles Cooley, the sociologist, put it, "the fittest must always survive, but the standard of fitness is largely in our control."<sup>20</sup> Inevitably, this dynamic view of evolution led to a consideration of the role of the state in the moral arena, much as it had in the economic. The value of the outside force in "controlling" development justified, whether one was environmentalist or hereditarian, state action. Franklin Giddings, the pioneer sociologist, stated the logic for state action as a conserving force:

The key to the solution of the social problem will be found in a frank acceptance of the fact that one part of every community is inherently progressive, resourceful, creative, capable of self-mastery and self-direction, while another portion, capable of none of these things, is to be made useful, comfortable and essentially free only by being brought under bondage to society

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<sup>19</sup>J. R. Street, "A Study in Moral Education," Pedagogical Seminary, V (July, 1897), pp. 39-40.

<sup>20</sup>Charles Cooley, "Nature versus Nurture in the Making of Social Careers," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1896, pp. 399-405.

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and kept under mastership and discipline until they have acquired the power to help and govern themselves.<sup>21</sup>

Since the trend toward environmental explanations of social problems marked the new social science, it is important to explore the late-nineteenth-century environment. For an increasing number of Americans, this meant the city, whose coming dominance was reflected in the period's statistical studies. Almost 30 percent of the American populace according to the 1890 census, lived in "cities" (defined as locales with more than 8,000 people), compared to only 3.5 percent in 1790.<sup>22</sup> The increases in urban population were even more dramatic in the "great" cities. In a ten-year span (1880-1890), New York's population rose by 25 percent, while Chicago experienced a gain of 118 percent in the same period.<sup>23</sup> Mere population figures, however, only reveal one dimension of the growth pattern. As Stephan Thernstrom notes in a recent study of

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<sup>21</sup>Franklin H. Giddings, "The Ethics of Social Progress," in Jane Addams et al., Philanthropy and Social Progress (New York: T. Y. Crowell, 1893), p. 244.

<sup>22</sup>Adna Ferrin Weber, The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Statistics (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969 reprint of 1899 ed.), pp. 22-24; U.S., Eleventh Census, 1890, pt. 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1895), p. lxxv.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. lxxvii.

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ban Boston, population figures are not in themselves adequate indices of population shifts. Thernstrom's work shows an internal migration rate to and from Boston of massive proportions.<sup>24</sup> This "turnover" rate hints at the tumult within the large cities of the time, and at the difficulties of antiquated governmental machinery in coping with it. While this work applies only to a particular city, it can be fairly assumed that the problem of "turnover," in varying proportions, applies to other major population centers as well.<sup>25</sup>

Demographic analyses of the city's populace showed to be different in composition from metropolitan populations of earlier periods. An extremely high percentage of great city residents were foreign-born or American-born children of foreign parents.<sup>26</sup> In the cases of New York, Chicago, and Boston, all centers of immigrant concentration, the figures reached as high as 78 percent foreign-born or offspring thereof.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, as has

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<sup>24</sup>Stephan Thernstrom, The Other Bostonians: Property and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880-1970 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 16-20, 232.

<sup>25</sup>See Weber, The Growth of Cities, pp. 22-27.

<sup>26</sup>U.S., Eleventh Census, pt. 1, p. xciii.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.; see also Arthur Mann, Yankee Reformers in Urban Age (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1954), pp. 3-6.

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ten been noted by historians, a higher percentage of the  
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 ones in America. John R. Commons, along with other re-  
 formers, espoused this view, in testimony before con-  
 sessional investigatory bodies.<sup>28</sup> In addition to the immi-  
 nt, internal migratory patterns increased city popu-  
 lions by displacing people from the farms to the city.  
 rural-born population, theorized reformers, was no more  
 able of coping with city life than the immigrant.<sup>29</sup>

G. Stanley Hall's view of these changes was one  
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<sup>28</sup> U.S. Industrial Commission, Reports . . . On  
Migration and on Education, XV (Washington: Government  
 Printing Office, 1901), pp. ix-xxi, 311.

<sup>29</sup> See Everett S. and Ann S. Lee, "Internal Mi-  
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and social commentators of the period), it was likely to threaten body and morals, particularly since the two were seen to be interconnected.<sup>30</sup> Surveys of city conditions in this period, whether of the "scientific" or "impressionistic" variety (using the arbitrary distinctions of the period) agreed that the city problem represented a grave crisis in American community life. That study was needed was beyond question, reformers felt, and in calling for detailed, factual analyses of urban social life they aligned themselves with the positivist faith of the period. Compiling facts was regarded as a necessary means of comprehending the problem and avoiding rash, "unscientific" solutions, a notion that persisted in all levels of urban administration and nascent social work as well. Ample precedents for such survey methods existed, most notably in Britain, where Charles Booth was publishing the results of his early investigations of London's working classes. Booth, as president of the Royal Statistical Society, helped set up the methodological matrix for social surveys that became internationally influential.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "Moral Education and Will-Training," Pedagogical Seminary, II (January, 1892), pp. 72-89.

<sup>31</sup>Charles Booth, "Life and Labour of the People in London: First Results of an Inquiry Based on the 1891

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American surveys of major cities showed a demographic nightmare in the making. An appointed New York State Tenement House Committee in 1894, typical of the investigatory bodies of the period, estimated Manhattan's population as 1.9 million, of which 1.3 million lived in tenement houses, tightly packed in poverty pockets of the city.<sup>32</sup> Hastily built and pitifully congested, the typical tenement was totally unfit for human habitation, and attempts to "reform" the tenement system, via deliberate investigation, legislation, and regulation failed time and again. This fact should have influenced reform methodology, but reform procedure changed little. In Manhattan, most tenements were of the so-called "double-decker" variety. The double-decker, or "dumbbell" tenement as it is sometimes known, was the product of reformist agitation in the late seventies and early eighties. This earlier civil pressure, the result of sanitary reform agitation beginning during and after the Civil War, argued against

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census," Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, LVI (December, 1893), pp. 557-93; Harold W. Pfautz, Charles Booth on the City: Physical Pattern and Social Structure (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 3, 13,

<sup>32</sup> New York State, Report of the Tenement House Committee as Authorized by Chapter 479 of the Laws of 1894 (Albany: James Lynn, 1895), pp. 8, 12.

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tenements as health hazards, "pestilential human rookeries," that bred germs and disease via "poisonous and malodorous gases," sewage, and animal and human waste.<sup>33</sup> Coupled with the inadequate ventilation given apartments caused by building on the standard rectangular lot pattern of 25 by 100 feet on a gridiron street plan, the old tenement was a breeder of high mortality. The dumbbell design was considered an improvement, since it provided for airshafts at the sides of the buildings, thus increasing air circulation to the interior rooms, and so it was awarded the prize for the best design on a reformist-sponsored 1879 competition. However, the "new law" tenement did not attack the basic problems of the gridiron system, population congestion, and low income, all of which were considered outside the province of sanitary reform. Instead, it actually encouraged the perpetuation of the tenement evil by allowing airshaft space to count towards the percentage of open space required on a given lot, thus reducing the already meager yard space. Furthermore, the

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 13; New York Sanitary Aid Society, Report, 1887, quoted in I. N. Phelps Stokes, ed., New York Slums: Extracts from Sources to 1905, Vol. iv, pp. 1654-63 in Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library; Carroll D. Wright, "The Slums of Chicago, New York and Philadelphia . . .," Seventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894), pp. 92-95.

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new law tenements were built with more stories than their predecessors, on the rationale that airshafts gave adequate ventilation to any amount of floors.

By the late eighties, New York tenement wards were suspected of harboring dangers beyond the sanitary dimension. The studies of human nature, as already mentioned, linked the mental state and bodily efficiency closer together, thus increasing worries that the urban poor areas were "powder kegs." The aforementioned commission of 1894, using detailed survey methods, found that certain wards of the lower east side of Manhattan contained over 400 people per acre,<sup>34</sup> and individual blocks recorded densities as high as 1,700 people per acre.<sup>35</sup> From the physical standpoint of course, this deemed the new law tenement a disaster. The double-decker was now labeled "one of the worst forms of housing ever employed," and the dangers of the airshaft enumerated in both investigative reports and newspaper exposes:

Generally opening into the cellar, in which foul air is constantly being sucked into the various rooms. If the shaft is large enough to allow the

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<sup>34</sup>New York State, Report of the Tenement House Committee . . . 1894, passim.

<sup>35</sup>Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, A History of Urban America (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 159.

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light to strike the ground floor, it immediately becomes a receptacle for old clothes, food and the like, while its usefulness as a light shaft wanes. When the shaft is not protected by a skylight, rags and rubbish of all kinds are thrown in, and it is sometimes used as a privy. In cases of fire, the light shaft allows the flames to pass from floor to floor with great rapidity.<sup>36</sup>

Contemporary observers concluded that such dwellings had negative moral effects on their occupants, producing a sinister equation. One popular writer called the tenement areas "grim and grewsome" environs whose moral decay allowed for an atmosphere of vice and crime. A picture was put forth of an exotic arena of pestilence, whose corruption could easily extend outside its own borders. As such, the occupants of the area were regarded with a mixture of contempt, fear, and pity, described as "degenerate populations, so disfigured by sin and ignorance," trapped in a "polyglot wriggling compound."<sup>37</sup> This sort of attitude transcended any differences existing between hereditarians and environmentalists, as it appealed to their mutual fears.

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<sup>36</sup>Quoted in Marcus T. Reynolds, The Housing of the Poor in American Cities (College Park, Md.: McGrath Publishers, 1969 reprint of 1893 edition), p. 14.

<sup>37</sup>Frank Moss, The American Metropolis from Knickerbocker Days to the Present: New York City Life in All Its Phases, Vol. II (New York: P. F. Collier, 1897), pp. 357-58, 366-67.

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Interpretations of statistical evidence were couched in heavily moralistic terms, though "scientific" study supposedly ruled out subjective interpretation. In this sense, the child problem became more complicated in form and scope. Despite a generally declining birth rate nationwide, immigrants in congested areas still had a relatively high birth rate, resulting in an abundance of very young, American-born children. A study of Chicago's "Little Italy" found only 10 percent of the children in that district to be over ten years of age.<sup>38</sup> Along with the problem of numbers was the fact the stable family life tended to disintegrate in the city, and this trend affected children's lives in adverse ways. Coping with the problem of the city family was more difficult than other reform tasks, as many wondered if the family as it had been known was obsolete. A participant in a symposium of "Present-Day Papers" written for Century magazine in 1890, mused on whether the family of former days had fallen victim to the general bigness of social life and would now have to have some of its functions, particularly in regards to child-raising, taken over by outside agencies. Child study and

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<sup>38</sup> Carroll D. Wright, "The Italians in Chicago: Social and Economic Study," Ninth Special Report of the Commission of Labor (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897), pp. 15-17.

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arly educational progressivism, as will be seen, pointed to similar conclusions, seeing the family role in the maintenance of moral order as in need of buttressing.<sup>39</sup>

As such, the city's tendency to corrupt children morally received particular attention in investigations of the physical environment. Trades in tenements, such as cigar making and clothing, often employed children, some as young as three years of age. The combination home-factory made for scenes of young children making cigars or garments in foul-aired sweatshops, while parents worked alongside and tried gamely, but unsuccessfully, to maintain proper custodial care of their young.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, as meeting high rents with low income proved difficult, lodgers and boarders from the "shiftless and floating" population were taken in. Usually young single men who were recent arrivals from a similar ethnic group or rural backgrounds, the lodgers were blamed for corrupting child-life by presenting a bad sort of moral tone to the

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<sup>39</sup> Samuel W. Dike, "Problems of the Family," *Century*, n.s. XVII (January, 1890), pp. 385-95; John Wey, *The School and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1899), pp. 10-12.

<sup>40</sup> T. J. Dowling, "Tenement House Cigarmaking in New York City," in Bureau of Statistics of Labor of the State of New York, *Thirteenth Annual Report* (Albany: H. Crawford, 1896), pp. 545-48; see also "The Sweating System," scp. no. 11 in New York State, *Report of Tenement House Committee . . . 1894*, p. 251.

impressionable mind. "Life is promiscuous as that of brutes," noted one observer. Children were obliged to listen to criminal braggadocio that served as "their first lessons in crime, drawing it in, as it were, with their first breath." The consequent "moral contagion" made the development of socially acceptable habits of discipline, self-respect, and "right thinking" impossible.<sup>41</sup>

Notions regarding the "moral corruption" of city children were shared by charity workers and child study adherents. They felt that if children were acquainted with adult responsibilities prematurely and in an anti-social or "unnatural" manner (i.e., one not conforming to middle-class definitions of familial stability and moral purity) the effect on the impressionable young mind would be wholly negative. The evolutionary pattern of child raising was upset, thus making the child dangerous to himself and to his community. Therefore, as the nuclear family crumbled into an amalgam of vice, crime, and disorderly relationships, the spectre of a perverted class of

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<sup>41</sup>B. O. Flower, "Practical Measures for Promoting Manhood and Preventing Crime," Arena, XVII (November, 1897), pp. 673-80; Edward T. Devine, "The Shiftless and Floating City Population," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, X (September, 1897), pp. 149-64; Helen Campbell et al., Darkness and Daylight; or, Lights and Shadows of New York Life (Hartford, Conn.: A. D. Worthington, 1892), pp. 106-08.

children became frightening.<sup>42</sup> The reformers' fear of "depravity" transcended hereditarian and environmentalist beliefs, since anti-social behavior, whatever its cause, required control. The theme of the danger of the lustful city to its young was heard constantly, and seems to have stemmed more from fears that children would infect surrounding communities than from purely humanitarian concerns. Slum exposés, whether via official commissions or popular journalists, were phrased as warnings more than as cries of outrage.<sup>43</sup> While the exposé urged the community to ameliorate the plight of the poor by attacking the "causes" of poverty, it did so in terms of the medical idiom of preventing contagion rather than developing cures. This is due to the fact that "causes," as such, were defined within limits that excluded the reconsideration of basic economic postulates.

The career of Jacob Riis as a champion of the rights of city children illustrates the motivation of the campaign for city uplift. Riis regarded urban ills as problems of morality rather than systematic economic faults.

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<sup>42</sup>James B. Reynolds, "Influence of Tenement House Life on the Nervous Condition of Children," Illinois Society for Child Study, Transactions, II (1896), pp. 33-35.

<sup>43</sup>See Joseph Lee, "White Slaves, the Oppression of the Worthy Poor," Charities Review, I (February, 1892), pp. 179-85. ]

He saw greed, vice, and ignorance as both products and causes of the slum, thereby viewing difficulties in terms of attitudes rather than monetary scarcity and holding the poor largely responsible for their lot. Riis depicted the tenement as a "dumping ground" for society's unfortunates, with the child as its innocent victim. With "the gutter for a playground," an atmosphere of immorality among one's companions, and squalid home conditions demoralizing the impressionable mind, growth to good citizenship was impossible. "The wonder is that they are not all corrupted," said Riis.<sup>44</sup> The present-day child nuisance was contagious, since the bad boy would eventually lead a debauched adult life and probably channel his resentment towards those living in more comfortable areas of the city. As such, Riis' descriptions of slum children's lives urged middle- and upper-class reformers to protect themselves by providing the child with a moral shield against his own surroundings.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Jacob Riis, The Peril and The Preservation of the Home (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs, 1903), pp. 26-27; Riis, The Children of the Poor (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), pp. 18-24.

<sup>45</sup> See Robert H. Bremner, From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States (New York: New York University Press, 1956), pp. 69-72.



The writings of Riis serve as a bridge between popular moods and reformist circles. He employed little statistical material in his work, yet his message was similar to that being propagated by the growing body of professional charity workers. Riis was a strong proponent of environmentalism. True, he admitted, heredity was important, but "in the last analysis, what is it but the sum of the environment that should have been undid generations back?"<sup>46</sup> In this way, Riis placed the blame for the child's delinquency squarely on the family. These views derived from his own experience, an Algeresque rise from poor immigrant status to middle-class respectability that left him indebted to his adopted country and convinced of its basic benignity.<sup>47</sup> Thus he concurred with the charity worker's distinction between the respectable poor and the pauper class. Riis regarded the tramp with scorn, and had little sympathy for those in financial distress whom he judged "capable" of working.<sup>48</sup> Judging them incompetent,

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<sup>46</sup> Jacob Riis, "A Blast of Cheer," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1901, p. 21.

<sup>47</sup> Jacob Riis, The Making of an American (New York: Macmillan, 1902), pp. 14-62; Louis Ware, Jacob A. Riis: Police Reformer, Reporter, Useful Citizen (New York: D. Appleton, 1938), pp. 23-25.

<sup>48</sup> Jacob Riis, "The Making of Thieves in New York," Century, XLIX (November, 1894), pp. 111-13; Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890), pp. 78-81.

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implied that agencies and institutions ought to watch, if not interfere with directly, the raising of their children. His warnings seemed all the more plausible, in view of the many statistical studies which showed a high incidence of crime among American-born children of foreign parents.<sup>49</sup> Wise to American ways, easily outwitting their parents, sullen and resentful, the first American-born generation required management and discipline. Frequently, in his realistic reporter's style, Riis would "quote" conversations between a "street arab" and an adult:

Where do you go to church, my boy?'  
 We don't have no clothes to go to church.'  
 and indeed, his appearance, as he was, in the doorway of any New York church would have caused a sensation.  
 Well, where do you go to school, then?'  
 I don't go to school,' with a snort of contempt.  
 Where do you buy your bread?'  
 We don't buy no bread; we buy beer,' said the boy, and it was eventually the saloon that led to the police as a landmark to his "home." It was worthy of the boy. As he had said, his only possession was a heap of dirty straw on the floor, his daily diet a crust in the morning . . .<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> William I. Cole, "Criminal Tendencies," in  
 H. A. Woods, ed., The City Wilderness: A Settlement  
 (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1898), pp. 148-75;  
 Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the  
 Census, Prisoners and Juvenile Delinquents in Institutions,  
 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907),  
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<sup>50</sup> Riis, How the Other Half Lives, pp. 184-85.

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Inevitably, said Riis, the unmanaged and undisciplined child drifted from the collapsed home into the street, where he would prematurely learn the facts of life, and acquire the bad habits of living a jungle-like, day-to-day existence. Thus the corrupt older generation would infect the younger, and produce a criminal class to repeat their squalid lives. Riis, therefore, in blaming the slum dweller's plight on moral rather than economic circumstances, thereby limited the role of government in righting social wrongs. Slum residents, of course, knew that they were exposed to vice and crime at an early age<sup>51</sup> but argued that immorality was nothing more than a by-product of economic deprivation. Riis and the social service professionals, however, had only revised the old theory of poverty-as-moral decay, seeing it as arising from earthly, controllable sources rather than spiritual, irredeemable origins. The implication was that immorality, as such, could be stopped without a major alteration in the economic structure.

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<sup>51</sup> Riis, "The Making of Thieves in New York," pp. 112-13; see also Harry Roskolenko, The Time That Was (New York: Dial Press, 1971), p. 24; Moses Rischin, Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 82-88.

By the nineties the "local color" movement in literature reached the city. "Slumming" was a standard outlet for the popular writer and for the realist and naturalist weary of Victorian restraints on subject matter. Tenement genre such as newspaper vignettes and in the short story format was common. Usually written in a Dickensian style, most of them appealed to the innate curiosity of the growing reading public concerning the city immigrant. Such writers assured their audiences that the new arrivals were harmless and colorful, though strange. Social life in tenement areas was pictured as an urban version of small-town folksiness and, while far from comfortable in the material sense, not desperate either. One writer told his audience that tenement occupants were happy people, who "get more pleasure out of life than the privileged classes," while others dwelled on the camaraderie of the poor and their tendencies toward an innocent, childlike sort of fun not enjoyed in more formal circles.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, realism and naturalism in literature often

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<sup>52</sup> See M. J. McKenna, Our Brethren of the Tenements and the Ghetto (New York: J. S. Ogilvie, 1899), p. 20; William Ralph, People We Pass: Stories of Life Among the Masses of New York City (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1896), pp. 4, 8, 78; Brander Matthews, Vignettes of Manhattan (New York: Harper, 1894), pp. 67-82.

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prompted a searching examination of slum conditions. Stephen Crane's Maggie: A Girl of the Streets pictured the slum as a dark force of destruction, within which the "careening building," the tenement, served as an engine of evil. William Dean Howells showed little patience with the romanticizers, noting that the so-called "picturesque" slum remained so only when the writer gave his audience "the distance which it needs." To immerse oneself in the slum atmosphere would provoke a far different portrait.<sup>53</sup> Ironically, opinions such as those of Crane and Howells were criticized as Spencerian, overly gloomy, and thus anti-humanist by newspaper reviewers. Jacob Riis, however, steered a middle ground between the two extremes, idealizing the denizens of the congested wards, particularly the children, yet stressing the moral pollution and squalor of the slum. His stories, appearing in Century and various newspapers, implied a personal intimacy with the subject that satisfied both the call for realism and the curiosity of the reader, adding proper doses of environmentalism and pathos. Most of his child

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<sup>53</sup> Stephen Crane, Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1970 reprint of 1893 ed.), p. 9; William Dean Howells, Impressions and Experiences, pp. 219-22; see also David M. Fine "Abraham Cahan, Stephen Crane, and the Romantic Tenement Tale of the Nineties," American Studies, XIV (Spring, 1973), pp. 95-107.



subjects were his friends, and all of them were "basically good." All, however, were victims of the corrupt slum atmosphere. For some, this meant needless death in a street accident, a commonly reported occurrence of the times given fictional breadth by Riis.<sup>54</sup> For others, it meant a life of crime, but with mitigating circumstances. The criminal child in the Riis vignette was a natural product of "a bare and cheerless room," with "a pile of rags for a bed in the corner," and a stereotyped drunkard father.<sup>55</sup>

Jacob Riis' best known tale of a tenement child gone wrong was "Skippy of Scrabble Alley," which was based on the real-life career of a youthful convicted murderer.<sup>56</sup> "Skippy" had grown up amid hopeless conditions in the city's worst ward:

So far as he had ever known home of any kind it was there in the dark and moldy basement of the rear house, farthest back in the gap that was all the builder of those big tenements had been able to afford of the light and air for the poor

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<sup>54</sup>Jacob A. Riis, "Paolo's Awakening," in Riis, Out of Mulberry Street: Stories of Tenement House Life in New York City (New York: Century Company, 1898), pp. 166-81.

<sup>55</sup>Jacob A. Riis, "Nisby's Christmas," in Children of the Tenements (New York: Macmillan, 1903), pp. 104-16.

<sup>56</sup>Jacob A. Riis, "The Genesis of the Gang," Atlantic, LXXXIV (September, 1899), pp. 302-05.

people whose hard-earned wages, brought home every Saturday, left them as poor as if they had never earned a dollar . . .<sup>57</sup>

Naturally, "Skippy" took to the streets to seek companionship and such happiness as he could find. Yet the city restricted him from even minor pleasures, and his arrest for ball-playing in the streets led him to the gang and its evil ways. The ethic of the savage, "to take things as he found them, because that was the way they were" had taken hold of him, and his tragic end was only a natural product of this socially instilled lawlessness. Yet, concluded Riis, "the real reckoning of society" ought to be with "Scrabble Alley," and not the boy.<sup>58</sup> In this way, sentimentalism served to warn the reader of the social peril of the unattended young.<sup>59</sup>

The conventional agencies of "child-saving," entrusted with the care of the slum child, did not prevent his fall. The most obvious of these institutions, the school, was a conspicuous failure in assuming this custodial

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<sup>57</sup> Jacob A. Riis, "Skippy of Scrabble Alley," in Children of the Tenements, pp. 357-59.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 360-64.

<sup>59</sup> This theme is discussed further in Walter F. Taylor, The Economic Novel in America (New York: Octagon Books, 1964), p. 82.



and preventive role. Overcrowding in the slum school was endemic, and many children were turned away even when their parents preferred that they learn rather than work.<sup>60</sup> Even if admitted to school, however, the child was more likely to be stunted than helped. Ill-prepared and contemptuous teachers, lacking knowledge of the new principles of child development, forced the young into taxing mental exercises that unduly strained the growing mind. Child study adherents argued that the anti-"natural" education of the schools invited disaster by ignoring laws which were nature's chief provision for the education and healthful employment of children."<sup>61</sup> Crammed into confining desks in crowded rooms,<sup>62</sup> the city child came to view the immoral street as an arena of freedom.

Since the traditional agency of child management, the school, was judged inadequate, and since disorder of serious nature was likely, early social welfare

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<sup>60</sup>New York State, Report of the Tenement House Committee . . . 1894, pp. 170-73; see also New York Times, November 22, 1891, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup>Stuart H. Rowe, "The School and the Child's Physical Development," NEA, Proceedings, 1905, pp. 742-49.

<sup>62</sup>See R. Tait McKenzie, "Influence of School Life on Curvature of the Spine," in NEA, Proceedings, '98, pp. 939-44.



institutions assumed the burden of "child-saving." This marked a turn from earlier forms of philanthropic practice. Joseph Lee, the Boston philanthropist-reformer, distinguished in a 1902 work between "constructive" and "preventive" philanthropy. In the past, said Lee, preventive work such as legislation, repressive measures, and relief had been employed to cope with the burden of the unfit. Now, however, in keeping with theories of environmentalism, there was a turn towards "constructive" activity. The "constructive" activity placed stress on the actual causes of need and the eradication of these, so as to deal with the case before it reached the hopeless stage.<sup>63</sup> "Constructive" effort would logically be concentrated on the child, who was not yet absolutely corrupted.

The distinction made by Lee between "old" and "new" philanthropy is comprehensible when placed in the matrix of the new social welfare movement. Beginning in the late 1870s, the "charity organization" movement swept through American cities. Ostensibly an administrative reform, its implications were actually more than technical. Major relief agencies were consolidated into a central clearing

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<sup>63</sup> Joseph Lee, Constructive and Preventive Philanthropy (New York: Macmillan, 1902), pp. 2-9.

house, so as to avoid overlapping aid or sectarian clashes among the many church-affiliated relief agencies.<sup>64</sup> More than coping with such problems, however, charity organization was intended to be precisely what Lee called "constructive" philanthropy. It would, felt its proponents, answer the complaint made against relief agencies for spending too much time on reforming the "vicious" and not enough at preventing their existence by building up institutions and initiative.<sup>65</sup> This focus on "causes" of poverty did not imply any reevaluation of the social structure, as charity organizers still saw their role as limited. They distinguished sharply between "pauperism" and "poverty," thus retaining moralistic cant at the same time they boasted of making philanthropy "scientific." The pauper was an individual deserving of contempt, one who consciously sought the status of a public charge. "Lazy, shiftless, and extravagant," such persons were public

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<sup>64</sup> Nathan Huggins, Protestants Against Poverty: Boston's Charities 1870-1900 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwald Publishers, 1971), pp. 51, 69-70; see also Asa Briggs, "The Welfare State in Historical Perspective," European Journal of Sociology, II (1961), pp. 221-58.

<sup>65</sup> R. W. Hill, "The Children of 'Shinbone Alley,'" p. 229.

leeches who deserved no sympathy.<sup>66</sup> The old philanthropy of direct relief was held accountable for the persistence of pauperism, which was regarded as a moralistic aberration rather than a manifestation of economic inequities. Allegedly "easily" obtainable, direct relief encouraged bad habits. Charity organizers, in their desire to co-ordinate administration, sought to end the pauper threat to the city by legal means, encouraging strict anti-mendicancy legislation.<sup>67</sup> As such, it is apparent that charity organizers did not believe in "inherited" degradation, but their environmentalism was not at all humanitarian in its motivation.

"Poverty," however was a different phenomenon, wholly opposed to pauperism. Never fully defining just what it was, charity organizers essentially regarded anyone with material need yet short of the status of public charge to be in "poverty." Yet, unlike pauperism, this

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<sup>66</sup>Robert Treat Paine, "The Importance of Stopping Outdoor Relief to Chronic or Hereditary Paupers," Charities, X (February 7, 1903), pp. 134-37; Joseph Kirkland, "Among the Poor of Chicago," in Robert A. Woods, ed., The Poor in Great Cities, pp. 195-239.

<sup>67</sup>W. A. Johnson, "Methods and Machinery of the Organization of Charity," no. 34 in Charity Organization Society of the City of New York, Annual Reports and Miscellaneous Papers, 1887 (New York: C.O.S., 1888).



state was not opposed to nature, but "the necessary result of the natural dependence between man and man," and a natural outcome of urbanization.<sup>68</sup> Direct subsidy in the form of relief to those in poverty was opposed, as it encouraged the receiver to slip towards pauperism. "Human nature," said Josephine Shaw Lowell, a leader of the charity organization movement in New York, insured the decline of those encouraged to rely on direct relief and, indeed, any aid given "in order to make it as little dangerous as possible," required accompanying "moral care."<sup>69</sup> Washington Gladden, the most significant of the Social Gospel clerics, many of whom were involved in charity organization, also warned against direct relief:

We must never forget that the degradation of the soul is a far worse misery than hunger or cold and that a method of charity which relieves men's bodily wants and at the same time undermines their manhood or weakens their self-respect, is of very doubtful value.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ansley Wilcox, "The Charity Organization Idea," no. 31 in *Ibid.*; J. J. McCook, "Charity Organization and Social Regeneration," Lend-a-Hand, XIII (December, 1894), pp. 161-64.

<sup>69</sup> Bremner, pp. 51-60; Mrs. C. R. Lowell, "Poverty and Its Relief," Lend-a-Hand, XV (January, 1895), pp. 6-12.

<sup>70</sup> Washington Gladden, "The Plain Path of Reform," Charities Review, I (April, 1892), pp. 251-56.

Thus "misery" was unnatural yet, if it existed, unassailable. By such reasoning, the charity organizers retained the old moralism, and invested it with the new environmentalism. A "causes of need" form used by the New York Charity Organization Society in the nineties listed "intemperance" and "laziness" as among the applicable labels allowed for a particular case.<sup>71</sup> Problems were not regarded as unsolvable, however. People could be enlightened by indirect means, and hopefully raised from "pauperism" to "respectable poverty." Charity workers extolled the hardworking, unburdensome poor and worried that the mixing of paupers and the poor in the slums encouraged the latter to take up the ways of the former.<sup>72</sup> Using this reasoning, resistance to poverty was defined in terms of disease. Children, as such, were vulnerable to "moral contagion" from criminal classes or profligate parents. Since this was not biologically inherited, however, it might be prevented by proper action.

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<sup>71</sup>Charity Organization Society of the City of New York, Annual Reports and Miscellaneous Papers, 1895 (New York: Charity Organization Society, 1896), p. 39.

<sup>72</sup>Zilpha Smith, "Causes of Poverty," Lend-a-Hand, V (January, 1890), pp. 23-30; see also Riis, How the Other Half Lives, pp. 22-24, passim.



Charity organization, then, was a form of social insurance for the powered against those without power. Membership rolls of charity organization societies were dominated by propertied and upper-class elites, and public appeals made on self-interested premises. Public exhibitions of tenement conditions were acknowledged to be part of a strategy of "bringing the so-called slums to the people uptown."<sup>73</sup> Private groups involved in relief were advised to de-emphasize "wasteful" ("\$950 of every \$1,000 given") direct aid, since only indirect assistance was helpful to the "vicious." Such a position did not wholly conflict with the Spencerian dictum that aid to the lowly, while elevating the giver, kept human waste afloat, for charity organizers continually argued that their activities reduced the "unfit" populace via moral suasion.<sup>74</sup> The attempt to "reinforce those who are morally deficient," was really an efficient way of protecting society from the

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<sup>73</sup>See Lawrence Veiller, The Reminiscences of Lawrence Veiller, transcript of interview for Oral History Project, Columbia University; Chicago Woman's Club, Board Minutes (April 6, 1892), in Chicago Woman's Club Mss., Chicago Historical Society.

<sup>74</sup>Richard T. Ely, Studies in the Evolution of Industrial Society (New York: Macmillan, 1903), pp. 167-69.

spread of "moral disease."<sup>75</sup> As a means of further divorcing social welfare functions from the economic realm, municipal charity organizations were consistently chartered so as to be administered by unpaid boards of trustees,<sup>76</sup> thus furthering the growth of an inbred charity "establishment."

Charity organizers, committed as they were to indirect relief, experimented widely with the "friendly visitor," an ancestor of the modern-day social worker. The friendly visitor, usually a middle- or upper-class woman, visited the homes of the poor and provided aid in housekeeping, nutrition, use of resources, and "good habits" in general so as to promote familial stability without recourse to the dole. The friendly visitor aimed to prevent the poor family from becoming a public charge by teaching it how to "make do," and at no time promoted such political notions as to cause family dissatisfaction with the economic structure. Indeed, Mary Richmond, a

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<sup>75</sup>H. L. Wayland, "A Scientific Basis of Charity," Charities Review, III (April, 1894), p. 271; Charles R. Henderson, Introduction to the Study of the Dependent, Defective, and Delinquent Classes (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1901), p. 48.

<sup>76</sup>Josiah Quincy, "The Administration of Municipal Charities," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1898, pp. 198-205.

prominent friendly visitor later active in the professionalization of social work, warned visitors not to be "swept away by enthusiastic advocates of social reform" from a "safe middle ground" position. Visitors, she said, should never lose sight of the fact that "character is at the very center" of social ills.<sup>77</sup>

In the practical arena then, environmentalism promoted a multicausal view of poverty that viewed problems primarily in moral and behavioral terms. Amos Warner's American Charities, the most comprehensive and representative volume on the field in the nineties, spoke of a vast, interconnected web of circumstances leading to degeneration including disease, diet, lack of education, "self-abuse," shiftlessness, and family collapse.<sup>78</sup> This new consideration of the causes of "weakness" retained the moral-spiritual overtones of the older viewpoints, but added the authority of science as both a confirming force and as a panacea. Warner acknowledged that "the child follows by some secret

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<sup>77</sup>Quoted in Roy Lubove, The Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Career, 1880-1930 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 11.

<sup>78</sup>Amos G. Warner, American Charities: A Study in Philanthropy and Economics (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1894), pp. 25, 27-29, 40-47.

but irresistible propulsion the history of the parent," but insisted that conscious interference by outside forces could check the trend towards a "vicious" temperament. As such, "constructive" philanthropy was interspersed with heavy doses of the old "preventive" variety. Multicausality as such might be considered a progressive advance over grimmer analyses, but the de-emphasis of economics at the expense of behavioral factors diluted the reform thrust considerably. Seemingly "humane" considerations of the causes of poverty actually tended to avoid the very confrontation with the "roots" of poverty that were allegedly under attack and the strategy of "indirect" aid prompted a piecemeal approach to social ills that slowed progress. As C. Wright Mills pointed out, multicausality, when employed in such a context, weakens efforts at social amelioration and objectively aids in the maintenance of the status quo.<sup>79</sup>

The institution that was supposed to cope with the problem of the wayward child was the juvenile court. State-by-state agitation throughout the nineties culminated in the establishment of these courts in Illinois in

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<sup>79</sup>C. Wright Mills, "The Professional Ideology of Social Pathologists," American Journal of Sociology, IL (September, 1943), pp. 169-80.

1899, and elsewhere during the next decade. Seen by its proponents as a humane and yet "scientific" movement, the juvenile court rested on the notion of society's corporate responsibility for the child and his surroundings. To be sure, institutions such as reformatories and juvenile asylums justified their existence on like grounds, but their arguments tended to contain overtones of the anachronistic theories of "natural depravity" now rejected by reformers. In addition, institutionalization of children had by now come under attack as producing hardened individuals who, as a result of being cared for, lacked initiative and became paupers.<sup>80</sup> The alternative, placement of juveniles in the regular court flow was likewise decried, as the child was put among adult criminals and pointed towards evil. For its legal-historical rationale, the juvenile court movement drew heavily on the new social science. The modern state was analogized to a sort of extended family, comparable to the primitive tribe in the anthropological sense, and endowed with the duty to protect

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<sup>80</sup>"Report of Illinois," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1899, pp. 53-54; Frank B. Fay, "Our Children in 1915," Lend-a-Hand, VI (May, 1891), pp. 308-11.



its members.<sup>81</sup> In the legal sense in particular, the doctrine of In loco parentis was used to justify state interference in the affairs of an "inadequate" family.

The juvenile court system saw child life as an evolutionary process demanding discreet yet "constant vigilance."<sup>82</sup> As such, it was more than just a court, and this is reflected in its procedures and delegated powers. Hearings were conducted informally, the process of conviction eliminated, and crime and punishment, in the sense that they existed in adult courts did not occur here. A juvenile did not have to have committed a "crime" to be brought into court. Colorado's definition of delinquency, for example, was phrased in terms of violation of socially acceptable forms of behavior that were not necessarily criminal:

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<sup>81</sup> Josiah Strong, The New Era, or the Coming Kingdom (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1893), pp. 121, 253, 320-21; P. Caldwell, "Duty of the State to Delinquent Children," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1898, pp. 404-10; Homer Folks, The Case of Destitute, Neglected, and Delinquent Children (New York: Macmillan, 1902), pp. 236-41; Anna Garlin Spencer, "Social Responsibility Toward Child-Life," in sec. II of International Congress of Charities, Correction, and Philanthropy, Chicago, June, 1893 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1894), pp. 6-15.

<sup>82</sup> See Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), p. 169.

patronizes, visits or enters a disorderly house or dram shop . . . wanders about the streets in the night without being engaged in any lawful business or occupation.<sup>83</sup>

Likewise, judgment proceeded differently in this court than it did in adult courts. In considering the disposition of the case, the sitting judge considered the violation itself less important than its chances for repetition. Penal reformers and child-workers favored the "indeterminate" sentence or probation, the length of which depended on the individual's maintenance of "good behavior."<sup>84</sup>

The movement then, rested on wholly environmentalist concepts. It assumed that adequate behavior was a matter objectively determined, and that social forces and institutions could produce desired behavior patterns in those judged aberrant. As such, the court considered the child's surroundings, and his parents in particular. In doing so, the court felt it was attacking the "cause" of problems, and doing so before the child was hopelessly debauched. Court investigators, individually trained in a manner comparable to friendly visitors in methods of

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<sup>83</sup>"The Year in Juvenile Courts," Charities, XIV (July 1, 1905), p. 873.

<sup>84</sup>Platt, The Child Savers, pp. 99, 177.

"objective" observation, consistently blamed parents for providing the child with a crime-inducing environment. Once again, analogies in procedure to medical practice were used, in this case to examine the so-called "neuro-pathic" family. Immigrant parents, concluded the investigators, ignorant of American sanitary standards and morals, induced the young to labor without reward, and provided them with inadequate custodial supervision.<sup>85</sup> Children, more at home in the city street and in the nether worlds of American cities than their parents thus were "running wild . . . like little animals" and falling prey to "noxious growth" patterns due to this lack of parental checks.<sup>86</sup> The reports of court investigators, used by judges, phrased the problems in these environmental terms in their analyses of given situations:

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<sup>85</sup> Mrs. Joseph T. Bowen, "The Delinquent Children of Immigrant Parents," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1909, pp. 255-60; Luther H. Gulick and Leonard P. Ayres, Medical Inspection of Schools (New York: Charities Publishing Committee, 1908), p. 7; Elza Herzfeld, "Superstitions and Customs of the Tenement House Mother," Charities, XIV (July 29, 1905), pp. 983-86.

<sup>86</sup> T. D. Hurley, ed., Juvenile Courts and What They Have Accomplished (privately printed, 1904), p. 18; Joseph Hawes, Children in Urban Society: Juvenile Delinquency in Nineteenth Century America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 180-81.

2nd arrest. Both times for stealing . . . father out of work. 6 children . . . Boy has not been in school more than two weeks this year . . . mother drinks.<sup>87</sup>

Surroundings very bad. Boy does not go to school. Father out of work and mother apparently half crazy . . . They would not let me in, and the mother was very brawling and noisy about my coming. A sister about 15 years of age is the only support of the family.<sup>88</sup>

Parents thus became pariahs who mentally and physically abused their children. Reports similar to the above told of children being forced to work long hours, only to turn over all their earnings to ungrateful, often drunk, parents. Such persons, "thoroughly disreputable in drink and language," made the home a place to be avoided, driving the child into the company of similarly abused "gang" members and eventual trouble.<sup>89</sup> Little wonder then, that

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<sup>87</sup>Investigator's Notebook, p. 145 (June, 1897-August, 1899), Juvenile Protective Association Supplement I--Case Studies, Folder 7 in Juvenile Protective Association Mss., University of Illinois--Chicago Circle.

<sup>88</sup>Investigator's Notebook, p. 193 (November, 1899-August, 1901), Juvenile Protective Association Supplement I--Case Studies, Folder 9 in Juvenile Protective Association Mss., University of Illinois--Chicago Circle.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 107; as a result of the agitation of juvenile court reformers, Colorado passed an "Adult Delinquency" statute, holding parents accountable for the criminal actions of their unsupervised children.

children became incorrigible. Judge Ben B. Lindsey of Denver, the well-known juvenile court jurist, regarded children as "little savages," subject to storm and stress, whose amorality could be channelled into good or evil pursuits. He was totally skeptical of the efficiency of punitive measures in the case of children who had been raised in, as an investigator put it, "ignorance of the raison d'etre of social customs."<sup>90</sup> Therefore he and other juvenile court judges accepted jurisdiction over the family on the grounds that, as defined by child-workers attached to the court:

. . . enjoyment of the parental relationship is a privilege to be exercised under strict accounting, and to be justified by adequate performance.<sup>91</sup>

Thus progressivism, as one historian of the juvenile court movement writes, was "unwilling to eliminate the traditional practice of moral indoctrination."<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ben B. Lindsey, "Childhood and Morality," NEA, Proceedings, 1909, pp. 146-57; Ben B. Lindsey and Harvey O'Higgins, The Beast (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1910), p. 149. Carl Kelsey, "The Juvenile Court of Chicago and Its Work," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, XVII (March, 1901), pp. 298-304.

<sup>91</sup> Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, "The Community and the Child," Survey, XXV (February 4, 1910), p. 786.

<sup>92</sup> Peter Gregg Slater, "Ben Lindsey and the Denver Juvenile Court: A Progressive Looks at Human Nature," American Quarterly, XX (Summer, 1968), pp. 211-23; Roy Lubare, The Progressives and the Slums (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962), pp. 186-89.

Determinism was cast aside, and the state's police power extended to the realm of the juvenile life cycle, the correct management of which would perpetuate the objectively fixed moral order. If the family could not give the child a "proper" upbringing, the state had to do so, and the reformers had little respect for the parental capabilities of the new immigrants. As Jane Addams remarked, one could not expect a primitive Italian peasant to act as a New England scholar.<sup>93</sup> Likewise, Thomas Travis, a student of delinquency, declared morality to be a quality alien to slum youth:

It would be like asking a Chinaman to produce the music of Wagner, or an African savage to show the delicacy of moral feeling a cultured woman manifests.<sup>94</sup>

There were alternatives to the removal of the child from his home. In general, they involved attempts to influence and regulate his conduct, so as to counterbalance home influences. One charity worker asserted that there were "three ways out of this degradation--by education--by

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<sup>93</sup> Jane Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics (New York: Macmillan, 1902), p. 229; see also Daniel Levine, Varieties of Reform Thought (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1964), p. 22.

<sup>94</sup> Thomas Travis, The Young Malefactor: A Study in Juvenile Delinquency, Its Causes and Treatment (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1908), pp. 16-17.

suitable recreation--by change in environment."<sup>95</sup> As such, the child's leisure time was scrutinized since it was considered to be a major corrupting force, yet potentially an ally of constructive citizenship, according to the child study movement. A student of G. Stanley Hall, in examining juvenile gangs, depicted them as "natural" phenomena arising from an "instinct of activity" and a desire for companionship ("the social instinct"). Generally formed to facilitate leisure-time pursuits, the gang "went wrong" only if legitimate outlets for activity were lacking.<sup>96</sup> Unfortunately, this was often the case in the city, where innocent activities such as street play were banned, and children daring to play were arrested. Graham Taylor, the Chicago settlement house leader, reacted angrily to this. He said that society, "in a blunderbuss way," was insuring the creation of delinquency "by punishing them for the 'crime' of being what they were made to be--boys."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Chicago Woman's Club, Board Minutes (April 6, 1892), Chicago Woman's Club Mss., Chicago Historical Society.

<sup>96</sup>J. Adams Puffer, "Boys' Gangs," Pedagogical Seminary, XII (June, 1905), pp. 175-212.

<sup>97</sup>Graham Taylor, "The Big Problem of the Small Boy," Chicago Daily News, May 2, 1903, clipping in Graham Taylor Mss., Newberry Library, Chicago; see also Lillian Wald, The House on Henry Street (New York: Henry Holt, 1915), p. 95.

Child study suggested ways to turn these impulses into less harmful channels. James Mark Baldwin, a leading child psychologist, said that the child's natural tendency to imitate, which made him "a veritable copying machine," might serve as a "great socializing function."<sup>98</sup> Other studies urged that slum children be considered as "a congeries of uncoordinated propositions," capable of proper conduct if supervised. The overall confidence that the "easily impressed" mind could be guided into "right channels" indicated that the manipulative dimensions of such a program were welcomed.<sup>99</sup>

Nascent welfare state theory, then, advocated preparations for the handling of a permanently disabled class while at the same time failing to challenge the myth of equal opportunity. This meant that welfare work would be framed within a definition of proper conduct that

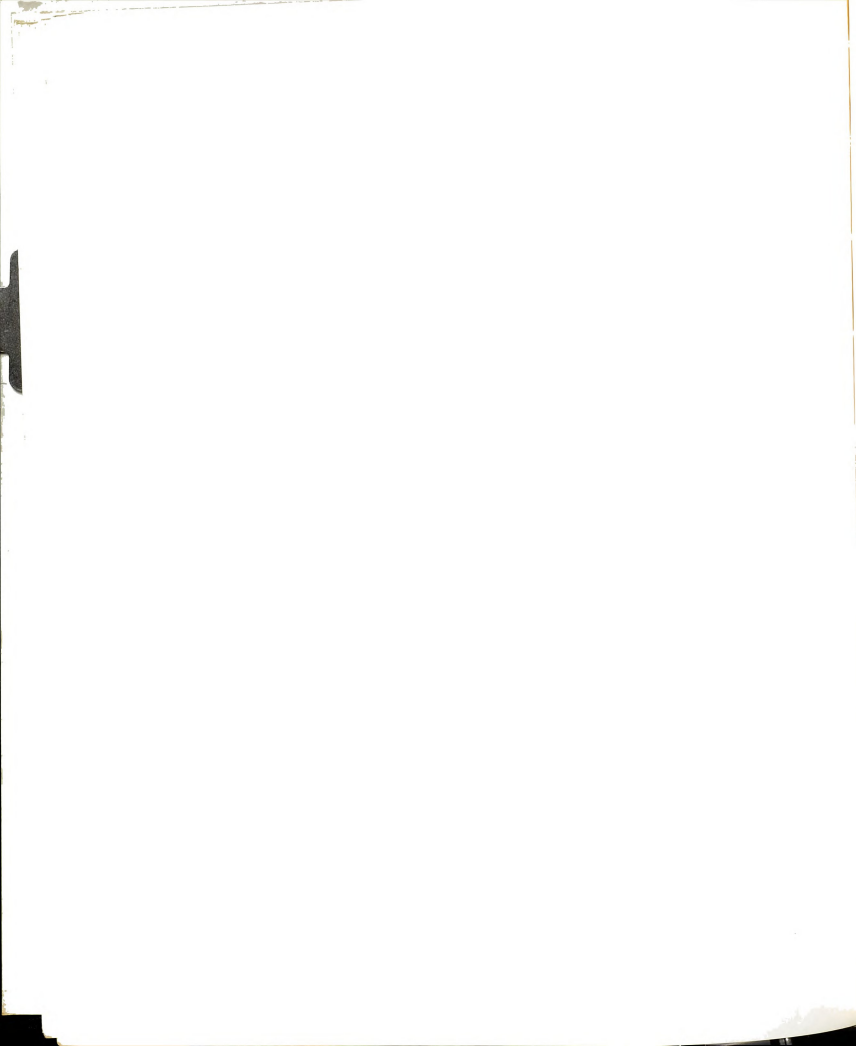
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<sup>98</sup> See James Mark Baldwin, Mental Development in the Child and the Race (New York: Macmillan, 1896), pp. 296-98, 357-59, 488; Baldwin, The Individual and Society (New York: Macmillan, 1900), pp. 18-26; Mary F. Ledyard, "Relation of Imitative Play to Originality and Consequent Freedom," NEA, Proceedings, 1899, pp. 547-51.

<sup>99</sup> James Sully, "Studies in Childhood. XI: Material of Morality," Popular Science Monthly, XLVII (October, 1895), pp. 808-17; "Discussion," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1891, pp. 325-26.



encouraged a compliant populace and asserted the governing community's right to insure its perpetuation. Society's assumption of a wider custodial role, when coupled with the recent scientific discoveries of the nature of children's play, pointed to a significant place in social programs for public recreational facilities.



### CHAPTER III

#### PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, AND VACATION SCHOOLS

Speaking before the Chicago Woman's Club in 1892, Albion Small, the noted sociologist, asserted that character building and healthy growth involved "the proper direction of animal virtues."<sup>1</sup> This notion did not shock those present, since a curiosity about man's physical nature characterized the nineties.<sup>2</sup> This change in the moral climate was part of an overall perception of the need to cope with all sectors of being in order to regulate social life. Children, in particular, were regarded as in need of supervision, and custodial and pedagogic potentialities were greatest in their play lives. The playground movement of the nineties was the product of this understanding, a reform cause incorporating the latest developments in the practical and theoretical social sciences.

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<sup>1</sup>Chicago Woman's Club, Minutes (November 11, 1892), in Chicago Woman's Club Mss., Chicago Historical Society.

<sup>2</sup>See John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the Nineties," in John Weiss, ed., The Origins of Modern Consciousness (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965), pp. 25-48; Larzer Ziff, The American 1890s (New York: Viking, 1966), pp. 51-88.

The Chicago Woman's Club, interested in "civic work," was anxious to put into practice the new ideas of the period. They felt, as did other groups active in charity work, that intelligent, directed action could solve the most pressing social problems. At the same time, the 1893 Columbian Exposition spawned a feeling that the urban community could be ordered, both physically and in its social intercourse. Reformers viewed the city as an organism of separate but nonetheless closely linked parts, a tightly organized entity despite its size.<sup>3</sup>

Ordering and improving childhood was an important part of programs intending to integrate urban social life. The child's major pursuit--play--was perceived as the best means of regulating his conduct. The Columbian Exposition contained a "Children's Building," managed by a woman's civic committee chaired by Mrs. Potter Palmer. New techniques in education and in child-raising were demonstrated there, with special attention to leisure activities. Parents who wished to view other exhibits left their children in the care of matrons who led classes in physical

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<sup>3</sup>Roy Lubove, The Progressives and the Slums (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962), pp. 186-88, 218-19; Charles Zueblin, American Municipal Progress (New York: Macmillan, 1902), pp. 3-7.

culture, games, and manual training.<sup>4</sup> Exhibits concerned with the child study movement were also part of the children's building. The thrust of the entire display was to show the validity of the notion of reciprocal dependence of mind and body, now accepted by both scientists and progressive churchmen.<sup>5</sup> Given the recognizable dangers of city life to both the bodies and morals of its residents, the concern with the implications of this theory was unsurprising, particularly as it applied to children. Poorly attended to by their parents and thus prey to physical and moral collapse, the children of the city were nothing less than the flotsam of urban life. This led to the rhetorical question posed by a child-saver of the period:

If dirt is misplaced matter, then what do you call a child who sits eternally on the curbstones and in the gutters of our tenement house districts.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Bessie Louise Pierce, A History of Chicago: Volume III: The Rise of a Modern City, 1871-1893 (New York: A. Knopf, 1957), p. 505.

<sup>5</sup>New York World, November 23, 1891, p. 6.

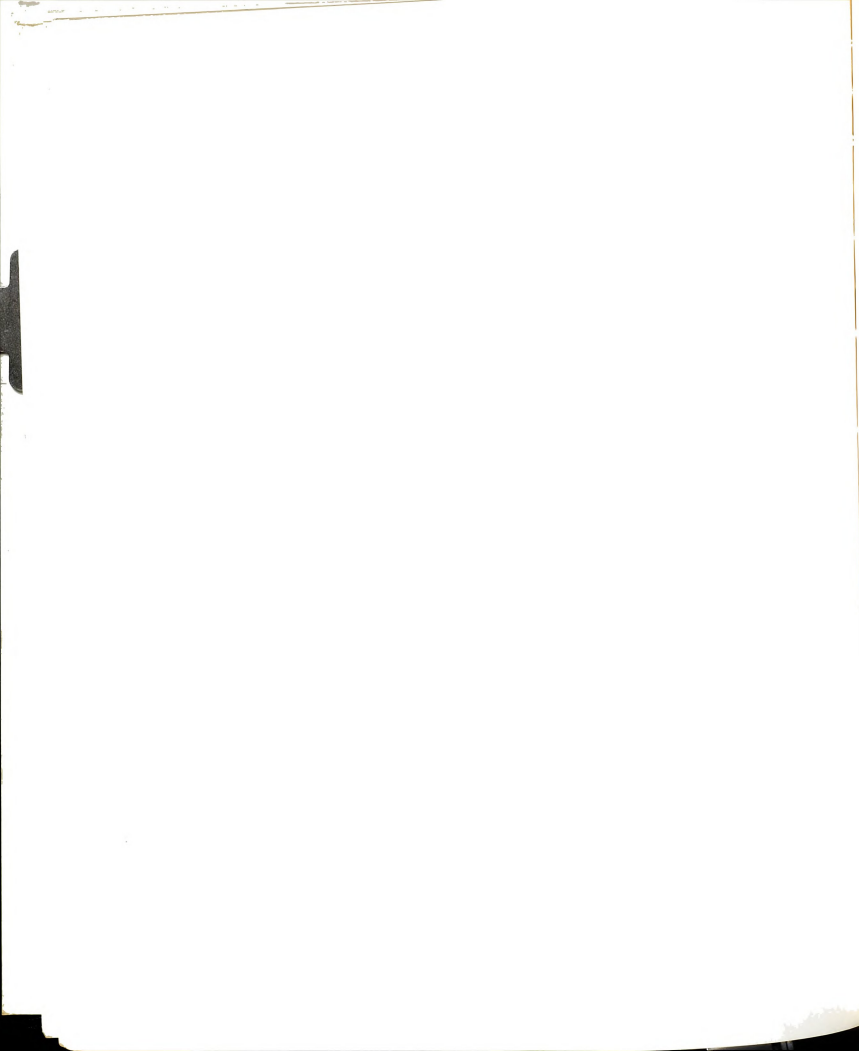
<sup>6</sup>Quoted in Chicago Society for School Extension, By-Laws (Chicago: n.p., 1903), p. 9.

The city child was bound to become a nuisance, since he grew up under conditions recognized as not "normal." Prey of evil street influences, he endangered property, harassed residents, and would likely become more threatening to public order with age. To progressives, the city child raising process epitomized the drift and disorder said to be the core of the "social problem." Without regulation, the harmless diversions of children might develop into chronic criminal pursuits. For this reason, development of the "efficient life" had to begin in childhood.

The philosophy of the juvenile court permeated all areas of work with children. The juvenile court movement stressed the need to "manage" children so as to prevent the growth of bad habits, especially when parents were judged "deficient." In this sense, play was an appropriate place at which to begin work, since city children spent much of their time in rough, unsupervised street play. If controlled, said court workers, play led to self-control and obeisance to law.<sup>7</sup> Thus the goal of preventing

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<sup>7</sup>John Martin, "Social Life in the Streets," in University Settlement Society (New York), *Report*, 1899 (New York: University Settlement Society, 1900), pp. 22-24.



delinquency would be met. The logic of this position was not disputed, for all professions concerned with children agreed that childhood represented an opportunity, a chance at "formation," which was far superior to "reformation," or coping with an already entrenched problem. One child worker saw his role as a "seducer" of children into "effective citizenship." This involved active work with children prior to the commission of a criminal act, and logically assumed all children were possible social threats:

Society must learn to idealize to the extent of thinking of every child as a possible delinquent before it may dream of every child as an acceptable member of society, and lay its plans accordingly.<sup>8</sup>

It is not surprising then, to find that those persons at the forefront of juvenile court movements were also active in the establishment of play facilities for children.<sup>9</sup> This was consistent with the progressive desire to manipulate the child's environment to insure "self-control and habits of industry." It also reflected their faith that the child "well-placed and trained" need not be

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<sup>8</sup>Quoted in Richard Roy Perkins, Treatment of Juvenile Delinquents (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), pp. 56-57, 76; see also T. F. Chapin, "Play as a Reformatory Agency," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1892, p. 443.

<sup>9</sup>"Play versus Juvenile Courts," Boston Sunday Globe, November 11, 1906, p. 4.



well-born.<sup>10</sup> In addition, management of children's activities promoted Americanization. Perhaps this might undermine family life, but many reformers were willing to do so, given their lack of faith in the competence of the lower-class family. Urban social life gave outside agencies the opportunity to direct the growth of the immigrant child. The European, according to the progressive child reformer, was "raw material," needing "social training and discipline" to become fit for American citizenship, and the child of foreigners could be helped to "measure up" to American standards.<sup>11</sup>

Given this belief that the undirected flow of activity in urban social life encouraged unacceptable behavior patterns, children's play came under scrutiny. Jacob Riis, in his examination of the lives of street children, concluded that leisure time was the spawning ground of crime, yet also of good citizenship. At present, he said, the unsupervised child was a menace both to his own and to the community's well-being. Prevented from

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<sup>10</sup>"Prevention and Cure," Boston Herald, April 22, 1897, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup>Beulah Kennard, "Pittsburgh's Playgrounds," Survey, XXII (May 1, 1909), p. 195; Rev. M. Mc G. Dana, "Our Juvenile Delinquents," Lend-a-Hand, XV (August, 1895), pp. 86-89.

exercising their natural desire to play by police, traffic, or the physical city itself, boys naturally turned to illicit activity. Studying case histories of boys at a juvenile home, Riis concluded that their offenses were not criminal, but "a case of misdirection, or no direction at all, of their youthful energies."<sup>12</sup> In this sense, he said, the play life of children became the key to crime prevention. Riis argued that "crime in our large cities is, to an unsuspected extent, a question of athletics merely."<sup>13</sup> As has been noted, he distilled the thought of the child-study movement into forms fit for popular consumption. The general public, already sympathetic to the idea of the city as "unnatural," accepted his viewpoint. The city boy, by Riis' definition, could be analogized to "a little steam engine with the steam always up and play as a safety valve." The policeman, landlord, and other agents of oppressive restraint, "sat" on the valve and caused a buildup of pressure and its eventual explosion in crime. To be sure, the lack of play facilities did not lead the child directly to murder or other terrible crimes,

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<sup>12</sup>Jacob A. Riis, The Children of the Poor (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), p. 130.

<sup>13</sup>Jacob A. Riis, The Peril and the Preservation of the Home (Philadelphia: G. W. Jacobs, 1903), pp. 167-69.

but it encouraged petty mischief and the flouting of society's rules which, if unchecked, began the evolutionary process from boy to vicious outlaw.<sup>14</sup> For these reasons, children's desires had to be fulfilled in some harmless way. Riis continually liked to point out that the boys' gang, hated and feared by city residents, could be turned into a force for good. The gang was "nothing but the genius for organization in our boys run wild," and, with proper guidance, could shed its role as a "distemper of the slum" and become an agency of good behavior.<sup>15</sup>

During this period, numerous studies of boys' activities in cities were published, most of which reduced the problem of the city child to one of undirected and frustrated play. There was little question, as statistics showed, that juvenile offenses were increasing,<sup>16</sup> and the "gang instinct" was seen as the root cause. Boys, like their savage forebears, enjoyed games of chance, the hunt, and a generally vigorous physical life in their formative

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<sup>14</sup> Jacob A. Riis, "The Genesis of the Gang," Atlantic, LXXXIV (September, 1899), pp. 304-05.

<sup>15</sup> Jacob A. Riis, "The Making of Thieves in New York," Century, IL (November, 1894), p. 110.

<sup>16</sup> See Joseph Lee, "Juvenile Law-Breakers in Boston," Publications of the American Statistical Association, VIII (1902-3), (Boston: American Statistical Association, 1903), pp. 409-13.

years. This was both natural and healthy, since play had historically evolved into modes of cooperation that presaged adult life.<sup>17</sup> In his play group the boy learned the values of subordination to a cause, concern for others, and the moral order of civilization.<sup>18</sup> Observers of children came to idealize gang rituals and, in their tendency to study them in intimate detail, made the thesis of leisure activity as the solution to crime seem scientifically valid. Though they conceded that unrestricted play made the boy's mental processes "diffusive, unsymmetrical, lacking inhibition," most city boys were "clearly differentiated" from the mental dullard or "moral imbecile."<sup>19</sup> The period of the nineties through the early progressive era was marked by private and church-related attempts to work with city boys, using leisure activities as their major stimulant. Supporters of such movements were quick to note that their efforts involved both wayward youths and those not in trouble.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>C. C. Van Leiuw, "Racial Traits in the Group Activity of Children," NEA, Proceedings, 1899, pp. 1057-63.

<sup>18</sup>J. Adams Puffer, "Boys' Gangs," Pedagogical Seminary, XII (June, 1905), pp. 201-02.

<sup>19</sup>J. Madison Taylor, "Difficult Boys," Popular Science Monthly, LXIX (October, 1906), p. 340.

<sup>20</sup>William Byron Forbush, The Boy Problem (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1901), pp. 160-200, passim; John E. Gunckel, Boyville: A History of Fifteen Years' Work Among Newsboys (Toledo: Toledo Newsboys' Association, 1905), pp. iii, 3-12.

Students of child life, however, tempered their idealizing of the city boy with their descriptions of contemporary conditions. For all the potential of good citizenship in the city boy's reservoir of character, his influences at present were bad. The street was a jungle, where "might makes right,"<sup>21</sup> a child's version of the Darwinian battleground depicted by naturalistic writers. One child worker saw the street as the devil's playground itself, the scene of the demolition of human character, from which "sickness, nervousness, melancholy, stupidity, uncontrolled passions, lack of balance, mental and moral" resulted.<sup>22</sup> Street life, "with a lack of proper counter-acting influence," led "inevitably toward the cultivation of the destructive spirit."<sup>23</sup> Probation officers investigating the home and neighborhood environs of convicted offenders concurred in this condemnation of "perverted" play instincts.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the offering of a substitute

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<sup>21</sup>Stoyan Vasil Tsanoff, "Children's Playground," Municipal Affairs, II (June, 1898), p. 293.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 294.

<sup>23</sup>Stoyan Vasil Tsanoff, Educational Value of Children's Playgrounds (Philadelphia: privately printed, 1897), p. 17.

<sup>24</sup>Charles Stelzle, Boys of the Street: How to Win Them (New York: F. H. Revell, 1904), pp. 15-16.

for the disorderly street life was deemed both a realistic action and a direct attack on social ills.<sup>25</sup>

The first agencies to explore the possibilities of playgrounds for children were the settlement houses. According to a recent work, the settlement had a "profound commitment" to recreational facilities for their districts, and ranked it as high on their lists of neighborhood priorities as health care and housing.<sup>26</sup> The reason for this is rooted in the basic thrust of the settlement movement. Settlement residents saw city dwellers as living in an atmosphere of loneliness,<sup>27</sup> despite the physical evidence of overcrowding. This condition was not physical, however, but psychic, a consequence of the loss of local ties of family, neighborhood, and peer group brought on by displacement from abroad or from a rural community. Such persons, according to Jane Addams, came to large cities "without fellowship, without local tradition or public spirit, without local organization of any kind." Impersonalization

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<sup>25</sup> Leonard Benedict, Waifs of the Slums and Their Way Out (New York: F. H. Revell, 1907), pp. 23-24, 153-54.

<sup>26</sup> Roy Lubove, The Progressives and the Slums, pp. 193-205.

<sup>27</sup> Jane Addams, "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements," in Jane Addams, et al., Philanthropy and Social Progress (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1893), p. 4.

and the lack of orderly relationships, interpersonal and institutional, made the city population a transient one, susceptible to the machinations of ward boss, saloonkeeper, or gang leader, according to Addams.<sup>28</sup> The settlement filled the breach as the remedy for this "social maladjustment." Composed of college-educated persons whose "own uselessness hangs about them heavily," it became the practical manifestation of the concept of the ersatz, extended family popularized in the social sciences.<sup>29</sup>

Hull House, perhaps the most famous of American settlements, saw its role as a place of good example, "in a part of the city where such homes are rare," and considered itself as "embracing the best things of the best circles."<sup>30</sup> In its extension into the family realm it followed the rationale of its contemporaries, the charity organization society and the juvenile court. According to Graham Taylor of Chicago Commons, an early settlement, recovery of the positive concept of family was the main

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Jane Addams, "How Would You Uplift the Masses," in Jane Addams: Writings Mss., Hull House, University of Illinois--Chicago Circle.

<sup>30</sup> Mary H. Parker, "A House on Halstead Street," clipping in Hull House Scrapbook, I (1889-94), Folio 424 in Hull House Association Mss., University of Illinois--Chicago Circle.

function of the houses.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the settlement worker, in conceiving of "family," had an idealized grouping in mind, alongside which the family of the tenement districts paled. Thus he was often critical of the poor man's family, seeing it as a basic cause of his travail. Jane Addams regarded the interposition of settlement between adult and child as legitimate and necessary. This, she felt, and not economic change, was the key to the problem of the tenement family:

One of the most discouraging features about the present system of tenement houses is that many are owned by sordid and ignorant immigrants. The theory that wealth brings responsibility, that possession establishes at length education and refinement in these cases fails utterly.<sup>32</sup>

Shaping the play life of children, then, was a major facet of the settlement program. From the start, leisure activities were seen as an agency for the promotion of good conduct in children, and the remedy to mischief. The existence of the street gang was not necessarily a barrier to the settlement worker who, living in the neighborhood, often established a close rapport with the young, hoping to

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<sup>31</sup>Graham Taylor, Pioneering on Social Frontiers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), pp. 290-91.

<sup>32</sup>Jane Addams, "The Objective Value of Social Settlements," in Addams, et al., Philanthropy and Social Progress, pp. 30-31.



"methodize their sport." As such, the settlement considered it important to make a "strong effort" to secure play space. Usually with the help of a private donor, they converted vacant areas into playgrounds, Hull House leading the way in this regard.<sup>33</sup> However, the settlement was limited by both its many interests and lack of funds from proceeding beyond the minimal, despite its ambitions. Hull House residents, meeting in January, 1895, shortly after the opening of their playground, saw the new year as bringing "the murky fingers of debt holding us with tenacious grasp."<sup>34</sup> Despite their expertise in fund-raising, settlement houses could never administer an ambitious system of public recreation unilaterally.

In desiring open spaces in the city however, the settlement aligned itself with the late-nineteenth-century parks movement. Parks for cities became a popular cause in this period, as they represented a buffer or "breathing space" in the "artificial" city where residents could enjoy the physical effects of good air and the moral improvement

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<sup>33</sup>Hull House Residents and Associates, Minutes of Meetings, I (January, 1895), p. 76 in Hull House Association Mss., University of Illinois--Chicago Circle; see also College Settlement, Eighteenth Annual Report (New York: Winthrop Press, 1900), p. 7.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

that allegedly resulted from idyllic surroundings.<sup>35</sup> Scientific studies asserted the health-giving value of parks,<sup>36</sup> following the post-Civil War drive for sanitary reform. Bostonians, as early as 1876, worried about the erasure of natural parklands by population encroachment. Rapid urban expansion, said Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., prevented "ventilation," which was necessary for the proper physical and moral growth of children.<sup>37</sup>

The real boost to the parks movement, however, was the Columbian Exposition. Meetings and displays there showed the value of parks as breaking the "undue, wearisome regularity" of gridiron-patterned street layout. The views of planners such as Frederick Law Olmsted came to be regarded in social theory as well as technical proposals.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Roy Lubove, The Urban Community: Housing and Planning in the Progressive Era (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 5; see also Nathan Matthews, Jr., "Justification of City Expenditure on Parks and Parkways--Material for Public Education," in NEA, Proceedings, 1903, pp. 102-109.

<sup>36</sup> See Elizabeth Halsey, The Development of Public Recreation in Metropolitan Chicago (Chicago: Chicago Recreation Commission, 1940), pp. 16-17.

<sup>37</sup> See Parks for the People: Proceedings of a Meeting Held at Faneuil Hall, June 7, 1876 (Boston: Franklin Press, 1876), pp. 21-23.

<sup>38</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, "Parks, Parkways, and Pleasure Grounds," Engineering Magazine, IX (May, 1895), pp. 253-60.

The so-called "city beautiful" movement arose soon after the conclusion of the exposition. This was a civic concern that expressed itself in beautification projects ranging from public buildings to parks.<sup>39</sup> Its leadership came from the burgeoning business community, which valued parks both as a commercial venture and as engendering a psychic attachment to the city on the part of the populace. The Kansas City Park Commission, for example, in drawing up plans for an ambitious park system, frankly acknowledged these considerations:

We are just beginning to realize that by beautifying our city, making our city beautiful to the eye and a delightful place of residence, abounding in provisions that add to the enjoyment of life, we shall create among our people warm attachments to the city and promote civic pride, thereby supplementing and exercising our business advantage and increasing a power to draw business and population.<sup>40</sup>

The initiatives of so-called "civic leaders" such as these were welcomed by those who planned city parks. To Frederick Law Olmsted, an effective park movement required

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<sup>39</sup> See Charles Zueblin, American Municipal Progress (New York: Macmillan, 1902), pp. 6-9.

<sup>40</sup> Report of the Park and Boulevard Commissions of Kansas City, Missouri (Embracing Recommendations for the Establishment of a Park and Boulevard System for Kansas City), Resolution of October 12, 1893 quoted in Lubove, The Urban Community: Housing and Planning in the Progressive Era, pp. 40-41.

"a small body of cultivated men, public spirited enough to serve without pay."<sup>41</sup> Such a nonpartisan group, freed of politics, would insure the predominance of "efficiency" as the major consideration in site selection and administration. Not ignored however, was the supposed therapeutic value of parks. The Kansas City Commissioners saw their system as providing the city boy with an ideal environment that would help him "grow into a cheerful, industrious and contented man."<sup>42</sup> For this reason, private bodies such as chambers of commerce and "civic clubs" often sponsored small parks and model playgrounds for a short time to demonstrate the value of public funding. Charity and settlement workers often joined in coalitions with these business-dominated groups, so much so that a discernable pattern of private-to-public development of recreational facilities is apparent in all major cities throughout the period. Non-partisan park boards or boards of education usually assumed the work after a time. As such, private efforts were often transplanted, administrators and all, onto the public payroll. This meant a like municipalization of the concerns of these private groups.

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<sup>41</sup>Olmsted, "Parks, Parkways, and Pleasure Grounds," p. 254.

<sup>42</sup>See Lubove, The Urban Community, p. 43.

Agitation in favor of public recreation tended to concentrate on the beneficial effects of parks and playgrounds on children's behavior. While this was an overtly more humane argument than one which confined itself to estimates of the commercial value of a park system, it was in reality little more than a self-serving position. By the nineties commercial leaders had been won over to the views of settlement workers and educators concerning the social adjustment of the city child. The earlier positions which justified park expenditures for health reasons had not impressed businessmen, but "health," as seen from the point of view of the mental realm, did. At the 1894 New York State Tenement House Committee hearings, the committee acknowledged that "no suggestion more frequently recurred than that in favor of small parks, and of playgrounds for children."<sup>43</sup> Like sentiments began to appear in other cities, particularly in those municipalities where strong settlement and charity organization movements allied themselves with one of the new civic bodies. New York and Chicago are cases in point.

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<sup>43</sup> New York State, Report of the Tenement House Committee . . . 1894, pp. 41-42.

The playground movement in New York is not only illustrative of the gradual municipalization of recreational agencies but also of the linkage of recreation, reform, and social theory. As the movement developed, it was incorporated into the anti-slum agitation of the times, and in philosophy and actions was representative of the outlook of the urban reformer. New York actually had a law on the books providing for playgrounds as early as 1887, when Mayor Abram S. Hewitt stimulated the passage of the so-called Small Parks Act following a tenement house investigation. The act gave the Board of Street Opening and Improvement power to lay out public parks in Manhattan, and appropriated up to \$1,000,000 a year for such purposes.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, funds unused one year could not be spent the next, and thus lost monies were not recoverable. Bureaucratic slowness, usually due to the overlapping functions of agencies, coupled with the city's hesitancy to exercise rights of eminent domain, led to total disuse of the act. This led Hewitt, then out of office, to remark disgustedly that "everything takes ten years."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Jacob A. Riis, "Letting in the Light," Atlantic, LXXXIV (October, 1899), p. 497.

<sup>45</sup>Allan Nevins, Abram S. Hewitt: With Some Account of Peter Cooper (New York: Harper and Bros., 1935), pp. 504-06.

In the early nineties the playground movement continued on a modest scale. Usually through private donations, vacant parcels of land were outfitted and maintained by settlement houses or by charity organizations such as the New York Association For The Improvement of the Condition of the Poor.<sup>46</sup> One of the most significant of these efforts was that of the New York Society for Parks and Playgrounds for Children, founded by Abram S. Hewitt in 1890. Noting that some of the most crowded wards had populations "more dense than that of Cairo, Egypt,"<sup>47</sup> the society opened a model playground. Their efforts soon attracted public attention due to the newspaper coverage of Walter Vrooman, a young reporter for the New York World. Vrooman put forth the society's contention that private playground work could not satisfy the need for a comprehensive park system.<sup>48</sup> On November 13, 1891, he wrote in the World of the formation of the "New York Union of Religious and Humanitarian Societies for Concerted Moral

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<sup>46</sup> See Lillian D. Wald to Mrs. Solomon Loeb, March 26, 1895 in Lillian Wald Mss., New York Public Library.

<sup>47</sup> New York Society for Parks and Playgrounds for Children, Annual Report, 1893 (New York: New York Society for Parks and Playgrounds for Children, 1893), p. 9.

<sup>48</sup> Walter Vrooman, "Parks and Playgrounds for Children," Century, XLIII (December, 1891), pp. 317-18.

Effort."<sup>49</sup> This movement, described in bold-face headlines as "the greatest movement ever inaugurated for the real benefit of all the people," was to spur civic regeneration, beginning with an extensive system of parks and playgrounds. Several weeks later, with Vrooman spurring them on, many of the most prominent clergymen in the city spoke on the use of a park system as a vanguard of moral regeneration.<sup>50</sup> Vrooman's continued exposés of the lives of slum children, "on whom dyspepsia and melancholia are steeped in every feature," gave the impression that a great wave of reform was on the way.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, the young reformer's enthusiasm had resulted in his overuse of reportorial license. The great "union," it seemed, was little more than a hoax, and those who had been quoted as endorsers angrily denounced Vrooman's scheme.<sup>52</sup> The movement soon dissolved into the sectarian bitterness typical of church-sponsored relief agencies.

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<sup>49</sup> New York World, November 13, 1891, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> "Public Parks and Playground: A Symposium," Arena, X (July, 1894), p. 279; New York World, November 23, 1891, p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Harlan B. Phillips, "Walter Vrooman: Agitator for Parks and Playgrounds," New York History, XXXIII (January, 1952), pp. 30-31.

<sup>52</sup> New York Times, November 14, 1891, p. 8.



As a result, by 1894 the reformers could only point to one real success: Mulberry Bend Park, which was established in a slum area continually depicted as a den of vice by Jacob Riis and others. This was the only park erected under the 1887 law. Mulberry Bend Park, however, was an old-school park. That is, it was erected as a "breathing space," and not a playground. There was an important difference between the two. Landscape architects and park officials were slow to conceive of the park as an area whose purpose was other than that of an idyllic garden. Children, particularly "street" children, were forbidden to play there, as the moral effects of the park were supposedly transmitted by the observation of beauty and the healthful air only. Playground workers complained of the intransigence of park officials, while Jacob Riis related how he personally was warned to "keep off the grass" of the very park he had agitated in favor of. To Riis, such restrictions on park use made it of minor value as a crime deterrent. He saw them as yet another form of checking natural energies without substituting a harmless diversion for them.<sup>53</sup> One of the officials of the New York Association for Parks and Playgrounds for Children remarked bitterly

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<sup>53</sup>Riis, "Letting in the Light," p. 495.

that "the present attitude of our park officials is that it is better for grass to grow green over children's graves than yellow under their feet."<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, the call for playgrounds was soon taken up by the more "systematic" reformers. The 1894 Tenement House Committee, noting the failure of the 1887 act, suggested new legislation designed to make procedural problems less of an obstacle than they had been.<sup>55</sup> The testimony of witnesses, many of whom suggested the need for small play parks to keep children "out of trouble," was followed by an investigation conducted by a reform group, the Committee of Seventy, in 1895. This proto-progressive organization of business and professional persons appointed a sub-committee on small parks, among whose members were Jacob Riis, Gifford Pinchot, and representatives of the major settlement houses. It called for revision of the 1887 Small Parks Act, and also suggested a statute making a playground compulsory at all new school sites.<sup>56</sup> The most important benefits of the playground,

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<sup>54</sup>"Parks and Playgrounds: A Symposium," pp. 282-88.

<sup>55</sup>New York State, Report of the Tenement House Committee . . . 1894, p. 505.

<sup>56</sup>Committee of Seventy, Report of Sub-Committee on Small Parks, 1895 (New York: Committee of Seventy, 1895), pp. 3-5.

according to the committee, related to its value in the prevention of juvenile crime. Citing one area where a small park existed already, Jacob Riis noted a significant drop in crime on the police rolls. He concluded that "my experience with Poverty Gap makes me feel quite certain that there is a connection."<sup>57</sup> The state legislature in 1895, enacted the school playgrounds provision, popularly known thereafter as the "Riis Law."<sup>58</sup>

Park and playground establishment thus became the core, both in ideas and in personnel, of early urban progressivism in New York. Its advantage as an issue for reformers was self-evident, for playgrounds were something that everyone could favor. Conceived as an antidote to the slum, the playground fell within the spectrum of "indirect" aid preferred by charity workers. Moreover, it was viewed as a positive development, a "constructive" form of philanthropy, since it aided those who had not yet "gone awry" but were likely to do so. As such, the rationale for playground construction shows the congruence between "constructive" and "preventive" philanthropy.

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<sup>57</sup> Riis, "Playgrounds for City Schools," Century, IL (September, 1894), p. 660.

<sup>58</sup> New York Parks and Playgrounds Association, Statement Relating to Recreation in Greater New York (New York: Parks and Playgrounds Association, 1910), p. 17.

In 1897 the city appointed a small parks committee under the chairmanship of ex-Mayor Abram S. Hewitt. The committee's members were almost wholly recruited from the "good government" clubs, organizations which had the function of formalizing the coalitions of business and professional persons dedicated to "civic betterment." Jacob Riis, a member of one of them, admitted the domination of the business viewpoint, but defended the clubs as valuable reform mechanisms.<sup>59</sup> The committee's report, when issued later in that year, emphasized the role of the small park in maintaining orderly relationships. Children, it said, were "forgotten" in the original city plan, and needed play space. Without it, the report warned, the "sense of hostility between the child and the guardians of public order" would continue, and eventually culminate in the creation of a "criminal class." The logic of evolution from frustrated play desires to acts of illegality was accepted in full by the committee:

The failure to provide for the reasonable recreation of the people, and especially for playgrounds for the rising generation, has been the most efficient cause of the growth of crime and pauperism in our midst.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>See Good Government Club "X" to Jacob Riis, July 20, 1896 in Box 2, Jacob Riis Mss., New York Public Library.

<sup>60</sup>City of New York, Report of Committee on Small Parks, 1897 (New York: City of New York, 1897), pp. 1-2.

To combat this trend, the committee advocated the construction of playgrounds in congested areas, particularly in what it called the "areas of turbulence." It emphasized the positive moral effects of wholesome play on children, asserting that "physical energies, if not directed to good ends, will surely manifest themselves in evil tendencies."<sup>61</sup> In addition, the report noted that the construction of small parks would involve the razing of bad tenement sections deemed "dens of crime" by police and settlement workers. Slum clearance displaced the "most depraved and debased classes," who at present constituted a direct threat to persons and property in the adjacent commercial and shopping districts. In this way, Jacob Riis argued, playgrounds constituted the true "remedy" for crime.<sup>62</sup> The committee's report was buttressed with maps, tables citing population density and crime rates, and other relevant statistics gathered by survey methods.

As a result of both the committee report and the election of the reform Low administration in 1897, the city began working more closely with groups advocating playgrounds. The most noteworthy of these was the Outdoor

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-5.

<sup>62</sup>Jacob A. Riis to Board of Education, New York City, July 13, 1897 in Ibid., pp. 23-25.

Recreation League, another reform coalition growing out of the good government club movement. The league secured the city's permission and partial funding to develop Seward Park, an unimproved plot on the lower east side. It opened the park for the summer of 1898, and funded other, smaller sites as well.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, the league consistently clashed with the Tammany-dominated park board, which was always suspicious of the reformers. Still, since it had the backing of powerful civic groups, the league gained the necessary funds to fully improve the Seward Park site. On October 17, 1903, it was completed for a formal opening, attended by over 100,000 area residents. Jacob Riis delivered the opening remarks, applauding the area's children for having "fairly earned" a place where "no copper will dare disturb you."<sup>64</sup> At the same time, the league's efforts had prompted the extension of the playground system, both in schools and under the parks

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<sup>63</sup> Arthur Henry, "The Outdoor Recreation League," Outlook, LXIV (January 6, 1900), pp. 47-53; New York City, Parks Department, Annual Report, 1902 (New York: Martin Brown, 1903), p. 35; Outdoor Recreation League, "The Kips Bay Free Gymnasium and Playground," (New York: Outdoor Recreation League, 1899 (?)), pamphlet in New York Public Library.

<sup>64</sup> "Speech by Jacob A. Riis at the Formal Opening of the William H. Seward Park, Canal Street and East Broadway, 17 October 1903," holograph in Box 2, Jacob Riis Mss., New York Public Library.

department. Charles Stover, a settlement worker, later became the city's park commissioner, after the league had turned control of the playgrounds over to the city.<sup>65</sup> New York then, had developed a successful playground movement in less than a decade, largely due to the movement's arguments in favor of mild reform as a preventive measure.

Civic groups made up of business leaders, social workers, and other professional persons also led the drive for public recreation in Chicago. There they were organized into issue-oriented committees that, due to overlapping membership, made for an inbred reform "establishment" on this and all urban reform issues,<sup>66</sup> even moreso than was the case in New York. Those represented included private organizations such as the Chicago Woman's Club and the Chicago Civic Federation, a nascent progressive group founded to put city government on a sound "business basis." All saw the need for a "counter-attraction"<sup>67</sup> to the

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<sup>65</sup>Charles Stover, "Seward Park Playground at Last a Reality," Charities, X (February 7, 1903), pp. 27-33; New York City, Parks Department, Annual Report, 1903 (New York: Martin Brown, 1904), pp. 10-12.

<sup>66</sup>See Anthony R. Travis, The Impulse Toward the Welfare State: Chicago 1890-1932 (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1971), pp. 47-83.

<sup>67</sup>J. Frank Foster, "An Article on Small Parks Read Before the Chicago Society for School Extension," (n.p., n.d.), pamphlet in Chicago Historical Society.

corrupt city environment. The large number of immigrant children in the city, "filling every nook, working and playing in every room . . . pouring in and out of every door"<sup>68</sup> constituted a large population that stood little chance of developing into desirable citizens. Juvenile court workers continually pointed this out. Actually, the reformers were willing to concede the point, and were mainly concerned with preventing bad conduct rather than helping the child grow. Their main concern, said one, was to "get them out of the streets . . . at all hazards and at any cost."<sup>69</sup>

The playground effort moved more smoothly here than in New York, thanks to the aforementioned network of reform groups. In addition, Chicago already had a fairly comprehensive park system, organized into districts since 1869.<sup>70</sup> Still, the system had been conceived as a network of "breathing spaces," rather than play spaces, and most of the parks were far removed from tenement districts.

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<sup>68</sup> Agnes S. Holbrook, "Map Notes and Comments," in Residents of Hull-House, Hull-House Maps and Papers (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1895), pp. 5-6.

<sup>69</sup> Arthur A. W. Drew, "Holliganism and Juvenile Crime: The Only Cure," Nineteenth Century, XLII (July, 1900), p. 97.

<sup>70</sup> Halsey, The Development of Public Recreation in Metropolitan Chicago, p. 18.



The interest in parks spurred by the 1893 exposition, while considerable, did not automatically create a drive for playgrounds, which owed their initial presence to settlement efforts. Both Hull House and the Northwestern University Settlement made model playgrounds an integral, though limited, part of their neighborhood programs.<sup>71</sup> Settlement workers led games and other activities on ill-equipped areas leased or informally lent by philanthropists. This arrangement was unsatisfactory, but to the settlement worker it was a superior alternative to unregulated street play. Moreover, it kept the child away from his crowded home, where he would probably imbibe both bad air and bad morals.

The movement received its biggest boost when it was linked to the concern for juvenile crime that resulted in the 1899 juvenile court bill. During this period, recreational facilities as a crime deterrent became a virtual article of faith among Chicago reformers. Early in 1898, Jacob Riis addressed the Municipal Science Club, a business and professional men's organization, at Hull House. Blending child study ideas with his own intimate recollections of the New York slums, he urged the establishment of a

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<sup>71</sup>Northwestern University Settlement, Circular No. 6 (June, 1896), p. 13.

municipal playground system. The club's president, impressed by the argument, said that prudence dictated the logic in favor of a playground system, calling it a matter of "intelligent selfishness."<sup>72</sup> Speakers at the Woman's Club and the Civic Federation had also convinced them of the value of the playground in preventing crime.<sup>73</sup> Often cited as proof was the reduction of delinquency by one-third in the area of the small, ill-equipped Northwestern University Settlement playground. Not only were children less disposed toward criminal careers, according to the local police lieutenant, but traffic accidents had decreased as well.<sup>74</sup> Another playground worker quoted police as saying that delinquency was directly proportionate to the lack of play space.<sup>75</sup>

Municipal action soon followed. On June 12, 1899, the city council heard a resolution asking for funds to

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<sup>72</sup>Michael P. McCarthy, "Politics and the Parks: Chicago Businessmen and the Recreation Movement," Illinois State Historical Society Journal, LV (Summer, 1972), pp. 161-62.

<sup>73</sup>Chicago Woman's Club, Club Minutes (February 24, 1897) in Chicago Woman's Club Mss., Chicago Historical Society.

<sup>74</sup>Charles Zueblin, "Municipal Playgrounds in Chicago," American Journal of Sociology, IV (September, 1898), p. 155.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

maintain playgrounds in the crowded wards, which were demonstrably short of play space. The resolutions passed several months later, the council acknowledging that it had been influenced by "numerous movements."<sup>76</sup> Soon after, a "Special Park Commission" was created, consisting of representatives of civic organizations, the Woman's Club, and the settlements, as well as the already extant park boards. The commission became the leader of the public recreation movement in Chicago in the progressive period. When stymied in its request for large appropriations by the machine-controlled council, it agitated for and secured the passage of a public bond issue to finance small park construction.<sup>77</sup> The commission's success was due to its stress on play facilities as a form of social insurance. According to Mary McDowell of the University Settlement, the playground filled the breach between home and settlement necessary for the assimilation of the immigrant populace. Testifying in favor of the playground system, she asserted that the foreign populations "must become more rational in

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<sup>76</sup>Chicago City Council, Proceedings, 1899-1900 (Chicago: City Council, 1900), pp. 653-54, 1535-37.

<sup>77</sup>Special Park Commissioners, Report of the Special Park Commissioners to the City Council of the City of Chicago, February 4, 1901 (Chicago: John F. Higgins, 1901), p. 4.

their thinking and acting." To encourage this process was good sense, in that it made Chicago "more desirable for the home-seeker, and a safer place for business enterprise and development." In addition, exercise expended on play was far superior to that "used to bully fellow workers and lead to struggles against law and order."<sup>78</sup>

The Special Park Commission opened a number of playground sites beginning in 1902. Working closely with the already extant park commissions, it attempted to place them in crowded areas such as the stockyards district. Dominated by real estate interests, the several commissions were in the meantime both solicitous of property rights, and cognizant of the effect of park placement on land values. Publicly, however, they stressed the crime-prevention aspects most strongly, the South Park Commissioners citing "conditions found in home life" as a major reason for the new parks.<sup>79</sup> Meanwhile, the commissioners ordered playground supervisors to direct the activities in the parks. Team games were encouraged, since they promoted character building and loyalty to a higher cause.<sup>80</sup> Chicago's

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<sup>78</sup> McCarthy, "Politics and the Parks," pp. 167-71.

<sup>79</sup> South Park Commissioners, Annual Report, 1904 (Chicago: South Park Commissioners, 1905), p. 6.

<sup>80</sup> South Park Commissioners, Annual Report, 1905 (Chicago: South Park Commissioners, 1906), pp. 48-49.

playground system soon attracted national attention, especially when early studies of its effectiveness "proved" that areas with small parks experienced a marked decline in crime. Particularly persuasive was a study which examined the delinquent inmates of the John Worthy School. It found that six times as many of the boys came from no-park areas than from sections of the city that had parks.<sup>81</sup> Obviously then, playgrounds provided a "healthy outlet" for youthful energies. As one Chicago playground supervisor expressed it:

Fighting an athletic battle for the glory and honor of one's neighborhood, as a member of a well-organized team composed of one's neighbors, is a long step in advance of fighting for one's self against every one in the neighborhood.<sup>82</sup>

Complementing the playground movement was the drive for summer "vacation schools" for children. Differing from playgrounds only in that they made use of school facilities idle in the summer, these institutions were justified on grounds similar to that of playgrounds. Their promoters noted the special dangers to person and property from unsupervised children, asserting that the summer vacation

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<sup>81</sup>"Chicago's Park Commission on River Ward Conditions," Commons, VII (June, 1902), pp. 1-3.

<sup>82</sup>Ernest Poole, "Chicago's Public Playgrounds," Outlook, LXXXVII (November 30, 1907), pp. 726-27.



removed the school from consideration as an agency of control. Summer social life in the city intensified the temptations open to children. It was the epitome of that state of disorderly, inefficient existence seen as characteristic of the working class:

. . . half-clad babies sprawl and disport themselves among the half-decayed vegetables displayed for sale outside the doors of the houses and over the sidewalks. The saloons, of which there are many, are literally packed with men, women, and children . . . all is life and sensation and motion, a multitude of fiery eyes and inimitable shrugs bespeak far more than any English tongue can.<sup>83</sup>

The summer then, encouraged illicit forms of recreation that led to bad conduct and criminality. Teachers complained that pupils returning to school in the fall had acquired an "unhealthy moral tone and swing of the mind and heart towards immorality." As a result, it often took until Thanksgiving to restore order. The loss of the previous year's "good work" in the summer might prove even more grievous, as the pupil might not return to school at all.<sup>84</sup> Once again, statistical studies were used to

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<sup>83</sup>"An Italian Colony," clipping in Hull House Scrapbook, III (1895-97) folio 426 in Hull House Association Mss., University of Illinois--Chicago Circle.

<sup>84</sup>Fred W. Smedley, "The Future of the Vacation School," Child-Study Monthly, III (October, 1896), pp. 294-97; Graham Taylor, "By Graham Taylor," Chicago Daily News, July 2, 1904 in Graham Taylor Mss., Newberry Library, Chicago.

illustrate the danger of unchecked activity. The Massachusetts Civic League, a Boston organization of charity workers and the "civic-minded" appointed a committee on "Juvenile Law-Breaking" in 1899. It found juvenile arrests increasing greatly in the summer, particularly among boys ten to fifteen years of age.<sup>85</sup> Similar studies in Chicago showed identical results: an increase in summer arrests of over 60 percent. The child's environment, particularly his home influences, were once again seen as the root cause of the problem. The slum home "gives no incentive or opportunity for understanding what is best in life," asserted the Chicago Woman's Club, a leader of the vacation school movement.<sup>86</sup>

Vacation schools were established by the same groups who had promoted playgrounds, and proceeded on the same course of private-to-public funding. In Boston, the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches, a coalition of sectarian

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<sup>85</sup> Joseph Lee, "Preventive Work," Charities Review, X (February, 1901), pp. 586-600; Sadie American, "The Movement for Vacation Schools," American Journal of Sociology, IV (November, 1898), pp. 309-26; Lee, Constructive and Preventive Philanthropy, pp. 112-15.

<sup>86</sup> Sadie American, "Vacation Schools in Cities," Commons, II (March, 1898), pp. 3-4; Massachusetts Civic League, Annual Report-1900 (Cambridge, Mass.: Co-operative Press, 1900), pp. 17-18; Chicago Woman's Club, Report of the Chicago Permanent Vacation School Committee of Women's Clubs, 1902 (Chicago: Chicago Women's Clubs, 1902), pp. 7-8.



charity organizations, supervised summer playgrounds and playrooms in school facilities. Its purpose was not merely to provide children with enjoyment, but "to continue the elevating and civilizing influences of their school training, so that the summer months might not be wholly demoralizing."<sup>87</sup> Following this example, the New York Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor began work in 1894. Games, manual training, and pupil "self-government" activities kept children out of mischief, thus "awakening in them the ambition to become producers and not drones."<sup>88</sup> The association, despite these encouraging results, complained of a lack of funds, and finally persuaded a hesitant board of education to take over the work in 1897.<sup>89</sup> Previously, schoolmen had been reluctant to involve themselves, also due to a lack of funds and the annoyance of the added administrative burden.

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<sup>87</sup> Benevolent Fraternity of Churches (Boston), Annual Report, LXIII (1897), pp. 25-26.

<sup>88</sup> The League for Social Service, "Recreation Plus Education: Vacation Schools in New York," Municipal Affairs, II (September, 1898), pp. 433-38; New York Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, In the Dog-Days: The Vacation Schools, Season 1896 (New York: AICP, 1897), pp. 3-4, 19.

<sup>89</sup> American, "The Movement for Vacation Schools," p. 316; "Notes," Child-Study Monthly, III (January, 1897), p. 513.

The strongest movement for vacation schools was in Chicago, where the playground movement at the municipal level was being established contemporaneously. The dominant figure there was Mary McDowell. In 1896 she spoke to several groups on the theme "Youth and the City Streets," and eventually secured the support of the Chicago Civic Federation for the first vacation school that summer.<sup>90</sup> The vacation school, like the playground, was to be a training ground for character conducted by those more suited to the task than working-class parents. According to Miss McDowell, the directed activities at the school would counteract the "bad moral influences" of the home. They would:

. . . supply a means by which children having limited opportunities for culture might gain access to an ideal atmosphere and perhaps escape forever the danger of being led into vice.<sup>91</sup>

Promoters of summer recreational activities such as vacation schools were in sympathy with the concept of

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<sup>90</sup>"Vacation Schools," Commons, I (May, 1896), p. 9; Katherine A. Jones, "Vacation Schools in the United States," Review of Reviews, XVII (June, 1898), pp. 710-16; Harold Wilson, Mary McDowell: Neighbor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928), p. 61.

<sup>91</sup>"Schools in the Slums," clipping in Hull House Scrapbook, III (1895-97), folio 426 in Hull House Association Mss., University of Illinois--Chicago Circle.

"nature" as it was interpreted in the cities at this time.<sup>92</sup> The arcadian notions of the urban American manifested themselves in the desire to bring the good moral influences of the country to the city child. Vacation school supervisors liked to point out that many city children had never seen trees, flowers, or in the case of Chicago children, Lake Michigan, citing anguished letters from parish priests and social workers.<sup>93</sup> Though often regarded as reason enough for summer recreation programs, these supposedly liberating forces were subsumed to the general purpose of control. As such, vacation schools represented another variation of the indirect aid plus moral suasion formula favored by charity workers, who continued to see child problems as matters involving personal rather than institutional adaptation. The work in Chicago soon came under the control of the Woman's Club, which funded it through the personal contributions of its members, the wives of the city's

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<sup>92</sup>See Sadie American, "Vacation Schools," Education, XXVI (May, 1906), p. 509.

<sup>93</sup>George L. McNutt, "Chicago's Ten-Million Dollar Experiment in Social Redemption," Independent, LVII (September 15, 1904), pp. 612-17; see also letter to Special Park Commission, March 10, 1902 in Report on Conditions to Lincoln Park Commissioners, folder in Chicago Historical Society.

elite.<sup>94</sup> The schools were run by a committee composed of Mrs. Cyrus McCormick, Jane Addams, Charles Zueblin, a sociology professor at the University of Chicago, and Francis A. Parker, the progressive educator and leader of the child study movement in Illinois.<sup>95</sup> Under their direction, the schools reopened in 1898, largely attracting children aged ten to thirteen, who were thus beyond the age of easy parental supervision.<sup>96</sup> Team games, manual training, and "civic exercises" made up the program. The latter involved "self-government" designed to further the child's appreciation of the political process. Each day's activities were opened with the recitation of a "civic pledge" written by Mary McDowell. A virtual paean to the city, its theme was the duty of the young citizen to have the proper "civic spirit," and to know his place in the unified, organic community.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>Chicago Woman's Club, Report of the Chicago Vacation School Committee of Women's Clubs, 1898 (Chicago: Chicago Woman's Club, 1899), pp. 1-6, 15-16.

<sup>95</sup>Chicago Society for School Extension, Handbook, 1903-4 (Chicago: Chicago Society for School Extension, 1904), p. 5.

<sup>96</sup>American, "Vacation Schools," p. 510.

<sup>97</sup>Richard Waterman, Jr., "Vacation Schools," NEA, Proceedings, 1898, p. 407.

The vacation schools and playgrounds of Chicago remained under the joint control of the Woman's Club and the Chicago Board of Education until 1910, when the board assumed full control. Each year, they claimed to have "temporarily closed the devil's workshop" and combated the moral malaise of the unnatural city, "where the buzz of the bee is replaced by the gong of the electric car moloch."<sup>98</sup> Participating children improved themselves in several ways, as supervisors noted that physical activity led to "a parallel evolution of mental qualities" such as initiative, cooperation, and a sense of "the justice of rules."<sup>99</sup> Civic organizations in many areas of the country followed the Chicago example, citing a desire to provide a "normal" atmosphere. The linking of recreation to community spirit was peculiarly progressive. It was a telling point, one which won adherents to the recreation movement who were unimpressed by sentimental appeals.<sup>100</sup>

Playgrounds thus became a nationally popular concern. They were depicted time and again as "a Godsend

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<sup>98</sup>O. J. Milliken, "Chicago Vacation Schools," American Journal of Sociology, IV (November, 1898), p. 290; Hull-House Bulletin, III (October, 1898), pp. 4-5.

<sup>99</sup>"Vacation Schools," editorial in Independent, LIV (July 24, 1902), pp. 1792-93.

<sup>100</sup>Waterman, "Vacation Schools," p. 404.

to law-abiding people" without which the community would need to provide "additional police stations, jails, and hospitals."<sup>101</sup> Most playground supporters were progressives, and they made certain to promote public recreation in local campaigns for progressive candidates. The fusionist Low administration in New York, in which Jacob Riis was influential is the most obvious, but not the only, example.<sup>102</sup>

Lost in the flood of publicity surrounding the movement, however, was the fact that it did little to positively improve the lives of city residents. Despite the increase in parks, Chicago by 1903 had a worse person-park acreage ratio than before, especially in crowded areas.<sup>103</sup> The renowned vacation schools in that city never

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<sup>101</sup>H. A. Dame, "Opportunities and Advantages of the Boston Street Boy," in Massachusetts Civic League, Scrap-book 1903-08, Massachusetts Civic League, Boston: Everett B. Mero, ed., American Playgrounds (Boston: American Gymnasium Company, 1908), pp. 33-34; St. Louis, Mo. Civic Improvement League, Report of the Open-Air Playgrounds Committee (St. Louis: Civic Improvement League, 1903), pp. 5-6; Special Park Commission, "A Plea for Playgrounds" (Chicago: Special Park Commission, 1905), p. 11

<sup>102</sup>Citizen's Union (New York), Small Parks and Recreation Piers for the People: Pamphlet No. 6 (New York: Citizen's Union, 1897), pamphlet in New York Public Library; Edward T. Devine, "Municipal Reform and Social Welfare in New York," Review of Reviews, XXVIII (October, 1903), pp. 433-48.

<sup>103</sup>Zueblin, American Municipal Progress, p. 242; see also Report on Conditions to Lincoln Park Commissioners (January 27, 1903), folder in Chicago Historical Society.

reached more than 10,000 children in any given summer even by the most optimistic compilation.<sup>104</sup> Park site selectors were far more soliticious towards the property owner than the city resident. Truly needed sites were deemed too costly for development,<sup>105</sup> yet others were taken even when local residents objected. These nascent "slum-clearance" programs displaced residents from their homes into an already tight housing market. As a result, higher rents and increasingly cramped quarters were the familiar fruits of "civic improvement."<sup>106</sup>

Thus the recreation movement had grown up with urban progressivism. Doubtlessly, its motives and goals stood as lessons for the larger national movement. This became clear in subsequent years, as the notion of "change" for the sake of social stability became a bench mark of the progressive thrust. The conflict that some have seen between the settlement and the "civic leader" is not apparent. Aside from the fact that both participated

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<sup>104</sup>Chicago Woman's Club, Report of the Chicago Permanent Vacation School Committee (Chicago: Chicago Woman's Club, 1906), p. 27.

<sup>105</sup>West Park Commissioners, Annual Report, 1906 (Chicago: West Park Commission, 1907), pp. 14-16.

<sup>106</sup>Charity Organization Society of the City of New York, Forty Years of Housing (New York: Charity Organization Society, 1938), pp. 8-9; see also Edith Abbott, The Tenements of Chicago, 1908-1935 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), pp. 62-63.

congenially in reform "establishments," the settlement's goals had never wavered from the desire to integrate the child into society. This view caused the settlement to consider itself as a "preventive station," one which related to the city child as "a mediator between him and the juvenile court."<sup>107</sup> Therefore, the symptoms of urban squalor rather than its causes were dealt with. As one historian has noted, public recreation programs "posed no threat to private economic prerogatives, and had positive advantages as a social control mechanism."<sup>108</sup> Since both social worker and businessman doubled the competence of working-class parents, they agreed on the need to intervene in the growth process. Both agreed that a major function of modern charity was to screen society of its "soot," and in the need for "expert treatment in doing so."<sup>109</sup> The experimental prelude to the formation of the "adjustment" theory had occurred within the city ghetto. Thus it was that a movement ostensibly desiring to release the city's

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<sup>107</sup>"The Social Settlement as an Instrument to the Community for Service," (1909?), in Collateral-Settlements folder, Lillian Wald Mss., New York Public Library.

<sup>108</sup>Roy Lubove, Twentieth Century Pittsburgh: Government, Business, and Environmental Change (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1969), p. 51.

<sup>109</sup>Nathaniel Rosenau, "Organized Charity," Charities Review, VI (July-August, 1897), p. 395.



young from the harsher aspects of urban life became one which served to prepare them to accept their fate uncomplainingly. Liberation, in this sense, was ironically a freedom for the sake of control.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE NATIONALIZATION OF THE RECREATION MOVEMENT

"Put a playground over my grave, not a monument."<sup>1</sup>  
So spoke Tom Johnson, the progressive mayor of Cleveland in 1911. Johnson's sentiments typified those of the many progressives who had come to accept public recreation as a model reform, one worthy of national expression. The success of the municipal experiments of the nineties and the first years of the new century regarded as extraordinary. No social movement, declared the recreation pioneer Henry S. Curtis, "has risen more rapidly from the realm of the spectral into the real" than the playground movement.<sup>2</sup> Most importantly, by 1910 both an organization and a philosophy linking the recreation cause to the national progressive movement had developed. The organizational response to social problems was quite characteristic of

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<sup>1</sup>"By Graham Taylor," Chicago Daily News, May 6, 1911, in Graham Taylor Mss., Newberry Library, Chicago.

<sup>2</sup>Playground Association of America, Proceedings of the Second Annual Playground Congress and Year Book (New York: Playground Association of America, 1909), p. 204.

progressivism, as it welded local reform coalitions and their disparate elements into bodies capable of expressing a national consensus. Moreover, an organization served as a lobbying group for legislative efforts, considered by many progressives as the key to the movement's success. In the case of public recreation, the widening from more parochial concerns came as a result of the formation of the Playground Association of America in 1906. The association, especially through Joseph Lee, its president after 1910, helped place recreation on a plane with other social problems as an important issue, and established links with other progressive groups whose concerns overlapped with their own. As a result of the work of Lee and the association, the recreation cause began to outgrow its narrow limits and moved beyond the modest goals of its earliest adherents.

Joseph Lee was born in Brookline, Massachusetts in 1862. He was the son of Colonel Henry Lee of the prestigious banking firm of Lee, Higginson and Company. Young Joseph was raised in a style appropriate to his "Boston Brahmin" background. He spent much time on the family's country estate with the children of other wealthy families, enjoying childhood games and rituals that left a favorable impression on him. Lee often recalled later how enjoyable

these experiences had been, feeling that "anyone who had not hung May baskets had missed something out of life."<sup>3</sup> In adolescence he acquired knowledge of the ethical values of sport common to the upper classes. The ideals of "Muscular Christianity" and the British boarding school had been transplanted to New England, and Lee assimilated them in a multitude of athletic pursuits. He credited this sector of his upbringing with making him a "man's man."

Young men whose families had the stature of the Lees usually attended Harvard, afterwards entering the family business and the genteel society of the Boston rich. Lee followed this pattern to a point, entering Harvard as a member of the class of 1883, and participating vigorously in athletics. After graduation and attendance at Harvard Law School, however, he abandoned his intended path. He found that he had little interest either in law or in the family firm, certainly not enough to justify a life's commitment.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, he had been influenced by the ideas

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<sup>3</sup>A. V. H. Sabora, "The Contributions of Joseph Lee to the Modern Recreation Movement and Related Social Movements in the United States," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1952), pp. 39-40, 62-64; Barbara Miller Solomon, Ancestors and Immigrants (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 104.

<sup>4</sup>Sabora, "The Contributions of Joseph Lee," pp. 72-73.

of the upper-class reformers of the eighties, who asserted the need for the "better element" to participate more directly in public life, both to improve the moral tone of political life and to maintain their own interests.<sup>5</sup> The perilous social conditions of the period threatened disorder, they felt, and new life in the moribund political arena was imperative. Therefore, public service was now regarded as a worthy career for the scions of prominent families bored by "idle living." Lee, disdaining the stuffy atmosphere of banking and brokerage houses and seeing himself as something of a democrat, was among those finding social reform attractive. He participated in the charity reform drive of the eighties, accepting its combination of moralism and environmentalism. In addition, he became active in the Immigration Restriction League, a popular cause among wealthy Bostonians. Lee's fear of racial pollution strongly influenced his views on other matters of public policy, and he remained an ardent restrictionist throughout his public life.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>See John G. Sproat, "The Best Men": Liberal Reformers in the Gilded Age (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 272-81.

<sup>6</sup>Solomon, Ancestors and Immigrants, pp. 126-31; Madison Grant, the racial supremacist, credited Lee with financing "the I.R.L. throughout the long period of Egyptian night."

As might be expected, considering his background and early involvement in reform, Lee's concept of philanthropy was patrician, accepting the notion of benevolence from above. Lee is important, however, since he connected this viewpoint with a belief in the necessity for active participation in reform efforts. Lee urged philanthropists to abandon the charitable dole, agreeing with others that it was "inefficient," and contending that the unique position of the wealthy required them to become directly involved in public affairs. Apparently, Lee felt that the financial standing of the philanthropist indicated an expertise in social relations:

I believe our philanthropists have a duty to perform in the systematic study and promotion of progressive legislation. . . . I believe that in our existing theory of legislation, or at least in our customary practice, an important function is left unfilled, namely, of deliberate, thoughtful, leadership, and that because of his supreme qualifications, through familiarity with the facts on which progressive legislation should be based, the discharge of this function belongs, as regards a considerable range of subjects, to this practical philanthropic worker.<sup>7</sup>

The concept of the active philanthropist was the theme of Lee's well-known work Constructive and Preventive

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<sup>7</sup>Joseph Lee, "The Philanthropist's Legislative Function," New England Magazine, XXVI (March, 1899), pp. 51-52.

Philanthropy, published in 1902. It asserted that the arrival of the active philanthropist would change charity work from a passive, "preventive" mechanism to a positive, "constructive" one, thereby altering the course of all reform movements.<sup>8</sup> Lee himself had been very active in charity work in the previous decade. Already a respected authority on social problems, he prepared the Massachusetts Exhibition on Charities and Correction for the international meeting at the Columbian Exposition.<sup>9</sup> In 1897 he founded the Massachusetts Civic League, a model reform group intended to shape the course of charity and civic work. Backed by a number of wealthy reformers, the league's initial energies were devoted to a campaign to fragment the State Board of Lunacy and Charity into separate bureaus dealing with charities, insanity, and children. The league insisted it was non-partisan, even "conservative," only seeking to improve the efficiency of public charity.<sup>10</sup> Separating the child from the pauper was especially important to Lee, who accepted the charity reformer's view

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Lee, Constructive and Preventive Philanthropy (New York: Macmillan, 1902), pp. 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> Sapora, "The Contributions of Joseph Lee," pp. 89-92.

<sup>10</sup> Boston Journal, May 5, 1897, p. 21; Massachusetts Civic League Flyer (1897) in Scrapbook (1897), Massachusetts Civic League, Boston.

of the tramp as human flotsam. His arguments paralleled those used elsewhere in favor of a juvenile court system, which the league also favored.<sup>11</sup>

After the initial campaign, Lee's interests in children did not translate into legal reform, but in a desire to provide play space for city children. This interest had been aroused years before, when he participated in an area survey conducted by the Family Welfare Society of Boston. Noting cases of boys arrested for street play, he remarked that it was "as if the boys had been arrested for living."<sup>12</sup> Recalling his own abundant opportunities for play as a child, and crediting them with a major note in character development, he adopted children's play as his special concern, and took over the then-failing playground movement in Boston.

Boston's playground movement began in 1886, when the Massachusetts Emergency and Hygiene Association, a group concerned with "the diffusion of information on the subject of healthful living," opened "sand-gardens for

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<sup>11</sup> Clipping from Springfield Republic, April 18, 1897 in ibid.; Joseph Lee, The Tramp Problem (Massachusetts Civic League Leaflet no. 4, 1905).

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in George D. Butler, Pioneers in Public Recreation (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishers, 1965), p. 2.



young children modeled after the play areas of Berlin."<sup>13</sup> In 1888 the association was given authorization by the Boston School Committee to operate playgrounds and vacation schools on school property in the summer, in cooperation with the Associated Charities of Boston.<sup>14</sup> The school committee and the association stressed the benefits of good health resulting from exercise, only secondarily connecting play with moral improvement and crime prevention.<sup>15</sup> While they noted that "toddling things" could find "refuge here from a drunken mother or father," they kept such references to a minimum. As a result, the program was not seen as particularly important in preventing social disorder, and suffered from a lack of funds. Despite attempts in the nineties to link it to the general effort to combat "systemized depravity,"<sup>16</sup> the school committee phased playground sponsorship out of its budget by 1901.

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<sup>13</sup> Massachusetts Emergency and Hygiene Association, First Annual Report, 1885, p. 4; Massachusetts Emergency and Hygiene Association, Second Annual Report, 1886, pp. 6, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Massachusetts Emergency and Hygiene Association, Fourth Annual Report, 1888, pp. 19-21; Boston School Committee, Proceedings, 1888 (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1888), p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> Boston School Committee, "To Parents," flyer dated June 10, 1889, in Boston Public Library.

<sup>16</sup> Massachusetts Emergency and Hygiene Association, Fifth Annual Report, 1889, pp. 28-31.

Lee and the Massachusetts Civic League met with more success than their predecessors by connecting children's play with crime deterrence and moral efficiency. Lee's aforementioned study of juvenile crime, which grew out of the work of a league committee, led to the formation of a playground committee under league auspices in 1901.<sup>17</sup> The committee took over a site in the North End for a model playground. Supervised activities, designed to reach the boys of the neighborhood, achieved results "so marked as to attract special attention," according to the playground supervisor. The playground's utility was proven by the case studies of "bad boys" who had been made over:

Arrested once, discharged. Favorite sport was teasing junk men, fruit men, and playing football in private grounds, until chased . . . is now a member of the carpentry club, a helper at the camp and on the field, a valuable and honest boy.<sup>18</sup>

Lee boasted that the league's efforts had caused the "hoodlum element" to disappear from the North End.<sup>19</sup> He was

<sup>17</sup>Massachusetts Civic League, Annual Report, 1901 (Cambridge: Cooperative Press, 1901), pp. 19-21.

<sup>18</sup>H. A. Dane, "The General Improvement of Boys in Our Neighborhood," pp. 63-70 in K. S. Duryee, ed., The Playground Years and Letters--1899-1908, unpublished mss. in author's possession, Massachusetts Civic League, Boston.

<sup>19</sup>Joseph Lee to Henry L. Higginson June 19, 1903, p. 72 in ibid.; see also Report of the Superintendent of the Columbus Avenue Playground to the Playground Committee of the Massachusetts Civic League (1904), typescript in Scrapbook (1903-08), Massachusetts Civic League.

elected to the school committee, and convinced it to take over the playground work in 1907. Meanwhile, public control of the vacation schools was already a reality, insuring them of funding. As a member of the school committee, Lee also secured a provision requiring the establishment of play facilities adjacent to schools.<sup>20</sup>

Lee's early official deeds, however, did less to make him a national figure than his extensive writings on the nature and function of play. Jacob Riis called him "the practical, common-sense champion of the boy and his rights, in school and home and in the playground,"<sup>21</sup> and other progressives recognized him as the "father of the American playground." Since he was a respected authority on the subject, Lee's writings on play are interesting both in terms of their content and their role in the recreation movement. In general, they combined his idealization of the role of the gentleman, which he considered "the greatest achievement of the English race,"<sup>22</sup> with popularized child study theories. In so doing, he became the unofficial

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<sup>20</sup>Sapora, "The Contributions of Joseph Lee," pp.251-52.

<sup>21</sup>Quoted in Lee, Constructive and Preventive Philanthropy, pp. iii-v.

<sup>22</sup>Joseph Lee, Play in Education (New York: Macmillan, 1915), pp. 375-76.

spokesman for the play movement, bridging the gap between science and social reform much as Jacob Riis had done earlier.

Lee felt that play was the authentic avenue to character education, the only path that adhered to "nature's curriculum." Lessons learned by the young at play sowed "the arts of war and peace," and provided ideals and goals "that men will die for and in pursuit of which all human genius is expressed."<sup>23</sup> The young boy at play exhibited a "dawning of political spirit,"<sup>24</sup> and expressed this in his group or gang. To be sure, the gang impulse could result in lawlessness, but society was to blame for this, "because of our own perversity in denying to this most lawful impulse some lawful method of expression."<sup>25</sup> Therefore, children were not innately destructive, but sought a means of reconciling life and civilization through their own versions of the civic and chivalric ceremonies of adults. Lee, following a model adapted from child study, divided

<sup>23</sup> George D. Burrage, "With the Class of 1883 at Harvard," Recreation, XXXI (December, 1937), p. 533.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Lee, "Kindergarten Principles in Social Work," NEA, Proceedings, 1903, p. 382.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph Lee, "The Playground as a Part of the Public School," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1907, pp. 459-71; Joseph Lee, "Playground Education," Educational Review, XXII (December, 1901), p. 455.

child life into three stages: "dramatic," "self-assertion," and "loyalty." The first stage, from infancy to age six, was a period of fantasy and make-believe, necessary for the development of mental and physical powers. The second stage, which overlapped into early adolescence, was potentially dangerous. An "anarchistic age," according to Lee, it was marked by a desire for power and adventure that evinced the child's ambition to create a healthy self-image.<sup>26</sup> Given the city's restraints on the adventurous play activities that had long served to educate children, however, lawlessness often resulted.

Having established the city boy's dilemma, Lee proposed that society sanction play life in the regulated playground. There the unlawful expressions could be controlled and directed into athletic pursuits. Once the boy reached the age of "loyalty," the tendency to gather in groups and gangs could likewise be properly managed. Since the gang was basically a perverted form of the desirable impulse to cooperate, the "kindergarten of the future citizen," it might be turned into a force for good. After all, Lee argued, the gang was a potent form of the "civic mindedness" progressivism advocated. It was nothing

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<sup>26</sup>Lee, Play in Education, pp. 166-68.

more than the boy throwing himself "with his whole weight and spirit into the life of his city and state."<sup>27</sup>

Obviously then, properly directed "infant commonwealths" were a necessity.<sup>28</sup> Play served as the means to this end, as an authority figure might organize the boys, supplying the "social energy" needed to forge the abstract ideals of boyhood into constructive activities. In the team game the boy learned to subordinate himself to a purpose, service to the "invisible body" of society.<sup>29</sup> The playground thus became the nascent civil state, a world in which ideas and goals deemed worthy of perpetuation were renewed in a "severe course of moral discipline."<sup>30</sup>

The concept of the playground as the spawning ground of desirable citizenry was derived from the genteel English boarding-school ethic Lee had been raised on. Far from conflicting with his lack of pretentiousness and withdrawal from the sedentary pursuits of the rich, it

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<sup>27</sup> Lee, "Playground Education," pp. 464-66.

<sup>28</sup> Lee, Play in Education, p. 163.

<sup>29</sup> Joseph Lee, "Play as Medicine," Survey, XXVII (November 4, 1911), pp. 1131-38.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Lee, "Play as a School of the Citizen," in Playground Association of America, Papers of the Chicago Meeting, Playground Association of America (New York: Playground Association of America, 1908), pp. 16-21.

buttressed his feeling that his course was correct. Logically then, Lee concluded that "the boy without a playground is the father to a man without a job."<sup>31</sup> Obviously, this opened up a new dimension to the play movement. Now publicly organized play was necessary not merely for health reasons, nor even to prevent delinquency, but to preserve and help develop an organic society of leaders and subordinates, smoothly efficient in its operations. Play then, by being an "antidote to civilization," was actually its firmest ally.<sup>32</sup>

Initially, Lee was unenthusiastic about forming a national organization to promote the cause of public recreation. Fearing that such a group might be so narrowly conceived as to miss the connection between recreation and civic life, he suggested that those who wished to nationalize the movement's scope join the American Civic Association or the National Municipal League, both of which were important progressive groups. If anything, this indicated Lee's desire to make public recreation a major facet of municipal progressivism. However, the promoters of a

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<sup>31</sup>Lee, Constructive and Preventive Philanthropy, p. 123.

<sup>32</sup>Joseph Lee, "Play as an Antidote to Civilization," Playground, V (July, 1911), pp. 100-27.

national movement were in sympathy with his misgivings, and Lee soon gave them his support.<sup>33</sup>

The new group, the Playground Association of America, was founded in February, 1906. One of the founders, Henry S. Curtis, later said that original plans for an organization were modest, basically concerned with training recreation workers, but that this had expanded into a desire to emulate the Central Games Committee of Germany.<sup>34</sup> That group served as a planning body for Germany's public recreation program, a comprehensive effort to use leisure time as a force for constructive citizenship. Curtis, at this time Supervisor of Playgrounds for the District of Columbia, held a Ph.D. from Clark University and had been Director of Child Study in the New York City schools. Luther Halsey Gulick, the association's co-founder, was well-known in educational circles both as a physician and as an organizer of recreation programs. Gulick had published a number of important studies on the physical and psychological effects of play, and also developed the physical education program of the Y.M.C.A. in accordance with his

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<sup>33</sup>Henry S. Curtis, "How it Began," Recreation, XXV (May, 1931), pp. 71, 106.

<sup>34</sup>Henry S. Curtis, "The Playground," in N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1907, pp. 278-86.



findings. Convinced of the ethical potency of athletics, Gulick made it the core activity of the organization, designing the Y.M.C.A.'s triangular symbol ("body, mind, and spirit").<sup>35</sup> The Playground Association of America's ambitious founders did not intend for it to be bound by parochial concerns, as Lee had feared, but hoped to connect it with other progressive reform causes.

The initial meeting of the association, held at Chicago in June, 1907, was a turning point in the course of the public recreation movement. Cooperating with Chicago park officials, who were planning an extensive "play festival" to call attention to Chicago's extensive park expansion program, the association organized what became a well-attended convention, attracting the participation of progressives with national reputations. President Roosevelt and Jacob Riis were elected honorary officers, and Jane Addams, Graham Taylor, and Joseph Lee gave addresses and led session meetings on specialized topics. Over 5,000 delegates were in attendance, and met in sessions concerned with program planning, child study, philosophy of the public recreation movement, and other significant topics.

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<sup>35</sup> Ethel J. Dorgan, Luther Halsey Gulick (New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1935), pp. 36-44.

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Graham Taylor regarded the meeting as marking a new course in public recreation:

The transition of playground activity from a more or less sporadic and disconnected series of efforts in our large cities to a firmly established and well-organized national movement.<sup>36</sup>

The organizers of the Chicago meeting were especially intent on conveying a seriousness of purpose to the delegates. They intended the association to establish links with other practical manifestations of progressivism such as the new education and the urban planning movements. Accordingly Luther Gulick reiterated the view that play was the epitome of learning by example. The child in play, he said, forged a "civic conscience," by submitting himself to rules and goals, a basic requirement for social cohesion. The playground, he said, was our "great ethical laboratory," an arena where the proper balance between freedom and restraint was maintained. Obviously, he continued, this method of teaching the principles of right conduct was superior to hackneyed didactic means.<sup>37</sup> Lawrence Veiller,

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<sup>36</sup>Graham Taylor, "How They Played at Chicago," in Playground Association of America, Papers of the Chicago Meeting, pp. 1-10; see also South Park Commissioners, Annual Report, 1907, p. 62.

<sup>37</sup>Luther H. Gulick, "Play and Democracy," in ibid., pp. 11-16.

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the New York housing reformer, supplemented this view, arguing that the playground movement was soundly based upon the environmental interpretation of the causes of poverty that was now generally accepted.<sup>38</sup>

The Chicago meeting marked the beginning of a permanent national forum on public recreation. Succeeding annual conventions, usually held in conjunction with a play festival in major cities, were also well-attended and attracted much notice in reform circles. The participation of progressive politicians and local civic leaders was commonplace at the meetings. Besides the conventions, however, the association published a monthly magazine, Playground, which chronicled major developments in the movement, and sponsored activities designed to make park and playground administration efficient and to expand facilities as well.

Public recreation was regarded by the association and its leaders, such as Lee and Gulick, as a form of municipal stewardship intended to insure the "social efficiency" of youth. In the context of the progressive period, this meant an expansion of institutional guidance

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<sup>38</sup>Lawrence Veiller, "The Social Value of Playgrounds in Crowded Districts," in P.A.A., Papers of the Chicago Meeting, pp. 37-40.

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of the lives of children, particularly since schools and parents were judged deficient. Guided recreation was an imperative, then, since unregulated play was likely to lose sight of the abstract ethical goals underlying the recreation philosophy. Thus, while establishing play as a potentially positive force, the recreation leaders insisted that only guided play could be ethically potent. According to Luther Gulick, free, undirected play was an unnatural phenomenon, comparable to laissez-faire in the economic arena. Just as the economic free market left the innocent at the mercy of devilish forces, so the city street game did the same to children.<sup>39</sup> To Joseph Lee, an undirected playground was worse than no playground at all, as it provided a place where the gang could "seduce the imagination" of the impressionable. He paraphrased his famous statement about the boy without a playground, adding a corollary that the boy with a bad playground might become the father to man with a job "best left undone."<sup>40</sup>

The most cited evidence of the utility of the supervised playground was the study of "The Relation of

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<sup>39</sup>Luther H. Gulick, "The Doctrine of 'Hands Off' in Play," in P.A.A., Proceedings of the Third Annual Playground Congress and Yearbook, 1909 (New York: P.A.A., 1910), pp. 289-96

<sup>40</sup>Massachusetts Civic League, Annual Report, 1907, p. 25.

Playgrounds to Juvenile Delinquency" done by Allen T. Burns in 1907-1908. Burns, a social worker affiliated with the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, a pioneer social work school headed by Graham Taylor, analyzed data involving juvenile court proceedings in Chicago over several years. He concluded that a high percentage of those whose post-court careers were "successful" (i.e., not recidivist) lived in areas with large and small parks within walking distance. The small parks, which were usually devoted to athletics rather than scenery, seemed to lead to a particularly impressive decrease in the extent of delinquency. Crime statistics comparing rates in small-park areas before and after their establishment also showed the crime-preventing potential of parks. Furthermore, Burns cited proof that the proportion of the decline of delinquency could even be related to whether one lived a very few blocks from the park or several blocks away. According to Burns, this was scientific proof of what had been long expected. He flatly declared that:

The prescence of parks and playgrounds in an area is coincidental with a decrease on the number of cases of juvenile delinquency and with an increase in the proportion of cases successfully cared for by the court.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Allen T. Burns, "Relation of Playgrounds to Juvenile Delinquency," Charities and the Commons, XXI (October 3, 1908), pp. 25-31.



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The Burns study provided recreational promoters with a useful tool in their attempts to expand the movement. As Burns had noted, the low per-capita cost of recreation facilities compared to its social "savings" marked it as an example of the progressive ideal of "efficient democracy."<sup>42</sup> This point was particularly telling, as civic leaders could now show that parks and playgrounds, at a very low cost, cut crime rates and raised property values. As such, public parks demonstrated the "positive commercial value of attractive appearances."<sup>43</sup> Graham Taylor and other social reformers did not feel that such reasoning was a detriment to the movement. Instead, Taylor applauded businessmen for showing a new sense of social responsibility in recognizing that parks "are among the chief assets of Chicago's working capital."<sup>44</sup>

Efficient planning and administration were considered necessary for a successful program, and the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 27-29.

<sup>43</sup> South Park Commissioners, Annual Report, 1908, pp. 11-13, 112-114; see also Cincinnati Park Commission, A Park System for Cincinnati: Report of the Park Commission of Cincinnati to the Honorable Board of Public Service of the City of Cincinnati (Cincinnati: Cincinnati Park Commissioners, 1907), p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> Graham Taylor, "By Graham Taylor," Chicago Daily News, October 23, 1909 in Graham Taylor Mss., Newberry Library, Chicago.

association provided services to insure this. Statistical surveys were recommended as a necessary adjunct to impressionistic methods of assessing a city's needs, and served to provide material for the evaluation of programs.<sup>45</sup> The presence of trained personnel was likewise important. In keeping with the general progressive tendency to promote the professionalization of social service, the association favored the establishment of playground commissions or other forms of non-partisan administration. The ideal commission, it felt, included both professional recreation workers and distinguished citizens who were not connected with the city machine.<sup>46</sup> The concern for a professionally staffed program expressed itself in the association's publication of a course in play for recreation workers, and in its agitation for professional courses of study at normal schools and universities. The association's suggested course included extensive studies of child nature and the social utility of recreation.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Rowland Haynes, "Recreation Survey, Milwaukee, Wisconsin," Playground, VI (May, 1912), pp. 38-66; see also "Seminar on Playground Statistics," in P.A.A., Proceedings, 1909, pp. 415-23.

<sup>46</sup>E. B. Mero, "Current Developments in Municipal Recreation," American City, IV (April, 1911), pp. 187-89.

<sup>47</sup>See P.A.A., A Normal Course in Play for Playground Directors (P.A.A., publication no. 72, 1908).

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This concern with professionalization and "non-partisanship" grew out of the progressive fear of the city machine. In this case, recognizing that the scope of the movement was expanding rapidly, the leaders of the association worried that municipal playgrounds might become a new area of financial dishonesty where the political bosses to gain control of them. Graham Taylor urged the Governor of Illinois to see that "right types of directors"<sup>48</sup> were appointed to recreational agencies. Taylor had good reason to worry, as Chicago's rapidly growing park system, hailed by Theodore Roosevelt as the nation's finest, contained pay-rolls padded with political appointees. Untrained in either recreation or in juvenile problems, they mismanaged the parks, allowing all sorts of illicit activities to take place. One commissioner in the West Park District was said to have made appointments that "would bring tears to the eyes of the sphynx."<sup>49</sup> This was no surprise to social

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<sup>48</sup> Graham Taylor to Governor Charles Dineen July 18, 1906 in Graham Taylor Mss., Newberry Library, Chicago.

<sup>49</sup> See letter to Mrs. James A. Britton, November 13, 1913 in Juvenile Protective Mss., folio 4, University of Illinois--Chicago Circle; see also Taylor to Dineen March 9, 1909 in Civic Committee Minutes 1908-09, pt. 2, Chicago City Club Mss., Henry S. Curtis warned that, were the "corner politician" in charge, the playground "will become a social influence on the same plane as the saloon or brothel." See "Athletics in the Playgrounds," American City, III (July, 1919), pp. 21-25.

workers, since the commissioner himself as an "ex-saloon keeper and booze fighter," whose character had been depicted quite unfavorably by a juvenile court investigator:

A libertine and rogue of the lower type, ignorant, obscene, immoral, vulgar, stupid, and entirely lacking in executive ability.<sup>50</sup>

The remedy, as mentioned, was professionalization, coupled with "impartial" administration. The association advised park commissioners to "avoid employing moths and molluscs,"<sup>51</sup> and urged cities to adopt the merit system in hiring. This was, as mentioned, in keeping with the general progressive trend towards commission systems or similar administrative structures designed to curb the influence of the machine. Unfortunately, such measures made urban government even less responsive to the popular will than had been the case, and park and playground commissions proved no different. They were usually composed of so-called "experts" and "civic leaders" rather than representatives of the sectors of the city's population supposedly benefiting from increased recreational facilities.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>"Summary of Lincoln Park System Survey," in Juvenile Protective Association Mss., folio 4, University of Illinois--Chicago Circle.

<sup>51</sup>William J. McKiernan, "The Intelligent Operation of Playgrounds," in P.A.A., Proceedings, 1908, pp. 98-112.

<sup>52</sup>Henry S. Curtis, "Secretary's Report," in P.A.A., Proceedings, 1909, pp. 55-63.

The desire for expansion superseded the other programs of the association, and publicity and legislative proposals were designed to accomplish this goal. Promotional activities on the part of the association were extensive on both the municipal and state levels. The favored methods of promoting public recreation, however, also excluded the participation of the resident of the crowded city district. The private campaign-to-public funding formula utilized in the nineties was recommended, only on a larger scale. The association suggested that local campaigners form a special body to promote public recreation, preferably made up of representatives of boards of trade, chambers of commerce, and similar organizations. It would publicize the cause in local newspapers, lecture to residents on the crime-preventing aspects of recreation and, "when the public is warmed up to the subject," secure a speaker from the national association, preferably Joseph Lee, Jacob Riis, or another well-known person in the movement.<sup>53</sup> The association also supplied, through its "field secretaries," statistical information relating to playground

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<sup>53</sup>E. B. Mero, American Playgrounds (Boston: American Gymnasium Company, 1908), pp. 79-85; see also "Chart of Agencies for Developing and Playground or Home Garden Movement (1910)" in Scrapbook, 1911-22, Massachusetts Civic League, Boston.

management to assist new efforts.<sup>54</sup> Generally, however, local promoters were advised to rely heavily on the co-operation of the business community.<sup>55</sup>

The most significant of these local efforts was the Massachusetts referendum on playgrounds, which showed the association employing a political device esteemed by progressives. The campaign was essentially created and managed by Joseph Lee, asserting the lawmaker's role to be a necessary duty of the modern philanthropist. In his silver anniversary class dinner at Harvard in 1908 Lee defended "paternalism" in the name of social stewardship, asserting that progressive legislative theory was based on the need for the state to assume a custodial function.<sup>56</sup> The Massachusetts referendum was a practical extension of this notion. In May, 1908, the state legislature adopted a measure requiring all cities of over 10,000 population to vote on whether municipal funding of playgrounds was

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<sup>54</sup>See Lee Hanmer, First Steps in Organizing Playgrounds (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1908).

<sup>55</sup>Graham Romeyn Taylor, "Ten Thousand at Play," Survey, XXII (June 5, 1909), pp. 365-73.

<sup>56</sup>Burrage, "With the Class of 1883 at Harvard," p. 533.



appropriate. Separate city and town votes were scheduled for December, 1908 and March, 1909 respectively.<sup>57</sup>

Since the referendum was the most significant public test to date of the recreation movement, the Playground Association of America and the Massachusetts Civic League coordinated a massive publicity campaign, employing speakers and a barrage of literature in what Lee referred to as "missionary work." Local businessmen and their organizations were especially cooperative in the effort. Lee noted that they were particularly receptive to the argument favoring playgrounds as "the only . . . school we have to fit boys for the larger functions of modern business."<sup>58</sup> The local newspaper in Brockton, for example, carried Lee's quotation, "the boy without a playground is the father to a man without a job" at the top of its editorial page for a month.<sup>59</sup> There the referendum passed by a 7-1 margin, while statewide it succeeded in 24 of 26

<sup>57</sup>Joseph Lee, "Report of Massachusetts," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1908, p. 407; see also Kate Stevens Bingham, "The Playgrounds of Greater Boston," New England Magazine, XL (April, 1909), pp. 184-92.

<sup>58</sup>Massachusetts Civic League, Annual Report, 1909, pp. 15-20; see also Massachusetts Civic League, Playground Referendum for Cities and Towns of Over Ten Thousand Inhabitants (Boston: M.C.L. and P.A.A., 1908).

<sup>59</sup>E. B. Mero, "Massachusetts Adopts Playground Law," Playground, II (January, 1909), p. 65.

cities. In 1911 the legislature revised the playground law to cover smaller towns.

The Massachusetts success was duplicated in other areas in campaigns that were able to gain funding for expanded park and recreation facilities. As in other playground drives, the support of the business community was a regular feature. In Seattle, for example, an effort to enact a statewide playground bill employed the slogan "philanthropy is good business" in courting commercial leaders, citing increased property values, and lower crime rates as benefits.<sup>60</sup> The Children's Playground Association of Baltimore urged its city's residents to support a playground funding campaign on the grounds that playgrounds were "far less costly than the reformatory or the juvenile court," while a Washington, D.C. effort publicized itself with a button on which President Taft declared "I am for playgrounds." Many other organized recreation promotions extended the movement into cities of varying sizes and areas of the country that had heretofore lacked playground movements.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Seattle Playgrounds Association, Washington Playground Bill (1910 leaflet).

<sup>61</sup>Mero, "Massachusetts Adopts Playground Law," p. 55.

By 1909, just three years after its founding, the Playground Association of America was the coordinating body of one of the strongest progressive interests. During the two years since the Chicago convention, cities with recreation facilities had increased from 90 to 336, and their number rose throughout the progressive period.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps the key to the movement's success was that its leaders had connected the drive for public recreation with the general progressive theme of efficient citizenry. The old arguments concerned with crime prevention had been raised to a higher level that seemingly granted public recreation a role more positive and more encouraging than it had enjoyed previously. According to Graham Taylor, the movement had been of "utmost service in promoting that spirit of cooperation and of team play" required for responsible citizenry.<sup>63</sup>

Henry S. Curtis, however, probably illustrated the relation between the movement and national progressivism best of all. The playground, he said, had contributed to

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<sup>62</sup>Everett C. Beach, "The Playground Movement in California," Sunset Magazine, XXVI (May, 1911), pp. 521-26; Civic Improvement League (Louisville, Kentucky), Report of the Open Air Playground Committee (Louisville: Civic Improvement League, 1905).

<sup>63</sup>L. H. Weir, "The Playground Movement in America," in NEA, Proceedings, 1911, pp. 925-32.

the efficiency of the city by making it a desirable place to live and work. Indeed, Curtis noted that the playground movement had made it difficult to sell residential and commercial property in areas where such facilities were lacking. Those municipalities that had extensive facilities recognized their value as a selling point. Curtis cited the attention given playgrounds in the "booster" magazine, The City of Denver, as evidence of this. Most importantly, according to Curtis, were the far-reaching social effects of recreation facilities. Monies spent on them he said, "may properly be put down as social insurance," since the "growing feeling of discontent among the workers of the world" threatened to erupt into strife:

The focus of the matter is the difficulty under existing circumstances of leading a life that is worth living. Neither the work of the father in the factory, nor the life of the mother in the tenement, nor the play of the children in the street is satisfying to the spirit, and there has been no provision for public recreation or for a satisfying use of leisure that might feed these growing hungers.<sup>64</sup>

Curtis' assertions indicated that the recreation movement had widened in scope. The establishment of the Playground Association of America had made it a national

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<sup>64</sup>Henry S. Curtis, "Does Public Recreation Pay?" American City, VIII (February, 1913), pp. 144-45.

enterprise with considerable strength in major municipalities. Now linked to the mainstream of progressive thought and action, the movement now looked well beyond its original concern with children. Recreation promoters such as Curtis argued that programs had to be extended to combat the potentially disruptive forces predominant in urban social life. For the recreation movement to expand, however, it had to redefine itself. This meant not only that the leisure time pursuits of adults would be scrutinized, but that recreation promoters were to contribute to a reworking of the concept of community in the context of urbanization. By so doing, their influence exceeded the range of their actions.

## CHAPTER V

### RECREATION AS A COMMUNITY PROBLEM:

#### THE PROGRESSIVE VISION

The recreation movement had begun in the nineties as a relatively modest endeavor, hoping to provide play space for city children. By 1908, however, it had become a national concern, vying for the attention of progressives. Basically, the movement was regulatory in orientation, attempting to further the intelligent direction of an important sector of city life. However, this meant that its original focus on the lives of children was becoming a burden. Graham Taylor, attending the fourth convention of Playground Association of America in June, 1910, noted that the meeting exhibited an awareness of the "bigness of the problem of public recreation:"

Play has over flowed the playground. We have thought that the thing to do was to scoop up all the play that was lying around loose in a city's streets and pour it off into playgrounds with 'supervisors' to stir it. But now we see that this takes care of only a small part of the ocean.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Graham Taylor, "The Rochester Play Congress," Survey, XXIV (July 2, 1910), p. 560.

The drive for playgrounds had emphasized the importance of reaching children with good influences at a young age. Failure to do so was regarded as foresaken opportunity, the consignment of the child to the social junkpile. The urgency of this message was used with success by the early playground promoters, but finally began to have a constricting effect on the drive for public recreation. Though based on optimistic environmentalist premises, the notion of pliable childhood implied that little could be accomplished after the early years of life. Now, however, those involved in social service realized the limitations of the old arguments. The Survey, the major social service periodical, declared in a 1912 editorial that it was "now taken for granted that grown people must play."<sup>2</sup>

Not only had the initial studies of the utility of play been limited to children, they had simply been proven erroneous in many of their suppositions. The assumption that a properly molded childhood guaranteed a useful, productive adulthood had not been borne out. Writing in 1910 to housing reformer Robert De Forest, with whom he had worked in the first New York playground campaigns, Jacob

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<sup>2</sup>"The Renaissance of Play," Survey, XXVIII (June 15, 1912), p. 437.

Riis asked "of what use" publicly sponsored playgrounds were in raising the moral tone of the young "if they are corrupted by the home that is their environment."<sup>3</sup> The fact that Riis, an influential publicist for the play movement for many years, had developed reservations about the efficacy of playgrounds was particularly significant. Originally optimistic about the playground's utility as an ethical training ground, he now felt that "good influences" had to be provided far beyond the formative years. Others involved in the play movement agreed. A panel of recreation workers in New York studying the city's public programs noted that, despite the expansion of the playground system, "not more than 5%" of the populace was reached by municipal efforts.<sup>4</sup> In Chicago, the South Park Commissioners, who directed the most extensive park district in the city, admitted that more attention was due its adolescent and adult population. Over two-thirds of the city's young were out of school before high school, and the playground seldom met their recreational needs.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Jacob Riis to Robert De Forest, March 7, 1910, Box 1, Jacob Riis Mss., New York Public Library.

<sup>4</sup>See Comments on the Considerations Submitted to the Special Committee on Recreation of the Board of Estimate and Appropriation (1910?), typescript in New York Public Library.

<sup>5</sup>South Park Commissioners, Annual Report, 1906, pp. 56-57.



The extension of the organic view of society beyond the realm of biological analogy contradicted views that saw the end of childhood as the conclusion of the plastic period of human nature. Sociological thought, as it developed during the progressive era, provided an ideological matrix for the development of a view of social man that knew no age limit. American thinkers found the interpretations of certain European sociologists useful. The Durkheimian concept of the collective consciousness infused organicism with a social dimension complementing that of the psychical. Collective consciousness was far different from individual consciousness, and not merely the sum of the perceptions of many individuals. Rather, it was a semi-permanent phenomenon with a groupist orientation, one which showed society to be basically cooperative and conserving.<sup>6</sup> Durkheim's view provided an antidote to the Spencerian atomism American sociologists had found to be a hindrance in their work.

The Durkheimian model of society was obviously applicable to the collective life of the city, as were the observations of Georg Simmel in his famous essay, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," translated and circulated in

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<sup>6</sup> See Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society, trans. by George Simpson (Glencoe: Free Press, 1933), pp. 80-86, 105-12.

America soon after it was written in 1902-1903. Simmel argued that the city presented the individual with the difficulty of preserving personal autonomy "in the face of overwhelming social forces of historical heritage, of extended culture, and of the technique of life." The most pressing social problems of the day, he insisted, radiated outward from this psychic dilemma. The city was now looked on as a stage or arena marked by the "intensification of nervous stimulation"<sup>7</sup> resulting from a congeries of discontinuous sensations and images. Cities had become almost wholly economic units dominated by the pursuit of money and pleasure. Therefore, said Simmel, human contacts became impersonal, dominated by mutual suspicion, and characterized by a defensive "reserve." The city, where one was in daily contact with other persons far more than in rural society, nonetheless was a land of strangers lacking any sense of community; as Simmel noted:

[The] brevity and scarcity of the inter-human contacts granted to the metropolitan man, as compared with the social intercourse of the small town.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in Kurt H. Wolff, ed., The Sociology of Georg Simmel (Glencoe: Free Press, 1950), pp. 409-10.

<sup>8</sup>ibid., pp. 415-16, 421.

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Simmel's portrait of the city was accepted by both academic sociologists and those involved in "practical" social work, many of whom were familiar with the social life of the small town. Moreover, the view of man's psychic processes as essentially social had become a basic component of progressivism's view of the American political and social order. Robert E. Park, whose work as a member of the so-called "Chicago School" of urban sociology became widely known in the post-World War I period, actually wrote his first major piece in 1915. In it, Park laid the basis for the socio-psychological "ecological" view of the city. The urban community, he asserted, was more than just the sum of many individuals, but "a state of mind" incorporating custom, tradition, and sentiment and therefore was "a moral as well as a physical organization."<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, said Park, the modern city had subordinated these socializing functions to its commercial duties, and natural patterns of order in areas such as family life, cultural association, and local attachment had suffered accordingly.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Robert E. Park, "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the City Environment," American Journal of Sociology, XX (March, 1915), pp. 578-84; see also Morton and Lucia White, The Intellectual Versus the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright (New York: Mentor, 1964), pp. 159-162.

<sup>10</sup>Park, "The City," pp. 584-98, 608-12; Park D. Goist, "City and 'Community': The Urban Theory of Robert Park," American Quarterly, XXIII (Spring, 1971), pp. 46-59.

Once again the city was being depicted as "unnatural," but the critique of the sociologists was far different from that of the bio-mechanistic Spencerians. Illustrative of this is the work of Charles Horton Cooley, a professor at the University of Michigan whose studies of community and socialization were influential among progressives. City life, said Cooley, was marked by disorder originating in the social process that manifested itself in the moral arena. While city residents lived in close physical quarters to each other, there was "union on a low plane but isolation on a higher,"<sup>11</sup> stemming from the decline of old facilitators of social relations, most notably the so-called "primary group." Cooley defined the primary group as the basic social unit around which societies had been constructed:

. . . primary in the sense that they give the individual his earliest and completest experience of social unity, and also in the sense that they do not change in the same degree as more elaborate relations, but form a comparatively permanent source out of which the latter are ever springing.<sup>12</sup>

The primary group then, shaped human nature itself, according to Cooley. The self, far from standing in

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<sup>11</sup>Charles Horton Cooley, Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), p. 247.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-27.

opposition to society, was in concord with it, and the so-called "social self" was a complex of ideas deriving from interpersonal contacts.<sup>13</sup> In a sense, Cooley was building upon the arguments of his fellow sociologist Franklin Giddings, who had asserted that "consciousness of kind" was the motivating force behind human associations. A state of organic sympathy (or, as Giddings sometimes referred to it, "like-mindedness") "consciousness of kind" underlay the basic institutions of community necessary for social survival.<sup>14</sup> Generally, it was not limited to any particular age group, and therefore complemented the Deweyan notion of learning and growth as ongoing processes throughout all of life.<sup>15</sup>

With the decline of primary group contacts in the city, however, "consciousness of kind" was difficult to discern. Sociologists felt that the highly specialized city aggravated the social division of labor. This meant that interpersonal contacts were based on material considerations rather than on "innate" ties to the community.

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<sup>13</sup>Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), pp. 35-36, 179.

<sup>14</sup>Franklin Giddings, The Principles of Sociology (New York: Macmillan, 1896), pp. 17-19; Giddings, Elements of Sociology (New York: Macmillan, 1898), pp. 52-58.

<sup>15</sup>See Irving King, Social Aspects of Education (New York: Macmillan, 1914), pp. 69-72.

Thus they defined the problem as one of flawed communications, ironic considering the technological advances that had occurred.<sup>16</sup> Cooley, though, did not feel that a return to village life was either possible or desirable. Rather, he hoped that the modern communications revolution, by reducing the distance between society's members, might facilitate social as well as commercial progress. The "intimate face-to-face association and cooperation" characterizing primary groups would then be duplicated, albeit on a larger scale. Ultimately, the individual would regard himself as part of "a large and joyous whole." This would infuse his work, which Cooley conceded was dull and monotonous, with a sense of meaning derived from the realization that his tasks were interconnected with the larger society and not isolated and meaningless.<sup>17</sup> This state seemed distant, however.

The city retained its forbidding psychic aura since it lacked structures to provide for the natural gregariousness of man, and instead relied on haphazard arrangements that threatened social stability. Robert E. Park observed

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<sup>16</sup>See Jean B. Quandt, From the Small Town to the Great Community: The Social Thought of Progressive Intellectuals (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), pp. 56-57.

<sup>17</sup>Cooley, Social Organization, pp. 3, 79-81, 95-97.

that the modern city existed in a state of "perpetual agitation," an "unstable equilibrium" that made its residents vulnerable to poorly-thought out ideas and persuasive but exploitive campaigns that left community life in "a chronic state of crisis."<sup>18</sup> Mary Simkhovitch, one of the most influential pioneer social workers, agreed. She felt that the fast pace and physical congestion of city life led to mental instability of an anarchistic bent:

. . . the gradual substitution of sensation as opposed to reason, and that means social demoralization, ever ready to catch at the latest news, to float on the surface of the hour, never to think a thought through, but to go on rapidly from one sensation to another.<sup>19</sup>

The most obvious casualty of the city's assault on sociability was the family. Social workers cited the alarming increase in divorce, especially among the lower classes, as evidence.<sup>20</sup> From estrangement from one's family it was a short step to a feeling of separateness from the community. Some allowance for this might be given the immigrant, unfamiliar as he was with American ways, but almost all

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<sup>18</sup> See Park, "The City," pp. 598-607.

<sup>19</sup> See National Conference on City Planning, Proceedings, 1909, Senate Doc. no. 422, 61st Congress, 2d Session, pp. 100-104.

<sup>20</sup> See Charles R. Henderson, The Social Spirit in America (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1904), pp. 26-27; William L. O'Neill, Divorce in the Progressive Era (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 20, 23-24.



progressives agreed with Graham Taylor that a "sense of detachment is the curse of communities."<sup>21</sup> Lord Bryce, writing in 1912, warned that a feeling of at-largeness from society would eventually affect political attitudes. Highly-charged city dwellers, he said were "more likely to be swept away by words," and therefore liable to "what might be called a revolutionary temper."<sup>22</sup> Edward A. Ross placed this progression within an evolutionary framework. Social order, he said, was a matter of "escaping collision." Thus a cooperative sense was not incompatible with healthy individualism. Yet modern society's lack of "sympathy" caused the "natural order" of social relations to break down, leaving the community to "the prey of individuals."<sup>23</sup> Mary McDowell agreed, finding the immigrant populace as among the worst offenders. Living in disorderly quarters, they gave undue freedom to their children, and thereby allowed a "do-as-you-please philosophy" to replace "the restraints of an old community feeling."<sup>24</sup> The social

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<sup>21</sup> Graham Taylor, "By Graham Taylor," Chicago Daily News, June 26, 1909 in Graham Taylor Mss., Newberry Library, Chicago.

<sup>22</sup> James Bryce, "Menace of Great Cities," (New York: National Housing Association pub. no. 19, 1912).

<sup>23</sup> Edward A. Ross, Social Control (New York: Macmillan, 1901), pp. 1, 52, 87.

<sup>24</sup> Mary McDowell, "The Stranger in the Community," folder 12, Mary McDowell Mss., Chicago Historical Society.

worker's critique complemented the fears of the business community. A speaker before the Philadelphia Civic Club talked of the critical need to develop "a sense of real, positive membership in the community, a sense of personal responsibility for the conduct of common affairs."<sup>25</sup>

The organic view offered a possible solution to the problem. Given the immigrant influx, return to the older, atomistic community life was both impossible and undesirable, since it promoted continued isolation and dependence on the supposedly defective family unit. Small-scale social organization on a neighborhood basis, but with a recognized linkage to the larger city, was championed. Not only did it provide an antidote to the communication problem, but it offered an "enlarged home" as a counterpart to the familial unit. If the city was an organism, then the neighborhood was its cell.<sup>26</sup> Robert A. Woods of the South End House in Boston felt the family to be antedated by the neighborhood, the oldest institution based on

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<sup>25</sup> Arthur Dunn, "Training for Citizenship," (Philadelphia) Civic Club Bulletin, IV, no. 5 (February 15, 1911), pp. 64-77.

<sup>26</sup> See Bernard J. Newman, "The Home of the Street Urchin," National Municipal Review, IV (October, 1915), pp. 587-93.

loyalty and corporate responsibility.<sup>27</sup> The neighborhood thus was a social adhesive with a clear claim on tradition; according to Woods:

It is surely one of the most beautiful of all social facts that, coming down from untold ages, there should be this instinctive understanding that the man who establishes his home beside yours begins to have a claim upon your sense of comradeship . . . The neighborhood is a social unit which, by its clear definition of outline, its inner organic completeness, its hair-trigger reactions, may be fairly considered as functioning like a social mind . . .<sup>28</sup>

Progressives thus interpreted the decline of neighborliness in a historical-social context. Joseph Lee argued that village life had been "the crucible of the race," and wondered if its passing might account for the loss of Anglo-Saxon play traditions.<sup>29</sup> The basic interdependence of men prompted by the communication and transportation revolution meant that there was more need than ever for a genuine community sense. Earlier, face-to-face communication had been the key to the "harmonizing of differences through interpretation." Modern "selfish"

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<sup>27</sup>Robert A. Woods, "The Neighborhood and the Nation," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1909, pp. 101-06; Woods, "Families and Neighborhoods," Survey, XXII (June 26, 1909), pp. 462-64.

<sup>28</sup>Quoted in Park, "The City," p. 580.

<sup>29</sup>Joseph Lee, "American Play Tradition and Our Relation to it," Playground, VI (July, 1913), pp. 146-59.

individualism, a product of nineteenth-century materialism and "class egoism" came under attack.<sup>30</sup>

Revival of the neighborhood feeling, or "recovery of the parish" as Robert A. Woods liked to call it, became a major concern of the new profession of social work.<sup>31</sup> Its practical translation, though, became a matter of re-establishing control over an errant populace, since the renewal of neighborhood loyalties more often than not was expressed in a desire to build a consensus around already-extant norms. Edward T. Devine, a leading social worker, linked communitarian feelings to the "formation of good habits" and training in social efficiency. Simon N. Patten argued that the real social problem of the day was "de-generation," a community product that required a community solution. The "subman," said Patten, needed to be eliminated before the social body could rise to the "superman's"

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<sup>30</sup>Mary P. Follett, The New State (New York: Longman's Green, 1918), p. 34; Charles A. Ellwood, The Social Problem (New York: Macmillan, 1915), pp. 43-44; see also Park, "The City," p. 595.

<sup>31</sup>See Allen F. Davis, Spearheads of Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 75-76; Roy Lubove, The Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Career (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 13-18.

level, and this could best be accomplished by didactic means.<sup>32</sup> Obviously then, one reason for the progressive fascination with the small town was the restraints it had placed on its people. Though recognizing its violation of privacy, Jane Addams noted that "village gossip" had had its uses in expressing disapprobation of undesirable behavior.<sup>33</sup> The small town, argued many, brought all classes together and blurred economic and occupational distinctions. Edward A. Ross bemoaned its decline since its secret had been "not so much control as concord." Ross called for the ascension of a "party of order" made up of professionals, "stablists," and an ethical elite to direct society.<sup>34</sup> Thus social theorists, allegedly critics of theoretical reductionism, had themselves defined the city's problems in terms of "understanding." This merely complemented scientific management theories of employer-employee contact,

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<sup>32</sup>Edward T. Devine, The Normal Life (New York: Macmillan, 1915), pp. 31-36; Simon N. Patten, "The Laws of Environmental Influence," Popular Science Monthly, LXXIX (October, 1911), pp. 396-402; Devine, The Family and Social Work (New York: Survey Associates, 1912), pp. 33-45.

<sup>33</sup>Jane Addams, Newer Ideals of Peace (New York: Macmillan, 1907), p. 215.

<sup>34</sup>Ross, Social Control, p. 433.

which assumed a general identity of interest.<sup>35</sup> Charles Cooley, the sociologist of community, expressed this feeling, hoping to promote "organized rivalry, which by specialization and social control is . . . organized co-operation."<sup>36</sup>

Given this analysis of urban social defects, no facet of city life was more criticized by progressives than leisure. J. Horace McFarland of the American Civic Association said that it was a grievous error to "think of recreation as a sort of civic dessert."<sup>37</sup> Unregulated, "laissez-faire" leisure was dangerous, devoid of the aforementioned sanctions of village public opinion. Unsupervised leisure, according to one prominent social worker, encouraged "a curious tendency in the individual to permit himself greater license of conduct" than in ordinary circumstances.<sup>38</sup> As

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<sup>35</sup> See Samuel Haber, Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 59.

<sup>36</sup> Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order, pp. 308-09.

<sup>37</sup> J. Horace McFarland, "General Recreation Facilities," in John Nolen, ed., City Planning (New York: D. Appleton, 1915), pp. 139-58.

<sup>38</sup> Louise DeKoven Bowen, The Road to Destruction Made Easy in Chicago (Chicago: Juvenile Protective Association, 1916), pp. 4-12.

such, it hardly served the great educative functions ascribed to it by progressive theorists such as Charles Cooley, but was interconnected with the general social tendency towards overdifferentiation and overspecialization. Recovering the true function of leisure, admitted John Dewey, would be difficult, since preparing citizens for a worthwhile lifetime of work and preparing them to use leisure wisely involved "probably the most deep-seated antithesis" in education, rooted in the anti-cultural division between labor and leisure.<sup>39</sup> For the present, leisure was merely a compensatory mechanism. Simon Patten, writing in 1909, said that leisure had become an ineffectual, frantic antidote to the boredom of factory life. Since the worker did not see the relationship of his work to the social whole, he regarded leisure as freedom from both drudgery and social obligations.<sup>40</sup> The Russian writer Maxim Gorky, visiting America in 1907, agreed with Patten. On a trip to an amusement park, he found a "hell . . . constructed of paper-mache and painted bright red." The

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<sup>39</sup> John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1916), p. 293.

<sup>40</sup> Simon N. Patten, Product and Climax (New York: B. Muebsch, 1909), pp. 22-24; James Peyton Sizer, The Commercialization of Leisure (Boston: R. G. Badger, 1917), pp. 28-29.

tawdriness of American popular amusements, said Gorky, indicated both individual depravity and the tyranny of capital. In what he called the "idle dance" of boredom was shown a basic insufficiency in American life.<sup>41</sup>

To progressives then, leisure failed at its mission of education and renewal. The city's peculiar complex of license and restraint was especially criticized. This lack of direction, it was felt, accounted for the anarchic state of the people's play. Municipal provision for leisure provided an alternative, one with ample historical precedents dating from ancient Greece. As Jane Addams noted, however, the modern city had declared this to be an unnecessary function. Work was highly specialized and systemized, while play had been left to "malignant and vicious appetites."<sup>42</sup> As a result, the individual harmed himself and his community. According to Charles R. Henderson, a prominent sociologist, vice and crime were "antisocial actions out of an antisocial disposition." He asserted that since "the materials for hell fire, in the moral sense," were present in everyone, the

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<sup>41</sup>Maxim Gorky, "Boredom," Independent, LXIII (August 8, 1907), pp. 309-17.

<sup>42</sup>Jane Addams, The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets (New York: Macmillan, 1909), pp. 4-6.



city resident at play was unlikely to consider the effects of his actions on others.<sup>43</sup>

Exposing and documenting the problem of leisure now involved the investigation of all of the city's residents, not merely school-age children. The statistical evidence of the problem of leisure was overwhelming, and easily lent itself to the popular survey methodology. Left to the free market, evidence showed, leisure was an exploitable commodity, refuge from which was certainly not given by the impotent home, "a sleeping box and eating den--too often no more."<sup>44</sup> Commercial leisure, interested only in profit, had no reservations about appealing to the worst in men's natures. As specialized examinations of the demographic components of the city showed, commercial recreation undermined the community sense considerably.

Studies of adolescence had a distinct impact on the views of urban social structure and on the study of leisure as well. Some recognition of the special nature of adolescence had been made earlier, but it was not until

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<sup>43</sup>Charles R. Henderson, Introduction to the Study of the Dependent, Defective, and Delinquent Classes (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1901), p. 255.

<sup>44</sup>Michael M. Davis, The Exploitation of Pleasure: A Study of Commercial Recreations in New York City (New York: Russell Sage Foundation pamphlet no. 84, 1911).

the child study era that it became the subject of intensive scientific scrutiny.<sup>45</sup> The organizational patterns imposed by urbanization effectuated this consideration, since the age of leaving school generally corresponded with entrance into the working force and some degree of independence from one's family. Therefore, the existence of an intermediate stage between childhood and adulthood was now recognized.

G. Stanley Hall popularized the concept of adolescence in the monumental work he published in 1904. In Adolescence, Hall depicted youth as an age of crisis corresponding to that of a "new birth," wherein impulses of both the biological and social variety led to a restructuring of character. The adolescent, "neo-atavistic," was exposed to "the later acquisitions of the race," particularly the associative and socializing feelings. As such, this "rebirth" was both the dawn of adulthood and the determinant of its direction. It was a period of storm and stress, "the age of natural inebriation without the need of intoxicants." The psychological stresses on the youth

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<sup>45</sup> See Joseph Kett, "Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth Century America," in T. K. Rabb and R. I. Rotberg, eds., The Family in History: Interdisciplinary Essays (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1973), pp. 95-110; John Demos and Virginia Demos, "Adolescence in Historical Perspective," Journal of Marriage and the Family, XXXI (November, 1969), p. 637.

likewise increased the pressure on society to mold him into a useful, efficient member. Hall had, essentially, given society a "second chance" to shape the consciousness of its offspring.<sup>46</sup>

In a sense, the new view of adolescence implied a rejection of many of the postulates of child study. In part, this was due to the factual evidence indicating that child study had overemphasized the "irredeemable" nature of the individual once he had passed beyond the early years. In addition, empirical evidence suggested that even properly raised children were not immune from character-polluting influences later in life. Furthermore, despite its social implications, the body of child study work relied on simplistic biological analogies to society, now regarded as outmoded. Once accepted notions were now questioned, as child study was attacked for being overly determinist. William Byron Forbush, an early booster of child study who had worked with G. Stanley Hall, lampooned its ideas and methods as producing a false portrait of youth:

The psychological manikin whom Theophilus  
Innocentius, Ph.D., has conjured up on his

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<sup>46</sup>G. Stanley Hall, Adolescence, I (New York: D. Appleton, 1904), pp. xiii, 70-74.

wondrous charts from a questionnaire sent out to 14,329 parents and school teachers.<sup>47</sup>

G. Stanley Hall had himself come to have reservations about the child study movement, and expressed embarrassment at the rash claims of its more fanciful followers. In fact, such incidents caused him to turn to the study of adolescence in the first place.<sup>48</sup> The critical nature of the pre-adulthood period, however, had become generally recognized, such that it attracted the attention of all persons interested in ordering urban community life. In this way, while the methods and concepts of child study were questioned, the movement's assertion of the need to control and direct life was merely transplanted and extended beyond the early years. Most agreed with Hall that "our urbanized hot-house life, that tends to ripen everything before its time,"<sup>49</sup> was a bad influence on the young.

A number of arguments were used to prove that, while adolescence was inevitably a difficult period, the

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<sup>47</sup>William Byron Forbush, The Coming Generation (New York: D. Appleton, 1912), p. 6; see also Ellis W. Schuler, "The Passing of the Recapitulation Theory and Its Misapplication to Education," Educational Review, XLIV (September, 1912), pp. 191-96.

<sup>48</sup>Dorothy Ross, G. Stanley Hall: The Psychologist as Prophet (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 316-17.

<sup>49</sup>Hall, Adolescence, I, p. xi.

social life of the city unduly aggravated tensions. The city, especially its leisure patterns, allowed the growing awareness of life to flow into lawless, socially perverted channels. M. V. O'Shea, Professor of Education at the University of Wisconsin and a leading student of youth, said that, since consciousness in general derived from experience, social consciousness was essentially "a kind of theatre," in which peer groups, the public, and community tradition judged performance.<sup>50</sup> Where the standards of the judges were low, as was the case in the city, the performance was also. In addition, conflicts caused by the high degree of sociability in adolescence often led basically well-adjusted youths to commit criminal or antisocial acts. Jane Addams made the idea of misdirected sociability the theme of her book, The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets. Youth's lawlessness, she asserted, was only the "fine revenge" of the young on a society that had let innate desires for companionship be manipulated by the sleazy and degenerate entrepreneurs who turned them to ill ends. Adventure, a need for friendship, and a dislike for dull uniformity were expressed in socially disapproved forms of

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<sup>50</sup> M. V. O'Shea, Social Development and Education (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1909), pp. 10, 85.

recreation since alternatives were lacking. It was not surprising then, that most deviant careers began and established themselves in this "critical period," so as to be reversible only with the very greatest difficulty.<sup>51</sup>

Youth's mental conflict with society, often expressed in its recreation, had replaced the bio-social crisis of childhood as the age of peril. One practical offshoot of this was the establishment of departments of psychology with semi-official or structural ties to the juvenile court system. The most well-known of these was in Chicago, where the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute was established in 1909. Originally privately endowed, it was formally organized by Julia Lathrop of the U.S. Children's Bureau, and by 1914 officially associated with the juvenile court. The institute's executive committee included Jane Addams, Allen T. Burns, and Graham Taylor.<sup>52</sup> Under its director, William Healy, it conducted detailed case studies of juvenile offenders with the hope of discovering the causes of social deviance. The most notable of these was

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<sup>51</sup>Addams, Spirit of Youth and the City Streets, pp. 56-63; Edgar James Swift, Youth and the Race: A Study in the Psychology of Adolescence (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), pp. 148-53.

<sup>52</sup>William Healy, The Individual Delinquent (Boston: Little, Brown, 1915), pp. 809-10.

The Individual Delinquent, in which Healy asserted that numerous factors, not simply heredity, were responsible for adolescent behavioral problems. The youth was less a criminal type than a "product of forces," as Healy and his associates showed in their studies. Detailed accounts of family history and mental and moral influences indicated that bad companionship, improper recreation, and mental conflicts expressed in or deriving from a warped sexuality were almost always involved.<sup>53</sup> Since the adolescent, according to Healy, evinced the "greatest capacity for being influenced by environment and the strongest powers of reacting upon surroundings," it was not surprising that the "effective evil influence" spawning many criminal careers was the direct product of leisure or the desire for it.<sup>54</sup>

Healy, as mentioned, opposed the view that youthful crime derived from faulty breeding.<sup>55</sup> His studies showed

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 3, 17, 53-65.

<sup>54</sup>William Healy, "Community Conditions Influencing Conduct," in Madison Board of Commerce, Madison, "The Four Lake City" (Madison: Madison Board of Commerce, 1915), pp. 88-96. The presence of Healy's ideas in a "booster" publication is significant in showing how and where they were popularized.

<sup>55</sup>"Mind Tests Show Crime as Disease," Chicago Herald, June 19, 1914, clipping in Evelina Belden Paulson Mss., University of Illinois--Chicago Circle.

that most youthful offenders were of average intelligence, and he therefore deemphasized heredity as a causal force.<sup>56</sup> As in the case of the earlier debates on the heredity-environment issue, however, the points of contention often proved to be unclear. Healy argued that mental problems, especially an "anti-social grudge" were the major causes of deviance. Likewise, other environmentalists saw no conflict between their basic sympathies and the characterization of crime as mental defect, so long as the problem was depicted in the proper light. One study of adolescent and adult crime concluded that the offender "is no more to be blamed for his crime than is the mentally defective boy for his weakness." He therefore ought to be treated as "a sick man who must be returned to moral health."<sup>57</sup> Once again crime prevention was being shown as a matter involving the promotion of "mental efficiency," rather than changes in the social structure. The acceptance of the analogy of crime to disease made it possible to depict adolescence as

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<sup>56</sup>William Healy, "Psychiatric Work With Offenders for the Courts," N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1914, pp. 298-305.

<sup>57</sup>A. P. Drucker, On the Trial of the Juvenile-Adult Offender (Chicago: Juvenile Protection Association, 1912), pp. 35-38.



a period requiring a kind of quarantine from certain types of leisure.<sup>58</sup>

Social workers found the psychological approach useful in interpreting community problems. Stressing multiple causation and detailed fact-gathering, studies of adolescence lent themselves to a community approach to the solution of individual problems.<sup>59</sup> More and more, "deviance" became an entity judged by subjective standards in the community laboratory. "Social maladjustment" was the catch-all phrase used to describe problems, and the definition of the adjusted individual displayed the middle-class morality of the professional. As a result, continued control of adolescent behavior was urged, since the youth was constantly subjected to temptation "while the will is weak and the mind not yet intelligent."<sup>60</sup> The humane impulse of preventing city life from unduly rushing the aging process thus had the darker dimension of the maintenance of custody over the potentially "dangerous."

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<sup>58</sup> See Alexander H. Stewart, American Bad Boys in the Making (New York: Herman Dehner, 1912), p. 15.

<sup>59</sup> Lubove, The Professional Altruist, pp. 55, 64-67; William Healy, "The Bearings of Psychology on Social Case Work," National Conference of Social Work, Proceedings, 1917, pp. 104-12.

<sup>60</sup> See Edward T. Devine, Misery and Its Causes (New York: Macmillan, 1909), pp. 11-12, 49, 241-51; S. P. Breckenridge and E. Abbott, The Delinquent Child and the Home (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1912), pp. 129-30.

Studies of the amusements of adolescents served to emphasize their peril to youth, as well as the inadequacy of present municipal programs. As mentioned, Allen T. Burns' study of playgrounds and delinquency had proven useful to playground reformers, yet it had also shown that the effectiveness of playgrounds was limited to younger children.<sup>61</sup> Child study notions to the contrary, older youths did not spend their leisure on the athletic field exercising instincts of the tribal horde. Often out of school and working, they were influenced by worldly companions who introduced them to gambling, alcohol, and the cheap theater. Laboring youths or those working in street trades such as selling newspapers were particularly susceptible. Ignored or misunderstood at home, they turned to unsavory peers for models on which to build their developing social instincts.<sup>62</sup> Recognizing that adolescent crime continued despite the formation of the juvenile court, Chicago reformers in the Juvenile Welfare League, the

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<sup>61</sup>Allen T. Burns, "Relation of Playgrounds to Juvenile Delinquency," Playground Association of America, Proceedings, 1908, pp. 170-73.

<sup>62</sup>Myron E. Adams, "Children in American Street Trades," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, XXV (May, 1905), pp. 23-24; Ernest Poole, "Waifs of the Street," McClure's, XXI (May, 1903), pp. 40-44; Russell Sage Foundation, Boyhood and Lawlessness (New York: Survey Associates, 1914), pp. 15, 24-29, 60-65.



successor to the group that had campaigned for the 1899 juvenile court bill, formed the Juvenile Protective Association in 1906. The new group was to oppose "all that tends to rob children of the right to grow up in an atmosphere of purity and moral cleanliness."<sup>63</sup> The association divided the city into districts and sent investigators there to survey amusements and organize permanent regulatory committees. Other civic groups soon followed suit.

The investigators were astounded by the popularity of the "nickel" theater among youths. "Attracted by lurid advertisements and sensational posters," adolescents patronized degrading melodramas that romanticized crime, showed scenes of murder and robbery, and so inflamed their minds that they were, allegedly, motivated to duplicate what they had seen on stage. Selling schoolbooks or spending earnings to enter the theatre, youths would even steal to gain admittance. The City Club's investigation of theaters and penny arcades chronicled their bad influences. Acts that "ought not to be allowed on any stages" stimulated the mind and served as a "feeder to prostitution and

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<sup>63</sup>"Organization of the Juvenile Protective League" (1906), folio 10, Juvenile Protective Association Mss., University of Illinois--Chicago Circle; see also "Executive Committee Minutes," (March 10, 1906), folder 12, Juvenile Protective Association Mss., supplement I.

vice," and the subject matter tended "to appeal to the weak or vicious minded."<sup>64</sup> Since investigators estimated that 32,000 children attended daily, the problem was indeed enormous. As a result, Chicago's youth faced a future of immorality:

. . . by the time these boys are twelve or fifteen years old they are so saturated with "blood and thunder" and the commonest vulgarity that everything else seems tame and commonplace to them.<sup>65</sup>

There were other sordid attractions of commercialized leisure available to youth. Studies ranging from popular newspaper exposés to community recreation surveys showed that pool rooms, candy shops, and public beaches all offered socially perverse forms of entertainment.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, the adolescent read sensational accounts of crime in

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<sup>64</sup>Chicago City Club, Civic Committee Reports, 1906-7, pp. 124-29, Chicago City Club Mss., Chicago Historical Society; Maurice Williams, "The Nickel Theatre," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, XXXVIII (September, 1911), pp. 95-99; Louise DeKoven Bowen, Five and Ten Cent Theatres (Chicago: Juvenile Protective Association, 1909), pp. 2-3.

<sup>65</sup>Gertrude Palmer, "Earnings, Spending, and Savings of School Children," Commons, VIII (June, 1903), p. 9; Josiah Flynt, "The Pool-Room Vampire and Its Money-Mad Victims," Cosmopolitan, XLII (February, 1907), pp. 359-71.

<sup>66</sup>Columbus, Ohio, Central Philanthropic Council, Pool Room Survey (Columbus: Central Philanthropic Council, 1916), pp. 4-13; Juvenile Protective Association of Cincinnati, Recreation Survey of Cincinnati (Cincinnati: Juvenile Protective Association, 1917), pp. 26-29.

the newspapers and, affected by his natural thirst for adventure, desired to experience illicit forms of recreation. "The subtle power of suggestion" thereby played upon his mind in an unsavory manner. Especially vulnerable, according to one social worker, were working class youths, "owing to the lack of organization in their activity."<sup>67</sup>

Concern with the immoral tone of the city's leisure extended the "age of susceptibility" past the adolescent stage, however. The dangers of vice and alcohol became more visible in the progressive period and, as a result, the young working woman and the working man were seen to be in need of social custodianship. In the case of the former group, progressives noted the recent demographic changes in the city that removed supervising influences. Whereas an 1889 study showed that a high majority of working girls lived at home,<sup>68</sup> this was less often the case a generation later. Even when residency with her family was maintained, the working woman, particularly if her parents were immigrants, knew fewer restraints than had formerly been the case. This, plus the supposed independence that

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<sup>67</sup>See "Chicago Newspapers and Juvenile Crime--1913 Reports," Juvenile Protective Association Mss., University of Illinois--Chicago Circle.

<sup>68</sup>Carroll D. Wright, The Working Girls of Boston (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1889), pp. 20-21, 119-26.

came from earning a living, implied that recklessness would be exhibited. Therefore, when cities "discovered" the vice problem, social disorganization and the lack of proper familial relationships in the city environment, rather than economic dislocations, were considered primary causes.

To be sure, the vice exposé was not a new phenomena. As recently as 1894, the English journalist William T. Stead had documented in detail Chicago's immoralities, causing an uproar that contributed to the founding of the Chicago Civic Federation by the city's elite. However, Stead's investigation had not been a detailed survey, and it did not discuss to any great extent the underlying causes of vice.<sup>69</sup> In the progressive period, however, there was less interest in maintaining a silence about the causes of immorality, since it had been proven that this taboo did not halt its growth.<sup>70</sup>

Progressive investigators stressed the peril of the premature adulthood that industrial society had forced

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<sup>69</sup>William T. Stead, If Christ Came to Chicago! (Chicago: Laird and Lee, 1894), pp. 35, 251-52.

<sup>70</sup>See John C. Burnham, "The Progressive Era Revolution in American Attitudes Toward Sex," Journal of American History, LIX (March, 1973), pp. 885-901.

upon the working girl, thus paralleling the argument used in studying problems of child life and adolescence. Living in dingy boarding houses or under crowded conditions at home, she had little to look forward to. Factory work was "deadly, monotonous, and starves the imagination," and department store work likewise offered long hours at a meager salary.<sup>71</sup> Parental guidance was merely "a smattering of conventional morality" likely to be ignored. Jane Addams noted that the immigrant mother had special difficulties in this regard, as the city made it impossible to maintain "the old notion of care and guardianship" known in the old country.<sup>72</sup>

The desire of the working girl for a better material existence was in direct conflict with the "commonplace and sordid" city. A resident of New York's University Settlement pointed out that the girl earning two or three dollars a week could not help but compare her lot to the seemingly

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<sup>71</sup>Louise DeKoven Bowen, The Department-Store Girl (Chicago: Juvenile Protective Association, 1911), p. 9; The travails of the working girl became a significant theme in popular writings at this time. See, for example, Edith S. Browning, "Bertha, the Sewing Machine Girl," Chicago Tribune, June 23, 1907, sec. 2, p. 6; this series was advertised as "the Great Domestic Melo-Drama."

<sup>72</sup>Jane Addams, "The Girl Problem, Its Community Aspect," (1914), Jane Addams-Writings, Hull House, University of Illinois--Chicago Circle.



glamorous life of the prostitute.<sup>73</sup> Young women working as chambermaids in hotels, who could "hardly stand" after a day's work, suffered "mental agony" which ultimately led to moral collapse.<sup>74</sup> Theories of "innate depravity" were dismissed by progressives as irrelevant. Julian Mack, the well-known justice of Chicago's juvenile court pointed out that working girls who returned to "dark corners" of drab rooms, were, like the daughters of respectable families, possessed of a "never-to-be-stilled cry for happiness."<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, both their working conditions and their amusements offered "no inducement to be moral, but rather the contrary." Those who remained "straight," often lived alone in "bitter drudgery, with no pleasure at all."<sup>76</sup>

The public study of vice was a phenomenon of the progressive period. Undertaken by publicly-appointed

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<sup>73</sup> James B. Reynolds, "Prostitution as a Tenement House Evil," in Robert DeForest and Lawrence Veillen, The Tenement House Problem, II (New York: Macmillan, 1903), pp. 16-27.

<sup>74</sup> See "Summary of the Reports on Hotels," Juvenile Protective Association Mss., University of Illinois--Chicago Circle; Louise DeKoven Bowen, "How to Prevent Delinquency" (1912), folio 229, Hull House Association Mss., University of Illinois--Chicago Circle.

<sup>75</sup> Julian Mack, "The Day of the Child," in Chicago Child Welfare Exhibit, The Child in the City (Chicago: Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, 1912), pp. 6-10.

<sup>76</sup> Louise DeKoven Bowen, The Straight Girl on the Crooked Path: A True Story (Chicago: Juvenile Protective Association, 1916), pp. 3-8.

committees, or the quasi-public bodies of "civic leaders," investigations placed vice in the context of that social disarray and inefficiency deemed the city's underlying weaknesses. Vice crusaders considered their work a needed antidote to the "scare literature" on the subject that had made the "white slave" theme common in newspapers, magazines, and the popular theater. Portrayed as a conspiracy, the white slave evil involved kidnapping, drugging, and other lurid experiences.<sup>77</sup> Vice investigators however, tended to de-emphasize the conspiratorial view in favor of an examination of the socio-economic problems involved. Chicago's vice investigation was typical. The Vice Commission declared that vice had become one of the city's largest commercial ventures, an adjunct to the liquor trade.<sup>78</sup> Recruitment was not difficult, as young working girls were susceptible to the flattery of the procurer. The Chicago commission, as well as those in other cities, stated that no evidence of a conspiracy existed, but that the vice traffic operated in a decentralized manner. The "Committee

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<sup>77</sup> M. Madeline Southard, The White Slave Traffic Versus the American Home (Louisville: Pentacostal Press, 1914), pp. 11-12; Clifford G. Roe, Panders and Their White Slaves (New York: F. H. Revell, 1910), pp. 11-18.

<sup>78</sup> Chicago Vice Commission, The Social Evil in Chicago (Chicago: Chicago Vice Commission, 1911), pp. 25-43.

of Fifteen," examining vice in New York, blamed the environment of the poor for spawning the problem. A girl from a poor home, "without training, mental or moral" was consistently "ignorant and disagreeable, slovenly and uncouth, good for nothing in the social and economic organism." As a result, she disintegrated "to a point where she is indistinguishable from the congenital pervert."<sup>79</sup> Social workers were more charitable than this, but likewise failed to comprehend the basic pressures on the working girl.<sup>80</sup>

Having agreed that the "cold, calculating spirit" of the vice entrepreneur, coupled with the "loss of freedom of will and action" were the major causes of vice,<sup>81</sup> studies always considered the role of leisure in aggravating the difficulty. Feeling the "thrill of the primordial urge," young people sought companionship and recreation, and often

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 185-87, 245-46; George Kibbe Turner, "The Daughters of the Poor," McClure's, XXXIV (November, 1909), pp. 45-61; Committee of Fifteen, The Social Evil: With Special Reference to Conditions Existing in the City of New York (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902), pp. 10-11.

<sup>80</sup> See Lillian Wald, The House on Henry Street (New York: Henry Holt, 1915), pp. 172-73.

<sup>81</sup> George J. Kneeland, Commercialized Prostitution in New York City (New York: Century, 1913), pp. 5-12.

found it in dance halls and saloons, since the city offered "negligible quantities" of wholesome amusements.<sup>82</sup> Investigator's reports of dance halls and saloons contained stories of suggestive dancing and heavy drinking, all encouraged by the proprietor.<sup>83</sup> One of them noted:

. . . an immoral atmosphere accompanied by a tense undertone which one unconsciously feels to permeate the familiarities indulged in.<sup>84</sup>

Alcohol, in particular, led to entrapment. The Juvenile Protective Association reported that most cases of girls "gone wrong" began in the liquor-drenched atmosphere of the dance hall. Peer group pressure and the desire to escape the day's toil led to drinking, from which "the disreputable lodging house is only a very short step."<sup>85</sup> A New York report called the dance hall a "free for all."

<sup>82</sup>See "Conference on Girls' Club Work" (March 30, 1910), Chicago Commons Mss., Newberry Library, Chicago; Ruth S. True, The Neglected Girl (New York: Survey Associates, 1912), pp. 57-59.

<sup>83</sup>Kneeland, Commercialized Prostitution in New York City, pp. 56-57; Juvenile Protective Association, Report, 1909-10 (Chicago: Juvenile Protective Association, 1910), pp. 3-11.

<sup>84</sup>"Dance Halls on North Clark Street" (1913?), Evelina Belden Paulson Mss., University of Illinois--Chicago Circle.

<sup>85</sup>Louise DeKoven Bowen, "Dance Halls," Survey, XXVI (June 3, 1911), pp. 383-87; Juvenile Protective Association, Minutes (May 26, 1911), folder 22, Juvenile Association Mss., supplement I.

The dance, with "all sorts of contortions," added to the pressures from one's companions to turn natural impulses into degrading channels.<sup>86</sup> Jane Addams felt this to be a special tragedy, since the desire for entertainment and amusement was basically innocent, yet irredeemably perverted by commercial exploitation. Therefore, society shared with the individual the blame for vice, as it had left amusement to "laissez-faire," the ultimate consequences of which were visible in the reports and files of vice committees.<sup>87</sup>

The critique of the saloon paralleled and overlapped that of the dance hall, but it was mainly concerned with workingmen's recreation. Studies noted that an unduly high percentage of their incomes were spent on tobacco and drink, the most dissipating forms of recreation encouraged in the saloon.<sup>88</sup> One study of Boston's saloons

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<sup>86</sup> "Investigator's Report," (December 28, 1913), Committee of Fourteen Mss., New York Public Library; see also Affidavits, Box 11, Committee of Fifteen Mss., New York Public Library.

<sup>87</sup> Addams, The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets, pp. 6-15, 51-60; Maude Miner, Slavery of Prostitution: A Plea for Emancipation (New York: Macmillan, 1916), pp. 79-81.

<sup>88</sup> Richard Colt Chapin, The Standard of Living Among Workingmen's Families in New York City (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1909), p. 49.

estimated that half of the city's workingmen patronized them each day, spending many millions of dollars annually on unhealthy amusements. Similarly, the detailed social surveys that were common in the progressive period, showed that the saloon often was the lone form of after-work recreation for the adult male.<sup>89</sup> Progressives therefore saw the saloon as a wholly parasitical institution, causing familial disintegration and neighborhood decline, not to mention crime and prostitution.

Unfortunately, the social surveys conceded that the saloon also served a legitimate social function, satisfying basic instincts of gregariousness and fellowship sought after the long work day. In the summer of 1898, William B. Harrison, a graduate fellow at the University of Michigan, studied Chicago's working-class saloons. Harrison concluded that, far from going to the saloon to get drunk, the "investigation shows this to be the least potent factor in the life of the saloon." Rather, it served as a place of "fulfillment of a demand for social intercourse" that had been intensified by the monotony of

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<sup>89</sup>Charles Stelzle, "How One Thousand Workingmen Spend Their Spare Time," Outlook, CVI (April 4, 1914), p. 76; M. F. Byington, Homestead: The Households of a Mill-Town (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910), pp. 27-30.

the factory. No other institution, said Harrison, gave workingmen an opportunity to meet friends and discuss topics of interest.<sup>90</sup> Saloon life, then, was a subculture of its own, one which served as the "social center" of the neighborhood:

It is the center of learning, books, papers, and lecture hall . . . the clearing house for their common intelligence, the place where their philosophy of life is marked out and from which their political and social beliefs take their beginning.<sup>91</sup>

The saloon emerged in progressive writings as a sort of "poor man's club," analagous to the finer meeting places of the middle and upper classes. It also served as a substitute for the ideal socializing functions of the home, which had atrophied in the city. Just as the rest of his family suffered from cramped quarters, so did the workingman. He was scarcely to blame, therefore, for turning to the saloon.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, progressives regarded the

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<sup>90</sup>William B. Harrison, "The Social Function of the Saloon," General File (1895-1913), Chicago Commons Mss., Newberry Library, Chicago.

<sup>91</sup>E. C. Moore, "The Social Value of the Saloon," American Journal of Sociology, III (July, 1897), pp. 1-2; Allen T. Burns, "Labor at Leisure--Sketch at First Hand," Commons, IX (April, 1904), pp. 100-113.

<sup>92</sup>James Forbes, "The Reverse Side," in Paul U. Kellogg, ed., Wage-Earning Pittsburgh (New York: Survey Associates, 1914), pp. 307-91.

saloon's variety of sociability as dangerous, morally and otherwise. They felt that saloons helped to maintain the political machine, since the neighborhood tavern brought "the raw political material of the district to the foci of party organization." Capitalizing on the patron's desire for friendship was thereby made easier for the politico who, it as noted, often owned the saloon itself. Meeting rooms for local clubs were rented by the saloonkeeper, giving the ward boss additional opportunities to spread pernicious influences.<sup>93</sup> Harrison's study of Chicago's saloons reported that vote-buying via alcohol was common. Befriended by the glad-handed politician, workingmen were "willing to sell their highest privilege for a pittance."<sup>94</sup> The middle-class reformer thereby found it possible to show that the workingman, like the shopgirl, adolescent, and child was in danger of becoming socially "inefficient" unless guided in his leisure pursuits.

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<sup>93</sup> Davis, The Exploitation of Pleasure, pp. 48-50; V. Barie, "The Public Dance Halls of the Lower East Side," in University Settlement Society, Fifteenth Annual Report, 1901 (New York: University Settlement Society, 1902), p. 33; James H. Timberlake, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement 1900-1920 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 146-56.

<sup>94</sup> See Harrison, "The Social Function of the Saloon."



Leisure was now incorporated into the progressive program to make society predictable in its conduct and manageable in its affairs. An unplanned and unregulated society, in both its physical and intellectual dimensions, appeared to progressives as "an evil which is gnawing at the vitals of this country."<sup>95</sup> The solution, they realized, was not the indiscriminate repression of popular amusements, a lesson drawn from the experiences of the early playground movement. It involved, rather, the supervision of the populace by agencies offering satisfying and socially "safe" forms of leisure. These institutions, to be effective, would have to be municipally sponsored. This was one of the major themes of Walter Lippmann's A Preface to Politics, in which Lippmann had criticized Jane Addams and the Chicago Vice Commission for favoring an unrealistic program of repression as the solution to the vice problem. Miss Addams, he said, "had put her faith in the district attorney," a self-defeating endeavor. Since the commission conceded that the cravings satisfied by the saloon and dance hall were natural and would always be pursued, the remedy to the problem lay in redirection, not prohibition. This involved,

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<sup>95</sup> See Henry Morgenthau, "A National Constructive Programme for City Planning," National Conference on City Planning, Proceedings, 1909, pp. 59-60.

said Lippmann, "supplying our passions with civilized interests."<sup>96</sup> Lippmann's references to the Freudian concept of sublimation only showed that he and other progressives had adapted psychoanalytic concepts to the progressive ideals of civic consciousness and service that had been developed from a variety of sources.<sup>97</sup>

The organic view of society, which heretofore had led to the demand for society to assume a custodial role in childhood, now called for the lifetime maintenance of this relationship. Control of adolescent and adult leisure was now seen necessary for social efficiency. This constituted an elaboration on the definition of social problems in terms of deficiencies in the familial arena. Since most studies pointed, however vaguely, to the social and economic arrangements persisting in the city as stimuli to dissipating pleasures, and since no special reordering of these arrangements was contemplated, the removal of the problem to the leisure sector placed the onus on the city

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<sup>96</sup> Walter Lippmann, A Preface to Politics (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), pp. 42, 99-106.

<sup>97</sup> See Ward Cromer and Paula Adams, "Freud's Visit to America: Newspaper Coverage," Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences, VI (October, 1970), pp. 349-51; Edward A. Ross, "Adult Recreation as a Social Problem," American Journal of Sociology, XXIII (January, 1918), pp. 516-18.

resident, both child and adult. Considered "socially weak," he would require guidance toward a pattern of consensus-oriented behavior. The progressive faith in environmental manipulation led both to this desire to leave little in social life to chance and to a faith that relationships could be so ordered. This extension of the dimension of social control constituted the "mastery" of which Lippmann spoke, in the sense that "the substitution of conscious intention for unconscious striving"<sup>98</sup> would lead to the social integration demanded by both the Taylorite and the social worker. Constructive leisure then, had evolved from a concept concerned with keeping children out of mischief to an ambitious desire to order the sociability of all.

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<sup>98</sup>Walter Lippmann, Drift and Mastery (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1961), p. 148; Charles Horton Cooley, Social Process (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), pp. 127-28.

## CHAPTER VI

### RECREATION AS CIVICS: THE SOCIAL CENTER MOVEMENT

American City, the magazine of the progressive-oriented American Civic Association, noted in a 1915 editorial that the "leisure problem . . . is crowding the labor problem for a place in the sun."<sup>1</sup> It was not coincidental that these "problems" were being mentioned together, since most urban progressives believed that crime and maladjustment were caused by structural weaknesses in working class homes and communities. Likewise, education for leisure was now regarded as necessary for adults as well as children. John Richards, a superintendent in the South Park District of Chicago, argued that recreation was not to be defined merely in terms of sports and games.<sup>2</sup> This sector was "perhaps not the most important part" of the city's program, but was secondary

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<sup>1</sup>"Municipal Recreation for All the People," American City, XIII (December, 1915), p. 467.

<sup>2</sup>See J. R. Richards, "The Aim and Scope of the Recreation Movement," Playground, X (January, 1917), pp. 377-81.

to the purpose of meeting overall community needs.<sup>3</sup> During the progressive period, particularly after 1909, this was reflected in the trend toward comprehensive recreation programs encompassing the entire family. These endeavors were closely connected to the ends of civic education and what was euphemistically called "social efficiency."

This desire to invest society with a custodial role meant an indefinite lengthening of the growth process, formerly attended to only in childhood and adolescence.<sup>4</sup> In a sense, it was also a recognition that the usurpation of familial functions of child-rearing by progressive education and peripheral programs had, ironically, increased social instability by accentuating the differences between parent and child. In the recreative phase, this was to be combated by a total community program, organized around the neighborhood, one which would allow for the "finer enjoyment of recognized diversity," yet ultimately show "the unity underneath all our differences," according

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<sup>3</sup>South Park Commissioners, Annual Report, 1913, pp. 68-75.

<sup>4</sup>See M. V. O'Shea, Social Development and Education (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1909), p. 338. For some historical antecedents of this idea see Phillippe Aries, Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of the Family, trans. by Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage, 1965), pp. 88-89, 171-73, 261-64.

to a community organizer.<sup>5</sup> This did not indicate a sudden progressivist affection for the nuclear family. The old distrust remained in force. Jane Addams argued that, while the family was the basic social unit, it needed renewing each generation.

. . . and the forces upon which its formation depend must be powerful and unerring. It would be too great a risk to leave it to a force whose manifest actions are intermittent and uncertain. The desired result is too grave and fundamental.<sup>6</sup>

Society's assumption of custodial duties was therefore a necessity, given the complex functions of modern parenthood and citizenship. Indeed, many community workers argued that the home was "hopelessly inefficient," and had "largely disintegrated as a spiritual and ethical agency."<sup>7</sup> Actual breaking-up of the family structure was, of course, inconceivable. Rather, "community experts" could direct the family in ways that would insure a constructive community life. Eventually, the community would

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<sup>5</sup> Mary P. Follett, The New State (New York: Longman's Green, 1918), pp. 199-201.

<sup>6</sup> Jane Addams, "Why Girls Go Wrong," Ladies' Home Journal, XXIV (September, 1907), p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> See Juvenile Protective Association (Chicago), Report 1918-19 (Chicago: Juvenile Protective Association, 1919), p. 11; Arthur W. Calhoun, A Social History of the American Family From Colonial Times to the Present: Volume III. Since the Civil War (Cleveland: A. H. Clark, 1918), pp. 172-76.

draw "the individual into its own current, and evoke his higher possibilities," according to Charles Cooley.<sup>8</sup> This sort of "directed" family, progressives assumed, would strengthen social bonds rather than cause them to atrophy.<sup>9</sup> As Cooley had observed, the changeability of human nature was closely linked to "the character of social organization," which, he felt, determined the varieties of action one could choose.<sup>10</sup>

The progressive concept of social organization was thus one-sided, involving the supervision of those less fit, owing to environment, by a "social physician." The self-consciously "scientific orientation of social work stressed "intelligent" organization, especially in the leisure sector.<sup>11</sup> Rightly managed leisure, said Frederic C. Howe, would result in "increasing the industrial, civic, and social efficiency of men and women," thus encouraging their adaptation to the exigencies of modern civilization.

<sup>8</sup>Cooley, Social Process, p. 177.

<sup>9</sup>See Ellen H. Richards, Euthenics: The Science of Controllable Environment (Boston: Whitcomb and Barrows, 1912), pp. 74-81, passim.

<sup>10</sup>See Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), pp. 32-33, 75.

<sup>11</sup>Charles A. Ellwood, "Social Facts and Social Work," Survey, XL (June 8, 1918), pp. 287-89.

John Collier, an important advocate of community organization in New York, argued that "work as a social bond had simply been destroyed," and that leisure had become a binding force of far greater significance. Adjusting the maladjusted, said Collier, could be effected through the organization of leisure, which had the psychological effect of "aggrandizing the individual's conception of himself in a direction which is socially practicable."<sup>12</sup> This provided an antidote to Edward A. Ross' "agitated herd," often the result of the degrading forms of leisure found in the city that corrupted even the basically stable citizen.<sup>13</sup>

Planning and organization of the city along lines of efficient management indicated a desire to condition the populace to new patterns of living of a consumptive rather than a productive orientation. Simon N. Patten, the progressive economist, described this developing outlook and outlined its social implications. As early as the nineties he perceived a coming age of transition from an economy of

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<sup>12</sup> John Collier, Lecture Delivered by Mr. John Collier at the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Recreation Rooms and Settlements, New York City (January 23, 1917), typescript in New York Public Library; Collier, The Community Center in Social Education (1916), pamphlet in New York Public Library.

<sup>13</sup> See Edward A. Ross, "The Mob Mind," Popular Science Monthly, LI (July, 1897), p. 390.



scarcity to one of abundance.<sup>14</sup> Increased leisure was an important consequence of this development. Patten warned, however, that leisure required regulation to prevent the gluttony and dissipation that could arise from plenty. In this sense, the community organizer assumed a special function. Addressing the School of Philanthropy of the Charity Organization Society of New York in 1905, he asked social workers to aid in conditioning the city resident to the coming economic transformation. They could best do this, said Patten, by exploiting the "social heredity" of the populace in accordance with environmentalist-based psychological concepts. Admittedly, said Patten, city leisure patterns were at present pernicious, but mere "back to nature" programs were primitivist and reactionary.<sup>15</sup> Rather, good habits of leisure laid the groundwork for the consumption-oriented economy and united the whole community as one classless entity. The proliferation of ideals and institutions, he said, would cause a state whereby "their united effect would be strong enough to determine the

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<sup>14</sup>Daniel M. Fox, The Discovery of Abundance: Simon N. Patten and the Transformation of Social Theory (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 45, 100-01.

<sup>15</sup>Simon N. Patten, The New Basis of Civilization (New York: Macmillan, 1905), pp. 9-10, 32, 204-06.

choice of individuals and make their conduct conform to the interest of the race."<sup>16</sup>

Patten's views gave the sanction of the economic theorist to the linkage between leisure and citizenship that social service progressives were stressing. This new connection between leisure and ethics underlined John Collier's aforementioned contention that society had failed to train its members for the right use of leisure even though leisure was becoming a dominant motif in urbanized society, one which society would begin to look to for the maintenance of an organic community structure. What workers needed, said one observer, were "resources upon which they can draw when the outside ends have been accomplished."<sup>17</sup> For this to be effected, according to Frederic C. Howe, it was necessary to "wrest leisure from commerce" and to promote the neighborly instincts of good citizenship by integrating the family unit in the leisure realm.<sup>18</sup> This followed the popular progressive belief that the right

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<sup>16</sup>Patten, "The Relation of Sociology to Psychology," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, VIII (November, 1896), pp. 433-60.

<sup>17</sup>William Jewett Tucker, "The New Reservation of Time," Atlantic, CVI (August, 1910), pp. 190-97.

<sup>18</sup>Frederick C. Howe, "Leisure," Survey, XXXI (January 3, 1914), pp. 415-16.

course was to "substitute," not "annihilate" in the re-creative sector.<sup>19</sup> Michael M. Davis, who studied patterns of recreation in New York City for the Russell Sage Foundation, noted that most reformers now agreed that "counteractive effect can best be gained through counter-attraction rather than through the old blue-law policy of repression,"<sup>20</sup> while Mary K. Simkhovitch argued that wholesome recreation for the city worker was a necessity "if indeed we properly understand social-utility."<sup>21</sup>

The idea that basic human drives might be harnessed to the ends of social service and community efficiency via the rationalization of leisure activities was basic to this progressive faith. Richard T. Ely and Josiah Strong, among others, regarded the "law of service" as the basic underpinning of social relations, and Ely saw the service ethic as illustrating "the oneness of human interests."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>See Graham Taylor, "City Neighbors at Play," Survey, XXIV (July 2, 1910), pp. 548-59; Charles Stelzle, Christianity's Storm Centre (New York: F. H. Revell, 1907), pp. 123-27.

<sup>20</sup>Michael M. Davis, The Exploitation of Pleasure: A Study of Commercial Recreations in New York City (New York: Russell Sage Foundation pamphlet no. 84, 1911), pp. 5-6.

<sup>21</sup>Mary K. Simkhovitch, The City Worker's World in America (New York: Macmillan, 1917), p. 134.

<sup>22</sup>Josiah Strong, The Challenge of the City (New York: Eaton and Means, 1907), p. 175.

Social gospel-oriented clergymen agreed, seeing a relaxation of rigid attitudes toward leisure as a means of restoring their influence on parishioners.<sup>23</sup> On a more secular level, "service" was championed in the name of public-spiritedness. Edward A. Ross talked of training citizens with "spunk" for social service while the Jamesian concept of a "moral equivalent" of war became a rallying point for progressivism in general.<sup>24</sup> In its most immediate area of application, that of social work, "service" served as an antidote to social disorder by synthesizing impulses into "constructive" channels of action. The field's professionalization, said one of its leaders, "makes us cautious and careful, slow to jump at conclusions, and conservative in the application of remedies." Fields of action encouraged within the discipline were those which improved an individual so as to "adapt him to the social conditions about him."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order (New York: Macmillan, 1912), pp. 431, 442.

<sup>24</sup> Edward A. Ross, "Training Citizens With 'Spunk' For Social Service," Survey, XXIV (August 29, 1914), p. 547; William James, "The Moral Equivalent of War," Popular Science Monthly, LXXVII (October, 1910), pp. 82-90.

<sup>25</sup> George B. Mangold, "Curriculums of Schools of Social Service," in N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1915, pp. 612-15.

The desire for a means to "adapt" city residents naturally complemented the sociological critique of the urban neighborhood, and enabled the city's business and professional classes to superimpose their own worries about the lack of order in the city atop reform rhetoric. The Chicago City Club noted a "growing feeling that our cities are today suffering grave harm from the lack of neighborhood organization and action" in both the social and commercial spheres.<sup>26</sup> Actually, a certain degree of spontaneous organization of social life existed in the city, in the form of private social clubs, ethnic associations, and lodges. However, neither the businessman nor the social worker regarded these with confidence. A study of Boston's working class districts by Robert A. Woods lamented the "spirit of lawlessness" in those areas, and suggested that existing social institutions needed an outside coordinating agency to provide "wide, understanding oversight" so that "their potential power might be directed along definitely constructive lines."<sup>27</sup> This prevented

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<sup>26</sup>Chicago City Club, "Program of a Competition for Plans for a Neighborhood Center" (1914), folder in Graham Taylor Mss., Newberry Library, Chicago.

<sup>27</sup>Robert A. Woods and A. J. Kennedy, The Zone of Emergence: Observations of the Lower Middle and Upper Working Classes of Boston (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1969), pp. 54, 134.

a lapse into the unsavory variety of local solidarity represented by the saloon, which was regarded as "narrow, clannish, or partisan."<sup>28</sup>

The leisure problem and its remedies were discussed by Simon Patten in his 1909 volume Product and Climax. Using a semi-allegorical format, Patten described a visit to a small, "typical" American city. The nighttime visitor was struck by the contrasts on the city's main street, one side of which was bright, the other dark:

. . . and what lurked on the forbidden side of the street, where the occasional white flare of a street lamp fell upon closed windows, locked gates, shut doors, and broad stretches of turf on which nobody walked? I crossed from the bright side to the dark side, and there, interspersed with comfortable homes, stretched in dull array the very institutions of civilization itself!<sup>29</sup>

The "institutions of civilization" of course, were the public school and library, both closed at night and for most of the summer as well, the very periods when their service was most required. As a result, the "bright side" of the street was the side with cheap theaters, saloons, and similar ventures catering to the people's leisure needs.

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<sup>28</sup>See note 26.

<sup>29</sup>Patten, Product and Climax (New York: B. Huebsch, 1909), pp. 12-13.

Reversing the desire for leisure counterbalanced economic development, as Patten had previously pointed out. Work in modern society had lost much of its meaningfulness and what Patten called "climax," meaning collective satisfaction, would be gained through artificial means if necessary. Obviously, an indictment of the city's communal life was in order. Leisure, historically a period of revitalization for work and service, was now being turned to purely dissipating ends only because "the conserving moral agencies of a respectable town have their shutters down and nobody needs their wares."<sup>30</sup> By linking his theory of amusement with his perception of a consumption-oriented future, however, Patten was able to proffer an optimistic viewpoint. Leisure could indeed be an uplifting force, serving as a force for civic education analagous to the didactic role of nature in the life of early man. Properly organized, it might lead to a "new interpretation of life" through the satisfaction of instincts in collective forms, and thereby promote the desired end of the "cooperative" society.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 18, 52, 67-68.

While some precedents for public action in the field of adolescent and adult leisure existed, they were not oriented towards the development of community consciousness, but retained a static definition of leisure and failed to provide familial guidance. In the early nineties Henry M. Leipziger, a New York school superintendent, began a program of adult education via a system of free extension lectures in the schools of congested districts. He hoped to make the school into a "municipal meeting house" that would assume "some of the character of a real social settlement."<sup>32</sup> Highly popular, the free lecture system offered both an alternative to the saloon-dance hall variety of recreation and an opportunity for the immigrant to receive "citizenship education." Leisure time activities such as these, said Leipziger, would help to "standardize the various elements of our constantly inflowing population."<sup>33</sup> Through "a means of acquaintanceship which will ripen into companionship," he said, acrimony decreased and community feeling developed. Nevertheless, the system offered only

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<sup>32</sup>See Henry M. Leipziger, "Extracts from Addresses of the Lecturer's Annual Reunions Regarding Wider Use of the Schools," (1907-10), Henry M. Leipziger Mss., New York Public Library.

<sup>33</sup>Henry M. Leipziger, "The City and Civilization," (n.d.), Writings-Lectures Folio, Leipziger Mss.



a narrow alternative to commercial recreation that could not possibly expect to attract significant numbers of persons away from dissipating pursuits. Furthermore, it did not attend to the breach between family members that developed in the city. School children were excluded from attendance at the lectures, ostensibly because school extension was designed to benefit those who could not participate in a normal school program. Yet this fact only showed how modest the effort was, confirming that it was not the sort of community-wide venture recommended by sociologists.

The most important new development in the progressive recreation movement did not originate in a major city but in the medium-sized municipality of Rochester, New York. Though not afflicted with urban social problems on a scale comparable to New York or Chicago, Rochester experienced changes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that significantly affected the city's social organization. The city grew rapidly in the nineties, and by 1900 almost one-third of its residents were foreign-born and over half of its children the offspring of foreigners.<sup>34</sup> Rochester

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<sup>34</sup>Blake McKelvey, "The Lure of the City: Rochester in the 1890s," Rochester History, XXVIII (October, 1966), pp. 7-8.

thus suffered from dislocations prompted by these changes and the rapid growth of manufacturing. Sweatshop conditions and a large, economically depressed class led to an alarmingly high rate of crime among both foreign and native-born groups. By the early 1900s reports of prostitution, juvenile delinquency, and saloon debauchery were regularly reported in the city's newspapers, worrying its ambitious business community.<sup>35</sup> Rochester's civic leadership however, made it a casebook of urban progressivism. It was the home of Walter Rauschenbusch, the "Christians Socialist" theologian, who popularized the public-service ethic as effectively as any progressive, and it also had a strong, organized business community that exhibited a reformist tinge. Businessman-progressives controlled the city's government through a succession of mayors such as James G. Cutler, a wealthy mail-chute manufacturer and former president of the city's Chamber of Commerce. They were, however, generally congenial in their relations with the local Republican boss and were to graphically demonstrate that the service ethic was quite compatible with business-oriented government.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See Rochester Union-Advertiser, February 14, 1907, p. 8; February 15, 1907, p. 9; February 20, 1907, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> McKelvey, Rochester: The Quest for Quality, 1890-1905 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 91-92.

Rochester's progressives quickly accepted the validity of public recreation as a cause fusing the interests of the city's various ethnic groups and economic divisions. By 1905 the city had a playground movement, as well as many ethnic and occupational oriented social clubs and a labor lyceum group.<sup>37</sup> These were, however, regarded as divisive rather than unifying forces, lacking an orientation toward the "common good" of Rochester. These disparate forces were motivated to unify in the name of civic spirit by Edward J. Ward, a local educator who had once been a ministerial student of Rauschenbusch. On February 15, 1907 Ward organized a meeting of delegates from eleven civic groups at the Rochester Chamber of Commerce. These included, among others, the Social Settlement Association, the Central Trades and Labor Council, and the Children's Playground League, as well as representatives of businessman's associations. Ward impressed upon them the necessity for central meeting places for community affairs to replace the saloon and the street, ones which would promote both recreation of the social variety and leisure time civics education. The most suitable places, obviously, were the city's schools, which

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<sup>37</sup> McKelvey, "Walter Rauschenbusch's Rochester," Rochester History, XIV (October, 1952), pp. 5-12.

were unused during evenings, weekends and summers and had proper facilities already. The group resolved that the school board be asked to open Rochester's schools for use as evening "social centers," and the board accepted the proposal, ordering work to begin in the fall of 1907 and providing funds for such purposes.<sup>38</sup> In justifying its action, the board asserted that "the community as a whole should make provision for its fundamental social needs" and that the "social instinct" of its people ought not to be satisfied in "haphazard" ways.<sup>39</sup> Graphic illustration of the board's motives was given at the first social center's opening ceremony, when its president stated that organized leisure was the only alternative to "the harvest of crime, insanity, and moral degeneration and shipwreck which is so terrible a characteristic of existing society."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> League of Civic Clubs, Rochester Social Centers and Civic Clubs: The Story of the First Two Years (Rochester: League of Civic Clubs, 1909), pp. 7-9; Rochester Board of Education, Proceedings of 1907 (Rochester: Board of Education, 1908), p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Rochester Board of Education, Proceedings of 1907, pp. 82-83.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in League of Civic Clubs, Rochester Social Centers and Civic Clubs, pp. 23-24.

The most persuasive case for the social centers was made by their appointed supervisor, Edward J. Ward. By placing them in the mainstream of urban progressive ideals of an orderly, regulated community, he both expanded the definition of "recreation" as such, and attracted national attention. Ward argued that both social unrest and political corruption were "primarily" problems of recreation, in that the saloons, prostitution, and gambling all contributed to the undermining of public morale and the consequent maintenance of boss rule.<sup>41</sup> Improper recreation split both family and community into private, parochial groups whose concerns were selfish and narrow. Existing social clubs, informal saloon contacts, adolescent and young men's gangs, and political parties were examples of such associations. As a result, according to Ward, the fragmented community visualized government as a distant, abstract entity beyond its control and related to it in an unhealthy atmosphere of "filial subordination."<sup>42</sup>

Like contemporary sociologists, Ward looked to community organization as a remedying force, and like them

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<sup>41</sup>Edward J. Ward, "The Rochester Social Centers," in Playground Association of America, Proceedings, 1909, pp. 387-96.

<sup>42</sup>Ward, The Social Center (New York: D. Appleton, 1913), pp. 3-4, 71-74.

he evoked memories of smaller, intimate, and allegedly more democratic societies in promoting his program. Ward's illustrations, however, were more popular and nostalgic than those of the academics. He argued that social centers duplicated the old, direct, New England style of democracy which itself had been dependent upon the social use of the "little red schoolhouse" back home. In the schoolhouse, the "artificial" distinctions of caste and class had disappeared through socialization as all were "just folks" "meeting on common ground and in the common interest."<sup>43</sup> Ward frequently related the story of the city banker who recalled the rural schoolhouse "lyceum" of his youth wherein "a man-to-man frankness and democracy . . . made America mean something to us young fellows." Unfortunately, this "human spirit" had faded in the city, where one did not "get that feel of being a citizen."<sup>44</sup> Ward noted that many who had never experienced neighborly schoolhouse gatherings seemed to "remember" them nonetheless, indicating a sort of common memory of a world other

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<sup>43</sup>Ward, "Public Recreation," in N.C.C.C., Proceedings, 1909, pp. 180-81; "The Little Red Schoolhouse," Survey, XXII (August 7, 1909), pp. 640-49.

<sup>44</sup>Ward, The Social Center, pp. 96-98; see also Ward, "The Schoolhouse as the Civic and Social Center of the Community," in NEA, Proceedings, 1912, pp. 436-37.

than "that of the brute pretense, suspicion, fear, deception, exploitation, dog-eat-dog, caveat emptor."<sup>45</sup> He therefore expressed wonder that modern society had been so late in recognizing that "right adjustment" could be effected by the establishment of a "coordinating machinery" not unlike the deliberative bodies of early America. In Rochester, where citizens "no longer feel together," said Ward, the social center could unify disparate elements. He noted that "only in a time of social strife can we fully value the common ties of civic unity and friendliness."<sup>46</sup> As such, the social center idea was far from controversial, as it had a special appeal for the "older, more conservative American."

Rochester's social center movement grew rapidly from its commencement in a single school in the fall of 1907 to the evening use of eighteen buildings less than two years later. Recreational activities for children and adults were organized, with special emphasis on the adolescent and the adult (Ward often referred to the social centers as "really playgrounds for adults"<sup>47</sup>). The real

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<sup>45</sup>Ward, The Social Center, p. 102.

<sup>46</sup>Ward, "The Schoolhouse as the Civic and Social Center of the Community," p. 438.

<sup>47</sup>Ward, The Social Center, p. 270.

core of the program, however, was the "League of Civic Clubs" for adults and its adolescent counterpart, the "Coming Civic Clubs," organized in the various centers. They promoted civic awareness, according to their literature, through the discussion of varying political viewpoints. Ultimately, this resulted in more intelligent voting and appreciation of opposing positions. In the schoolhouse, all outlooks were supposedly worthy of respect, since the social center revived the old community feeling "where there wasn't any difference between the parson's wife and the hired girl."<sup>48</sup> Ward had always maintained, like other progressives, that the working man really desired a place other than the saloon for his leisure-time political discussion, and the social center was intended to meet this need. He felt that it "picked up from their haphazard and miscellaneous surroundings" the processes of civic education and the social instinct.<sup>49</sup>

Ward's contention belied the orientation of the centers, which developed as institutions defining "civic

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<sup>48</sup> League of Civic Clubs, Rochester Social Centers and Civic Clubs, p. 111.

<sup>49</sup> Ward, "Where Suffragists and Anti's Unite," American City, X (June, 1914), pp. 519-24.



spirit" in terms of minimizing conflict rather than promoting structural changes in Rochester's political and social arrangements. Ward believed that organization of the citizenry in the schoolhouse was a "scientific" arrangement, unlike the imposed dividing lines between economic classes and political parties. Actually, this meant that the superficialities of occasional interpersonal contact were regarded as sufficient to overcome larger and deep-rooted social boundaries. Furthermore, the one-sided nature of the socializing process in the school centers weakened their claim to "democracy." A member of the school board saw the civic clubs as demonstrating the "essential solidarity" of all, whether employer or employee, through the arousal of the "ethical spirit" via "appropriate stimulation."<sup>50</sup> Some of Rochester's most conservative businessmen had originally been wary of political discussion in the schoolhouse, yet the individual civic clubs always sought to resolve political issues through "understandings." In this sense, they were the adult counterparts of the "civics education" courses for school children popularized by progressive educators that were

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<sup>50</sup>George B. Ford, "Buttressing the Foundations of Democracy," Survey, XXVII (November 18, 1909), pp. 1232-33.

intended to assure "social efficiency." In Rochester, such courses promoted a conservative, chamber of commerce concept of social service. Ward himself constantly argued that there was a need for adults to receive similar instruction in civics.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that civic club discussion of public questions was not "partisan or exclusive," as the school board proudly boasted. Occasionally, controversial statements were made, but these "indiscreet or erroneous" ideas were quickly rejected. In addition, the board noted that discussion ultimately served as an "effective antidote" to these views. Therefore, the appearance of a socialist on the center was not cause for alarm, since "these extreme views thrive and become dangerous when cultivated by isolated groups who intensify their one-sided and unbalanced opinions . . ."<sup>52</sup> One observer of a civic club gathering noted that the atmosphere made participants less likely to

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<sup>51</sup>See Edward Stevens, Jr., The Political Education of Children in the Rochester Public Schools, 1899-1917; An Historical Perspective on Social Control in Public Education (Ed. D. diss., University of Rochester, 1970), pp. v-vi, 129, 171; see also Sidney C. Sivertson, Community Civics: Education for Social Efficiency (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1972), pp. 261-77, passim.

<sup>52</sup>Rochester Board of Education, Proceedings of 1909 (Rochester: Board of Education, 1910), pp. 63-64.

"lose their heads" and "be carried away so as to take any hasty or ill-considered action." Instead, opinions were modified and adjusted to patterns of "rational progress."<sup>53</sup>

Though Ward himself warned against ill-considered city boosterism, such a spirit was promoted vigorously in the social centers. Ward noted that the civic clubs, despite their non-partisan composition, "uniformly showed a conservative spirit" in their attitudes towards local municipal activities.<sup>54</sup> The social centers had their own songs of civic pride, all infused with the "Do It For Rochester" idea that was the slogan of both the centers and the local chamber of commerce.<sup>55</sup> Symbolizing the booster orientation was a cartoon accompanying Ward's article on the social centers in The Survey. It showed hats and coats marked with political and ethic insignias piled outside a room marked "Civic Club," from within

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<sup>53</sup>Ford, "Buttressing the Foundations of Democracy," pp. 1233-34.

<sup>54</sup>Quoted in Irving King, Education for Social Efficiency (New York: D. Appleton, 1913), pp. 89-90.

<sup>55</sup>Rochester Chamber of Commerce, The Rochester Chamber of Commerce 1888 to 1917 (Rochester: Chamber of Commerce, 1917), pp. 18, 22-23.

which came the lyrics "we are one in heart" from a social center song. The songs themselves, incidentally, all contained the theme of the "abolition" of class distinctions in the name of service by all for Rochester's sake.<sup>56</sup>

The social center, as conceived by Ward, extended the sphere of recreation beyond the narrow boundaries of athletics. Progressives had long looked for a practical means of doing so, and thus Rochester soon attracted the attention of some of the more influential urban reformers. Ray Stannard Baker, in an article for a national magazine, depicted the social center as part of a national "insurgent spirit" of constructive public action, and noted approvingly that the centers were institutions of leisure time that attracted all elements of the community.<sup>57</sup>

American City wondered why "no one ever thought" of the

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<sup>56</sup>See Ward, "The Little Red Schoolhouse," p. 649; For example, one song contained the following verse:  
 "And now they're coming from Buffalo, Hurrah, Hurrah  
 A place where we're considered slow, Hurrah, Hurrah  
 To learn of the social center plan  
 And how we make it that every man  
 Can talk about the things  
 He wants to talk about, Yes, can talk about the things  
 that ought to be talked about."  
 (Source: Ward, The Social Center, p. 185).

<sup>57</sup>Ray Stannard Baker, "Do It For Rochester," American Magazine, LXX (February, 1910), pp. 687-96.

idea before, and applauded the centers as arenas uniting all classes "in a common bond of understanding and sympathy, sharing amusements as well as trials."<sup>58</sup> Lincoln Steffens was perhaps the most enthusiastic of all about the social center. He had previously been disappointed, he said, in the failure of either enlightened leaders or groups of "good" people to advance the civic spirit. The social center, however, brought together all people, and this "would promote the common interest through genuinely democratic action." Were it to be transplanted on a national basis, argued Steffens, the movement "would mark a new era in municipal progress."<sup>59</sup>

The social center idea gave progressives a concrete program for rationalizing the leisure of urban residents and directing their political education. The notion of an entire neighborhood, young and old, native and immigrant, participating in supervised activities in the schoolhouse was especially attractive to social workers, who had long felt the neighborhood to be the basic socializing unit. Graham Taylor had argued that "the need of the hour" was the restoration of neighborliness, which was regarded as

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<sup>58</sup>Harriet Childs, "The Rochester Social Centers," American City, V (July, 1911), pp. 18-22.

<sup>59</sup>Quoted in Ward, "The Rochester Movement," Independent, LXVII (October 14, 1909), pp. 860-61.

the social center's primary duty.<sup>60</sup> Of course, it was pointed out that settlements had sponsored neighborhood recreational activities for many years. Since the nineties Hull House had sponsored a discussion forum, the "Working People's Social Science Club," as well as dances for adolescents and home economics and public health instruction for women.<sup>61</sup> Boston's South End House always regarded the promotion of leisure time political discussion as one of its major duties. Its residents felt that the settlement was both an agency to serve the community and an alternative to saloon-based politics:

. . . a kind of neutral ground where scholar and toiler, capitalist and employee, native and immigrant, Protestant and Catholic, might enter into friendly conference and . . . be led to undertake certain kinds of useful public service in common.<sup>62</sup>

However, settlements always encountered problems in managing community recreation programs, just as they had had in founding playgrounds in the nineties. Such

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<sup>60</sup> Graham Taylor, "A Social Center for Civic Cooperation," Commons, IX (December, 1904), pp. 586-87.

<sup>61</sup> Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House (New York: Macmillan, 1910), pp. 178-79; Hull House Year Book 1906-7 (Chicago: Hull House Association, 1907), pp. 9-23.

<sup>62</sup> South End House Association, Tenth Annual Report, February, 1902 (Boston: n.p., n.d.), p. 5.

programs were a drain on finances and personnel of these already hard-pressed institutions, and the political discussion programs in particular often attracted unwanted notoriety. In addition, the settlements were evolving into more professionalized agencies with the proliferation of schools of social work. Mary Simkhovitch asserted that settlements ought to decrease their social activities since the individual house was "primarily a group of interested persons, only secondarily and perforce an institution."<sup>63</sup> The "scientific" concept of case work, as it developed, encouraged a more detached relationship between the social worker and the community. As a result, said Graham Taylor, settlements were "only too glad to give up" sponsorship of most community recreational activities.<sup>64</sup>

In the meantime, schools and parks departments in major cities had not been wholly inactive in extending recreation to adolescents and adults. Beginning in 1902, New York had opened several of its schools for evening

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<sup>63</sup>Mary K. Simkhovitch, "The Public School: Its Neighborhood Use," Commons, IX (September, 1904), pp. 406-17.

<sup>64</sup>Graham Taylor, "By Graham Taylor," Chicago Daily News, August 20, 1904, clipping in Graham Taylor Mss., Newberry Library, Chicago.

recreation, hoping to reach adolescents not in regular attendance.<sup>65</sup> Chicago's South Park District constructed an elaborate system of large parks with fieldhouses, providing meeting places other than saloons for local associations. Henry G. Foreman, president of the district, had argued that mere "breathing spaces" were not enough, and that the stimulation of neighborhood patriotism and pride was necessary. The fieldhouse program and the training in community work given district employees were intended to provide a design for neighborhood development in working-class quarters.<sup>66</sup> However, both the New York and Chicago systems had severe deficiencies. The New York evening recreation program was confined to adolescents and was also based on the already-outmoded definition of recreation as athletics alone. Chicago's plan was conceived with families and neighborhoods in mind, but reached few persons in practice. As was frequently noted by city planners, the large park-fieldhouse unit was too centralized to be of service to most of the population.

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<sup>65</sup>New York City, Department of Education, Report of the City Superintendent of Schools 1902-3 (New York: Department of Education, 1903), pp. 159-91.

<sup>66</sup>Henry G. Foreman, "Chicago's New Park Service," Century, LXIX (February, 1905), pp. 610-20.



Rather than traveling long distances, youths stayed in their own neighborhoods and local groups continued to rent rooms adjacent to dance halls.<sup>67</sup> In addition, the Chicago system was too costly for most cities to adopt. Most municipalities preferred to use existing school plants rather than erect separate facilities.

Writings on school extension, as mentioned, were sporadic throughout the nineties. The movement received a boost, however, when John Dewey addressed the 1902 National Education Association convention on "The School as Social Center." Placing school extension within the context of extended democracy, Dewey argued that wider use of the school promoted "a socialism of the intelligence and the spirit." To Dewey, the opening of the school to those who could not attend it regularly was an exercise in the progressive belief of lifelong educability. Recreation, of course, was at the core of this program.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, the original school extension programs were modest efforts. Schoolmen were reluctant to accept additional administrative burdens, and also feared that

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<sup>67</sup>Henry S. Curtis, "The Neighborhood Center," American City, VII (August, 1912), pp. 133-37.

<sup>68</sup>John Dewey, "The School as Social Center," NEA, Proceedings, 1902, pp. 377-83.

extended use of facilities would lead to property damage and financial problems. Beginning with the Rochester experiment, however, the ideology of efficiency led to a reconsideration of this position. The concepts of scientific management, when applied to education, revealed it to be "inefficient" in both preparing the young for citizenship and serving the community. Simon N. Patten, among others, hinted that a deemphasis of public education might be forthcoming if schools failed to improve.

The efficiency movement's attack worried many educators, and led them to a new position regarding the wider use of school plants.<sup>69</sup> They hoped to counter the progressive complaint that the schools were not used enough, and were therefore "profitless" for eighteen hours per day and the entire summer as well. Critics felt that these "fenced-in bugbears" constituted "a waste of investment," that private capital would not tolerate for a moment," according to one observer.<sup>70</sup> Henry M. Leipziger, the

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<sup>69</sup> See Raymond E. Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 6-22; Simon N. Patten, "An Economic Measure of School Efficiency," Educational Review, XLI (May, 1911), pp. 467-69.

<sup>70</sup> Sylvester Baxter, "Widening The Uses of Public Schoolhouses," World's Work, V (March, 1903), pp. 3247-48.

pioneer of New York's modest program of adult education echoed this complaint, asking: "is any industrial plant erected at great cost used to so limited an extent?"<sup>71</sup> The newly-accepted notions of extended use were usually couched in terms of idealistic progressive educational ideology. Elmer Ellsworth Brown, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, said that by opening the schools to the community Americans were "carrying the opportunities of childhood into mature life." To Brown, the idea had a practical aspect too, since adults were still somewhat "plastic" in terms of educability.<sup>72</sup> Irving King, the ideologue of social efficiency, argued that "a truly socialized education" had to make reference to "the spontaneous community life." More influential, however, were Edward J. Ward, and Clarence A. Perry. The former's work in Rochester made him a national figure in school extension, and he made it the major theme of the 1910

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<sup>71</sup>Henry M. Leipziger, "The School as a Social Centre, Address delivered . . . March 10, 1908," Leipziger Mss., New York Public Library.

<sup>72</sup>Elmer Ellsworth Brown, "Some Uses of the Public Schoolhouse," Playground, IV (March, 1911), pp. 397-403; see also Ellwood P. Cubberley, Changing Conceptions of Education (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1909), pp. 54-68.

convention of the National Municipal League, a powerful organization of "civic-minded" progressives. Perry, an urban planner and educator who worked for the Russell Sage Foundation, published the definitive work on extended use, Wider Use of the School Plant, in 1910. Reflecting the author's belief in the sociological theories of urban isolation and neighborhood disintegration, the volume saw school extension as the basis for a comprehensive program of neighborhood organization. Perry's many illustrations of the possibilities of wider use ranged from family recreation to immigrant education.<sup>73</sup>

In implementing social center programs, however, educators relied little on actual community participation. In Rochester, Ward had not found the idea of community self-government incompatible with social engineering, always asserting the need for professional management of the centers.<sup>74</sup> This pattern repeated itself nationally as school administrators looked to business methods and

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<sup>73</sup>Clarence A. Perry, Housing for the Machine Age (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1939), pp. 20, 209-16; Perry, Wider Use of the School Plant (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1910), passim. Perry was intimately involved in the planning of the model community of Forest Hills Gardens in Queens, New York.

<sup>74</sup>See Edward Stevens, Jr., "Social Centers, Politics, and Social Efficiency in the Progressive Era," History of Education Quarterly, XII (Spring, 1972), pp. 11-23.

goals as the major antidotes to inefficiency.<sup>75</sup> The model for the efficient school system was that of Gary, Indiana, the town erected by the United States Steel Corporation. Its superintendent, William Wirt, planned the school system on management principles. The so-called "platoon school" concept featured full use of the entire plant during the school day, and an extensive program of evening activities open to all. Wirt proved that his plan was not only more economical than a park or fieldhouse system, but also socially efficient in that it provided for the management of the leisure time of the entire population.<sup>76</sup> There were negative implications of such a rigidly structured system of social life, but Wirt's plan received praise from progressives. He and the steel company were praised for realizing that "efficient management of industry should go hand in hand with the development of a well-rounded community life."<sup>77</sup>

In adopting the techniques of scientific management the social center movement also accepted its ends. As was

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<sup>75</sup>Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency, p. 126.

<sup>76</sup>William Wirt, "Utilization of the School Plant," in NEA, Proceedings, 1912, pp. 492-95.

<sup>77</sup>See U.S. Bureau of Education, "Building the Industrial City of Gary," Community Leaflet no. 20 (1918).

the case in Rochester, the social center became viewed as an institution responsible for the muting of social conflicts that might intensify as a result of family breakdown and unregulated leisure time pursuits. To Irving King, the movement was a conserving force, "an attempt to cultivate and develop certain values which already exist and whose worth has been established."<sup>78</sup> At a superintendent's conference under National Education Association auspices, schoolmen planning social center programs were advised to avoid "matters controversial in politics, religion, or social conditions . . . the object is to unify interests, not to let passions astir nor to engender strife."<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, some superintendents sought to absorb the forces making for community unrest into the program of the social center. "Frequent thoroughgoing discussion of socialism," according to one of the early social center promoters, "is quite as likely to prove a preventive or anti-toxin."<sup>80</sup> Success in quelling disruptive forces was claimed by a number of center

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<sup>78</sup>King, Education for Social Efficiency, p. 262.

<sup>79</sup>Department of Superintendence, National Education Association, "Utilization of the School Plant--Discussion," NEA, Proceedings, 1912, pp. 495-97.

<sup>80</sup>Allen B. Pond, "The Free Platform," Commons, VIII (October, 1903), p. 3.

organizers. One of them reported converting a group "who would be termed anarchists" into a discussion club, where their stridence had become "perceptibly milder . . . getting to be literary, academic, philosophic." Had discussion remained in the saloon, "a little injudicious repression" might have spurred a violent response.<sup>81</sup>

Edward J. Ward made this theme important in publicizing the need for social centers, crediting them with developing "that breadth of human sympathy, that sense of solidarity . . . upon which all who do not accept the doctrine of 'the class struggle' base their hope of human progress."<sup>82</sup>

The most obvious example of the social center's responsiveness to the business community's demands occurred in the founding city of Rochester in 1911. By that time Ward had left to direct the Extension Division of the University of Wisconsin, but the social center movement was still vigorous. However, a crisis in the social centers soon proved that "civic spirit" was to be defined narrowly. On February 4, Kendrick P. Shedd, a social

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<sup>81</sup>Arthur Bostwick, "The Public Library, The Public School, and the Social Center Movement," in NEA, Proceedings, 1912, pp. 240-46.

<sup>82</sup>Ward, "The Schoolhouse as the Civic and Social Center of the Community," pp. 438-39.

center director who was also a professor at the University of Rochester, spoke on "Privilege's Fear of Democracy" before one of the social center civic clubs. A mild socialist, Shedd referred in his speech to the "red flag" as a "symbol of brotherhood . . . broader than the stars and stripes."<sup>83</sup> The city's conservative newspaper and the more conservative businessmen, long suspicious of the centers, immediately pounced on these remarks, and circulated sensational accounts of Shedd's speech.<sup>84</sup> As a result, within two weeks the centers' appropriations were halted and they were forced to close. The debate over the closing, which was intense, focused on tactics rather than ends. Common Good, the booster-style social center magazine, argued that "a large number of our citizens . . . live constantly very close to the dividing line between good and bad citizenship." Keeping them "safely upon the side of good normal living" had been the result of the center's programs. Therefore, said the magazine, the

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<sup>83</sup>John Dutko, Socialism in Rochester 1900-17 (M.A. thesis, Department of History, University of Rochester, 1953), pp. 147-52. Shedd was more of a "booster" than a radical. He had written most of the previously mentioned social center songs.

<sup>84</sup>Rochester Union-Advertiser, February 6, 1911, p. 4; February 8, 1911, p. 6.



centers deserved revival lest the citizenry "topple . . . bodily and sometimes irretrievably into criminality."<sup>85</sup>

Few social center promoters, therefore, were discouraged by what had happened in Rochester. Rather, they saw it as evidence of the need for tighter management of centers. As a result, the contradiction between the applauded aim of creating a community-run institution and the actual practice of control via managerial expertise went unnoticed. In New York, for example, development of the social center program was entrusted to the People's Institute, a quasi-public organization that had been a pioneer in community organization efforts. Founded in 1897 by Charles Sprague Smith, an educator, it was designed to provide both recreational opportunities and political education for residents of Manhattan's Lower East Side. Its backers included both social service professionals and theorists such as Franklin Giddings, Jane Addams, Lincoln Steffens, and Frederic C. Howe (who served as director for a time) as well as "good government" crusaders such as Abram S. Hewitt, Jacob Riis, and other

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<sup>85</sup>"Social Centers Must Live Again," Common Good, V (December, 1911), p. 6.

businessman-progressives prominent in that movement.<sup>86</sup> Through its association with the Cooper Union, the institute promoted political discussion, through a series of "people's clubs," and adult and adolescent recreational opportunities as an alternative to those existing on the lower east side.<sup>87</sup> Though somewhat successful in attracting attention among progressives, the institute eventually realized that its self-contained programs comprised only a small-scale operation. Therefore, when in 1912 it was invited by the city's board of education to coordinate social center work, it turned most of its energies to that endeavor.

The newly-created "Social Center Bureau" of the People's Institute publicized the proposed social centers of New York as an alternative to those sordid institutions presently supplying the tenement dweller's need for human companionship. John Collier, who directed the institute, argued that it was dangerous to continue to let the Tammany Hall boss and the dance-hall proprietor satisfy the desire

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<sup>86</sup> See Jacob Riis, "The People's Institute of New York," Century, LXXIX (April, 1910), pp. 850-63; also Charles Sprague Smith, Working With the People (New York: A. Wessels, 1904), pp. 146-51.

<sup>87</sup> See "The People's Institute Club "A"" (1902-3), pamphlet in Box 8 (Club Activities), People's Institute Mss., New York Public Library.

for companionship. The basis of their control in this area, he said, was recreation, which was "fundamentally civic" and ought to be managed to that end.<sup>88</sup> The Social Center Bureau, therefore, intertwined leisure, politics, and community in its arguments.<sup>89</sup> A comprehensive social center program, it felt, might become the unifying element in New York's civic life. The center, since it was regulated, was superior to the saloon or dance hall. In addition, contended social workers, it was also preferable to the ethnic associations commonly found in the city which, while well-meaning, were misguided and ultimately divisive. "Heaped with a corroded, shattered, yet noble wreckage of the leisure time heritage of the past of our Caucasian peoples,"<sup>90</sup> the immigrant needed the guidance of the expert in shaping his social life. As Collier

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<sup>88</sup> John Collier, "Leisure Time, the Las Problem of Conservation," Playground, VI (June, 1912), pp. 93-106; Collier and Edward M. Barrows, The City Where Crime is Play (New York: People's Institute, 1914), pp. 1-8.

<sup>89</sup> See "The Redemption of Leisure," (1913), pamphlet in Box 7 (Community Center Work and Committee on Recreation), People's Institute Mss.; see also A Campaign Handbook in Social Centers: For Workers in New York City (1912), typescript, New York Public Library.

<sup>90</sup> "The Community Center as a Public Movement," (1914), Box 21, People's Institute Mss., New York Public Library.

asserted, the basic problem of "adjusting maladjusted people" was not solved by "endless, hysterical repressive efforts," but by supervision and direction.<sup>91</sup>

The first of the People's Institute's social centers opened in 1912, directed by a citizens committee that included Collier, Howe, Clarence A. Perry, and Luther Gulick. It offered political discussions, concerts, industrial arts and home economics classes, and athletics, intending to reach all family members. As the social center movement developed in New York, however, it divorced center management from the community. Instead, the institute provided a machinery for directing the work. It created the "New York Training School for Community Workers," a social work school in concept if not in fact. Under a faculty that included Joseph Lee, Luther Gulick, Mary Simkhovitch, and many others prominent in community work, students were trained in a professional program that included both field work and classes in group organization, city planning, delinquency, and the theory and uses of leisure.<sup>92</sup> Using an outside agency and a professional

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<sup>91</sup>Collier, "The Community Center in Social Education."

<sup>92</sup>New York Training School for Community Workers, General Announcement 1915-16, in People's Institute Mss., "A School That Studies Life," (1917), pamphlet in People's Institute Mss.

class to conduct center programs showed the extent to which ideas popular in business had infiltrated social service. The dangers of "efficiency," while supposedly recognized, were ignored. While decrying "soulless" German-style efficiency, Collier spoke of community centers as organizations bringing the "mass" of people into relations with the "expert," and asserted that "community centers must approximate one another in their type of organization and in their ideals and in their customs."<sup>93</sup> Given this outlook, it is not surprising that many ethnic and labor groups, long distrustful of what one historian has called the institute's "aura of condescension," criticized the "uplifters" who ran the centers as aloof and insensitive.<sup>94</sup>

The civic outlook adopted by social workers and educators involved in the social center movement therefore merged smoothly with the "community uplift" programs of local business groups. Presaging the boosterism generally identified with the post-World War I era,

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<sup>93</sup> See Proceedings of the National Conference on Community Centers (April 17-20, 1917), pp. 24, 27, 107-08, typescript in New York Public Library.

<sup>94</sup> See Moses Rischin, The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 212-16; Letter from Carl Beck (Labor Forum) to Collier, December 6, 1917 in People's Institute Mss.

businessmen's organizations were becoming interested in "community service" projects related to their support of city planning and "good government" movements. Thus when John Collier wrote that the ideas of civic splendor and business efficiency dominating city planning ought to be extended to all levels, including leisure, businessmen were impressed, and became eager to participate in community organization experiments.<sup>95</sup> One of the most notable booster ventures was the "Boston-1915" movement started in 1909 by Edward A. Filene, the department store owner. Gaining the support of businessmen, social workers, and other progressives (among them Louis D. Brandeis), this organization pledged to effect a program of urban improvement in both the physical and political senses. Through social centers, playgrounds, and public works it hoped to break the grip of the Irish ward boss. Paul V. Kellogg, editor of The Survey noted that the movement exhibited "considerable of the 'hurrah, boys' spirit." Its literature stressed "team-play between the efficient men of the community." Kellogg, however, saw nothing wrong with the "cheerful acceptance of boom-town methods" by the

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<sup>95</sup>Collier, "City Planning and the Problem of Recreation," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, LI (January, 1917), pp. 208-15.

organization.<sup>96</sup> Similar groups sprang up in other cities, enabling businessmen to forge even closer ties with social workers and educators than had formerly been the case. Business groups sent delegates to the first national meeting of the new "Social Center Association of America" in Madison, Wisconsin in 1911, and, through the National Municipal League, helped to popularize the movement themselves.<sup>97</sup> On the local level, they worked with educators, city planners, and social service professionals in popularizing civic pagentry and municipal holiday celebrations. Gaining popularity in the progressive period, these events brought the entire community together for its leisure, building upon themes of community pride and patriotism as well. A member of the board of trade of one community enthusiastically commented that such activities served to make the city "a unit in the minds of its people."<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Paul V. Kellogg, "Boston's Level Best," Survey, XXII (June 5, 1909), pp. 187-96; Kellogg, "The 1915 Boston Exhibition," Survey, XXIII (December 4, 1909), pp. 328-34.

<sup>97</sup>National Municipal League, Hand Book 1914 (Philadelphia: National Municipal League, 1914), pp. 4-9; Chicago City Club, Minutes and Reports of Civic Committees, pt. 1 (November 11, 1911), pp. 133-34, in Chicago City Club Mss., Chicago Historical Society.

<sup>98</sup>John Ihlder, "The New Civic Spirit," American City, IV (February, 1911), pp. 123-27; see also George H. Webb, "The Businessman's Relations to Civic Development," American City, III (August, 1910), pp. 64-66.

The Playground and Recreation Association of America (which had changed its name in 1911 to show its widening concerns) assisted communities in planning these affairs and more permanent programs as well.

The social center movement proved attractive to progressives, since it offered a solution to the nagging problem of the working class family and the immigrant that welfare programs for children, such as playgrounds had not solved. Those involved in social service frankly admitted that the early public recreation movement had worsened the already splintered condition of the urban family.<sup>99</sup> The social center, however, extended the custodial relationship between the social service expert and the child to the parents, thus providing what was regarded as "the best possible antidote to all agencies which make for an abnormal society."<sup>100</sup> As far as the immigrant was concerned, the social center offered a variety of assimilation stylistically different from the

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<sup>99</sup> As Clarence A. Perry put it, it was necessary to "retard" the assimilation of children, and "speed up" that of young adults and parents. (Proceedings of the National Conference on Community Centers . . . (1917)), p. 54.

<sup>100</sup> Report of Chicago Public School Extension Committee and Vacation Schools, 1909-10 (Chicago: Board of Education, 1910), pp. 14-21.



rigid Americanization programs favored by some, yet with ultimately similar objectives. The center organizers accepted the contentions of social scientists regarding "social disorganization" and "maladjustment" of foreigners, and thus had little confidence in the immigrants' ability to mold a productive community life. Therefore, they sought to bring ethnicity under expert control in the center, where the trappings of ethnic pride would be tolerated at the same time that local ethnic institutions, which were far more vigorous and constructive than they have usually been depicted, were discouraged.<sup>101</sup> Within the public meeting place, as a People's Institute community worker put it, there was "no necessary conflict" between immigrant customs and ideas and Americanization.<sup>102</sup> This decline of self-government among ethnic groups was likewise

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<sup>101</sup>Recent literature in both history and the social sciences questions the degree of "disorganization" present in urban, immigrant and working-class communities. See Milton M. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 34; David Ward, "The Emergence of Central Immigrant Ghettos in American Cities: 1840-1920," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, LVIII (June, 1968), pp. 343-59; Virginia Y. McLaughlin, "Patterns of Work and Family Organization: Buffalo's Italians," in T. K. Rabb and R. I. Rotberg, The Family in History: Interdisciplinary Essays (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1973), pp. 111-26.

<sup>102</sup>Clinton S. Childs, "Community Centers and Americanization," (1913) typescript in New York Public Library.

encouraged among American-born workingmen and their families. Progressives insisted that these developments were worthwhile. Woodrow Wilson envisioned the social center as ending "class segregation . . . the most undemocratic thing in the world,"<sup>103</sup> yet the socialized community ideal presented by urban progressives was far from egalitarian. Rather, it stemmed from the spread of the notion of society as a corporate body whose members consented to the maintenance of social stratification in a strife-free milieu. Leisure and "service," now intertwined in progressive thought, meant the acceptance of consensus rather than growth and renewal.

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<sup>103</sup>Woodrow Wilson, "The Need of Citizenship Organization," American City, V (November, 1911), pp. 264-68.

## CHAPTER VII

### WORLD WAR I: RECREATION, THE SOLDIER, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

World War I served as a climax to many progressive programs. Pre-war reform efforts, one of which was the recreation movement, displayed a common desire to rationalize society. War necessities now gave reasons for accelerating efforts in community organization. While some social workers and educators worried that pre-war gains would be erased in wartime,<sup>1</sup> most felt that the mobilization of the populace afforded them an opportunity to extend existing efforts. As a result, most persons involved in social service enthusiastically supported America's entry into the conflict. Addressing the National Conference of Social Work in June, 1917, Robert A. Woods noted that "a peculiar note of moral exultation" existed among the participants. Woods' own remarks indicated one reason for this state of mind. The war, he said, could result in "a thousand

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<sup>1</sup>Edward T. Devine, "The War and the Common Welfare," Survey, XXXVII (July 7, 1917), p. 314.

enterprises in social work which have been in the dream stage . . . [to] precipitate over night into reality, into inevitableness."<sup>2</sup> Others echoed this theme of war-as-opportunity. G. Stanley Hall, writing before the American entry into the conflict, asserted that war could unite the populace in a way such that differences of political sentiment, income, and race might be subordinated to an attempt to seek "fresh points of rapport."<sup>3</sup> Edward T. Devine, the well-known New York social worker who initially held misgivings toward the war, now argued that the aims of social service agencies were fully compatible with the war needs of "unity in sentiment, harmony in planning, coordination in action."<sup>4</sup>

Essentially, war magnified the opportunities for social workers by increasing the intensity of the problems they had concerned themselves with in the pre-war period. Social workers agreed that war aggravated those forms of

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<sup>2</sup>Robert A. Woods, "Address of Robert A. Woods," in National Conference of Social Work, Proceedings, 1917, pp. 27-29. See also Allen F. David, "Welfare, Reform, and World War I," American Quarterly, XIX (Fall, 1967), pp. 516-23.

<sup>3</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "The War and Education," in NEA, Proceedings, 1916, pp. 86-92.

<sup>4</sup>Edward T. Devine, "Social Forces, Survey, XXVIII (June 20, 1917), p. 290.

social disorganization seen as root causes of social ills. It disrupted normal family, neighborhood, and larger community relationships, and invited an organized effort to counterbalance such dislocations. One problem that presented itself was juvenile delinquency, in which alarming increases were reported among all European belligerents.<sup>5</sup> Several attempts were made to explain this trend. One asserted that the war spirit promoted the release of "primal instincts" in the entire population, and that delinquency was the youth's way of exercising these instincts.<sup>6</sup> More often, however, the lack of supervision was seen as the cause. War directed parental energies into areas other than supervision. Thus, as one study noted, "the child's extra leisure coincides with his parent's entire lack of leisure, owing to war work."<sup>7</sup> As a result,

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<sup>5</sup>"Notes and Abstracts," Journal of Crime and Criminology, VII (March, 1917), p. 925; U.S. Department of Labor. Children's Bureau, Juvenile Delinquency in Certain Countries at War: A Brief Review of Available Foreign Sources (Dependent, Defective, and Delinquent Classes Series no. 5; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918), pp. 6-8.

<sup>6</sup>W. D. Lane, "Making the War Safe for Childhood V--Delinquency in War Time," Survey, XXVIII (August 8, 1917), pp. 451-54.

<sup>7</sup>U.S. Children's Bureau, Juvenile Delinquency in Certain Countries at War, p. 8.

social workers saw a need for increased institutional participation in the children's leisure time.<sup>8</sup>

The leisure problem was connected with the war effort even more directly, however. Mobilization required the establishment of large training camp facilities, generally adjacent to towns unprepared for a large influx of persons. The strains of war affected both the men in the camps and the communities themselves. Camp life, said one psychologist, was an "unnatural state" resulting in a "psychological tendency of leveling down to the lower element."<sup>9</sup> Lacking the restraints of home-town community opinion and seeking relief from camp drudgery, the soldier was likely to frequent the saloon and the prostitute. The result could be a devastating loss of military efficiency. All European participants had reported great increases in venereal disease rates that deprived them of needed manpower. Actually, one did not have to look to Europe for such examples. The venereal disease problem had been acute

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<sup>8</sup>W. S. Reynolds, "A Plan for Co-ordinated Conferences on Child Welfare," in NCSW, Proceedings, 1917, pp. 261-68.

<sup>9</sup>"Zones of Safety," Survey, XXVIII (July 21, 1917), pp. 344-50.



in the American armed forces for years,<sup>10</sup> and its seriousness was exposed during the Mexican border crisis of 1916. This frustrating exercise left many troops installed in isolated border towns such as Columbus, New Mexico, where drunkenness and the patronage of prostitutes was common. Alarmed by the situation, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker sent a representative, Raymond B. Fosdick, to study the situation. Fosdick's confidential report noted a "considerable increase" in prostitution and in the growth of red-light districts in the Texas and New Mexico towns in which the troops were quartered. Some houses, he said, "were so full that admittance was refused to soldiers at the front door and they were told to 'come back in fifteen minutes.'"<sup>11</sup> Not surprisingly, the venereal disease rate among the troops was high, reported to approach 30 percent in some companies.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Bascom Johnson, "Eliminating Vice From Camp Sites," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, LXXVIII (July, 1918), pp. 60-64.

<sup>11</sup> Confidential Report, Raymond B. Fosdick to Newton D. Baker, August 10, 1916 in Raymond B. Fosdick Mss., Princeton University.

<sup>12</sup> Camp Activities: Hearing Before the Committee on Military Affairs, HR (65 Cong. 2d Session), March 17, 1918 in Raymond B. Fosdick Mss., Princeton University.



The problem at the border soon attracted the attention of the public. One observer reported seeing "a constant procession of drunken soldiers reeling in the mud toward camp." The "coarser element" prevailed among the men, he said, but this was to be expected since most of the soldiers were young and thus very susceptible to peer group pressures, particularly when "the desire is strong and the will is weak."<sup>13</sup> Therefore, both military and community efficiency suffered. This alarmed progressives, who had always approached social problems assuming the need to regulate community life. They now saw their advances threatened by the "shattered ideals, lowered standards, sensualized minds and perverted practices brought into home life and society" by the soldier.<sup>14</sup> The border difficulty, too, was small in scale compared to the potential problems involved in training a large army for the war in Europe. War Department plans called for the rapid construction of at least sixteen training camps designed to hold 40,000 men each.<sup>15</sup> The peril both

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>M. J. Exner, "Prostitution and Its Relation to the Army on the Mexican Border," Social Hygiene Monthly, III (April, 1917), pp. 3-18.

<sup>15</sup>New York Times, July 1, 1917, p. 8.

to adjacent towns and to the soldiers was obvious. In his report to Baker on the Mexican border crisis, Fosdick had urged that "a well thought out policy" for future situations was required, and suggested that a "veiled threat" to move camps away from towns that did not police themselves be made.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, a community worker familiar with the problem urged careful supervision of the soldiers' leisure. Otherwise, "vicious conditions, especially in connection with the sale of intoxicants, prostitution . . . and consequent infection with venereal disease" would prevail.<sup>17</sup>

Secretary of War Baker, however, was an urban progressive familiar with the work of the recreation movement. As Mayor of Cleveland he had expanded public recreational facilities, including both playgrounds and social centers, and knew what an organized leisure program could accomplish. Therefore, several weeks after the United States entered the war he asked Fosdick, a former student under Woodrow Wilson at Princeton who had much experience in administration (especially police work) in several progressive city governments, to organize and chair training

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<sup>16</sup> See Confidential Report, Fosdick to Baker, cited above.

<sup>17</sup> "Zones of Safety," p. 350.

camp commissions for both the War and Navy Departments. According to Baker, the commissions were to serve as clearinghouses "for suggestions of various kinds in relation to the question of providing rational recreation and other facilities for men in training camps."<sup>18</sup> Soon afterwards, Baker asked Joseph Lee, the president of the Playground and Recreation Association of America (who had also been appointed to the training camp commissions), to utilize the association's resources in the coordination of leisure activities for servicemen in towns adjacent to the camps. Baker acknowledged the precedents for his plan in the pre-war recreation movement. Speaking before a conference of civic groups and recreation workers called to organize the effort in October, 1917, he noted the superiority of a policy of providing wholesome recreation to one of repression. The lesson of the recreation movement was clear:

. . . that if you wanted to get a firebrand out of the hands of a child the way to do it was neither to club the child nor grab the firebrand, but to offer in exchange for it a stick of candy.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Newton D. Baker to Raymond B. Fosdick, April 18, 1917 in Raymond B. Fosdick Mss., Princeton University.

<sup>19</sup>Newton D. Baker, "Invisible Armor," Survey, XXXIX (November 19, 1917), pp. 159-60.

The training camp commissions and the War Camp Community Service, the organization created out of the Playground and Recreation Association of America, were entrusted with providing soldiers with what Baker called an "invisible armor . . . a set of social habits replacing those of their homes and communities."<sup>20</sup> The key to accomplishing this was the rationalization of the "bewildering environments" of the camps.<sup>21</sup> Combining military and civilian authorities in the effort would avoid disruptions of the sort experienced in Europe and maintain the efficiency of the services. Wartime conditions also gave Baker extraordinary powers to deal with the vice problem. The new Selective Service Act contained sections authorizing the president and Baker to ban alcohol in or near camps and to suppress vice, even when licensed in the community as was the case in many Southern areas.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, Baker asked the State Councils of National Defense, set up to manage war-related activities in local

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1917, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918), p. 30.

<sup>22</sup> William Snow, "Social Hygiene and the War," Social Hygiene Monthly, III (July, 1917), pp. 31-32.

communities, and to cooperate to insure that those "who will be at that plastic and generous period of life should be surrounded by safeguards."<sup>23</sup> Some communities with licensed vice districts such as El Paso and New Orleans were reluctant to close them, but Baker and Fosdick threatened them with removal of the training camps and the consequent stigma and loss of revenue that would follow.<sup>24</sup>

However, Fosdick himself admitted that "it is not enough merely to set up "verboden" signs along the roadside,"<sup>25</sup> and the major part of the war recreation program concentrated on the maintenance of acceptable forms of leisure for soldiers in and out of camp. The training camp commissions administered an extensive athletic program designed both to improve the physical fitness of the draftees (the lack of which was shown in the high rejection

<sup>23</sup>See Commission on Training Camp Activities, "Documents Regarding Alcoholic Liquors and Prostitution in the Neighborhood of Military Camps and Naval Stations," pp. 1-5, pamphlet in Raymond B. Fosdick Mss., Princeton University.

<sup>24</sup>See New York Times, May 20, 1917, p. 5; Raymond B. Fosdick, Chronicle of a Generation (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 146.

<sup>25</sup>Raymond B. Fosdick, "The Commission on Training Camp Activities: Address at meeting of the Academy of Political Science December 15, 1917," (New York: Academy of Political Science, 1918), pamphlet.

rates and the consequent need to lower standards to raise needed manpower), and brought in service organizations such as the Y.M.C.A. to set up facilities such as libraries and clubhouses. This, said Fosdick, was not a matter of "sentimentality," but "just plain efficiency."<sup>26</sup> He argued that it was necessary to provide "adequate expression for the healthy animal spirit" lest it "invariably assert itself in some form of lawlessness."<sup>27</sup> In addition, the commissions conducted an extensive program of educating soldiers to the dangers of venereal disease. President Wilson had promised that soldiers would return to their homes after the war "with no scars except those won in honorable warfare,"<sup>28</sup> and the commissions' pamphlets, movies, and lectures were intended to accomplish this. One movie, "Fit to Fight," was seen by virtually all draftees. It depicted the story of "Hank Simpson," a naive farm boy convinced by his camp buddies to ignore the warnings of the commission's lecturer and go to town

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<sup>26</sup>See Edward F. Allen, Keeping Our Fighters Fit For War and After (New York: Century, 1918), p. 17.

<sup>27</sup>Raymond B. Fosdick, "The War and Navy Department's Commissions on Training Camp Activities," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, LXXIX (September, 1918), pp. 130-42.

<sup>28</sup>See Fosdick, Chronicle of a Generation, p. 157.

for a "good time." In doing so, he contracts venereal disease, and becomes a "useless slacker" in an army hospital while his fellow trainees eagerly leave for Europe on the troop transport.<sup>29</sup> In general, the commissions' program proved somewhat successful in lowering disease rates, which were far lower among the American forces in Europe than they had been in Mexico, and likewise less than occurred in European armies.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, Fosdick understood that supervision within the camps had to be supplemented with organization in surrounding communities. As mentioned, this was the task of the War Camp Community Service, a quasi-official agency directed by Joseph Lee. Lee's conception of the recreation movement placed it in the context of organizing community relations, and this made it adaptable to the war situation. According to him, the young enlisted man at the camp, severed from home and community surroundings, presented a threat to the adjacent community analogous to

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<sup>29</sup>Walter Clarke, "Social Hygiene and the War," Social Hygiene Monthly, IV (October, 1918), pp. 259-306.

<sup>30</sup>Raymond B. Fosdick, "The Fight Against Venereal Disease," New Republic, XVII (November 30, 1918), pp. 132-34; see also Report of the Commission on Training Camp Activities to the Secretary of War (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918), p. 4.

that of the unsupervised city child. Lacking those "natural human relations in which a normal life so largely consists, and this at an age at which these relations are of vital and absorbing interest," he was likely to heed his peers' promptings much as the city boy heeded the gang. Camp communities, said Lee, had responded to the problem in the wrong way, as its "good" members and institutions had shunned the soldier while the "bad" did not.<sup>31</sup> Instead, as one of Lee's subordinates put it, it was "time for Xville to be interpreted to her guests by her best instead of her worst citizens."<sup>32</sup> Enlightened self-interest justified the participation of "civic leaders" in leisure time campaigns. Lee noted that "the atmosphere which it creates for him will be the one in which it itself must live," and urged communities to order the lives of their residents, not merely the soldiers, in accordance with the recreation movement's concept of service.

The War Camp Community Service operated similarly to the pre-war recreation campaigns. Community organizers,

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<sup>31</sup>Joseph Lee, "War Camp Community Service," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, LXXIX (September, 1918), pp. 189-91; Lee, "The Training Camp Commissions," Survey, XXXIX (October 6, 1917), pp. 3-7.

<sup>32</sup>Charles F. Weller, "Permanent Values in War Camp Community Service," Survey, XL (December 7, 1918), pp. 295-96.



most of whom had had experience in public recreation drives, worked with selected members of local groups, appointed by Lee, in planning programs. "The great ones of the community," as one organizer referred to them, represented not the whole community but its business and professional sectors. Chambers of Commerce, Rotarians, women's service groups, and professional social workers were the usual sources of support.<sup>33</sup> "Community houses," similar to the school social centers, conducted amusements such as dances, movies, and community songfests, while sub-committees supervised girls' work designed to combat the so-called "lure of the khaki." These groups, usually called "Girls' Protective Bureaus," policed recreation areas, provided education to combat "moral dangers," and encouraged adolescents to participate in war relief work.<sup>34</sup> Communities reluctant to address this problem in the past despite appeals from recreation workers were now forced to do so.

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<sup>33</sup> War Camp Community Recreation Fund, Campaign Manual (New York: Playground and Recreation Association of America, 1917), pp. 6-7, 22-23; War Camp Community Service, A Few of the Things All America Does For the Men in Uniform (New York: Playground and Recreation Association of America, 1918), pp. 6-8.

<sup>34</sup> Henrietta S. Additon, "Work Among Delinquent Women and Girls," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, LXXIX (September, 1918), pp. 152-60.

The work of the War Camp Community Service was supplemented by that conducted by local groups under the auspices of the State Councils of National Defense. These agencies also employed persons with extensive backgrounds in social service and public recreation, who saw the war as an opportunity to expand local recreation programs.<sup>35</sup> The ideal of neighborhood organization, for example, suddenly gained respect as local "community councils," often centered in the schools, carried the concept of total war to the neighborhood. P. P. Claxton, the United States Commissioner of Education, saw these groups as valuable in mobilizing community sentiment, while President Wilson himself argued that they could "build up from the bottom an understanding and sympathy and unity of purpose."<sup>36</sup> The community council was not regarded as a manipulative device but as "localized" democracy. This organization of entire neighborhoods, according to John Collier, promoted "manifold adjustments--permanent adjustments if we will make them such--in the direction of constructive citizenship." By connecting recreation with public service,

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<sup>35</sup> Leroy Bowman, "The Neighborhood Association," in NCSW, Proceedings, 1918, pp. 465-69.

<sup>36</sup> Ida Clyde Clarke, The Little Democracy: A Text-Book on Community Organization (New York: D. Appleton, 1918), pp. 2-3, 11-12.



said Collier, the councils were not vulnerable to the complaint of "factory system" agency rule.<sup>37</sup>

In actuality, the local councils were dominated by business and professional groups, as were the other relief organizations. In Chicago, for example, the City Club was directed to supervise the work. It accepted a Chamber of Commerce plan for the "systematic formation of neighborhood units," administered according to a plan of "controlled decentralized civic cooperation,"<sup>38</sup> while in New York the People's Institute was active in coordinating the work. These organizations sponsored pageants, children's activities, and service functions that local neighborhoods seldom planned themselves, but instead were directed by business-oriented groups.<sup>39</sup> Their desired end was not to increase the community's role in planning its affairs, but to promote war spirit and identification with the so-called "civic leaders" who dominated the agencies.

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<sup>37</sup>John Collier, "Community Councils: Democracy Every Day," Survey, XL (August 31, 1918), pp. 604-06; Collier, "The Organized Laity and the Social Expert," NCSW, Proceedings, 1917, pp. 464-69.

<sup>38</sup>City Club of Chicago, Minutes and Reports of the Civic Committees 1917-18, pt. 2, pp. 190-91, 207 in Chicago City Club Mss., Chicago Historical Society.

<sup>39</sup>Charles F. Weller, "Patriotic Play Week and the War-Time Recreation Drive," Playground, XII (August, 1918), pp. 175-89.

By the end of the war, recreation planners felt that they had fulfilled the aims of the progressive recreation movement. One War Camp Community Service organizer said that "community life has received a great impetus,"<sup>40</sup> as changes that would have taken many years to occur had taken place during the war. In this sense, of course, the planners were merging the public recreation campaign with the general course of urban progressivism.<sup>41</sup> Originally conceived as a "comprehensive program of civic expression and communal service," urban progressivism had, during the war, "put individual wills together." According to George A. Bellamy, the Cleveland settlement leader, this was its greatest accomplishment. The pre-war community, said Bellamy, had been "a mighty population without a great sense of cooperation except in some sudden, tragic impulse."<sup>42</sup> The wartime trend, however, had been to create new agencies and institutions insuring continued cooperation.

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<sup>40</sup>Martha Candler, "The Better Cities Which the War Camp Community Service is Building," American City, XIX (October, 1918), pp. 262-65.

<sup>41</sup>See Edward Burchard, "Community Councils and Community Centers," in NCSW, Proceedings, 1918, pp. 469-72; Samuel Wilson, "The Community House--An Element in Reconstruction," American City, XIX (December, 1918), pp. 467-70.

<sup>42</sup>George A. Bellamy, "A Community Recreation Program for Juveniles," in NCSW, Proceedings, 1918, pp. 65-68.

From this perspective, it is understandable that many in public recreation urged the continuance of wartime governmental programs. As was the case with other war agencies, though, the demobilization sentiment plus the businessman's general distrust of government (despite its beneficial activities) resulted in the dismantling of the recreation bureaus. Lessons, however, had been learned. Community organization in the leisure sphere continued throughout the twenties in the form of "booster" activities and in the work of social service agencies. War, therefore, had organized communities, but had done so in a manner accelerating the divorcement of decision-making from the members of the communities themselves. In this sense, the war was indeed the climax of the public recreation movement.

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It is now apparent that the public recreation movement failed both to reduce urban crime and to overcome the appeal of commercial recreation by providing wholesome alternatives. Nevertheless, programs analagous to those advocated by the recreation reformers during the first part of the century remain as integral components of governmental efforts in the social welfare sector. It is tragic that many of the descriptions of slum life and its effects

utilized in this study appear timely today. More unsettling, however, is the fact that analyses of the causes of poverty and deprivation and the prescribed remedies for such ills changed little throughout the years. This work asserts that the public recreation movement was limited in its effectiveness, since it adhered to a network of assumptions concerning American society and its goals that has hampered all major reform movements. An analysis of this ideological structure and its application to the recreation cause is all the more necessary, due to its continued resilience in social thought. In this sense, the study of leisure is a foil to the consideration of the concept of reform in general.

All reform movements claim to address the "causes" of the injustices they attack, and the progressive recreation movement was no exception. Beginning with the early playground drive, however, the movement confined itself to a concern with the secondary and peripheral manifestations of deprivation and want. The limitation of the debate concerning the origins of crime to hereditarian-environmentalist parameters precluded an examination of the basic flaws in the urban socio-economic structure. Theories of innate depravity were rejected since they

threatened the ideal of equal opportunity central to American belief. The alternative, however, viewed crime as the by-product of aberrant forms of social organization within the family or neighborhood. The notion of the "depraved" slum-dweller was thereby not rejected, but placed upon an ideologically acceptable plane, as society's need to control the errant child became the assigned task of "reform." The charity organization movement's distinction between the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor was preserved as well, evolving into a definition of "right conduct" contingent upon the child's acceptance of the status quo. Child psychology contributed to this outlook, though perhaps unwittingly, by asserting the need to sympathize with the child's mental struggles. It viewed this understanding as a means to the end of maintaining order. This variety of regimentation precluded a significant critique of the child's material lot. Therefore, the early playground advocate who saw play as promoting the development of the trait of "resentment against injustice" did not (or perhaps did) realize that the major figures in the playground movement hoped to submerge this impulse.

As a result, the burden of the child "problem" shifted from the social and economic structure to its



victims. Holding the parent accountable for his child's legal difficulties was no more humane than the discarded concept of innate depravity. Nevertheless, "adjustment" of populations rather than institutions was perceived as the solution to social problems, and entrusted to social service professionals and educators convinced of the necessity for order. The "expert," myopic in his commitment to "scientific" analysis, accepted the crime: disease analogy. This encouraged a view of the entire populace as diseased and in need of management. The rigor of scientific scrutiny was circumscribed, therefore, beginning not at the causal level but at the symptomatic.

This critique of the playground movement does not denigrate the basic premise of providing play space for children. Play, however, is a basic right in and of itself, and should not be viewed as a means to another end, nor as compensation for deprivation. Many of the early playground workers displayed a sincere concern for the city child's lot. Yet, despite its claims, the playground cause did not reduce juvenile lawlessness, proving that socio-economic deficiencies are not easily counterbalanced. Moreover, the social control dimension of the playground campaign was very real. Joseph Lee, its main spokesman, defined

character in terms of acquiescence to an old, hierarchical conception of society, his overt celebration of child-life being an expression of loyalty to a questionable ideal.

The initial failure to attack the underlying causes of want insured that later phases of the recreation movement, concerned with adolescent and adult leisure, would be refinements of old ideological commitments. Progressives such as Simon N. Patten and Jane Addams succinctly described the failure of the urban community to generate healthy forms of recreation. Likewise, analysis of adolescent amusements, the prostitution problem, and the saloon were often correct in showing how economic miseries led many to participate in unhealthy leisure pursuits. Still, more attention was given to the social disarray that was implied by these studies than to the facts they presented. As a result, adolescents and adults were judged in need of society's custodianship much as the child had been. The welfare state concept of society's corporate responsibility for its members therefore focused on their behavior rather than their economic well-being.

The community recreation drive, as exemplified by the social center, derived from these assumptions. It is difficult to criticize the provision of healthful forms of

leisure for adolescents and adults, yet it is apparent that the social center's major commitment was to the minimization of conflict. Social center promoters lacked respect for ethnic and local community tradition. To make this the major point of criticism, however, is to let present-day sensitivities hinder the analysis. Many involved in the recreation cause accepted the existence of these traditions, realizing the folly of destroying older forms of unity. They therefore encouraged the retention of the trappings of ethnicity and neighborhood, while denying the community the power to govern itself. The social centers, as was shown, were controlled not by their patrons but by local business and professional groups desirous of a "safe" citizenry. The "civic club" was the ancestor of the "service" organization of the 1920s, proof of the consensus-molding possibilities of community recreation. Indeed, with the post-war removal (visible, at least) of the most morally repugnant recreational forms, the attack on commercial recreation waned as it was recognized as a socializing force. Eventually, civic leaders realized that commercial and public recreation were complementary. Recreation is now regarded as a means of assimilating the entire populace into the consumerist mainstream.

Much recent scholarship concerns itself with progressivism's commitment to social control. This study, in its scrutiny of the nature and motivation of a significant reform cause of the period, fits within this trend. The parallels between the leadership structure and methodology of the recreation movement and that of the period's business hierarchy are obvious. The recreation movement was ideologically consistent with the progressive reform dimension in general, although it drew much of its strength from the middle-class professionals involved in social work. The loss of the dissenting perspective by those directly concerned with social improvement indicates an ideological weakness in the accepted social theory of the period allowing for the absorption of the community worker into consensus politics. In this sense, the development of the modern recreation movement serves as a grim benchmark of the growth and development of this century's reform tradition in all its manifestations.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY



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There is no comprehensive historical analysis of the recreation movement. Clarence Rainwater, The Play Movement in the United States (Chicago, 1921) is a useful chronology of developments, though not an analytical work. Primary material dealing with recreation and peripherally related topics in urban history is plentiful, however. This essay is intended as a topical survey of these materials, roughly corresponding to their usage in this work. Insofar as is possible, sources whose utility extends over several areas will be indicated as such.

The interaction between scientific and reform ideas in the late nineteenth century is important to the comprehension of major influences on reformers. General works such as Paul Boller, American Thought in Transition: The Impact of Evolutionary Naturalism 1865-1900 (Chicago, 1969) and R. Jackson Wilson, In Quest of Community: Social Philosophy in the United States 1860-1920 (New York, 1968) detail the American interpretation of evolution as progressive and manageable. Of the primary materials Henry Drummond, The Lowell Lectures on the Ascent of Man (New

York, 1894) was one of the most influential works that took this point of view, albeit it was written by an Englishman. Anthropological studies were likewise useful to those studying child nature and human society in the 1890s. Among these are Edward Tylor, Primitive Culture (London, 1873) and the more specific works dealing with games and amusements such as William W. Newell, Games and Songs of American Children (New York, 1883) and Stewart Culin, Korean Games (Philadelphia, 1895).

Another source of new ideas on child nature was education, with which child psychology enjoyed a reciprocal relationship, each influencing the problem-solving procedures of the other. The National Education Association, Journal of Proceedings and Addresses from the mid-1880s through the early years of the twentieth century devoted many sessions to child study, kindergartens, and the mental effects of schooling. G. Stanley Hall presented a number of papers at these meetings. Links between child study and progressive education may be discerned in Francis A. Parker, "The Child" in NEA, Proceedings, 1889 and John Dewey, The School and Society (Chicago, 1899). Also, in 1894 the NEA established a child study department to organize presentations in that area.



For the child study movement it is advisable to begin with Dorothy Ross, G. Stanley Hall: The Psychologist as Prophet (Chicago, 1972), by far the best treatment of Hall's career though the shorter study by Merle Curti in his The Social Ideas of American Educators (Paterson, 1959) is also useful. Hall's two seminal essays on child nature are "The Moral and Religious Training of Children," Princeton Review, X (January, 1882) and "The Contents of Children's Minds on Entering School," Princeton Review, XI (May, 1883). It is necessary to consult the numbers of the American Journal of Psychology and Pedagogical Seminary, the journals Hall founded and edited, for detailed studies of child nature and play. The most important are Henry Sheldon, "The Institutional Activities of American Children," AJP, IX (July, 1898) and Hall's joint study with A. Caswell Ellis, "A Study of Dolls," PS, IV (December, 1896). The journals also contain many of the topical syllabi used in data-gathering by Hall and his students.

Other works developing the concept of play in psychological thought are Hall, "The Story of a Sand Pile," Scribner's, III (June, 1888); "Boy Life in a Massachusetts Country Town Thirty Years Ago," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, n.s., VII (October, 1890); and "Note

on Early Memories," PS, VI (December, 1899). In addition, the studies of local child study groups show the central place of children's play in the movement. These include David Kinley, "Some Social Aspects of Child-Study," in Illinois Society for Child Study, Transactions, I (December, 1894) and the various works published in Child-Study Monthly. Karl Groos' two volumes, The Play of Animals (New York, 1896) and The Play of Man (New York, 1898) detail the theory of play-as-preparation-for life, which impressed many urban reformers.

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Any classification of primary source works on the city in this period must begin with the writings of



Jacob Riis. The small collection of his papers in the New York Public Library (the major collection is in the Library of Congress) contains little material of interest, but for some correspondence between Riis and local reform groups. His popular writings, however, both of the investigative variety and the fictional, deal extensively with the consequences of city life for children's growth patterns and the need to direct their play toward constructive ends. How the Other Half Lives (New York, 1890); The Children of the Poor (New York, 1892); Children of the Tenements (New York, 1903); "The Making of Thieves in New York," Century, XLIX (November, 1894) are among the most noteworthy. The story "Skippy of Scrabble Alley" in Children of the Tenements is Riis' most concise statement of the way in which frustrated play desires evolved into crime. Besides those of Riis, there are a number of other useful works of this genre, including Helen Campbell, Darkness and Daylight (Hartford, 1891); Robert A. Woods, The Poor in Great Cities (New York, 1895). One of the early official investigations of slum life is New York State, Report of the Tenement House Committee as Authorized by the Laws of 1894 (Albany, 1895), while specialized studies of immigrant life such as Carroll D. Wright, "The

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Roy Lubove, "The Progressives and the Prostitute," Historian, XXIV (August, 1962) and John C. Burnham, "The Progressive Era Revolution in American Attitudes Toward Sex," Journal of American History, LIX (March, 1973) detail the background of the period's vice investigations. The Committee of Fourteen Mss. and The Committee of Fifteen Mss. (both in the New York Public Library) are large collections containing investigative reports, affidavits, and other materials on prostitution. Chicago Vice Commission, The Social Evil in Chicago (Chicago, 1911) is a one-volume report of findings in that city. Attempts to explain vice as originating in habits of leisure are Jane Addams, The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets (New York, 1909) and Louise DeKoven Bowen, The Straight Girl on the Crooked Path: A True Story (Chicago, 1916). George Kibbe Turner,

"The Daughters of the Poor," McClure's, XXXIV (November, 1909) is a muckraking treatment of the vice problem.

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For the background to the social center movement in Rochester, see Blake McKelvey, Rochester: The Quest for Quality, 1890-1905 (Cambridge, 1956) and Edward Stevens, Jr., "Social Centers, Politics, and Social Efficiency in the Progressive Era," History of Education Quarterly, XII (Spring, 1972). The Rochester Board of Education,



Proceedings, (Rochester, 1907-10) and Annual Report (Rochester, 1907-10) detail the movement's rise and fall as does the local newspaper, the Rochester Union-Advertiser. Most of the material on Rochester's social centers is found in the writings of Edward J. Ward, especially The Social Center (New York, 1913); "The Rochester Social Centers," in Playground Association of America, Proceedings of the Third Annual Playground Congress and Year Book, 1909 (New York, 1910); "The Little Red Schoolhouse," Survey, XXII (August 7, 1909); and "The Schoolhouse as the Civic and Social Center of the Community," in NEA, Proceedings, 1912. John Dutko, Socialism in Rochester 1900-1917 (M.A. thesis, University of Rochester, 1953) is the best account of the controversy leading to the closing of the centers. Actual center activities are discussed both in the aforementioned works and in League of Civic Clubs, Rochester Social Centers and Civic Clubs: The Story of the First Two Years (Rochester, 1909), as well as in Common Good, the social center magazine. Ray Stannard Baker, "Do It For Rochester," American Magazine, LXX (February, 1910) and Henry S. Curtis, "The Neighborhood Center," American City, VII (August, 1912) are representative reformist views of the social center phenomenon.

The expansion of the movement is chronicled in Clarence A. Perry, Wider Use of the School Plant (New York, 1910). Community recreational activities in New York are detailed in the People's Institute Mss. (New York Public Library), a large collection within which the writings of John Collier and the reports of civic committees are most important. John Collier and Edward A. Barrows, The City Where Crime is Play (New York, 1914) is representative of the views of the People's Institute on the community recreation problem and Collier's study "City Planning and the Problem of Recreation," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, LI (January, 1917) exhibits the linkage between public recreation and city promotion that is at the nascent stage during the progressive period.

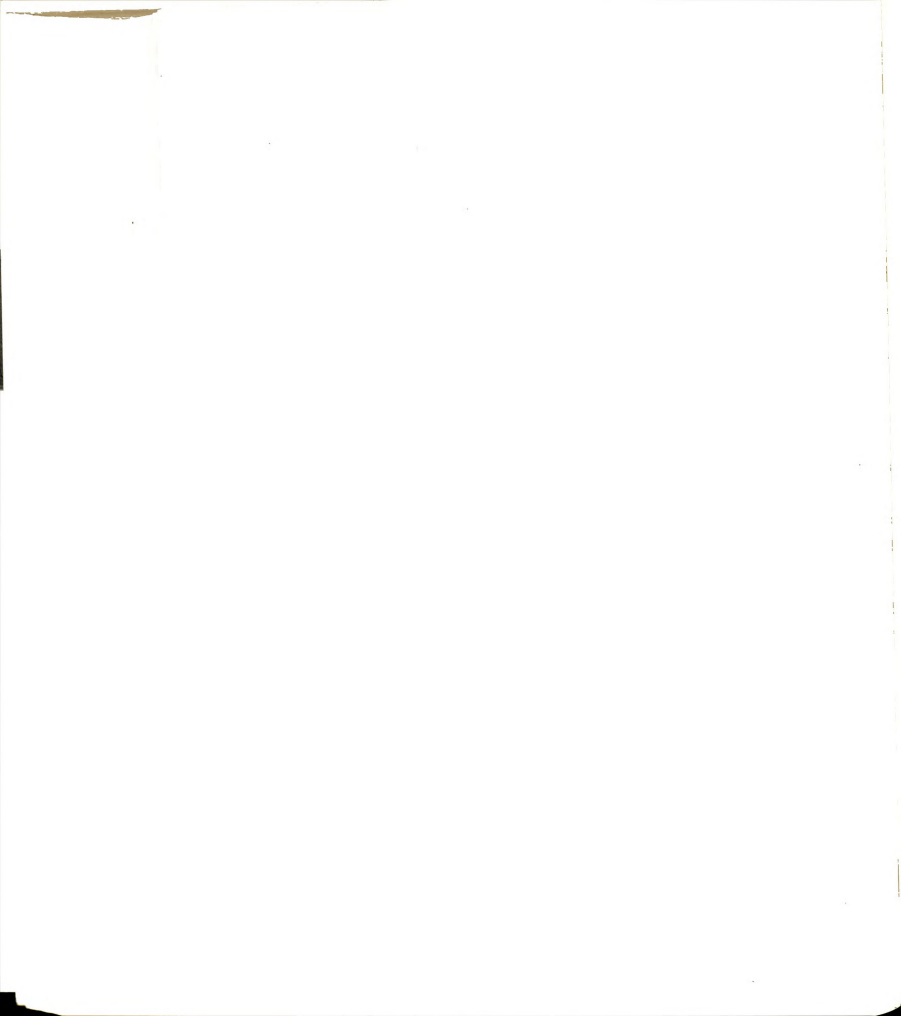
The Raymond B. Fosdick Mss. (Princeton University) contain much material on Fosdick's activities as chairman of the Commission on Training Camp Activities and his autobiography, Chronicle of a Generation (New York, 1958) is also useful. For the social service professional's view of the war see Robert A. Woods, "Address," NCSW, Proceedings, 1917, and Edward T. Devine, "Social Forces," Survey, XXVIII (June 20, 1917). U.S. Children's Bureau, Juvenile Delinquency in Certain Countries at War: A Brief Review of




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