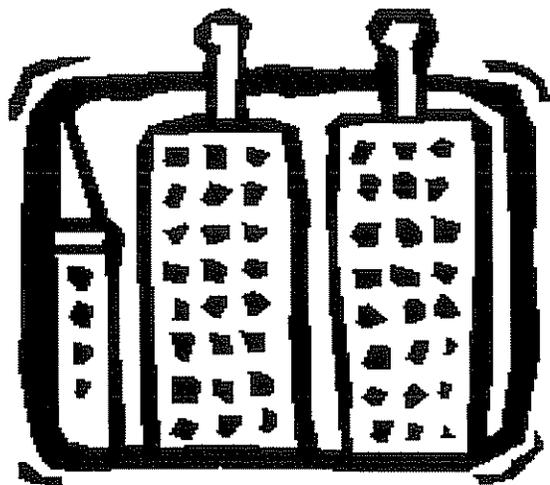


DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES :

SERVICE IS
CONTESTED



SERVICE IS CONTESTED



If you think service is a simple and clear-cut thing, simply read the following articles. All of these articles have one thing in common: they differ greatly in describing the purpose and meaning of public service in our society. Some writers believe that service is inherently “condescending” and even destructive; others believe it is a moral good and crucial for democracy. Some argue that service is good for young people, while others explain that it can be divisive. Other writers state that our country needs more service. Still others argue that we should stop talking about service and begin to address the deeper causes of our nation’s problems. Whatever these authors argue, they show that there is not one vision for service. We hope this section can help your group debate the higher purposes of service as it relates to democracy, citizenship, and public life. In certain ways, this should be a continuation of the work you did in Part Two.

Where possible, we pair articles which seem to speak to one another (except for the opening article by Robert Coles which stands on its own). That is, if one person argues that service is morally wrong, we pair it with someone who argues that service is a moral good. We hope this can help provoke debate better, so that partici-



pants have an array of ideas before they discuss their own attitudes towards these issues. Of course, some of our divisions might not make sense to you. And very often articles that are placed in one pair might speak better to articles in another pair. Our only intention in these pairings is to *begin* debate — not force you into predetermined outlooks.

We also follow each reading with a set of questions. These are meant to begin discussion, and again you might feel that our questions are not helpful. Feel free to construct your own. But we have tried to ask hard questions about the implications of arguments and about how they relate to different visions of service. Again, if participants use these readings to debate the deeper meaning of service, you have succeeded.

Participants might also have read articles in their local paper discussing the merits or downsides of service. They should be encouraged to look for these sort of articles and bring them in for discussion (and perhaps write letters to the editors in response).



COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK

BY ROBERT COLES

Robert Coles is a professor of psychology at Harvard University who has written numerous books about the moral education of young people. Here he recounts his own experiences with community service and sets out the idea that service teaches us something important, if we allow it to. This article is reprinted with permission from the author (it originally appeared in Liberal Education, September/October, 1988).

When I was a college student I did “volunteer work,” as we then called it. I tutored some boys and girls who were having trouble with reading, writing, arithmetic. I left one part of Cambridge, Massachusetts, for another, often on foot, so that I could enjoy what my father had taught me to call a “good hike.” When I came back to “school,” certain scenes I had witnessed and certain statements I had heard would stay with me come to mind now and then as I pursued various courses, lived a certain late adolescent life.

Often, when I went home to visit my parents, they inquired after my extracurricular teaching life. My mother was inclined to be religiously sentimental: it was good that I was helping out some youngsters in trouble. For her the sin of pride was around any corner; hence our need to escape that constant pull of egoism, to work with others on behalf of their lives, with our own, for a change, taking a back seat. My father, a probing scientist, commonly took a different tack and asked me many times the same question, “What did you learn?”

I was never quite sure how to answer my father, and often I had no need to do so. My mother was quick to reply, emphasizing her notion of the education such tutoring can afford a college student: “the lesson of humility,” a favorite phrase of hers. If any amplification was necessary, she could be forthcoming with another well-worn piety: “There but for the grace of God. . .”

My father’s question often came back to haunt me, no matter my mother’s hasty, biblical interventions. What *did* I learn? What was I *supposed* to learn? I was, after all, the teacher, not the student. Anyway, these were elementary school children, and there was nothing new in the ground I was covering with them every week. But I had listened to my father too often, on long walks through various cities, to let the matter rest there. He was born and grew up in Yorkshire, England, and

was a great walker, a great observer as he kept his legs moving fast. He was also an admirer of George Orwell long before *Animal Farm* and 1984 were published — the early Orwell who wrote *Down and Out in London and Paris*, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, and *Homage to Catalonia*; the Orwell, that is, who explored relentlessly the world around him and described carefully yet with dramatic intensity the nature of that world.

My father had introduced me to those books before I went to college, and they returned to me as I did volunteer work, a scene, some words, or more generally, Orwell’s social and moral inquiry as both are conveyed in his several narrative efforts. I was beginning to realize that Orwell was a “big brother” for me in a manner far at variance to the already widespread meaning of that phrase. He was helping me make sense of a continuing experience I was having, sharing his wisdom with me, giving me pause, prompting in me scrutiny not only of others (the children I met, and occasionally their parents) but my own mind as it came up with its various opinions, conclusions, attitudes.

Later, at college, I would read the poetry and prose of William Carlos Williams, his long poem *Paterson*, his Stecher trilogy, *White Mule*, *In The Money*, *The Buildup*. Williams tried hard to evoke the rhythms of working class life in America, the struggle of ordinary people to make their way in the world, to find a satisfactory manner of living, of regarding themselves. He knew how hard it is for people like himself (well-educated, well-to-do) to make contact in any substantial way with others, who work in factories or stores or on farms, or indeed, who do not work at all or are lucky to be intermittently employed.



When he emphasized his search for an American “language,” Williams was getting at the fractured nature of our nation’s life — the divisions by race, class, region, culture — which keep so many of us unaware of one another, unable to comprehend one another. Often as I went to do my tutoring, and heard words I never before knew or heard words used in new and arresting ways and as I learned about the memories and hopes and habits and interests of people in a neighborhood rather unlike the one where I lived, I thought of Williams’s poems and stories and realized how much he owed to the humble people of northern, industrial New Jersey. As he once put it to me, years after I graduated from college, “Those house calls [to attend his patients] are giving me an education. Every day I learn something new, a sight, a phrase, and I’m made to stop and think about my world, the world I’ve left behind.” He was reminding both of us that the “education” he had in mind was no one-way affair.

I fear it took some of us doing our volunteer work a good deal of time to learn the lesson Williams was putting to word. At my worst, I must admit, a sense of *noblesse oblige* was at work — a conviction that I would share certain (intellectual) riches with “them.” Only when I went with Williams on some of his house calls, observed him paying close heed to various men, women, and children, did I begin to realize how much his mind grew in response to the everyday experiences he was having.

Now, many years later, I find myself a teacher at a university, offering courses for undergraduates and for students in professional schools (law, medicine, business, education). I work with many young people who are anxious to do community service of one kind or another — teach in urban schools, offer medical or legal assistance to needy families. At times I stand in awe of some of those youths—their determination, their decency, their good-heartedness, their savvy. I also notice in many of them a need for discussion and reflection: a time to stop and consider

what they would like to be doing, what they are doing, what they are having difficulty doing. A college senior put the matter to me this way one afternoon: “I started this work [volunteer work in a school near a large urban low-rent housing project] as something apart from my courses, my life here as a student. I wanted to be of use to someone other than myself and in a really honest moment, I’d probably add that I was also being selfish: It would beef up my brag sheet when I apply to a graduate school. But hell, I’d been doing this kind of [volunteer] work since high school as a part of our church’s activities, so I shouldn’t be too cynical about my motives! But the last thing I expected was that I’d come back here [to his dormitory] and want to read books to help me figure out what’s happening [in the neighborhood where he does volunteer work]. I’ve designed my own private course—and it helps; I can anticipate certain troubles, because I’ve learned from the reading I do, and I get less discouraged, because I’ve seen a bigger view, courtesy of those writers.”

He said much more, but the gist of his remarks made me realize that there are social scientists and novelists and poets and essayists who have offered that student so very much — their knowledge, their experience, their sense of what matters, and not least, their companionship — as fellow human beings whose concerns are similar to those of the youths now sweating things out in various student volunteer programs. Put differently, those writers (or filmmakers or photographers) are teachers, and their subject matter is an important one for many of our country’s students, engaged as they are in acts of public service.

Our institutions of higher learning might certainly take heed — not only encourage students to do such service, but help them stop and mull over what they have heard and seen by means of books to be read, discussions to be had. This is the very purpose, after all, of colleges and universities, to help one generation after another grow intellectually and morally through study and the self-scrutiny such study can sometimes prompt.



Questions for Discussion

1. What was Coles' initial motivation to serve? What do you think Coles' mother meant when she referred to service as "a lesson in humility"? Has your service experience been a lesson in humility? Why or why not?
2. How did Coles' father's questions, coupled with his own reflection, change the way Coles conceived of learning and teaching?
3. What exactly did Coles learn from William Carlos Williams?
4. Coles suggests that service, like other life experiences, is a learning opportunity. What makes service particularly conducive to learning?
5. What kind of reflective processes should we encourage in our society if we want to, "help one generation after another grow intellectually and morally...?"



"TO HELL WITH GOOD INTENTIONS"

BY IVAN ILLICH

Ivan Illich has been a pastor in America and has worked with religious organizations in Latin America. In addition, he has written important works of social criticism and cultural history (including the famous book, Deschooling Society). In this speech, he provides a harsh criticism of initiatives that are akin to the Peace Corps. Much of this writing is framed by the events of the late 1960s (when it was written), but its core arguments remain pertinent today.

For the past six years I have become known for my increasing opposition to the presence of any and all North American "do-gooders" in Latin America. I am sure you know of my present efforts to obtain the voluntary withdrawal of all North American volunteer armies from Latin America — missionaries, Peace Corps members, and groups like yours, a "division" organized for the benevolent invasion of Mexico. You were aware of these things when you invited me — of all people — to be the main speaker at your annual convention. This is amazing! I can only conclude that your invitation means one of at least three things:

Some among you might have reached the conclusion that Conference on Inter-American Student Projects should either dissolve altogether, or take the promotion of voluntary aid to the Mexican poor out of its institutional purpose. Therefore you might have invited me here to help others reach this same decision.

You might also have invited me because you want to learn how to deal with people who think the way I do — how to dispute them successfully. It has now become quite common to invite Black Power spokesmen to address Lions Clubs. A "dove" must always be included in a public dispute organized to increase U.S. belligerence.

And finally, you might have invited me here hoping that you would be able to agree with most of what I say, and then go ahead in good faith and work this summer in Mexican villages. This last possibility is only open to those who do not listen, or who cannot understand me.

I did not come here to argue. I am here to tell you, if possible to convince you, and hopefully, to stop you, from imposing yourselves on Mexicans.

I do have deep faith in the enormous good will of the U.S. volunteer. However, his good faith can usually be explained only by an abysmal lack of intuitive delicacy. By definition, you cannot help being ultimately vacationing salesmen for the middle-class "American Way of Life," since that is really the only life you know.

A group like this could not have developed unless a mood in the United States had supported it — the belief that any true American must share God's blessings with his poorer fellow men. The idea that every American has something to give, and at all times may, can and should give it, explains why it occurred to students that they could help Mexican peasants "develop" by spending a few months in their villages.

Of course, this surprising conviction was supported by members of a missionary order, who would have no reason to exist unless they had the same conviction — except a much stronger one. It is now high time to cure yourselves of this. You, like the values you carry, are the products of an American society of achievers and consumers, with its two-party system, its universal schooling, and its family-car affluence. You are ultimately — consciously or unconsciously — "salesmen" for a delusive ballot in the ideals of democracy, equal opportunity and free enterprise among people who haven't the possibility of profiting from these.

Next to money and guns, the third largest North American export is the U.S. idealist, who turns up in every theater of the world: the teacher, the volunteer, the missionary, the community organizer, the economic developer, and the vacationing do-gooders. Actually, they frequently end up alleviating the damage done



by money and weapons, or “seducing” the “underdeveloped” to the benefits of the world of affluence and achievement. Perhaps this is the moment to instead bring home to the people of the U.S. the knowledge that the way of life they have chosen simply is not alive enough to be shared.

By now it should be evident to all America that the U.S. is engaged in a tremendous struggle to survive. The U.S. cannot survive if the rest of the world is not convinced that here we have Heaven-on-Earth. The survival of the U.S. depends on the acceptance by all so-called “free” men that the U.S. middle class has “made it.” The U.S. way of life has become a religion which must be accepted by all those who do not want to die by the sword — or the napalm. All over the globe the U.S. is fighting to protect and develop at least a minority who consume what the U.S. majority can afford. Such is the purpose of the Alliance for Progress of the middle-classes which the U.S. signed with Latin America some years ago. But increasingly this commercial alliance must be protected by weapons which allow the minority who can “make it” to protect their acquisitions and achievements.

But weapons are not enough to permit minority rule. The marginal masses become rambunctious unless they are given a “Creed,” or a belief which explains the status quo. This task is given to the U.S. volunteer - whether he be a member of CIASP or a worker in the so-called “Pacification Programs” in Vietnam.

The United States is currently engaged in a three-front struggle to affirm its ideals of acquisitive and achievement oriented “Democracy.” I say “three” fronts because three great areas of the world are challenging the validity of a political and social system which makes the rich ever richer, and the poor increasingly marginal to that system.

In Asia, the U.S. is threatened by an established power — China. The U.S. opposes China with three weapons: the tiny Asian elites who could not have it any better than in an alliance with the United States: a huge war to stop the Chinese from “taking over” as it is usually put in this country, and; forcible re-education of the so-called “Pacified” peoples. All three of these efforts seem to be failing.

In Chicago, poverty funds the police force and preachers seem to be no more successful in their

efforts to check the unwillingness of the Black community to wait for grateful integration into the system.

And finally, in Latin America the Alliance for Progress has been quite successful in increasing the number of people who could not be better off — meaning the tiny, middle-class elites - and has created ideal conditions for military dictatorships. The dictators were formerly at the service of the plantation owners, but now they protect the new industrial complexes. And finally, you come to help the underdog accept his destiny in this progress!

All you will do in a Mexican village is create disorder. At best, you can try to convince Mexican girls that they should marry a young man who is self-made, rich, a consumer, and as disrespectful of tradition as one of you. At worst, in your “community development” spirit you might create enough problems to get someone shot after your vacation ends and you rush back to your middle-class neighborhoods where your friends make jokes about “spics” and “wetbacks.” You start on your task without any training. Even the Peace Corps spends around \$10,000 on each corpsmember to help him adapt to a new environment and to guard him against culture shock. How odd that nobody ever thought about spending money to educate poor Mexicans in order to prevent them from the culture shock of meeting you?

In fact, you cannot even meet the majority which you pretend to serve in Latin America — even if you speak their language, which most of you cannot. You can only dialogue with those like you — Latin American imitations of the North American middle class. There is no way for you to really meet with the underprivileged, since there is no common ground whatsoever for you to meet on.

Let me explain this statement, and also let me explain why most Latin Americans with whom you might be able to communicate would disagree with me.

Suppose you went to a U.S. ghetto this summer and tried to help the poor there “help themselves.” Very soon you would be either spit upon or laughed at. People offended by your pretentiousness would hit or spit. People who understand that your own bad consciences push you to this gesture would laugh condescendingly. Soon you would be made aware of your irrelevance among the poor, of your status as middle class college students on a summer assignment. You would be roundly rejected, no matter if your skin is white — as most of your faces here are — or brown, or

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black, as a few exceptions who got in here somehow.

Your reports about your work in Mexico, which you so kindly sent me, exude self-complacency. Your reports on past summers prove that you are not even capable of understanding that your do-gooding in a Mexican village is even less relevant than it would be in a U.S. ghetto. Not only is there a gulf between what you have and what others have which is greater than the one existing between you and the poor in your own country, but there is also a gulf between what you feel and what the Mexican people feel that is incomparably greater. This gulf is so great that in a Mexican village you, as White Americans (or cultural White Americans) can imagine yourselves exactly the way a White preacher saw himself when he offered his life preaching to Black slaves on a plantation in Alabama. The fact that you live in huts and eat tortillas for a few weeks renders your well-intentioned group only a bit more picturesque.

The only people with whom you can hope to communicate with are some members of the middle class. And here please remember that I said "some" — by which I mean a tiny elite in Latin America. You come from a country which industrialized early and which succeeded in incorporating the great majority of its citizens into the middle classes. It is no social distinction in the U.S. to have graduated from the second year of college. Indeed, most Americans now do. Anybody in this country who did not finish high school is considered underprivileged.

In Latin America the situation is quite different: 75% of all people drop out of school before they reach the sixth grade. Thus, people who have finished high school are members of a tiny minority.

Then a minority of that minority goes on for university training. It is only among these people that you will find your educational equals.

At the same time, a middle class in the United States is the majority. In Mexico it is a tiny elite. Seven years ago your country began and financed a so-called "Alliance" for the "Progress" of the middle class elites. Now, it is among the members of this middle class that you will find a few people who are willing to spend their time with you. And they are overwhelmingly those "nice kids" who would also like to soothe their troubled consciences by "doing something nice for the promotion of the poor Indians." Of course, when you

and your middle-class Mexican counterparts meet, you will be told that you are doing something valuable, that you are "sacrificing" to help others.

And it will be the foreign priest who will especially confirm your self-image for you. After all, his livelihood and sense of purpose depends on his firm belief in a year round mission which is of the same type as your summer vacation-mission.

There exists the argument that some returned volunteers have gained insight into the damage they have done others — and thus become more mature people. Yet it is less frequently stated that most of them are ridiculously proud of their "summer sacrifices." Perhaps there is also something to the argument that young men should be promiscuous for awhile in order to find out that sexual love is most beautiful in a monogamous relationship. Or that the best way to leave LSD alone is to try it for awhile — or even that the best way of understanding that your help in the ghetto is neither needed nor wanted is to try, and fail. I do not agree with this argument. The damage which volunteers do willy-nilly is too high a price for the belated insight that they shouldn't have been volunteers in the first place.

If you have any sense of responsibility at all, stay with your riots there at home. Work for the coming elections: You will know what you are doing, why you are doing it, and how to communicate with those to whom you speak. And you will know when you fail. If you insist on working with the poor, if this is your vocation, then at least work among the poor who can tell you to go to hell. It is incredibly unfair for you to impose yourselves on a village where you are so linguistically deaf and dumb that you don't even understand what you are doing, or what people think of you. And it is profoundly damaging to yourselves when you define something that you want to do as "good," a "sacrifice," and "help."

I am here to suggest that you voluntarily renounce exercising the power which being an American gives you. I am here to entreat you to freely, consciously and humbly give up the legal right you have to impose your benevolence on Mexico. I am here to challenge you to recognize your inability, your powerlessness and your incapacity to do the "good" which you intended to do.

I am here to entreat you to use your money, your status and your education to travel in Latin America. Come to look, come to climb our mountains, to enjoy our flowers. Come to study. But do not come to help.



Questions for Discussion

1. Is service *inherently* an imposition of a server's lifestyle and privilege on those being served? Illich suggests that it is. Is he right? Why or why not?
2. Illich argues about international service but brings up a national case when speaking about ghettos. Does his argument work for national service as well as for international service?
3. Does your background always affect your service activities? How and why? How and why not?
4. What would Robert Coles say to Ivan Illich about his view of those who are serving?



THE MORAL EQUIVALENT OF WAR

BY WILLIAM JAMES

William James (1842-1910) was one of America's most famous philosophers. Known for developing the philosophical concept of "pragmatism," James also wrote about the pressing political issues of the day. In this essay, he sets out his criticism of pacifism and argues that Americans must find peaceful means of giving expression to warlike virtues. Many of the ideas found here influenced the formation of the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s.

The war against war is going to be no holiday excursion or camping party. The military feelings are too deeply grounded to abdicate their place among our ideals until better substitutes are offered than the glory and shame that come to nations as well as to individuals from the ups and downs of politics and the vicissitudes of trade. There is something highly paradoxical in the modern man's relation to war. Ask all our millions, north and south, whether they would vote now (were such a thing possible) to have our war for the Union expunged from history, and the record of a peaceful transition to the present time substituted for that of its marches and battles, and probably hardly a handful of eccentrics would say yes. Those ancestors, those efforts, those memories and legends, are the most ideal part of what we now own together, a sacred spiritual possession worth more than all the blood poured out. Yet ask those same people whether they would be willing in cold blood to start another civil war now to gain another similar possession, and not one man or woman would vote for the proposition. In modern eyes, precious though wars may be, they must not be waged solely for the sake of the ideal harvest.

Only when forced upon one, only when an enemy's injustice leaves us no alternative, is a war now thought permissible.

It was not thus in ancient times. The earlier men were hunting men, and to hunt a neighboring tribe, kill the males, loot the village and possess the females, was the most profitable, as well as the most exciting, way of living. Thus were the more martial tribes selected, and in chiefs and peoples a pure pugnacity and love of glory came to mingle with the more fundamental appetite for plunder.

Modern war is so expensive that we feel trade to be a better avenue to plunder; but modern

man inherits all the innate pugnacity and all the love of glory of his ancestors. Showing war's irrationality and horror is of no effect upon him. The horrors make the fascination. War is the *strong life*; it is life *in extremis*; war-taxes are the only ones men never hesitate to pay, as the budgets of all nations show us....

In my remarks, pacifist though I am, I will refuse to speak of the bestial side of the war-regime (already done justice to by many writers) and consider only the higher aspects of militaristic sentiment. Patriotism no one thinks discreditable; nor does any one deny that war is the romance of history. But inordinate ambitions are the soul of ever patriotism, and the possibility of violent death the soul of all romance. The military patriot and romantic-minded everywhere, and especially the professional military class, hesitate to admit for a moment that war may be transitory phenomenon in social evolution. The notion of a sheep's paradise like the revolts, they say, our higher imagination. Where then would be the steeps of life? If war had ever stopped, we should have to reinvent it, on this view, to redeem life from flat degeneration.

Reflective apologists for war at the present day all take it religiously. It is a sort of sacrament. Its profits are to the vanquished as well as to the victor; and quite apart from any question of profit, it is an absolute good we are told, for it is human nature at its highest dynamic. Its "horrors" are a cheap price to pay for rescue from the only alternative supposed, of a world of clerks and teachers, of coeducation and zoophily, of "consumer's leagues" and "associated charities," of industrialism unlimited, and feminism unabashed. No scorn, no hardness, no valor any more! Fie upon such a cattleyard of a planet!

So far as the central essence of this feeling goes, no healthy minded person, it seems to me, can help to some degree partaking of it. Militarism is the great



preserver of our ideals of hardihood, and human life with no use for hardihood would be contemptible. Without risks or prizes for the darer, history would be insipid indeed; and there is a type of military character which every one feels that should never cease to breed, for every one is sensitive to its superiority. The duty is incumbent on mankind, of keeping military characters in stock-of keeping them, if not for use, then as ends in themselves a pure pieces of perfection....

Pacifists ought to enter more deeply into the aesthetical and ethical point of view of their opponents. Do that first in any controversy, says J. J. Chapman, *then move the point*, and your opponent will follow. So long as anti-militarists propose no substitute for war's disciplinary function, no *moral equivalent* of war, analogous, as one might say, to the mechanical equivalent of heat, so long as they fail to realize the full inwardness of the situation. And as a rule they do fail. The duties, penalties, and sanctions pictured in the utopias they paint are all too weak and tame to touch the military-minded. Tolstoy's pacificism is the only exception to this rule, for it is profoundly pessimistic as regards all this world's values, and makes the fear of the Lord furnish the moral spur provided elsewhere by the fear of the enemy. But our socialistic peace-advocates all believe absolutely in this world's values; and instead of the fear of the Lord and the fear of the enemy, the only fear they reckon with is the fear of poverty if one be lazy. This weakness pervades all the socialistic literature with which I am acquainted. Even in Lowes Dickinson's exquisite dialogue, high-wages and short hours are the only forces invoked for overcoming man's distaste for repulsive kinds of labor. Meanwhile men at large still live as they always have lived, under a pain-and-fear economy — for those of us who live in an ease-economy are but an island in the stormy ocean — and the whole atmosphere of present-day utopian literature tastes mawkish and dishwatery to people who still keep a sense for life's more bitter flavors. It suggests, in truth, ubiquitous inferiority.

Inferiority is always with us, and merciless scorn of it is the keynote of the military temper. "Dogs, would you live forever?" shouted Frederick the Great. "Yes," say our utopians, "let us live forever, and raise our level gradually." The best thing about our "inferiors" today is that they are as tough as nails, and physically and morally almost as insensitive. Utopianism would see them soft and squeamish, while militarism would

keep their callousness, but transfigure it into a meritorious characteristic, needed by "the service," and redeemed by that from the suspicion of inferiority. All the qualities of a man acquire dignity when he knows that the service of the collectivity that owns him needs them. If proud of the collectivity, his own pride rises in proportion. No collectivity is like an army for nourishing such pride; but it has to be confessed that the only sentiment which the image of pacific cosmopolitan industrialism is capable of arousing in countless worthy breasts is shame at the idea of belonging to *such* a collectivity. It is obvious that the United States of America as they exist today impress a mind like General Lea's as so much human blubber. Where is the sharpness and precipitousness, the contempt for life, whether one's own, or another's? Where is the savage "yes" and "no," the unconditional duty? Where is the conscription? Where is the blood-tax? Where is anything that one feels honored by belonging to?

Having said thus much in preparation, I will now confess my own utopia. I devoutly believe in the reign of peace and in the gradual advent of some sort of a socialistic equilibrium. The fatalistic view of the war-function is to me nonsense, for I know that war-making is due to definite motives and subject to prudential checks and reasonable criticisms, just like any other form of enterprise. And when whole nations are the armies, and the science of destruction vies in intellectual refinement with the sciences of production, I, see that war becomes absurd and impossible from its own monstrosity. Extravagant ambitions will have to be replaced by reasonable claims, and nations must make common cause against them. I see no reason why all this should not apply to yellow as well as to white countries, and I look forward to a future when acts of war shall be formally outlawed as between civilized peoples.

All these beliefs of mine put me squarely into the anti-militarist party. But I do not believe that peace either ought to be or will be permanent on this globe, unless the states pacifically organized preserve some of the old elements of army-discipline. A permanently successful peace-economy cannot be a simple pleasure-economy. In the more or less socialistic future towards which mankind seems drifting we must still subject ourselves collectively to those severities which answer to our real position upon this only partly hospitable globe. We must make new energies and hardihoods continue the manliness to which the military mind so



faithfully clings. Martial virtues must be the enduring cement; intrepidity, contempt of softness, surrender of private interest, obedience to command, must still remain the rock upon which states are built—unless, indeed, we wish for dangerous reactions against commonwealths fit only for contempt, and liable to invite attack whenever a center of crystallization for military-minded enterprise gets formed anywhere in their neighborhood.

The war-party is assuredly right in affirming and reaffirming that the martial virtues, although originally gained by the race through war, are absolute and permanent human goods. Patriotic pride and ambition in their military form are, after all, only specifications of a more general competitive passion. They are its first form, but that is no reason for supposing them to be its last form. Men now are proud of belonging to a conquering nation, and without a murmur they lay down their persons and their wealth, if by so doing they may fend off subjection. But who can be sure that *other aspects of one's country* may not, with time and education and suggestion enough, come to be regarded with similarly effective feelings of pride and shame? Why should men not some day feel that it is worth a blood-tax to belong to a collectivity superior in any ideal respect? Why should they not blush with indignant shame if the community that owns them is vile in any way whatsoever? Individuals, daily more numerous, now feel this civic passion. It is only a question of blowing on the spark till the whole population gets incandescent, and on the ruins of the old morals of military honor, a stable system of morals of civic honor builds itself up. What the whole community comes to believe in grasps the individual as in a vise. The war-function has grasped us so far; but constructive interests may some day seem no less imperative, and impose on the individual a hardly lighter burden.

Let me illustrate my idea more concretely. There is nothing to make one indignant in the mere fact that life is hard, that men should toil and suffer pain. The planetary conditions once for all are such, and we can stand it. But that so many men, by mere accidents of birth and opportunity, should have a life of *nothing else* but toil and pain and hardness and inferiority imposed upon them, should have *no* vacation, while others natively no more deserving never get any taste of this campaigning life at *all*—*this* is capable of arousing indignation in reflective minds. It may end by seeming

shameful to all of us that some of us have nothing but campaigning, and others nothing but unmanly ease. If now — and this is my idea — there were, instead of military conscription, a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against *Nature*, the injustice would tend to be evened out, and numerous other goods to the commonwealth would follow. The military ideals of hardihood and discipline would wrought into the growing fiber of the people and no one would remain blind as the luxury classes now are blind, to man's relation to the globe he lives on, and to the permanent sour and hard foundations of his higher life. To coal and iron mines, to freight trains, to fishing fleets in December, to dish-washing, clothes-washing, and window-washing, to road-building and tunnel-making, to foundries and stoke-holes, and to the frames of skyscrapers, would our gilded youths drafted off, according to their choice, to get the childishness knocked out of them, and to come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer ideas...

...Such a conscription, with the state of public opinion that would have required it, and the many moral fruits it would bear, would preserve in the midst of a pacific civilization the manly virtues which the military party is so afraid of seeing disappear in peace. We should get toughness without callousness, authority with as little criminal cruelty as possible, and painful work done cheerily because the duty is temporary, and threatens not, as now, to degrade the whole remainder of one's life. I spoke of the "moral equivalent" of war. So far, war has been the one force that can discipline a whole community and until an equivalent discipline is organized, I believe that war must have its way. But I have no serious doubt that the ordinary prides and shames of social man, once developed to a certain intensity, are capable of organizing such a moral equivalent as I have sketched, or some other just as effective for preserving manliness of type. It is but a question of time, of skillful propagandism, and of opinion-making men seizing historic opportunities.

The martial type of character can be bred without war. Strenuous honor and disinterestedness abound elsewhere. Priests and medical men are in a fashion educated to it, and we should all feel some degree of it imperative if we were conscious of our work as an obligatory service to the state. We should be *owned*, as soldiers are by the army, and our pride would



rise accordingly. We could be poor, then, without humiliation, as army officers now are. The only thing needed henceforward is to inflame the civic temper as past history has inflamed the military temper. H. G. Wells, as usual, sees the center of the situation. "In many ways," he says, "military organization is the most peaceful of activities. When the contemporary man steps from the street, of clamorous insincere advertisement, push, adulteration, underselling and intermittent employment into the barrack-yard, he steps on to a higher social plane, into an atmosphere of service and cooperation and of infinitely more honorable emulations. Here at least men are not flung out of employment to degenerate because there is no immediate work for them to do. They are fed and drilled and trained for better services. Here at least a man is supposed to win promotion by self-forgetfulness and not by self-seeking. And beside the feeble and irregular endowment of research by commercialism, its little short-sighted snatches at profit by innovation and scientific economy, see how remarkable is the steady and rapid development of method and appliances in naval and military affairs! Nothing is more striking than to compare the progress of civil conveniences which has been left almost entirely to the trader, to the progress in military apparatus during the last few decades.

The house-appliances of today, for example, are little better than they were fifty years ago. A house of today is still almost as ill-ventilated, badly heated by wasteful fires, clumsily arranged and furnished as the house of 1858. Houses a couple of hundred years are still satisfactory places of residence, so little have our standards risen. But the rife battleship of fifty years ago was beyond all comparison inferior to those we possess; power, in speed, in convenience alike. No one has a use now for such superannuated things."

Wells adds that he thinks that the conceptions of order and discipline, the tradition of service and devotion, of physical fitness, unstinted exertion, and universal responsibility which universal military duty is now teaching European nations, will remain a permanent acquisition, when the last ammunition has been used in the fireworks that celebrate the final peace. I believe as he does. It would be simply preposterous if the only force that could work ideals of honor and standards or efficiency into English or American nature should be the fear of being killed by the Germans or the Japanese. Great indeed is Fear; but it is not, as our military enthusiasts believe and try to make us believe, the only stimulus known for awakening the higher ranges of men's spiritual energy.

Questions for Discussion

1. What reasons does James give to bolster his argument that we need a moral equivalent of war? What aspects of war and military life does he value? Why? What does James mean by a war "against Nature"?
2. What political criticisms was James responding to when he wrote the essay? Are they still relevant today?
3. Does the moral purposefulness of the military depend on identifying "an enemy" who is to be vanquished? Is this a dangerous idea to emulate in a democracy aiming at inclusion and universal membership?
4. What nonmilitary wars have we fought in this country (War On _____) ?
5. Do you think the "team" model of service emulates military platoons or squadrons? Do you think it reenforces the benefits of service to work in a team? What are the strengths of that model? What are the weaknesses?



ON BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

BY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) is well known for leading the civil rights movement. He is not as well known for being an important philosopher, which he was. In this article, King sets out his vision of concern for others' well-being and provides both a criticism and defense of certain outlooks on altruism. In this way, he provides an interesting response to Rand's dismissal of altruism (our next reading).

And who is my neighbor?

Luke 10:29

I should like to talk with you about a good man, whose exemplary life will always be a flashing light to plague the dozing conscience of mankind. His goodness was not found in a passive commitment to a particular creed, but in his active participation in a life-saving deed; not in a moral pilgrimage that reached its destination point, but in the love ethic by which he journeyed life's highway. He was good because he was a good neighbor.

The ethical concern of this man is expressed in a magnificent little story, which begins with a theological discussion on the meaning of eternal life and concludes in a concrete expression of compassion on a dangerous road. Jesus is asked a question by a man who had been trained in the details of Jewish law: "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life." The retort is prompt: "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" After a moment the lawyer recites articulately: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Then comes the decisive word from Jesus: "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

The lawyer was chagrined. "Why," the people might ask, "would an expert in law raise a question that even the novice can answer?" Desiring to justify himself and to show that Jesus' reply was far from conclusive, the lawyer asks, "And who is my neighbor?" The lawyer was now taking up the cudgels of debate that might have turned the conversation into an abstract theological discussion. But Jesus, determined not to be caught in the "paralysis of analysis,"

pulls the question from mid-air and places it on a dangerous curve between Jerusalem and Jericho.

He told the story of "a certain man" who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers who stripped him, beat him, and, departing, left him half dead. By chance a certain priest appeared, but he passed by on the other side, and later a Levite also passed by. Finally, a certain Samaritan, a half-breed from a people with whom the Jews had no dealings, appeared. When he saw the wounded man, he was moved with compassion, administered first aid, placed him on his beast, "and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." Who is my neighbor? "I do not know his name," says Jesus in essence. "He is anyone toward whom you are neighborly. He is anyone who lies in need at life's roadside. He is neither Jew nor Gentile; he is neither Russian nor American; he is neither Negro nor white. He is 'a certain man'—any needy man—on one of the numerous Jericho roads of life." So Jesus defines a neighbor, not in a theological definition, but in a life situation.

What constituted the goodness of the good Samaritan? Why will he always be an inspiring paragon of neighborly virtue? It seems to me that this man's goodness may be described in one word—altruism. The good Samaritan was altruistic to the core. What is altruism? The dictionary defines altruism as "regard for, and devotion to, the interest of others." The Samaritan was good because he made concern for others the first law of his life.

The Samaritan had the capacity for a *universal altruism*. He had a piercing insight into that which is beyond the eternal accidents of race, religion, and nationality. One of the great tragedies of man's long trek along the highway of history has been the limiting of neighborly concern to tribe, race, class, or nation. The God of early Old Testament days was a tribal god

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and the ethic was tribal. "Thou shalt not kill" meant "Thou shalt not kill a fellow Israelite, but for God's sake, kill a Philistine." Greek democracy embraced a certain aristocracy, but not the hordes of Greek slaves whose labors built the city-states. The universalism at the center of the Declaration of Independence has been shamefully negated by America's appalling tendency to substitute "some" for "all." Numerous people in the North and South still believe that the affirmation, "All men are created equal," means "All white men are created equal." Our unswerving devotion to monopolistic capitalism makes us more concerned about the economic security of the captains of industry than for the laboring men whose sweat and skills keep industry functioning.

What are the devastating consequences of this narrow, group-centered attitude? It means that one does not really mind what happens to the people outside his group. If an American is concerned only about his nation, he will not be concerned about the peoples of Asia, Africa, or South America. Is this not why nations engage in the madness of war without the slightest sense of penitence? Is this not why the murder of a citizen of your own nation is a crime, but the murder of the citizens of another nation in war is an act of heroic virtue? If manufacturers are concerned only in their personal interests, they will pass by on the other side while thousands of working people are stripped of their jobs and left displaced on some Jericho road as a result of automation, and they will judge every move toward a better distribution of wealth and a better life for the working man to be socialistic. If a white man is concerned only about his race, he will casually pass by the Negro who has been robbed of his personhood, stripped of his sense of dignity, and left dying on some wayside road.

A few years ago, when an automobile carrying several members of a Negro college basketball team had an accident on a Southern highway, three of the young men were severely injured. An ambulance was immediately called, but on arriving at the place of the accident, the driver, who was white, said without apology that it was not his policy to service Negroes, and he drove away. The driver of a passing automobile graciously drove the boys to the nearest hospital, but the attending physician belligerently said, "We don't take niggers in this hospital." When the boys finally arrived at a "colored" hospital in a town some fifty

miles from the scene of the accident, one was dead and the other two died thirty and fifty minutes later respectively. Probably all three could have been saved if they had been given immediate treatment. This is only one of thousands of inhuman incidents that occur daily in the South, an unbelievable expression of the barbaric consequences of any tribal-centered, national-centered, or racial-centered ethic.

The real tragedy of such narrow provincialism is that we see people as entities or merely as things. Too seldom do we see people in their true *humanness*. A spiritual myopia limits our vision to external accidents. We see men as Jews or Gentiles, Catholics or Protestants, Chinese or American, Negroes or whites. We fail to think of them as fellow human beings made from the same basic stuff as we, molded in the same divine image. The priest and the Levite saw only a bleeding body, not a human being like themselves. But the good Samaritan will always remind us to remove the cataracts of provincialism from our spiritual eyes and see men as men. If the Samaritan had considered the wounded man as a Jew first, he would not have stopped, for the Jews and the Samaritans had no dealings. He saw him as a human being first, who was a Jew only by accident. The good neighbor looks beyond the external accidents and discerns those inner qualities that make all men human and, therefore, brothers.

The Samaritan possessed the capacity for a *dangerous altruism*. He risked his life to save a brother. When we ask why the priest and the Levite did not stop to help the wounded man, numerous suggestions come to mind. Perhaps they could not delay their arrival at an important ecclesiastical meeting. Perhaps religious regulations demanded that they touch no human body for several hours prior to the performing of their temple functions. Or perhaps they were on their way to an organizational meeting of a Jericho Road Improvement Association. Certainly this would have been a real need, for it is not enough to aid a wounded man on the Jericho Road; it is also important to change the conditions which make robbery possible. Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary. Maybe the priest and the Levite believed that it is better to cure injustice at the causal source than to get bogged down with a single individual effect.

These are probable reasons for their failure to

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stop, yet there is another possibility, often overlooked, that they were afraid. The Jericho Road was a dangerous road. When Mrs. King and I visited the Holy Land, we rented a car and drove from Jerusalem to Jericho. As we traveled slowly down that meandering, mountainous road, I said to my wife, "I can now understand why Jesus chose this road as the setting for his parable." Jerusalem is some two thousand feet above and Jericho one thousand feet below sea level. The descent is made in less than twenty miles. Many sudden curves provide likely places for ambushing and expose the traveler to unforeseen attacks. Long ago the road was known as the Bloody Pass. So it is possible that the Priest and the Levite were afraid that if they stopped, they too would be beaten. Perhaps the robbers were still nearby. Or maybe the wounded man on the ground was a faker, who wished to draw passing travelers to his side for quick and easy seizure. I imagine that the first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But by the very nature of his concern, the good Samaritan reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?" The good Samaritan engaged in a dangerous altruism.

We so often ask, "What will happen to my job, my prestige, or my status if I take a stand on this issue? Will my home be bombed, will my life be threatened, or will I be jailed?" The good man always reverses the question. Albert Schweitzer did not ask, "What will happen to my prestige and security as a university professor and to my status as a Bach organist, if I work with the people of Africa?" but rather he asked, "What will happen to these millions of people who have been wounded by the forces of injustice, if I do not go to them?" Abraham Lincoln did not ask, "What will happen to me if I issue the Emancipation Proclamation and bring an end to chattel slavery?" but he asked, "What will happen to the Union and to millions of Negro people, if I fail to do it?" The Negro professional does not ask, "What will happen to my secure position, my middle-class status, or my personal safety, if I participate in the movement to end the system of segregation?" but "What will happen to the cause of justice and the masses of Negro people who have never experienced the warmth of economic security, if I do not participate actively and courageously in the movement?"

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but

where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. The true neighbor will risk his position, his prestige, and even his life for the welfare of others. In dangerous valleys and hazardous pathways, he will lift some bruised and beaten brother to a higher and more noble life.

The Samaritan also possessed *excessive altruism*. With his own hands he bound the wounds of the man and then set him on his own beast. It would have been easier to pay an ambulance to take the unfortunate man to the hospital, rather than risk having his neatly trimmed suit stained with blood.

True altruism is more than the capacity to pity; it is the capacity to sympathize. Pity may represent little more than the impersonal concern which prompts the mailing of a check, but true sympathy is the personal concern which demands the giving of one's soul. Pity may arise from interest in an abstraction called humanity, but sympathy grows out of a concern for a particular needy human being who lies at life's roadside. Sympathy is fellow feeling for the person in need — his pain, agony, and burdens. Our missionary efforts fail when they are based on pity, rather than true compassion. Instead of seeking to do something with the African and Asian peoples, we have too often sought only to do something *for* them. An expression of pity, devoid of genuine sympathy, leads to a new form of paternalism which no self-respecting person can accept. Dollars possess the potential for helping wounded children of God on life's Jericho Road, but unless those dollars are distributed by compassionate fingers they will enrich neither the giver nor the receiver. Money devoid of love is like salt devoid of savor, good for nothing except to be trodden under the foot of men. True neighborliness requires personal concern. The Samaritan used his hands to bind up the wounds of the robbed man's body, and he also released an overflowing love to bind up the wounds of his broken spirit.

Another expression of the excessive altruism on the part of the Samaritan was his willingness to go far beyond the call of duty. After tending to the man's wounds, he put him on his beast, carried him to an inn, and left money for his care, making clear that if further financial needs arose he would gladly meet them. "Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." Stopping short of this, he would have more than fulfilled any possible rule concerning one's



duty to a wounded stranger. He went beyond the second mile. His love was complete.

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick has made an impressive distinction between enforceable and unenforceable obligations. The former are regulated by the codes of society and the vigorous implementation of law-enforcement agencies. Breaking these obligations, spelled out on thousands of pages in law books, has filled numerous prisons. But unenforceable obligations are beyond the reach of the laws of society. They concern inner attitudes, genuine person-to-person relations, and expressions of compassion which law books cannot regulate and jails cannot rectify. Such obligations are met by one's commitment to an inner law, written on the heart. Man-made laws assure justice, but a higher law produces love. No code of conduct ever persuaded a father to love his children or a husband to show affection to his wife. The law court may force him to provide bread for the family, but it cannot make him provide the bread of love. A good father is obedient to the unenforceable. The good Samaritan represents the conscience of mankind because he also was obedient to that which could not be enforced. No law in the world could have produced such unalloyed compassion, such genuine love, such thorough altruism.

In our nation today a mighty struggle is taking place. It is a struggle to conquer the reign of an evil monster called segregation and its inseparable twin called discrimination — a monster that has wandered through this land for well-nigh one hundred years, stripping millions of Negro people of their sense of dignity and robbing them of their birthright of freedom.

Let us never succumb to the temptation of believing that legislation and judicial decrees play only minor roles in solving this problem. Morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless. The law cannot make an employer love an employee, but it can prevent him from refusing to hire me because of the color of my skin. The habits, if not the hearts, of people have been and are being altered every day by legislative acts, judicial decisions, and executive orders. Let us not be misled by those who argue that segregation cannot be ended by the force of law.

But acknowledging this, we must admit that

the ultimate solution to the race problem lies in the willingness of men to obey the unenforceable. Court orders and federal enforcement agencies are of inestimable value in achieving desegregation, but desegregation is only a partial, though necessary, step toward the final goal which we seek to realize, genuine intergroup and interpersonal living. Desegregation will break down the legal barriers and bring men together physically, but something must touch the hearts and souls of men so that they will come together spiritually because it is natural and right. A vigorous enforcement of civil rights laws will bring an end to segregated public facilities which are barriers to a truly desegregated society, but it cannot bring an end to fears, prejudice, pride, and irrationality, which are the barriers to a truly integrated society. These dark and demonic responses will be removed only as men are possessed by the invisible, inner law which etches on their hearts the conviction that all men are brothers and that love is mankind's most potent weapon for personal and social transformation. True integration will be achieved by true neighbors who are willingly obedient to unenforceable obligations.

More than ever before, my friends, men of all races and nations are today challenged to be neighborly. The call for a worldwide good-neighbor policy is more than an ephemeral shibboleth; it is the call to a way of life which will transform our imminent cosmic elegy into a psalm of creative fulfillment. No longer can we afford the luxury of passing by on the other side. Such folly was once called moral failure; today it will lead to universal suicide. We cannot long survive spiritually separated in a world that is geographically together. In the final analysis, I must not ignore the wounded man on life's Jericho Road, because he is a part of me and I am a part of him. His agony diminishes me, and his salvation enlarges me.

In our quest to make neighborly love a reality, we have, in addition to the inspiring example of the good Samaritan, the magnanimous life of our Christ to guide us. His altruism was universal, for he thought of all men, even publicans and sinners, as brothers. His altruism was dangerous, for he willingly traveled hazardous roads in a cause he knew was right. His altruism was excessive, for he chose to die on Calvary, history's most magnificent expression of obedience to the unenforceable.

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Questions for Discussion

1. King contends that the Samaritan's (and Christ's) altruism was universal, dangerous, and excessive. What does he mean? Are these positive characteristics?
2. What does King say about loving one's neighbor? Is he right? What does it mean to "love one's neighbor as oneself?" Do we need to know and love ourselves before we can fulfill the command to love others? Or does serving and working with others help us to come to know and love ourselves?
3. Do you think service programs try to enforce "unenforceable obligations?" Why or why not?
4. What distinction does King draw between pity and sympathy? What endeavors have failed because of a failure to see this distinction, according to King? What do you think is required for someone to feel sympathy as opposed to pity for another?
5. Compare the ethic of the good Samaritan to the statement by Ayn Rand's *Roark* (the next selection): "Suffering is a disease. Should one come upon it, one tries to give relief and assistance. To make that the highest test of virtue is to make suffering the most important part of life." Does an ethic centered on relieving the suffering of others distract from more important human tasks? How would King respond to Rand?



THE FOUNTAINHEAD

BY AYN RAND

Ayn Rand (1905-82), was born in St. Petersburg, Russia. Her family lived affluently until her father's business was nationalized by the Communist government when Rand was twelve. In 1926, two years after graduating from the University of Petrograd, Rand emigrated to the United States. She deeply admired the US for its founding principles of individual rights and freedom. Having planned to become a writer since childhood, Rand published her first novel, We the Living, in 1936. Her other novels include Anthem (1938), The Fountainhead (1943), and Atlas Shrugged (1957). In each of Rand's novels, a talented and individualistic protagonist struggles against the forces of mediocrity and collectivism. In the 1960s, Rand expanded the philosophy of her novels into an intellectual movement known as Objectivism. Objectivism derides altruism and celebrates the creativity, independence, and self-fulfillment of radically discrete individuals in capitalist society.

Rand's The Fountainhead tells the story of architect Howard Roark, a man of exceptional ability and integrity. Roark secretly designs a housing project for another architect of lesser ability on the condition that the plans not be changed in any way. When his plans are altered beyond recognition, Roark dynamites the completed building. At the subsequent trial, Roark defends his action and attacks altruism in the following speech:

Thousands of years ago, the first man discovered how to make fire. He was probably burned at the stake he had taught his brothers to light. He was considered an evildoer who had dealt with a demon mankind dreaded. But thereafter men had fire to keep them warm, to cook their food, to light their caves. He had left them a gift they had not conceived and he had lifted darkness off the earth. Centuries later, the first man invented the wheel. He was probably torn on the rack he had taught his brothers to build. He was considered a transgressor who ventured into forbidden territory. But thereafter, men could travel past any horizon. He had left them a gift they had not conceived and he had opened the roads of the world.

"That man, the unsubmissive and first, stands in the opening chapter of every legend mankind has recorded about its beginning. Prometheus was chained to a rock and torn by vultures—because he had stolen the fire of the gods. Adam was condemned to suffer—because he had eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Whatever the legend, somewhere in the shadows of its memory mankind knew that its glory began with one and that that one paid for his courage.

"Throughout the centuries there were men

who took first steps down new roads armed with nothing but their own vision. Their goals differed, but they all had this in common: that the step was first, the road new, the vision unborrowed, and the response they received—hatred. The great creators—the thinkers, the artists, the scientists, the inventors—stood alone against the men of their time. Every great new thought was opposed. Every great new invention was denounced. The first motor was considered foolish. The airplane was considered impossible. The power loom was considered vicious. Anesthesia was considered sinful. But the men of unborrowed vision went ahead. They fought, they suffered and they paid. But they won.

"No creator was prompted by a desire to serve his brothers, for his brothers rejected the gift he offered and that gift destroyed the slothful routine of their lives. His truth was his only motive. His own truth, and his own work to achieve it in his own way. . . . He held his truth above all things and against all men.

"His vision, his strength, his courage came from his own spirit. A man's spirit, however, is his self. That entity which is his consciousness. To think, to feel, to judge, to act are functions of the ego.

"The creators were not selfless. It is the whole secret of their power—that it was self-sufficient, self-

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motivated, self-generated. A first cause, a fount of energy, a life force, a Prime Mover. The creator served nothing and no one. He lived for himself. "And only by living for himself was he able to achieve the things which are the glory of mankind. Such is the nature of achievement.

"... There is no such thing as a collective brain. There is no such thing as a collective thought. An agreement reached by a group of men is only a compromise or an average drawn upon many individual thoughts. It is a secondary consequence. The primary act—the process of reason—must be performed by each man alone. We can divide a meal among many men. We cannot digest it in a collective stomach. No man can use his lungs to breathe for another man. No man can use his brain to think for another. All the functions of body and spirit are private. They cannot be shared or transferred.

"... The creative faculty cannot be given or received, shared or borrowed. It belongs to single, individual men. That which it creates is the property of the creator. Men learn from one another. But all learning is only the exchange of material. No man can give another the capacity to think. Yet that capacity is our only means of survival.

"Nothing is given to man on earth. Everything he needs has to be produced. And here man faces his basic alternative: he can survive in only one of two ways—by the independent work of his own mind or as a parasite fed by the minds of others. The creator originates. The parasite borrows. The creator faces nature alone. The parasite faces nature through an intermediary.

"The creator's concern is the conquest of nature. The parasite's concern is the conquest of men.

"The creator lives for his work. He needs no other men. His primary goal is within himself. The parasite lives second-hand. He needs others. Others become his prime motive.

"The basic need of the creator is independence. The reasoning mind cannot work under any form of compulsion. It cannot be curbed, sacrificed or subordinated to any consideration whatsoever. It demands total independence in function and in motive. To a creator, all relations with men are secondary.

"The basic need of the second-hander is to secure his ties with men in order to be fed. He places

relations first. He declares that man exists in order to serve others. He preaches altruism.

"Altruism is the doctrine which demands that man live for others and place others above self.

"No man can live for another. He cannot share his spirit just as he cannot share his body. But the second-hander has used altruism as a weapon of exploitation and reverse the base of mankind's moral principles. Men have been taught every precept that destroys the creator. Men have been taught dependence as a virtue.

"The man who attempts to live for others is a dependent. He is a parasite in motive and makes parasites of those he serves. The relationship produces nothing but mutual corruption. It is impossible in concept. The nearest approach to it in reality—the man who lives to serve others—is the slave. If physical slavery is repulsive, how much more repulsive is the concept of servility of the spirit? The conquered slave has a vestige of honor. He has the merit of having resisted and of considering his condition evil. But the man who enslaves himself voluntarily in the name of love is the basest of creatures. He degrades the dignity of man and he degrades the conception of love. But this is the essence of altruism.

"Men have been taught that the highest virtue is not to achieve, but to give. Yet one cannot give that which has not been created. Creation comes before distribution—or there will be nothing to distribute. The need of the creator comes before the need of any possible beneficiary. Yet we are taught to admire the second-hander who dispenses gifts he has not produced above the man who made the gifts possible. We praise an act of charity. We shrug at an act of achievement.

"Men have been taught that their first concern is to relieve the suffering of others. But suffering is a disease. Should one come upon it, one tries to give relief and assistance. To make that the highest test of virtue is to make suffering the most important part of life. Then man must wish to see others suffer—in order that he may be virtuous. Such is the nature of altruism. The creator is not concerned with disease, but with life. Yet the work of the creators has eliminated one form of disease after another, in man's body and spirit, and brought more relief from suffering than any altruist could ever conceive.

"Men have been taught that it is a virtue to agree with others. But the creator is the man who



disagrees. Men have been taught that it is a virtue to swim with the current. But the creator is the man who goes against the current. Men have been taught that it is a virtue to stand together. But the creator is the man who stands alone.

“Men have been taught that the ego is the synonym of evil, and selflessness the ideal of virtue. But the creator is the egotist in the absolute sense, and the selfless man is the one who does not think, feel, judge or act. These are functions of the self.

“Here the basic reversal is most deadly. The issue has been perverted and man has been left no alternative—and no freedom. As poles of good and evil, he was offered two conceptions: egotism and altruism. Egotism was held to mean the sacrifice of others to self. Altruism—the sacrifice of self to others. This tied man irrevocably to other men and left him nothing but a choice of pain: his own pain borne for the sake of others or pain inflicted upon others for the sake of self. When it was added that man must find joy in self-immolation, the trap was closed. Man was forced to accept masochism as his ideal—under the threat that sadism was his only alternative. This was the greatest fraud ever perpetrated on mankind.

“This was the device by which dependence and suffering were perpetuated as fundamentals of life.

“The choice is not self-sacrifice or domination. The choice is independence or dependence. The code of the creator or the code of the second-hander. This is the basic issue. It rests upon the alternative of life or death. The code of the creator is built on the needs of the reasoning mind which allows man to survive. The code of the second-hander is built on the needs of a mind incapable of survival. All that which proceeds from man’s independent ego is good. All that which proceeds from man’s dependence upon men is evil.

“The egotist in the absolute sense is not the man who sacrifices others. He is the man who stands above the need of using others in any manner. He does not function through them. He is not concerned with them in any primary matter. Not in his aim, not in his motive, not in his thinking, not in his desires, not in the source of his energy. He does not exist for any other man—and he asks no other man to exist for him. This is the only form of brotherhood and mutual respect possible between men.

...”No work is ever done collectively, by a

majority decision. Every creative job is achieved under the guidance of a single individual thought. An architect requires a great many men to erect his building. But he does not ask them to vote on his design. They work together by free agreement and each is free in his proper function. An architect uses steel, glass, concrete, produced by others. But the materials remain just so much steel, glass and concrete until he touches them. What he does with them is his individual product and his individual property. This is the only pattern for proper cooperation among men.

“The first right on earth is the right of the ego. Man’s first duty is to himself. His moral law is never to place his prime goal within the persons of others. His moral obligation is to do what he wishes, provided his wish does not depend *primarily* upon other men. This includes the whole sphere of his creative faculty, his thinking, his work. But it does not include the sphere of the gangster, the altruist and the dictator.

“A man thinks and works alone. A man cannot rob, exploit or rule—alone. Robbery, exploitation and ruling presuppose victims. They imply dependence. They are the province of the second-hander.

“Rulers of men are not egotists. They create nothing. They exist entirely through the persons of others. Their goal is in their subjects, in the activity of enslaving. They are as dependent as the beggar, the social worker and the bandit. The form of dependence does not matter.

“But men were taught to regard second-handers— tyrants, emperors, dictators—as exponents of egotism. By this fraud they were made to destroy the ego, themselves and others. The purpose of the fraud was to destroy the creators. Or to harness them. Which is a synonym.

“From the beginning of history, the two antagonists have stood face to face: the creator and the second-hander. When the first creator invented the wheel, the first second-hander responded. He invented altruism.

“The creator—denied, opposed, persecuted, exploited—went on, moved forward and carried all humanity along on his energy. The second-hander contributed nothing to the process except the impediments. The contest has another name: the individual against the collective.

“The ‘common good’ of a collective—a race, a class, a state—was the claim and justification of every tyranny ever established over men. Every major horror

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of history was committed in the name of an altruistic motive. Has any act of selfishness ever equaled the carnage perpetrated by disciples of altruism? Does the fault lie in men's hypocrisy or in the nature of the principle? The most dreadful butchers were the most sincere. They believed in the perfect society reached through the guillotine and the firing squad. Nobody questioned their right to murder since they were murdering for an altruistic purpose. It was accepted that man must be sacrificed for other men. Actors change, but the course of the tragedy remains the same. A humanitarian who starts with declarations of love for mankind and ends with a sea of blood. It goes on and will go on so long as men believe that an action is good if it is unselfish. That permits the altruist to act and forces his victims to bear it. The leaders of collectivist movements ask nothing for themselves. But observe the results.

"The only good which men can do to one another and the only statement of their proper relationship is—Hands off!

... "It is an ancient conflict. Men have come

close to the truth, but it was destroyed each time and one civilization fell after another. Civilization is the progress toward society of privacy. The savage's whole existence is public, ruled by the laws of his tribe. Civilization is the process of setting man free from men.

"Now, in our age, collectivism, the rule of the second-hander and second-rater, the ancient monster, has broken loose and is running amuck. It has brought men to a level of intellectual indecency never equaled on earth. It has reached a scale of horror without precedent. It has poisoned every mind. It has swallowed most of Europe. It is engulfing our country. ... "I came here to say that I do not recognize anyone's right to one minute of my life. Nor to any part of my energy. Nor to any achievement of mine. No matter who makes the claim, how large their number or how great their need.

"I wished to come here and say that I am a man who does not exist for others.

"It had to be said. The world is perishing from an orgy of self-sacrificing.



Questions for Discussion

1. Why does Rand detest altruism? To what does she place altruism in opposition?
2. Might helping others through community service make them dependent on your help, stifling their individual initiative or creativity? Do welfare payments, retirement benefits, or other social services have this effect?
3. Rand suggests that independence of others allows us to feel benevolent toward them, whereas dependence breeds fear and hatred of others. Where else have you heard this critique? Has it played out in public debates? How does this correspond to your own experience?
4. Rand's protagonist argues that inventors and original thinkers have always been punished as transgressors against society: Do we treat original thinkers this way today?
5. Roark states, "No work is ever done collectively." Is this true? Is community service an individual or a collective work?
6. Roark does "not recognize anyone's right to one minute" of his life. Do you believe others have a right to any part of your energy or life? Roark is a man, he says, who "does not exist for others." Can we really exist only for ourselves? How would you answer Roark?
7. According to Rand's hero, "The choice is not self-sacrifice or domination. The choice is independence or dependence." Roark argues that the individual "who lives for others" is a dependent. Do you agree? What is the difference between independence and domination?



CIVIC COOPERATION

BY JANE ADDAMS

One of the first lessons we learned at Hull-House was that private beneficence is totally inadequate to deal with the vast numbers of the city's disinherited. We also quickly came to realize that there are certain types of wretchedness from which every private philanthropy shrinks and which are cared for only in those wards of the County Hospital provided for the wrecks of vicious living or in the city's isolation hospital for smallpox patients.

I have heard a broken-hearted mother exclaim when her erring daughter came home at last too broken and diseased to be taken into the family she had disgraced, "There is no place for her but the top floor of the County Hospital; they will have to take her there," and this only after every possible expedient had been tried or suggested.

This aspect of governmental responsibility was unforgettably borne in upon me during the smallpox epidemic following the World's Fair, when one of the residents, Mrs. Kelley, as state factory inspector, was much concerned in discovering and destroying clothing which was being finished in houses containing unreported cases of smallpox. The deputy most successful in locating such cases lived at Hull-House during the epidemic because he did not wish to expose his own family. Another resident, Miss Lathrop, as a member of the State Board of Charities, went back and forth to the crowded pest house which had been hastily constructed on a stretch of prairie west of the city. As Hull-House was already so exposed, it seemed best for the special smallpox inspectors from the Board of Health to take their meals and change their clothing there before they went to their respective homes. All of these officials had accepted without question and as implicit in public office, the obligation to carry on the dangerous and difficult undertakings for which private philanthropy is unfitted, as if the commonalty of compassion represented by the state was more comprehending than that of any individual group. ...

In our first two summers we had maintained

three baths in the basement of our own house for the use of the neighborhood and they afforded some experience and argument for the erection of the first public bathhouse in Chicago, which was built on a neighboring street and opened under the City Board of Health. The lot upon which it was erected belonged to a friend of Hull-House who offered it to the city without rent, and this enabled the city to erect the first public bath from the small appropriation of ten thousand dollars. Great fear was expressed by the public authorities that the baths would not be used and the old story of the bathtubs in model tenements which had been turned into coal bins was often quoted to us. We were supplied, however, with the incontrovertible argument that in our adjacent third square mile there were in 1892 but three bathtubs and that this fact was much complained of by many of the tenement-house dwellers. Our contention was justified by the immediate and overflowing use of the public baths, as we had before been sustained in the contention that an immigrant population would respond to opportunities for reading when the Public Library Board had established a branch reading room at Hull-House.

We also quickly discovered that nothing brought us so absolutely into comradeship with our neighbors as mutual and sustained effort such as the paving of a street, the closing of a gambling house, or the restoration of a veteran police sergeant. ...

Many subsequent years of living in kindly neighborhood fashion with the people of the nineteenth ward, has produced upon my memory the soothing effect of the second class railroad carriage and many of these political experiences have not only become remote but already seem improbable. On the other hand, these campaigns were not without their rewards; one of them was a quickened friendship both with the more substantial citizens in the ward and with a group of fine young voters whose devotion to Hull-House has never since failed; another was a sense of identification with public-spirited men throughout the city who contributed money and time to what they considered a gallant effort against political corruption.



So far as a Settlement can discern and bring to local consciousness neighborhood needs which are common needs, and can give vigorous help to the municipal measures through which such needs shall be met, it fulfills its most valuable function. To illustrate from our first effort to improve the street paving in the vicinity, we found that when we had secured the consent of the majority of the property owners on a given street for a new paving, the alderman checked the entire plan through his kindly service to one man who had appealed to him to keep the assessments down. The street long remained a shocking mass of wet, dilapidated cedar blocks, where children were sometimes mired as they floated a surviving block in the water which speedily filled the holes whence other blocks had been extracted for fuel. And yet when we were able to demonstrate that the street paving had thus been reduced into cedar pulp by the heavily loaded wagons of an adjacent factory, that the expense of its repaving should be borne from a general fund and not by the poor property owners, we found that we could all unite in advocating reform in the method of repaving assessments, and the alderman himself was obliged to come into such a popular movement. The Nineteenth Ward Improvement Association which met at Hull-House during two winters, was the first body of citizens able to make a real impression upon the local paving situation. They secured an expert to watch the paving as it went down to be sure that their half of the paving money was well expended. In the belief that property values would be thus enhanced, the common aim brought together the more prosperous people of the vicinity, somewhat as the Hull-House Cooperative Coal Association brought together the poorer ones...

Certainly the need for civic cooperation was obvious in many directions, and in none more strikingly than in that organized effort which must be carried on unceasingly if young people are to be protected from the darker and coarser dangers of the city. The cooperation between Hull-House and the Juvenile Protective Association came about gradually, and it seems now almost inevitably. From our earliest days we saw many boys constantly arrested, and I had a number of most enlightening experiences in the police station with an Irish lad whose mother upon her deathbed had begged me "to look after him." We were distressed by the gangs of very little boys who would sally forth with an enterprising leader in search of old brass and iron,

sometimes breaking into empty houses for the sake of the faucets or lead pipe which they would sell for a good price to a junk dealer. With the money thus obtained they would buy cigarettes and beer or even candy, which could be conspicuously consumed in the alleys where they might enjoy the excitement of being seen and suspected by the "coppers." From the third year of Hull House, one of the residents held a semiofficial position in the nearest Police station, at least the sergeant agreed to give her provisional charge. Mrs. Stevens, who performed this work for several years, became the first probation officer of the Juvenile Court when it was established in Cook County in 1899. She was the sole probation officer at first, but at the time of her death, which occurred at Hull-House in 1900, she was the senior officer of a corps of six. Her entire experience had fitted her to deal wisely with wayward children. She had gone into a New England cotton mill at the age of thirteen, where she had promptly lost the index finger of her right hand through "carelessness," she was told, and no one then seemed to understand that freedom from care was the prerogative of childhood. Later she became a typesetter and was one of the first women in America to become a member of the typographical union, retaining her "card" through all the later years of editorial work. As the Juvenile Court developed, the committee of public-spirited citizens who first supplied only Mrs. Stevens's salary, later maintained a corps of twenty-two such officers; several of these were Hull-House residents who brought to the house for many years a sad little procession of children struggling against all sorts of handicaps. When legislation was secured which placed the probation officers upon the pay roll of the county, it was a challenge to the efficiency of the civil service method of appointment to obtain by examination, men and women fitted for this delicate human task. As one of five people asked by the Civil Service Commission to conduct this first examination for probation officers, I became convinced that we were but at the beginning of the nonpolitical method of selecting public servants, but even stiff and unbending as the examination may be, it is still our hope of political salvation.

In 1907 the Juvenile Court was housed in a model court building of its own, containing a detention home and equipped with a competent staff. The committee of citizens largely responsible for this result, thereupon turned their attention to the conditions which



the records of the court indicated had led to the alarming amount of juvenile delinquency and crime. They organized the Juvenile Protective Association, whose twenty-two officers meet weekly at Hull-House with their executive committee to report what they have found and to discuss city conditions affecting the lives of children and young people.

The association discovers that there are certain temptations into which children so habitually fall that it is evident that the average child cannot withstand them. An overwhelming mass of data is accumulated showing the need of enforcing existing legislation and of securing new legislation, but it also indicates a hundred other directions in which the young people who so gayly walk our streets, often to their own destruction, need safeguarding and protection.

The effort of the association to treat the youth of the city with consideration and understanding, has rallied the most unexpected forces to its standard. Quite as the basic needs of life are supplied solely by those who make money out of the business, so the modern city has assumed that the craving for pleasure must be ministered to only by the sordid. This assumption, however, in a large measure broke down as soon as the Juvenile Protective Association courageously put it to the test. After persistent prosecutions, but also after many friendly interviews, the Druggists' Association itself prosecutes those of its members who sell indecent postal cards; the Saloon Keepers' Protective Association not only declines to protect members who sell liquor to minors, but now takes drastic action to prevent such sales; the Retail Grocers' Association forbids the selling of tobacco to minors; the Association of Department Store Managers not only increased the vigilance in their waiting rooms by supplying more matrons, but as a body they have become regular contributors to the association; the special watchmen in all the railroad yards agree not to arrest trespassing boys but to report them to the association; the firms manufacturing moving picture films not only submit their films to a volunteer inspection committee, but ask for suggestions in regard to new matter; and the five-cent theaters arrange for "stunts" which shall deal with the subject of public health and morals where the lecturers provided are entertaining as well as instructive.

It is not difficult to arouse the impulse of protection for the young, which would doubtless

dictate the daily acts of many a bartender and pool-room keeper if they could only indulge it without thereby giving their rivals an advantage. When this difficulty is removed by an evenhanded enforcement of the law, that simple kindness which the innocent always evoke goes from one to another like a slowly spreading flame of good will. Doubtless the most rewarding experience in any such undertaking as that of the Juvenile Protective Association, is the warm and intelligent cooperation coming from unexpected sources, official and commercial as well as philanthropic. Upon the suggestion of the association, social centers have been opened in various parts of the city, disused buildings turned into recreation rooms, vacant lots made into gardens, hiking parties organized for country excursions, bathing beaches established on the lake front, and public schools opened for social purposes. Through the efforts of public-spirited citizens a medical clinic and a Psychopathic Institute have become associated with the Juvenile Court of Chicago, in addition to which an exhaustive study of court-records has just been completed. To this carefully collected data concerning the abnormal child, the Juvenile Protective Association hopes in time to add knowledge of the normal child who lives under the most adverse city conditions....

It is difficult to close this chapter without a reference to the efforts made in Chicago to secure the municipal franchise for women. During two long periods of agitation for a new City Charter, a representative body of women appealed to the public, to the Charter Convention, and to the Illinois Legislature for this very reasonable provision. During the campaign when I acted as chairman of the federation of a hundred women's organizations, nothing impressed me so forcibly as the fact that the response came from bodies of women representing the most varied traditions. We were joined by a church society of hundreds of Lutheran women, because Scandinavian women had exercised the municipal franchise since the seventeenth century and had found American cities strangely conservative; by organizations of working women who had keenly felt the need of the municipal franchise in order to secure for their workshops the most rudimentary sanitation and the consideration which the vote alone obtains for workingmen; by federations of mothers' meetings, who were interested in clean milk and the extension of kindergartens; by property-owning women, who had been powerless to protest against unjust taxation; by organizations of professional women, of university



students, and of collegiate alumnae; and by women's clubs interested in municipal reforms. There was a complete absence of the traditional women's rights clamor, but much impressive testimony from busy and useful women that had reached the place where they needed franchise in order to carry on their own affairs. A striking witness as to the need of the ballot, even for the women who are restricted to the most primitive and traditional activities, occurred when some Russian women waited upon me to ask whether under the new charter, they could vote for covered markets and so get rid of the shocking Chicago grime upon all their food; and when some neighboring Italian women sent me word that they would certainly vote for public washhouses if they ever had the chance to vote at all. It was all so human, so spontaneous, and so direct that it really seemed as if the time must be ripe for political

expression of that public concern on the part of women which has long been forced to seek indirection. None of these busy women wished to take the place of men nor to influence them in the direction of men's affairs, but they did seek an opportunity to cooperate directly in civic life through the use of the ballot in regard to their own affairs.

A Municipal Museum which was established in the Chicago Public Library building several years ago, largely through the activity of a group of women who had served as jurors in the departments of social economy, of education, and of sanitation in the World's Fair at St. Louis, showed nothing more clearly than that it is impossible to divide any of these departments from the political life of the modern city which is constantly forced to enlarge the boundary of its activity.

Questions for Discussion

1. This excerpt is largely an anecdotal account of the cooperative efforts of those involved in the settlement house movement at the turn of the century. Many current advocates of community service and of political reform draw on Addams' work and the settlement house tradition for inspiration. But what exactly does Addams say that is relevant to us nearly a century later?
2. Jane Addams says that one of the lessons she learned at Hull-House was that private charity was "totally inadequate" to deal with the problems of the "disinherited." What does she mean? What examples does she use to support her claim? Can you draw upon examples from your own service work to support or refute her claims?
3. Addams talks about the good feeling and "comradeship" that comes from working together to tackle a public issue or problem. How did sustained collective work result in comradeship? What would Rand say to Addams?
4. Have you tried to make connections between your personal community service work and an underlying public policy problem? How did you go about doing this?
5. Addams seems to dislike young people hanging out, drinking, and smoking. Is there something condescending about her attitude towards the poor people she works with? What would Illich say about this?

SERVICE IS CONTESTED



ARE SOCIAL SERVICE INSTITUTIONS THE ENEMY OF COMMUNITY?

BY JOHN MCKNIGHT

John McKnight, a critic of traditional ways of doing social work, has argued for a number of years that "helping others" often harms local communities. In this essay, he provides a succinct outline of his views. The article is reprinted from Social Policy (Winter, 1987) with permission from the journal.

In American society, we are witnessing a struggle between community and institutions for the loyalty of the people. This struggle has come about as institutions have stepped in to provide vital services once carried out by communities themselves: health, education, mental health, and social justice. Those who make social policy design these "human services" for "consumers" or "individuals."

Unfortunately, this concept of institutions serving individuals has encountered major problems. In spite of ever growing, ever more sophisticated service systems, programs are increasingly ineffective and even counterproductive. For example, we now understand that our "correctional systems" consistently train people in crime. Studies demonstrate that a substantial number of hospital patients become sick or injured with maladies worse than those they were admitted with. In many of our big city schools, we see children fall further behind each year. Thus, despite legions of therapists, social workers, and bureaucrats, we have created crime-making corrections systems, sickness-making health systems, and stupid-making schools.

This system is set up for failure because it excludes the most important component of society: the community, the social sphere made up of family, friends, neighbors, neighborhood associations, clubs, civic groups, local enterprises, churches, ethnic associations, temples, local unions, local government, and local media. These are the social institutions that serve as the basic context for enabling people to make their contributions. In a social system based on community, those whom makers of social policy would now label, treat, and counsel would instead be incorporated into a community where their contributions capacities, and fallibilities would be part of a network of relationships involving work, recreation, friendship, support, and the political power of citizenship.

Because so many people know only a world shaped by institutions and human service workers, they may not even recognize the signs of a community. Here are a few distinctions:

Capacity. Communities are built upon recognizing the whole depth—weaknesses and capacities of each member. The policy makers build a world based on what each person lacks or needs — a model based on deficiency.

Collective effort. In community work, shared responsibility requires many talents. Thus, a person who has been labeled deficient can find support in a community that can shape itself to the unique character of each person. Contrast that with the individualistic approach of the therapeutic professional and the rigidity of institutions that require people to shape themselves to the needs of the system.

Informality. In the community, transactions of value take place without money, advertising, or hype. Care emerges in place of structured service.

Stories. In universities people know through studies. In businesses and bureaucracies, people know by reports. In communities, people know by stories. These community stories allow people to reach back into their common history and their individual experience for knowledge about truth and direction for future.

Celebration. Community activities incorporate celebrations, parties, and other social events. The line between work and play is blurred, and the human nature of every life becomes part of the way of work. You will know that you are in a community if you often



hear laughter and singing. You will know you are in an institution or bureaucracy if you hear the silence of long halls and the intonations of formal meetings.

Knowing community is not an abstract understanding. Rather it is what each of us knows about all of

us. Many of us recognize that we have been degraded because our communities and our roles as citizens have been surrendered to the control of managers, therapists, and technicians. We forgot about the capacity of every single one of us to do good work.

Questions for Discussion

1. McKnight attacks human services, arguing that they turn citizens into clients and create dependencies. Do you think this is true for the service work you did? Why or why not? Did you create dependencies?
2. Do you agree with McKnight that informal communities are better at meeting needs than formal, bureaucratic institutions? Is this always the case?
3. How do McKnight and Addams differ? Would McKnight be critical of Addams?

SERVICE IS CONTESTED



EXCERPT FROM WOULDN'T TAKE NOTHIN' FOR MY JOURNEY NOW BY MAYA ANGELOU

Maya Angelou, author of I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Gather Together in My Name and many collections of poetry, often writes about issues like faith, justice and the dignity of the human spirit. The following essay, Charity, was excerpted from the book, Wouldn't Take Nothin' for My Journey Now (Random House 1993 (C) Maya Angelou) with the permission of the publisher.

The New Testament informs the reader that it is more blessed to give than to receive. I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver. The size and substance of the gift should be important to the recipient, but not to the donor save that the best thing one can give is that which is appreciated. The giver is as enriched as is the recipient, and more important, that intangible but very real psychic force of good in the world is increased.

When we cast our bread upon the waters, we can presume that someone downstream whose face we will never know will benefit from our action, as we who are downstream from another will profit from that grantor's gift.

Since time is the one immaterial object which we cannot influence—neither speed up nor slow down, add to nor diminish—it is an imponderably valuable gift. Each of us has a few minutes a day or a few hours a week which we could donate to an old folks' home or a children's hospital ward. The elderly whose pillows we plump or whose water pitchers we refill may or may not thank us for our gift, but the gift is upholding the foundation of the universe. The children to whom we read simple stories may or may not show gratitude, but each boon we give strengthens the pillars of the world.

While our gifts and the recipients should be considered, our bounty, once decided upon, should be without concern, overflowing one minute and forgotten the next.

Recently I was asked to speak before a group of philanthropists and was astonished at their self-consciousness. The gathered donors give tens of millions of dollars annually to medical research, educational development, art support, and social reform. Yet, to a person they seemed a little, just a little, ashamed of themselves. I pondered their behavior and realized that someone had told someone that not only was it degrading to accept charity but it was equally debasing to give it. And sad to say, someone had believed that statement. Hence, many preferred to have it known that they dispense philanthropy rather than charity.

I like charitable people and like to think of myself as charitable, as being of a generous heart and a giving nature, of being a friend indeed to anyone in need. Why, I pondered, did the benefactors not feel as I?

Some benefactors may desire distance from the recipients of their largess because there is a separation between themselves and the resources they distribute. As inheritors or managers of fortune rather than direct earners, perhaps they feel exiled from the gifts; then it follows that they feel exiled from the recipient.

It is sad when people who give to the needy feel estranged from the objects of their generosity. They can take little, if any, relish from their acts of charity; therefore, are generous out of duty rather than delight.

If we change the way we think of charity, our personal lives will be richer and the larger world will be improved. When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed. "Charity...is kind;...envieth not;...vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."



Questions for Discussion

1. Giving should not be limited, Angelou claims. Do you think she is referring to private acts of giving or to public? What is community service, private or public? Do you think unlimited giving is possible or fair to ask of a server? What does Angelou think?
2. What is Angelou's critique of those who disdain charity? What do you think she bases her claim on?
3. There is nothing about learning through giving in Angelou's essay. What do you think Angelou would say you learn through service? Do you agree or disagree? Why?



WHY DO WE REMAIN SILENT?

CORRINE MULDOON MCKINNEY

Ms. McKinney is a social worker. In this article she argues for a defense of keeping social work as a profession. She also argues against the use of non-professionals in social service settings — an implicit and important argument against some public service initiatives. This article originally appeared in Social Work (May, 1992).

An aging starlet slugged a cop, a movie mogul was convicted of forgery, and the Watergate conspirators betrayed the trust of the country. What do each of these offenders have in common? Each was given, as a part of her or his sentence, the obligation to perform “community service”: one to work in a shelter for battered women, one to make a social services movie, and the others to work in various areas of the human services. To add insult to injury, although most people would welcome the chance to serve, the starlet initially refused to comply.

There are countless other, albeit less notorious, examples of people who have been mandated to work in the public sector, in areas in which social workers claim professional expertise. These are not prisoners in work-release programs or ex-offenders who have expressed desire to do public service. Rather, in these cases, a judge has decided that doing work for the community is a penalty and should be performed in lieu of incarceration.

Although many people who are sentenced perform nonsensitive tasks, the sentences of these celebrities and of many others required that they perform work in the human services. Social workers who pride themselves on doing such work believe that it takes specialized knowledge, values, and skills to do so and should feel insulted that others consider community service a punishment.

In the public sector, applicants frequently must take an oath to uphold the laws of the land. Why, then, does society think that people who have violated laws should do such service? In some areas of the social services, fingerprinting and the checking of criminal records are mandatory for employment. How can society justify the screening into social services positions of those who have no other qualification except that they have been convicted of crimes?

Many people perform what could be called community service: professional workers, such as

social workers, who share prerequisite education, perfected techniques, and a written code of ethics; ‘paraprofessionals,’ who often help social workers interface with the population served; members of special-interest groups, such as service agencies and religious organizations; countless volunteers who give of their special talents; and recovering people and ex-offenders who feel a commitment to do ‘good works.’ As different as these people are and as diverse as their motivations may be, they share a dedication to what they do and a pride in how it is done. It seems unconscionable that society says that others who have shown no desire to serve and who may have no propensity for it should do so.

The escalation of the practice of community-service sentencing seems to have begun in the early 1980s, when Attorney General William French Smith asked the Justice Department to look for alternatives to incarceration. Since that time, many so-called white-collar criminals have been “sentenced” to serve the public. This practice has now been expanded to include those who have been convicted of more serious crimes.

To the best of my knowledge, no group has questioned the overall validity of such a practice. One union, however, has taken a stand on a similar issue. It stated that the filling of a job with an officially mandated person (a person on “workfare”), who was not selected on the basis of predetermined standards, was taking a job from a potentially qualified applicant. By the same token, at least one professional association has successfully blocked the performance of a sentenced person in its area of purview. In this case, an attorney was adjudicated for her client’s escape from prison and subsequently sheltering him from authorities. She was ordered to receive psychiatric care and to perform community service in a paralegal capacity. Her former professional association argued successfully that a disbarred attorney had no place in the practice of law, and she was thereby reassigned.



We social workers should also fully monitor what is meted out as a community-service sentence when it involves working with the vulnerable populations whom we serve. If we believe that our primary duty is to our clients, we will protect our clients from the involvement of others who have no apparent interest or predetermined talent and whose services are imposed upon them.

We should treasure our professional arena. Greenwood, whose article is a hallmark in the field, wrote that the ingredients of a profession are "(1) systematic theory, (2) authority (3) community sanction, (4) ethical codes, and (5) a culture". He believed that society gives the profession a "monopoly" in the field and that the profession seeks to prove: that the performance of the occupational skill requires specialized education; that those who possess this education ...deliver a superior service; and that the human need being served is of sufficient importance to justify the superior performance.

A profession demands a higher level of performance from its members than does an employer from its employees and, by implication, delivers more than society can expect from one forced to perform a task. The guarantee of high-quality performance is a profession's ethical code.

Social workers did not arrive at the position of a valid profession. The first time we asked ourselves if we were a profession, we received a qualified no. In his classic essay, Flexner suggested that social work was not a profession because it had not demonstrated that it had specialized knowledge and techniques. Others further deny social work's professional status in the belief that a professional must charge on a fee-for-service basis, which we social workers cannot do with our poor clientele.

Toren denigrated social workers' use of "practice wisdom," suggesting that it is "generalizations inferred from many specific cases-and that a

great deal of intuition is required in the application of this knowledge". Ehrenreich wrote that the striving toward professionalism in social work has been impeded by the field's early identification with the poor and the fact that its ranks comprised primarily women.

Be that as it may, social work now has fully accredited schools of social work and a strong professional organization. Our focus is on both the public and the private sectors, but we work with the most vulnerable populations. If we allow society, through our court system, to assign anyone -with no desire, preparation, or skills- to perform the kinds of activities that we see as our life's work, we are allowing our hard-fought achievement of having our clients served by fully prepared professionals to be undermined.

It is possible that our lack of response to this phenomenon is due to our lack of cohesiveness as a profession. The National Association of Social Workers was formed from a coalition of professional associations and has been marked by differences of opinion, not altogether unbecoming the milieu in which social workers operate. It is time, though, that we take a united stand on this issue. As Toren stated, "An occupation will be classified as a semiprofession if it lacks one or more of the professional qualities ... [or] the professional association may be divided, inefficient, or powerless". For us to do nothing undermines our authority.

We now are a fully recognized profession, are outspoken in many areas of social welfare, and act as *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) in instances in which we hold an expert opinion. It is time for us to look carefully at just what duties are mandated by the court and what clients are affected by them when people are given a community-service sentence. When we see that such a sentence jeopardizes the welfare of those for whom we speak, we should so advise. We know from our political activity that to do nothing means to cede a right.

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Questions for Discussion

1. Why does the author argue that human service work should be a profession? What does she mean by "profession" and what is she opposed to in terms of other conceptions of service? What are the conflicts she points out?
2. What does the author believe a profession promises in terms of positive values? Do you agree with her assessment?
3. Do you believe community work should be a profession? Were there experiences you had during your service term that could have been handled better by a professional? Defend your argument either way.



FROM STATISTICS TO SOUP KITCHENS: YOUTH AS RESOURCES IN THE 1990S

BY VICTORIA JUEDS

This article explains how service can help youth develop leadership skills. It sets out a nice argument against Harry Boyte's argument that service is therapeutic. This article is reprinted with permission from National Civic Review (Spring/Summer, 1994).

When we think of youth in America today, we think of pathology. It is difficult to do otherwise: children and teens are beset by the challenges of drugs and AIDS and poverty, of gangs and racism, of fragmented families. Similarly, when we think of youth development, we think of solving problems. We think of preventative or remedial programs designed to target substance abuse, boost school attendance, and decrease street violence. Problems and problem solving have become intrinsic to our way of thinking about children and adolescents — but there is a paradox in this perspective, as today's youth advocates are pointing out. By focusing purely on problems when we address young people's concerns, we are unwittingly dissipating our most valuable resource: the young people themselves.

The fact that we think of youth in terms of problems may itself be youth's most serious problem. Young people have an abundance of positive energy and a wealth of talent. But because youth development traditionally has been approached from a negative angle, this energy and talent is going to waste. It is undeniable that children and adolescents are under siege by societal ills from drug abuse and teenage pregnancy to gang warfare and underperforming schools. But they are victimized even further by any point of view that focuses solely on problems. In the words of Goodwin Liu, Senior Program Officer for Higher Education at the Corporation for National and Community Service, "There is a victim status assigned to kids because they are victims. But we have to get beyond that, to view them as smart people, as gifted people with something to offer."

Increasingly, advocates for youth are suggesting that a negative approach to the concerns of young people fails to impact the very issues under scrutiny. They argue that positive ideas and initiatives must take

the place of negative conceptions and preventative measures. Bombarding the young population of America with programs designed to halt juvenile crime, prevent substance abuse and decrease illiteracy has not met the challenge of creating a whole and healthy environment. Instead, we must work to engage young people in productive activities - particularly activities - particularly community service — in order to capitalize on their inner resources.

"We must really make that quantum leap toward positive youth development and toward viewing kids as an organic whole," says Cindy Ballard, Director of the Coalition for Community Foundations for Youth. The Coalition, a Kansas-based nonprofit organization, provides grant money and technical assistance to community foundations. Rather than on focusing on problems — and the voids and threats that exist in children's lives — the Coalition considers each young person to be replete with potential for action and growth. As Ballard puts it, her organization seeks ways, "of framing positive policy instead of preventative policy." It encourages communities to involve youth in decision-making processes and in activities, thus giving them a positive role in their environment.

The National 4-H Council echoes the Coalition's intent to move away from the emphasis on problems. Dick Sauer, President and Chief Executive Officer, notes that "even youth organizations tend to see kids as objects we do things to, or problems we need to address, rather than as resources that can be part of the solution."

In contrast, 4-H has developed a new, proactive mission. It is based on the concept of Community Youth Development, a philosophy in which young people figure as participants and leaders in community activities and issues, as opposed to passive recipients. 4-H's partners are encouraged to bring young people to the

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table and engage them in dialogue about issues relevant to their lives.

Within this trend, organizations are stressing community service as a particularly high priority in youth development. Based in Washington, DC, the Corporation for National and Community Service funds programs around the country that engage youth in service and volunteer activities. It seeks to replace the traditional concept of “kids as people with problems” with that of “kids as resources with talents and skills to offer,” as Liu puts it. With this philosophy in mind, the Corporation invests in programs such as mentoring and tutoring by student volunteers, and neighborhood watch programs involving young people. This summer, for example, has been styled a “summer of safety,” and the Corporation has involved middle and high school kids in an escort program for elderly people.

Giving children and teens a positive role in community life entails benefits both for the young people and for their communities. First of all, involvement in community service and in policy debates affords youth a much-needed feeling of personal value and responsibility which otherwise is lacking in their lives. As Sauer puts it, “Kids want to be part of the solutions to today’s problems. They want to be respected and valued.” Placing young people in places of action and responsibility, whether that means involving them in a volunteer program at a local nursing home or encouraging them to join a community sports team, is a critical means of boosting their confidence and self-esteem.

It is widely agreed that positive involvement in neighborhood activities or volunteer work fosters a real sense of value in young people. Campus Outreach Opportunity League, (COOL), a Washington, DC nonprofit, is committed to engaging college students in community service on the assumption that such work is beneficial to both the student and the community. Executive Director Jennifer Bastress describes COOL’s work as “institutionalizing belief in the self.” Students have the capacity to make stunning contributions to society, she points out, and it is important that they be aware of their potential to do so.

In return, participation of youth in community service is bound to benefit the community itself. According to Goodwin Liu, young people are unique in the wealth and resiliency of strength they can bring to community work. And according to Heather McCleod, co-editor of *Who Cares* magazine, points out that

students can provide fresh ideas and insights to debates that have grown pedantic and stagnant. According to McCleod, “Young people give a much more ‘real’ perspective to issues. They are not caught up with the merely academic point of view.” Without kids at the table, she argues, “it’s all quantification, objectification, and statistics. Conversations become removed from the emotional reality.”

Ideally, positive engagement of young people in their communities creates a mutually beneficial partnership. To this end, organizations like COOL are geared towards enhancing the contributions of youth to the community. Bastress explains that her organizations does more than just plant students in soup kitchens: its goal is to make their work productive and sustainable. COOL encourages youthful volunteers to explore the social and economic issues that relate to their work, as well as the emotional factors that come into play. By reflecting on and evaluating their own experiences, students add a great deal more than the time they have spent. “It’s not enough to say simply, ‘I want to help,’” argues Bastress. “Students must ask critical questions about their work. We really want service to be meaningful.”

As COOL, 4-H, and others are pointing out, the concept of youth as resources implies a shift of perspective away from problems and problem solving. Nonetheless, concentrating on the talents and skills of young people does ultimately solve problems. Destructive social behavior is replaced by participation in the community. Reflecting on 4-H’s philosophy toward youth, Sauer observes, “Kids want to be put into leadership roles — and if they aren’t given those leadership roles, they’ll seek them elsewhere, even if that means in gangs.”

These experts maintain emphatically that the needs of young people can be met in positive ways, and that the voids that gangs previously filled can be occupied by service or other constructive activities.

When communities start thinking about positive youth development rather than how to reduce drop-out rates or the incidence of teen pregnancy, Ballard explains, “They open up a vast array of opportunities — for both the kids in question and the communities in which they live.”

Before this happens, however, there must be a shift in focus among youth advocates, policy makers and individuals in communities all across the country. On



the first, most fundamental level, the money used in youth development must be re-allocated, with more spending on positive programs for kids and less on preventative measures. But spending patterns will not be altered without the theoretical acceptance of positive youth development. Community activists, elected officials and concerned individuals must be convinced of a need for a change in perspective. “The challenge is getting a broader acceptance for this model,” says Sauer of the national 4-H Council. “Communities still see youth as a problem and treat kids in a controlling way.” Even communities in which the resources of youth ostensibly are recognized may under-value the contributions of youth. McLeod comments, “They just don’t ‘walk the talk.’ They invite one young person to the table and then they don’t invite him to participate.”

But perhaps the most imposing obstacle to positive youth development is the lack of encouragement given to young people themselves. Children and teens must be convinced of their own resources; too often they are labeled as “problems” — a disempowering practice that discourages them from realizing their potential.

Liu suggests that young people often are stereotyped as drug users or delinquents, while “the vast majority of kids are not like that..... When we focus on their circumstances, we see youth handcuffed by social problems.”

In order to remove those handcuffs, COOL maintains that students must be made more aware of their strengths and potential. “We’ve never been taught how to make those connections between service and activism,” says Bastress. “COOL works to help students identify the issues that are important to them and let them know that they can have an impact.”

McLeod and Bastress dismiss the title Generation X as an empty generalization that distorts the reality of today’s young people. In fact, McLeod, together with her co-editor Leslie Crutchfield, was inspired to start *Who Cares* magazine by the very real impact young activists and volunteers are having on today’s world. “What’s amazing is that young people really have taken the initiative,” she remarks. “Young people have decided, for whatever reason, that they can do something about things and that they are going to have to do something about things.”

Any form of growth or development require resources: energy, knowledge, enthusiasm and skill. But in the realm of youth development, the greatest potential resource is going unrecognized and unexploited: young people themselves. The energy and talents of young people are not only their own best ally — in that they are a major source of self-esteem and confidence — but also potentially positive forces on society.

Questions for Discussion

1. What exactly do youth add to their communities, from the perspective of Jueds?
2. Some might say that youth are not the best people to play a role in community service because they very well might move away from the community. How would Jueds respond to this?
3. Many people believe that American culture prizes youth too much (as seen in advertisements and ideals of beauty, which stress youthfulness). Do these peoples’ beliefs challenge Jueds’s argument in any way?
4. How does Jueds’s argument challenge that made by Harry Boyte?



COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CIVIC EDUCATION

BY HARRY C. BOYTE

Harry Boyte is a well-known political and community activist. In addition, he has written numerous books and articles about community organizing and democracy. Here he sets out his criticism of community service as it is practiced often in America today. This article is reprinted with permission from Phi Delta Kappan (June, 1991).

Community service, widely touted as the cure for young people's political apathy, in fact teaches little about the arts of participation in public life. To reengage students in public affairs requires redefining *politics* to include, in addition to electoral activity, ongoing citizen involvement in solving public problems. It requires a conceptual framework that distinguishes between public life and private life. And it calls for a pedagogical strategy that puts the design and ownership of problem-solving projects into the hands of young people.

According to conventional wisdom, teenagers and young adults are deeply disenchanted with politics and public issues. The Times Mirror Center reports that, for the first time since World War II, young people show less interest in public affairs than their elders. Only one in five follows major issues "very closely."

In fact, youths today have a complex set of attitudes about the world. More detailed probing finds a generation not so much apathetic as furious at adults' apparent inaction in the face of mounting social problems. Today's young people are jaded with Sixties-style protest and uncertain about what else there is to do. It is clear, however, that senior-class trips to Washington, D.C., of exhortations to be "good citizens" — the stuff of earlier generation's civic education are not going to interest young people in politics.

Community service is proposed as the resolution of this dilemma. Advocates claim that service prepares a self-centered generation for citizenship. Thus, for instance, the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship has argued that, "if the service commitment begins early enough and continues into adulthood, participatory citizenship would become what Robert

Bellah and his colleagues call habits of the heart, family and community traditions of local political participation that sustain a person, a community and a nation."

Using this rationale, community service initiatives are on the rise. Detroit schools now require 200 hours of community service for graduation. Atlanta issued a 75-hour minimum requirement to increase "understanding of the obligations of a good citizen." Minnesota and Pennsylvania have developed statewide financing for student service. Congress passed the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to provide federal support.

Community service refers mainly to a variety of individual voluntary efforts, from working in food banks and shelters for the homeless to helping in nursing homes or hospitals to participating in tutoring projects and literacy campaigns. In addition, the phrase sometimes encompasses activism with regard to such issues as homelessness and drug abuse.

Service involvements can produce a number of desirable educational outcomes: connection with other cultures, experiential learning, personal growth. But service does little to connect students' everyday concerns with the political process. Nor do service projects normally teach the political skills that are needed to work effectively toward solving society's problems: public judgment, the collaborative exercise of power, conflict resolution, negotiation, bargaining, and holding oneself and others accountable.

Adults often see community service as a renewal of the political tradition of civic republicanism, in which citizens learn to "put aside" their self-interests in altruistic concern for others. To younger Americans, steeped in a culture that glorifies "lifestyles of the rich and famous" and praises the virtues of free enterprise, calls to renounce self-interest sound disingenuous at best.



Instead, young people find that service meets their needs for personal relevance and a sense of membership in a community. Volunteers usually disavow concern with larger policy questions, seeing service as an *alternative* to politics. “I do community service for myself,” explained one young woman at a North Carolina college who had begun a successful mentoring program for pregnant teens. “I have a passion for it. I can’t save the world.” In schools where learning seems dry and remote, service experiences create a sense of usefulness and connection. A young student from Ohio who does volunteer work with retarded children explained, “I like to see people gain from what I can do for them. I like myself better for helping them.”

From the perspective of civic education, the weakness of community service lies in a conceptual limitation. Service lacks a vocabulary that draws attention to the public world that extends beyond personal lives and local communities. Most service programs include little learning about the policy dimensions of issues that students address through person-to-person efforts. Volunteers rarely have the wherewithal to reflect on the complex dynamics of power, race, and class that are created when middle-class youths go out to “serve” in low-income areas.

Most notably, without a conceptual framework that distinguishes between personal life and the public world, community service adopts the “therapeutic language” that now pervades society. From television talk shows to election campaigns, such public concepts as accountability, respect for public contributions, and recognition of varying interests and viewpoints have given way to a language of self-development and intimacy. Thus even sophisticated community service programs designed for high school students use personal growth as their main selling point. Educational objectives include self-esteem, a sense of personal worth, self-understanding, independence, personal belief in the ability to make a difference, consciousness of one’s personal values, openness to new experiences, capacity to persevere in difficult tasks, and the exploration of new identities and unfamiliar roles. *Politics* is absent.

A different way to teach politics is essential if we want to reengage students with citizenship understood as playing an ongoing role in public affairs. Partly, this new approach means retrieving older definitions. The word *politics* comes from the Greek *politikos*, meaning “of the citizen.” A citizen-centered politics re-creates the *concept of a public realm*, as distinct from

private life, in which diverse groups learn to work together effectively to address public problems, whether or not they like one another personally. To be meaningful, public work also requires an *experience of power* that can come from self-directed action.

Project Public Life of the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota has found that teens and younger students alike have great interest in “problem-solving politics” in which they are central actors. The Public Achievement program of Project Public Life — undertaken with the cooperation of St. Paul Mayor James Schiebel, Minnesota 4-H, and others— is based on a pedagogy that allows youths to define their own concerns and design and manage their own projects in which they learn how to work constructively with diversity.

A Public Achievement training effort conducted in the fall of 1990 with the Inner Urban Catholic Coalition— a group of 13 St. Paul Catholic schools— illustrates the approach. Principals, teachers, and students were asked to participate in Public Achievement in order to lend new energy and meaning to Martin Luther King Day celebrations, which many felt had grown stale. At the outset, educators agreed to hand over authority for the project to teams of junior high school students. The students, with educators watching but not talking, received training in public skills and concepts in order to design King Day celebrations relevant to their own lives.

In the training, Peg Michels and Rebecca Breuer of the Public Achievement staff emphasized such skills as public speaking, recruiting other students, organizing meetings, analyzing problems, developing action plans, and conducting evaluations. They also structured public meetings to ensure that students would interact across school lines, delivering reports and obtaining diverse feedback.

The King Day activities that emerged from these sessions varied, but on balance administrators and teachers were amazed at the creativity, zeal, and skill that students displayed in response to being “taken seriously” and having the freedom to plan their own public projects.

The process allowed students to design events that were connected to their own lives and reflected their own capabilities. At St. Luke’s Catholic School, for instance, the initial team of students who participated in the training recruited a task force from grades 4 through 8 to plan class activities that would culminate in a large



public event for the school and community on January 18th. Students from each grade participated in and reported on projects in which they applied to problems of their own lives the principles that King's life exemplified, such as the nonviolent resolution of conflicts and the disavowal of prejudice. Jeff Maurer, a teacher at St. Bernard's, another Catholic school involved in the project, said, "I have developed a new appreciation and respect for my students as I watched them identify issues, devise strategies to deal with those issues, and

evaluate their own progress."

The service language of "caring and community" is simply no antidote for today's youthful cynicism about politics. Moreover, the predominantly one-on-one character of typical service experiences leaves little room for political learning. As this generation defines itself politically, it will focus on finding practical answers to the problems of the nation. Teaching the skills and concepts of such problem-solving will require a far more public pedagogy.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the difference between therapeutic and democratic efforts from Boyte's viewpoint? What exactly does Boyte mean by therapeutic? Do you agree with the distinction he makes?
2. If service makes you "feel good" is there something wrong with that? Why or why not? Defend your argument against or with Boyte's argument.
3. Is there a use for service that is divorced from politics? Why or why not?



DANNY

BY TRABIAN SHORTERS

Trabian Shorters was a Youth Engaged in Service (YES) ambassador to the Points of Light Foundation. He wrote this article originally for Who Cares: A ToolKit for Social Change, Summer 1994. Permission to reprint the article was received from the magazine.

As I've traveled the country working on youth service projects, doing trainings, and attending conferences, I've had the opportunity to meet lots of young people. Many of them are privileged white graduates or students of Ivy League universities. Few are young adults still living in the inner cities.

In 1992, I attended two conferences in Chicago — one hosted by the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL), the other hosted by the Points of Light Foundation, my employer at the time. Between these conferences I met a 19-year-old gang-banger from the Chicago Commons. His name was Danny. At the COOL conference, a group of bright-eyed young people were trained to do workshops and presentations. Upon conclusion of that conference, we were sent to sites around Chicago to conduct these workshops. Two trainers and I were sent to the Commons, a high rise housing project, to do a training called "Community Service: What's In It For Me?" The area we entered was completely paved, with torn fences and ill-kept living units. The young brothers that we did our workshop with named a half dozen gangs in their project: they explained that two blocks up was one group's turf and two blocks down was another group's. Just a few days earlier, a young brother was shot and killed in front of the same community center.

I abandoned the floor-plan for the workshop and instead, used an approach that I had learned from Garry Mendez at the National Trust for the Development of African American Men. I talked to the young men about the Commons, their lives, and their aspirations, never making a disparaging comment. They talked about being doctors, NBA stars, and how a good girlfriend, basketball, and this community center could keep them from spending time with a gang.

After the workshops, I talked with a couple of

brothers as we walked to the van that would take us trainers out of the ghetto and back into the community service world. I remembered that we had a youth reception that evening and told the fellas they were welcome to come. Danny climbed in the van with us. By the time we went from the last gate of the Commons to the entrance of the Chicago Sheraton, he had relaxed the tension in his shoulders, though he still seemed apprehensive. He said that he had never seen this side of Chicago.

The "Volunteers at the Heart of Change" Conference, sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation, was more than a little intimidating. I was amazed by the glamour and high ceilings and shiny surfaces in the hotel. Danny was doubly so. I went upstairs with Danny to check the room that the Foundation had purchased for me, and that's when he told me that he was in a gang in the Commons. He assured me that he wasn't a shooter, but he really had no choice but to join. I told him that I appreciated him being on the ups with me, and gave him a dress shirt to wear for the reception. I left Danny in the room, and went downstairs to do the 'service Negro' bit for the foundation.

When I returned to my room, Danny had raided the refrigerator and was watching TV. He was a tough looking, strong young brother, but in this setting he was completely intimidated. I couldn't blame him. I told him about how tripped out I was the first time I stayed in a hotel in Washington, D.C., and how this was the first national networking conference that I had ever attended. He asked me questions about how much money I made, and what I did exactly; I told him about how little I got paid and how little I actually did in any single community. He told me about how his dream in life was to do three things: get married, move out of the Commons and get a house. Over the course of talking, he mentioned that he had dropped out of school after his

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older brother, “the smart one,” went to prison. His mother was a substance abuser, so he moved out when he was 17 and stayed with his girlfriend when it was okay with her mom — and on the streets the rest of the time.

The more he talked, the more frustrated I felt. I tried to think of one program that could do something for him — one! He was obviously a good guy in a bad place, but without a college degree, a Negro’s smile, or an articulate rap, he didn’t have a place to turn that I knew of. YouthBuild was the closest thing that I could think of, but there wasn’t a corps in his area, and there was no transportation to anywhere else. He said he didn’t feel ready to make “the move” anyway. I suggested that we go to the youth reception and dinner that followed it.

The youth reception was a dog-and-pony show for the adults at the conference. As the “brightest hope of the service movement,” we young trainers presented a peace quilt that we had made. It was painfully obvious that even as they tried to make progress in addressing “serious social issues,” my peers were fighting to gain sincere approval from their elders. In a lot of ways, they were trying to map out meaningful roles for themselves in their parents’ world, and found that they were valued for working with Negroes, Hispanics and the poor. So without knowing much about the people, they were working hard to gain stature in the charitable world.

A group of us younger participants, who had been trained at the first conference, gathered at a restaurant after the reception. We were all committed to the concept of community empowerment, but that day, Danny helped me realize how enemies can be made from well-meaning people. This group of young people was not from the community they wanted to work with. They were, for the most part, college-educated theorists and idealists willing to test their convictions on people like Danny. Danny and I ate at a table with a few others, including a sister named Fawn, and my friend Jesse. I wanted Danny to get to know the other folks, but I refused to make him an exhibit or put him on display. He was a brother in my black family and I treated him as such, as did Fawn and Jesse, and the sister behind the front desk who erased all charges for the snack bar in our room. That, to me, was human courtesy.

As the meal progressed, I watched the young people who led programs in campus outreach activities,

facilitated “diversity” workshops, and who were generally patronized as the best hope of our culturally divided nation, fall flat. Only a couple of them had the experience and the good sense to treat Danny as a person. So much of their training and approach to “the urban dilemma” was intellectually based, and executed, that if they were not relating to someone like Danny in a program or project, they did not know how to relate to him at all. I realized that unless they were clearly in positions of authority with predetermined guidelines for interaction, these college-educated service celebrities were unprepared to deal with their peers in the ghettos.

No one can build an agenda for change among people they do not know personally. I’m sure that the young people at the dinner wanted to converse with Danny, but didn’t know how. To a lot of them, Danny was a symbol of a world with which they were intellectually preoccupied. They could not look at him in any other way, and in this personal setting his symbolic value made awareness of their own symbolic roles inescapable. They were being praised by their elders for relationships they supposedly had with people like Danny. How could they talk to him without insulting, belittling, or offending him; without embarrassing themselves; without exposing themselves? Most of them couldn’t. Most of them didn’t.

The next day, Danny and I parted ways. He said that I treated him “just like a brother,” and thanked me. I told him that he was my brother and that he was welcome. I gave him my phone number. He told me that neither his girlfriend nor his best friend had a telephone. Then an assistant from the community center came to pick Danny up, and told me that I could reach Danny by calling the Center.

The conference ended with a mammoth banquet on the waterfront, catered by the finest restaurants in Chicago. We witnessed folk dancing, and learned about the cultural history of Chicago — but there was no mention of the one million African Americans who live in Cook County, “the Green” or “the Commons.” We watched young black boys and men do acrobatic tumbling, trained by a brother who gave a disciplined alternative to the streets. The closing event alone must have cost thousands of dollars.

As I did a string of conferences that summer, I began looking for national programs operated by people from the black community, and, in particular, from the urban black community. By the time I called the



Commons' community center, no one knew where Danny was. I regretted not calling sooner, and not being prepared to help Danny when I met him. I asked the people at the center if they knew any of Danny's friends,

or his mother, or any of the other places where he might go. They didn't. In the end, none of us knew how to reach Danny.

Questions for Discussion

1. Shorters argues that you can't "build an agenda for change among people you do not know personally." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Is his assertion supported or contradicted by history? Give examples.
2. Are the barriers between people too strong for people to cross them? What's the similarity and difference between Shorters's and Illich's viewpoint?
3. What is lost when people view service as a job or as a pathway to a career? How might Shorters differentiate between *his* career path and those of his peers who are not African American?
4. What do you think Shorters' argument is legitimate? What is he right about? What is he wrong about? Defend your argument.

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BENJAMIN R. BARBER

A MANDATE FOR LIBERTY

Benjamin R. Barber is Director of the Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy (the organization which printed this book) and Whitman Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University.

The extraordinary rise in public interest in community service has inspired widespread participation by the nation's young in service programs. It has also provoked a profound and telling debate about the relationship of service to voluntarism, on the one hand and to civic education and citizenship on the other. Two complementary approaches to service have emerged that are mutually supportive but also in a certain tension with one another. The first aims at attracting young volunteers, particularly students, out of the classroom and into service projects designed to strengthen altruism, philanthropy, individualism, and self-reliance. The second is concerned with integrating service into the classroom and into academic curricula in hopes of making civic education and social responsibility core subjects of high school and university education.

Underlying these two complementary approaches are conflicting though not altogether incompatible views of the real aim of student community service programs. The differences are exemplified by the issue of whether classroom based service programs should be voluntary or mandatory. If the aim of service is the encouragement of voluntarism and a spirit of altruism...then clearly it cannot be mandated or required. To speak of coercing voluntarism is to speak in oxymorons and hardly makes pedagogical sense. But if service is understood as a dimension of citizenship education and civic responsibility in which individuals learn the meaning of social interdependence and become empowered in the democratic arts, then to require service is to do no more in this domain than is done in curricula decisions generally.

As it turns out, the educational justification for requiring courses essential to the development of democratic citizens is a very old one. America's colleges were founded in part to assure the civic education of the young — to foster competent citizenship and to nourish the arts of democracy. Civic and moral responsibility were goals of both colleges organized around a religious

mission and secular land-grant colleges. The premise was that democratic skills must be acquired. We think of ourselves as "born free," but we are, in truth, born weak and dependent and acquire equality as a concomitant of citizenship. Liberty is learned: it is a product rather than a cause of our civic work as citizens.

Those most in need of training in the democratic arts of citizenship, are, in fact, the least likely to volunteer. Complacency, ignorance of interdependence, apathy, and an inability to see the relationship between self interest and broader community interests are obstacles to it, attitudes that dispose individuals against it. The problem to be remedied is here the impediment to the remedy. Education is the exercise of authority — legitimate coercion — in the name of freedom: the empowerment and liberation of the student. To make people serve others may produce desirable behavior, but it does not create responsibility and autonomous individuals. To make people participate in educational curricula that can empower them, however does create such individuals.

Thinking that the national problem of civic apathy can be cured by encouraging voluntarism is like thinking that illiteracy can be remedied by distributing books on the importance of reading. What young people require in order to volunteer their participation in education-based community service courses are the very skills and understandings that these courses are designed to provide.

There are, of course, problems with mandating education of any kind, but most educators agree that an effective education cannot be left entirely to the discretion of pupils, and schools and universities require a great many things of students — things less important than the skills necessary to preserve American freedoms. It is the nature of pedagogical authority that it exercises some coercion in the name of liberation. Civic empowerment and the exercise of liberty simply are too important to be treated as extracurricular



electives.

This account of education-based service as integral to liberal education in a democracy, and thus, as an appropriate subject for mandatory educational curricula points to a larger issue: the uncoupling of rights and responsibilities in America. We live at a time when our government has to compete with industry and the private sector to attract men and women to the military, when individuals regard themselves almost exclusively as private persons with responsibilities only to family and job, with endless rights against an alien government, of which they see themselves, at best, as no more than watchdogs and clients, and, at worst, as adversaries and victims. The idea of service to country or an obligation to the institutions by which rights and liberty are maintained has fairly vanished. "We the People" have severed our connections with "It" the state or "They" the bureaucrats and politicians who run it. If we posit a problem of governance, it is always framed in the language of leadership — as if the preservation of democracy were merely a matter of assuring adequate leadership surrogates who do our civic duties for us. Our solution to problems in democracy is to blame our representatives. Or to place limits on the terms they can serve. Our own complicity in the health of our system is forgotten, and so we take the first fatal step in the undoing of the democratic state.

Civic education rooted in service-learning can be a powerful response to civic scapegoatism and the

bad habits of representative democracy (deference to authority, blaming deputies for the vices of their electors). When students use experience in the community as a basis for critical reflection in the classroom, and turn classroom reflection into a tool to examine the nature of democratic communities and the role of the citizen in them, there is an opportunity to teach liberty, to uncover the interdependence of self and other, to expose the intimate linkage between rights and responsibilities. Classroom-based community service programs empower students even as they teach them. They bring the lessons of service into the classroom even as they bring the lessons of the classroom back into the community.

In a vigorous democracy capable of withstanding the challenges of a complex, often undemocratic, interdependent world, creating new generations of citizens is not a discretionary activity. Freedom is a hothouse plant that flourishes only when it is carefully tended. Freedom, as Rousseau once reminded us, is a food easy to eat but hard to digest and it has remained undigested more often than it has been assimilated by our democratic body politic. Without active citizens who see in service not the altruism of charity but the necessity of taking responsibility for the authority on which liberty depends, no democracy can function properly, or, in the long run, even survive...Democracy does not just "deserve" our gratitude; it demands our participation as a price of survival.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What are the two different approaches Barber sets out for service in this article? Do you agree that they are mutually exclusive? Is he right?
2. Do you think that service should be mandatory? What are the best arguments that service should be mandatory? What are the best arguments that it should not be mandatory?
3. Do you believe that service should be seen as a form of punishment or not?

SERVICE IS CONTESTED



PUBLIC SERVICE, OR ELSE

BY SCOTT BULLOCK

This editorial is reprinted with permission from the New York Times (May 16, 1996). In it, Mr. Bullock makes an argument against mandatory service.

President Clinton's philosophy may be enigmatic at times, but his core ideals were on display at a commencement address at Penn State University last Friday. He urged all public schools to make community service mandatory by requiring high school students to volunteer for a certain number of hours in order to earn their diplomas.

A handful of school districts have instituted such mandatory community service programs. But few educators have pushed for it, and it's easy to see why. Mandatory service is unpopular, unnecessary and perhaps even unconstitutional.

When Maryland's Board of Education imposed the only statewide service program, in 1993, 22 of 24 local school districts opposed it. So did the teacher's association and the P.T.A. The students have been equally unenthusiastic. Two thirds of the 1997 class (the first affected by the 75 hour requirement) has not completed even one hour of service.

President Clinton cannot chalk this up to teen-age apathy. Polls consistently show that some 60 percent of students volunteer on their own, through community groups, churches and their families. They volunteer because they want to, not because they are forced to.

Mandatory service is just another instance of public school intruding into family decisions. Understandably, many parents are upset and have challenged the power of schools to conscript their children.

Yesterday, parents from Rye Neck school district in Westchester County, NY, who are represented by the Institute for Justice, filed an appeal with

the Supreme Court, asking it to rule that mandatory service programs violate their 14th Amendment right to control their children's education.

So far, lawsuits challenging these local programs have been unsuccessful. But even if the Court rules against the parents, constitutional problems will continue to arise.

For instance, should schools award credit for work performed through religious organizations? Some districts blatantly discriminate against such groups. In Rye Neck, a Jehovah's Witness was told that what he perceived as the highest form of service — preaching door to door — was unacceptable. In Bethlehem, PA, the public high schools awarded credit for singing in a community choir but not a church choir.

Problems have also arisen when students volunteer for controversial causes. In Bethlehem, the school district approved work for Planned Parenthood but not for Operation Rescue. In Chapel Hill, NC, the school district approved work for Greenpeace but not for the National Rifle Association.

Public schools can avoid these conflicts by using the "carrot" approach to community service. Why not give volunteers extra credit or special recognition? Young people are pretty savvy and can tell the difference between genuine efforts to help others and feel-good mandatory programs imposed by politicians.

By distorting the concept of volunteering, President Clinton undermines the very values of community he seeks.

SERVICE IS CONTESTED



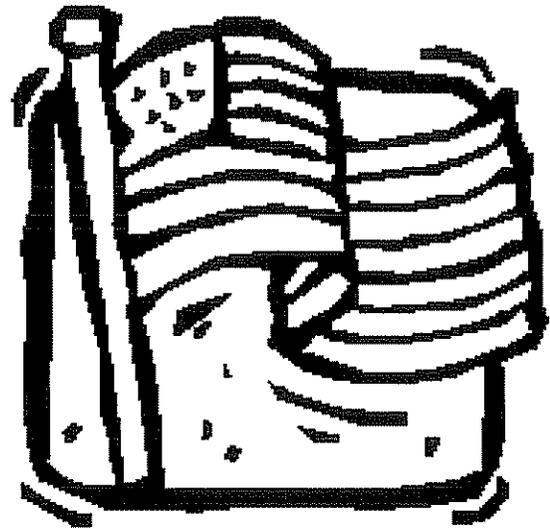
Questions for Discussion

1. What is the difference between incentives for service and mandatory service?
2. Why exactly does the author object to mandatory service? What do you believe his philosophy of government is?
3. How do you think mandatory service programs should decide on appropriate service sites? What kind of criteria should they use?



THE STATE OF SERVICE:

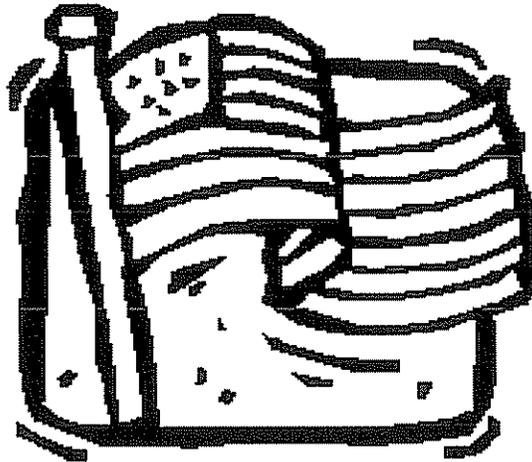
SERVICE AND
THE NATION



SERVICE AND THE NATION



Debates about national service sprang up when President Bill Clinton proposed his AmeriCorps program as well around the Presidential Summit on Volunteerism (1997). These debates have focused on the responsibility of the federal government towards its citizens and the responsibility of citizens towards taking care of problems in their own communities. Many debate where the primary responsibility should lie — in local communities or the federal government. They also debate, in the process, their underlying philosophies of government — some believing in the legitimacy of public institutions and others distrusting them.



This is an important debate about the future of the nation, and it is one that you can inform by drawing on your experiences with service. What did service teach you about the appropriate role of citizens and government? When reading this final selection of readings, you should consider how your experience in service relates to these wider questions. And you should think about your own philosophy of government.

This section brings together authors with differing perspectives about national service. As before, questions follow. See the facilitation notes at the beginning of Section Three about discussions if you have any questions or concerns.



THE HOW AND WHY OF VOLUNTEERING

BY BENJAMIN R. BARBER

This piece originally ran as an op-ed in the Philadelphia Inquirer on Sunday, April 20, 1997.

Americans agree that volunteerism is a good thing, and it is. But they do not agree on what volunteerism is or how it relates to government — which they like a good deal less than they like volunteerism.

Most supporters of volunteerism share a healthy conviction that free societies are rooted in engaged citizenry committed to ongoing neighborhood voluntary activity. The spirit of liberty in America, observed Alexis de Toqueville, is local. Democracy is bottom up, not top down — and thus depends on the education and involvement of citizens in community self governance.

But whether self governance is understood as a road to a stronger national democracy or part of an assault on all democratic governance depends very much on whether we wish to enhance trust and confidence in democracy locally and nationally, or sap it still further, pretending that the market sector can somehow directly solve all our social problems.

In fact, concealed in the enthusiasm for volunteerism are several conflicting views about the place of voluntary activity in the American way of democracy. So that while the language of volunteerism may suggest that it transcends narrow partisan differences and helps repair the breach separating citizens from their government, it also disguises salient political differences.

Not so surprisingly these differences track more traditional ideological cleavages. For conservatives, volunteerism is often seen as replacing a government that “doesn’t work,” rather than being a road to better government. Voluntary activity is “private” and largely apolitical, a transfer of responsibility from public officials to the private sector where charity and philanthropy are supposed to take up the slack.

For progressives, voluntary service represents a strengthening of democracy, a devolution of power not

to individuals and private corporations but to local democratic institutions and self-governing communities. It is a way to share responsibility and build partnerships between citizens and their elected officials, a way to pull down rather than put up walls between government and the rest of us.

In the 1980s, Presidents Reagan and Bush crafted a privatized “Points of Light” approach to volunteerism that was a welcome invitation to Americans to become more involved in their communities.

But for some, this seemed to be a measure calling on “heroic” school principals and self-sacrificing pastors, one by one and one on one, to solve all the intractable problems government had supposedly failed to solve.

Volunteerism became less a recipe than a surrogate for good citizenship. It was a way to underscore the alleged bankruptcy of the welfare state and such traditional public institutions as public schools and federal welfare agencies. Far from “repairing the breach,” it widened the gulf between Americans and their government, and taught a lesson not just about the benefits of self-sufficiency but about the futility of organized social cooperation. It pushed for private, individual and market strategies, and left volunteers with their distrust of government and their distaste for the governors largely intact. What it did for volunteerism is admirable, what it did for (and to) citizenship was less clear.

President Clinton came to office with a rather different message. The primary social experiment he fashioned — the Corporation for National Service — was aimed at transforming the earlier ethic of volunteerism into an ethic of citizenship.

In the first summer of service in 1993, the President spoke of a season of service that might lead to a lifetime of citizenship. Every volunteer is a prospective citizen, every citizen a partisan of democracy. Volunteers are heroes of a sort, but finally, democracy is



government without heroes, government by ordinary women and men taking responsibility for their common lives.

We live in a world of multinational corporations, global environmental and communications ecosystems, and sovereign nation-states that require not only local responsibility but national forms of citizenship.

We cannot solve one by one and locally the

large infrastructural social problems created over half a century by national and transnational forces — economic downsizing, global drug markets, trade policy or immigration overload, for example.

But for individuals not to feel overwhelmed, we also need a vibrant form of local engagement in which we can begin the journey to social responsibility and citizenship. At its best, this is exactly what volunteerism does — as a vital first step on the long journey from individual effort to common democratic struggle.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the conflicting views of government that Barber traces out? What perspective do you most agree with? Why?
2. Barber offers that volunteerism can become a bad thing if it is seen to be in conflict with public institutions of government. Do you agree? Explain your ideas.
3. What do you think Barber's philosophy of government is? How does this differ with the current perspective on government as seen through the media?



WHY SERVICE MATTERS

BY COLIN POWELL

Colin Powell was Chairman of the President's Summit for America's Future. This originally ran as an essay in Newsweek in April, 1997.

Not long ago, I visited a Boys and Girls club in a poor area in Florida. I was talking to a group of kids sitting on the floor around me about my own childhood. My family wasn't rich; in fact, we lived in a tenement in the Bronx. But, I told the group, my parents had created an enveloping family environment that gave sustenance, structure and discipline to our lives. We were taught to believe in ourselves. As I spoke, a 9-year-old boy raised his hand, "General," he asked, "do you think if you didn't have two parents you would have made it?"

That kid cut me right to the quick. He was saying, "This isn't my world you're talking about. Can I still make it?"

My answer was, "Yes, you can." That boy may not have had what I had growing up, but, I said, "there are people here who care for you, who will mentor you, who will watch over you and teach you right from wrong."

As I began traveling around the country in retirement, my own interests turned inward, from national security and cold war to what is going on here at home. I have seen social, cultural and racial divides that are deeply troubling. These are problems government can't solve, so it is up to us to get on with it. Last Friday we started: I had the unusual privilege of standing in the White House beside two of the presidents I had served — Bill Clinton and

George Bush. One had defeated the other at the polls, but old rivalries are giving way to a common purpose. We were together to announce the President's Summit for America's Future, which will be held April 27-29. Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter and First Ladies Hillary Clinton, Lady Bird Johnson and Nancy Reagan will be present to welcome the delegations from every state and hundreds of volunteer groups. The goal is not just to celebrate "service" but to encourage corporations and nonprofits to further mentoring, skill training, child health care, service to community and safe places for children.

It won't be easy. In my travels, I have met many youngsters. Too many of them are in despair. I saw for myself during 35 years in the military what happens when you take young people, provide a nurturing, structured environment and give them leaders to look up to. I've since wondered what would happen if we could make that model available to every kid.

I find that so many people are anxious to do more, if only we can help them channel their time, energy and treasure. There's no reason every company in the country can't take one kid, 10 kids or 100 kids and teach them about the workplace. There's also a place for local government. Look at California, where Governor Pete Wilson has created a program to recruit 250,000 mentors for at-risk youngsters by 2000. Each of us who has been blessed must reach down or reach back and lift up somebody in need.



Questions for Discussion

1. Why does Powell believe that corporations and non-profits should play a leading role in volunteerism? Is he right in his analysis?
2. Why can't government solve problems dealing with "social, cultural and racial divides"? Is Powell right? Why does he think volunteer work can do more than government? Do you agree? What do you think Powell's philosophy of government is?
3. Do you think service should be about "lifting somebody in need"? Why or why not?



TWO CHEERS FOR CHARITY

BY MARIO M. CUOMO

This editorial, by the former Governor of New York State, is reprinted with permission from the New York Times (April 27, 1997).

What a dazzling array of ideas and proposals make up today's extravaganza in Philadelphia called the President's Summit for America's Future!

Americans helping Americans out of a deep compassion for the disadvantaged, especially the 15 million children at risk. "A new way of doing business" (in the words of the summit meeting's organizers) that will by the year 2000, give at least two million of these children better health, better education, a better chance at a good job, safer places to live and work and even better relationships with their parents or mentors.

No one will be taxed to pay for any part of it, nor will there be any grubby partisan politics. Whatever political benefits may develop will rebound to both major parties because they are both well-represented among the leading organizers. Altogether, the latest in ultimate volunteerism. And maybe the most appealing of all, on the outside of the brightly wrapped package for all to see: "The Era of Big Government is Over."

There is no doubt that the Philadelphia gathering will be well-received by the American people and that it will do something. The idea of volunteerism is irradicably an American tradition.

Americans have been marvelously generous with their own time, ideas and resources for more than 200 years. Think of the countless groups already at work: religious organizations, foundations, corporations, not-for-profits like the American Red Cross, Volunteers of America and Mentoring USA - not to mention volunteer firemen who risk their lives for their neighbors simply because it is a good thing to do.

Indeed, for more than most of our history, much of what we now call social services were

provided by private charities. Long before welfare, unemployment insurance, Medicaid, Medicare or even a public school system, people in need were helped by charities or not at all.

So a well-organized, highly motivated bipartisan effort to stimulate further our instinct for mutual aid and community activity is an intelligent and useful appeal to the better angels of our nature. It will brighten the soul of the nation and provide a welcome respite from the less inspiring political skirmishing to which we've become so accustomed. Sounds almost perfect.

Almost.

But there is the danger we will feel so good about being good to one another privately that we will be tempted to believe that government does not need to do anything more. The summiteers own statements make appallingly clear how great the need for assistance is. They mention millions of children at risk and 40 million poor people in America. They mention the need for better education and skills training. There are estimates that just to repair public school buildings around the nation we will need nearly \$100 billion. This does not even consider the shortages of books, transportation and modern technology, nor the inappropriate shortness of the school year.

The summiteers mention better health: More than 40 million Americans are without health care insurance. Both Democrats and Republicans in Congress admit that the life of many children will be ruined unless they are provided with access to early and regular health care.

The summit meeting is a good thing, if we are to regard it as helpful to deal with these enormous problems but refuse to delude ourselves into thinking that it is a substitute for government.

The reason America went from almost purely



private social services to welfare, food stamps, unemployment insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, public schools and a highway system was not because we stopped being charitable. It was because the size of our population, the density of its gathering and the nature of the problems of industrialization created greater needs than private charity alone could meet.

Private effort should come before we use government to serve a need: Government is best used only where private effort is inadequate. But private effort is clearly inadequate to do what we have to do to make any real progress in dealing with the vast, complicated, rooted problems associated with poverty.

Ask Cardinal John O'Connor in New York. Ask the leaders of the United Jewish Federation. Ask the operators of the soup kitchen at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine. Ask the Ohio Hunger Task Force, which feeds 10,000 American each year. They

will tell you the truth: Of course we will profit from the encouragement and even from a little prodding. But American charities at their very best can build a bridge only a short part of the way across the chasm.

The rest must be done by the real ultimate form of volunteerism, our government, which after all is not something apart from the people, but is rather the coming together of Americans to decide how best to handle common problems with common resources.

If both parties in Congress can agree to waste \$50 billion on corporate welfare; if our Congress says we can afford hundreds of billions of dollars in tax cuts; and if we can afford to give our richest Americans Social Security and Medicare payments that they don't need, how can we refuse to build the bridge all the way from here to decency?

Go to the Summit: But remember the whole truth!

Questions for Discussion

1. Cuomo implies that volunteerism cannot accomplish everything. What is his argument? Do you agree?
2. Do you see any conflicts between private volunteerism and the public activities of government? How do motivations to serve affect this conflict?
3. What are the things government can and cannot do? What are the things volunteerism can and cannot do?
4. How do you change government? What are examples of citizens changing government? Do you think our energy is better spent trying to change government or in volunteering?



NATIONAL DEBT, NATIONAL SERVICE

BY WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

This story, by the well-known conservative writer, William Buckley, was reprinted with permission from the New York Times (October 18, 1995).

The points of light of George Bush, those little oases of civic-mindedness and philanthropy he spoke of during his Presidential campaign, have ended in Las Vegas comedy routines ("Mister, can you spare a point of light?") Yet, in 1988, 23 million Americans gave five hours per week or more in volunteer social work. Assuming that the labor of those who engage in such activism is worth only the minimum wage, we are talking about \$25 billionworth of time already given to service concerns other than one's own.

All this suggests that the spirit is there, but it coexists with a strange and unhealthy failure by many American men and women to manifest a new sense of obligation to the patrimony, a phenomenon noted 50 years ago by the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset, except he was speaking about modern man, not Americans. The neglect of the patrimony by Americans is perhaps more unconscionable, because it can be persuasively argued that we owe more than perhaps any other country to those who bequeathed us the land we live in and the institutions that govern us.

My thesis is that we need a national service. There are proposals sitting around in Congress, whose strengths and failures I have evaluated elsewhere. Here the focus is on the assertion that prompts the proposal: the search for an institutional vehicle through out which we could give expression to the debt we feel, or should feel, for the patrimony. Here are the distinctive aspects of the program I have elaborated.

1. The program should be voluntary, because voluntary activity is presumptively to be preferred to obligatory activity, and because although we are thinking in terms of requital (what can we do for our

country, in return for what it has done for us?) man, lest he become unrecognizable, should be left free to be ungrateful.

2. That doesn't mean that society should not use incentives, such positive and negative reinforcements as the behaviorist B.F. Skinner wrote about, to press the point that those citizens who appreciate the Bill of Rights and the legacies of the Bible, of Aristotle, Shakespeare and Bach, and who document that appreciation by devoting a year of their lives to civic-minded activity, are to be distinguished from those who do not.

Distributive justice never hesitates to treat unequally unequal people, in respect of rewards, and esteem. There is no such thing as a first-class citizens or a second-class citizen, and although commutative justice is owed to them equally, that's the end of it. The person who devotes 40 hours a week to community service is a better citizen than his ungrateful counterpart, and society shouldn't funk acknowledging the difference. This who fear a class system should ponder the offsetting effects of shared experience, shoulder to shoulder.

3. The objective of national service should not be considered in the tender of Good Deeds. Tending to the sick, teaching illiterates to read, preserving our libraries are desirable ends. But the guiding purpose here is the spiritual animation of the giver, not the alms he dispenses. The person who has given a year in behalf of someone else, is himself better for the experience. National service is not about reducing poverty; it is about inducing gratitude.

There isn't any way in which we can tangibly return to our society what we have got from it: liberty and order, access to the poetry of the West, the devotion of our parents and teachers. The point needs to be made that tokenism is not to be dismissed, because, in



other contexts, it is scorned. Because the dead of the Civil War cannot be revived does not mean, as Lincoln told us, that they can be forgotten. And the search for the practical way in which to hold them in esteem should go beyond national holidays we spend on the beach. The cultivation of the rite of passage, from passive to active citizenship, is the challenge of

national service.

We will always be short of Americans who can add to the Bill of Rights, or compose another “Don Giovanni.” But there is the unmistakable means of giving witness to the gratitude we feel, or ought to feel, when we compare our lot with that of so many others who know America only in their dreams.

Questions for Discussion

1. Buckley argues that service should be “voluntary” and not “obligatory.”

Do you agree? Compare this to the argument Barber makes in *A Mandate for Liberty*.

2. Do you agree with Buckley that service should help a server with his or her spiritual outlook? Why or why not? What do you propose differently than Buckley?

3. If service is about gratitude, what about people who don't have gratitude? What assumptions is Buckley making about our society? Should everyone feel gratitude towards this nation? Why or why not? What kind of service would we have if only people who feel gratitude were to serve?



POLITICS AND NATIONAL SERVICE: A VIRUS ATTACKS THE VOLUNTEER SECTOR

BY BRUCE CHAPMAN

In the following essay, which first appeared in National Service: Pro and Con, edited by William Evers, Bruce Chapman raises a number of serious objections to national service.

Proposals for government-operated national service, like influenza, flare up from time to time, depress the resistance of the body politic, run their course, and seem to disappear, only to mutate and afflict public life anew. Unfortunately, another epidemic may be on the way. The disease metaphor comes to mind not as an aspersion on the advocates of national service because, with good-natured patience, persistence, and seemingly relentless political invention, they mean well, but from the frustration of constantly combating the changing strains of a statist idea that one thought had been eliminated in the early 1970s, along with smallpox.

Why does the national service virus keep coming back? Perhaps because its romance is so easy to catch, commanding a nostalgic imagination and evoking times when Americans were eager to sacrifice for their country. Claiming to derive inspiration from both military experience and the social gospel — if we could only get America's wastrel youth into at least a psychic uniform we might be able to teach self-discipline again and revive the spirit of giving — it hearkens back to William James's call for a "moral equivalent of war." But at the end of the twentieth century should we be looking to war for moral guidance?

True service is one of the glories of our civilization in the West, especially in the great independent (or volunteer) sector of American society. Inspiration for service in the West comes from the Bible in parable and admonition and is constantly restated in the long historical tradition of Judeo-Christian faith. Personal service is a freewill offering to God. This is very different from performance of an obligation to government, which is a tax on time or money.

True service, then, has a spiritual basis, even for some outside the Judeo-Christian tradition *per se*. Fulfillment of an obligation to government, in contrast,

has a contractual basis unless it is founded on an outright commitment to a coercive utopianism. Either way, it is not true service. Nor can enrollment in a government-funded self-improvement project or acceptance of a government job be called true service. Indeed, when coercion or inducements are provided, as in the various national service schemes, the spirit of service is to that degree corrupted.

In practice, the service in a federal program of national service would be contaminated by government determination of goals, bureaucratization of procedures, and, inevitably, government insistence on further regulating the independent sector with which it contracted. National service would tend to demoralize those citizens who volunteer without expectation of financial reward and stigmatize the honest labor of people whose fields were invaded by stipended and vouchered volunteers.

Government intervention is always a potential threat to the voluntary sector. When totalitarians have come to power in other Western countries, they have sought to absorb this sector, conferring official sponsorship on certain organizations and scorning others, thereby inculcating in the citizenry the government's valuation even on use of free time. Although in the United States totalitarianism is not a current danger to our liberal democracy, coercive utopianism is always a legitimate concern.

Alexis de Tocqueville saw in our own early history that the genius of voluntary association was America's superior answer to the leadership energy provided in other societies by aristocracies. But government, he warned, may seek to direct the voluntary sector in the same way it erroneously seeks to control industrial undertakings:

"Once it leaves the sphere of politics to launch out on



this new task, it will, even without intending this, exercise an intolerable tyranny. For a government can only dictate precise rules. It imposes the sentiments and ideas which it favors, and it is never easy to tell the difference between its advice and its commands.”

National service proposes to organize the voluntary sector efficiently and render it more fruitful. Can one imagine a political scheme in this field that purported to do otherwise? But is the voluntary sector so weak that it needs this unsolicited assistance? On the contrary, it is at least as robust as ever. According to the Gallup Poll, American adults contribute an average of two hours a week of service; more than 23 million Americans (according to the umbrella association Independent Sector) give more than five hours a week in service. Financial contributions to charity have risen 30 percent (adjusted for inflation) in the 1980s. Some volunteer sector leaders, perhaps failing to anticipate the spirit-killing cost of government paperwork and second-guessing, eagerly solicit government funding, and during the 1960s and 1970s such funding grew steadily. Interestingly, during that same period the value of private sector charitable giving was relatively stagnant. By 1980 the independent sector was relying on government contracts for more than a quarter of its funds.

Experts on philanthropy using the same data differ as to whether the government’s share of funding in the volunteer sector shrank or remained the same thereafter. In either event, however, some administrators of volunteer associations would like to see more federal money.

But although federal contracts for services may represent an advance over governmental operation of certain programs, one has to worry about any trend that makes the independent sector more beholden to the government and thus less independent. When volunteer association leaders complain that the government cannot expect the much smaller volunteer sector to do the government’s job, they must be heard. But they need to recognize in turn that the volunteer sector should avoid the temptation of accepting more and more federal funds to do the government’s job. In this, national service represents the greatest peril.

Government’s undue influence and controls on the volunteer service sector are especially dangerous to the country’s religious institutions. The largest share of

the money (46 percent) and likely the largest share of service activities in the volunteer service sector come from churches and synagogues. Government cannot tread in this field except with big feet, and the ground is filled with the land mines of the separation-of-church-and-state issue. As government intervenes in the roles of religious institutions, it diminishes them. Worse, it may choose to play favorites, providing paid volunteers for the service activities of one church because its activities are considered constitutional (for example, day care) while denying them to another (for example, day care where religion is part of the schooling). “Without intending” it, in Tocqueville’s phrase, the government’s use of tax monies in this way can distort churches’ choices, tempting them to follow the government’s money rather than their own consciences.

In countries where churches receive public subsidies, faith typically is weaker than where, as in America, churches are not taxed but also are not tax supported. With the trend toward government support for the voluntary service sector, especially with prospective national service (or community service) contracts for paid volunteer programs, religion has the most to lose. Either it will find the government outbidding it with financial inducements for volunteers, or it will find the competition for government funds pitting one church or synagogue activity against another and one denomination against another, with money taken from the people as a whole. The claim, then, that a federal program of national service will be a boon for the existing volunteer sector could not be more insidious.

But the claims that national service would help solve certain practical societal problems also prove fallacious on inspection. The romantic impulse of national service is not genuinely connected to any worthy public need that cannot better be met in other less disruptive and less costly ways. To the extent that we want a highly motivated military and affordable college tuition, housing, hospital maintenance, or job training, government employment subsidies are not the most efficient or fair way to get them. If, for example, we want to support students, we might adopt the idea used in other countries of offering more scholarships based on old-fashioned scholarship rather than on the government’s idea of service. Or we might provide a tax credit for working students. What we do not need to do is start a war, as it were, and then try to justify it by creating a GI Bill.



To the extent that we lack the human resources to staff menial jobs in hospitals, we should raise pay, pursue labor-saving technology, allow more legal immigration, or all of these rather than over pay high school graduates as short-term workers and thereby cause bad feelings among permanent workers who are paid lesser amounts to do the same jobs.

To the extent that we want to see the private sector as a whole expand, it makes no sense to engage a federal bureaucracy, let alone a host of little federal and local bureaucracies, to orchestrate the movement. Under such terms it is government, not the voluntary sector, that will be expanded. Douglas Besharov, Research Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, has suggested that reducing existing government regulation of the voluntary sector, especially the liability for personal suits, would invigorate voluntary associations. Independent Sector would like an improvement in tax breaks that were reduced in 1986, such as tax deductions for nonitemizers. To expand the role of service in society, government can also exhort, inform, recognize, and praise, which President Bush is doing in his Points of Light initiative.

National service is a poor answer to concrete problems, then, because it is barely cognizant of the problems themselves. Instead, government-directed national service is advanced *a priori* as the answer to almost any public ill, from ravaged forests to overcrowded prisons, to poverty, to illiteracy, to graffiti on buildings, to overtaxed border patrols. Presented almost as a panacea, what we have in the national service cosmogony is the concept that millions of potential volunteers exist whose own problems, whatever they are, can be solved by putting them to work meeting the needs of the rest of society, whatever those needs are, and that this concatenation can occur only by the magic hand of government.

National service proponents also want us to believe that work performed by all people called *volunteers* is free. In fact, the labor of national service volunteers represents an opportunity cost, a hidden expenditure of time that could be used in other ways more useful to society, as well as to the national service volunteers themselves. For many youth, their serious career contributions would be

delayed by time in government-directed service. Arguably, we already have too many older teenagers earning entry-level pay at fast-food emporia (often for pin money, not tuition) instead of studying. It is a mistake born of inexperience to think that such work is ennobling, whether financed by Colonel Sanders or Uncle Sam. In Japan, with whom we must compete, students typically do not hold down jobs but concentrate on their studies.

Moreover, the national servicers propose to load down their volunteers with untaxed government stipends and postservice financial rewards. This provision, which is unfailingly coupled with a requirement that only government-approved service be funded, thus reveals national service as a disguised government jobs program like the long-abandoned Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA) of the 1970s or any number of its wasteful and often corrupt predecessors. National service doesn't save time or money; it squanders both.

But if the desire for national service lacks an object (if, indeed, it is a passionate desire in search of a public need), it is a desire with at least superficial political appeal. The Gallup Poll of December 1987 showed that 83 percent of the populace favored the national service concept. Because the particulars of the concept are vague and changeable, politicians can identify with national service without raising many objections, meanwhile associating themselves with warm and gushy — if indistinct — humanitarian sentiments. Backers therefore have been at pains to find political purposes worthy of such sentiments and to attach their passionate desires to them.

In the mid- 1960s national service was promoted as a politically acceptable way of curing the manifest inequities of the draft by, of all things, expanding the draft. The hope was to unite supposed national service idealism with what was perceived as the grim necessity of conscripting soldiers for the armed forces. Morale would surely go up if everyone, one way or another, had to serve. This assumed, of course, that young people could not tell the difference between serving in the library at home and getting shot at overseas. Regardless, social engineers were happy to employ military conscription to fulfill their own societal designs...

The outcome of this particular phase in the saga of voluntary service versus national service is not yet



known. The hopes of those who oppose national service were high, even though they knew that defeat of the utopian virus would not kill it. But another temporary defeat would assure that, for a while at least, millions of

knee-socked national service youth performing works of supposed civic content would be mobilized only in the imagination of their progenitors and that the “moral equivalent of war” would be fought only in the sociological petri dishes of academe.

Questions for Discussion

1. Who administers your community service program? Has your program encountered any of the problems Chapman describes?
2. If your community service takes the form of paid short-term work, do you find yourself in conflict with either permanent workers or “true” volunteers, as Chapman fears?
3. Chapman argues that national service represents an “opportunity cost” for young people, detaining them from making a “serious career contribution” to society. Do you agree? Would other activities be more beneficial for either yourself or society?
4. Do you see community service as “a freewill offering to God” or do you think community service should be paid work? Does getting paid for a job necessarily reduce the nonmaterial rewards of the work?



THE IMPLICATIONS OF NATIONAL SERVICE ON YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

BY CLAUDIA HORWITZ

Claudia Horwitz runs a nonprofit organization called Stone Circles. She has participated in many debates on youth service. This article was originally published in Social Policy, Fall 1993 and is excerpted with the permission of the magazine.

So many people in the national youth service movement are sitting on the fence that I am waiting for it to collapse. Most of my peers have had trouble deciding whether to commit wholeheartedly to national service or to abandon it. And I don't blame them. Despite a nagging skepticism, we all want to believe that national service is going to affect our generation one way or another, so why not get involved and make sure it's a program worth having?

I sat on that fence for a while, because I believe young people have the power to change things in this country. And from the fence you can see two potential allies: money and power. But since Bill Clinton was elected last November, I have watched national service unfold with disappointment. After much thought and real heartache, I have decided it's just too dangerous to support.

It's not the concept that I have a problem with—it's the reality. National service is sapping the energy of many of our nation's most powerful young leaders, sweeping them up into federal bureaucracy before their time. And while they bury their heads in youth service jargon, presidential mandates, and funding requirements, community activists worry that the program will perpetuate the myth that community service is enough to address serious social problems.

Most of my colleagues are working so hard they have little time to reflect on the implications of the administration's plan. On the other hand, the administration has made no real effort to encourage or seek out constructive criticism. Like other "feel-good" issues, national service is hard to oppose. As a result, there has been a dearth of rigorous public debate on the issue or fundamental critique of its possible outcomes — and many of those with the most to say are clamming up for legitimate fear of jeopardizing the future of their own programs. The national service legislation has already been passed,

but before the bill is implemented, there is still time to rethink its goals and how these goals will be achieved.

The Beginning of the End?

Anyone who spent time on a college campus in the mid-'80s knows that student community service is not a recent invention. By the late 1980s, there were numerous national volunteer service organizations that banded together to lobby successfully for the 1990 National and Community Service Act. The Act created the Commission on National and Community Service, a federal agency that distributed \$73 million in grants over the past two years to local, state and national community service agencies, corps, schools and universities.

The day after Bill Clinton was elected, a group of young people drafted a letter to the Clinton transition team at the urging of the Commission. That group turned into a youth task force, which then immediately developed and built support for AmeriCorps, a proposal for a diverse, locally-controlled service corps with minimal bureaucracy. Less than a week later it was discovered that the proposal had been slightly changed in the Commission's hands. Instead of the recommended emphasis on local organizations — a carefully thought-out provision to assure greater inclusion of grassroots groups — the proposal now stressed more centralized statewide agencies, which the Commission was already working to develop. (It is these agencies, now called State Commissions, which will ultimately control the implementation of national service.) At the same time, many of us in the service movement were approached to recommend young people for possible staff positions at the White House Office of National Service. The young people on the ONS staff, wound up being more often those with presidential campaign experience and political connections than those with significant



service movement experience. Already, political jockeying had begun to take precedence over experience and vision.

The task force grew, and became known as Young People for National Service. In a December 22nd memo to the transition team, YPFNS produced, as it had been requested to do, a list of principles the group *would not* support in a national service program. Among other things, the group feared a program administered by a major federal bureaucracy, and one that “didn’t include young people in the development and administration at the local, state and national levels.”

The final national service legislation mandates that states provide technical assistance and training where requested or needed, and that at least one young person be appointed to the commission. This is not exactly what I’d call including young people in the development of the program — and including young people is the best way to guard against an unwieldy federal bureaucracy that wastes taxpayer dollars.

“The federal government doesn’t tell Boeing how to build their jet engines,” pointed out a director of one of the country’s leading campus-based community service programs. But national service policy has been designed, and primarily will be implemented, not by young people, but by Washington insiders. Young people, it seems, are not viewed as experts of anything, not even their own experience as community activists. Instead, national service has become a political game for adults to play.

YPFNS now has 1,500 young people in its database and coordinators receive an average of 40 to 50 calls per week from young people wondering how they can have a voice in creating a plan for national service. Many are still concerned that their state agencies won’t include young people and community members in the decision-making and that local groups won’t get the information or help needed to submit proposals.

Trabian Shorters, interim chair of the development committee for YPFNS and one of the original task force members, explained, “The corps structure may very well be the most beneficial that I’ve seen for getting people involved in their neighborhoods. But organizations are using the fact that people are suffering just to pull their hustle over. That’s why there’s a need to create a membership organization for people who do serve, a collective voice. Otherwise you just get exploited.”

Real Problems, Real Solutions

My main concern about a national service program is that it will draw attention away from the real causes of and possible solutions to very critical problems. The momentum of the current initiative clouds the realities of poverty, despair and violence — challenges to young people everywhere.

This is a weird time in America. Sixth graders bring guns to school, and families make homes out of cardboard. Thus far, however, national service has conveniently overlooked the political and economic realities of the time. When President Clinton first launched his national service program at Rutgers University in March of 1993, he remarked that “national service will be America at its best ... national service is nothing less than the American way to change America.” That’s tough to swallow.

I do believe national service was founded with good hearts, the best of intentions, and a desire to bring back the enthusiasm of JFK’s Peace Corps. But if President Clinton really believes that the spirit of service “is giving us a chance to put the quilt of America together in a way that makes strength out of diversity, that lifts us up out of our problems, and that keeps our people looking toward a better and brighter future,” we’re in trouble. The problems of the ‘90s did not arise from thin air; the increase in poverty, injustice, racism, unemployment, illiteracy and AIDS is no accident. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. described the Reagan-Bush years as a time of “national leadership that assigned the pursuit of self-interest moral priority and systematically sabotaged the law and agencies designed to protect the public interest.” I applaud the current administration’s departure from this philosophy, but it is not enough.

Sure, national service will provide some young people with an alternative to the more well-known options — dropping out, investment banking, dealing drugs, working at McDonald’s. But the opportunities for young people to do community work come at a heavy price. There is an unspoken desire to “keep it apolitical.” We all know this is impossible. The question is not whether it will be political, but what kind of politics it will have. The government runs the risk of perpetuating a dehumanizing system, of fostering relationships of dependence without challenging the unequal distribution of power and wealth responsible for this system in the first place.

Helen Dentiam, who recently completed a

SERVICE AND THE NATION



Helen Dentiam, who recently completed a report for the New World Foundation, describing the current status of youth organizing in the United States, is openly critical of this view. "National service is pulling the wool over people's eyes," she said in a telephone interview. "Service portrays itself as solving problems in this country. Bold claims are being made that are actually doing *a disservice* to the young people who have much more potential to do social change organizing. National service is neglecting and manipulating communities, portraying them as victims who have no voice, cannot act on their own behalf and do not have power. The plan won't let people critically examine those problems, and communities aren't permitted to define the problems for themselves: how they want to address them and how they want to direct funds to change social structures." We cannot expect serious social change without a critical analysis of our political, economic, and social systems — an analysis that national service will not encourage or allow.

Killing Too Many Birds

Steve Conn, a doctoral candidate in American history at the University of Pennsylvania and longtime commentator on student activism, believes there is a problem of cross-purposes. "Some people advocate national service because it seems like the easiest way to fix the college financial aid system, a perfectly admirable goal. There's another constituency of people that see our generation as a collection of dissipated youth that need to shape up and why not discipline us with a military-like form of community service. And then there is a handful of people who want to talk about solving community problems. These people don't get a lot of air time."

"So," he continues, "we have two problems that are not related to communities or service — lack of discipline as a generation and financial aid — but service seems like a good way to solve them. Neighborhoods become the crash pad upon which this program lands, without much discussion about what effect this is going to have. It's that type of Victorian ideal that any service project that takes place in a disadvantaged locale is a good thing." Others agree that national service is nothing more than a grand experiment. It doesn't matter what actually works best, just whose ideas thrive and how much they cost. When it's over, a few people go to college and real

people are stuck cleaning up the lab. With 20,000 to be serving by 1994 that's a lot of broken test tubes.

The recent wave of media attention has failed to mention that *no one* in this field would have livelihoods if not for the work of thousands of community leaders who literally create jobs for many of the young people wanting to get involved in community service. We're all looking for unsung heroes and heroines, but young people providing service are not the answer, however bright and capable they may be. If the federal government (and the media) spent half as much energy on local grassroots efforts and leaders who have given decades to their communities as they have to national service, they would find those heroes, and might in the process change the perception that low-income communities do not and cannot do anything for themselves.

Creating a Movement for Justice

I'm all for involving young people in community action — but it should be sustained, long term empowering action, not just one-time experiences or service work that fails to challenge current power dynamics. This generation has inherited a failing economy, a bankrupt political system and a vacuous, made-for-TV culture, and we're trying to figure out what the hell to do about it. We already know that the patient is very, very sick. Breaking the cycle of disadvantage in America is going to take a whole lot more than some strong band-aids. Serious social change is not going to happen without a real grassroots movement, one that ferments at the local level and bubbles up and over state and regional politics.

Of course, the federal government does not create movements, it creates alternatives. Holli Levinson, who works with Empty the Shelters in Atlanta, points out, "the government will never pay me, or anyone else, to support the efforts to organize with homeless people. They will set up an institutionalized system of soup kitchen volunteers and then claim they are spending their resources to 'solve' homelessness." Ironically, this alternative — a national service program — risks diverting the passion, energy and anger of young people who care, those who could have truly built a community-based movement.

I am not alone on this side of the fence; many of the best community organizers, advocates and activists I know have been here for a long time. We all share the same gut level reaction that a national community



problems our nation's communities are facing. We're not cynics, we're just realistic. And we've traded one kind of idealism for another. Effective community action means reverting back to priorities that are at the core of the human spirit, those things that have been pushed down, almost below the surface. It is

about taking certain values, like justice and equality, and lifting them back up to eye level. And it's about supporting communities to build their own brand of activism, not one which has been laid out in a legislative mandate.

Questions for Discussion

1. What exactly are Horwitz's objections to a national service program?
2. Do you think Horwitz's faith in a more decentralized, bottom-up initiative run by young people is better? How would it (or not) address the problems she is concerned with?
3. Why does Horwitz argue against seeing service as "apolitical"? What does she mean by this? Do you agree or disagree with her?
4. How does Horwitz's view relate to Buckley's? To Chapman's? Where do Chapman and Horwitz agree and disagree?



DON'T CALL THEM VOLUNTEERS

BY JOHN P. WALTERS

This editorial is reprinted with permission from the New York Times (February 2, 1996).

President Clinton has been sounding more like a New Republican than a New Democrat lately, calling for an end to big government. But his oratory is belied by his record, especially one of his proudest legislative accomplishments: the Americorps national service program.

It is here, not in the mire of continuing budget negotiations, that liberal and conservative visions of the role of government are brought into stark relief. After staunchly opposing the program, Congressional Republicans capitulated last month to a temporary spending measure that kept it alive. By focusing more on cutting the budget than on programs that need cutting, conservatives allowed themselves to be outfoxed by the President.

Mr. Clinton presented Americorps as more than just another Federal Program: it was to be "citizenship at its best," the essence of his "new covenant" between the people and their Government. While conservatives argue that government must be cut back so that civil society can bloom, the President believes that government can be reinvented to serve society.

Americorps, the president claimed, was going to strengthen local charities and show that government money could stimulate private giving. The program would not only promote community service: it would combat an attitude of entitlement among young people by encouraging them to work to earn money for higher education.

Yet in the year and a half of its existence, Americorps has shown itself to be everything that is wrong with big government.

No one denies that the program's 24,000 paid volunteers are doing some good, from restoring wilderness trails (who wouldn't want to do that?) to painting houses in poor neighborhoods. Nevertheless, the program embodies the inevitable flaws of a Government

social welfare project.

Last year, a General Accounting Office audit revealed that each participant costs the Treasury about \$27,000 per year — roughly \$10,000 more than Americorps had estimated. And cost isn't the only problem. When government comes to the table as a partner, its interests tend to crowd out those of others. More than one fourth of Americorps volunteers were placed in Federal, state or local government agencies — helping government help itself rather than genuine grass-roots organizations.

The program also appeared to have its own agenda, spending tax dollars on liberal programs like sex education, "self-esteem" enhancement projects and advocacy groups for liberal causes.

Finally, in spite of the President's claim that Federal money could be used to leverage private support, the General Accounting Office audit found that only 12% of Americorps funds came from private sources. The program allowed groups to substitute the blessing of a government grant for the hard work of gaining and sustaining local support — the essence of grass-roots accountability.

AmeriCorps reveals how the Administration fundamentally misunderstands citizenship. Paying people to "volunteer" confuses the genuine contribution of almost 90 million people who give their time to good causes with a Great Society jobs program. The very premise of Americorps contradicts the principle of responsibility that is at the heart of self-government. It implies that local social problems are Washington's to solve.

By renewing their attack on Americorps instead of letting the President win the next round, conservatives could relaunch a national debate over the role of government. They could also expose the contradictions in the President's "New Republican" image.



Questions for Discussion

1. What do you think Walters means by “civil society”? Why is this an important element of his argument?
2. Do you agree with Walters that national service duplicates welfare programs with their purported bureaucracy of waste? Does the concept of service change anything about how human needs are met?
3. Walters implies that government should play no role in service and should allow “grassroots organizations” to do things themselves. Do you believe government has a role to play here? How would organizations do it themselves? If not, why not? If so, why? Justify your argument.



A NEW BARGAIN FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

BY SAM NUNN

Sam Nunn was a Democratic Senator, representing Georgia, from 1979 to 1996. A highly respected public official, he was particularly active in foreign policy issues, and sat on the Armed Services Committee since 1979. This article is reprinted with permission from the New Democrat (November-December, 1996).

AmeriCorps, this country's national and community service initiative, is caught in a crossfire between Democrats and Republicans. For the last two years, some of us in Congress have argued long and hard to defend it as a sound investment and as an important experiment with tremendous potential. Others have sought to kill the program outright.

This gunfight has been intensified by President Clinton's strong endorsement and personal embrace of AmeriCorps as his administration's signature initiative. Not surprisingly, due to his strong support, Republicans have repeatedly held the program hostage.

Clearly, the debate on national service in this Congress has been less than visionary. Those of us who support AmeriCorps have been too busy trying to keep it alive to really address its long-term future. Those who have opposed it have often been driven to abolitionist rhetorical excesses, encouraged by the extraordinary leverage of a death threat.

There are two obvious ways out of this impasse, other than, of course, total victory by one side or the other.

The first, and most obvious, is to split the difference between the current AmeriCorps and no AmeriCorps — to reduce funding and eliminate some of the program's most controversial aspects, giving each side a small victory and preserving a weak, but at least living hostage for future fights. That sort of compromise was reached earlier this year through the good faith and good offices of Republican Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa, a critic, and Corporation for National Service Chairman Harris Wofford.

But as I see it, we need a new bargain on national and community service. And the first step toward that bargain must be made by both sides.

What Liberals Must Do

For liberals, the first step is to recognize that AmeriCorps is not the be all and end all of national service, but rather the latest effort of applying an old idea of asking Americans to give something back to their country and then rewarding their service with the opportunity to pursue higher education.

It means taking seriously national service's underlying ethic of mutual obligation between citizens and their government, even if that raises uncomfortable questions about whether we should carefully and gradually phase out student financial aid programs that are not based on service or academic achievement.

It means that AmeriCorps' supporters should begin to consider it as a replacement for existing programs, rather than as an add-on. If we really have faith in national service, we should be willing to see it become one of our primary delivery vehicles for social services.

Finally, it means fully getting behind Harris Wofford's efforts to use AmeriCorps to increase and strengthen unpaid volunteers, and to greatly increase both collaboration and partnership with nonprofit organizations at the national, state and local levels.

In other words, national service has to be made relevant to the American taxpayers in terms of efficiency of government services and the delivery thereof. If we insist that national service must be structured as it is today, locked into deals cut three years ago among youth service providers, public sector unions, federal agencies and congressional committees, then we cannot complain too much if conservatives dismiss the whole idea as the product of a bygone era.

Ultimately the supporters of national service must come to understand that the initiative could be suffocated by its friends just as surely as it can be executed by its enemies.

What Conservatives Must Do



For some of the loudest opponents of national service, the first step may seem like a twisting, Michael Jordan - style leap from the foul line. But for most conservatives, it may not require much movement at all, other than assenting to a higher and clearer perspective.

As a veteran of a number of years of debate on national service and as one who has sometimes been accused of conservatism, I am tempted to respond to conservative critics on their own terms.

To charges that national service participants are paid to sit around camp fires and sing, “Kum-bay-ya,” I could respond by telling you any number of stories about the real work these young people do, from creating neighborhood safety watches, to rebuilding civic parks, to teaching adults how to read, to visiting and caring for the homebound elderly.

To the claim that national service threatens to undermine true volunteerism, I could answer by quoting many leaders of national nonprofit groups on how paid volunteers help them dramatically increase the number of unpaid volunteers participating in their own efforts.

I could point out that national service represents a true investment in our young people, with three separate payoffs:

1. The first is the positive impact on the lives of young people serving others
2. The second is the value of the service they perform
3. The third, and biggest payoff, is the education and skills that these young people obtain from their post-service educational benefit. All you have to do is look at the GI bill to see what kind of payoff that brought to our society, probably the biggest single contributor to the increased productivity of this economy in the 1950s and 1960s.

I could then point out that every negative assessment of the cost-benefit ratio of national service that has ever been done invariably compares the total cost to only one of these three benefits. I challenge the critics to put all three into the equation when you come up with your cost-benefit ratio.

I could even poke a little fun at conservative politicians who will make a speech one day attacking national service on the grounds that subsistence payments or educational benefit somehow or another

taint the spirit of volunteerism, and then make a speech the next day supporting higher pay and larger educational benefits for the members of the all-volunteer military.

Several Problems, One Solution

But let me challenge my conservative friends on a higher ground, making several propositions about the problems and opportunities facing America that I believe the conservatives can share:

1. The most important threat to America’s future today is not military or economic, but moral. It comes not from beyond the seas, but from within our own cities, our own deteriorating families, and our own hearts. It comes from the decline of our civic institutions that once helped transmit values and helped, indeed, raise our children.

2. In part because of the blessings of peace, an increasing number of young Americans today are in danger of growing up without knowing what it means to serve the country, or what it means to work in a disciplined environment with other people from different backgrounds, different races and different beliefs.

3. Many big government programs are no longer helping us make progress against the social ills associated with poverty in blighted communities, and some may even be making things worse.

4. America’s civic sector — our churches, charities, volunteer organizations and neighborhood groups — deserve public support as the most effective agencies we have for positive and constructive social change.

5. Many of our country’s political problems come from the belief that you can get something for nothing, instead of earning opportunities with hard work.

6. Finally, America’s deepest problem is spiritual. Too many Americans no longer believe in our country’s special place in history enough to sacrifice to keep it strong and keep it free.

Suppose I told you that we as a nation could respond to all of these problems simultaneously — that we could express our moral and civic values, give young people the opportunity to learn patriotism and



discipline, replace top-down bureaucracies with bottom-up problem solving, strengthen our civic institutions, provide more opportunity for higher education, substitute mutual obligation for something for nothing, and tap our deepest resources for energy and spirit in this country, our young people.

If we could do all of that in one program, would it be worth spending a few dollars? I think the

answer is clear.

I urge both sides of this argument on national service to think constructively on how we can further this great experiment with its tremendous potential effect on America's future. The middle of the road does not have to be mushy or muddling. Let's take a step to the center, and let's bring our brains and vision with us.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you think Nunn responds well to both sides of the debate? Is his middle-of-the-road approach satisfying? Why or why not?
2. What philosophy of government does Nunn have? How does it differ from Walters'? How does it differ with Cuomo?



CONCLUSION



As you conclude your involvement in a formal community service program, you might think you have more questions than answers about communities and public life. It may even seem like you have more questions than you did when you first got involved. Hopefully the games, exercises and readings included in this guidebook enabled you to seriously engage those questions and to make connections between your service and a complex wider world full of problems and potential.

Community service can lead us on a rich and sometimes confusing journey. You might have become involved out of a simple desire to do something useful or out of an interest in the incentives that some service programs offer – like financial aid or loan forgiveness. But by engaging in the day-to-day concerns of a community and working with others to improve life there, your perspectives may have altered or changed completely. There were probably many frustrations, crises and everyday difficulties. There were probably just as many joys, surprises and opportunities to learn new things and make real contributions. You and other community service participants may have felt alternately optimistic, cynical, critical or hopeful.

We hope that this guide gave you many chances to discuss and debate both the day-to-day aspects of service and its deeper implications. Faced with new experiences, you hopefully learned to think critically about events, situations and processes that affect different aspects of community and political life. By finding new ways to learn from one another and to engage important issues collectively in an informal environment, you modeled democratic community within your own group. At best, all your efforts were reflected in constantly evolving and improving service efforts that benefited many people and institutions.

Reflecting on your efforts, you may have learned the invaluable skill of making every situation a learning environment, and everyone with whom you work a teacher. Faced with challenges, opposition and frustration, you hopefully learned how to achieve your goals through peaceful, constructive means. Learning these skills is important – they will certainly help you as you move forward. But hopefully something else took place as well. Reflective service probably set the stage for you to become a more active citizen. Your experience has helped you to become the kind of citizen who will contribute to community life and to the on-going debate about where our country should head. We need more people like that in this country.

Active citizenship is a never-ending process. We hope that your engagement in community and public service and critical reflection enabled you to make democracy and citizenship meaningful. Are you ready for a lifetime of involvement? We hope so. Because citizenship doesn't end with service. In fact, it only begins.

GOOD LUCK!

CONCLUSION



ANY QUESTIONS?

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