Biographical Note

William B. Cannon (1920-2006) was a professor and administrator at the University of Chicago between 1954 and 1989. He was concurrently involved with national politics, active in the Bureau of the Budget during Lyndon B. Johnson's administration. Cannon was a key figure in the development of Johnson's "War on Poverty" policy, including the controversial Community Action Program implemented in 1964.

Cannon was born in Cascade, Iowa, where he completed a Catholic high school education. Cannon entered the University of Chicago in 1941, but his tenure as a student was interrupted by army service between 1943 and 1946. He received his undergraduate degree in 1947, followed in 1949 by a Master's in Political Science. Between 1954 and 1958 he served as the University's Director of Social Science Development and Assistant Vice President.

By the 1960s Cannon had moved into government administration, where he worked at the Bureau of the Budget. Between 1962 and 1965 he was Assistant Chief of the Office of Legislative Reference for Health, Education, and Welfare Programs. In 1965 he became Chief of the Bureau's Education, Manpower and Science Division, and two years later he was named Director of Operational Coordination and Policy Research. He was active on Presidential Task Forces on education in 1964 and 1967.

President Johnson's Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 instituted new structures for distributing federal resources and administering social welfare programs. Cannon was instrumental in developing the Community Action Program (CAP), which funded anti-poverty initiatives at the local level. Participating agencies were not required to justify their programs to civic or state departments. Although this was designed to ensure "maximum feasible participation" in the "War on Poverty," it created political tensions between the administration and local authorities, as mayoral offices accused Johnson of undermining federalism and politicizing the poor.

Cannon returned to the University of Chicago in 1968, serving as Vice President for Programs and Projects until 1974. He left Chicago for two years act to as Dean of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, but returned in 1976 when he became faculty at the School of Social Service Administration (SSA}. Until 1984 he was also the University's Vice President for Business and Finance. He taught SSA courses on public policy until his retirement to Austin, Texas in 1989. Cannon remained involved in social welfare programs outside academia throughout his career, participating in nonprofit corporations such as the Youthwork Corporation.

As an academic, Cannon continued to be an outspoken Democrat and a believer in "maximum feasible participation of the poor." He felt the Reagan administration had destroyed the traditional alliance between the middle-classes and lower classes. In his New Class Politics (1986), he argued the Democratic Party should cease to compete for middle class votes and turn their attention to counter-organizing the non-middle classes. By focusing on party organization at the local "club" level, Cannon hoped the American poor would develop a distinct political and electoral identity, eventually forming a dominant bloc in the Democratic Party which could push new policy directives. He continued to write on government policy through the Clinton administration.

Cannon died in 2006. He was survived by his four children, Julia, Dominic, William, and Robert.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of William B. Cannon

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, William B. Cannon of Chicago, Illinois do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recording and transcript of the personal interview conducted on May 21, 1982 at Chicago, Illinois and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcript shall be available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

(2) The tape recording shall be available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript and tape.

(4) Copies of the transcript and the tape recording may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcript and tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

William B. Cannon
Donor

8-11-83
Date

INTERVIEW I

DATE: May 21, 1982
INTERVIEWEE: WILLIAM CANNON
INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE
PLACE: Sheraton O'Hare Hotel, Chicago, Illinois

Tape 1 of 2

C: --together for every president, the president's program. Sometimes it's just a simple compilation and coordinating job, and sometimes it's a clearance job and then actual substantive stuff. So we had to keep track of everything that was going to be ready to go up next January, the following January, as part of the President's program.

We were very much aware that the President had been talking to [Walter] Heller--this is Kennedy--and had asked Heller, who was then chairman of the Council [of Economic Advisers], as you know, to do some kind of study, to get the analysis done in essence for maybe a major presidential thrust or program in poverty next year. And he got [Robert] Lampman to do it. Lampman had been around on the staff of the council. I don't remember now whether he had left the staff and was brought back as a consultant or what, but he had been around on the staff and I had worked with him a year or two before on the consumer message; Lampman was in on that. Lampman, of course, had the reputation of doing the poverty studies in the late fifties for the Senate committee. Or was it a joint committee?

I've forgotten. Lampman apparently did the analysis that satisfied
Kennedy that at least there was some real something to know about poverty and therefore maybe something to do about it.

Then--and here my memory's a little fuzzy--Kennedy appointed a committee. It had at least four actors in it, four principal chiefs, that is: Kermit Gordon, Budget Bureau; Walter Heller, council; Bill Wirtz, Labor; and Wilbur Cohen--or [Anthony] Celebrezze,
but Wilbur Cohen, really--[HEW]. But then it was part of a larger group. It was an interagency task force is what it was. What I'm trying to do is to cite the people who were really in control of it.
That task force began meeting, I believe, in the summer, but certain-ly in the fall.

It was a laundry list kind of operation. It just fanned out and asked the agencies for suggestions for what to do for an anti-poverty program. Somewhere around, oh, late September, early October--again, I was in the Office of Legislative Reference [of the Bureau of the Budget]; this was my area, Health, Education, and
Welfare and things like that--we saw a laundry list that the task force had generated as a first effort. There must have been a hun-dred and fifty separate proposals. They may not have all been dif-ferent, but they were all separate, and they represented the kinds
of things that line agencies had been thinking about for years. It
was a fairly unimaginative list.

As I recall, there was a big White House meeting somewhere in
mid-October, early October maybe, with [Ted] Sorensen to begin

fashioning a program. You know, you had to decide what the program was going to be because you had to get specs and you had to begin drafting legislation and things like that.

G: Was this meeting while Kennedy was still president?

C: That's right. That's right. But it was a bomb. I mean the meet-ing was a bomb. I wasn't there, but I was told. And Sorensen really in effect said, "Go back and do some more homework," to this task force.

About that time we were getting anxious. It was October, and January comes up a lot faster, and running the legislative side of things, we had to make sure we had something. There was kind of an implicit responsibility in the office to be a ramrod for the White House, which is to keep the process moving fast enough to the end. So it was from that angle that we began to get concerned if the President really wanted a program like this. That wasn't clear. That was not at all clear. In part the agencies weren't paying a lot of attention because they weren't sure that the President really wanted it. But if he really wanted it, we had to act on the assump-tion that he did and had to make a judgment as to whether he was going to get a program the way the process was working. And we were very dubious--this is Sam Hughes and me--about it.

I'd had some dealings with David Hackett, who was Bob Kennedy's

roommate, as you know, in school and a very close friend, in connec-tion with what eventually became VISTA but was set up as the domes-
tic service corps.

G: The National Service Corps?

C: Something like that, yes. I'd known Dave through those contacts and I had kept in touch with Dave. Now, I began talking to him about [the fact that] I was worried about the interagency process. They tend to be ineffectual and this one was proving to be as ineffectual as most. So I began prodding Dave to prod the Attorney General, Robert, to tell the White House this thing didn't seem to be going anywhere and somebody ought to be taking charge of it. Now, whether he ever did that or not I don't know, and there's some evi- dence from things later that he did. I began the argument, which was later fulfilled in a different way, that what you really needed was not an interagency task force, but someone who was really going to run the program and who had a stake in it and therefore ought to be in on the shaping of it and the selling of it to Congress, which is exactly what happened with Shriver, which I thought was a mar- velous development when it came.

I'd argued this with both Gordon and Heller, because by now it's mid-November. It's the tenth of November, somewhere around there, the eighth, and there was another White House meeting. This time [it was] on the same laundry 1ist shortened--maybe there were only seventy-five [items]--and Sorensen couldn't do anything with that either. So, you see, they were sent back again because that's all you can do with it is to tell them to try it again. But after all, this was November 10 and everybody was beginning to get

worried. There would have to be a decision whether to go ahead, and
on the basis of what they had at that point they couldn't go ahead.
So Hackett began, I'm sure, to talk to Bob Kennedy. But really all that happened was that I got from Dave--you know, I asked him what were his ideas, and he gave me a couple of pieces of paper. I must do a project for Indians, and something and so on, a number
of small projects around the country, because he was a small type.
He was very cautious in wanting to go ahead, and to this day he thinks we went too fast, too big.

G: He saw it as a demonstration.

C: Right. Right. On the other hand, Bill Wirtz was pushing for a utopia, a five billion dollar-a-year job program. That wasn't in the works at all, but that's what he was pushing for. And he thought he was going to get it; that was the other side.

But at any rate, then came the assassination, and the great decision was what to do. I mean, a) we didn't know what Johnson would want to do, and that was critical, and b) we didn't have a program. Even if he wanted to do something, what the hell is it that he would do? Okay? And those are two major [points]. Really, the lines of communication were just beginning to form. I mean, we hadn't worked with Johnson. You know how vice presidents are, or at least used to be, they're fairly isolated from things, at least like this.

But we decided just to move ahead and I took various ideas, key ideas we were kicking around, education, jobs and so on, and I

wrote a memorandum, which I think is in your files and which Sam Hughes sent to Wilbur Cohen and also to [William] Capron and Heller. And they bought it. It had the germ of the Community Action Program, but it had more than that. Around this germ and some other ideas, you could get a coherent program. Really what the memorandum did was while it specified going ahead in certain areas on education and so on, it also said what you need is a very flexi- ble program, because poverty is a flexible problem and you need authority organized around some concept, comprehensive community action. Then you don't have to worry about a hundred and fifty-eight programs or seventy-five; you've got some coherence to it.

G: What was your model for Community Action at this time? Did you use, say, one of the Ford Foundation programs?

C: No. After we surfaced this idea, then Kermit bought it after Capron and Heller bought it. Incidentally, there's a document from the council to Sorensen, December 14 I think is the date, which has the label "Comprehensive Community Action Program." That was extracted from my memo that turned--

(Interruption)

So things were popping and eventually Heller sent a memo on the fourteenth to Sorensen recommending a comprehensive community action program as a centerpiece. Capron had lifted those words, as I found looking over my memorandum right here, from my memorandum. They were not side headings or anything, they were just in there in a sentence. I hadn't recognized the value of it.

But they were also popping in another direction in that Gordon himself began to get in on the act. We had a meeting with him, and he said, "This sounds an awful lot like some of the stuff the Ford Foundation is doing." He'd been with Ford, you know, and I had no notion of it myself, none whatsoever. I didn't know what they were doing. I happened to know Paul Ylvisaker from another contact many years before when I'd been at the University of Chicago and was raising money and talked to him about money to do an addi- tion to the Madison Papers. But that was the only connection I ever had. But we then had a series of meetings with Ylvisaker and Mike Sviridoff, who was then at New Haven, Yale. And yes, as far as I could tell they were talking about something else. The resemblances were really very superficial. Now, I checked this out because I thought maybe I'd gotten it through Hackett who, after all, I did know and I just kind of picked it up without attribution. He was vehement about it in the sense that, by God, he wasn't going to have anything to do with their silly little concept, you see. So he was, if anything, giving me the negatives of it rather than the positives
of it.

No, it really came out of the framework in which I was operating plus my own personal background, which was an attempt to put a legis lative package together and try to figure out a way to unify, politi cally and intellectually, things that were very different. And or ganizing it around a political appeal that I thought would be very
effective and would sell on the Hill, which was localism.

G: How about the term community action? Do you have any idea where [it came from]?

C: I have no idea where it came from. I know that I deliberately set out to write the memo organized around community action. That was the notion. The idea was that it was to be local corporations doing X, Y, Z. I chose the word corporation not because I like the word corporation. I didn't. I just chose the word corporation because I thought it would have more of a business [appeal]. You'll see, we were trying to combine the political appealability with it, but I guess I had been a decentralist all the way through. I was run ning against the tide in political science as it was then taught here in Chicago and elsewhere, which was nationalism. I was a de centralist. I wrote a paper in my municipal government course on how, which I went and looked back at years later. It was essentially the same idea. So these things came up.

G: Let me ask you to back up a minute. Was there a group that met that summer--I'm talking about the summer of 1963--with Lampman, a Saturday club?

C: Mike March. Yes, there was a staff group. You see, I talked about the principals earlier, namely Cohen and Gordon, but there was a staff group that was meeting all the time. Mike March was there, a Budget Bureau representative. I don't remember now who the others were, but they were staff types from around and they were running the show.

G: What did that group do?

C: They developed these hundred and fifty-eight proposals and priced them out and analyzed them and prepared them and so on.

Now, then, of course, we're now coming to the era where your memorandum starts.

G: There was a meeting after the assassination, I guess. First Heller
met with LBJ, I understand.

C: Well, yes, those meetings I wasn't privy to, but I was privy to them in the sense of being reported to. The one I was reported to-- well, there were a number of meetings of Heller and Gordon and
others, with Sorensen and others. Bob Kennedy got back in on the act. He let it be known--this is why I thought maybe Hackett had talked to him prior to the assassination--that he would be inter-ested in having the job which Shriver got, in effect.

G: Resigning the attorney general's position?

C: Right. And heading up the War on Poverty. And he let this be known. My informant was Dave Hackett. This was one of those big December meetings with Sorensen and others in which the Attorney General came in--he was still attorney general--and said in this open group that he would really consider taking on this job. So I
said, I deduce from that that he'd be in on it all the way along the line. There's another area where I'll tell you about, on the Shriver task force. Don't let me forget, because Kennedy was cru-cial to Community Action at that point with regard to Shriver.

So how do you want me to go from here?

G: Well, let's proceed as much chronologically as possible.

C: Okay.

G: And we'll go through and pick up the—

C: We developed off, after that December 14 meeting. Community Action was sold with Sorensen and maybe with LBJ; I just don't know what Sorensen and LBJ were talking about. But it sold. It didn't sell with Bill Hirtz. It began the alienation of Bill Wirtz from LBJ. Well, that's more than I really know. But Wirtz was always diffi cult. But after all, my judgment is that he and Pat Moynihan thought they really had a chance to get the brass ring, that is to get the control of the War on Poverty. They were both left stand ing at the post largely because Community Action offered a much cheaper, coherent program as opposed to a very expensive job pro gram as the centerpiece of the War on Poverty. They were not op posing Community Action, except that Wirtz at one point called it a band-aid program. I notice you seem to say that Gordon supported that concept. Actually, Gordon came back--I saw him right after the meeting in which Wirtz had called it a band-aid program--and he was kind of angry at me, Gordon was, but it was a different in terpretation. I made a different interpretation from what you have here. Kermit was saying, in effect, "Let's not highlight the money, because then it puts Wirtz in a position to call it a band aid program, and I don't want to be blackmailed up into a higher number. So let's highlight the substance of the program." (Laughter)

But at any rate, that tension was beginning to emerge, and the [interagency] task force by now was defunct. It hadn't come up with Community Action, though it may have existed on paper and though there was a number of staff meetings all of which were going to de velop the concept of Community Action and begin writing the specs.

And there was legislation; I was working on legislation with Mike March for a number of days and weeks at that point. We were just getting ready to put a bill up on the Hill on a presidential mes sage. And then we kept ginning up examples of what Community Action Programs would be like.

All of this was really preparatory to the Christmas meeting. Gordon told me--or was it [Charles] Schultze?--that the President- LBJ--Christmas Eve had decided against the War on Poverty and had gone to bed that way. But Christmas morning they talked to him again--Heller and Gordon--and he decided to go for it. That's the story I heard.

Well, at any rate, they came back with the word to really charge, really get the legislation fixed. Somebody began drafting a message, I've forgotten whom. Then all of a sudden I remember getting a call on Saturday morning--! don't know what date this would be--from Kermit saying we're starting over. Shriver's going to plan to head a task force. And what date would that be?

G: That would be late January or early February.

C: It was the day it was announced in the papers.

G: I think it was January 31 or February 1; the press conference was the first. It was a Saturday or something like that.

C: Well, by Sunday night, the next day, Kermit and I and Heller and Mike [Myer] Feldman, I think maybe Charlie [Schultze] was there and maybe Capron, met with Sarge. He had Warren Wiggins and Frank Mankiewicz and Adam Yarmolinsky and maybe one or two others there. This was a meeting that Kermit had requested.

G: Where was the meeting held? Do you remember?

C: At the Peace Corps office, I believe. It was in an office, I mean, it wasn't at Sarge's home.

The whole aim of the meeting was to sell Sarge on what we'd been doing and particularly Community Action. By this time, Community Action had begun to get that peculiar kind of attaching feature; people would learn about it and like it. And Sarge hardly heard us, to be very frank with you. He told me many months or a year later or so that he never thought much about Community Action.

G: Why not? Did he raise objections?

C: No, no. His hearing aid was just turned off. Sarge's focus that night was and continued to be for a long time to repeat the politi cal success of the Peace Corps.

G: Oh, I see.

C: Okay? So that he wanted something glamorous, easily understood, apparent in its workings, and which you could succeed at, okay? Community Action was much too complex and diffuse, the concept. It would take a lot of time, and Sarge wanted it fast. It would

take a lot of time to work out Community Action, there's no question about it. But he underestimated some of the enormous, political interests, to put it to you as a somewhat neutral term, that Community Action could generate. He and I got in a fight in the papers *over* the mayors on this, so this is something else. So he was just not listening to us, as hard as we kept trying to sell him. He was much more interested in what eventually became the Job Corps, because that fitted. He could take these tough ghetto kids off the street and make citizens out of them. You could show it at all kinds of. . . . And Yarmolinsky was *very* hostile to Community Action--

G: Oh, really?

C: --at that point. Adam gave off that same phenomenon of--that's peculiar, I've not seen it anywhere before, because three months later Adam was one of the biggest boosters of Community Action. So what had happened is wives and things began to get involved in Community Action, you see. This happened all around the country. It provided a volunteer in a communication network that people had been looking for for a long time.

G: Well, was anything decided at that Sunday meeting, do you recall?

C: No, it wasn't a decision meeting. Sarge just kind of heard us.

And Mike Feldman was there from the White House staff and he

was arguing for localism, too, you see, so everybody was. . . . But Sarge was obviously listening to something else, and Yarmolinsky

and Mankiewicz--Mankiewicz you never knew what the hell he was

doing. But Wiggins was operating, trying to protect Sarge on this new untried rapids crossing. Nothing was decided. All it basically did, for me at any rate, was to say I knew where there was a core of support for Community Action.

Now for the next ten days or so, fifteen maybe, I was out of the game completely for reasons I'm not at all clear about.

G: You just weren't invited back?

C: I wasn't invited back, yes.

G: Because there was a big meeting on February 4, two days after that

Sunday meeting.

C: I think Kermit went to that, but I was out of the game. It was, I think, fairly much deliberate.

G: Really?

C: Yes. For about ten days. Then I got invited back for reasons that aren't clear. And I was invited back to attend a meeting. I was a kind of technician to price out what the [Shriver] task force had come up with. You know, carrying out a Budget Bureau function. So I joined the meeting that Yarmolinsky was chairing and had the core group of the task force on it. Let's see, Mankiewicz was there again, [Eric] Tolmach, Moynihan, Ylvisaker, Jacobs, Hal Horowitz, Wilbur was there occasionally, but Wilbur never stays put, Jim Adler from Commerce, Andy Brimmer I think was in on it, also. And they had been sitting around the table obviously for

days and nights.

So I was there to price out a program. Well, for the first time apparently, they had reality involved, because they had to tell someone what the program was so he could price it up. I lis tened to them all and it was just incoherent, so I went back and
wrote out a pricing table. I'd developed a two or three-page pricing table from everything they'd say, Job Corps, et cetera. But I put Community Action back in the list because they hadn't said to take it out, and I put a price on it. Community Action was out at that
point.

G: Oh, it was?

C: The group had rejected it, and I kind of encouraged Ylvisaker to bring it back up again in these meetings. But then I put it down in the list, you see, which really became the legislation, and put the price on it. That made it look very real when you put five hundred million dollars here and two hundred million for the Job Corps and how many enrollees you're going to have. This little paper crystallized the discussions. Well, these discussions then went on for severa1 days.

G: Did you continue to participate?

C: Oh, yes, I became a participant at that point. Man, they were mad as hell at the second meeting when I came back with this piece of paper which was very concrete and very brief. Yarmolinsky threw it on the table and said, "Another goddamn Budget Bureau trick. They always make things look real with numbers." I'm quoting him almost exactly. But there wasn't anything he could do. They were running

out of time, you see. And they had really been retracing the steps that we had been retracing for months. Which is all right, that's fine, but they're finding the same set of problems and they're com ing up with the same laundry list. So Community Action becomes, again, an organizing principle for the thing. So when would that be, mid-February we're talking about now.

Now, two things are involved in here, and I hope I got the chronology right. I can't quite remember. One is the drafting of a presidential message; I think that could have occurred in January. At one point, this may have been before the Shriver operation, but it could have been after--I think it was after. I say it because I'm not sure. But at one point, I suddenly got summoned up to Capron's office. Charlie Schultze was there and they were writing a presidential message. They were using as their base a message that John Galbraith had written and given to the President, and the President had given it to Heller to do something with. Well, the three of us proceeded and we read the message. It was nice rhetoric and all that. We threw it away. We had to have a message over at the White House by the next morning, and this was noon, so we wrote all night. We wrote a message which I still think was a pretty good message and handed it over to the White House. It never floated, but it developed a theory of Community Action.

G: Was it essentially the one that was used or was it not?

C: No, it really wasn't. It really wasn't. I think the program ideas were all there, but the orientation was all different.

Now, back to the Shriver task force over at the Peace Corps headquarters, damnedest kind of operation I ever saw. Reporters were crawling all over the place; Sarge was talking to everybody, every interested interest group, and we had them all in there. I was in a big meeting once that he had called with Dick Lee, the mayor of New Haven, and all of a sudden Sarge turns to me and says, "I've got to go. Would you take over?" I had no idea what the meeting was to be about or anything.

But at any rate, I began talking to John Steadman, who's a lawyer, and Hal Horowitz and I began, from my Office of Legislative Reference point of view, saying, "We've got to get some legislation." I don't remember the dates exactly, but that got set up and I don't know quite who did it.

Oh, this is a point I'd mentioned earlier. During this period while we were talking, Yarmolinsky and Moynihan were the two chief honchos and they were saying Sarge really wasn't going to buy Community Action. So I went to Hackett and I said, "You've got to do something about this. You've got to get the Attorney General to talk to his brother-in-law." Well, in a couple of days, there was no bar against having Community Action. I don't know whether the talking was ever done, but all of a sudden Community Action was in.

VISTA, as just a little side note, I was in two meetings with Gordon and Shriver in which Kermit made a very strong plea to Sarge for VISTA, almost on a personal level. You know, Kermit was a Quaker and this kind of voluntary action was very dear. I mean,

this man, he was really--and Sarge kept saying it wasn't very important, it wasn't good politics. It didn't have the title VISTA, it had the National Service Corps or something.

G: It had been defeated the year before.

C: It had been defeated, right. But Kermit asked him, "Really, as a favor to me, won't you do it?" I think that's why it got in the bill eventually.

G: Well, do you think that Shriver felt that it might constitute com petition with the Peace Corps?

C: I don't know. I don't know that part of it. I had worked on the National Service Corps earlier, and I know that the Peace Corps was objecting on just those points.

G: Oh, really?

C: Yes. But that was in that context. So at any rate, we went over to Justice somewhere--it must have been mid-February--on a Friday and there was Schlei. It was a typical Yarmolinsky operation. The way I reason it is I told Adam, and others undoubtedly told him, "You need a bill." So in typical fashion, Yarmolinsky, being a lawyer himself, said, "Well, if I need a bill, I need a lawyer.

I need the government's lawyer who drafts bi11, Who's the govern ment's lawyer who drafts bills?" Well, it was Schlei. So, "Norb, draft a bill." I don't think Norb had ever drafted a bill, from the beginning at any rate.

So I sat there with Schlei and Steadman, and there were people trooping in and out. As I said, we had a separate caucus of people

I mentioned. Well, I guess I wasn't on tape then. But we sat there and we drafted from Friday to Sunday night or something, and we had a bill for a meeting on either Monday or Tuesday of the chief participants, all the agency heads, the Wirtzes and the Celebrezzes and the Cohens and the so on. Yarmolinsky chaired the meeting to clear the legislation. I guess I'm getting a little mixed up. We had a bill on Monday or Tuesday that we could circu late for a meeting a few days later of the kind I just described.

Now, in drafting the bill, there were a lot of things that I had had in my memo that I put in which became transformed. I mean the preference clause in the Economic Opportunity Act, for example, was a watered-down version of what I'd proposed in my December memo of a waiver giving the president the right to waive certain require ments in existing programs, you see. That came from that. Maximum feasible participation, according to my understanding, came out of the separate drafting session we had in those same offices in Justice of Hackett and me and [Hugh]

Calkins and Boone--I don't know whether Boone was there--but

Fred Hayes was there and Hal Horowitz. Hal was doing the drafting for us, and it was Hal that we told the concept to, of participation, and he came back with a draft labeled "Maximum Feasible Participation of the Poor."

G: So you felt the 1anguage was his?

C: Yes. Well, unless he got it from somebody else, but that's the way it came back, because we immediately noticed it. As a matter of fact I had goofed on it, because when I took the language back to

clear it within the bureau, I went to the chief of the labor welfare division and he said, "Well, this isn't your concept, 'Maximum Feasible Participation of the Poor.'" I said, "By God, you're right." So we crossed it out and wrote in "Residents of the Area." You see, "Maximum feasible Participation of the Residents of the Area," because we weren't looking at just a program to orga

nize the poor, we were looking at a program to organize the commun ity. So that part I know, "Residents of the Area," you see. But Hal did the drafting on Title II, or at least somebody for him in his office or sometl1ing.

G: Was there, within this drafting group, a difference of opinion with regard to what local participation should be?

C: I don't think so. I don't think so, though Dave Hackett kept raising that question, and it came up in another context.

G: How would he raise the question? What did he [say]?

C: Well, in his typical way he would simply say, "Now, is this what you mean? Is this what you mean?" And we couldn't answer that. And we talked about it.

But it came up in another context. When I told you I went over to the small group within the task force that Yarmolinsky was chairing and that Ylvisaker was there and Moynihan was there, I was sitting right next to Moynihan. When Moynihan says in Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding that he did not understand Community Action, it wasn't because he wasn't exposed.

G: Is that right?

C: Yes, at least three times. This is one that I'm telling you about.

I was sitting right next to Pat, and Ylvisaker was across the table and someone raised the question, "What if," they said to Paul, "you're up testifying and they suggest to you that one of the effects of Community Action will be to undermine the mayor's controls of the city?" And Paul said, "If they ask me that ques tion, I'll ask them another question." That was his direct answer. And there was Pat sitting there. Well, beyond that, I patiently explained to Yarmolinsky and Moynihan two or three times the con cept of Community Action.

G: What did you say?

C: Oh, I obviously put it in the terms I believed it, which is it was a method of organizing local political action, community action.
It was just that. It was not a delivery system. We were always clear; it was not supposed to be just a delivery system. It wasn't a mechanism for dispensing services, though it would dispense ser vices and money. But the major point was maximum feasible partici pation in the local community problems. Now, this does have implications for mayors and. . . .

G: But did you see it as working within the structure of local govern ment, whatever it might be, or did you see it as a way to bypass local government?

C: No, I saw it both ways. That was the key to it. This is exactly the question Pat raised to us after the act was passed. He called a meeting with Gordon protesting that we were subsidizing the

opposing parties and so on and so forth. He raised that exact same question, and my response was that the concept of Community Action is its flexibility. That is, it could be something different in New York, it would certainly be something different in Chicago where Dick Daley was in charge, and it would certainly be something dif ferent in Saginaw. And that was the point. It was supposed to fit local political, social, and economic circumstances. And in Chicago it did. There was no problem with Community Action in Chicago. I worked that beat. Daley had that firmly under control. Pat was worried about what was going on in Harlem with HARYOU and things
like that.

But the point of Community Action was its adaptability and flexibility. You see, this is a big country. I spent a lot of time going around it after this was all passed, visiting various cities, and in Saginaw the government doesn't want to have anything to do with Community Action. They've got enough to do doing urban renewal. So that in there they want a separate Community Action, and if they're told they're going to have one out of the government structure, there won't be any.

G: But how about, let's say, in the South, where you had a traditional exclusion of blacks from the local government process. Did you see Community Action there as a way to give blacks more power?

C: No, that was not our orientation. I know Frances Fox Piven and [Richard] Cloward raised the thesis that the War on Poverty repre
sents the rise of the civi1 rights movement. I think that

overstresses what was going on at that time. Community Action, War on Poverty, were not black-designed, minority-designed programs.

They weren't designed to deal with that problem specifically. As a matter of fact, the larger percentage of poor in this country at this time were white. Substantially. So it wasn't, no. I don't want to be misunderstood, because we were very concerned about how Community Action would operate in the South, not as a minority pro gram, but as a community program. That's why maximum feasible par ticipation was such important language and other parts of Title II, because they were designed to make it work on a community level with maximum feasible participation. And I don't care, in our minds it could be rednecks who were being excluded and ought to be in. We were concerned about community action and a community approach to poverty.

G: So when you indicated participation of the residents, you did not mean exclusively poor people?

C: That's right.

G: You were talking about what other elements in the community besides poor people? Local government?

C: Local government, rich people. I was hoping there would be a lot of volunteerism came out of that. You see, my orientation was formed--I'd been back here at the University of Chicago in charge of fund raising for the University. I was used to working with the rich community and I was trying to take the way they did their

volunteer work and transfer it into a governmental structure, which
would involve not only the poor but others.

G: The question has been raised, of course, how a concept that was potentially as radical, or if you will--

C: Very American.

G: --as Community Action, how did it come out of the Bureau of the
Budget?

C: Well, essentially it came out of me in the sense I pulled it all together and added a few things. But I pulled these bits and pieces, and I was trying to just put a program together as part of
the job.

G: But am I right in saying that you saw it as a program that would challenge local government where it needed to be challenged, that would work within local government where--?

C: Exactly. Exactly. It was designed not to destroy. It was supposed to be positive, constructive. Obviously there was going to be at some times friction, but that's the nature of politics and change.
But it was designed from a national point of view, which is a funny thing to say, but what I mean is that it was designed to fit situa tions all over this very diverse country, rural, city. You know, one of the big successes of CAP was in the rural areas, which was not a surprise to me, it was a surprise to a lot of people. But it wasn't to me.• It's got a lot of the old [people] as live out
in the farm country now, it's got a lot of that in it even now.

But it would provide a vehicle whereby the community could express
itself.

G: Okay. Well, I guess that we ought to go into some of these ques tions on that phase in a little more detail. You seem to have covered the language of maximum feasible participation.

C: Yes. There was the whole struggle over who was going to get the program and the creation of OEO.

G: Did HEW want it? Do you recall Celebrezze making a pitch to get
it?

C: Well, Celebrezze may have uttered words or something like that, but no one took him seriously. He was just not a figure who had any standing around the town. And he was strictly in there to carry Ohio and Cleveland. My memory is that if you approach that ques tion from the angle, again, of Community Action, Community Action was a concept that was quite alien to HEW. HEW was, and HHS is, an agency organized around the concept of functional experts deliv ering services, doctors, nurses, social workers, et cetera, deliv ering various kinds of services or income benefit payments directly to individuals. So that Community Action was just plain alien to it. While HEW certainly would have liked to take over any of the job programs and had always been fighting with Labor over that, and certainly it would have wanted to have the education programs, the rural programs they didn't care about one way or another, the agricultural programs. I think the reason they didn't get it is

that they didn't have a unified approach to wanting it that they

were really serious about. So they may have uttered words, but I think they were relatively relaxed about it. Now, HUD was very-- Bob what's-his-name--

G: Weaver.

C: Weaver was very sympathetic to Community Action, almost like a HUD-
type program. But you know that agency also had mortgage banking and big finance connections which diverted it from wanting to become a center of a war on poverty. So there wasn't any struggle there. Then there was a question of Labor, which was, I think, the real competi
tor. Wirtz and Moynihan really wanted to have it. I don't know why they didn't get it. Politically, through its assistant secretary, Sam Merrick, the agency had only gotten a brand new Kennedy program, the Manpower Development and Training Act, in 1962. It wasn't clear that Labor was handling it well at that point, and I think there were some concerns about Wirtz' erratic administration. In programmatic and organizational terms it wasn't a logical candidate. In program matic and organizational terms if there was a logical candidate it was HEW, and it wasn't fighting too hard. So this left room when Sarge decided, or whoever, that he wanted a separate agency, there was room to maneuver.

G: Do you think that part of the reason for this creation of a new agency was simply to broker the competing agencies, let's say HEW and Labor, rather than give it to one or the other?

C: You remember my memorandum put all the power in the president, which the bureaucracy really resisted, maybe with some justice.

I'm not talking about this president or that president but any president. I had thought it had to be in the president, and I think the OEO--

(Interruption)

G: --a question of OEO becoming a coordinating agency or a full line
operating agency.

C: Well, that was the kind of contradiction in the OED concept right from the beginning, and I think [it] ultimately did it, and to an extent Community Action, in. It was a difficult problem to solve. From one angle, an agency that did the planning and in effect con trolled the resource allocation, if it could do it through the budget process, would have been ideal. But the argument was that it wouldn't get any real attention if it didn't have some goodies of its own to dispense, and there's a lot of truth in that.
Besides, planning from two separate operations tends to get unreal istic. Now the other side of the contradiction was that when you put planning and delivery of services together, almost inevitably delivery of services drives out planning and coordination, and that's exactly what happened.

During the course of implementing the program, I had--and Charlie backed me--major rows with [Joseph] Kershaw and the other key people at OEO over just this. It came to a focus around the fact that they were trying to convert CAPs into delivery systems. We didn't mind the delivery, but we wanted the focus on CAP to be
participation planning. You know, figuring what the hell the

community problems are, giving the community a mechanism, not just giving it resources. Yes, you give them a few resources to fi11 gaps, but they had to develop their own resources and they ought to know what their objectives are and they ought to be rational about it. And this sugars off in terms of how you staff the Community Action agencies, and they just kept putting the delivery system staff and delivery systems in there and that did it in eventually. Because then that meant that the community didn't have a strong bureaucratic base for defending itself. The other agencies could come along and pick it apart or you could turn off the resources, which is what began to happen.

So that contradiction all the way through between planning and operation, I don't know that it's resolvable. I think I would
have--I don't know. It was a matter of management, I think, the only way it could have been resolved, and Sarge, as I've indicated before, was much more oriented toward curing the problem of poverty, which meant delivering resources and benefits and services and pro grams rather than Community Action.

G: Well, we'll get into this later on, but it seems to me that Congress, too, placed much less emphasis on comprehensive planning than they did on getting the job done.

C: Oh, yes. That's right. Oh, I understand that. I understand that. Head Start was much more attractive than the notion of a community
plan.

G: Did the Peace Corps role of community organization have any influence at all in the development of OEO, community organization?

C: I assume it did, but the development was done in this way by Fred Hayes and Bi11 Bozman, and they were not Peace Corps oriented. Fred had been an examiner at the Budget Bureau and had worked the HUD beat. He'd been the HUD examiner--well, the HHFA examiner in those days, FHA, HFA--and Bill had been in some comparable position. Neither one had any Peace Corps orientation. The other influence on organization, though, and not very great I don't think, was Jack Conway who of course came out of the labor movement. But he was so laid back it's hard to know what his influence was on this. Then there was Sandy Kravitz. I don't think Sandy had any Peace Corps [orientation]. So if it came, it came from Sarge himself. I don't think he had many Peace Corps people with him, did he?

G: Well, Mankiewicz for a while.

C: Mankiewicz. But Frank was, you know, doing something else.

G: How about Saul Alinsky's views on community organization?

C: Well, I was quite familiar with them, because I was here in Chicago, right where Alinsky was working. I mean, we had the same problems.

The Hyde Park neighborhood and the Back of the Yard neighborhoods had the same problems at the same time. And undoubtedly, Alinsky's- the University was in the midst of the same kind of trying to sta bilize and hold a neighborhood that Alinsky was trying to engineer in Back of the Yards. We did it as a matter of fact. Some of my

models for Community Action were developed in the mid-fifties, the

period I'm talking about when we were working with the Hyde Park Kenwood Community Conference and the Southeast Chicago Commission, which the University formed, which was a Hyde Park-Kenwood neighbor
hood community action group which worked to save the damn neighbor hood without a lot of program, by the way. It was more this plan ning and neighborhood participation that saved and made an inte grated neighborhood.

G: So you did have a model there?

C: Oh, yes. Right. I had that university model. I'd forgotten about that. It was that that began getting me interested. I'd always been interested in poverty, but I began to get quite interested. In the mid-fifties I remember doing a survey, being in an academic institution, of the literature, and the only literature I could find of any relevance in 1955 was Ted Schultz, who later got the Nobel Prize. A little essay on agricultural poverty, that was about all there was in the whole bloody, goddamn literature. I mean, of any analytic value, you see.

But at any rate, we knew what Alinsky was doing down in the Back of the Yards but he seemed to us like just a promoter. I know a lot of my students, a lot of my friends, think the world of Alinsky, but I'm telling you how the stable, solid,

Hyde Park types thought about what he was doing down there. So if there was any influence, it was, as far as I'm concerned, very limited and I would generalize from that to think that I can't see how the Alinsky
movement had [much influence]. Boone had some contacts.
Boone

could have been, and Boone was very influential in setting up Community Action. Boone was a Chicagoan that had worked on the police force. Dick was probably as influential as anybody in set ting up the Community Action Program.

G: Really?

C: Yes.

G: Well, Moynihan describes essentially a transformation of the com- munity action concept from the time the legislation was drafted until the actual implementation.

C: No. See, all of us had been working on it all the way through. Boone, Hackett, Hayes, they were all. . . .

G: So there was no radicalization?

C: There was no discontinuity. No. No. Not at all. The only change in Community Action was this one on moving toward delivering goods. That was the [objective]. We all understood it.

G: Was there any length--?

C: For example, I was sent out in September of 1964 by Bill Bozman who was working for Fred Hayes, to set up a Community Action pro gram in Chicago. I talked to Daley and so on and so forth. And I knew Chicago; I was operating in the Chicago context. I wanted to get the goddamn local Community Action set up and had to work with the Mayor to do it. We weren't trying to radicalize the place. I thought maybe the place would change even though these things were set up under city aegis. I thought he might let it change, and in fact that did happen. The Woodlawn Organization, for example, beat

him finally. So he controlled most of the others. I wasn't thinking there was going to be massive changes. We were building a long-term political institution and concept, you see.

G: Do you think that the power potential of the poor was overlooked? Did you envision the organized poor as having as much clout, as being constructive, as it later did?

C: Well, I think the only way I can answer that question is that I've never, don't to this day, set the poor apart. I mean, they're peo ple like you and me and they will do whatever we would do if we had an organization available to work in.

Sometimes you'll succeed and sometimes you'll fail, sometimes you won't pay any attention to it, but if you do, it'11 work for you. So I wasn't really concerned about it, because I took a different, egalitarian view of people.

G: Did you have anyone in the White House who was aware of the Community Action concepts and was at all in touch with the task force or your--?

C: You mean during the Shriver period or what?

G: Yes, during this period.

C: During the planning period or during the operations or--?

G: During the period from the time Shriver was appointed until the legislative battle in August. Let's say from January to August.

C: Well, there's several people I was in touch with. One was a guy now dead, Henry Wilson, because he was lobbying the Hill for the White House and keeping us informed on what was happening.

I remem ber writing a very violent memorandum to Henry when I thought Community Action was being threatened by friends like Conway who

weren't supporting it strongly enough on the Hill. Otherwise, our contacts were, I guess, diffuse. The staff hadn't shaken down yet. Moyers wasn't fully around, at least to my visibility. Feldman I guess was there and Sorensen. Was Lee White still there? Lee had something to do with it. Yes, right.

G: Do you think the White House staff was aware of what Community Action consisted of?

C: You mean in this period?

G: Yes.

C: Well, it's hard for me to answer that. I just don't know. I think basically I don't know because Sarge was-- I don't know with whom he was talking. I guess with Moyers. That's right, he was doing a lot of talking with Moyers. But he and Moyers, through that route, were running the show and these other people, except for things 1ike Henry Wilson lobbying on the Hill and so on, were really out of it.

G: In The Vantage Point, LBJ asserted that he perceived Community Action as "a means of shaking up existing institutions," that local governments had to be challenged, to be awakened. Did you ever have this impression of the White House or LBJ's attitude?

C: Well, it's not only the War on Poverty now, but my impression of LBJ's attitude, and I think it's correct, is that here's a man who decided that he wanted to take some decisive steps, big ones. We'd been incrementalizing, Kennedy had been temporizing, always with

the thought that maybe we're going to make a big jump after the 1964

elections or something. Well, I think LBJ decided--every evidence in every field, and I was in a lot of them--that he was ready for risky steps in the sense that good ideas had political risks. So that once I knew that he'd made up his mind to go for a War on Poverty and for Community Action, I wasn't at all [surprised]. And I figured we just had White House support. You don't usually know what staff are going to do, but you figure you had presidential support and I always operated on that principle from the beginning to the end, and it never failed me. So whether he did in fact--I mean Charlie came back from the White House one day and said, "The President thinks you and I have made a boo-boo on Community Action." Now, this is after Pat Moynihan had been over there lobbying about what a radical, upsetting [program it was]. I don't know whether he talked to the President; I don't know to whom he talked over there, but he talked to somebody.

G: Was this after the program was operating?

C: Yes. Right. This was somewhere in January or February of 1965 that I got a call to come down to see Gordon, and there's Gordon- Kermit--with Moynihan. And Kermit has Pat repeat the whole litany of things that became Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding, and I sat there trying to refute them, you see. So Kermit told me he'd been over lobbying in the White House. Then when he went back to Harvard he brought his seminar to town two or three times. Every time the OEO bill was up for authorization Pat's seminar would come

to town, and Pat would use that as an occasion to lobby against
Title II, Community Action.

G: Do you think that a lot of this on Moynihan's part was a result of--?

C: Left at the post.

G: Is that right?

C: I think so. I always thought so. I thought he would be the big gest booster in the world for Community Action if he saw what it was and got hold of it; it might have even in some strange way done better that way.

G: Well, first of all, do you think he wanted a position in the program?

C: Oh, yes. He sure as hell did. No question about that. And so did Wirtz.

G: How do you know that? Moynihan, say, would he want to be deputy director of OEO?

C: Yes. Yes. I can't remember the exact words. You see, there was this big fight over who was going to be at least number two if Labor got the program. And there was a big fight between Pat on the one hand and Sam Merrick on the other. Sam had been the fair haired boy because he'd lobbied through the MDTA. He was trying to convert, in typical Sam Merrick fashion, the labor part into his program so he could run [it], you see, and Pat was resisting it.

They were fighting in the papers. They were getting their favorite reporters' side. No, Pat I'm sure figured this was his royal road
to romance, and he put his money on jobs. Of course, he was

operating in the Labor Department, and I suppose that's natural. Jobs and young people, you see. He wanted to get them as young as he could. I remember when we were arguing about what the age should be for enrollment in the Job Corps. Pat wanted to drop it to fourteen from sixteen, and I said, "We11, he11, you'11 get a11 the mothers in America against you. You'll take their little kids away from them." Well, that stopped him.

G: Now, do you recall how the decision was made that OEO rather than the Labor Department would operate the Job Corps?

C: Painfully. (Laughter) Well, it was made as I saw it simply on the grounds that Sarge says, "I want this." From the very beginning, from that first Sunday night, he was really committed to this idea. This is what he felt emotionally and politically was it.

G: Where was the decision made? Was it made by LBJ? Was it made by BOB? Was it made by--?

C: No, it wasn't made by BOB. There were various memoranda, one from Harold Seidman and so on doing analyses, and Hazel Guffey did an analysis. The decision was made in the White House, and I don't know who that is. I suspect Moyers. Now whether Moyers checked with LBJ, I just don't know.

One of my impressions is--I don't know how close Sarge actually was to LBJ. I have some evidence that he wasn't very close because I was sitting in on secret sessions of the Ben Heineman Commission sometime later. They were reviewing governmental organization and

reviewing OEO, and Ben reported that he had the story that Sarge at

one point wanted to know how he was doing with the President, so he sent in a message via Bill Moyers to find out how he was doing. The message came back that he was okay, but it didn't sound like a man who had easy, direct access.

Of course, as you know, I don't know when it a11 began, but there was a considerable alienation between Moyers and the President at one time. I remember being in the Cabinet Room with the President and the 1967 education task force in which President
kept talking about "that boy who works for me" and so on. What the hell's going on? You know how he could be. So I don't know. I don't know what those relationships were. They had been, I think, fairly close early in the game.

G: Now, about this time evidently there was a tremendous friction between Moynihan and Wirtz.

C: Was there? Now that's new to me. I'm beginning to remember. There was. I remember something of it, yes.

G: Apparently Wirtz felt that Moynihan had not done a sufficient job of representing the Labor Department's interests in that

task force and had acceded to the other position too much.

C: But on the other hand, at the sign-off meeting, Wirtz was there when we went over the legislation. He was there along with the other cabinet sectors and it was a clearance and he could have said no.
He could have, and he's such a rash man that if he felt like it he would have, I'm sure. I think what you may be hearing is this

fight between Merrick and Moynihan for control of the Secretary.

G: Well, I knew that that also existed, but I have the impression that Moynihan was even banned from these task force meetings for a while, that Wirtz wouldn't even let him go as a result.

C: Yes, now that you mention it, there's something, yes. But I keep associating that with the Merrick thing.

Wait a while. I think what he was talking about was the Job Corps. That he wanted the Job Corps, Wirtz did. He wanted it very, very much, and he was losing the battle. So he was punishing the messenger who was bringing the bad news.

G: Well, I think that the precise issue may have had to do with Moynihan acceding that the Employment Service simply couldn't do an adequate job of recruiting for the Job Corps and therefore-

C: That brings back memories, yes.

G: Does that sound like it might have been [the case]?

C: Yes, yes.

G: What was your feeling on that? Did you feel that--?

C: I didn't give a damn about the Job Corps. As far as I was concerned, those dogs could fight over that bone and keep them preoccupied. I had no hopes for the Job Corps. I just didn't think you could go home again. You can't go back to the CCC, what Kennedy called
"one of Hubert's exuberances."

G: Well, there's also the question, did Lyndon Johnson see the War on Poverty as in essence sort of a reincarnation of the NYA, which he'd
been state director of, or the CCC?

C: He may have. I obviously don't know that. Those programs, the NYA-type programs, and even the Job Corps, were existing legisla tion--either proposals or whatever. They had to go with any pack age that you had, and they'd come out of Humphrey and some others. So as far as I was concerned, he always struck me, from every bit of evidence I saw, as too unfettered a man. I mean, he wasn't a romantic like Hubert. Hubert wanted to relive the past. But Johnson, I don't think, was like that. So I never operated, and my colleages didn't operate on the premise that he wanted to reinsti tute the New Deal programs. I think he wanted to go beyond them.

G: There was also something I think that Wirtz was in favor of, a cigarette tax.

C: That was Gaylord Nelson's proposal, and as a matter of fact, I was in a meeting with Sarge and Gordon, where Sarge broached this as a proposal and argued for it fairly strongly.

G: Argued to whom?

C: To Gordon that we ought to take this this way.

G: And what was the [reaction]?

C: Well, our reaction was this is fantastic. (Laughter) They'd laugh you out of court if you tried that. It was a different era.

G: Did the White House also put the quietus on that, do you know?

C: I think once Sarge surfaced it in a few circles, he decided that it died of itself. It was easy for anybody to kill who

wanted to kill it at that point. It was really just a matter of Gaylord

Nelson, who was quite influential at that time.

G: To what extent was the bill as drafted a product of how much money
you had to spend?

C: Well, in the sense, I suspect, that if we had five billion dollars a year in the budget, we might have had a much different

and larger jobs program. We would have argued against it

conceptually, be cause we didn't think it was the way to do business about poverty, just as we didn't think further increases in income maintenance pay ments was the way to do business. Anybody can do all that.

G: Was the income maintenance route discussed?

C: Yes, but again it was such big bucks that people wouldn't go into it. There'd been the Public Welfare Act Amendments of 1962 which in their way were very important, and that's about as far as any body wanted to go at that point, you see. But they were both--what the dollars did in a way was to force the development of an imagi native program which was in a sense open-ended. It could cost lit tle money or it could cost an awful lot of money because of this tension between planning and participation on the one hand, and delivery of services on the other.

Now, I know as OEO developed, the planners over there were just frustrated as hell that they weren't getting multi-billion, four or five billion dollars a year for their programs. But on

the other hand, I was on the other side of the table at that point, in the Budget Bureau back in the examining divisions again, and we
were probing that and successfully.

G: Was there a feeling within the task force that you were uncertain how to solve the problem of poverty and that experimentation was the best route in the problem?

C: Yes, that was the official doctrine. It had a lot of reality to it.

G: Did you, as a task force member, consider a natural tendency of these sorts of programs to spread themselves thinner than you orig inally had in mind?

C: How do you mean, "spread themselves thinner"?

G: Each congressman, for example, saying, "I want one in my area."

C: Yes, that was a political fact of life.

G: But did you anticipate this at all?

C: Well, we didn't anticipate it in the sense of doing something to forestall it, but we anticipated it.

G: Okay, a few more questions on the Job Corps. Do you know who coined the name Job Corps?

C: I don't. But I don't even remember when. It had been done in the early days of that Shriver task force.

G: Early on in the Shriver task force, there was a concept that the Defense Department would have a key role in that.

C: That's right. When I did the pricing out, it was Defense that was going to run these camps and convert military camps, which I thought was crazy. That came from Yarmolinsky, who'd been over working
for McNamara. He even announced that first Sunday night when we met
with Shriver that Bob McNamara was willing to be involved in this

job program, whatever it was going to be, and use Defense Department resources.

G: Well, what happened to the Defense Department? Why was their role--?

C: Well, my hunch is a) they were busy doing other things; b) I think there was still lingering worry in those days of creating National Youth Corps that were military instruments of government, and mili tarizing. I just think that the notion of militarizing the War on Poverty was [inaudible].

G: It seems like there was some opposition from the old-line liberals that they instinctively attacked that concept.

C: That's right. That's right. And there was no need for it. There was no need to take on these people as enemies.

G: Did this, though, the exclusion of the Defense Department, create logistical problems in having to set up the program?

C: It might have. I'm not familiar enough with how the Job Corps and the Neighborhood Youth Corps were set up. But it could have. It probably wasn't a bad idea to use the Defense Department.

G: One of the elements, I gather, in the concept of the Job Corps was that so many men were being rejected for the draft.

C: That was Moynihan's Selective Service's study of, well, what to do. He was a very smart guy, and he came to town and he was trying to develop a brass ring, you know. One of the ways he went--he picked some pretty good analysts; Paul Barton, he used to work

in the Budget Bureau and so on--was to try to figure with youth,

and then try to figure out a theory on which youth and why, and then to justify a national program. That's how he came upon Selective Service rejects and did his study of all that. That's fine, except that--it's hard to explain, but a) he was probably too early in his time, too much in advance of it, and on the other hand the paradox was that if he were later his data wouldn't have stood up. So it just didn't catch on. It just really didn't catch on as much as the notion of the alienated ghetto black kid doing something, making a citizen out of him.

G: To what extent do you think the Job Corps was designed to make more youths eligible for the draft?

C: Well, that was a conscious idea. The idea was to shape them up into citizenship so that they could carry on the roles of a citizen. Rejuvenate them physically, mentally. You see, a lot of the rejects were on mental capacity or mental competency grounds.

G: Now, the Labor Department also had its own employment bill, a youth employment opportunities bill or something like that. Was this at all--?

C: That was in effect picked up in Title I.

G: I thought they ultimately received a separate appropriation for that.

C: They may have. But I can't remember.

G: Did you see this at all in conflict with the Job Corps?

C: I think in my memo I'd swept the Labor youth bill into the--no, no, this was just a matter of amalgams and mergers and I think Labor,

if you'll prompt my memory, may have kept pushing it when it lost the Job Corps.

G: Do you know how the decision was made to delegate the Neighborhood Youth Corps to the Department of Labor?

C: It was part of the deal on the Job Corps. That was the arrangement.

G: Did you have any role in the planning of the Neighborhood Youth Corps?

C: Only in the sense that the basic, original legislation I'd be in on the clearance of it. I worked out a formula which I can't--yes, that was it. Hubert was pushing. It was Hubert's youth bill, if I remember correctly. That's right. We didn't want it, because he wanted it too big, and I worked out a formula which satisfied both the Budget Bureau and the White House and Hubert Humphrey. I played the numbers game, and I got a numbers game which all three parties would agree to and then it became the administration's bill. That's all, the only thing.

G: Was the Neighborhood Youth Corps essentially an income transfers program or was it really designed to do more than that?

C: It was a youth program. It was, I think, Hubert Humphrey's romanti cism of trying to recapitulate the NYA and so on. The 1930s were a lot closer then than they are now.

G: Education provisions, adult education, do you recall how that was added to the legislation?

C: I think it was partly added as a sweetener for Carl Perkins and-

G: Edith Green maybe?

C: --Edith Green. Yes. It was basically that, and then conceptually adult education might help get people out of poverty. But it wasn't any kind of a centerpiece. It was just one of the pieces and maybe, if I remember correctly, it was a concession to HEW. Somebody over there wanted [it].

G: There was a President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency [and Youth Crime] program--

C: That was David Hackett manned that, you see.

G: Right. In West Virginia. This was a pilot program that dealt with--

C: Jennings Randolph, right.

G: --preschool and it was called Even Start.

C: Oh, was it? I didn't know that. Is that where the Head Start title
came from?

G: I don't know, but it's a compelling--

C: When I was out in Chicago in September of 1964 trying to set up the program here, we had a big component we were urging on the city,
a program, but we didn't have any name for it. I know people were trying to find a name at that point for it, and then Head Start came up.

G: But I was just wondering if you were aware of that West Virginia program.

C: No.

G: Did the idea of preschool development enter the task force dis cussions that first year?

C: I don't know. I'd have to go back and look up the examples that were ginned up including some of mine. I think we had preschool programs in them. As I said, certainly by September of 1964 it was a big item, and I wasn't surprised by it. So it must have been in there, but it was in a welter of other things. It wasn't highlighted as a special strain or thread in the theory.

G: You've talked about VISTA and answered most of my questions there, but let me ask you one other thing. Did the task force intend for the VISTA volunteers to do community organization work or did they intend them to do case work?

C: I think the task force a) it didn’t talk about it very much. As I say, I think this was simply a concoction between Gordon and Shriver in effect taking over whatever modifications Shriver wanted to make of the previously sent up National Services Corps and who worked out the details [I don't know]. That came toward the end and it may have been the staff worked it out or Yarmolinsky or something. It surfaced as an idea for several kinds of discussions, but who did
it I don't know. The concept, though, which was basically volun teerism in community settings, was from Gordon.

G: Oh, I see.

C: I think using VISTA to do community organizing was just probably Fred Hayes and Dick Boone looking for another implementing instru ment for Community Action.

G: Okay. Did you have any role in the legislative fight of 1964 to
get the program enacted?

C: Only in making sure that Community Action didn't get tainted going through the process. There wasn't much of a threat to it. The big fights were over some kind of church-state issue, which [was where] people think Sarge gave away the store. I guess from Hugh Carey he accepted more limitations than he needed to have. At least Frank Keppel was always saying that in the education area.

G: Well, that was a very hot issue.

C: Yes, it was very hot. Frank insisted that Sarge choked on this issue, but I don't know whether he did or not. I was really only concerned on [Community Action]. It didn't take much effort, but I watched Community [Action]--Title II--like a hawk.

G: Another issue that came up in connection with Community Action was the family-planning question.

C: Yes, I didn't get in on that.

G: Did you have any dealings with Adam Clayton Powell at all during this legislative [period]?

C: Well, I'm trying to think. With staff, yes, but not much. Not much. Not with Mr. Powell directly. I had some dealings with Mrs. Green, but again basically through staff. Who was her staff guy? I've forgotten.

G: Wasn't she the one that insisted on having women's Job Corps camps included?

C: Yes, right. She had been the one who was giving the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency a hard time, and Dave Hackett particularly a hard time in the pre-poverty days. It was for her

benefit that we had been stressing the notion of comprehensive Community Action plans. She wanted that. She was a tough lady. I remember Charlie and I were going up to see Mrs. Green--this was later on the National Defense Education Act. Charlie went over to talk to the President about it, and the President says--I'm quoting Charlie--"Watch out, son, that old lady'll screw you."(Laughter) I forgot I'm on tape. That's okay.

G: Evidently about thirty-five million dollars was diverted from an Appalachian program, shifted in DEO. Do you recall that and if that created a--?

C: I recall those diversions and I'm not sure which Appalachian--that was probably a Budget Bureau doing; in other words, I don't know whether it was highway fund money or what. Yes, I remember it vaguely. But there was an effort to shift money around in support of the program.

G: Apparently, also, Representatives Bob Poage and [Harold] Cooley of North Carolina wanted more money for FHA.

C: That was under the agriculture-housing provision, wasn't it, of that act?

G: Yes. I think they were using--

C: Rural housing, yes. I don't know. That's a new one, not a new one, but I just wasn't in on that.

Tape 2 of 2

G: Now Mayor Daley did come up and testify on the Hill about how the

program would run, but left doubt how it would run in Chicago under
his control.

C: He left no doubt with me when I talked to him. I was working with the head of his Human Resources Department, though I'm not sure it was called that then, a guy named Deton J. Brooks, "Jack" Brooks. Not the Jack Brooks of Texas, but a black man who was very good and very helpful but obviously Daley's instrument. And as I said ear lier, I had no illusions about making radical changes in this city and I wasn't really trying to. I just wanted to see if somehow we couldn't inch forward with the notion of community participation which had been going on in Hyde Park and Back of the Yards and so on. And it did that. We got more community-based organizations here in town now than we've ever had.

G: One of the tacks that the Republicans took during the hearings was to press the other cabinet officials on how the delegated pro grams would work and whether or not they should have more

influence in the programs and that sort of thing. Did you see

this as a
problem?

C: Yes. Really a major problem, because you had to work out the treaty between OEO and the department, and that's very difficult, very difficult. I think OEO's intentions were quite good here, but it was, again, a diversion from the two mainstreams of the energy's efforts: one, the job program and the other, Community Action. It seemed bureaucratic as it was, so I'm sure it didn't
get the same amount of attention. But it's true, in administrative

terms there was nothing but headaches from many of these delegated programs, especially the ones delegated to Labor. Labor was frac tious and intractable and uncooperative throughout all this, insti tutionally, at the top with the Secretary and within the bureaucracy. You know, I went to the wedding of Bill Wirtz' son and Peggy--all I know her by now is Peggy Wirtz--who was an examiner in my division working on the poverty program. And as I went through the receiving line, the Secretary said, only partially joking, that he was going to let bygones be bygones and Labor and OEO from there were going to cooperate. (Laughter)

G: Do you think, in retrospect, that the organization of OEO should have been different? Should it have been a cabinet-level depart ment? Should Shriver have been a member of the cabinet? Should it have had some czar status above the cabinets or cabinet departments?

C: Well, things like preferences and delegated programs and so on were an effort to give it a special status. They were a realistic effort in the sense they could work with a great deal of difficulty, but they did fit the pattern of doing business, not without causing radical disruptions in them. There was an effort to have a czar with the National Poverty Council and things like that. They didn't work too well, they worked. I just think in the American system of government you probably can't coordinate as we are now. We just can't really attack. It's a major political policy problem, that's what I'm reduced to saying.

G: Some of the rural provisions were thrown out in the legislative fight, I understand, particularly the program that was called the land reform provision.

C: The latifundia we called that. (Laughter)

G: Tell me about that. How did it get in?

C: That was fascinating. As I remember it, it had to do with the Mississippi Delta. Who was it, was it Jim Sundquist? No, Jim Sundquist was not the main sponsor. I guess he's the one who de railed it. Jim was on the task force. I'd forgotten about that.

G: Was it John Baker, do you think?

C: Who the hell [was it]? Somebody over there in Ag was pushing it. And we really used to joke about that when it was in the draft of specs and things, program statements, wondering if it would last, because it would have given the Mississippi Delta, the Delta coun try, back to the inhabitants. No, that was obviously not going to last, but who the hell was it? Somebody in Ag, it could have been John Baker.

G: There was Turley Mace, also, who worked. . . .

C: No, that's not familiar. Let me look on the list there and see if there's any prompting there. Jim Sundquist, I know, had to be the coordinator on it. Milt Semer, I'd forgotten he was there. And Steve Pollak, by God. Annie Oppenheimer. No. I don't see much representation there from Ag.

G: I think the only ones I have are Baker and Sundquist, really.

C: And Jim is too conservative to have--I remember being a little taken aback when he didn't get violent about opposing it, though. So it must have been somebody fairly influential in Ag who was pushing it. But once it really got the light on it; it was bound to lose.

G: Really?

C: Yes.

G: Do you think that the bill that went up had an urban bias, or pro urban [bias]?

C: Well, yes, though a distinct effort was there to do something in the agricultural areas, and of course, again, Community Action could well be a rural program. As I said earlier, it became one of the best units of the CAP program.

Incidentally, you tend to forget the effects of these CAP pro grams. I had four or five years ago a student in one of my clas ses, a very bright, young--not young, she was fortyish--Hispanic woman who was--I learned her careers. She'd been really just a laborer and along comes Community Action to her town and she got involved in that, and she's ended up being very good in her field here in Chicago and very happy. But it just took somebody who would have spent their whole life down there in the back areas of New Mexico and realized the potential, which is another dimension of the thing.

G: There was added in the Congress a provision for indemnity payments to dairy farmers.

C: That was Gaylord Nelson, again, Wisconsin. But that was strictly political, had nothing to do with--I've forgotten why he was so important at the time. He was chairman of something. Maybe of that committee, I don't know.

G: Congress also eliminated a proposal providing for loans to private businesses to stimulate employment.

C: That was the Small Business [Administration].

G: Yes.

C: Yes. Again, that was a strain that continues to this day where you want to do something for small business in the way of licking the ghetto and other problems, but it was not a very serious [proposal]. No one was willing to bleed and die on it.

G: A former senate aide was quoted as saying, "If Congress understands Community Action it'll never get through."

C: Well, that's a good point. I had assumed that Congress did under-stand Community Action, so it's a question of what it meant, I think, by understand. What we're talking about again is the protean nature of Community Action. I visualized it as a major step forward in localism, decentralization, and political democracy, by providing an institutional setting which would encourage and express local participation in public policy matters. And at that level, I think the Congress understood it perfectly, and the Republicans turned out to be some of the biggest supporters of it. Now, the fact that any community, any political institution, can be used for in

ducing rapid social change, whether the Congress focused on that

done in some other way. They were supernumeraries in a sense; they weren't the movers and doers of it. I mean, the task force was com posed of some movers and doers, but most others were representation al figures. It was in the same session, almost in the same ten minutes, that Paul Jacobs makes an impassioned speech against Community Action. On what grounds? On the grounds that the only thing that would work would be a national socialist movement.

That's the only thing that would cure poverty, you see. It takes exactly the opposite side. But what I'm trying to say is these peo ple like Ylvisaker did not have the responsibility for carrying the thing through the Congress or anything or through the executive branch. They might be asked to testify under some grounds but it wasn't very likely, and they could say whatever they wanted to say, what bothered anybody.

G: But those who did have the responsibility, did they feel a need to conceal the possible implications of the program?

C: I never encountered that. Of all the people I knew, nobody--you don't play the game that way. That's a losing way to play the game. You can't conceal, I mean, and when you make an effort to do so, it becomes all the more difficult to conceal. You're dealing, after all, with a process that's got an awful lot of people who ask an awful lot of questions.

G: The governors' veto, the insertion of this-

C: That was southern.

G: Was it?

C: Yes. I believe so. Well, there were two elements to it. One was the traditional, which is now exaggerated under New Federalism-maybe it isn't--but at least the traditional deference of giving the states some voice in everything, and the poverty program was one largely not oriented towards states. Then [there was] the Budget Bureau doctrine that "the state is the governor," so if you do anything, you want to do it through the chief executive, that kind of thing. But that I think basically was an effort to assure the South that they had some chance, okay? Because this was a pro gram that was invading the South in many ways at that time.

G: Did you feel that that was too much of a compromise?

C: Well, no, because I was worried to death that we wouldn't get any program, because the South would hold us up for ransom, so I was willing to pay even more than that. Because we got an awful lot out of that that helped us in the South to get a program.

G: How about the issue of comprehensive planning? It seemed that Congress really did cut way back on that.

C: It did. And I was really kind of astonished, because it was at Hackett's advice and it may turn out that what we're talking about here is his own concept rather than a politically useful concept. I think he had, and has, great belief in comprehensive planning, and if the Kennedys had stayed in, under his poverty program it would have been largely a comprehensive-planning program. While I'm sympathetic to the planning aspects of the program, as I said

earlier, you still have to move somewhere. So I think we had

pushed comprehensive planning, and comprehensive planning always sounds good in an institution like the Budget Bureau, you know. So we had pushed it, but I hadn't really pushed it because I thought it was necessary politically, but it turned out not to be.

G: Do you have any idea why Shriver was chosen first to head the task

force?

C: I think the notion that I talked about earlier did get promoted, which is that instead of an interagency task force to plan a pro gram, you want to give the planning to the person who at the same time is going to head it up and therefore has to sell it and has to be able to implement it and therefore has to plan it so that he knows what he's doing. All those things seem to me to come to a head. I was promoting that in various places, and as I mentioned earlier, I think that message got to Bob Kennedy, who put himself forward in front of a number of people and I guess did it more than once, his wanting to be that person. Well, I think it was clear that the idea was a good one and had to be implemented. You weren't going to get anywhere with the old interagency task force. So I think the President looked at his options and he certainly didn't want Bob Kennedy as an option, and I don't know what other options he might have had. He knew Shriver, and I gather liked him, and Shriver had proven that he could work the Hill and so on and so forth. And of course Bill Moyers was close to Shriver.

G: So it was assumed that Shriver would not only head the task force but he would also head the War on Poverty effort?

C: Yes, right. Right.

G: Were other people considered, like Terry Sanford?

C: His name floated around, but his kind of name always floats around. He apparently does a very able job in a number of ways.

G: Do you have any recollections of the Adam Yarmolinsky episode where he was excluded from the program?

C: Yes, he was really persona non grata on the Hill, and the story was at the time that some committee chairman--who would it have been, [Phil] Landrum or somebody?

G: I thought it was Cooley that was his adversary.

C: It could have been. My memory's not fully clear. [He] had told Shriver that Yarmolinsky would have to go as the price of getting the bill. I think there were three elements involved in Adam's eventually leaving. One was I think there was some anti-semitism involved in it. The other was that Adam was very, very bright and came across--I don't think he was--very, very arrogant. He could cut you down very quickly and wound you and he was unidirectional in that he didn't sail to, it didn't matter what person he was dealing with. Individuals, and congressmen in particular, don't like that, and I think that was a piece of it. Then I think he's a very striking-looking man, but he does have certain aspects to him that turned a lot of people off. So I think it was that combination of things. Then I think there was some feeling in the background that he was an eastern radical. He'd come out of

Harvard Law or some place like that. So I think it was clear very

early in the game that he wasn't going to last and that was really
too bad.

G: Do you think that it had to do with the fact that he was in effect
designated for that position--

C: As deputy.

G: --when Shriver perhaps told members of Congress that he hadn't been? Was Shriver in a very difficult, awkward position here?

C: Well I'm only going on hearsay that you're recalling to me. There was something there, that Congress felt it hadn't been consulted. That's about all I remember, really. But I really think it's these other characteristics, the lack of consultation was simply the pub lic way of dealing with the problem.

G: Is there anything else in the task force phase of the program be fore the legislation was enacted that we need to [discuss]?

C: No, Moynihan wrote a message which was all jobs. This is after we had the bi11 done and that had to get rewritten.

G: I wondered about that, because he assigned a long message to write and evidently spent a good deal of time on it.

C: It was all jobs. It had nothing to do with what was in the legis lation or what was in the program. I guess Moyers rewrote it or somebody, but we protested strongly that it wasn't about what the President was sending to the Hill. It was amazing. So there was that, and there were the tedious working on the specifications and legislation and all that, very tedious meetings. That's the normal
kind of workings of the executive branch. No, that's about it.

G: Did you attend many of the regular task force sessions in which you discussed papers and--?

C: Yes, except for that ten-day period, I was there all the time.

G: Yes. You've sort of given me the impression that there was not a whole lot of continuity in the task force, that that was no cen tral mechanism for taking and evaluating ideas and boiling them

down.

C: We11, there was a smaller group that I met with after the ten-day hiatus, of Yarmolinsky, Mike Harrington, Moynihan, Jacobs, Tolmach, Mankiewicz, Ylvisaker, Brimmer, me, Hal Horowitz, Jim Adler, Jim Sundquist. We sat around the table and went over a11 these pro posals, just that small group. I don't know what that group was, but there were lots of other people on the task force who never showed up that were invited to these things. So there was a small group which in the ten days I was out had been reviewing all the proposals, and had come to a dead end. And I guess that's why I got invited back in.

G: Well, I certainly do thank you.

C: Okay.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]