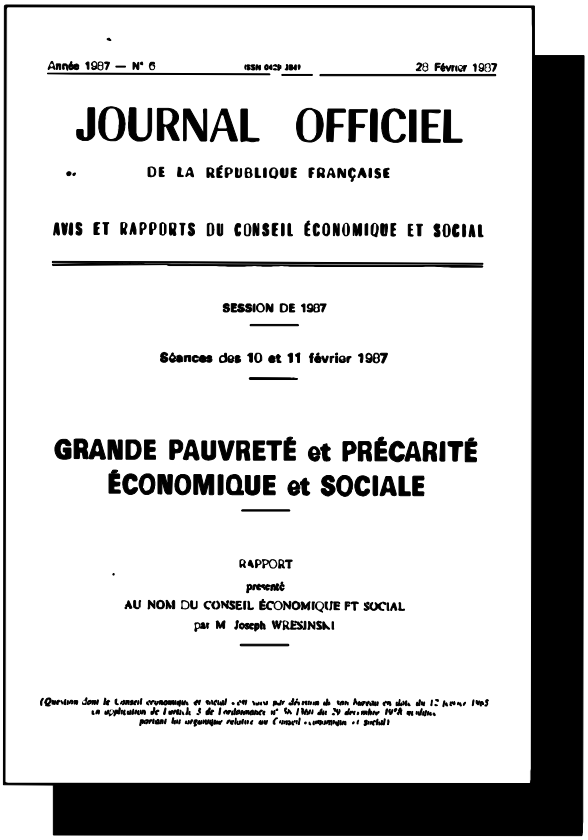
CHRONIC POVERTY

AND

LACK OF BASIC SECURITY



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AU NOM DU CONSEIL ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL

par M. Joseph WRESINSKI

The Wresinski Report

of the

Economic and Social Council of France

CHRONIC POVERTY

and

LACK OF BASIC SECURITY

A Report of the

Economic and Social Council of France

by Joseph Wresinski

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Chronic Poverty and Lack of Basic Security

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INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

"Chronic Poverty and Lack of Basic Security," a document better known as the Wresinski Report, was submitted to the French government in 1987 by France's Economic and Social Council. The Council examines proposed laws on economic and social matters and may submit amendments to the government, which is free to adopt them or not. But the Council also presents recommendations on its own initiative, which it did with the Wresinski Report. Most of the Council's members are official representatives of the major sectors of French society, such as management, labor, agriculture and the professions; a few are distinguished citizens appointed by the President for the special contributions they can make to the Council's work.

Joseph Wresinski, a member of the Council, oversaw the preparation of the report and guided its adoption through the Council.

The report deals with extreme and persistent poverty and its impact on people's lives. It breaks with much that is accepted wisdom by governments around the world and proposes an entirely new approach.

The French initiative holds much that is of interest to other countries. It comes to grips with conditions that are prevalent in many nations: the persistence of deep poverty in an economy that has raised living conditions for most people over the past few decades; the existence of a layer of the population that has no access to the economic, social, cultural and civic life of the nation; and an alienation so deep that it splits off one segment of the population from the whole.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An Accumulation of Disadvantages

Large numbers of French families, the Wresinski Report says, live in poverty more extreme and more persistent than is generally recognized. They live in destitution because they are born into it and have no means of escape. Their precise number is not known. The state collects statistics on income levels, unemployment, health, housing, education and illiteracy, but it treats them as separate categories; the statistics do not reveal the people behind the numbers.

The desperately poor do not just lack money. They are also likely to be homeless or to live in marginal housing, to suffer from ill health, to leave school without knowing how to read and write, and to have trouble finding work. With such an accumulation of disadvantages, they spend their lives struggling to survive. Their overriding concern is to keep their families together and to provide a better future for their children.

But their struggles go unrecognized. The poor are pushed into areas where others rarely penetrate: inner city slums, the outskirts of towns, and isolated rural dwellings. When they do appear in the public eye, it is often because they have been made homeless in their own neighborhoods. Geographically segregated and socially isolated, they are cut off from the cultural, political and civic life of the country.

It is this exclusion, even more than material want, that traps the families, according to the Wresinski Report. No effort to reduce or eliminate persistent poverty can succeed, the report asserts, unless it is based on an understanding of the effects of exclusion. Families who live in extreme poverty will be able to realize their potential only when they are no longer isolated.

The Need for a Wide-Ranging, Continual Effort

Relief, charitable, temporary or emergency programs lose their value unless they are undertaken as part of a larger continual effort. The aim must be complete economic, social and cultural integration into the society at large. Social service agencies and others involved in work with the poorest strata of the population must not be satisfied with administering services; they must learn to accompany the poor on their long road to integration.

One immediate need is to provide a source of stable income. Individuals and families cannot begin to make long-term progress if there is no money for basics like food and rent. Another need is to ensure a more rational administration of social services. Running each service, such as housing, health, employment and job training, in isolation from the others adds chaos to the lives of those whom they are set up to help. Support should be offered in a way that takes into account the real situation of the lives of the very poor.

Changing the administrative machinery, however, is not enough. The key word in the report is partnership. The best informed experts on poverty are the poor, and they must be listened to and associated with the planning and management of any effort undertaken on their behalf.

The new approach must become part of the permanent machinery of state in France. Only a sustained national effort with wide-ranging programs can give to those who have been excluded the skills and knowledge that society demands. A major enterprise, the report admits, but one that is not beyond the resources of the state nor the energies of society once it accepts the challenge. To ensure the success of the reforms, the report calls for strong planning and evaluation at national and local levels.

IMPACT ON FRANCE AND INTERNATIONAL ECHOES

The report recommended that a comprehensive national effort should be agreed upon immediately, but that the practical application of the reforms should first be tested and evaluated. The government asked *"départements"* (basic administrative districts of France) to volunteer for the first phase, and chose thirteen of them to conduct pilot programs. Late in 1988, social services concerned with health, education, job training, housing and welfare in these districts started to coordinate their efforts along the lines recommended by the report.

The decisive step toward implementation of the report was taken by Prime Minister Michel Rocard. In one of his first legislative acts, he introduced a bill calling for a guaranteed minimum income. The government made clear that the purpose of the law was not to provide temporary relief but to support a major effort toward the social integration of those at the bottom of the social scale.

The Minimum Income Law passed on December 1, 1988. Although payments under the law are lower than those proposed by the Wresinski Report, passage of the law marks the beginning of a comprehensive program to eliminate extreme poverty.

The principles behind the Wresinski Report inspired two United Nations resolutions and one Unicef resolution soon after its publication.

The first U.N. resolution, adopted in May 1988 by the Economic and Social Council, urged the Commission for Social Development to suggest "strategies that will help put an end to the marginalization of people living in extreme poverty." In the second resolution, adopted early in 1989, the Commission on Human Rights "affirms that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent national and international action is therefore required to eliminate them."

The Unicef resolution, adopted by its Executive Board in April 1989 and entitled "Reaching the Poorest," commits Unicef "to cooperate in identifying the poorest groups, particularly children and mothers ... [to] explore the most appropriate ways to reach [them ... and] to bring about their participation in the basic services and actions for development."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND THE REPORT

Joseph Wresinski was a French priest. Brought up in desperate poverty himself, he never ceased to regard the poor as his family and his people. In 1957 he founded what became the International Movement ATD Fourth World, which now has branches in Africa, Asia, Central America, Europe and North America. He died in 1988, a champion of the Fourth World, society's most forgotten men, women and children.

Father Joseph Wresinski's appointment to France's Economic and Social Council was a significant step in his quest for official representation of his people. President Giscard d'Estaing, a conservative, first named him to the Council in 1979; and President Mitterrand, a socialist, reappointed him to a second five-year term. It took Father Wresinski almost six years to get the Council to commission the report and another two to see it to completion.

When Father Wresinski joined the Council, he redoubled his efforts to absorb all that was to be known about extreme poverty. He set up a working group of Fourth World volunteers to comb through the records that the Movement had compiled for over 30 years. An American scholar called these records "the most important longitudinal study of poverty in existence." Father Wresinski also conducted wide-ranging consultations in France and other countries.

The official Council enquiry began with public hearings. As each chapter of the report was completed, a committee of Council members debated it paragraph by paragraph and word by word. When the report was voted on in plenary session, it passed with 154 voting for, none against, and 40 abstentions. The policy statement contains the recommendations that the Council approved. It summarizes the principal points made in the report.

Father Wresinski was 70 years old when the report was issued. For more than 30 years he had tried to alert France to the disgrace of extreme poverty in its midst. As a young priest he had seen that those at the bottom of society were unknown -they had no identity, no voice and no representation. He set out to provide them with all three. In the Council and in the report, he succeeded in gaining recognition of the poor as potential partners in society.

When the report came out, Father Wresinski was ailing, but he had one last triumph. On October 17, 1987, the Movement marked its 30th anniversary with a gathering in Paris in defense of the human rights of the poor. Some 100,000 people crowded into the Plaza of Human Rights and Liberties (formerly the Trocadero) to witness the dedication of a stone tablet set in the Plaza. The stone is inscribed with these words by Father Joseph Wresinski: "Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty."

CHRONIC POVERTY

AND

LACK OF BASIC SECURITY

THE WRESINSKI REPORT

of the

Economic and Social Council of France

REPORT SUBMITTED BY JOSEPH WRESINSKI ON BEHALF OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

For the preparation of this report, the Section on Social Affairs interviewed the following persons:

- Georgina Dufoix, Minister of Social Affairs, spokesperson for the government;
- Ms. Reynaud, head of social services for the family allowances agency (C.A.F.) of St. Etienne;
- Nicolas Jacob, lawyer in Paris;
- Louis Join-Lambert, Director of the Research Institute of the Movement ATD/Fourth World;
- Ms. Pisarra, children's judge in Paris;
- Dr. Debionne of Nancy;
- Ms. Ligier, elementary school teacher in the 13th arrondissement of Paris;
- Jean Labbens, sociologist;
- Michel Mollat, historian;
- Mr. Leuprecht, Director of Human Rights at the Council of Europe;
- Mr. Fragonard, Director of the national agency for family allowances (C.N.A.F.);
- Mr. Schwint, Mayor of Besançon;
- Mr. Oheix, Inspector General at the Ministry of Social Affairs;
- Adrien Zeller, Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, in charge of the social security program.

In addition, the reporter interviewed a number of other people, whose names are listed in an appendix.

The author of the report is grateful to all those people and to others who helped to prepare the report, especially members and associates of the Economic and Social Council.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

On February 12, 1985, the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council invited the Social Affairs Section to prepare a report on "Chronic Poverty and Lack of Basic Security" *(Grande Pauvreté et Précarité Economique et Sociale).*

The Bureau gave the following reasons for its request:

The present economic situation has brought to light increasing instances of people having inadequate social protection and little or no economic security. In the streets we see individuals and families who have become homeless. With few or no resources, they must survive by begging and other expedients, some of them illegal and some of them harmful to themselves and others.

In an economic downturn, this phenomenon is only likely to become more pronounced and widespread, especially because of the increase in unemployment and the new systems of unemployment compensation in France. Despite their efforts, government agencies, private relief organizations and public assistance offices cannot meet all the demands made on them and, still less, respond to the real needs.

This situation has prompted studies and proposals by prominent individuals, working groups and organizations; in some cases, their suggestions are being tried. Other countries, experiencing the same phenomena, have also introduced different attempts at a solution.

The Economic and Social Council felt that it would be useful to prepare a report and recommendations on this subject, as an extension of the survey "Combating Poverty" *(La lutte contre la pauvreté),* submitted by Professor Péquignot and adopted on September 20, 1978, by the Council's Section on Health, Education and Social Affairs. The new report could examine the extent and gravity of the various situations and delve into their causes. It could also examine how people's lives are affected by these problems, how they try to cope with them and what they hope to achieve. The report might also examine present forms of assistance, proposals for change and experimentation (their objectives, the proposed beneficiaries, the methods of operation, their limits and even possible negative effects). It could propose new solutions, going beyond temporary case-by-case proposals (which are still necessary), and offer coherent, comprehensive and long-term responses to the problems under review.

1. Definitions

In order to clarify the scope of the report, we propose the following definitions for the terms "chronic poverty" and "lack of basic security."

A lack of basic security is the absence of one or more factors that enable individuals and families to assume basic responsibilities and to enjoy fundamental rights. Such a situation may become more extended and lead to more serious and permanent consequences. Chronic poverty results when the lack

of basic security simultaneously affects several aspects of people's lives, when it is prolonged, and when it severely compromises people's chances of regaining their rights and of reassuming their responsibilities in the foreseeable future.

2. General Context of Report

Today, Europeans are realizing that the lack of basic security and the presence of chronic poverty are again matters of concern in their respective countries. The signs are evident, if not in their own lives, then in the situation of their neighbors or their communities. The topic is widely discussed in the media and is the subject of many surveys and studies. During the last few years, forms of deprivation that many thought were a thing of the past have reappeared. We have discovered that chronic poverty still exists and that, in fact, it had never really disappeared. Increasingly, men and women - indeed, whole families - find it impossible to earn a living. Destitution, uncertainty from day to day, even homelessness and hunger have visibly spread among certain groups within the population.

The composition of these groups has noticeably changed during the past twenty years. The absence of basic security, which leads to chronic poverty, is affecting fewer elderly people but more younger people, especially those living alone, and more families, especially single-parent families.

Rapid changes in all aspects of modem life have destabilized the more vulnerable members of society and trapped them in a permanent state of marginalization. The web of relationships that sustained them has disappeared and, with it, the chief means of even knowing who has been excluded. However, they have not remained passive. The poorest have become conscious of their rights, and they have begun to demand that their rights be respected.

Many Europeans, particularly the French, have begun organizing in order to respond to the most urgent and most intolerable situations. Some have gone further. They are searching for ways to eradicate persistent, recurring poverty - a condition that destroys those who must endure it, is unacceptable amidst general prosperity, and is contrary to the tenets of a society founded upon justice.

For the past decade, public authorities in France have become more directly concerned with the continuing existence of poverty. In the name of national solidarity, leaders of political groups and private associations have called for greater efforts and more discussion about poverty.

Beyond this call for solidarity, they also realize that the persistence of chronic poverty and the likelihood of increasing deprivation of basic security raise fundamental questions about the workings of the social and economic systems in France. These performed reasonably well in an industrial economy in which full employment was generally assured. However, the number of people seeking work has been steadily rising, while society has been introducing massive changes in both the production and the service sectors. An unacceptable consequence has been the permanent exclusion of some people from the job market. This situation raises important questions between citizens who in theory belong to the same country but of whom some have been excluded and others risk being so. The all-too-familiar problem of inequality is compounded when unequal opportunity becomes permanent exclusion. We cannot limit the discussion to a lack of basic security without considering the ultimate consequence: namely, leaving some people outside the normal workings of society. When examined in this manner, chronic poverty and the deprivation of basic security are not merely a recurring subject of public attention; they are vital questions for the organization of tomorrow's society.

The Economic and Social Council has already been active in bringing about widespread recognition of these facts. As early as 1978, its report by Professor Henri Péquignot, "Combating Poverty," described in detail the historical and sociological approaches to poverty. After examining the principal administrative actions that had been undertaken, the report noted the fading illusion that poverty would disappear because of a higher standard of living, greater economic prosperity, improvements in social services, or structural reforms.

Subsequent reports by he Council have dealt with disadvantaged population groups and related questions. In particular, there were Professor Viot's report on bringing handicapped persons into the work force (1979) and Professor Pétrequin's report on housing for people with very limited resources (1986).

Other reports have mentioned the situation of disadvantaged persons, in particular the reports of Burnel on comprehensive family policy (1981), Levy on public health education (1982), Gruat on present and future adult training (1982), Sullerot on marital status and its legal, fiscal and social consequences (1984), Théry on the role of private associations in educational, health and social action policies (1986), Meraud on "Production, Economic Growth, Employment" *(Production, croissance, emploi),* (1984), and most of the reports dealing with the Five-Year Plan and the economic state of the nation.

In all these reports, the Council pointed out that instances of people suffering from a serious lack of basic security have not disappeared in France. There were fewer of them, admittedly, and they had become less visible, notably after the concerted national effort during the 1960s to do away with shantytowns. Nevertheless, in 1974 the National Assembly's Commission on Cultural, Family and Social Affairs estimated that five percent of the French people should be considered as "living in a state of destitution or on the borderline of destitution" (from an appendix to the minutes of the National Assembly session of October 10, 1973, official journal 682, page 23, in regard to a proposal on financial matters for 1974).

A form of dual society already exists in France. To believe otherwise would be a misjudgment having serious consequences for domestic planning. Society is already structured in a way that denies certain citizens participation, however unequal, in the educational, economic and political processes, or in the cultural and social life of the country. They are trapped in a state of dependence and their number is growing; this is the reality that

prompted the Economic and Social Council to produce this report.

Our approach does not ignore the fact that there are situations requiring immediate action or that the government should always be prepared to guarantee "assistance to persons in danger." The Council wishes to go beyond these necessary emergency efforts and to examine the deprivations of basic security that already affect many people, and how the situation ultimately leads to chronic poverty and social exclusion. We want to review the limits of social protection today. Why are some situations of need answered and others not? How can France establish a "safety net" extensive enough to protect all citizens? How can we insure that public assistance remains an emergency measure, not a long-term response? How can we prevent a lack of resources from forcing some citizens into a state of dependence, isolation or permanent discrimination?

Looked at in this way, it is important to restate the links between assistance and a sense of national solidarity. Public assistance is not a way for people to escape their responsibilities. It is one step in a process that respects the dignity of disadvantaged citizens, allows them to improve their condition and thus regain their rightful place in society. This is the only valid procedure in a society founded on the concept of human rights.

3. A Framework in Which to Operate

In order to answer the questions we have raised, the following procedure seems best:

First, the mandate given the Council is to examine the problem of "chronic poverty and lack of basic security" in all its implications. We will start from earlier work done under the auspices of the Council or by other French or European agencies, namely:

- the Péquignot report (1978), which contained a synthesis of studies and actions in the fight against poverty;
- the 1980 report by the French delegation to the Commission of the European Communities, which had attempted a systematic appraisal of poverty situations in the member countries and their national policies to combat it;
- Gabriel Oheix's January 1981 report, prepared at the request of the French government, which contained proposals for immediate action by the public authorities;
- the E.E.C. 1981 report published at the end of the first European anti-poverty program (1976-1980), which reviewed a number of promotional action programs already tested in the field.

Our report will attempt both to summarize the findings in these reports and to bring them up to date. We will also use:

- documents and facts made available to us by public and private institutions directly dealing with the questions we are examining;
- the testimony of qualified persons in hearings of the Social Affairs Section of the Economic and Social Council;
- testimony systematically gathered from people affected by chronic poverty and from field workers in contact with situations of chronic poverty;
- recent socio-economic and historical studies related to the purposes of this report.

The kind of social and economic relations that will govern tomorrow's society are increasingly pertinent for today. Péquignot wrote in his report that "permanent insecurity" is the common characteristic of all situations of chronic poverty.

Public opinion and institutional reactions reflect the increasing awareness of the destructive effects of the deprivation of basic security on the physical and moral integrity of individuals, on the autonomy of the family unit, on the transmission of culture, and on the ability of those affected to participate in society. The country has realized that, when living conditions are too precarious, individuals and families cannot assume responsibilities or exercise fundamental rights, however much they may be guaranteed by the Constitution.

The French public is awakening to the reality that an underclass is likely to become a permanent feature of society if these conditions persist and spread. As a result, many concerned citizens are reexamining the notion of democracy and of what is really meant by national solidarity.

In other words, how can citizens be protected against chronic poverty and the deprivation of basic security? What can we offer them so that one day they are not forced into a state of dependence? What will enable them to exercise fundamental rights and thus remain active social partners?

This line of questioning is the context in which the present report intends to build on previous work in the field. While our present concern is that the most intolerable situations are immediately addressed, our ultimate concern is preventing the recurrence of similar situations. We see this report as guidance for a society that is ever alert to the possibility of chronic poverty and social exclusion in its midst and that is willing to mobilize all the necessary resources against these social ills.

We are also convinced that the efforts already undertaken must be expanded and carried to completion. According to our analysis, attention should be concentrated on members of urban and rural populations living in conditions of chronic poverty. Their situation is extremely precarious, characterized by circumstances such as being unemployed for a long time, being a single woman with children, being a young person without any job skills, coping with physical or mental handicaps, or having problems with the justice system. In these different situations, we find the people who benefit the least from existing support systems and who are sometimes not covered at all by present policies.

To understand their daily life means learning more about how they see their situation, what they feel they need, and what they hope will change. At the same time, we are called on to develop a method to gather this knowledge, to develop effective responses from it, and to redress a basic injustice, namely, that these people have rarely been asked to give their views on the conditions in which they live.

A rigorous approach to acquiring knowledge means looking beyond the mild or "average" forms of insecurity.

To ensure the effectiveness of new measures, we must be able to recognize when a state of deprivation progresses to a state of chronic poverty. Both conditions are rooted in the same causes, and intensity is not the distinguishing factor. Even destitution does not necessarily lead to the social and cultural exclusion that characterizes chronic poverty. This means that an all-embracing social protective system cannot be based simply on degrees of deprivation.

Thus, tackling chronic poverty and finding appropriate responses to it requires us to develop methods that can address a variety of deprivations, wherever they appear in society. The tendency might be to respond first to the demands of more vocal and better-organized groups. But if we deal first with the most difficult situations, we will ensure that the people involved are not left only with emergency measures which, over a long period, marginalize them rather than help them.

Finally, a keener appreciation of justice and fundamental rights would mean giving priority to those citizens for whom human rights seem to be merely words on paper. Equality among people implies investing more resources in those who have received the least protection and the fewest opportunities.

4. Outline of the Report

The report will contain the following sections:

Part One, entitled "Current and Evolving Situations," will examine the methods now used in France to measure and understand chronic poverty and the lack of basic security. In turn, this analysis will be the basis for our proposals. We shall try to assemble a set of qualitative and quantitative data at the national, regional and local levels that will allow reasonable estimates and observations to be made. The methods now in use do not always make it possible to prepare a status report in any great detail. It is more important to identify the actual circumstances than to pin the label of poverty on one set of individuals or another. We shall explore the limits of knowledge in this field - limits that will have to be pushed back in the near future.

Part Two will be devoted to an evaluation of the means available to achieve basic security. How, for instance, do they affect the poorest? To what extent do they provide a safety net that protects everyone? Is the safety net a means of promotion to more security?

Assuming that our society clearly intends that rights should be enjoyed by all, we shall look at existing measures with these questions in mind:

Are individuals and families guaranteed the means to achieve basic security, integration and participation in society? What obstacles stand in their way? What innovations seem likely to produce change?

In setting up general policies, the poorest must be given special consideration. At the same time, special measures must not be allowed to segregate them into a type of "handicapped" category. Special measures must eventually lead to the application of the same norms that apply to the population as a whole.

We shall examine how a coherent and comprehensive overview of situations where basic security is absent can lead to the development of coherent anti-poverty programs and to the prevention of chronic poverty. It is not sufficient to propose partial measures that end up being applied only sporadically. On the contrary, we hope to identify elements of a general policy that can be introduced in stages and that will be mutually reinforcing over time. A society so equipped can prevent the re-emergence of situations that are contrary to our present concept of justice.

PART ONE

CURRENT AND EVOLVING SITUATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Are there now in France [1] individuals and families seriously lacking basic security or living in chronic poverty, or on the verge of these conditions?

How many of them are there?

How do they live?

These questions daily confront people at all levels: field workers in contact with the very disadvantaged, policy makers called on to formulate responses, and researchers who are asked to provide theoretical explanations.

As we pointed out in the general introduction, in the last ten years important studies have attempted to give some answers. It is not an easy task, as their authors recognize. Poverty is a difficult phenomenon to measure - a fact borne out by the varying conclusions reached by these studies.

For example, their figures for the number of poor vary and their measures of the degree of poverty are not clear.

Pétrequin points out these disparities in his report "Housing For Low Income Groups" (May 28, 1986). He notes that between 1970 and 1980 the incidence of poverty in France (which in his study includes situations of chronic poverty and lack of basic security) was estimated to be:

- 10 % of the population by René Lenoir in "The Excluded - One Out Of Ten in France" *(Les exclus - un français sur 10);*
- 12 % by Lionel Stoleru in "Eliminating Poverty In Rich Countries" *(Vaincre la pauvreté dans les pays riches);*
- 14 % by Serge Milano in "Poverty In France" *(La pauvreté en France).*

Poverty as a social phenomenon is still not well understood, even though France has more than enough sources of information to tackle the problem and determine its nature and dimensions.

What are these sources?

In Part One we shall try to determine which sources are the most useful (realizing that we cannot be exhaustive in our treatment) and what we can learn from them. The chapters that follow will examine sources of information concerning:

- categories of population that can provide material for policy planning;
- economic security, housing, education and job training;
- a profile of chronic poverty in a specific urban neighborhood;
- studies of relationships of individual families with government services, with different private organizations and within their neighborhood;
- experience derived from grass-roots programs.

Using these sources, we should be able to make an accurate estimate of what the Economic and Social Council seeks to know -that is, the seriousness and extent of chronic poverty.

Published research and social theories can certainly contribute to our understanding of chronic poverty and the deprivation of basic security. As we cannot treat this material in a comprehensive way, we limit ourselves to a brief summary in this introduction of the principal ideas in current French research and studies.

Despite the many and diverse conclusions of their authors, these studies do have points in common.

First of all, poverty is no longer considered merely material and financial hardship. Chronic poverty is recognized as an accumulation of all kinds of deprivations, not only material, that leaves people with no alternatives or means of escape. The idea that the origins of poverty lie in chance happenings or in bad economic tunes has also been discounted. Individual misfortune and adverse economic developments can lead to hardship, but the severity of the hardship will vary with the social class or group to which the person belongs. Social and economic background determines if an individual or a family will sink into poverty. Poverty existed long before the economic crises; the new poor, like the old poor whom they join, are victims of the same social mechanisms that strike hardest those who are most vulnerable to begin with.

According to current thinking, these mechanisms are linked more to how society organizes itself than to deficiencies that could be remedied by supplemental measures. Society is not organized, for example, to give the poor the right to be heard, a serious lack pointed out by many studies. Another point they make is that the poor are forced into dependence, that their lives are controlled, and that they have become objects of policy rather than individuals to be socially protected. The authors of these studies also agree that the poor should be seen through their history as the people they are rather than as a burden on society. A key element in the solution to poverty, they say, is to listen to the poor and to give them a forum in which they can present their views.

We would add that the situation of the poorest in our society has an important link with the concept of human rights, which are not confined only to civil liberties and political freedom. These remain only words on paper unless the poorest have access to economic, social and cultural rights.

CHAPTER I

POPULATION CATEGORIES AND STATISTICS AS SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Social theory can certainly be helpful to field workers and those in administration. In practice, however, both groups are more interested in understanding the particular situations and populations with which they must deal. They need qualitative data to alert them to specific situations and quantitative data to gauge the extent to which the situations affect the population and, therefore, what measures ought to be undertaken.

In this chapter we shall examine the effectiveness of categorizing client populations in order to determine if they lack basic security or if they are in a condition of chronic poverty. We also want to determine the limits of such an approach and present some general observations concerning the use of statistics.

I. POPULATION CATEGORIES: THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

In situations where people lack basic security, a common approach in categorizing them is to describe them as being "at risk" or "already assisted," that is, receiving some sort of assistance.

The first group consists of those who are considered more vulnerable and whose situations require special preventive measures. The criteria for placing people in this category might be, for example:

- a family event such as a premature birth or the separation of a couple;
- a health condition such as a handicap or alcoholism;
- a family situation such as an orphaned child, a single parent household or a family with many children;
- living conditions such as substandard housing or unemployment without any benefit payments;
- belonging to minority groups such as immigrants and Gypsy people.

The population groups described as having been "already assisted" are most often those who receive some kind of public assistance. This can range from simple financial aid to the appointment of a financial supervisor, from help in the home to the provision of shelter or even institutionalization, or to the placement of children in foster homes.

Every social agency, public or private, whether limited to a community or active at a national level, develops a pool of information about its client population. The agencies continue to gather information, using it to estimate new needs and to make necessary adjustments in operating procedures.

At any moment, this constant gathering process shapes the agency's perception of its clients' needs relative to the requirements imposed by law and to the general standard of living. It also reflects the way the institution deals with the needs it has perceived. The existence of procedures developed over time to deal with a certain range of problems or the emergence of an accepted way of meeting specific needs has led to a specialization of institutions and personnel. Unfortunately, such compartmentalization can have negative effects. It sometimes forces those who apply for help to knock at many different doors, and it adds to the difficulty of coordinating different services. It also means that some fundamental needs of the poorest clients, such as participation in community life and access to learning and culture, are never met or even considered.

Nevertheless, every institution has its duly inventoried list of needs that it tries to address. Thus, in France information should be available on how people have already been assisted by the different agencies, for how long, the kinds of services rendered, the amount of money spent, the personnel employed and the numbers of persons reached. How can these statistics be used to indicate situations where there is chronic poverty or a serious lack of basic security?

Examples of information on public assistance recipients

In June 1985 the statistical service division (S.E.S.L) of the Ministry of Social Affairs published statistics and estimates on the number of beneficiaries of public assistance.

It estimated that the efforts undertaken in France to "support persons whose income was insufficient to allow them to live decently or to meet health-related costs" involved, as of December 31, 1983:

- more than one million sick people;
- about 450,000 children (180,000 taken into care and 270,000 receiving financial assistance);
- about 340,000 elderly persons (160,000 living at home and 180,000 in institutions);
- about 301,000 handicapped persons (175,000 at home and 126,000 in institutions);
- about 110,000 families in difficulty.

Does such assistance go to the poorest as a matter of priority? The information available tells us only that a certain number of persons received a certain kind of assistance. But there is no indication of the number of persons who got absolutely no help even though they may have been entitled to it. Nor do these figures show whether the assistance helped the recipients to make basic changes in their lives, or whether it was the same people who got the same assistance year after year.

In contrast, detailed surveys have shown that recipients have common characteristics other than the reason for which they receive public assistance.

For example, in a report to the regional council of the Department of the Drôme, "Seeking out Forms of Insecurity in the Drôme Department" *(Formes de la précarité; repérage dans la Drôme)* (1983) [1], we can discern common principal

characteristics in the population groups concerned, thanks to the analysis of the files of a number of different social services.

According to that report the majority of cases in the files of all these services were familiar with a large number of children. Apart from cases involving the Departmental commission on special education (C.D.E.S.), 30 % of all families served were headed by single parents. Unemployment was a factor among one third of the group. Overall, the group was characterized by low income and limited employment skills.

The results of the study also indicated that:

- almost two thirds of those receiving aid in 1983 were first-lime recipients and half were emergency cases (showing that more and more people have come to depend on public assistance);
- one third of those on the rolls received assistance from several agencies and one fourth depended on such help all year long (showing the severe impact when hardships accumulate).

The multiplicity of "problems" or forms of help required, the degree of urgency, whether the situation is recent or chronic - all these are indicators used by the different agencies to distinguish the degree of risk to which their clients are exposed and to warn if individuals or familiar are in particular danger.

Low income and low employment skill level do not, by themselves, lead to chronic poverty, although they do indicate relative inequality. But when they coexist with unemployment (particularly if there is no benefit payment), significant family responsibility (particularly if the family is large), a single-parent family, illiteracy or lack of job skills, the accumulation of these hardships compromises the equilibrium of the family as well as the development and education of the children. Here is where social policy must look in order to develop preventive measures, both for the individual and for the community.

Any conclusions about the number of people living in chronic poverty or deprived of basic security cannot be based solely on knowing who is already receiving public assistance. Understanding the situations of this group does, however, tell us something about our other category - individuals or families at risk. The challenge is to assess the risks that lead to marginalization and social exclusion.

For example, the handicapped, the unemployed, immigrants and familiar with a large number of children are not necessarily living in deep poverty. These situations exist at all social levels and, accordingly, do not always pose a serious problem. Nevertheless, the handicapped, the unemployed, immigrants and those belonging to large families face a greater risk relative to the entire population, and the lower they are on the socio-economic scale, the greater the risk. Unless they are assured of basic security and opportunities for advancement, members of these groups who also fall at the bottom of the socio-economic scale are most likely to become trapped in chronic poverty.

We see, then, that the classification of population groups by social service authorities helps us identify the different ways in which basic security may be lacking. The consequences, though, can differ greatly, depending on the social environment and the forms of deprivation.

Examples of groups confined to institutions

We now look at groups usually not considered in poverty related issues: those confined to institutions or psychiatric wards. Yet these are places where basic security can be most extremely lacking. We include prisons because, even though they have a different purpose and by their nature imply repression rather than assistance, they still fall into this category: they have a population with common characteristics and they keep persons under restraint.

The fact of being in one of these institutions constitutes exclusion from society as well as material and social impoverishment.

1. ***Prisons***

In October 1985, French prisons held 41,555 persons, half of them in pre-trial detention.

According to Ministry of Justice statistics [2], 50 % of the 89,127 persons incarcerated in 1984 were under 25 years of age (7 % were minors) and 26 % were aliens. The majority (65 %) were unmarried; 12 % were illiterate and 42 % stated they had no work skills or were unemployed.

A survey conducted by the National Center for Studies and Research in Prisons [3*]* using a sample of 900 inmates in four prisons between 1977 and 1980 yielded the following conclusions about the social and family background of the inmates.

Family background:

Two thirds of the inmates came from homes where one parent was no longer in the household for the following reasons:

-separation of parents: 16 %

-death of father or mother or both: 30 %

-identity of one parent unknown: 20 %.

Many inmates came from large familiar:

-one third had at least five siblings;

-12 % came from families with nine children or more.

Parents' occupation:

- Fathers were manual workers (31 %), retired or otherwise not employed (17 %) or were involved in trades such as scrap collecting or selling discarded items (14 %).
- Mothers were not employed or retired (63 %), worked in low-level service jobs (11 %), held low-level white-collar jobs (6 %) or worked in factories (5 %).

Level of education:

- 45 % had no school certificate or diploma;
- 9 % were completely illiterate;

- 38 % had only the C.E.P., the certificate of primary education (eight years of school).

Activity before prison:

- 40 % had no job or were registered with the national employment agency (A.N.P.E.).

Of those employed:

- 56 % were manual workers;
- 14 % were low-level white-collar workers;
- 9 % owned small businesses or were self-employed;
- 8 % were employed in low-level service jobs.

This survey shows that a disproportionately high percentage of prison inmates come from very disadvantaged groups [4]. There is no logical way in which incarceration as a repressive measure can pretend to answer their needs or those of their families. Indeed, many leave prison as ill-equipped to cope with life as when they entered.

2. *Adult-care institutions*

Although circumstances are different, a parallel case could be made regarding patients in psychiatric institutions and medium- to long-term care units in hospitals. Here the logic dictates a medical response in a confined environment, even though the original cause of the patients' mental instability is most likely linked to the unfavorable social environment in which they lived. Many men and women find themselves moving in and out of such facilities or similar ones (such as shelters or half-way houses), because they:

- were abandoned by their parents or placed in foster care when very young;
- were placed in institutions or in foster families during their youth;
- became wanderers as young adults for lack of a stable family background or when their families were suddenly dispersed, as happens among agricultural, seasonal and odd-job workers.

A survey undertaken by the Ministry of Health [5] showed that adult-care institutions were sheltering not only the elderly. Twenty-two percent of men residents (19,630 persons) and 10 % of women residents (14,831) - a total of 34,461 residents were under 60 years of age. The majority of these were institutionalized as a result of mental handicaps (58 %), physical handicaps (12 %) or multiple handicaps (11 %). But 19 % of them had no real handicap even though they were described as "needy cases," "slightly retarded" or "alcoholic." The great majority of these non-handicapped residents could get around by themselves (88 %) and, of these, 6 % were under 40 years old, 22 % were between 40 and 49, and 72 % between 50 and 59.

During 1985, for example, 4,997 homeless persons were lodged in the Nanterre shelter [6]. The admissions total, however, was 28,481, representing an average of 5 admissions per person during the year. The following is a breakdown of their ages:

- 15 % were under 30;
- 29 % were between 31 and 40;
- 26 % were between 41 and 50;
- 21 % were between 51 and 60;
- 9 % were over 60.

Also worth noting is that 40 % of them sought shelter for the first tune in their lives during that year.

According to the personnel working in such institutions, residents are often wrongly considered to be "mentally handicapped." Many residents came from backgrounds that could not provide basic security or the means to develop independence. That, we feel, is a chief characteristic of the poorest in our society. Public authorities, however, take charge of the residents of those institutions to alleviate their immediate needs or state of neglect, rather than because they understand that the residents never had the means to develop personal autonomy or to establish supportive relationships (which come from being treated with dignity, in a way that respects their freedom, their personality and their right to make choices). They are labeled "socially maladjusted," consigned to the ranks of the incurably ill or placed in institutions for a night or for a lifetime, sure of food and shelter, but with no other prospects in life.

*

* *

In conclusion, we can say that examining certain population categories sheds light on the nature of the deprivations to which they are subjected. This approach also shows how one deprivation can lead to another and how, over time, this accumulation results in chronic poverty.

There are, however, limitations to such an approach. Classifying people by the types of public assistance they receive, or by the deprivations they risk undergoing, identifies them solely in terms of needs. We use this approach for want of something better, but we are also aware that better methods are required to identify situations of chronic poverty.

II. THE STATISTICAL APPROACH

A. What Sort of Data Exist?

We shall now look at some statistical data in light of what they can reveal about chronic poverty.

In his testimony on February 18, 1986, before the Social Affairs Section, Louis Join-Lambert, director of the Institute of Research and Training in Human Relations (LR.F.R.H.) made the point that statistics can be both very diverse and yet complementary.

- He distinguished between the statistics of government administrations regarding their clients and the statistics resulting from surveys of given geographic areas (a neighborhood, for example).

- He also distinguished between statistical data from national or international surveys and the material provided by individual case studies or reports on specific cases. These last two have a more local character.

National statistics most accurately reflect the relative weights of the different population groups. As such, they give a more global context to "client-based" statistics, but the way in which these large-scale surveys are put together tends to obscure situations found at the extremes. National statistics have other disadvantages: they take a long time to process and are therefore never really up to date. They are also expensive.

By contrast, while statistics from local surveys may be less representative of the overall population, they better indicate the situations at the extremes. They are also more quickly available and, when frequently gathered, serve to spot trends, and they cost less.

Client-based statistics are generally accurate about what they are supposed to measure; for example, the number of people who receive rent allowances. But they would not indicate the number of people who, while eligible, never assert their right to the allowance. Mr. Fragonard, director of the National Family Allowance Fund (C.N.A.F.), spoke of these "potential recipients" during his appearance before the Social Affairs Section on April 15, 1986. He said that poverty programs were seriously limited by not having accurate counts of those eligible, whether they file a claim or not.

By contrast, surveys limited to a certain area (a neighborhood, for example) tan better discern the numbers of persons who are entitled to receive certain payments but who have never applied for them. Such surveys have to meet two essential conditions:

- They must cover the entire population, meaning that the sample must take account of the extremes, which are often underrepresented.
- The questionnaires must be carefully adapted for the target population and survey workers must be trained to elicit information from more disadvantaged persons.

Information from a census of the entire population or from broad national surveys (for example, on the standard of living in France) is not necessarily the most precise or most exhaustive, especially when it concerns poverty. More localized or sectoral surveys tend to give more trustworthy results and more possibility of drawing significant conclusions. Statistical services in France are in the process of developing the methodology to measure the impact of persistent poverty. For example, sampling has been dope in the Lorraine region by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (I.N.S.E.E.) and by the Division of Statistical Service, Studies and Information Systems and the Family Allowance Fund covering 100,000 families all over France. They are also developing methodology to detect the relationship between different forms of deprivation, such as in the survey by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies entitled "Different Situations of Disadvantaged People" (Situations *défavorisées).* But we will have to wait several years for reliable statistical data showing trends in the situation of the poorest.

B. Counting the Poor: Both a Risk and a Necessity

In its introduction, the French report to the European Economic Commission in 1980 emphasized the difficulty of arriving at an accurate count of the poor.

More recently, the Economic Data Center of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, Paris, concluded an article dealing with available surveys of poverty in France [7] with the comment: "Any attempt to assess poverty must be made on the basis of a variety of indicators. Serious questions have been raised about the unqualified use of monetary indicators (such as wages and income), but in conjunction with other information (such as housing, employment and health) they do give a clear idea of the living situation of families exposed to an accumulation of poverty-related problems."

Statistical data, however, rarely pull together the simultaneous impact of different aspects of poverty (as the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies would like to see), thereby placing the problem squarely in the context of current events (as suggested by Join-Lambert).

This multidimensional statistical overview of poverty has in fact been tried, most notably in a survey in the city of Reims made between 1976 and 1978 by the regional data center of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies in Champagne-Ardennes [8]. The data center in Paris, which we have already quoted, explains why this survey still serves as an important reference:

> Its originality comes from its use of the files from different services. For example, those from the office of the Family Allowance Fund helped identify families in Reims whose income before any allowance payments was less than the minimum wage (S.M.I.C.). Some 10 % to 12 % of families are missed by using Family Allowance Fund files. Files from the office collecting the home occupancy tex yielded valuable supplementary information. Data from the Ministry of Education's list of children in special education classes and data gathered from institutions by the regional Center for Maladjusted Children and Adolescents (Centre régional pour l'enfance et l'adolescence inadaptée) completed the data collection. A data bank on 2,000 families judged to be living in poverty was also set up. It incorporated information from the 1975 census on family composition and housing conditions for families still residing in the same place. Also, questions were directed to a variety of government administrations - public assistance, aid for children, public housing (H.L.M.), the association that pays unemployment benefits (A.S.S.E.D.LC.) and the children's court. The information from these sources supplemented the statistical data.
>
> This study is important because it clearly shows the relationship between the different elements that together create a situation of poverty: low income, marginal links to

the labor market, dependence on public assistance, dislocation and a larger than average number of children whose development is often impaired.

Despite the considerable interest shown by various regional offices within the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, this kind of survey does sot seem to have been duplicated.

If similar surveys were done elsewhere, we could assume that they would yield reasonable estimates, at least at the local level, of the number of families living in deep poverty. Extrapolations based on carefully gathered data could give an idea of the size of the population group subject to lack of basic security in many forms. Some feel that figures more exact than that are sot needed. To quote from the French report on poverty submitted to the European Economic Community: "A quantification of poverty in France does sot appear necessary, Even if a grand total of those affected by poverty is sot available (and probably could never be determined accurately), policies can still be formulated regarding the most disadvantaged, stipulating the measures to be taken and calculating the cost with great precision."

Let us further examine this proposition. The identification of who and how many of our fellow citizens are in a state of deep poverty often supposes that we establish a threshold of poverty, or rather a series of thresholds, each addressing a different component of poverty. This could become a fairly arbitrary procedure, demanding constant reevaluation in light of current conditions. Some industrialized countries do this, but only because they lack a more satisfactory and scientifically accurate method.

While we recognize the drawbacks of too mechanical a definition of chronic poverty and the labeling of the poor that could result, a reasonable estimate of potential beneficiaries for remedial measures is needed if our policy is to be realistic and gain public support.

In effect, the counting process must proceed by identifying the aspects of life where severe problems exist. This follows because in France, as in other countries of the European Community, policies are defined by what aspect of life they concern (employment, housing, health, school, culture, recreation, etc.). Merely establishing a general category of "poor citizens" does sot bring these policies into focus and has even proved harmful. We have sot forgotten the 1960s and 1970s when terms such as "asocial," "problem" and "maladjusted" were used to describe desperately poor families who became the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and public assistance agencies. Policies in such areas as employment, health, housing and education have never sufficiently addressed the very poor because any questions about the poor in these areas were always left for the social services to resolve.

We have our reservations about the use of statistics, especially if they simply pin the label "poverty" on people. Still, they can provide an estimate of the size of the population in chronic poverty and, more important, indicate which aspects of the lives of these least-served citizens require further study.

In the next three chapters we shall use available statistics to make estimates involving three basic areas: income, housing, and education and job training. The estimates of numbers of people will vary according to the category studied. Some people may show up in all three categories. In each case, we will pay special attention to situations where an accumulation of deprivations leads to high-risk situations. This will become even more apparent as we move from quantitative to qualitative approaches.

In this way, we hope to pull together all the information needed to evaluate and revise policies so that they can serve even the most excluded and provide an escape from chronic deprivation.

CHAPTER II

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Today, there are individuals and entire families who live on bare subsistence incomes or even no income at all.

Lack of job security and the difficulty low-skilled workers have in finding a job or even staying in the labor market are among the principal causes for this situation. While low or irregular income indicates a lack of economic security, the individuals and families involved are sot necessarily in a state of chronic poverty, defined as a persistent condition of accumulated hardships preventing people from exercising basic rights and responsibilities. Nevertheless, a lack of economic security is an important factor in determining whether people become trapped in chronic poverty.

One possible way of tackling the income question is to estimate the number of people whose living standards are obviously lower than those of mainstream society. This could give a definition of inequality.

Another approach is to estimate the number of people whose income is so low that it endangers their well-being. In this case we speak of absolute poverty. But to use this term with any kind of precision we would have to know what constitutes a minimum survival income.

The statistics cited below take a less absolute approach. They come from recent representative surveys. We shall comment on the way the data were gathered and on the conclusions to be drawn.

I. DISTRIBUTION OF LOW INCOME LEVELS IN THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

In the final report on its program of pilot projects and studies to combat poverty (C.O.M. - 81,769 final, December, 1981) the Commission of the European Economic Community provided figures on the extent of income inequality in the sine member countries during 1979, the year the survey was conducted.

The following table lists for each country the number of households described as "poor" because their income is less than 50 % of the national mean in terms of "consumption units" [1].

Percent and Number of Households in Poverty for the E.E.C.

Country	Year	Households below the threshold of 50 % mean annual income	
		Percent	Number in thousands
EEC (less Greece)	1973-1979	11.4	10,185
Belgium	1976	6.6	209
Denmark	1977	13.0	334
France	1975	**14.8**	2,630
Fed. Rep. of Germany	1973	6.6	1,527
Ireland	1973	23.1	172
Italy	1978	21.8	3,823
Luxembourg	1978	14.6	16
Netherlands	1979	4.8	233
United Kingdom	1975	6.3	1,241
Source: European Economic Community (E.E.C.)			

We have to be cautions in interpreting data from this study, especially in regard to the term "average income." The figures clearly show disparities in income. But a threshold of poverty at 50 % of the average income in one country does not mean that the purchasing power of that 50 % is equal to the corresponding 50 % in another country. For example, there is a considerable differential in purchasing power between the poverty threshold of Ireland and that of the Netherlands. In other words, we cannot really compare levels of poverty between countries. Moreover, the threshold of 50 % of average per capita income is relatively high and exceeds, at least in the richer countries, anything that we have in mind when we speak of "serious financial insecurity." Again, the concept of poverty is a relative one.

Another concern is the sources for the data on income. The report itself states: "The figures are based on diverse definitions and diverse sources, and use different scales in order to establish relationships between households of different sizes."

Finally, the report deals exclusively with financial resources, which cannot alone measure chronic poverty. But as we will point out in this chapter, lack of income creates the precarious living situation that tan lead to chronic poverty.

While we cannot make comparisons between countries using these statistics, they do show that serious inequalities exist in all E.E.C. countries. France is obviously not atone in having to confront the question of income inequality.

II. HOUSEHOLDS AT THE LOWER INCOME LEVEL

Although we have reservations about using poverty thresholds, studies based on this concept still provide useful information. With this in mind, we now consider a set of national statistics collected by the Research Center for Study and Observation of Living Conditions (C.R.E.D.O.C) in a 1978 survey of families residing in France (but excluding the agricultural population) [2].

While the E.C.C. figures measure relative inequality, the Research Center statistics are intended to measure poverty, although the concept is not defined precisely. The study measures levels of poverty in terms of the minimum wage.

Distribution of Population According to Income Level

Income levels		% of families [3]		No. of persons
% of Minimum wage	% of disposable income expressed in consomption units	Between levels	Under each level (cumulative)	In thousands (cumulative)
40	32	2.8	2.8	1,100
50	40	2.3	5.I	2,504
60	50	6.8	**11.9**	6,263
77	60	10.7	22.6	12,187
100	79	I 8.8	41.4	21,498

The two studies converge at the point where the Research Center's 60 % minimum wage level equals the 50 % average disposable income level, the threshold chosen by the E.E.C. The smaller percentage of families below this threshold in the Research Center study is explained in large part by the fact that this study does not cover the agricultural population. Thus, the study provides an estimate of the total population with incomes of less than 60 % of the minimum wage: 12 % of all families, or 6.26 million people (the figure rises to 13.4 % if only the non-agricultural population is measured).

For the 50 % or 40 % minimum wage level, however, the study is inadequate. The population sample is too small, and the method, which uses numerous reference points, is too complex. The small sample size also prevents a valid estimate being made of the families at the low end of the scale.

Despite these shortcomings, the study describes three important categories that appear among its "core families." These categories are:

-"Those in which the head of household is not employed"

Women over 60 who receive a widow's pension are numerous in this category. There are also couples in which both partners are without work. In these cases, the husband is often retired, handicapped or chronically ill or the wife is not employed and not receiving a pension. The pensions such families receive are based mostly on low-paying jobs. The single women in this category have had little previous employment and rarely receive public assistance. In all cases, the lack of formal education is striking.

-"Large families receiving family allowances and having certain common characteristics"

In this category, the husband is typically a blue-collar worker, sometimes with permanent employment. The wife is likely to be at home and not receiving a pension. Again, the lack of education and training is striking and applies equally to men and women. Family allowances, although substantial in absolute terms, do not give the families enough income (in terms of consumption units) to take them above the thresholds mentioned.

-"Special population groups in which certain situations predominate"

a) single-parent families, headed usually by a young woman with no job training;

b) persons who have been unemployed for a long period: mainly unskilled workers or low-level white-collar workers, usually unmarried if young. If they are married and over 50, the spouse is usually also not working and not receiving a pension.

c) Certain artisans or operators of small businesses, often running at a deficit - not easily categorized because the cases are highly individual.

Seventy-one out of 100 families below the 60 % level fall into these categories, while only 10 out of 100 families above the 60 % level are in these categories.

While a survey of this kind does not provide all the elements for understanding chronic poverty, it does offer very useful indicators of what basic security is lacking for the most disadvantaged populations, and who these populations are.

III. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INCOME INEQUALITY AND ECONOMIC INSECURITY

The study "Investigating Situations of Deprivation" *(l'Enquête sur les situations défavorisées)* was done by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies in 197879 and used a sample representative of the entire French population. A follow-up to the study tried to determine whether a household's lack of disposable income was related to its being in a precarious living situation. We will call the latter a "fragility index." In this study André Villeneuve set out to measure the likely elements of "fragility" in different aspects of life, such as employment, health, income, housing and isolation simultaneously. (It should be noted that he was not trying to define chronic poverty or explain its persistence.)

Villeneuve's criteria for judging "fragility" were the following:

- a household with less than 2,000 francs in savings or investments, or unable to meet sudden expenses equivalent to one month's income;
- income severely diminished by illness lasting two months;
- no one with whom to stay if need arises;
- work interrupted for health reasons for more than a year after age 18;
- obliged to go to work at a time the worker would not normally have chosen to do so [4].

The results of the study are then broken down into three categories:

- not fragile 45 %
- somewhat fragile 49 %
- definitely fragile 6 %

This study used an elaborate questionnaire and required lengthy interviews. For the poorer respondents, the questions probably delved into particularly sensitive areas. Thus, they would be expected to have more reticence when describing particularly bad situations and more difficulty in giving a coherent chronological account of a complicated chain of events.

Despite these limitations, Villeneuve's study does show a relationship between financial resources and his fragility index, although the two phenomena are by no means interchangeable. For example, the study showed that almost half (43 %) of those judged definitely fragile were not in the lowest income quartile.

Also, the study says nothing about the persistence of fragility in the lives of persons or families. This aspect is being addressed by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, which is currently studying a sample population in Lorraine. The survey methods are being refined and extended over time in order to detect persistent poverty among persons and families.

IV NUMERICAL ESTIMATES AND EVOLUTION OF LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS

A. Estimated Number of Persons Living in Serious Financial Insecurity

The various data may be compared in order to estimate the number of persons living in serious financial insecurity.

The study by the Research Center for Study and Observation of Living Conditions put 11.9 % of all families below 60 % of the minimum wage and 5.1 % below 50 % of the minimum wage (both in terms of consumption units). Villeneuve, as already noted, demonstrated that low income correlated only in part with the fragility index that he used.

It therefore seems reasonable to assume that between 4 % and 5 % of the population, or about 2.5 million people, lived in serious financial insecurity during the reference years (1978-79).

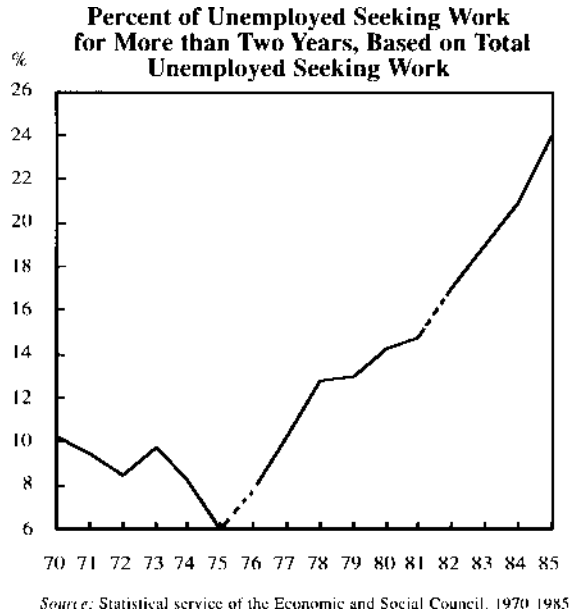
Still, using our definition of chronic poverty, we cannot equate the condition of chronic poverty solely with serious financial insecurity. To do so would lead to only partial solutions.

B. Changing Situation of Low-Income Populations

The current economic situation, which has made people less financially secure, demonstrates that the size and composition of

the low-income population is influenced by short-term economic trends as well as by long-term changes in the economic life of the country. One of the more disturbing developments is the increase in unemployment. And, as people are out of work for longer periods of lime and have less unemployment benefits, the numbers in the lowest-income groups are growing. Single-parent families who traditionally belong to the low-income population are also increasing. By contrast, the proportion of elderly people in the low-income category is decreasing with the increase in old-age pensions.

The following table shows both the increase in the number of the long-term unemployed (those looking for a job for more than two years) and the increasing proportion of this group in the overall population looking for work.



Source: Statistical service of the Economic and Social Council. 1970 1985

Another indicator of shrinking financial security is the rise in the volume of emergency aid, especially emergency grants by the Family Allowance Fund.

Between 1979 and 1983, this agency's expenditures on emergency aid rose an inflation-adjusted 24 % and the number of recipients increased by 16.6 % . According to the Family Allowance Fund administration, these increases are due to "rising unemployment and deterioration in the purchasing power of the families... and an increase in the number of families headed by single parents." (Family Allowance Fund files, April 3, 1985.)

V USEFUL MATERIAL FROM STATISTICS ON DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

A. Study of the Income of Unemployed Persons Not Receiving Unemployment Benefits

In light of our discussion of current statistical information, the more a study targets specific disadvantaged populations, the more it is likely to reveal about chronic poverty and lack of basic security.

One such report, published in October 1985, is particularly relevant. It deals with all persons who were listed by the National Union for Employment in Industry and Commerce (U.N.E.D.LC.) as being unemployed and not receiving benefit payments [5] as of September 30, 1984. The survey organization, Brûlé/Ville Associates (B.V.A.), first eliminated those whose benefit payments had been approved in principle but not yet paid (23 %), and those whose payments had been interrupted temporarily (2 %). Naturally, long waits for benefits undermine financial security, and the situation of the 23 % also merits study.

A representative sample was then drawn from the remaining 75 % who were unemployed and not receiving benefits. The findings showed that:

- 55 % had never been eligible for unemployment compensation, broken down as follows:
  - 21 % had never applied;
  - 31 % had been turned down, usually because they had not been in the system long enough;
  - 3 % had files marked "no action taken."
- 20 % had used up their benefits. Of the total:
  - 11 % had had short-term benefits;
  - 9 % had had long-term benefits.

In brief, more than one fourth of those not receiving unemployment benefits (21 % of the initial sample) had never applied for them. A survey of this 21 %, with 6 out of 10 responding, showed that a large number had problems in approaching the system. Persons over 40, unskilled workers and persons who never went beyond primary school figured prominently in this response group. This tends to support the contention of field workers that a number of especially disadvantaged persons never register as unemployed and thus are not included in any such survey.

In this report, the National Union for Employment's division of statistics and synthesis estimates that, as of December 31,

1985, 1,086,100 people were unemployed and not receiving benefits (including those looking for part-tune and fixed-term work).

The report further shows that in 1985 their monthly family income averaged 5,400 francs or about 1,392 francs per family member. However, 32 % had monthly incomes for the whole household ranging between 2,500 francs and 4,000 francs, and 16 % had less than 2,500 francs.

Behind these figures, there are important differences in family situations. For instance, are there other persons in the family who are employed? In the survey, 36.8 % of the non-compensated unemployed lived in families in which no one else had a job. Among these, 34.1 % had total monthly family incomes of less than 2,500 francs. When another family member did have a job, the percent of those with incomes of less than 2,500 francs dropped to 6.1 %. When two family members were working, the figure was 4.0 %. The report clearly states the significance of this finding: "...the existence of another job in the household determines the economic and social situation of unemployed persons not receiving compensation., It also explains the particular hardships suffered by heads of families who are unemployed and who do not receive compensation and whose spouses do not work."

The presence of children in the home also affects the family situation of unemployed persons not receiving benefits. For 34 % of these families, the allowances for children were the principal source of income. But even with the child allowances, average income per person in these families is 21 % below the average for all families, and 38 % below the average for families not receiving family allowances.

With regard to family budget, the report is fairly revealing even though some of the elements overlap. For example, some of the families who take out loans are also among those who have debts to reimburse. The following data from the report show the status of families in which at least one member is unemployed and not receiving benefits:

-23 % are home owners;

-58 % are tenants;

-16 % live with others.

Also:

- 85 % say they have no savings with which to meet un-foreseen expenses;
- 49 % have already drawn on their savings;
- 36 % have had to borrow money;
- 32 % have had to ask for postponement of payments due or are overdrawn at the bank;
- 27 % say they have experienced difficulties in feeding their families;
- 23 % indicate they have had difficulty paying for electricity, gas or telephone;
- 21 % have debts to repay;
- 17 % have credit installments to pay off;
- 17 % (more than one in four tenants) owe back rent;
- 12 % (half of those who are owners) owe back payments on their mortgages;
- 9 % have had to sell possessions;
- 6 % have had to move.

Finally, we cannot overemphasize that the reentry of the unemployed into the labor market is the sine qua non of economic security. The National Union for Employment calculated that the average period of unemployment for the unemployed not receiving benefits on December 31, 1985, was 346 days, and more than a year for 31.7 % in this category.

According to the National Union for Employment, the length of unemployment is linked to the person's qualifications, an important factor for the individual's future:

-Of the unemployed without benefits, 63 % were classed as "unskilled" in their last jobs (28 % manual laborers, 12 % semi-skilled, 23 % white-collar). But 76 % (13 % more than the percentage of unskilled workers) stated that they were ready to accept unskilled work just to get out of their situation.

The fact that skilled labor is ready to accept unskilled jobs shows the shortcomings of any economic growth that cannot create new jobs. The job prospects of the unskilled are, however, hardest hit.

The less qualified a person is, the longer the period of unemployment will be. As time goes on, a family becomes less and less able to deal with its economic burdens and tragic consequences. Living conditions deteriorate rapidly. The family structure is destabilized to the point where its long-term capacity to regain a sense of confidence and security is jeopardized.

Detailed information on the living situation of the unemployed is necessary for differentiating their situations. Only with this knowledge in hand can policies be devised to give priority to the people in the most intolerable situations.

In the final analysis, we are again confronted with the fact that a lack of skills and poor living conditions go hand in hand with a low level of income and difficulties in earning a living.

There still remains the problem of the unemployed who are not even registered by the National Union for Employment.

They exist at the margins of the employment market, where arrangements are informal, and work is unpredictable, intermittent or seasonal. Their status in official policy is nonexistent; they do not appear in either the statistics of workers or those of the unemployed. Their incomes are always low, hap-hazard or irregular, and often limited to family allowances. Because they cannot "earn a living" in any permanent way, and because our society functions on the economic contributions and job performance of its members, they are already becoming chronically poor.

B. Statistical Study of the Clients of the Social Services

Another study by the Research Center for Study and Observation of Living Conditions, undertaken for the National Planning Commission in February 1986 [6], deals with the clients of several social service agencies and examines them in light of five different socio-economic situations. The sample consisted of 1,491 households (representing from 1.5 % to 4.0 % of ail households in the different geographic areas for which the agencies were responsible). The time elapsed since the families first reported their difficulties was as follows:

- More than two years 36.1 %
- 6 months to two years 35.9 %
- Less than six months 22.0 %
- Did not know 6.0 %

A more rigorous analysis would require a comparison of such figures over a period of years. Such a procedure could indicate important trends among populations at the bottom of the socio-economic scale. Still, as we see in Table A, the study shows that two out of every five households cite unemployment as the root cause of their difficulties. Thus, even these limited data confirm the findings of the other surveys described above.

Other causes of the original trouble experienced are given in Table A. Table B shows the cumulative impact of the difficulties over time.

Table A
Original Cause of Difficulty*

Original Cause	Number of households	Percent of total households
Unemployment	580	38.9
Illness, accident, disability	469	31.5
Family break-up	342	22.9
Problems with children	266	17.8
Pregnancy, births	126	8.5
Death in family	81	5.4
Retirement	5 I	3.4
Other (no examples cited)	358	24.0

* The same household might give several answers, so the total can exceed 100 %.

Table B
Aspect of Life Affected

Area of Difficulty	Number of households	Percent of total households
Housing, health, employment	1 16	7.8
Housing and health	29	1.9
Housing and employment	177	11.9
Health and employment	359	24. I
Housing only	61	4.1
Health only	164	11.0
Employment only	375	25.2
None of the above	210	14.1
Total	1,491	100.0

Note: In Table B the percent of households reporting difficulty linked to employment was larger than those giving unemployment as cause of the original difficulty in Table A. The authors explain the difference as follows: "...concern in the family regarding employment is not confined to the unemployed family member; it is shared by those who consider their jobs uncertain and by women who are not working, who have no job skills, and whose income consists primarily of family allowances which, in the absence of regular earnings, can provide only a meager income."

This survey provides valuable information on which low-income groups now served by social services would be eligible for minimum income payments. We cite the concluding paragraphs of the report, which made assumptions about a guaranteed minimum annual income at rates of 50 % , 40 % and 20 % of the minimum wage expressed in terms of consumption units (taking into account the total financial resources of all members of the household).

For eligibility at 50 % of the net minimum wage in terms of consumption units (1,900 francs per month at 1985 prices) [7]:

- 57 % of households that depend in some way on social services would benefit from enactment of such a guaranteed minimum income;
- 65 % would benefit if minimum income payments were accompanied by elimination of family allowances and the special allowance for single parents.

The eligible households would consist of:

- all unemployed couples with one or more children, receiving no unemployment compensation;
- a large majority of the couples with children, receiving unemployment compensation other than the basic allowance or disability pensions;
- 25 % of families in which the head of household is employed. In this 25 % category, there are many families with large numbers of children who, for various reasons, do not receive a housing allowance;
- the majority of single-parent families in which the parent is unemployed (based on the assumption that their special allowance would be dropped);
- single persons without income, unemployed young people not receiving a special allowance, trainees and young people in the youth community employment programs (T.U.C.);
- retired couples and childless non-working couples with pensions of less than 3,200 francs.

It is clear we would be dealing with a fairly large population group - certainly larger than the present number of unemployed heads of households.

If eligibility were lowered to 40 % of the net minimum wage in terms of consumption units (1,520 francs per month):

- 43 % of the households depending on social services in some way would be eligible;
- 50 % would be eligible if the family allowances and the single-parent allowance (A.P.I.) were eliminated.

Again, a sizable number of families with children would be eligible (a third of those covered by the survey). In fact, unemployment benefits or disability payments in the neighborhood of 2,000 francs per month, combined with normal family allowances, would still fall below the threshold.

For eligibility set at 20 % of net minimum wage in consumption units (760 francs per month):

- 20 % of the households that depend in some way on social services would be eligible.

This group, however, would be limited and fairly homogeneous:

- 50 % of the group would be single persons or childless couples, generally without any income;
- 34 % would be families in which the adults are unemployed and receive no benefits, although most of the time family allowances clone or in combination with other casual sources of income help persons in this group to exceed the 20 % threshold.

The statistics do not say much about the people at these low income levels or how they got there.

The French national Catholic Relief organization (Secours catholique) has developed some useful data on this group.

C. Situation as Seen by Catholic Relief

All the humanitarian organizations that testified in connection with this report spoke of an increasing lack of basic security among the people with whom they deal. In 1982, Catholic Relief was already calling attention to the rising number of persons seeking aid at their outreach centers.

Selected Examples of Increase in People Seeking Aid from Catholic Relief [8]

	1979	1980	1981
Paris	4,496	7,238	8,395
Rennes	1,088	1,468	1,634
Rouen	2,446	3,537	3,943
Auch	N/A	130	234
Verdun	385	585	835

The organization estimates that 3 out of 4 new requests for help came from persons it had never seen before.

During the same period, Catholic Relief published a report, "The Poor Today" *(Pauvres aujourd'hui)*, showing the family situations of a sample of 580 applicants for assistance out of 1,948 who sought help in October, November and December 1980. The sample was selected and analyzed by the full-time staff of Catholic Relief. Disposable financial revenue per person per day was calculated according to the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{total financial resources} - (\text{rent and other costs})}{\text{number of persons in household} \times 30 \text{ days}}$$

Thus, at the time when they applied for aid:

- 1 out of 3 families had no disposable finances whatever;
- 1 out of 3 families could spend between 1 franc and 15 francs per person per day;
- 4 out of 5 families had less than 25 francs per person per day.

*

* *

In conclusion, we can say that national statistics cannot give useful information on individuals and families at the lowest income levels. They do yield some approximations that may eventually be useful for estimating the extent and cost of remedial measures needed to offset the lack of family income.

Statistical studies based on population categories help us to understand the complexity of a situation when financial security is lacking. They give us a preliminary understanding — still incomplete — of what lies behind financial insecurity and what other deprivations it can engender. With such information, we can better assess the level of income necessary to protect a family from deprivation and enable it to live with a minimum of security and dignity.

Finally, further studies could clarify other aspects of chronic poverty, such as frequency of unemployment, the impact of training on employment possibilities, and the role of the family. Such understanding can help define the areas where political action must be brought to bear if the provision of a guaranteed family income is to do more than just help the poor to survive.

CHAPTER III

A PLACE TO LIVE

Many individuals and families have to survive in precarious and even degrading housing conditions.

People are forced into unacceptable housing or even into a state of homelessness primarily because they lack adequate or regular income, or because they have no financial resources at all. There is no place for them in public or private housing, from which many have already been evicted. They end up staying with relatives or friends, taking refuge in shelters for the homeless, living in vans or trailers, becoming squatters in

unoccupied buildings, or wandering the streets and by-ways of our communities.

For people to have access to decent housing means having a place where they can feel at home, where they can live with dignity. It has taken years for some families to achieve this; others never do so. Many have no other choice than to undertake a daily struggle in miserable housing.

For those who manage to get decent housing, there still remain all the resulting financial obligations. If they have no steady or adequate income, debts begin to pile up. Rent, utilities, taxes and credit installments remain unpaid unless some sort of help can be found. Without aid, repossession and eviction are the final stages of this desperate struggle.

Gathering data on housing is as difficult as gathering data on income. For the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987, the United Nations arrived at estimates of the number of homeless in certain countries. To better define the situation in France we will use national statistics and client surveys covering both access to housing and the means of retaining it.

I. OBTAINING HOUSING

On May 28, 1986, the Economic and Social Council adopted a report entitled "Housing for Low-Income People" *(Le logement des personnes à faibles ressources).* In the introduction, the Council emphasized the link between difficulty in obtaining housing and lack of financial resources, although it had no statistics on the overall number of people seeking housing. Measuring the total number of individuals and families who need housing is as difficult as measuring the number of those seeking jobs. In France, people are considered as having requested housing when their application has been officially accepted. This supposes that certain conditions have been met and the likelihood exists that the application will be granted.

Even with registered applications, we do not have the means to aggregate the data at the national level. Thus, we are again faced with the problem of identifying the situations that characterize chronic poverty. To estimate the number of people who are currently without their own housing, we need data on potential applicants: those who do not own a home and those who do not have a formal rent agreement, as well as those who are in housing that bas been declared substandard or who are being evicted. Since we do not have such information, we will resort to an indirect estimate using the national census of 1982 and then look at research on so-called "client" statistics (records of people with inadequate housing or of people applying for housing at various agencies).

A. Statistics on housing conditions from the 1982 national census show the following:

-Severe overcrowding (at least two rooms less than the norm [1]:

In private housing	407,000
In public housing (H.L.M.)	84,000
Total in 1982	491,000

-Moderate overcrowding (one room less than the norm):

In private housing	2,137,740
In public housing	464,700
Total in 1982	2,602,440

The census also provides figures for those living in temporary or makeshift housing and for those in furnished lodgings:

- Principal residence is temporary or makeshift housing: 20,620;
- Principal residence is furnished lodgings: 120,700.

(In each case, there is one household per unit.)

There were difficulties in collecting information on more "atypical" housing, and the results clearly underestimate the number in this category.

Moreover, this "atypical" housing shelters a very large proportion of the most impoverished individuals and families in France. They can be owners, tenants, subtenants or squatters; they can live in isolated rural areas, crowded urban centers, even in suburbs. Their lodgings may be maids' rooms, or caretakers' quarters, garrets, lofts, furnished lodgings in rooming houses, or cheap hotels. In short, the poorly housed live in accommodations that are difficult to check in regard to the number of people in them and to their compliance with minimum living standards. How, for example, can the census take account of facilities that are rented or sublet without any lease, or those not registered as housing (sheds, garages, cellars, etc.)? How can such locations be checked? Many social workers even hesitate to intervene in such situations, because the only alternative for the household is to be left on the street.

All these non-registered accommodations raise the question of residency. Without a recognized residence, people have problems getting a job, applying for public assistance, voting and registering their children for school. For the purposes of our report, it is important to have as much information as possible on these associated problems. We therefore look to various client surveys to supplement shortcomings in the general data. While client surveys do not allow for extrapolation, they indicate what sort of difficulties people encounter. For instance:

B. The District Health and Social Action Services in Gonesse (Department of Val-d'Oise) surveyed 323 families registered as looking for housing in 1984. They found that:

-20 were in improvised housing;

-20 were squatters;

-47 were living with other people.

A total of 87, or 27 % , were thus without any real housing.

-139 were living in overcrowded units (including the 47 above who were living with other people).

More than a quarter of these applicants for housing were considered to be in an extremely precarious living situation.

C. In 1983, Catholic Relief analyzed the situation of 100,000 persons in 60 Departments who sought housing assistance because they lacked sufficient resources. Their circumstances were categorized as follows:

- Socio-demographic:

- 1 in 2 was partly or completely unemployed; all lacked any vocational training;
- 1 in 3 was sick, handicapped or disabled;
- 1 in 4 was a single female head of family;
- 1 in 5 was of foreign nationality.

- Housing:
  - 1 in 3 lived in public housing;
  - 1 in 3 lived in private housing;
  - 1 in 3 lived with a relative, a friend or an employer, or in a center, a shelter, a trailer or on the street.
- Financial resources:
  - 35 % had no resources or would have none left if they paid their rent;
  - 29 % had less than 20 francs per person per day to live on after paying the rent;
  - 37 % had significant arrears in rent and utilities.

D. In 1983 the National Federation of Orientation and Social Rehabilitation Associations (F.N.A.R.S.), surveyed the residents of 36 adult training centers - a total of 2,885 persons. For one center in the Department of Ile-de-France, they found that, on average, 19 % of the center's residents were able to find their own housing. Of these:

- 46 % were women with children;
- 20 % were couples;
- 3 % were single men;
- 14.5 % were single women.

For the remaining 81 %:

- 39 % were on the street (including 2 out of 3 single men);
- 14.5 % were in cheap hotels or in shelters;
- 20.5 % , mostly women, were in someone else's home;
- 7 % were in hospital or in prison.

E. In 1984 and 1985, 348 households were considered for admission to the transitional housing projects run by the ATD Fourth World at Noisy-le-Grand (Department of Seine-Saint-Denis) and Herblay (Department of Val-d'Oise). The files on these families show that the head of the household at the lime of application was in one of the following situations:

- 84 or 24 % were living with relatives or friends;
- 84 or 24 % had been evicted or were about to be evicted;
- 58 or 17 % were homeless (living in a cellar, in a car or on the street);
- 40 or 11 % were in a shelter or a cheap hotel;
- 34 or 10 % were in prison or hospital;
- 34 or 10 % were in makeshift housing (a shed, traiter or "squat");
- 14 or 4 % had no serious housing problem but required a change in housing status because of the breakup of a marriage or the death of a spouse.

F. Statistics on homelessness:

At a press conference held by charitable organizations on June 10, 1986, the number of homeless persons in Paris was reported to be 15,000.

In 1985, the Nanterre adult care shelter look in nearly 5,000 people who had no home (see Chapter I).

In testimony given for this report, the Farmers Mutual *(Mutualité sociale agricole)* stated that the number of migrant rural families had increased, although they could not give definite figures. Most of the migrants were not considered formal applicants for housing.

The findings cited above could be multiplied over and over. Many agencies consulted during the preparation of this report say that they constantly face people seeking "a roof over their heads." For example, Catholic Relief in Ile-de-France receives an average of 120 requests a day for shelter and housing. Furthermore, where files exist, they show an increase in the number of poorly housed people (in the Department of Essonne, for example, there was a 50 % increase from 1980 to 1983).

In some areas estimates are being made, although not systematically, of the numbers of people whose housing applications remain unanswered. In the four French Departments outside Europe the estimate was 35,000 in 1985.

We refer also to a report by the Ile-de-France Regional Economic and Social Committee (May 1984), entitled "Housing for Persons Socially Excluded or in Danger of Social Exclusion" *(Le logement des personnes exclues ou en voie d'exclusion sociale).* The report states that in 1983, 1,917 public housing units were allocated in Paris (1,877 in 1984), while records show that by the end of 1983 there were approximately 35,000 "priority" applications for people in bad housing. In a similar example, the Center for Housing Improvement (P.A.C.T.) [2] in Dunkirk registered an average of two housing applications a day during October 1985 while only two units were allocated each week, that is, seven times more applications were being received than housing units provided (in Paris it was 18 times more).

Although there are no precise national statistics, these local surveys do indicate a large gap between the need for housing and its availability. Based on these findings, we can assume that thousands of families and individuals have little security in their living situation, a condition that seriously threatens any family or community life.

Two examples:

- In Val-d'Oise, a family with five children was placed in an emergency shelter opened under the 1983 PovertyInsecurity Plan *(Précarité-pauvreté).* At the end of the winter, this

center closed and the family found itself on the street. The children were placed in foster care and the parents lived in their car.

- In Marseille in 1985, a family with two children, including one who was handicapped, were found to have been living in a cave for several years, obtaining water from a nearby factory.

The difficulties people face when they apply for public housing is another area that requires further investigation. In general, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- proof of income (usually other than social allowances) equal to three or four limes the amount of the rent;
- proof of a stable job and earnings of at least the minimum wage, backed by three or even six pay stubs. Sometimes this requirement is extended to include proof of an open-ended work contract, a condition that would exclude the self-employed or those in temporary employment, such as trainees in job training programs;
- sometimes a security deposit is required or the family must agree to being placed under financial supervision (this condition is increasingly imposed on the more disadvantaged families in order to protect the landlord);
- often, the applicant must show evidence of good moral and social character.

Clearly, there are reasons for these requirements. The public housing administration wants to avoid accepting families whom they may have to evict later. Management requirements, financial considerations and the desire to avoid an atmosphere of social tension all favor applicants who are solvent and who seem to fit a certain norm of community living. The intention is certainly not to eliminate the poorest. This, however, is what happens in practice, unless there are specific measures to avoid it, such as granting special housing funds or allowances, setting aside housing units for private associations to fill, and providing rent and security guarantees. One example of such housing assistance is the rent allowance (A.P.L.) that 580,000 French households received in the third quarter of 1985.

II. RETAINING HOUSING

We have been describing a certain part of the population that is effectively excluded from decent housing. Now we consider those who cannot keep up with the expenses of housing they have acquired and risk losing it. When no money is coming into the household, the first expenses that are not met are usually utilities and rent. We know about utility services being cut off and people being evicted, not to mention the sometimes considerable expense incurred by evictions.

A. Gas and Electricity Charges

Although no analysis has been made of households whose gas and electricity are cut off, we do know that the number of customers unable to pay their electric or gas bill has grown considerably in recent years.

For instance:

- in the city of Rouen the number of households whose service was cut off rose from 528 in 1983 to 1,155 (that is, 0.35 % of all customers) in 1984, an increase of I 19 %;
- in the city of Saint-Nazaire in 1984 the number was 1,600, or 1.45 % of all customers.

The suspension of service is relatively short for most people, but for the very poor, the situation can last for months and sometimes even years.

Under the emergency plan put into effect during the winter of 1984-85 and continued in 1985-86, measures were taken to reinforce the programs operated by local authorities and relief associations to avoid these service cut-offs (much like the efforts to help people avoid eviction). However, not all the problems have been resolved, since the moratorium on nonpayment extends only from December 1 to April 15 each year.

B. Rent

In October 1984, the public housing authority estimated that in the whole of France about 8 % of their rents were unpaid, compared with 2.5 % in 1980, an increase of 220 % in four years. However, the increases varied greatly in different places. For example, the rise was 35 % in Grande-Synthe (Department of Nord) (January 1985), 12 % in Tours (Department of Indre-et-Loire) (December 1983), and 12 % in Romans (Department of Drôme) (January 1984). These increases are not new. For the period 1973 to 1978, the amount of unpaid rent in public housing alone rose more than 37 % (adjusted for inflation).

The reasons for nonpayment are very similar for all the public housing administrations. For example, the social workers attached to the public housing administration (O.P.H.L.M.) in Rouen listed the principal causes of nonpayment of rent as:

- inadequate income: 44 % of cases. Income was basically social welfare payments, particularly the single-parent allowance (18°% of cases);
- arrears in installment payments, coupled with inadequate income: 25 % of cases;
- unemployment: 23 %;
- death in the family, separation, etc.: 4 %;
- sickness: 3 %;
- unexplained: 1 %.

In most cases, the problem is inadequate income (based mainly on unemployment benefits and social allowances), and this, compounded by debt, leads to an inability to keep to any sort of budget. Our purpose here is not to identify "bad risks," but simply to emphasize that, in most cases, nonpayment of rent results from the lack of a dependable income.

C. Evictions

1. National estimates

The Ministry of Justice calculated that there were 29,047 court proceedings for eviction of tenants in apartments or furnished lodgings in 1983 and 33,267 in 1984. This represents an increase of 14.5 % in one year. Successful eviction orders were 25,235 and 29,238 respectively, an increase of 16 % in one year.

The Ministry of the Interior calculated the number of evictions involving police in metropolitan France (excluding overseas Departments) to be 1,732 in 1981, 2,314 in 1982, and 3,285 in 1983. This is an increase of 42 % in one year and 90 % over two years.

2. In Paris

Statistics for the capital show that evictions involving police were mainly for nonpayment of rent. In 1984, of a total of 3,216 eviction orders for indebtedness [3]:

- 366 (11 %) resulted in settlement by agreement;
- 2,850 (89 %) resulted in actual evictions.

The evictions took place as follows:

- 1,973 (61 %) were by "voluntary" departure;
- 756 (24 %) were carried out by the marshal alone;
- 121 (4 %) were carried out by the marshal and police.

Very often, however, the eviction process is not systematically pursued, especially in the case of public housing. There are two ways to avoid being evicted:

a) Many agencies have a committee whose task is to look into the problem and find a solution. For example, in 1984 the public housing administration in Tours examined the cases of 95 tenants (0.8 % of the total) who had owed rent for more than twelve months:

-In cases representing 43 % of the total, 16 tenants left voluntarily, and 25 were evicted;

-Of the remaining 57 % of the cases, five tenants were rehoused elsewhere, and 47 entered into payment agreements. Three of these agreed to the appointment of a financial supervisor to manage their allowance payments. Two tenants paid what they owed.

Thus, while a solution was found for 57 % of the 95 tenants, guaranteeing their right to housing, 43 % of the persons and families concerned had to find a solution by themselves.

b) Since 1982, a fund to help households in temporary difficulty *(Fonds d'aides aux ménages en difficulté temporaire)* has functioned in the various Departments. By April 1985, more than 15,000 families had already been helped through 36 Departmental funds. The assistance given is in the form of reimbursable loans. This means that it is granted only to tenants who can offer some guarantee of future solvency.

In Paris, during the first six months of the operation of this fund, 361 out of 2,500 cases of nonpayment were selected for examination by the conciliation committee. For 200 tenants there was no agreement; of these,

-126 tenants stated that their debts had been settled or that they did not want a loan;

-35 tenants accepted the proposed help, but only 27 actually obtained it. The total paid out was 157,000 francs, or an average of 5,815 francs each.

During the preparatory hearings for this report, several organizations, such as the French Federation of Families *(Fédération française des familles)*, the Saint Vincent de Paul Conference and the financial supervision service of the Department of Seine-Saint-Denis, all indicated that the assistance of the funds tended to be sought too late, thus making the repayment of debts more difficult.

In a March 1985 report, "Housing for the Very Poor" *(Le logement des plus démunis)*, the social council of the national federation of public housing authorities (U.N.F.O.H.L.M.) recognized that not all parts of the population have a clear right to housing. With the existing housing stock, guaranteeing that right is sometimes difficult.

In summary, we are confronted with disparate data, which prevents us making an accurate estimate of the total need. The information is sufficient, though, to give an idea of the scale and seriousness of the violations of people's right to decent housing. Local client surveys show an increase in the number of households in precarious housing situations. Within the category "poorly housed," there is a great range of inequalities.

While applicants for housing, especially those who have been long on the waiting lists, are in a precarious situation, those who have not even had applications registered are facing chronic poverty.

The fact that many applications are not even registered means we still have difficulty identifying the very poor, much less answering their urgent need. Many of them do not appear in any list that is available to those responsible for ascertaining the housing needs of the nation.

We do know from specific cases that a precarious housing situation, combined with other hardships, can lead to chronic poverty.

For want of better information, we can offer an uncertain estimate of the number of people without proper housing in France (the homeless, those in makeshift accommodation, those living with others, those in housing declared unsafe, or those threatened with eviction). This estimate cornes from the European Program of Global Action Against Poverty, conducted in the city of Reims from 1976 to 1980 by ATD Fourth World. Many agencies collaborated to produce an estimate that 1,000 people are without proper housing out of the 200,000 persons in the city of Reims and surrounding areas, that is, 0.5 % of the population. Based on this figure for an average-sized city, it seems reasonable to assume that at the national level between 200,000 and 400,000 people do not yet enjoy the right to decent housing.

CHAPTER IV

ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN JOB SKILLS

Many men, women and entire families go through life without the opportunity to acquire even the most basic skills, much less the new skills demanded by today's world.

The preceding chapters have shown that different forms of the lack of basic security - inadequate income, makeshift, unsanitary or overcrowded housing, and unemployment, for example - multiply for people at the bottom of the socio-economic role. In those circumstances, what are the chances that children of such families can learn needed life skills or acquire job training? How will the insecurity of the family's situation affect the children and will it compromise their future chances? To find answers to these questions, we need to examine the situation of disadvantaged groups in relation to school and job training.

In France, education has become progressively more democratic. All socio-economic levels within the population have over time gained access to education. But has this progress benefited all children equally? Studies done between 1960 and 1970 indicated that the advances have not been as rapid as had been expected. Despite an increase in the number of university admissions for working-class families, the rate is still low compared with that for children from better-off backgrounds. For the really disadvantaged, access to universities simply did not exist. The ability of the education system to offer equal opportunity was not in doubt. What was being questioned was whether school curriculums look into account the knowledge of the children entering school and whether the instruction offered to students really prepared them for future job opportunities.

Toward 1980, an even more alarming discovery was made. In spite of free, compulsory education, illiteracy was still a significant problem, especially among the more disadvantaged populations. There seemed to be a serious social and cultural gap between the school and pupils whose lives had been marked by deprivation. The reason involved more than unequal opportunity. Because children could not master basic reading, writing or mathematics, they could not develop cognitive skills, the capacity to analyze and to make the most of what they learn by experience. For all practical purposes, they were left with little chance of taking part in the world around them.

Research and related discoveries have shown that for children to benefit fully from school, they must reach a certain stage of development in early childhood. Thus, the child is assumed to have a certain degree of physical dexterity and command of language, and a notion of time and space. Also, children must have first experienced success in the home before they can be expected to succeed in school. But their environment may have prevented any of this from happening;

A young child has little chance of developing adequately or of achieving success when he or she is deprived of space and toys in an overcrowded house, or when adults are so preoccupied with survival that they cannot provide for all the child's needs.

We know from statistics that access to learning and even elementary skills is very difficult for a significant proportion of the population. Every year, a sizable number of young people drop out of school without a diploma or with only a primary school certificate (219,000 in 1983). For the more disadvantaged, does school actually add to the overall insecurity in their lives?

Here again, national statistics are too incomplete to explain the relationship between chronic poverty and education and job training. Once more, we have to rely on recent surveys and limited studies, particularly those from the national education services. They provide some information about the progress of children through the primary and secondary grades, and the contribution of preschool programs. They also provide some data about those leaving the educational system without diplomas or certifiable job skiffs, about illiteracy and about lack of access to continuing training.

I. PROGRESS OF CHILDREN THROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

The table below is the result of a survey that followed a large sample of children through the primary grades, from the beginning of the school year of 1978-79 to the end of 1983-84 The figures are all percentages [1]. The horizontal lines indicate, for each school year, what happened in each class to the original group who entered the preparatory class in 1978-1979 For example, in 1979-1980, 86 % were promoted to the first year of the elementary course (CE1), 13 % repeated and 1 % were in special education [2]. The figures in italics indicate the percentage of students who progressed normally through school.

School Years	Year: Grade	1st C.P.	2nd CE1	3rd CE2	4th CM1	5th CM2	6th 6th	Special ed.	Total
1978-1979		**100**							100
1979-1980		13	**86**					1	100
1980-1981		1	17	**80**	1			1	100
1981-1982			3	20	**74**	1		2	100
1982-1983				4	23	**70**	1	2	100
1983-1984				1	6	25	**66**	2	100

Thus, at the end of the first five years of compulsory education, 66 children out of 100 entering school reached the sixth year without repeating, 25 repeated once, six twice, one three tunes, and two were in special education.

Nine percent of children repeated grades at least twice in primary school or attended special education classes. When we look at the occupational status of parents, we find that the following proportions of children repeated grades at least twice in primary school or attended special education classes:

- 26.1 % of children of laborers;
- 22.3 % of children of farm workers;
- 19.5 % of children of parents not working;
- 16.4 % of children of parents in service jobs;

- 14.4 % of children of semi-skilled workers;
- 9.8 % of children of skilled workers;
- 6.3 % of children of farm owners;
- 5.6 % of children of foremen;
- 5.2 % of children of low-level white-collar workers;
- 4.9 % of children of artisans or operators of small businesses;
- 1.8 % of children of parents in middle management jobs;
- 1.5 % of children of parents in industry or business;
- 0.4 % of children of parents in top management or the professions.

While a very small minority of the children of top managers or professionals (0.4 %) can expect to repeat classes or to be in special education, this is the norm for more than one fourth of the children of laborers (26.1 %) and for almost one fourth of the children of farm workers (22.3 %).

These national averages, based on social and occupational categories, do not show the extent of scholastic failure at the local level for certain populations. In poor communities, the very low rate of school success has a devastating effect: neither parents nor children expect to succeed; finally they come to believe that they cannot do so.

At the start of the 1982-83 school year, ATD Fourth World conducted a study in Reims of the scholastic status of 117 children from chronically poor families. At the time of entry into the 6th grade, no child had had a normal school history. Half the children had already repeated grades twice, one out of ten had repeated three times and the others - four out of ten - had been in special education classes.

Thus, both national statistics and specific case histories at the local level demonstrate a link between unequal achievement in school and socio-economic inequality. More precisely, recent studies by the Ministry of Education indicate that the cultural background of families and the expectations of parents for their children have an important influence on school success in primary grades. As for the difficult question of innate ability versus acquired skills, we refer to recent studies proving that the potential of all children to benefit from school instruction is not sufficiently taken into consideration [3]. School can prepare less gifted children for the future when the family and the environment are able to support them. But schools are still unable to take into account purely social inequality.

II. THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

According to a bulletin from the Information and Statistics Service of the Ministry of National Education [4], it is possible to measure the contribution of preschool programs to later success in primary school.

Social and occupational status of parents	Success rate at the end of primary school (meaning no repeating of grades) Years of preschool				Difference in success rate after 3 years in preschool
	0	1	2	3	
Top executives/professionals	76 %	N/A	N/A	87 %	+ 11
Middle-level managers	63 %	"	"	78 %	+ 15
Industry/business executives	52 %	"	"	66 %	+ 14
Farmer-proprietors	43 %	"	"	68 %	+ 25
White-collar workers	39 %	"	"	61 %	+22
Manual workers	30 %	"	"	48 %	+ 18
Others	29 %	"	"	50 %	+ 21
All groups combined	38 %	"	"	61 %	+ 23

The combined totals show success, that is, not repeating any grade during primary school, by:

-38 % of the children who had never been in preschool programs;

-49 % of those with one year of preschool;

-56 % of those with two years of preschool;

-61 % of those with three years of preschool.

These figures indicate that, overall, preschool programs have a favorable effect on performance in primary school. On average, this effect increases with the length of the preschool program.

For the combined student population, three years of preschool appears to increase the chances of success to 61 % , compared with 38 % for children without preschool experience. But is there always a direct relation of cause and effect? Parents able to place their children in a preschool program are most often from a social background that gives them the means to understand the needs of early childhood. Given this background, even if both parents work, they manage to provide the material and cultural support that favors proper development in infancy. More information is needed about the households of children who attend preschool if we are to measure the direct benefits provided by the program. What is needed is to measure the school success of children with similar backgrounds, some with preschool experience and some with no preschool experience.

The question of the relative contributions of preschool programs and family and social background needs further study: The Ministry of Education bulletin implies that all three elements must be considered. The children of low-level whitecollar workers benefited twice as much from preschool programs as did the children of executives (+22 as compared to +11). The positive effect of preschool thus seems more pronounced for children from less privileged backgrounds.

However, the performance of children of low-level white-collar workers after 3 years in preschool (61 % success rate) barely reaches that of children who never attended preschool and whose parents are at the middle management level (63 %). Children from better-off families, even if they did not attend preschool, for the most part had better school results than other children, even when the others attended preschool. Apparently what children acquire from family background outweighs what the preschool can offer children whose families have fewer advantages. Thus, family background remains the determining factor in assessing the likelihood of benefiting from the educational experience.

III. PROGRESS OF CHILDREN IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

In secondary education, the inequalities in scholastic success appear even more marked.

Consider the results of a sampling of students from all backgrounds who entered the first year of secondary education (the equivalent of the sixth year of compulsory education) in 1980 [5].

Four years later, in 1983-84, 88.5 % of the students were still in a position to obtain a diploma while 11.5 % were not.

The status of the students in this second group was as follows:

- 2.1 % were still in the second year of the first cycle of secondary education (seven years of schooling), having repeated a grade twice;
- 2.0 % were in a pre-vocational class (C.P.P.N.) or in the third year of a more practical secondary curriculum;
- 3.4 % were in a preparatory apprenticeship class (C.P.A.) or the fourth year of the more practical secondary curriculum;
- 0.9 % were in varions other classes;

-3.1 % had left school.

These percentages conceal significant differences related to the students' backgrounds. For example, 50 % of all the students in the sample entering the first year of secondary school reached the fourth year without repeating a grade. But the figure rises to 80 % for children with parents in the teaching profession.

According to the research carried out by ATD Fourth World on disadvantaged families in Reims, mentioned earlier, 8 % of the students surveyed in the 12 to 16 age group still had a chance of obtaining a diploma, but 92 % did not. (A total of 68 % were in special education.)

To really understand how special education and chronic poverty have become linked, we would need national statistics on the school attendance of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The bulletins of the division of planning, statistics and evaluation (S.P.R.E.S.E.) of the Ministry of National Education referred to earlier give the distribution of children 12 to 16 years old among the different types of special education in the school year 1983-84. Children of foreign nationality accounted for 17.2 % of the students in specialized education sections and in workshop classes, 11.6 % of the students in national technical training schools, but only 6.7 % of the students in general secondary education.

The criterion of "mild retardation," which is often used to justify placing children in special education, is determined by a series of tests. The expected standard performance presupposes intellectual attainments corresponding to the "average" abilities of a particular age group taken as the norm. Such a norm, however, does not take into account "learning time," which is necessarily longer for children from culturally different environments.

Although these data are limited, they do give an idea of the disparities evident at the end of secondary education.

IV STUDENTS LEAVING SCHOOL WITHOUT A DIPLOMA OR CERTIFIABLE JOB SKILLS

Young people are considered to lack a diploma or certifiable job skips [6] when they leave the educational system after:

- the first cycle of secondary education (between the sixth and ninth year of compulsory schooling);
- one year in the program leading to a certificate of vocational training, or the pre-vocational program or the preparatory apprenticeship program;
- special education;
- the second cycle of secondary education (before the final year).

All these cycles are in the lowest educational levels, namely VI and Vb [7].

Of the total number of students leaving the school system, 26 % had no certifiable job skills in 1973 and 11 % in 1983 [8]. The improvement is in fact much less than it seems because many students continued only until level V (third year of the 3-year proficiency certificate - C.A.P. - and the second year of the vocational training diploma - B.E.P.). For many students, this did not really represent a better level of education. They simply entered the job market later. Level V is the level reached by about half the annual class leaving school (48 % in 1983 compared with 40 % ten years earlier).

Including those with only a primary education certificate, the results for 1985 become:

Percent of work force without a diploma or with only a primary education certificate

	Men			Women		
	15-24 years	25-49 years	50 and over	15-24 years	25-49 years	50 and over
1985	31.2 %	36.1 %	63.1 %	26.1 %	36.3 %	67.0 %

Source: Survey by National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, 1985

The table above shows the progress achieved within a generation (a reduction by half in the percentage of those with no diploma, and a greater reduction for women than for men). Still, a high proportion (almost 1 in 3) of young men aged 15 to 24 have no diploma.

The following table shows the trend from 1973 to 1985 in the unemployment rate for young people starting an active working life whatever their age. They are considered unemployed if they did not enter the work force within nine months of leaving the educational system.

	Men				Women			
Unemployed	**1973**	**1977**	**1980**	**1985**	**1973**	**1977**	**1980**	**1985**
Young people without diploma [1]	12 %	31 %	42 %	56 % [2]	18 %	46 %	63 %	60 % [2]
Total youth population	9 %	20 %	26 %	38 %	13 %	26 %	39 %	42 %

[1] Young people still in apprenticeship programs are not included.
[2] For 1985, figures are for young people without diplomas or with the certificate given after leaving the first cycle of secondary education.

Source: Social Data 1984 and 1985 from National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies and from data in the process of being published.

The unemployment rate for all young men increased steeply: Between 1973 and 1985 it went from 9 % to 38 %. But for young men who had no diploma, the increase was even greater: from 12 % to 56 %.

The figures are similar for the age group 15 to 24:

Rate of unemployment for young people 15-24 years old

	Men		Women	
	1982	**1985**	**1982**	**1985**
Young people without a diploma or with only the primary education certificate	20.0 %	34.4 %	33.4 %	44.0 %
Young people with some kind of diploma	13.9 %	17.3 %	23.1 %	23.8 %

Source: Surveys of National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, 1982 and 1985.

In brief, in 1985 more than one third of young men with no diploma and nearly one half of young women with no diploma lacked jobs, compared with one sixth of young men with a diploma and one fourth of young women with a diploma.

As Odile Benoit-Guilbot noted [9]: "Young people who leave the school system with an incomplete education are most often the children of laborers or unskilled or semiskilled workers, and they are repeating the history of their parents. They always have a higher unemployment rate than do young people with any other educational level."

V. ILLITERACY

The lack of a diploma jeopardizes more than the chances of getting a job, for it hides a still more serious difficulty. Many of those who fail to obtain a certificate also fail to master the elements of reading, writing and mathematics. How will future parents be able to maintain a family on a small and irregular income if they lack these basic skills? Those with the greatest need for knowledge to get along in daily life have the lowest educational qualifications.

Véronique Esperandieu asks in the report she coauthored with Antoine Lion and Jean-Pierre Benichou, "Illiteracy in France" *(Des illettrés en France,* 1983): "How can people defend their rights on the job or in their community if they cannot read?" While this "radical form of social inequality" may be a temporary handicap for new immigrants, it has become a permanent state for a large section of the long-established population.

A 1982 report by Ms. Viehoff to the European Parliament on efforts to combat illiteracy confirmed an earlier estimate in 1981 by the Commission of the European Communities: namely, between 4 % and 6 % of the population, or some 10 to 15 million people, in the original nine-member European Community cannot read or write and have not developed the comprehension level of the average 13-year-old student.

A survey in 1976 by the Departmental Union of Family Associations (U.D.A.F.) of 1,000 families in the Essonne Department who were frequent clients of social services indicates that 47 % of the men and 51 % of the women either did not know how to read or write, or they read or wrote only poorly.

A press release by the Standing Committee Against Illiteracy (G.P.L.I), dated February 25, 1986, described the extent of illiteracy in the military:

"Out of 420,000 young men annually subject to military service, approximately 30,000 (7.14 %) can be considered illiterate."

This group further divides into three subgroups:

1) 1,000 who never went to school;

2) 15,000 who did not learn much in school because of handicaps due to their social background;

3) 14,000 who have forgotten what they learned in school.

According to the same press release, the options for possible remedial action by the military authorities are limited:

"Any efforts by the military to counter illiteracy would necessarily target the third group most, and the first group least. The second group would hardly be affected as they are most often exempted from military service.

"Out of 280,000 young men actually enlisted each year, some 10,000 must be considered illiterate; of these, some 5,000 chose to take remedial courses."

More qualitative studies are needed to find out what social environment these young men come from.

VI. LACK OF ACCESS TO CONTINUING TRAINING

Given the situations just described, lack of access to various types of training remains a serious problem for a significant proportion of the population.

In general, the participation of wage-earners in training programs is higher when they are better educated to start with; this is especially so when the training is employer-financed [10].

It is true that more than half of the training programs financed by the government, especially those for people seeking jobs, are targeted toward educational levels VI and Vb (cf. *Social Data,* 1984). And several training courses designed for 16- to 18-year-olds or 18- to 25-year-olds have attempted to reach the unemployed who have no skills. But the programs rarely succeed in imparting real, marketable skills. The training programs of the Association for Adult Vocational Training (A.F.P.A.) do lead to the proficiency certificate. However, according to the Declaration adopted on October 17, 1982, by the Economic and Social Council on prospects for the training of adults, these programs are out of reach "for too many applicants because they have too little basic education." Many continuing training programs do not use appropriate teaching theory and methods to compensate for the gaps dating from early schooling.

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Statistics at the national level are still inadequate for understanding the scholastic handicaps of children from insecure homes and environments. We have already noted a similar lack of information about those without economic security or access to decent housing. In the educational field, however, the children's environment is even more important because the future of new generations is at stake.

Failure in school is largely the result of the socio-economic conditions in which the families must live. In extreme cases, some children are considered educationally "deficient" because of the gap between what the school expects of their families and what the families can effectively provide. Many of these children end up in special education.

There are no statistics at the national level dealing with the relationship between families being in chronic poverty and their children being placed in special education. From what is now known, special education might be regarded as a way to keep many children from disadvantaged environments in school. But since special education does not lead to a diploma or to a trade, the children leave school totally unprepared for an active role in society.

Other young people are not much better off since their different paths through the education system can similarly lead to their acquiring neither skills nor a useful diploma (in 1983 there were 219,000 such cases). These adolescents are in a precarious situation that eventually can lead to chronic poverty. In 1983, one young man in four and one young woman in three without a diploma were unemployed; it can be assumed that many came from homes where unemployment and underemployment were already the rule for the parents. While we cannot provide exact numbers, lack of education is clearly one of the causes of the persistence of chronic poverty from one generation to the next.

Chronic poverty is also clearly related to illiteracy, for which there are almost no national statistics, except for the estimated figure of 7 % of annual conscripts recorded by the military. Also, how can we estimate the number of adult citizens who have never learned to read and write or who have lost these skills, which are so indispensable in modern life? Chronic poverty also results when lack of a basic education in childhood prevents adults from gaining access to continuing training. For continuing education programs do little for young people and adults who failed to profit from school instruction. The figures are inconsistent and incomplete, but from those that are available we must conclude that continuing education programs do not yet protect individuals from chronic poverty or prevent the exclusion of certain groups from the productive life of the country.

CHAPTER V

A COLLECTIVE LACK OF BASIC SECURITY: STUDY OF A NEIGHBORHOOD IN CAEN

So far, we have examined general statistical data and commented on their value and limitations. Now we shall examine a local situation to try to understand what happens when people are not assured of several of their essential needs. Our focus will be on a clearly defined area: a locality, neighborhood or complex of buildings. The aim will be to relate the distinctive features of chronic poverty to the sociological composition of the population in the area.

I. WHEN POVERTY IS CONCENTRATED IN ONE NEIGHBORHOOD

La Guérinière, a public housing complex in Caen, contains 2,500 apartments for low- and moderate-income tenants. It was built in 1962 to house people who had lost their homes during World War II and who had been living in unsafe, rundown

housing blocks. In 1984-85 the complex was renovated in order to bring the buildings up to proper housing standards. Many families who were in arrears with their rent in other parts of the city were rehoused in La Guérinière and given a housing subsidy (A.P.L.), which covered a substantial part of their housing expenses.

From November 1984 to January 1985 the Research and Training Institute of ATD Fourth World surveyed households in La Guérinière that participated in three housing programs for very low-income families: the "Economy," "Lopofa" and "Operation Million" programs, which managed 650 apartments in the housing complex. The purpose of the survey was to understand the daily life of the most disadvantaged families within a working-class neighborhood [1]. Three hundred and forty households, totaling 1,150 individuals, responded to the survey.

The majority of the people interviewed were French citizens (88 %). From the outset it was clear that many factors threatened family security:

-35 % of the households, or 50 % of the households with children, were single-parent families;

-in 63 % of the households, no one had a job (68 % of those who were out of work had been unemployed for more than a year, and 23 % for more than four years);

-50 % of the heads of household had no job skills;

-half of the heads of household (117 out of 234 people who answered this question) had started work before the age of 14, and one third (82 out of 234 people) between the ages of 14 and 16.

The survey revealed two dominant facts about the economic life of these households:

A. They suffered from low and irregular incomes.

- Only 22 % of the households said that they had enough money put aside to live on for more than one month.
- Only 37 % of the households were actually living on earned income, either a wage-paying job (33 %) or a self-employed activity (4 %). More than half of those working did not have steady employment: one in four had short-term contract work, one in eight had a temporary job, and one in six had part-time work.
- 17 % of the households were receiving unemployment benefits, including 6 % who would normally be ineligible but were receiving it through a public assistance program. But more than half of the unemployed did not receive any benefit, either because their benefits had run out (one in three), or because they had not put in enough time on the job (one in seven), or because they were looking for their first job (one in ten).
- In October 1984, the sole source of income for 18 % of the households was the family allowance given for children. Also, during 1984, one family in four experienced an interruption in payment of these allowances, usually because their entitlement was being reviewed.

The degree of insecurity resulting from these factors varied considerably. The situation within a household at any given moment depended principally on the regularity of benefit payments, the chance of finding stable employment, and the possibility of the family avoiding a last-minute search for the resources it needed to survive. We should note that a single factor could produce a permanent state of insecurity for an entire family, particularly when the head of the family was a single parent or an unemployed person or had no job skills and no savings to fall back on.

The few statistics quoted here point to the existence of a social group in which most households experience economic insecurity. For some, joblessness might be the principal reason. For others, past family history was still affecting the household. Many heads of households described the search for housing that had marked their life - moving from shacks to decrepit houses, and finally to this public housing complex: "I was put here because I was in debt," or, "The housing authority told me, 'Either you go to La Guérinière or you'll be evicted.'" Even there, some said that they were unable to keep up with the rent. They spoke of a history of unemployment dating back to the 1950s. Others said that as children they had worked on farms or collected mussels to help support their families. Most of the parents said that they hoped an education would give their children a life different from their own.

B. They were in chronic debt.

- 50 % of the households owed rent and 19 % had been threatened with eviction in 1984. Those threatened with eviction included 40 % of the families who depended mainly on the family allowance for children.
- 25 % of the households owed money for water bills.
- 23 % of the households owed money for gas and electricity.
- 20 % of the households surveyed and 41 % of house-holds depending mainly on the family allowance for children had their electricity cut off in 1984.
- 9 % of all the households surveyed and 20 % of households depending mainly on the family allowance for children had had their gas cut off in 1984.
- 30 % of the households had accumulated debts for rent, water, gas and electricity.
- 38 % of the households owed money on credit.
- 30 % of all the households surveyed and 58 % of households depending mainly on the family allowance for children had been threatened in 1984 with seizure of goods or garnishment of wages to satisfy debts.

II. POVERTY BECOMES A WAY OF LIFE

How do people, especially the poorest people, organize their lives in the face of constant economic insecurity? The families

interviewed spoke of long periods of waiting, of deprivation, ill health and chronic anxiety, which affected children as well as adults. But, they said, there were also times of helping each other, of providing shelter for others, of occasionally finding odd jobs, of celebrating and of renewing their courage because of the children.

A. The Negative Aspects

Waiting:

People spend their lives waiting. Waiting for good news they dare not believe: the chance to find a job or get training. Waiting to receive family allowances or welfare assistance that has not arrived on time. Waiting also for dreaded but probable events: the marshal arriving with an eviction or seizure notice, the utility company worker coming to shut off service.

Deprivation:

- 46 % of the households surveyed said that they were forced to do without other necessities in order to eat (72 % for families whose principal income was the family allowance for children);
- 48 % of the households said that they had received charitable donations of clothing (68 % for families whose principal income was the family allowance for children).
- Only 14 % were able to take family vacations during the summer of 1984, but 40 % managed to send their children on vacation.

Poor health:

Of the people interviewed, 40 % complained of poor health. Three fourths of the adults were covered by social security and 30 % of these had additional coverage through group insurance. However, this still leaves one fourth solely dependent on public assistance.

Chronic anxiety affecting children:

Children, like adults, bear the consequences of irregular or uncertain income: poor food, inadequate clothing and lack of health tare. The children also worry when accumulated debts threaten the family's security. Many of them also fear being placed in foster tare, a threat that the authorities frequently hold over their parents.

B. A Shared Struggle Against Chronic Poverty

Providing shelter for others:

One in five of the households surveyed was providing shelter for one or more homeless persons - sometimes a relative (usually a brother or sister), either alone or with a spouse, sometimes unrelated people (unmarried men, young adults, couples). Sheltering someone might give the household a little additional income, but over time the overcrowding leads to tensions that often make it impossible to continue this mutual help. In many families young adults continue to live at home, even when they are married and have their own children. Because they have no resources they cannot even get into subsidized housing.

Helping each other:

In 1984, half of the households resorted to borrowing money from neighbors. A network of borrowing and lending enabled the households to tide themselves over when they had no other recourse. While borrowing was a way of avoiding having their possessions seized or utility services cut off, this system created dependency between families. Loans must be repaid if repeat assistance is to be asked for. In fact, a number of households that resorted to borrowing from neighbors during 1984 said that it was becoming more difficult to obtain loans within the neighborhood [2].

Occasional work:

Fishing, gardening, doing harvest work on small farms, scavenging in junk yards, unloading trucks, helping people move, and doing simple mechanics, house-painting and plastering were the kinds of jobs people spoke of. Sometimes it was simply to do someone a service, to have something to do, to be able to take home some vegetables or fish or to earn a little money. But people spoke of having fewer and fewer such odd jobs. There was increasing competition among unskilled workers in the region for this casual employment, as others came from farther away in search of jobs. Unskilled workers were also competing with better-skilled artisans willing to take on this occasional work.

Celebrating:

Families often celebrate when they receive some money. The families attach great importance to these opportunities for bringing some much-needed joy into their lives "because you can't always be going without." Even being able to repay debts to neighbors is a sort of celebration. And from time to time, the children need a treat -"Why should they have to suffer? It's not fair." Or the families need to get out to escape the despair: "When you can let go for a little while, you feel much freer." People develop a way of living, a way of resisting poverty. But when it costs money, the outside world frowns at their "extravagance."

Courage that children give:

All the parents interviewed raid that the presence of their children was the principal motive to keep going. Parents said that for the sake of the children they would go back and ask for a job, or even beg for help, whereas for themselves they would not risk further humiliation.

In turn, the parents' resistance to poverty gives their children courage. The survey also noted that the children contribute to the family's resources. They bring back food, money or other things they manage to collect. They do the shopping when their mother is exhausted or if she cannot read the labels in the supermarket. Sometimes they even face up to a marshal come to evict the family.

Here then, briefly summarized, are some of the characteristics that emerge from a local survey. They are typical of the families who experience the greatest difficulties in an urban working-class district. Of course, there are many other important elements in their lives; in particular, their contacts with social service offices and other agencies or with public officials. We have selected the elements that best enable us to

understand the extent to which an entire group of people lacks basic security.

The neighborhood chosen for this survey was typical of other neighborhoods in France. In every large urban area there are similar localities with high concentrations of vulnerable families who lack basic living security. Community associations and social service agencies tan testify to this phenomenon. The same poverty also exists, but in more diffuse forms, throughout urban and rural areas, and it is less obvious and more difficult to measure. The families and individuals concerned are not any less at risk of becoming marginalized and excluded. In fact, the risk is greater because the traditional mutual aid networks are less closely knit.

From this examination of a local area, we see how the lack of various forms of basic security tan interconnect and coexist in a household and then in a neighborhood. In the end, they tan combine to create a way of thinking and living that spreads not only to members of the same family, but also to a whole group of families in similar circumstances.

This type of survey makes it possible to identify a social environment where individuals and families organize themselves on the bases of a common experience, as do people in all walks of life. When chronic poverty is shared, it tan lead to mutual assistance and helpful relationships; but it can also be self-perpetuating. Individual problems and the accompanying sense of personal inferiority weigh on the entire group. Unfortunately, greater attention is often given to the negative aspects of chronic poverty than to the positive elements of mutual support and encouragement.

Local surveys are a valuable general research method. Statistically oriented research may provide information about the nature and sort of appropriate measures, but because local surveys are more qualitative, they tend to place greater emphases on the means of putting these measures into effect, including setting priorities and coordinating selected actions. The effectiveness of any action depends on the way in which the people concerned view the conditions in which they live. To understand these real-life situations, we need to look at them through the eyes of small, representative local groups.

CHAPTER VI

CHRONIC POVERTY AS REVEALED IN FAMILY PROFILES

The type of local study mentioned in the previous chapter shows that chronic poverty marks people's whole personality. Attitudes and behavior reflect ways of being, doing, and thinking that have been strongly affected by a common social background and by a collective history. There is no doubt that this common historical frame of reference (which exists in every social grouping) colors the very nature of the needs and aspirations of each individual and of each family.

It is difficult enough to be a single woman and head of a family; it is far more difficult to have in addition a background of chronic poverty and a history of foster care as a child.

It is difficult enough to have to apply for subsidized housing, but far more difficult if no one in your family has ever been a rent-paying tenant, if they have never had a roof of their own, or if they have had to live in substandard housing.

It is difficult enough to be short of money, but far more difficult never to have any.

It is difficult enough to be out of work, but far more difficult if you have never had a job or if you have only had occasional jobs with no rights attached.

It is difficult enough to feel yourself cut off from the mainstream of society, but far more difficult to know that your group bas been outcast for a very long time.

Even going to school is difficult enough; it is far more difficult if no one you know seems to have benefited by doing so.

These different experiences are the framework upon which poverty develops into a condition passed from one generation to another. If any lack of basic security lasts long enough, it can lead to the impoverishment of an individual or family.

Individual experience of chronic poverty has a great influence on the search for possible solutions. Any solution requires an understanding of the conduct and attitudes that people adopt in dealing with their circumstances. Unfortunately, the requisite knowledge is rarely available. It comes only from the careful construction of individual or family profiles over time. In this chapter, we will use an example from a study, "A Poverty One Cannot Accept: the Social Biography of a Family on Public Assistance" *(La pauvreté intolérable: biographie sociale d'une famille assistée),* by Jean-Pierre Nicolas, the director of a regional child protection office of a family support agency (Erès, 1984).

I. THE SOCIAL SERVICE PROCESS AND RISKS FOR THE FAMILY

In his study, Jean-Pierre Nicolas considers two perspectives of the samee family: the administrative one contained in the files of social service agencies for the 15-year period 1966 to 1981, and the autobiographical one as told by one of the sons and his wife, Bertrand and Jacqueline Rouillard [1]. For the author, the juxtaposition of these two versions of the same family history demonstrates a mutual lack of understanding between the administration and the family, and the quasi-autonomous process by which social services create a case history.

The housing situation of the Rouillard family was typical of the isolation of the very poor. Their house was next to an abandoned railroad crossing and formerly housed the crossing-gates operator. The building, run-down and much too small for the 13 members of the family, was far from the town. Winter floods sometimes prevented the family from getting to the town. The house was surrounded by accumulated odds and ends, giving it an uncared-for appearance. The home-aid visitor

assigned to the family was discouraged by the sheer amount of work and the cramped living quarters. The town mayor wanted to find other housing for the family. Everyone seemed to realize that the family needed better housing if they were to get back on their feet. Indeed, the family had applied for a larger house as far back as 1966.

First, the family was placed under supervision, that is, an outside person oversaw their financial affairs. They would wait six more years before construction started on a house beside the former crossing-guard's dwelling. Any other solution was ruled out, not only because the family had no resources, but also because no one could see them living in public housing and no one wanted them in the town. In the end, the family gave up asking to be housed elsewhere. The general attitude in the town was, "Let them stay where they belong."

The family hoped at least to be able to stay together. But in 1968 seven of the children were taken into foster care by various agencies that refused to return them to their parents. The reasons given were the parents' lack of resources and their apparent failure to do anything to improve their living conditions in order to bring up their children properly. In 1970 the youngest child, then three years old, was returned to the parents on a trial basis. Under the control of the family supervision office and a special education service, the parents had to prove they were able to bring up their children. Determined to prevent the disintegration of her family, Mrs. Rouillard set out single-handed to get her other children back when her eldest son got married.

A reversal of the foster care order was granted for three of the children, and they came back to live with their parents. But as there was no improvement in the condition of the home, the agencies again asked that the children be removed.

These tensions affected family relationships. Mr. Rouillard spent time in a psychiatric hospital. He then disappeared, and nothing more was heard of him. Mrs. Rouillard sued for divorce in 1974. Later she abandoned the family home after the suicide of her new companion, who was accused of raping one of her daughters. The children were again taken into care. In November 1975 their house was sold.

One of the sons, Bertrand Rouillard, testified to the efforts made by the family: "My father was always working. He did an incredible number of things. Before becoming a construction laborer, and then an excavator operator, he had worked as a hauler in potash mines. At home, we were always clean and well cared-for, even if we often ate the same thing every day. We were never seriously ill. My mother loved her children and didn't want to be separated from us. It's true that we missed school when there was flooding or when we had to stay at home to look after our brothers and sisters. It's also true that our mother would treat us roughly because she hadn't been able to do what she wanted to do. Sometimes we got a beating for nothing."

Worse, the private life of the Rouillard family had become a public forum for all those who came to look, to inquire, to observe, to investigate and to judge.

"Because the family did not conform to normal standards, they were viewed with apprehension and suspicion. The broken window panes replaced with cardboard, the frames of old bicycles scattered in the yard, the father's occasional bouts of heavy drinking, the mother's absences: All these elements combined to create a negative impression that triggered adverse reactions from the outside. The various reports of social services emphasized that the Rouillard farnily differed from the norm. This led to a flood of unfavorable observations that made the family's reputation even more unfavorable."

Thus it was easy to justify placing the family under supervision: "It is common knowledge that Mr. Rouillard is an alcoholic who sometimes drinks as much as three liters of wine a day. He has a well-deserved reputation of being unstable and lazy. Mrs. Rouillard is rather moody and she is worn out by her repeated pregnancies. She was never a competent housekeeper and the inside of the house has become a complete mess."

The Rouillard family was also accused of petty theft: stealing other people's produce to feed their rabbits, stealing a small fishing boat and a motor scooter. The children were accused of pilfering and poaching. At school, they were called lazy, insolent and unreliable and they were considered to be troublemakers. The two who were allowed to stay with their parents were placed under the supervision of a children's agency. The others were placed in a regional foster-care institution "in order to meet the children's immediate needs and because of the emergency nature of the situation."

To all of this, the author, Nicolas, observes: "...taking a child out of its surroundings, treating the child as a `social case,' seeing the child only in terms of individual health and psychological problems... leads nowhere."

"Children who are institutionalized lose their identity, which is made up of the intangible bits and pieces of family life: certain smells, mingled voices; without these, they find themselves in limbo. Even if the foster families are well chosen and suitable, the children's identities as individuals and members of a family have been disturbed, disrupted and damaged."

By presenting both these views of the family, the author shows that, while the agencies involved genuinely wanted to meet the family's needs, they never considered the family's own view of their life, their goals and their aspirations. Reducing a person or a family solely to their needs, he says, risks identifying them in terms of weaknesses: They are seen as alcoholics, mentally unstable or violent. This is why the outside interventions in the life of the Rouillard family, instead of helping them get on their feet, as they wanted, finally destroyed the family.

Is the Rouillard story unique? No doubt it is, especially in the way the family's history was recorded by the various agencies concerned. The author uses these records to reveal a bureaucratic logic that followed its own inevitable course. He deplores the fact that the different agencies involved did not try to understand the family's side or to align their intervention with the family's own efforts to combat their poverty. No doubt this biography is rather exaggerated, especially as it concerns the social workers. All field workers would agree that every family, however poor, should have someone - a social worker or some chosen

representative - to defend them, and that every family should have some relations with relatives or neighbors.

Efforts to help the family should be based on the existing support or solidarity of others. Such an approach focuses not merely on the family, but also on relationships with the surrounding society. Family profiles can then provide the knowledge necessary for such an approach.

For this reason, some social service agencies and private associations are already constructing family profiles. The material comes from the "participant-observer," that is, the person who is directly helping the family from day to day in its struggle against poverty. The daily recording by the participant-observers of the family's life demonstrates a determination to base responses on the efforts of the families themselves and on the positive input from the family's environment. The process also offers the best guarantee that the families will be partners in their own advancement. Preparing profiles requires time, a special quality in human relationships, and a solid experience of the realities of poverty.

II. HOW A FAMILY RESISTS POVERTY: HOW ITS FUTURE CAN BE CHANGED

In the 1930s, Monique Pradel's father delivered coal on the outskirts of Caen [2]. Her mother did manual work on neighboring farms. Monique herself, as a young girl, was sent out to earn her keep on farms. She rarely attended school but was not completely illiterate. While still very young, she married Raymond Hornaing, who also came from a poor background.

Raymond had been raised by his grandmother because his father, a mason, had been unable to find work during the economic crisis of the 1930s. Raymond's mother had been doing domestic work to keep the family going. Raymond also worked on local farms. When Raymond was 14, his father died and Raymond was placed as a worker on a dairy farm. Two years later, he gave up farm work in order to learn his father's trade as a mason. But he was unable to obtain the proficiency certificate (C.A.P.) and from then on he had to make do with odd jobs. After their marriage, the young couple spent 25 years going from one makeshift lodging to another:

-six months in a shed on a small piece of land that was lent to them;

-one year in an old house that had been severely damaged during the war;

-four years in the "43rd", a shantytown in an abandoned military barracks;

-six months in a shack near the one where Monique's father lived;

-a single room in emergency housing;

-again in a shantytown from which they were driven by a fire;

-a month in a shelter for single persons, before returning to another shantytown.

Finally, in 1971, they were given a small house in a former transitional housing camp, where they remained until Raymond Hornaing died in 1985. During these 25 years, Mrs. Hornaing had twelve children and faced an endless struggle against dampness, rats, mold in walls and floors, cold in winter, stifling heat and dust in summer, and lack of water and lighting. Two children died in infancy. Of the remaining ten, nine were put in foster tare, usually for fairly long periods (generally from school age to 18 years old).

The social services had taken this course of action because of the housing conditions of the family and because neither parent had any real schooling. "We are going to put your Benoît in foster tare so he won't grow up to be a delinquent," the mother was told. Like that, Mrs. Hornaing later recounted, "they were all taken away, one after the other."

As for Mr. Hornaing, he had, in fact, continued his efforts to get a mason's certificate and finally received it after training on the job, at age 24. But this did little to help hem get work in his trade. He continued to do "a bit of everything," working as a day laborer in construction, and then in the port of Caen. Later, in 1980, one of his sons who himself was unable to find any work would say of his father with pride: "He was trained as a mason, but he did all kinds of work. He found odd jobs, unloading trucks and so on. He even worked in a charcoal-making camp."

For some time Mr. Hornaing had suffered from stomach problems, bronchitis and rheumatism for which he never received proper medical tare. Finally, at age 42 he was given a disability benefit. The amount was very small, but it was the first regular income that the family ever had.

This income did not change things much for Mrs. Hornaing. Throughout their life together, whenever her husband was out of a job or was not earning enough, the couple would go out together to dig beets, help bring in the hay, or, if it were the season, "collect shellfish, pick daffodils to sell as bouquets or linden flowers to make tea." Or Mrs. Hornaing look cleaning jobs, which she described in detail: "You used acid to clean the cement and paint off the baseboards and you had to scrub the floor on your bands and knees."

Why did this mother, whose children were routinely taken away from her, wear herself out in this way? "They told me that when things were better I could have them back. I was willing enough for them to be in foster care so that they could learn. But when there is no proper place to live and no regular income, they think: `Well, we've got the children and we'll keep them.' I even had to beg them to let me have the children for the holidays."

She could accept the children being in foster care only because they were at least getting an education.

So while she waited, she went on foot throughout the city to clean offices "so things will be better, so they can come home for the holidays."

There was a rude awakening, however, when the children came home for good. One after the other, they returned without having learned any skills, some even unable to do simple arithmetic, one almost illiterate. They had been placed in foster

tare by the social services so that "they would not become delinquents." Now at age 18, without any skills, how could they avoid being idle, their mother asked. She continued working to supplement her husband's pension. She had her children back at last and would go on working, even though neither she nor her children should have been put in this situation.

Gradually, the children left to set up their own households: a daughter in an old trailer, a son in a hovel from which he would soon be evicted. Grandchildren were born, and it became an extended family, as the grandmother regularly took in those whose housing was really bad. Surprisingly enough, a family court judge entrusted three of the small children to the grandmother when he decided to take them away from the parents. Things had completely turned around. Before, she had been judged incapable as a mother and, for some social services, an "unworthy mother." As a grandmother, she was now officially recognized as a person capable of bringing up children properly, which undoubtedly she is. Now she stays in her small, overcrowded house to care for the children during the day and does cleaning jobs late in the evening.

Over a period of some 30 years, this woman bas seen considerable changes in the attitude of the social services that never stopped intervening in her life. Gradually the right of the parents and children to stay together as a family has been recognized. But Mrs. Hornaing "bas seen too much" to put much faith in it. Nowadays, she is reserved in her dealings with social services, and a feeling of mutual trust has not been established. A report by an inspector from the family supervision services comments, "She is very secretive." Why would she be otherwise? Years earlier she was reproached for not taking the train to go to see her children in foster care, even though there was no money in the household. She was blamed for not writing to them, even though her lack of education meant she could barely write at all.

The family profile of Monique Hornaing indicates areas where a mutual action supporting a family might be based; for example, a sincere desire of social services to respect the family's rights should build on the real strengths of the family or the neighborhood. One of these strengths is the mother's endurance and her courage, which enabled her as a grandmother to regain her proper family role by sheer force of will. Another could be her role as a community member, since she is now active in improving conditions in her housing block with the support of a neighborhood association.

She says: "They took away my children, but here there is nothing for children. If something were done for them, then they wouldn't be doing all these stupid things."

A family profile, such as the Hornaings', can be used in a more general way to provide different elements of knowledge as well as specific guidelines for action. It traces a situation through a history that goes back to the lives of the parents and grandparents and sometimes further. It also shows how the members of a family live and think at the present time. We can then see how the lack of different kinds of basic security is interrelated and, especially, what the family thinks, how they react, and how they explain their current situation. We begin to recognize their hopes and their refusal to accept their situation. We see that they have projects in their lives, even if they cannot carry them out. Over time we can also see changes in the community around them and follow the social relationships that are strengthened or fall apart. These relationships and the sense of solidarity they convey are precisely the starting points from which to build far-reaching changes.

Family profiles provide qualitative knowledge that statistics can never achieve.

Because these profiles are done with the participation of the family itself, they constitute an irreplaceable tool for the advancement of the family. The elements in a family profile like that of the Hornaings become more significant when they are seen in relationship to other profiles done with the same rigor. A single profile, by itself, cannot be used to determine a course of action, nor can it provide an overall explanation of chronic poverty or serve as a basis for criticism of social policy as a whole.

The principal lesson we see in family profiles is that long-term deprivation of basic security often leads to chronic poverty, which is likely to persist into the following generation. Thus, both Hornaing parents came from families in the Normandy region who had lived all their lives in precarious circumstances. The economic and social changes that benefited the majority of people in the region somehow did not reach them and they became chronically poor. And their children now seem unable to escape the same condition without outside help. Only one of the daughters, through marriage, managed to escape poverty. Similar family profiles confirm this finding: Persistent deprivation in people's lives engenders other forms of lack of basic security, which lead to chronic poverty. The resulting condition overwhelms people's resources and powers to resist. Chronic poverty is not a chance happening: It gains hold in people's lives by wearing them down. To say otherwise ignores both the efforts that people make to escape poverty and the elaborate systems of protection that have been developed in France. Even with the rapid changes in society, these family profiles rarely show an abrupt descent into chronic poverty or a sudden escape from it. The parents and grandparents of the families now at the bottom of the socio-economic scale were near the bottom themselves. Even those who somehow rise above chronic poverty remain vulnerable to its effects for many years to come.

CHAPTER VII

UNDERSTANDING THE REALITY OF POVERTY THROUGH FIELD WORK

I. ACTION AS A UNIQUE SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

People working in the field, with their responsibility for dealing directly with poverty, need first-hand knowledge in order to act. They must draw on their individual experiences to formulate appropriate responses. The accumulated experience has become an important source of knowledge in France and in other European countries.

The experience of field workers who really know the lives of their clients can provide unique information. Depending on the rigor they use in recording what they learn, how the information is interpreted and analyzed, how many households are studied and how representative they are, the process can give rise to assumptions about the way people deal with certain situations and about possible shortcomings in the social aid system, particularly the lack of coordination between various agencies. When observations and assumptions match, they will come to be accepted as established fact. If social workers all over France reach the same conclusion about something, it is going to become accepted knowledge.

But the same knowledge, unless confirmed by scientific study, can be misleading. French social workers were among the first to recognize this; they have since been demanding a higher level of training (especially in psychology and sociology). In the same way, the services of specialists in the human and social sciences are increasingly being called upon. At the same time, the observations of the field workers began to be appreciated for their real worth and treated as a research tool. Cooperation between researchers and field workers was established. At this point, various forms of action-related research for specific purposes began to develop, notably the extensive work initiated by the National Family Allowance Fund (C.N.A.F.).

The dialogue in a field situation is necessarily different from that in a purely research environment. People can understand more readily when they are asked questions - even a lot of questions - to help them deal with situations in their own lives. The quality of the information depends on the trust inspired by the commitment of the field worker and on the training that the worker has received in dealing with situations of chronic poverty. The following examples illustrate the nature of the information obtained when action is accompanied by evaluation and research.

II. LACK OF BASIC SECURITY IN MANY FIELDS IS INTERCONNECTED - A SOCIAL WORKER'S PERCEPTION

In her testimony to the Economic and Social Council on February 18, 1986, Marie-Thérèse Reynaud, head of the social services of the St. Etienne Family Allowance Fund, described how social workers perceive the relationship between the different forms of lack of basic security that affect the most disadvantaged individuals and families. She began, though, by emphasizing that, because of initial suspicion and ignorance on both sides, social workers in general had a hard time arriving at a genuine understanding of this group and creating a genuine dialogue with them.

She explained that individuals and families who are trying to deal with an accumulation of poverty-related problems can think of little else but meeting their basic needs. Having enough to eat, making sure of having shelter and essential services such as water, gas and electricity become constant preoccupations that can take up an individual's entire energy all day long. Many families are in debt and constantly fear being evicted or having their gas and electricity shut off.

At this point, public assistance and private charities are the families' only recourse. This means that families have to "do the rounds" of various private or public agencies, and at each one have to explain and justify their impoverished state. Once families are in this situation, they become dependent on the individuals with whom they have to deal. In these encounters, the families know it is essential not to upset people or to appear to disagree with their proposals and conditions. The poorest families are so taken up with waiting for replies, either positive or negative, that they have little vision of any long-term solution. The social workers, in turn, are so busy answering immediate needs that they cannot offer especially deprived families any real help in regaining responsibility for their own lives.

According to Reynaud, the most serious consequences of this situation are the breakdown of relationships within the family, a failure to ensure that the children keep up with their work in school, and a feeling of worthlessness that makes contact with the outside world increasingly difficult. Obviously, impoverished families should not be forced into a struggle for survival that compromises their chances of self-development and participation in the community.

Reynaud's analysis coincides with the view of an increasing number of social workers, namely, that when a family is encountering difficulty in many areas, short-term action is often ineffective. Social workers in day-to-day contact were among the first to warn of the consequences of leaving families to deal with a multitude of needs. They could do no more than simply respond to the immediate impact of those needs. Emergency help to an individual or family solves nothing when the "emergency" is the result of persistent poverty. An even more serious problem is that emergency aid such as food, money and shelter may run counter to the patient, long-term efforts needed to help a family to find work, to learn how to manage a budget, or to see that the children go to school regularly. Social workers all over France have pointed out that having a multitude of needs within a family does not merely demand many responses; the families need a continuing support that will enable the persons concerned to become autonomous and to make a real contribution to the community. "You want to help us, but do you want us to make a success of our lives?" Whether asked directly or indirectly, this question of the poorest people appears frequently in the reports of those in the field.

Through field work, we can therefore distinguish between practices that provide only an outside response to problems and those that lead to direct involvement of the people concerned and that make them genuine partners.

III. THE POOR HOUSEHOLD - ITS RESOURCES AND CONSUMPTION

Between September and November 1985, at the request of the government agency for consumption, a survey was undertaken to ascertain how families considered to be "very poor" use their money. The study involved 16 families living in a transitional housing center. Because the sample is so small, the results are meant only to be indicative of what can happen in situations of chronic poverty. The study was made possible by cooperation between the families, a team of workers in the research center, and a team from the ATD Fourth World Research Institute [1]. It might be expected that a family's consumption would be measured in terms of the amounts of money it spends and what it chooses to spend it on. But the daily experience of workers at the center suggested that the focus should be on a family's income rather than its expenditures. The team felt that the families' low and irregular income left them little choice about how to spend their money. The following are some significant observations that resulted from the study.

A. Family Resources

The only income for more than two thirds of the families was the family allowance for children. For one fifth of the families, income came from work and various benefits (unemployment, allowances for handicaps, etc.). Disposable income after payment of rent, electricity, gas, water and other bills varied, but overall was very low. The average was 20 francs per person per day, with a minimum of 6.5 francs and a maximum of 40 francs. The small size of these disposable incomes becomes even more significant in light of the difficulties faced by individual households and the irregularity with which allowances are received.

The total allowance a family receives can vary from week to week. Sometimes accidental overpayment is followed by underpayment to even things out. Or benefits previously withheld will suddenly arrive in a lump sum. Families often contributed to these situations by making mistakes in filling out forms or missing deadlines for filing the proper Family Allowance Fund forms.

But delays in payment can also result from bureaucratic delays, technical problems on the part of the services administering the funds, or postal delays due to holidays. The effect of such delays can be serious when a family has no money at all.

Income from work can be equally irregular. Employment, when it exists, is often temporary, insufficient to establish the right to unemployment benefits, or undeclared and thus useless for establishing social security coverage. In some small businesses, workers can sometimes ask for advances on their wages. The resulting irregularity of income can mean severe problems toward the end of the month, especially for people who have not learned how to calculate a budget. When the working members of the family are self-employed, they are dependent on fluctuating demands for their services. Often they have insufficient income to pay into the social security system.

When families have no financial reserves, the uncertainty of income dominates their lives. Even in the short term, they never know how much money they can count on. Those who work with the very poor soon realize that the families have no choice but to live from day to day, with no future planning in their lives. Field workers know, for example, that in the period just before a family receives its allowance payments, there is probably no money in the household at all and the family should not be asked to pay out money at that time.

B. Incurring and Repaying Debts

Numerous large debts often burden the budgets of poor families. In other social groups, most debts are incurred by purchasing household goods on credit; for the very poor, debts are incurred because of the need to survive during the past week, the past month or the past year. Sometimes a third of the monthly income is used to repay debts as soon as it is received. Repaying debts is as essential as buying goods; those who live in chronic poverty know that they will soon again need credit from the neighbors, the grocer or the baker. But none of this credit goes toward investment in long-term purchases such as household equipment. Thus, the family economy remains focused on the past.

The most significant debts are for rent, utilities, medical care and holding off process servers. Debts may outweigh income, and when they accumulate it is almost impossible to pay them off without some kind of outside assistance.

Sometimes even individual debts exceed monthly income. In the table below, monthly income for October 1985 is compared with the total money owed for utility service as of November 1, 1985. These are examples only; no statistical significance is claimed.

Monthly Resources and Money Owed for Utilities by 11 Families

	Income October 1985 (In francs)	Debt as of November 1,1985 (In francs)
Family of 3 persons	1,755	2,389
Family of 4 persons	2,551	5,945
Family of 4 persons	5,757	3,665
Family of 5 persons	1,814	4.421
Family of 6 persons	6,697	3,563
Family of 6 persons	3,934	2,436
Family of 7 persons	3,599	4,400
Family of 7 persons	9,739	3,708
Family of 7 persons	8,222	3,521
Family of 8 persons	4,392	1,177
Family of 8 persons	6,637	2,463

These figures show that, short of sharply curtailing their consumption of gas and electricity, the families cannot pay on time or clear up what they owe. As a result, the debt increases each month and becomes more and more discouraging. In such

circumstances it is impossible to hold to some kind of family budget.

Some arrangement has to be made with the utility companies and new periods of grace have to be obtained to avoid having service cut off or having belongings seized for payment. The families have to tope with this constant fear while arranging for continuing use of utility services. When the research team learned of this situation, they passed the information on to field workers who were able to negotiate realistic payment terms with the utility company.

C. How Money Is Spent

Like their financial resources, spending differed among these families, but all often spend over 50 % of their income on food (in comparison, the average French family in 1984 spent about 20 % of its income on food). The families in the study buy groceries, bread, dairy products and meat, but very little fresh fruit or vegetables.

It is important to note that most of the money for food is spent just after a family receives its family allowance payment. Toward the end of the month, families often ask for credit and live mostly on starchy foods, bread and coffee with milk. Because the diet is neither balanced nor varied, at certain limes the families must suffer nutritional deficiencies.

- The children's education also weighs on a family's budget. The "back to school" allowance is clearly not sufficient. Parents want their children to have the same clothes, shoes and bookbags as the other children in school. There are also extra expenses for school activities (outings and field trips, for example). These fees may be a small amount each time, but they add up if there are several children in the family. The cost of summer camps and even meals in the cafeteria may be so high that children go without them even when reduced prices are available.

- The families rarely spend money on clothes. Many mothers get the family's clothes from charitable agencies, even though they find the practice embarrassing. The clothes they do buy are often the cheapest that they can find in second-hand stores (and therefore the poorest quality).

- Expenses for medical care and medicines can completely upset a family's budget if they are not covered under the public medical aid program.

- In spite of vacation vouchers being available from the Family Allowance Fund, the families spent almost nothing on vacations and leisure activities.

The study also included the adults' comments about having to deal with such a constrained financial situation.

One of the greatest problems is the recurring fixed expenses, especially utility bills. They represent a considerable burden on the families' low, irregular incomes. These expenses alone average 22.5 % of a household's monthly income, with a maximum of 50 % and a minimum of 10 % . They become a trap that the families cannot escape. In the families' view, everyone should be guaranteed shelter as well as running water, heat and electricity. Yet they are required to guarantee that they can pay for these services. It is difficult to ask a family without any stable financial resources or savings to make regular payments for anything unless they are first assured of a regular income. The parents interviewed in the study repeatedly asked why, when they can count on rent supplements every month, there is no equivalent for electricity and gas? For them, the government agencies were not following their own logic.

This study used various sources of information mentioned earlier. These multiple perspectives give a more comprehensive understanding of what it means to live in chronic poverty. An important "other view" came from the field workers who live with their families in the transitional housing center. Daily, they see the families' difficulties in surviving. For example, a few days before the family allowance checks arrive, children are sent to ask for food. When the checks do arrive, families try to pay back their debts, stock up on cheap pasta for the end of the next month, or buy some "extras" to celebrate the temporary end of want until the next time.

If there are to be significant changes in the lives of these families, we must understand their situation and know how to react. Many social workers and field workers are aware of the families' circumstances, and their experience and commitment are essential in developing social policy.

Finally, to complete this chapter, we will present some observations on how chronically poor people relate to the culture of society as a whole. Again, the material comes from workers in direct contact with chronically poor populations.

IV. IN OR OUT OF A CULTURE? OBSERVATIONS OF FIRST-HAND WITNESSES

The social exclusion of chronically poor people is very much linked to cultural barriers. To understand this phenomenon, we call on the evidence of those who work with the poor, who see, for example, all the obstacles a poor person faces in coming to a government agency for what seems to be a simple procedure.

A. Success Stories Are the Exception

In recent years there have been a series of biographies about or autobiographies by individuals who have made good after escaping from poverty, in some cases severe poverty [2].

These success stories show that there will always be men and women from poor backgrounds who can find the energy and drive to change their lives. Their achievements come in part from the support of their local community or of financially stable people who undertook to help individuals with very limited resources to achieve success. These "patrons" believe in a person's abilities and help them to make a future for themselves.

These accounts, while valuable, are the exception, as they would be for any other social background. The reality is that most people who are raised in an environment of persistent poverty do not escape their condition. Now as in the past, the escape from chronic poverty lies in a socializing process that

takes place in school, at work and in contacts made through groups or other associations.

B. When the Socializing Process Is Constrained

The social backgrounds of workers, rural people or the better-off are enriched by the accumulation of traditions and elements absorbed from other groups, often transmitted from generation to generation. In contrast, within an environment of persistent poverty, field workers observe that the transmission of such values is often limited. To avoid suffering or just to survive, people shrink from contact with a society that allows others to experience what they can only dream of. They distance themselves from the surrounding culture, which they find hurtful because it highlights what they do not know and what they cannot do. While they accept its basic values, the lack of any means to apply them wears down their acceptance and leads them on occasion to actions that conflict with those values. The values themselves become conditional. What is important is surviving and maintaining the family life. But honesty is important only as long as they can stay alive without stealing. School for the children is important only as long as the family can provide the necessary school materials. Personal health is important only as long as a stay in the hospital does not lead to the family being broken up.

C. Common Assessments of the Very Poor

The encounter with chronic poverty sometimes leads people like employers, teachers, doctors or psychologists to try to explain it. Their observations often take the following form:

- the very poor tend to avoid any form of constraint or discipline, even if it has unfavorable consequences (for example, quitting a job after an employer or a fellow worker has made a humiliating comment);
- the very poor cling to unrealistic expectations even if so doing prevents them from taking genuine opportunities, (for example, the belief that somebody will certainly turn up to help them to obtain a particular advantage);
- the very poor lack the necessary education to understand the logic of other people's thoughts so that they grasp only bits and pieces and so become easily exploited (for example, agreeing to work unpaid overtime as a favor to the employer);
- the very poor tend to pursue individual relationships that are gratifying but that do not put them on an equal level with others or lead them to involvement in community life (for example, becoming attached to a group leader but not really participating in the group activity);
- the very poor are irresponsible for not limiting the number of children they have, thus adding to their problems, and for being proud of having children, even if they are unplanned.

Comparing the above observations with the earlier observations from field workers shows how easy it is to misunderstand those living in chronic poverty. The comparison also shows how powerless people are to defend themselves against a society that not only governs their lives but also passes judgment on them, unless they possess a thorough knowledge of the norms on which society acts. All who depend on others for basic necessities have to confront these judgments in varying degrees.

D. People's Universities

People's universities are an outgrowth of the research-oriented action of the Fourth World Movement. They demonstrate the importance of giving chronically poor people a forum in which they can contribute to shaping society's culture. They respond to the desire of the very poor for knowledge and for involvement in the culture of their environment. The following are observations by people who have attended these universities:

"With all the problems we face, we need to talk, to be listened to, to feel we are contributing; we need to defend our dignity and freedom. That means we have to stand together so we can be as strong as others. We need to learn or we will always be exploited."

"We want to know about the things that govern our lives. We want to know our rights."

"I want my children to learn to read and write, to learn job skills. Otherwise they will end up like me, not knowing how to do anything."

Within the framework of the people's universities, the chronically poor join in a common effort to overcome tremendous disadvantages. But success also depends on their meeting others who believe in them and help them to develop their abilities, thus building a future for themselves.

E. Illiteracy

The recent attention given the problem of illiteracy (see Chapter IV) throws light on what is probably the most significant and specific demand among the very poor [3].

To understand the scope and significance of this demand, we refer to the criterion regarding illiteracy adopted by UNESCO in 1958: A person is considered illiterate if he or she cannot read or write and understand a simple explanation of facts relating to daily life. A person in this category is bound to suffer from social exclusion, given the importance of the written word in today's world, even though audio-visual communication is becoming more important. In a study on illiteracy [4] Bruno Couder and Jean Lecuit summarize its effects on people's lives:

- it increasingly restricts their chances of obtaining employment;
- it impedes their advancement and prevents participation in community or labor union activity;
- it creates all sorts of obstacles to the effective use of goods, institutions and services (purchases, transport, mail, notifications from public authorities, checks, etc.);

- it restricts communication within the family (keeping track of children's performance at school, contacts with children in Poster care or living elsewhere).

In particular, because illiteracy rules out the possibility of training in many areas, it provokes a social judgment tainted by an assumption of inferiority. In the end, an illiterate person becomes convinced that he or she is less intelligent than others.

F. Culture Means Participation

In her testimony before the Social Affairs Section of the Economic and Social Council on February 4, 1986, Georgina Dufoix defined culture in its broadest sense as the "means given an individual to understand the surrounding society and play a part in its workings."

In this context, for many families television is the only window on the outside world. Through television, the poor may become more aware of their deprivation; but at the same time it allows them - and particularly the young people - to identify with the value system they see portrayed.

The dialogues during meetings of the people's universities run by the Fourth World Movement clearly show that when people are unable to understand the links between the direct or indirect causes of their situation, they tend to attribute their condition to fate, to some sort of inferiority or even to their family. In contrast, when they share a way of thinking with those in similar situations, they find new opportunities, new energy and a network of support.

The principal injustice of which chronically poor people complain to field workers is that they do not understand the workings of the society around them and that they do not play any role in its development. Outside their immediate family, they have no real contact with the community and are not called on to help in building a society that would have a greater sense of solidarity. The fact that they never feel needed by employers, schools, churches, local associations, political groups or labor unions underlines their social exclusion in a clear and painful manner.

G. The Right to Culture and the Arts

The poor want art, beauty and artistic expression as part of their lives. Instead, adults often say, "We always live surrounded by ugliness," and children wonder, "Why is there nothing nice around us?" Given the opportunity, they show the same aptitudes for theater, art and music as anyone else.

Those in close contact with chronically poor people know that this longing for art and beauty is very real. People crowded in dingy lodgings on the poorest streets, constantly bombarded by noise, never seeing beautiful or carefully crafted articles these people have this fundamental need more than any others. Unfortunately, it seems to be the last need considered when a community is dealing with people in chronic poverty.

Despite the efforts by government and private groups to develop access to arts and culture, the more disadvantaged are still not being reached. When people can see and experience beauty in their communities, they will participate in its life and development.

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In this chapter, we have seen that field workers have accumulated a valuable body of first-hand knowledge about chronic poverty and the deprivations that accompany it. Depending on the closeness of relationships with the population and the methods used to record and interpret data, the information can confirm various hypotheses. It can also show the interrelationship between different causes of deprivation and how they result in chronic poverty. In addition, the poor have a chance to express themselves differently with field workers than they do with researchers. They reveal more clearly the ambitions and strengths that are the key to their future success.

This information contains valuable points for understanding the chronically poor.

In our discussion on how poor families spend their money, we recall that insufficient and irregular income forces the family to borrow - not for expenditures that would create structured patterns of family life and open up new prospects, but for bare survival. Families are too busy repaying yesterday's debt to even consider how tomorrow might be different. This is because the families have to use irregular sources of income (public assistance included) to meet regular expenses such as rent, water, gas and electricity.

Nutritional levels vary with the amount of money available; at the end of the month there is simply not enough to eat.

They are dependent on others because of their poverty and also because of their poor education.

They do not lack the aspiration to live otherwise; they lack what is needed to fulfill that aspiration.

According to field workers, the chronically poor have little access to the social and political spheres, and thus no influence in them. The poorest households have no input and no way of challenging the information and surveys that others use to control their lives.

The lack of access to cultural resources that hampers participation in political and social affairs is not just a matter of school or university education. It affects very basic aspects of existence - the family, work, religion, life in the local community, and even neighborliness. If people cannot live these important aspects of life in the way they desire, then reality and aspirations do not correspond at all. People have to put their beliefs and hopes on hold to be able to cope with daily life.

In brief, everyone has the right to the cultural benefits of society, and any challenge to chronic poverty must enable people to have access to cultural resources. This implies the involvement of those who can facilitate the process.

Participation in community life also means that the poorest can bring their sense of beauty to the arts. We need not look very far to see how others take advantage of cultural resources and add to that heritage. The advancement of the chronically poor is no different; they must be part of the culture-building process as well.

CONCLUSION TO PART ONE

In the introduction we raised questions that are very much in the mind of the public: Are there individuals and families already living in a state of chronic poverty or likely to fall into that condition? How many are there? What is happening in their daily lives?

We then examined different sources of information and what they revealed. They confirmed that in France chronic poverty exists and many people lack basic security. But we still have insufficient information on the number of individuals and families affected. Nor do we know enough about how they are affected, who are the least protected and how they cope with serious deprivation.

We noted that in France the volume of research and the number of studies have increased considerably in recent years as it has become evident that economic changes have made life more precarious for many people, and that, despite earlier economic growth, chronic poverty still exists.

Statistical surveys on a nationwide scale produced substantial information concerning many groups of people in France. However, because of the nature of these studies, they could not provide reliable information on the lowest socio-economic category. They confirmed that the majority of people in France are not poor, but they gave little information about those in the indigent minority and what they were experiencing in terms of deprivation.

The "client" studies gave much better figures for discerning the seriousness of specific situations. With such studies, we can see how a deprivation in one area gives rise to, or aggravates, problems in other areas for individuals or families. For example, as income decreases, it is more likely to be irregular, to be accompanied by unemployment, low job skills, or problems in relations with neighbors, or to involve a single-parent family. But even this information on small specific groups does not cover all the very poor. It fails to cover, in particular, persons who are eligible for assistance but who do not receive it because nothing is known about them.

Moreover, these two types of research have been conducted with insufficient regularity to reveal changes over time. Therefore it is still difficult to determine which forms of lack of basic security are temporary, which have really serious consequences in people's lives, and which are likely to lead to other problems. School statistics are the only ones that show the lasting effects of deprivation and reveal that the present generation is affected by the deprivation of its predecessors. Still, such statistics offer little information about the interaction between the various forms of lack of basic security.

To learn more, we can use field surveys, family profiles or action-oriented research. The first thing they show us is that we have much more to learn in order to approach and understand individuals and families whose chronic poverty has effectively excluded them from outside society. Field teams, however, can overcome these obstacles if they work at establishing communication while taking people's dignity into account, and if they are scientific in recording and verifying information. Their findings can provide important insights into the reactions, thoughts and ambitions of the people they serve. Such knowledge is unique for two reasons. First, it expresses, albeit indirectly, the demands of people who have no means to express them in a social or political forum. Second, the information is essential for establishing priorities and determining specific and general measures to address the causes of social and economic deprivation and prevent it being transmitted to future generations. There is still much more to be added to this body of knowledge on a nationwide level.

In effect, we are faced with serious situations that are not clearly understood and that are difficult to deal with. The available information is weak and, even more regrettable, the people affected have no means to speak for themselves.

There are, however, some important conclusions to be drawn from what is known, and these findings can help determine the direction of future policies.

The concept of chronic poverty is relative to the surrounding society, which, in the case of France, is prosperous and competitive. Nevertheless, poverty still exists in France in extreme forms: people lack not only the means to compete, but also the tools for survival.

National statistics cannot be used to obtain an accurate estimate of the number of people living in chronic poverty, or those whose situations are not dealt with by existing policies in areas such as housing, health and employment. However, if the general statistics in these different areas are combined with client studies, then more precise statistical data emerge, particularly on the key subject of income. Even with this approach, determining the number of people without decent housing remains difficult. The needs in education and job training can be approximated from studies on children in special education, failure rates in school and illiteracy among young men called up for military service.

All these data are necessary to determine the cost of measures that will:

-end situations where people seriously lack basic security;

-prevent the conditions that give rise to such situations;

-progressively incorporate into general policy-making the interests of people who live in such situations.

In Part One, we have assembled qualitative information to show how different aspects of the lack of basic security are interrelated and grow in people's lives. We saw that chronic poverty does not result from a lack of basic security in a single area such as health, income, housing or employment. Nor could we find one factor to be a prime cause from which all the others spring. The impact of the absence of certain types of security seems to depend largely on socio-economic level, financial reserves, educational level, job skills and the ability to participate in political and community processes. As people approach the low end of the socio-economic scale, the lack of basic security in one area is more likely to bring about insecurity in other areas and to have consequences for the entire family.

Even if chronic poverty affects entire communities, it should not be considered irreversible. Field studies, family profiles and observations from action-oriented research have all shown that there are possibilities for change. They give numerous examples of adults, young persons and entire families struggling to find a minimum of security in their lives. They manage in many cases because of the committed efforts of those in the social work field. Taking action is itself a sign of a determination to succeed.

Why, then, are people unable to draw on existing systems of social protection and end their chronic hardship?

This is what we shall try to understand in Part Two of this report.

PART TWO

AN EVALUATION OF THE MEANS AVAILABLE TO ACHIEVE BASIC SECURITY AND TO PARTICIPATE IN SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

France, as one of the most advanced industrialized countries, has been able over time to introduce a complex system of social protection, together with a widespread and varied structure of education and training. Within this system, many professionals help people in difficulties to function again in society. Also, there are safeguards within the system to insure that people's rights are respected. Everyone should benefit from these safeguards, especially those lacking basic security.

Nevertheless, even with our limited data, the facts presented in Part One of this report show that people continue to live in chronic poverty or to lack basic security in their lives. Considering only the lack of financial resources (which is most likely accompanied by other needs), we estimate that over two million people are in unacceptable poverty. We do not question the premises on which our social protection system is based, but we must ask why the institutions charged with providing it become increasingly ineffective when people have the most need of them.

In Part Two we shall examine the social service structures in light of the needs of the chronically poor. Are measures and objectives reassessed in relation to the living conditions of the poor? Is the priority then to eliminate these conditions because basic rights are not respected? Are the measures taken effective in preventing situations from worsening? In considering needed measures, is attention paid to experiences gained in the field? Throughout this part of the report, we shall present significant and innovative responses to these questions.

Chapter I presents an abridged historical review of the approaches to poverty to provide a better understanding of what is being done today.

We shall also see that the issue of poverty is increasingly considered a matter of rights both by the poor themselves and by various public leaders.

In subsequent chapters we shall examine whether the existing structures guarantee basic security in income, housing and health services; whether social services, education, job training and employment provide the means for people to take an active role in their community; and whether people can participate in society as a whole.

An Appendix will briefly describe what is being done in other member countries of the European Community.

In the Conclusion we shall present short- and medium-term recommendations that are based on our findings and that take into account the existing social structures and the expectations that those directly affected have for themselves and for their children.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF RESPONSES TO CHRONIC POVERTY

We feel that an examination of the past is valuable, especially in considering responses to poverty. Even though the notion of poverty has changed over time, the experiences of the past have influenced how we think and act today.

In this historical review, we shall see that the growing sensibility to the concept of human rights is relatively new. Perhaps this explains the present dissatisfaction with anti-poverty measures that would have been considered satisfactory not long ago.

I. THE INHERITANCE FROM THE PAST

Since the Middle Ages, two main attitudes toward the poor have emerged in European societies, sometimes mutually reinforcing and sometimes counteracting each other. Societies have traditionally wanted to protect all their members, but they have also cast out those whose presence represented too much of a risk or too much of a burden for the community.

The desire to protect members from the uncertainties of existence led to more complex institutions as the communities came to possess greater material wealth and realized that greater guarantees were needed for their members.

Nevertheless, the tendency to cast out those who seemed to present too heavy a burden has been constant throughout history. This partly explains the present inadequacy of measures at the political level and the distrust, even today, of the most vulnerable populations.

In the past the outcasts were people who had leprosy or the plague, who were insane or destitute, who had been imprisoned for begging, or who were needed for war but were considered superfluous in peace.

Today, depending on current economic and social conditions the outcasts may be itinerants, families considered asocial, immigrants, the homeless, or the long-term unemployed with no skills. All are in some way excluded from the rest of the community or are living in neighborhoods feared as breading grounds of crime.

These people arouse the same suspicions as in the past: they are considered to be responsible for their own situation, to have too many children, and to take advantage of the help given them.

The continued existence of excluded groups may be better tackled if we try to understand how society treated the poor during earlier periods of history.

Historians cite three main attitudes toward the poor and ways of assuming responsibility for them [1]. These attitudes have succeeded one another and sometimes overlapped. Each attitude prevailed for a time and shaped community relationships with the poor in a given region.

A. Feudalism: Protection of the Poor by the Feudal Lord and by the Church

From the Middle Ages to the beginning of the Renaissance the mass of people were poor but working within the institutions of feudalism. Depending on the region, they were considered to be free, to be in serfdom or something in between; all, however, were bound to perform manual labor and to pay taxes to the feudal lord. In return, custom demanded that the lord protect these workers, whatever their level, against poverty, hunger and invasion.

This relationship of dependency and protection was based on the idea of reciprocal duties, but the poor - who were mainly rural - were unable to enforce their rights if the feudal lord defaulted. Nor were they able to put up any effective opposition when the often excessive demands of a more distant overlord were added to those of the local lord (tithes, taxes on essentials like salt, etc.). Nevertheless, under the feudal system (10th to 12th centuries A.D.) the poorest, whether working or not, had a recognized place.

Early on, the Church spoke of the claims of the poor on its possessions. Saint Anaclet in the 1st century A.D. stated that "any man who is oppressed may, if he wishes, appeal to his bishop." And Saint Gregory the Great in the 6th century A.D. proclaimed the right of the poor not only to survive, but also to share in the riches of the Church. Throughout the feudal period, the bishops undertook to manage the possessions of the diocese in the name of the poor. Depending on the bishop, the disadvantaged were treated with more or less respect and generosity. In general, the bishops continually pressed the princes and feudal lords to contribute to this charitable work. The bishoprics and especially the abbeys were among the first advocates of "social transfers," and they were often very occupied with this task.

The feudal system neglected a whole group of people who were not part of its organized work or structures. These were the landless men and women, often wanderers, who lived by gathering what they could from the land, by peddling or even by robbery. They survived by all sorts of expedients: displaying strange animals, for example, or hiring themselves out for whatever work was available. Some were camp followers of armies, hoping to receive regular pay, or at least to eat or share in the pillaging. Most likely, this group, which did not benefit from any organized protection, could depend, at best, on the alms of others.

This social structure, with the poor inside the system and the very poor largely outside, changed with the rapid urbanization that took place between the 12th and the 14th centuries. A succession of bad harvests, destructive wars (the Hundred Years' War) and epidemics (the Black Plague in 1348) led to a massive movement to the towns, where only a few of the poor could hire themselves out. As the traditional protective systems were overwhelmed, an ever larger number of people were forced to wander or to live by begging. They were even more outcast than before.

Many of those who got work in the towns took jobs that were considered degrading - salvaging the carcasses of dead or worn-out animals, carrying away human waste, dyeing cloth and digging graves. They were needed for their services but still considered "unclean." As such, they were despised and often treated as outcasts. However, they and their families could count on the charity of various institutions. These organizations took over the role of protecting the urban poor who fit within a work relationship, while the feudal lords continued to protect the poor in the countryside.

In the towns and cities, the poor might find either new structures set up to help them or new forms of exclusion, depending on their circumstances. Already in the 13th century, and more especially in the 15th, parish organizations (for example, "The Tables of the Poor") and religious fraternities provided support and aid, while attempting to create a spirit of mutual assistance. To help people avoid a state of extreme distress, "funds" were set up in the 15th century to lend money against pledges at low interest rates (the original pawn shop). This was considered better than handing out alms because it did more to preserve human dignity. It is doubtful, though, that these funds did much good for people who had nothing to pledge.

B. Civil Authorities Take on Responsibility for the Poor

The second main trend reached its height between the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. This response was marked by the emergence of a greater esteem for those who enriched themselves through work.

The system of private charity continued, but communities and the central government took over more and more of the work of the Church. The protection of the "poor and beggars" ceased being simply a personal responsibility based on religious faith and became, instead, the collective responsibility of towns and cities. This major change evolved during the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries.

It should be noted that the French Revolution of 1789 continued this tradition. The new government intended to eliminate extreme poverty. It established a "Committee on Begging" to inquire into the causes of want and to make proposals. But a lack of resources prevented it from following up on the "social security system" that it had worked out. The only

aspect that survived was the affirmation that the poor ought to be able to earn their living through work [2].

Between the 15th and the 18th centuries, general hospitals and other care institutions took the place of religious hospices. Other signs of the shift to collective responsibility were the establishment of workhouses, asylums for the poor, children's homes and orphanages.

There were many reasons for these changes. The intention was not only to put people away or get rid of suspicious wanderers or fake "invalid-beggars." The fact is that during the period, any poor child over the age of ten acquired the previously unheard-of right to become an apprentice to a skilled tradesman in a guild. And this right was preceded by the right of the child to live in a family:

"We shall leave children under the age of ten in the care of their parents; if they are too poor we shall supply all or part of their nourishment, so that they may be fed." [3]

In reality, the desire to maintain order was as strong as the new sense of responsibility toward the poor and their rights. Repressions took place and recalcitrants were "to leave the said town and its suburbs within one week" or risk being locked in jail. Actually, the poorest people - long-time homeless and wanderers - were the target of the efforts to get rid of potential troublemakers. Depending on the period, some ended up in galleys or were impressed on to merchant ships.

Even at that period, the ambiguity in the attitude of society to the relationship between work and the poor was evident. Did they have the right to work, or did they have to work in order to improve their moral character? Was the right to work invoked in the name of human dignity? Today, we still seem to be trapped by this enigma, since we expect the unskilled unemployed continually to prove that they want to work.

In any case, during the 17th century, workshops spread rapidly in the cities, and schools multiplied in the towns and villages. The work of Jean-Baptiste de La Salle was preeminent in this field.

Despite these efforts, the ranks of the destitute continued to grow. They were coal miners, clog makers or woodcutters who could not earn enough for their families, or later on, unemployed iron miners in the hills of Normandy. Unfortunately, when these unemployed workers began to steal game or waylay travelers, they were no longer considered woodcutters or miners, but poachers and thieves. A similar situation exists for today's young unemployed; once they start stealing, they are seen only as "juvenile delinquents."

The ambiguity of trying to distinguish between the "good" and the "bad" poor - rescuing some and repressing others - continues to this day.

C. The Industrial Revolution and the Emergence of the Subproletariat

The third trend began to appear very strongly in the middle of the 19th century, with the progressive establishment of the working class.

Workers who could organize bettered their condition through their collective economic power. Increasingly, they compelled the employers and the authorities to grant them a role in society.

Those workers who were less skilled in the productive tasks of the period became the residue of industrialization - they were the "subproletariat." Karl Marx was the first to describe them when he invented the term "lumpenproletariat" [4]. These unskilled workers were at the mercy of economic fluctuations because they were systematically denied access to any skilled occupations. Parents passed on to children the same low-level, marginal or seasonal work, which offered neither the chance of a career nor an adequate or stable income.

Because they lacked any organization, the "subproletariat" turned for help to the social services that developed to assist them. They received almost no support from more established workers who had too recently achieved respectability and security to take the side of these unproven comrades. A major characteristic of this period was the separation between a working class struggling to assert its rights and a "subproletariat" apparently unable to make a case for itself, because it seemed to have nothing to offer that would entitle it to the same rights as organized workers.

The development of the working class had certain advantages for the poor. Besides the assistance they had been receiving from public and private groups, they were now organizing to help themselves and defend their rights. Mutual aid societies, which had been known since the Middle Ages, flourished anew. The poor were now seen as agents in the fight against poverty, and this struggle had become a political fight.

The very poor were not yet involved, and their absence from the struggle was a further sign of their exclusion. For them, progress would only mean that social and educational charities would gradually take the place of special courts, and that asylums and poorhouses would pay a little more attention to nourishment and health care and less to forcing their occupants to work. Education became more important than imprisonment and corporal punishment. Yet the lives of the very poor were still controlled by others; their situation had improved but there was no fundamental change.

This brief historical summary shows a clear evolution in society's response to poverty. The attitude to both poverty and the poor has changed. Professor Michel Mollat in his testimony to the Social Affairs Section on March 18, 1986, explained this in the following way:

The Christian concept of the poor as the image of Christ had been replaced by the view that human beings carried within themselves certain basic rights. This evolution is reflected in the changing vocabulary of the response to poverty: first "charity," then "good works," "philanthropy," "fraternity," and finally "solidarity." Despite the change in vocabulary and practice, Mollat showed that there were certain constants: first, the essential feature of impoverishment is the downward passage from one level to another, chronic poverty being at the bottom. Second, chronic poverty has many components: demographic, economic, social and structural, of which one or more dominate

depending on the period. Lastly, efforts to help people move out of poverty have to be constantly renewed because the causes of exclusion keep recurring. Periodically, private and public efforts would waver as people became discouraged. The responses to poverty then become inadequate and the delay in introducing new initiatives has serious consequences for the poor.

The periods of withdrawal can be made worse by the confused analysis that is often applied to the complex problem of chronic poverty. In the past, for example, the poorest were considered marginal people or delinquents. Moreover, proposals and actions are sometimes the result of a current fad that may have an emotional appeal at the time but will not provide any serious prospects for the future. In concluding his testimony, Mollat stressed the danger of being misled in trying to understand chronic poverty and initiate appropriate institutional responses. It is essential, he said, to have a sound knowledge of the people we are trying to help, and particularly of their difficulties and hopes. When we proceed in this manner, we demonstrate the respect and trust needed to bring together the efforts required on all sides. The quality of the responses that a society offers to the needs and expectations of its poorest members depends very largely on the idea it has of their lives and of the dignity they should be accorded.

Today, this idea is strongly influenced by the concept that all people have inalienable rights because these rights are inherent in the dignity of human beings. As mankind has progressed from the concept of sharing to the acceptance of rights for the poor, a broader response to the needs of the poorest has emerged, as we shall see below.

II. POVERTY: A QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

In France the concept of human rights as a cornerstone of democracy was explicitly stated for the first time during the 18th century, most notably in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789. This public declaration attempted to state the concepts of freedom and equality, not only in terms of rights, but as the basis of a political charter.

The idea that people are free and equal and that the state has clearly defined obligations toward them had been developing for centuries. The disappearance of slavery in western Europe during the first centuries A.D. was one early manifestation. Nor was it a new concept that the state should guarantee a number of rights, particularly those enabling a citizen to feel free, or that citizens should help one another as a sign of solidarity. In fact, the Declaration of 1789 was an attempt to give a public and political stature to a notion and practice that already existed in more diffuse forms. We have described above how the right to work and the right to receive an education became established practices in daily life. From that point, however, to understanding the relationship between freedom and responsibility, between power and duties, between equality by nature and inequality by situation, between security for some and insecurity for others, the road has been long. We still have not reached that goal today. But to know where we stand improves our chance of formulating proposals that are acceptable to contemporary opinion.

There has been substantial progress since the declarations of the late 18th century, which gave only a general idea of the rights that could protect an individual against the arbitrary exercise of power. Over time, the concept of economic and social rights has become precise and comprehensive enough to translate into increasingly elaborate legislation. Progress to date shows:

- the increasing application of such rights. They are now called universal rights and have been adopted worldwide, despite some halts and temporary setbacks;
- the growing understanding that rights are interdependent. If there were no right to education, to employment or to job training, then the right to vote or participate in community affairs would be meaningless;
- international agreements on the application of rights.

In France the Constitution of the Fifth Republic (1958) referred specifically to the 1789 Declaration of Rights, which the preamble to the Constitution of the Fourth Republic (1946) had already confirmed and enlarged.

In addition, France has adhered to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, signed under the auspices of the United Nations. As a member of the Council of Europe, France signed the Convention on Safeguarding Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties and the European Social Charter. These actions demonstrate that the country continues to affirm that democracy in France is solidly based on the Rights of Man first proclaimed in 1789.

Yet there still seems to be some doubt whether these rights apply to everybody. The restrictions of the past seem to appear in today's attitudes toward poverty. When people fall below a certain level of inequality and poverty, we seem to hesitate in recognizing that they have the same rights as others. Or perhaps we feel that the efforts to insure their rights are too costly and, in the name of the greater good for the greater number, we allow injustice to fall on a small minority and accept their exclusion from society.

The principle of insuring human rights for the poor has often been attested.

In 1790 La Rochefoucault Liancourt, president of the Committee on Begging, said:

"From times past we have always been ready to offer charity to the poor, but never to recognize the claims of the poor on society or those of society on the poor. The organization of assistance ought to be written into the Constitution. Public charity is not an expression of compassionate virtue; it is a duty, it is justice. Wherever there are people without the means of subsistence, the rights of people have been denied; the social order has been broken."

Similarly, Barère, speaking for the Committee of Public Safety, told the Convention on May 22, 1794, that the poor had a right to the charity of the nation:

"Yes, I am speaking of their rights because in a democracy... everything ought to lift the citizen above basic need, by work if

he is fit, by education if he is a child, by assistance if he is ill or old."

How far the country has been faithful to that principle, and how far it has been extended, can be judged from the remarks of the President of France to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on September 30, 1982:

"The struggle for human rights has become a struggle to ensure that none shall be excluded from their benefits: neither the Third World immigrant in a developed country, nor the member of the Fourth World, where people have been poor and illiterate for generations, nor the nomad wishing to preserve the ancient tradition of moving from place to place, nor the person leaving prison trying to rejoin society, nor the handicapped, nor the elderly, too often neglected."

In testifying for this report, Peter Leuprecht [5] commented on the interdependence of rights and on the joint responsibility of the nations seeking to advance human rights in Europe. He first recalled the three main ideas on which human rights are based:

-the dignity of all human beings;

-the solidarity needed at national and international levels to promote and defend human rights;

-the desire to offer special protection to the weakest.

By their nature, human rights are indivisible and universal; therefore, all people can claim these rights, including those in deep poverty, the illiterate and the powerless. Through the intermediary of nongovernmental organizations, these people can join in seeking the goal proclaimed by the international organizations "to free humanity from fear and want." In this way they are part of an international struggle against the practice of might over right. The emphasis of present efforts is on insuring the right to meeting basic needs, which is the prerequisite for all other rights. This means more than simply the guarantee that people should not be threatened by hunger; they should also be able to live in dignity.

Leuprecht cited some recent examples of this international effort:

- The Council of Europe has questioned member states on how they protect the basic rights of minors placed in institutions.
- The European Court for Human Rights issued a ruling that protects the right to family life, particularly the right of parents to bring up their own children and the right of children to be brought up by their own parents.
- The European Court has directed a member state to change its legal assistance laws to ensure that all citizens have access to justice regardless of their socioeconomic situation.

Destitution and social exclusion are increasingly viewed as violations of human rights. To promote this view, the Fourth World Movement launched an appeal calling on people to reaffirm this aspect of human rights. In 1982 and 1983, more than 200,000 people in three European countries signed the appeal. Awareness is spreading and the public is now faced with new questions. If people have enough resources to prevent them from starving but have no way of escaping their dependence on others, they are hardly free to enjoy economic and social rights.

When we give benefits to the unemployed and the handicapped without making any effort to reintegrate them into active social roles, we discriminate against them in a way contrary to their inherent human dignity.

This brief overview of modern history has given us a background for the next chapters in which we shall consider current legislation and regulations and the practices and problems that led to adopting them. We shall also examine whether they meet the need of the poorest people, not only to survive, but to live in dignity and freedom with their fellow citizens. How far does the protection extend and who is still excluded?

The Economic and Social Council, through its Social Affairs Section, is responsible for "studying the problems raised by the most disadvantaged segments of the population" (Article 2 of Decree No. 84-822, dated September 6, 1984, on the organization of the Economic and Social Council), and the Council itself is obligated "to examine and suggest any economic or social changes that have become necessary" (Article 1 of Regulation No. 58-1360, dated December 29, 1958, establishing the charter of the Economic and Social Council, as amended by Regulation No. 62-918, dated August 8, 1962).

This task is particularly important because there are few groups, public or private, that undertake comprehensive surveys of a population whose interests are seldom taken into account in political discussions. It did happen during the French Revolution in what was called "The Records of Grievances by the Fourth Order, a correspondence of good will between the dispossessed, men of conscience, and the Estates General, to compensate for the lack of the right to appeal directly to the Estates General, which should be available to all Frenchmen, but which this Order does not yet enjoy." (Dufourny de Villiers, *Cahiers du Quatrième Ordre,* No. 1, April 25, 1789. Reprinted by Editions Histoire Sociale, Paris 1967.)

In the following chapters, we shall examine how the poor live, sometimes with social protection, sometimes without it, and sometimes entirely on their own.

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From the earliest days of the Christian era, the Church declared that the poor are entitled to share in the benefits of society. But under the feudal system, lords protected only the rural working population from destitution. Very quickly a distinction arose between the poor who were part of society and the landless and jobless whose misery made them outcasts.

Between the 12th and the 14th centuries the face of poverty changed. Now in the rapidly expanding urban communities, the poor were supported by works of mercy and loans from the "funds" of religious fraternities. The assistance continued to take the form of either material goods or money.

When responsibility for the poor shifted from being viewed as a personal duty of Christians and became the collective obligation of the urban community (between the 14th and the 17th centuries), the poor began to be treated more severely. However, at the same time the idea developed that the poor had the right to earn a living and that their children were entitled to grow up at home and learn a trade. Help ceased to be purely in kind and began to include a whole range of apprenticeships.

In the 19th century, the rise of the working class was accompanied by organized efforts to create self-help, solidarity and a collective defense against exploitation, all of which continue to the present day. The poorest, however, remained unorganized, only marginally employed or forming a pool of casual labor, a practice that was to persist for many years. They received little benefit from the gains of the working classes and still depended on charity.

In the past 30 years, the problem of poverty has been rephrased in terms of human rights by private groups and political and religious leaders. A significant change in our time is the recognition of chronic poverty as a flagrant violation of human rights. Families of the Fourth World are organizing new forms of solidarity between themselves and other citizens. In Fourth World people's universities throughout France, those living in chronic poverty can reflect together on their situation and exercise the right to speak for themselves.

This is one stage in a slow but steady progress; we have no reason to believe that it will not continue.

CHAPTER II

ARE CHRONICALLY POOR PEOPLE GUARANTEED A SECURE INCOME?

On March 15, 1944, in the closing days of the Second World War, the French Resistance Movement issued a charter that called for "a comprehensive social security plan that would provide citizens with the means of existence when they are unable to secure them through
their own work."

A regulation dated October 4, 1945, further clarified the idea of social security, stating that its purpose was "to guarantee workers and their families against risks that might lessen or nullify their ability to earn a living" and "to cover the costs of pregnancy and of other family expenses." The same regulation also anticipated that the social security system would be extended to "new categories of beneficiaries and to other needs not foreseen by existing legislation." Thus, the regulation had written into it the provision that it could be adapted as necessary to deal with new situations arising from future social change.

In view of these clearly stated goals, we have to wonder why some citizens who are unable to work still lack the basic necessities. How is it that some workers and their families have no guaranteed security when their earning power is impaired or wiped out and they cannot cover essential expenditures?

What then is implied by the terms "means of existence" and "guarantee"?

The means of existence are more than merely what people need to avoid going hungry. In our urban consumer society, people have to pay for material needs such as food, clothing, housing and health care, and also for what they need to participate in society: education, books, modern sources of information and communication. Today's changing society demands the greatest possible creativity, adaptability and education of its members. They must have sufficient "means of existence" to allow them to create a future for themselves and their children. Not being dependent on others is not enough; people need to be able to develop their own potential if they are not to be excluded more and more from the social and cultural life around them.

And what is meant by "guarantee"? Our social protection system, which is supposed to adapt to changing needs, already provides payments partially to replace income for the unemployed, the aged, the sick and the handicapped, and to help meet various family obligations. These guarantees were established to meet essential needs, but they were restricted to certain categories of people. Access to these benefits is limited to avoid uncontrolled growth in the number of beneficiaries.

The amount and duration of many benefits depend on considerations such as:

- the situation of the individual or family (for example, family allowances are based on the number of minors in the family);
- acquired rights (for example, being employed for a certain time leads to the right to unemployment benefits).

Often, under our social protection system, individuals and families are entitled to certain benefits, regardless of their actual or future needs and their current resources. If, for example, some households receive only the children's allowance (no one in the household is working or receiving unemployment or disability benefits), they are not really benefiting from the social protection system. Consequently, their chance of obtaining subsidized housing or even adequate medical care is further compromised.

This situation leads us to ask:

-To what extent do the major elements of the social protection system reach the poorest members of the population?
-To what extent can the recent experiments with a guaranteed minimum income help to develop a social protection system offering a guarantee of income security for the poorest segments of the population?

The purpose of our investigation is not to question the existing system, which has been developed and refined over

time. We refer to its weaknesses only to try to find solutions for the many situations mentioned in Part One in which people were in chronic poverty or lacked basic security.

I. SOCIAL PROTECTION AND THE MOST DISADVANTAGED

A. Replacement Incomes

1. Old-age payments

Persons over 65 can receive a supplemental payment from the National Solidarity Fund, in addition to their retirement pension, in order to bring their total income up to two thirds of the minimum wage for a single person. Georgina Dufoix therefore stated in her testimony to the Social Affairs Section of the Economic and Social Council on February 4, 1986, that the elderly are no longer living in chronic poverty. This old-age benefit, though modest, provides a real guarantee of security. Nevertheless, it is inadequate for older people who have no other income and have additional expenses, such as the care of grandchildren when their parents cannot look after them. Moreover, this relative financial security cannot by itself protect the elderly against other hardships, such as isolation and dependence on others [I]. Both the Little Brothers of the Poor, a charitable religious group, and Catholic Relief testified to the fear the elderly have of being institutionalized. The testimony applied specifically to low-income families where the different efforts of family members to overcome hardship render mutual support very difficult.

2. Sickness benefits

In principle, everyone has some form of medical insurance. But the cost of illness still poses a serious problem for low-income families. The coverage of medical expenses will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Wage-earners who are forced to stop working are eligible for a daily payment equal to half their regular wage. Uninsured unemployed persons have no loss of income because they have no income to begin with. But the energy required to keep a family going in these circumstances may be well beyond persons so ill that they are eligible for sick benefits. They must look for help, walk from place to place, and keep a household going with few or no resources. In addition, illness most likely prevents them from doing the work that helped the family to survive: for example, doing odd jobs or collecting scrap. Workers who are not regular wage-earners do not receive benefits to replace lost earnings, nor do their normally low incomes allow them to put money aside for emergencies.

3. Disability coverage

The coverage for disabilities is better but still insufficient to protect everybody.

If the disability arises from a work-related accident or occupational hazard, the victim is entitled to a pension based on the degree of disability and on previous earnings. If the person is completely disabled, the pension can be equal to the former earnings. The workers best protected by this system are those in well-established industries where the efforts of organized labor have led to the recognition of job-related health problems and the adoption of safety and health measures.

But there are workers who are constantly exposed to serious hazards, such as the presence of toxic materials and the lack of safety equipment, and yet cannot prove that the harm they suffer is work-related. They may be exposed to health risks in a succession of dangerous and unhealthy jobs. In such cases, their disability pension is limited to 30% of their last earnings if they are considered still able to do some kind of work, and up to 50% if they are considered to be totally disabled. But before such a benefit can be paid, the applicants have to prove that their prior employment entitled them to full social security coverage. If it did not, they may apply to enter a retraining program, the Commission for Technical Training and Reclassification (C.O.T.O.R.E.P), which gives an allowance for "handicapped adults." If the disability exceeds 80% and is permanent, the applicant can receive an amount equal to the old-age social security benefit. In cases of lesser disability, the person may also apply for this benefit if he or she is unable to find work.

Disability coverage for the very poor generally runs into two major obstacles. One is that the agency concerned fails to recognize the long-term debilitating effects of the type of work performed by the poorest workers. Similarly, agencies may offer part-time work or retraining that are unrealistic for many of these unskilled workers. Their state of health often prevents them from having regular employment, but they cannot find part-time work and they have no other source of income.

4. Unemployment benefits

There are still many cases where the unemployed receive no benefits, despite the existence of public assistance, which is supposed to complement the unemployment insurance system.

a) Benefits from unemployment insurance

According to the terms of the 1984 and 1985 agreements between employers and labor, "the national occupational unemployment insurance system will guarantee a replacement income for a given period to all eligible wage-earners who are not voluntarily unemployed."

The system provides two successive series of payments for a person who has been covered for at least six months.

- The basic benefit, based on previous earnings, cannot be less than 57% of those earnings, or at least 107.61 francs per day as of October 1986. However, because the benefit cannot be more than 75% of the previous earnings, many unemployed persons whose earnings had been near or at the bottom of the scale actually receive less then the stated minimum benefit. According to the National Union for Employment in Industry and Commerce (U.N.E.D.I.C.), the agency responsible for distributing benefits, this was the case for 29% of the unemployed who received benefits as of June 30, 1986.
- The extended benefit, which prolongs the period of eligibility, was set at a flat rate of 62.28 francs per day as of October 1986 (90.78 francs for persons over 55).

The length of time the person has been covered under the system determines the length of benefits. This can vary from three months (for three months of work) to a maximum of 30 months (45 and 60 months for persons over 50 and 55 respectively)

The intent of the restrictions on unemployment benefits is to link benefits to worker contributions and to avoid abuses. In practice, the restrictions deny benefits to the workers in the most insecure situations. These include:

- job-seekers who have exhausted both their basic and their extended eligibility benefits;
- workers who have not been enrolled long enough during the 12 or 24 months preceding the start of unemployment;
- seasonal workers;
- casual workers, the self-employed, and first-time job seekers.

b) Public assistance (commonly called solidarity aid)

Some of those ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits can receive other forms of aid limited to a maximum of 3,933 francs per month per individual and 7,866 francs per household as of January 1, 1987. These are:

1. The special solidarity allowance available for unemployed persons who have exhausted their unemployment benefits, provided they were in full-time employment during five of the preceding ten years. This allowance is granted for renewable six-month periods and is roughly equivalent to the amount of the extended unemployment benefit. For those entitled to it, this allowance constitutes an initial guaranteed income.

2. The "integration" allowance available for persons waiting for a job, or waiting to enter a paid training program. The allowance can last up to one year and its availability is limited to strictly defined categories. Among these are:

- unemployed young people under 25 years of age, who are not eligible for basic unemployment benefits. Payment in their case is not related to income level;
- unemployed women who are widowed, divorced, separated or single and who have a dependent child;
- persons released from prison who have served a term of at least two months;
- young people under 25 who can show that they are the sole family support and that their income is inadequate.

The allowance can be up to 43.70 francs per day (87.40 francs for single women with children, 41.40 francs for young people).

On the one hand, the restrictions seem to result from a fear of establishing a category of people who are paid for not working. On the other hand, the concern that certain persons will be left without any means of support has led to an increase in the number of assistance categories.

However, the result seems to work to the disadvantage of those who want to work but who have not had the advantage of steady full-time employment, and whose lack of resources gives them the least chance of employment or training. The complexity of the system also works against those whose ignorance of the rules or procedures denies them opportunities supposedly available to all. The waiting times (sometimes several months) for periodic review of entitlements force the poorest recipients to depend on the charity of others while they wait.

The concept of a replacement income during periods of unemployment is compromised. The system seems to fail at the point where it is most needed. It does little to assist job promotion and perhaps even perpetuates the inequalities of the job market.

These times of changing employment require access to effective job training, especially for the less skilled, if they are to be integrated into the future work force. The requirements for such training will be examined later. Here it is important to emphasize the need for a minimum of economic security. Unskilled workers must have the opportunity to undertake job training and to believe that they can succeed as a result. It is also essential that the most disadvantaged should be able to seek work without jeopardizing the precarious sources of income on which they depend.

This brief review of unemployment coverage shows that not everyone can depend on the system to replace their income when they lose their earning power. The requirement for prior employment eliminates those who are already living in chronic poverty. Moreover, the allowances that are paid rarely provide an acceptable minimum income. Neither the amount nor the eligibility period represent long-term security for people already experiencing severe hardship.

B. Secure Sources of Family Income

Over the years, a number of special entitlements have been added to the family allowances introduced at the end of the Second World War to ensure subsistence for everyone in all circumstances. The 1970s brought new allowances that were based on a family's resources and that no longer required the head of the household to be working. The idea was to simplify the administrative details. The report "General Family Policy" *(La politique familiale globale),* presented by Mr. Burnel to the Economic and Social Council in 1981, contains a detailed history of the concept and evolution of family allowances.

Today, all families with two or more children receive family allowances. However, there are exceptions. One case is when the family has children over 17 years of age who are not in school or in a training program, and who are not working. This provision penalizes the poorest families the most, because their young people lack job skills and suffer from a high rate of unemployment (see Part One, Chapter IV).

Allowances can also be suspended when children are not going to school. This rule is rarely enforced in cases of short absences, but it does affect families who have no fixed abode.

Also, the allowance is sometimes suspended because local school authorities refuse to admit children on the grounds that the family is not resident in the community.

Many types of allowances have been introduced to meet different family situations. But the conditions under which they are granted, however well-founded, sometimes have the unfortunate effect of excluding those who need them most. For instance:

- ***Housing allowances*** are granted for accommodation that conforms to "minimum standards for residential occupation." The poorest families often cannot find or cannot afford such housing. (See Part Two, Chapter III.)
- ***Infant allowances*** are reduced by 50% if prenatal consultations and physical examinations are not done regularly as required. A study of one district of the Family Allowance Fund [2] showed that about one third of the more disadvantaged women in the survey did not fulfill the medical visit requirement. The reasons cited were that they did not know about the requirement, that they feared being scolded for becoming pregnant or even being pressured into aborting the child or giving it up at birth, or simply that they were prevented by more immediate worries such as threats of eviction, repossession of household goods, or lack of money.

We must also mention the recently announced regulation limiting the number of infant allowances payable to one family. This would again penalize poor families, in which births tend to take place at close intervals.

- **Single parent allowances (A.P.I.),** subject to a means test, give a substantial payment (3,366.70 francs per month for a mother and one child as of October 1986) for a year at a time (renewable until the last child's third birthday). This is given on condition that the parent is still "living alone." A recent report to the Economic and Social Council [3] criticized this stipulation as having detrimental effects on the family, and as being vague and difficult to verify. It makes payment of the allowance dependent on there being no male partner in the home.
- **Parental education allowance** *(allocation parentale d'éducation)* is given for a two-year period to parents who give up a job in order to raise at least three children. The purpose of this allowance is to increase the birthrate and to free up jobs. Beginning August 1, 1987, parents can benefit from this allowance if they have been employed for two years in the previous ten years rather than, as before, 24 months in the previous 30 months. Relaxing the employment requirement should benefit certain disadvantaged women. However, their number will certainly be small compared with the number of young women in poverty, many of whom have been unemployed since they left school. Even though the condition has been eased, the prior employment requirement still creates inequalities among women with children.

The expansion of family allowance categories has been accompanied by new restrictions that fall heavily on the poorest families. These include the limitation on infant allowances (see above), the elimination of the extended supplementary family benefit, which will penalize families with three children of whom one is over 17 but still dependent, and the tightening of the conditions for granting the moving benefit.

In 1970 an **orphan allowance** was created to help care for children whose parent or parents had died. It was extended in 1975 to any situation where a parent is left alone. Recently, it was renamed the family support allowance *(allocation de soutien familial).* The amount is low: 378.75 francs a month for one child in 1986, 505 francs a month for an orphan without either parent. Since January 1986, the abandoned parent is no longer required to bring a court action against the absent one. Here we have an example of a measure that, unlike many others, may help very poor parents in particular.

We shall now consider the general application of the family allowances.

Without good reading and writing skills, an applicant will find it difficult to supply in a timely fashion the information that the Family Allowance Fund office requires on such matters as income and changes in address, family situation or job status. This results in delays or errors in payments. The effects on the family budget are serious when the allowances constitute the family's principal income. Errors are eventually straightened out: in the case of underpayments, the amount due is paid in a single lump sum. Overpayments are recovered by reducing subsequent payments by a maximum of 20% each. But the variations in the amounts paid leave the family unsure of what resources it can depend on in advance, especially because other sources of income are often irregular and unpredictable.

The Oheix report of 1981 referred to this problem, and improvements have since been made. Among these are: periodic information campaigns aimed at the beneficiaries, home visits by workers to verify information, a friendlier welcome in the disbursement offices, and a transfer of records from one office to another in case of moves or changes in program. Also, people may now receive payments even while their cases are being verified. These improvements have certainly reduced the unnecessary hardship to which poor households are subjected. Yet there are still cases where payments are suspended, creating unnecessary hardships for families.

Even if all these difficulties were eliminated, the question remains whether these allowances are sufficient to cover family expenses.

According to a recent study [4], family expenditures increase an average of 19% for one child, 35% for two children, and 56% for three children. Meanwhile, family allowances plus tax relief in the form of dependent child exemptions provide an average increase in family income of 3%, 12% and 25% respectively.

In his testimony to the Economic and Social Council, Mr. Fragonard, Director of the National Family Allowance Fund, stated that the system of family allowances enables many families, especially large ones, to escape poverty.

However, he said that an examination of families with dependent children showed the following differences among the quartile with the smallest income of their own:

Number of children	Own income per person per day (In francs)
2	90
3	62
4	43
5	31
6	21

The decrease in per capita income as the number of children increases is explained by the fact that, at low income levels, increasing family size goes hand in hand with a deterioration in the socio-economic status of the family head and reduced opportunities for women in the family to work outside the home.

While family allowances do increase these families' disposable income, the increase is greater for single-parent families than for others. Fragonard estimated that in 1986, 150,000 two-parent families were still below the level of 50 francs per person per day, even with family allowances.

Another form of aid to families is subsidies for certain expenses, such as vacation vouchers from the Family Allowance Fund or reductions in the cost of rail tickets for large families. These are undeniable advantages, at least for those who are able to, and know how to, benefit from them.

Yet disadvantaged families can rarely travel or take vacations, nor are they especially encouraged to do so. Their need to escape from their everyday environment and to widen their horizons is greatest, yet they have the least chance of doing so. Vacation vouchers have allowed a growing number of modest-income families to go on vacation; but when a very poor family considers a trip, it must apply for additional help to make up the difference between the real cost of a vacation and the amount provided by the vouchers.

Family allowances provide an important part of children's educational expenses and they help prevent families from sinking into dire poverty. To be most effective, particularly for families in difficult circumstances, the allowances should cover all child expenses, should be paid regularly, and should be easily accessible for such families. However, rules and restrictions still tend to deprive the poorest families of some benefits. Specific kinds of aid often reach only certain categories of the poor, notably single-parent families.

C. Public Assistance

The different forms of public assistance reflect a national concern for those who do not fully benefit or who do not benefit at all from the social security system. We shall deal only with direct financial assistance to families and individuals in serious difficulty, namely the monthly allowances of the Aid to Children program (A.S.E.) and emergency cash grants. Other forms of help, such as food coupons, also exist. In the chapter on health, we shall discuss the public medical aid program.

Expenditures for direct financial assistance have increased substantially in recent years. According to the 1985 report from the general accounting office, expenditures on monthly allowances and emergency payments from the Aid to Children budget rose from 870 million francs in 1980 to 1,768 million francs in 1983, an increase of 103% in four years.

One indication of who receives this aid comes from a recent study in the city of Rennes [5]. It shows the following distribution of public assistance payments in 1984 by the social services office (C.C.A.S.) to 2,785 households: approximately 57% went to persons classified as living alone (mainly young people), less than 8% to childless couples, and 36% to families with children, mostly single-parent families (95% headed by women) with relatively few children.

In some Departments (see "Poverty and Lack of Security in the Vosges" *[Pauvreté et précarité dans les Vosges]*, a document by the National Union of Family Associations), young people aged 14 to 18 who have left their families are seeking this aid.

The grants are often made to compensate for delays in receiving benefits from other programs (family allowances, sickness and unemployment benefits). This was the case for 28% of the households receiving these grants, according to a recent study by the Research Center for Study and Observation of Living Conditions [6].

Unlike the regular social security system, the granting of public assistance, such as monthly payments from the Aid to Children program, depends on an evaluation of the applicant's need. Legislation has established the right to public assistance, but local authorities have often set their own payment scales. In any case, a local authority controls the granting of assistance. Whatever the justification for these procedures, applicants may feel that their morals or lifestyle are being judged. Sometimes local prejudice develops against those who seek help too often; they are considered a burden on the community. Emergency cash grants are relatively small, usually given as one-time assistance, and not meant to be renewed within a short time. There is no legal entitlement to emergency cash grants; they depend entirely on the goodwill of local administrations.

The proposed decentralization of the public assistance program might change the way the system operates, but it is too early to tell. The Economic and Social Council's committee on regional economy and national development is preparing a report on the impact of decentralization on public assistance.

The law of January 6, 1986, which set the conditions for the transfer of responsibilities in matters of health and public assistance, attempted to define criteria for receiving public assistance. However, the conditions are still very complicated. The law called for the establishment of a Departmental council for social development on which the recipients of public assistance were to be represented [7]. Applicants would have the right to appear before the grant committee, accompanied by a person of their choice. There still remains the question of what recourse will be available to people without fixed abodes, or to itinerant populations not registered as vagrants for whose

welfare the nation as a whole is still responsible, and of how they will be represented.

The question also arises whether public assistance will be cut back with the shift of financial responsibility to the Departmental level. Some Departments, aware that they can no longer count on co-financing by the central government, seem to settle on a fixed public assistance budget regardless of actual need.

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Our analysis shows that it is still difficult to guarantee that all individuals and families have the means to survive. Those who do not must turn to public assistance or private charity. The aid they receive in the form of shelter, cash grants, or in-kind assistance can help them deal with emergencies but offers no real long-term security. The recipients go from one source of temporary help to another, never gaining any new strength. On the contrary, they become visibly more dependent and even fearful. Even the program workers who provide the payments are dissatisfied with the system. All those involved are aware of these problems, and consensus is growing for the need for a guaranteed minimum income.

II. EXPERIMENTS WITH A GUARANTEED MINIMUM INCOME

The idea of providing a minimum of security through grants to maintain income is not new. England tried it in the 18th century, following the Speenhamland decision [8]. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the concept was promoted by theorists such as Charles Fourier in 1836 and Jacques Duboin in 1936 [9].

New Zealand introduced a form of guaranteed minimum income in 1938. Other countries have done so more recently, among them the Federal Republic of Germany in 1962, the Netherlands in 1963, Great Britain in 1966, Canada in 1969, Belgium in 1974 and Luxembourg in 1986. The experience of several of these countries is discussed at the end of Part Two of this report.

In France some local communities, as well as public and private agencies, have set up experimental programs to provide a guaranteed minimum income.

A. Legislative and Regulatory Measures

The family income supplement (S.U.R.F.) of 1980 reflected the general desire to provide a guaranteed income. This new program established the principle of a differential payment to bring income up to a certain level, but only for those earning a regular wage. Those with an irregular or unidentifiable income received a fixed amount of 210 francs per month. As these forms of income supplement were not indexed to the cost of living, they became obsolete; only a few families still receive the fixed allocation of 210 francs. Even when it was working well, the family income supplement program discriminated against families without regular earnings, who needed the most help.

While this report was being written, the government adopted a plan which, according to its sponsor, Adrien Zeller, Secretary of State for Social Security, intended to help "destitute persons living in conditions of exclusion." This plan is based on contracts between the central government and participating Departments. The contract provides an allowance of 2,000 francs per month in return for part-time work and participation in any job-training programs that are established. The government provides up to 40% and the Department the rest. The plan is intended for "persons over 25 years of age who are not eligible for unemployment benefits and who be-long to households without either earned or substitute income."

The plan is a step forward for several reasons: it could be extended to the entire country if it receives high-level government support. Unlike earlier programs, the priority beneficiaries are people with no financial resources, and the plan includes the possibility of training.

But the allowance is so low that it is more a survival income than a guaranteed income. A person with any income - even if it is lower than the allowance - is ineligible. Moreover, the family situation plays no role. Finally, the recipients have to be able to work and the community has to be able to provide work for them. After several months of experimentation, the results in the Department of Ille-et-Vilaine have not been very encouraging. There has been great difficulty in finding suitable work and, consequently, in enrolling any participants.

B. Experiments at the Local Level

1. Basic premise

In most of the experiments a "differential" allowance is provided to bridge the gap between an established minimum income for a family (or exceptionally an individual) and its current resources.

2. Beneficiaries

In principle, the intended beneficiaries are all the households in the designated district whose incomes are below the established threshold. However, in Rennes only families with children are eligible; in St. Etienne only single parents with dependent children are eligible; in Nantes and Charleville-Mézières only single persons and childless couples are eligible; and in Clichy only unemployed workers are eligible.

3. Duration

If the payments are to represent a guaranteed income, they should continue until another source of revenue - earned or supplemental - can be found. In the local experiments we have examined, however, the duration of payments is usually very short. In Besançon they last for a month, with possible extension. In Belfort, there is a review every three months with a mandatory three-month suspension of payments at the end of a year. Only in the 14-month experiment in Rennes was the principle of a real guaranteed minimum incorporated into the program (see below).

When the duration of payments is very short, it is doubtful whether this plan offers an improvement over other forms of aid with monthly payments. A more fundamental question arises if no attempt is made to locate an alternative source of income during the limited duration of the differential allowance. There is no justification for dropping individuals and families back into destitution simply to avoid the possibility that they will become dependent on some minimum income plan. Is there not a contradiction involved in periodically suspending or even canceling minimum income payments while expecting people to recover their sense of responsibility - something that is at best very difficult on a minimum survival income?

4. Amount of payments

There are different levels of payment in the different experiments, depending on their definition of the ceiling income. In Auxerre, the level is 700 francs per person; in Besançon and Nîmes, it is 70% of the national minimum wage for the first family member. Seventy percent of the national minimum is not a negligible amount; it covers basic necessities, but hardly allows for other expenses for training or education. There are differences also in the way family members are counted: in Auxerre all adults in the family receive equal amounts; in Besançon and Nimes the amount is increased for a man and wife and for each additional child.

Differences also appear in the way other income is treated. For example, in Nimes and Besançon the guaranteed level of income is the same, but in Nîmes that figure includes family allowances, whereas in Besançon it does not. This is an extremely important difference. In fact, treating family allowances as an additional source of income seriously penalizes families with children. It distorts the function of family allowances by considering them primary income unrelated to the special needs of children.

5. Financing the plan

Most of the local experiments are funded entirely from municipal resources. In Grenoble and St. Etienne, the Family Allowance Fund provides all the financing. In effect, this penalizes communities or Departments with a high incidence of poverty. The "local income supplements," as they are called in Belfort and Ille-et-Villaine, are co-financed by the Department and the central government. The experiment in Rennes (to be described later) was co-financed by ATD Fourth World from a grant received under the 1985 anti-poverty program, by the Rennes Family Allowance Fund, and by contributions from the Departmental children's aid service and from the Rennes community social action center. These agencies contributed an amount equal to the emergency payments paid to the same families in the previous year. This arrangement meant that 35% of the financing for the guaranteed minimum income plan came from what was saved by not paying emergency aid.

6. Linking guaranteed income to work

The recent government plan once again throws the spotlight on the relationship between guaranteed minimum income and work. In connection with the experiment in Ille-et-Villaine, we pointed out the danger of making the receipt of a survival income conditional on finding work when the community cannot provide jobs or when participants do not have the skills required.

To see the question in a broader context and not simply in terms of a current employment situation, we refer to a detailed study by Professor G. Enderle of the Laboratory for Ethical Economic Research at the University of St. Gall, Switzerland. This study emphasizes that the incentive to work must be related to the ability to work. It shows that there is still confusion between the need to work for an income and the right to work, which is a universal right. According to Enderle, only when it is recognized that the poor really want to escape poverty will the difference between work to achieve a guaranteed income and work as work become clear.

Other points can be made about linking a guaranteed minimum income to work. For instance, the jobs should not be "make-work," nor should they compete with the normal job market. The work should help the recipients add to their skills and facilitate their reentry into society.

7. The next step after a guaranteed income

The ultimate goal of a guaranteed income plan is to enable the beneficiaries to earn more than the guaranteed income; so the grant of a guaranteed minimum payment is generally accompanied by the support of a social worker in helping the recipient obtain other benefits, training opportunities or employment. Ille-et-Villaine (June 2, 1986) and the sub-Department of Belfort (March 4, 1986) both started programs based on this principle. They guarantee households below a certain income level an income supplement from local funds; in return, the recipients commit themselves to a "personal independence" contract, whereby they undertake to reestablish their independence through a job, training, or participation in a community undertaking.

8. Evaluation

Most of these programs are too recent to permit an evaluation of the long-term changes in the lives of the individuals and families involved. Some conclusions can, however, be drawn from the Besançon program, which has been in existence for more than 15 years, and from the Rennes program, which has included a systematic study of the impact of a guaranteed income on the daily life and prospects of the beneficiaries.

9. The Besançon program

One of the interesting features of the Besançon program is that it demonstrates the small amount of expenditures involved. According to the testimony of Mr. Schwint, the 1,717 grants made in 1985 cost 5 million francs, equivalent t0 4% of the local social service budget or 0.6% of the total municipal budget.

As the program developed, it affected different groups within the population. Called the "guaranteed social minimum," although it is really more an emergency assistance scheme, the program was originally intended for those considered to be most

in need, that is, the elderly (in 1968) and single mothers (in 1973). It was finally extended to all eligible households in 1974.

However, with the creation of a national single-parent allowance in 1976 and the increase in old age pensions in 1981, the groups that first inspired the creation of the "guaranteed social minimum" feature only rarely in its caseload because they are guaranteed a basic income from other sources.

Schwint also pointed out the limitations of a program that is narrowly defined and local in nature. The "guaranteed social minimum" is now available only to people who have been resident in the city for more than a year. The most serious limitation is that this temporary measure is doing nothing to change the situation of people who have no income and no prospects of gaining any. Moreover, potential beneficiaries who are unable to make an application themselves cannot receive assistance. We are led to conclude that if a real guaranteed income program were established in Besançon, the expenditures would be considerably higher than the current outlays.

10. The Rennes program

In Rennes [10] a minimum income grant was given for 14 months to 126 disadvantaged families who participated in the program and its evaluation on a voluntary basis. No demands were made on the families, although a team of social workers was put at their disposal for consultation or assistance.

Most of the participants experienced an immediate improvement in daily life, especially in meeting the needs of food and clothing.

Many were able to pay off their debts (for example, for rent, electricity, and money borrowed from neighbors). Some who had large debts still had unpaid balances at the end of the experiment.

Some participants could do things that they had long wanted to do but could not afford, such as enter training programs, get eyeglasses or obtain needed dental care.

The number of persons with jobs at the end of the experiment was the same as at the beginning; those who started with regular jobs continued to work. Those who had been unemployed for more than two years did not find employment, although in the interviews they constantly spoke of wanting to find regular jobs.

There were two contrary reactions to the program: some participants stressed the sense of dignity they gained from the program, while others felt more dependent as a result. For some it meant being free from constantly owing money, from having to beg for help or even food, and from a feeling of constant shame. Others, afraid that social workers would interfere with their lives, did not seek the help the program offered. Finally, some said they wanted to earn a living and not receive hand-outs.

These different experiments in guaranteeing income reveal both the conditions in which the concept can work and also the limitations of a minimum income grant.

The recipients need adequate regular payments to enable them to establish budgets and live within them, to buy what they need, to avoid having to borrow money in order to survive, and to be free from dependence on other people who make decisions for them. The income should be made available for a duration that allows the recipient to undertake longterm projects. Three or six months, or even a year, is simply not enough for families to become self-supporting. Employment training often requires successive stages before participants can qualify for a job. Because children and young people should be able to find security within their families until they become independent, family allowances should be excluded in computing the grant.

A guaranteed income, even if sufficient in amount and duration, cannot by itself ensure a better future or a stable job. It cannot compensate for all the accumulated handicaps of a life in chronic poverty. It has no influence on the job requirements that tend to eliminate the unskilled. It cannot fill the gaps in a child's learning.

The guarantee of a minimum income is certainly one element in an overall effort to eliminate chronic poverty, but it needs to be complemented by measures in other areas.

CHAPTER III

HOUSING: A BASIC SECURITY AND RIGHT NOT GUARANTEED FOR ALL

As we noted in Part One of this report, the lack of decent housing is one of the most visible manifestations of chronic poverty. Many individuals and families are wandering from place to place in search of permanent housing or are living in makeshift dwellings. Social service workers are seeing more and more young adults and families in this situation, especially on the outskirts of cities or in places where there might be a chance of finding work.

By declaring 1987 the Year of Shelter for the Homeless, the United Nations drew attention to this issue and mobilized worldwide efforts to deal with it. Despite substantial efforts, France cannot yet offer this basic security to all its citizens.

On May 28, 1986, the Economic and Social Council adopted the recommendations of a report, "Housing for Low-Income Persons" *(Le Logement des personnes à faibles ressources),* by Daniel Pétrequin. The report points out three main obstacles that must be dealt with simultaneously if people are to regain their right to decent housing:

- their inability to meet the cost of housing;
- the reluctance of local authorities to actively promote housing;
- the lack of diversified low-income housing.

The report estimates that two million households, or approximately 10% of all French households, lack decent housing and have income levels of less than 75% of the minimum wage. This segment of the population is in a

precarious economic situation. The households are not all in chronic poverty, but they all experience financial difficulties.

The recommendation adopted by the Council clearly states: "Marginal measures are not enough. Given the magnitude of the problem, we must find comprehensive solutions."

The serious situation of the most disadvantaged groups makes the need for structural changes even more urgent. Such measures must also prevent the recurrence of the extreme cases we see today.

The Quillot law of June 22, 1982, stated that adequate housing is a fundamental right. Acknowledging this right was a step forward even though the means to guarantee it were still lacking. A principle had been established, clearly stated and set in law. Yet people continue to be evicted, to have their homes repossessed and to have their water, gas and electricity cut off.

The right to housing had in fact already been established in a resolution of the Economic and Social Council, dated January 25, 1956, concerning housing for low-income workers. It stated, "The right to decent, up-to-date housing that meets the needs of family life must be considered a basic human right."

In the last few years, many groups that deal with housing have joined efforts to alert public authorities to the housing problem. The Social Council of the public housing program (H.L.M.) began hearings on the subject and, in March 1985, called for the creation of a public housing service to meet "the need to guarantee assistance to any family facing a housing problem."

All these initiatives indicate a growing awareness that housing is a basic need and that without it, other rights are compromised. Homelessness destabilizes families and can lead to families being broken up. Without an official residence people cannot vote. Substandard housing affects health and interferes with proper medical treatment.

I. DOES GOVERNMENT POLICY GUARANTEE HOUSING FOR ALL?

A. General Policies

1. The government's principal efforts in this field have been to stimulate housing construction. Builders can receive tax exemptions, special subsidies [1], and favorable interest rates. These reduce the cost of new construction and the rehabilitation of older buildings.

Public housing is a proven and effective institution; through it, communities carry out their responsibility to provide and manage housing for low-income people. But public housing still does not meet the needs of the poorest families.

For some time after the post-war reconstruction period, many individuals and families remained crowded in slums, furnished rooms, shantytowns and emergency housing units. Beginning in 1964 and continuing through the 1970s, a large-scale effort was made to eliminate the shantytowns by constructing various categories of minimum-standard temporary housing, which was meant to be followed by more permanent accommodation. This program was often criticized for being a form of segregated housing, but it was still out of reach for some people. It never went far enough to meet the needs of the very poor, and gradually small-scale shantytowns reappeared, especially in the form of primitive trailer camps.

Today, public housing is still inaccessible to persons in debt, to persons with low or irregular income, and to persons considered to have unacceptable reputations or behavior.

The result is that the poorest people live mainly in privately owned dilapidated housing.

2. The government provides individual aid based on income and family composition to enable low-income households to have access to better housing [2].

a) In 1948 a housing allowance for families with one or more children was introduced and distributed through the Family Allowance Fund. The allowance was extended in 1971 through monies allocated from the National Housing Aid Fund (F.N.A.L.) to include three additional categories: the elderly, those with an 80% disability or those judged unable to work, and wage-earners under 25 not living with their parents. Since March 1986, certain categories of unemployed people whose benefits have run out have also been included. Eligible households receive the allowance only if their housing meets minimum standards and conforms to the regulations for the number of people in the household. These rules can present problems for the lowest income groups; in addition, the allowance for utilities is too low. Although the poorest people are theoretically entitled to the allowance, few actually benefit from it.

b) The personal housing subsidy (A.P.L.) was created by the reform of 1977. It is an important advance because it allows low-income people to move into adequate housing if the landlord has a contract with the government. As in the previous program, the subsidy depends on income and household composition, but a pay-back scheme is also envisioned. It is assumed that the incomes of the beneficiaries will rise over time so that their subsidies can be progressively lowered. The savings would finance the extension of the program to other districts, provide money for the construction of new public housing, and pay for the rehabilitation of older housing through a subsidy for improving low-income rental units (PA.L.U.L.O.S.). In practice, the actual payments were very small and, as expenditures rose, the program was restricted. In 1985 a provision allowed for aid for rehabilitation without requiring the presence of tenants receiving personal housing subsidies.

The subsidies worked well for those who received them, but they remained out of reach for the people who needed them most.

3. The government's efforts to provide housing for more disadvantaged people has resulted in the rehabilitation of emergency or transitional accommodation under various programs: "social rehousing" (P.S.R.), the "reduced rent" program (P.L.R.) and the "elimination of unsafe housing"

program (P.R.I.). Tenants in these renovated buildings are eligible for the personal housing subsidy.

Some buildings were converted into shelters, others were demolished, and most of the tenants were relocated in older public housing with the lowest rents. This caused overcrowding for some households because adult sons and daughters who were still part of the household had not been counted. Some families refused to be relocated for various reasons because the new housing would be too expensive, for example, or too far from their work or from other relatives. Some households were not relocated because they were in the process of being evicted. In fact, as a result of the rehabilitation program a small number of former tenants ended up homeless as before or in makeshift housing.

4. Housing readaptation centers currently provide shelter for 30,000 people: individuals, single-parent families and sometimes entire families. The aim is to help them return to regular housing. In some cases, families have to split up in order to be sheltered. In Part One of this report we indicated that only a small percentage of the people in these centers find normal housing. This defeats the purpose of the centers, which can take people for only a limited time.

When their time is up, residents must go to other centers or even into the street. Also, according to the National Federation of Orientation and Social Rehabilitation Associations (F.N.A.R.S.), about 15% of the residents are there simply because they lack housing. This is a questionable practice, because the cost of sheltering a family of four in these centers is ten times higher than in public housing.

An interesting experiment, although not meant specifically to help marginalized families, is the "open shelters" concept. Private associations place clients in apartments where, after one year, they can become official tenants. The program is flexible; it avoids the stigma attached to "special housing," and it places people in a regular community. The program is backed by special "guarantee funds."

B. Policies Specifically for Disadvantaged Individuals and Families

1. Special funds from the joint contributions of local authorities and private associations provide a guarantee for landlords (usually public housing authorities) that rent will be paid for individuals and families who otherwise might not be admitted as tenants because they could not provide a rent guarantee. But some public housing admission committees have used these guarantees as security for applicants they would accept in any case. Without proper checks by local authorities, landlords may avoid taking the tenants for whom the plan was intended. It is still too early to know whether the fund will actually help a new category of tenants to enter public housing.

2. In 1981 a fund was created to help families who were temporarily unable to pay their rent. The fund was intended to replace private or public mediating committees and the rent arrears assistance program, created by the Union of Departmental Family Associations. The national government contributes 35% of the fund. Similar arrangements were made by some Departments in 1984 for families renting in private housing. That same year the national commission on public housing did a survey on the effectiveness of the different funds available to help public housing tenants. They concluded that the programs were satisfactory "within the limits of their means," that is, they did help households with temporary difficulties. Most of these funds cannot deal with tenants who are heavily in debt or who cannot repay the loans within a relatively short time (six months or one year; two years maximum). Consequently, most families in chronic poverty cannot benefit from these funds. In some cases the programs do forgive the debt, either in whole or part, by providing interest-free loans or, in exceptional cases, a grant.

Since the government announced that it will not replenish these funds because of large, unpaid loans, the cooperating parties have almost entirely abandoned the idea of forgiving debts, although this was permitted in a memorandum of July 20, 1982, and had been incorporated into aid programs that were in existence before that date.

3. Since 1977 the social services have financed a housing readaptation program (A.S.E.L) in some public housing complexes. This operation, which is similar to promotional housing programs, helps families adapt to public housing. It does not provide financial aid for rents.

In regard to this operation, a government memorandum states that the "aim of the readaptation program is to help families with very serious difficulties to stay in their present housing or to obtain permanent housing" [3]. The operation is an important support for families who have a decent place to live for the first time in their lives. Through the program, they can acquire needed tenant skills, such as organizing living space, using utilities efficiently and developing relationships within the community.

The memorandum stresses that there is an "advantage to adopting an overall approach to housing problems that includes all the aspects of daily life (economic, cultural and educational). The team implementing the program can involve other available community resources, such as schools, community centers, recreation programs and health facilities."

It is unfortunate that such an approach, which is cost-effective and well suited to poor families, is so limited: the quota is 5,000 families for the entire country.

In fact, all the present initiatives for helping families to stay in their homes help too few families, have too few funds, and are too restricted in the way those funds can be spent. Nevertheless, they have potential and should be expanded.

4. There are concerted campaigns by various agencies and organizations that include housing improvement as one element in an overall attempt to upgrade a specific area or urban neighborhood. The campaigns are aimed at maintaining and improving housing stocks, linking isolated enclaves to the rest of the community, and developing outreach programs that deal with

the social, educational, cultural and health aspects of community life.

Among these campaigns are "Habitat and Social Life" *(Habitat et vie sociale),* "social development of neighborhoods" *(développement social des quartiers)* - both will be described in Chapter V - "priority zones" *(îlots sensibles)* and "urban area contracts" *(contrats d'agglomération).* They are all intended as an overall response to the accumulated problems within a target area. Unfortunately, they do not contain a component like the housing readaptation program, which would enable the more disadvantaged to benefit from them. Unless some provision is made, the more able and vocal within the community will benefit, while social and ethnic minorities may be ignored and even pushed out in the name of "improving the community." It was to avoid this potential problem that diagnostic evaluations and family contracts were created.

The diagnostic evaluation is carried out with a view to formulating agreements between the government and the housing authority to provide access to housing for disadvantaged groups. The goal is to understand the situation of groups that have problems getting into public housing and to develop better solutions for their housing needs. Such an understanding is a first step in guaranteeing the right of all persons to choose the community in which they want to live.

Family contracts are agreements between the Ministry of Social Affairs and local communities. They are meant to facilitate the integration of newly arrived families into a community. The contracts call for neighborhood centers, day-care and early childhood facilities and housing suited to a family's composition. They are primarily intended to help large immigrant families. There are not many family contracts.

5. The "poverty and insecurity" program *(programmes pauvreté-précarité)* puts the major emphasis on keeping families in their homes. Half of the appropriation (300 million francs in 1985) was used to provide emergency housing or to pay the debts of households to prevent them from being evicted or having their utility services cut off in winter. One positive outcome has been to involve different agencies in a cooperative search for solutions and thus create better working relationships. The innovative efforts of local implementation teams has led to new initiatives, such as assistance in paying rent in difficult times and rent guarantee funds.

To sum up, these government measures help many individuals and families in difficult situations to find housing or to stay in it. For those in chronic poverty, however, the programs rarely guarantee housing security.

II. ACTION IN THE FIELD - ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR GOVERNMENT POLICY AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE DISADVANTAGED

Many agencies are searching together for ways around the bureaucratic roadblocks that deny people their right to housing. Some are involved in rehabilitating old housing and making it easier for people to gain entry to and remain in subsidized housing. Others are creating housing adapted to the needs of people who find themselves excluded from normal accommodation.

A. Coordinating Efforts

The poor are at a great disadvantage when faced with bureaucratic procedures, which often send them from one office to another. The inefficiency of the system is doubly discouraging when their requests for aid are turned down. This has led some social agencies to set up a single unit to deal with people's demands. Some examples:

- In the Department of Alpes-Maritimes, community social services in Cannes, Grasse and Nice joined with Catholic Relief to create a single association to examine housing requests and determine their priority, and to search for the needed housing.
- In the Department of Marseille, the administration set up a unit to provide housing for the homeless and the poorly housed, to prevent evictions, to acquire and rehabilitate old public housing, and to research the current housing shortage.

The effectiveness of these initiatives depends on the authority invested in the coordinating unit, the means put at their disposal, and the commitment of local authorities to the project.

B. Guaranteeing Rent Payments

Because their poorest clients are often insolvent, some agencies have devised agreements with landlords to avoid evictions. This has been done, for instance, in the Department of Loire-Atlantique through the joint efforts of the public housing office, local community groups, the Family Allowance Fund and the child welfare office. In the Department of Haute-Marne, people threatened with eviction may apply for a loan, a subsidy and partial forgiveness of their debts.

C. Material and Technical Assistance

The poor often live in old housing that needs renovation, but they rarely have the means to improve it themselves. Among agencies that provide the needed technical and financial assistance are the Center for Housing Improvement *(Centres d'amélioration du logement* / PACT*),* and Partners in Building *(Compagnons-Bâtisseurs).*

D. Fact-Finding

One reason for the inadequacy of housing policy is the lack of accurate information about the housing situation of poor people. In response, some agencies have carried out comprehensive housing surveys (for example, the social service office in the city of Gonesse and the Family Allowance Fund in the Department of Haute-Garonne).

This fact-finding is also carried out by some associations (Center for Housing Improvement and Catholic Relief, for example), university researchers, local community groups (which continually gather information), and Departmental housing councils that have set up committees for this purpose.

E. Pilot Programs

Because the poorest people cannot find suitable housing, some agencies have developed pilot programs such as those described below.

1. Construction of affordable housing

- The Departmental council of Calvados, working with the semi-private Concerted Development Office (O.P A.C), has built 276 single-family houses (in clusters of three or less) in 90 rural communities. The program has been in effect since 1976. A fund was created to cover nonpayment of rent and upkeep costs. The child welfare office follows the families' progress because many have had their children placed in foster care. The new housing offers families the security they need in order to get their children back. In 1984 the Department judged the operation to be cost-effective because it reduced expenditures on social services. Despite its promising start, the program was suspended because rural communities were reluctant to accept very poor families from urban areas.
- The city of Bordeaux built 25 single-family houses for families who had been living in very substandard conditions and who had been refused admission to public housing. The construction was based on detailed studies of cost-efficient quality housing. The entire rent is covered by the personal housing subsidy.

Local communities are investigating similar programs in order to avoid the cheap, cut-rate construction that marks accommodations as being "for the poor." The goal is to help families advance and participate in the community while avoiding the creation of ghetto neighborhoods.

2. Programs to integrate families into established neighborhoods

The agencies involved purchase or renovate properties and often manage them.

In the Department of Nord, 500 scattered units were accumulated by a regional rural housing authority (S.A.H.R.). In the city of Brest approximately 100 units were renovated by a local public housing authority *("Les Foyers").* The town of Valenciennes and the public housing authority of Lille and surrounding areas cooperated in a similar project.

Some programs have made use of buildings that formerly provided furnished rooms. Most public housing authorities, however, avoid this practice. Other programs rent the properties and improve them, or take on the management of private housing stock. Examples are the Association for Social Reintegration (A.R.S.) in the city of Nancy and the combined effort in Lille of municipal authorities, the Center for Housing Improvement and ATD Fourth World.

Local communities have proposed similar formulas for rundown privately owned buildings. In his report, Pétrequin suggests that public housing authorities should do the same with privately owned apartment buildings whose owners cannot maintain them.

F. Community Development Programs

Community services are necessary to help especially poor families adapt to their new housing and become part of their neighborhoods. Various agencies initiated community development programs for this purpose. Some neighborhoods where this is happening are:

- Croix de Fer in the city of Cahors, under the auspices of the Family Allowance Fund;
- the Buffon public housing complex in the Paris suburb of Colombes, sponsored by the Center for Housing Improvement;
- the Moulin neighborhood in the city of Lille, directed by the local social services;
- the promotional housing programs in the towns of Noisy-le-Grand and Herblay, managed by ATD Fourth World.

For families whose lives have been destabilized by chronic poverty, these programs are a real help. They create positive community support and provide multi-discipline staffs to serve the families. When the families leave the program, additional support services are provided for at least one year.

These programs are good examples of efforts by local communities to find comprehensive solutions but, given the dimensions of the problem of housing the poorest members of the population, their impact is limited.

All the above programs together involve only a few agencies and a relatively small number of neighborhoods and families.

Unfortunately, no national policy has emerged from these initiatives, which respond to real needs. Although they lay the basis for a guarantee of the right to housing for the poorest families, the future of these programs is uncertain because their financing is always in doubt. Such financial uncertainty may lead the authorities to invest in the "safest" families in order to secure future support.

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The findings in this chapter are in line with Pétrequin's contention that the housing shortage for people in the poorest groups of the community is caused by their lack of financial resources, the reluctance of local authorities to provide affordable housing, and the narrow range of available housing.

Housing authorities alone cannot remedy the problem; what is required is a concerted effort at the economic, social and cultural levels to help these families advance. Such a drive would help to meet the families' need for financial security and enable them to play a positive role in the community.

Once more, we see the interdependence of the many measures necessary to eliminate chronic poverty.

On the specific question of housing, the national policies show progress but they are reaching only part of the population

in greatest need. Pilot efforts at the local level show the direction to take in guaranteeing the right to housing for all.

CHAPTER IV

AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

Health care institutions differ from others because they had their origin in serving the poor. The "hospital" was originally a shelter for the poor, and the modern services of health insurance, health care plans and preventive medicine were intended to reply to the needs of poor people.

Current measures in the social protection system have improved the health of all citizens. It is obvious, however, that those with more money and education benefit more from the available services.

People at the bottom of the socio-economic scale receive inferior health services even though they live in conditions that are more likely to produce disease and bad health.

Inequality in social status affects life expectancy. On the average, a college professor at age 35 can expect to live another 43 years, an unskilled worker 34 years [1]. There are no statistics on the life expectancy of very poor people, but it is likely to be even shorter.

On March 4, 1986, the Council's Social Affairs Section heard testimony from Dr. François-Paul Debionne, who described the research he conducted while working in a poor neighborhood of Nancy with the university's public health department. To illustrate the health situation in the neighborhood, Dr. Debionne cited the results of a medical examination of a group of children going to summer camp. The children were smaller than others the same age, their teeth were in terrible condition, and they had been to the hospital more often than other children. Dr. Debionne described how poor families react to these health problems. Mothers often panic when faced with the symptoms of children's illness; they are afraid of possible consequences if the family seeks medical care.

Dr. Debionne stressed the relationship between living conditions and health, and pointed out obstacles to health protection. He described the initiatives of various groups and agencies committed to promoting health care in disadvantaged areas. Before explaining these initiatives, we should examine the financial, institutional and cultural factors that hinder proper health protection.

I. OBSTACLES TO HEALTH CARE

A. Financial Obstacles

1. Types of health insurance

a) Insurance coverage

Type of coverage	Percent of Population Covered
National social security insurance to 100% coverage	10.0%
National social security insurance + health care plan to 100%	34.7%
National social security insurance + health care plan under 100%	31.2%
National social security insurance alone	22.6%
National social security insurance + public medical aid (A.M.G.)	0.7%
Public medical aid only	0.4%
No protection	0.4% [2]
Total persons (thousands):	53,377

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies survey, 1980
- Social Data 1984

Although the above data have not been updated, recent findings at the local level indicate that there are still people without medical insurance.

The creation of the "personal insurance" plan in 1978 was thought to have extended health insurance coverage to all. It was meant to cover those who did not fit into any of the existing categories of the national health system.

Payments for this insurance (the minimum annual payment for one adult was 8,831 francs on July 1, 1986) are the responsibility of the insured, who can, however, request that they be made by a third party (the Family Allowance Fund, public assistance or the trust fund set up to administer national solidarity aid).

However, this still does not guarantee that everyone will be insured or that every illness will be covered.

In order to obtain third-party payments, an insured person must apply to the national health insurance fund (C.P.A.M.) and reapply each year to have the municipal social services office contribute all or part of the payment (the Family Allowance Fund may contribute part of the payment). In evaluating the applicant's financial resources, the public assistance committee also considers the resources of whoever is providing for the applicant. The only people exempt from this rule are the unemployed who have not received benefits for over a year and adults under 27 years of age. Some people prefer to renounce third-party payments rather than have a relative's resources investigated. If the committee refuses coverage and the applicant

is unable to make the payments, he or she is left without health insurance.

Furthermore, personal insurance coverage is not extended to persons who, in principle, should be covered under some other plan, or to their dependents. A good number of self-employed workers and small farmers are unable to make social security payments because they are assessed on an estimated income far above what they actually make (the minimum annual contribution for a self-employed worker on October 1, 1986, was 5,255 francs per year).

In cases of serious illness or postnatal care, the Independent Workers' Fund *(Caisse des travailleurs indépendants),* the Farmers Mutual, or even the municipal public assistance office are authorized to make these payments from their social welfare budget. However, this is rarely done.

If self-employed persons do not pay the premiums, they may be brought to court, have their property seized and deductions made from benefits already being paid, or even have their benefits cancelled. An auditor of the Farmers Mutual stated that 66 families in the Jura Department had lost all their social coverage in this way (quoted in the newspapers *La Croix* and *La Voix Jurasienne,* October 14, 1985). In 1983 another newspaper, *Le Travailleur Paysan,* reported that 600 families in the Department of Ille-et-Vilaine and 300 in the Department of Nord were in the same situation. Self-employed workers sometimes abandon their trade or resort to undeclared work because they cannot make social security payments.

Frequent job changes often mean that the coverage is shifted between different health insurance programs. Some people find out that they are not covered only after they become sick. This happened to one young couple who had no savings or income. Their personal insurance was being paid by public assistance, and when they moved they never received the notice for a renewal appointment.

b) Coverage of expenses

Whatever their coverage plan, the beneficiaries of health insurance may not be able to pay fees for which they are responsible. For a private medical consultation, fees must be paid in advance. When a social aid organization pays the beneficiary's premiums (third-party payments), the usual practice is to pay directly for medications, but it is still exceptional for them to pay directly for medical fees. In some communities, the public medical aid system (A.M.G.) may serve as the "third party."

The portion of medical expenses for which the beneficiary is responsible can be covered by a work health plan; this portion is 25% for medical services and from 30% to 60% for medication costs. Orthodontics, hearing devices and eyeglasses are poorly reimbursed, and many low-income people cannot afford them.

The base charge for a hospital stay was 25 francs per day in 1987. This was more than the total daily living expenses for a very poor person. Unless the hospital charge is paid by public medical aid, very poor people effectively pay more than their normal daily living expenses and still have to continue paying their own rent and utilities while they are in the hospital.

2. Public medical aid (A.M.G.)

In principle, any persons can have recourse to public medical aid if they can "prove that they need care and have insufficient resources." But the conditions for receiving this aid are more restrictive than for health insurance, and the coverage is more limited. Public medical aid is individualized; it must be requested for each person in the family and for each illness. It must be approved by a committee and is awarded only after an examination of the family's financial situation, taking into account obligations to provide for other relatives. The coverage is only for care that is judged indispensable; preventive care and regular check-ups are excluded. Delays in processing applications are often long, sometimes up to nine months. (Mayors of local communities can give emergency approval, at the risk of becoming responsible for the entire medical bill if the application is subsequently refused.)

To have public medical aid coverage for hospital costs, the patient must apply before discharge, and there is no advance assurance that it will be granted.

The public medical aid system operates very differently from region to region and seems to work better in rural areas. However, approval can be slow and the verification process sometimes humiliating. Sick people with insufficient resources are forced either to wait or to risk being responsible for payment of their medical bills. If they cannot pay, they risk court suits or seizures of property. People who cannot pay their medical bills often do not dare return to the hospital. Some ask a doctor for a free consultation, but then they are afraid to return to the same doctor. Others pay for the consultation, but then they have no money left to buy medicine. Some simply go without any health care at all.

B. Is Preventive Care Adapted to the Needs of the Poorest People?

We shall now examine what is being done to detect health threats early, to enable people to adopt proper health practices and to provide access to health education.

1. Systematic medical examinations

General health examinations at the job *(la medicine du travail) are* normally available only to regular employees.

The maternal and infant care program (P.M.I.) has a positive effect on young children and their mothers. The program is a real security for mothers because its services are free, they are available within the neighborhood, and they assure regular health care by providing the follow-up visits required by law.

The school health service *(le service de santé scolaire)* lacks the funds and personnel to reach all school-age children. Moreover, the checkups are scheduled in such a way that follow-up care is not assured for children who do not attend school regularly. The delivery of school health services is

becoming worse, although the services are an irreplaceable part of preventive health care.

The following persons are not included in any regular health checkup program: young people over 16, persons who do not have regular employment, some self-employed workers, and mothers who do not come under the maternal and infant care program. Self-employed workers can apply to have the same medical examinations that are available to regular employees, and anyone in the social security system can receive a free checkup every five years. But people in precarious circumstances rarely avail themselves of these opportunities. Furthermore, because of bad living conditions, they often cannot follow through on medical advice and treatment.

2. Health education

In a report to the Economic and Social Council [3], Mr. Levy pointed out that health education in schools and vocational training programs does little for those who have educational difficulties. Also, health and hygiene information at the work place has little effect on people in an unstable situation.

Health awareness campaigns are geared to the average educational level and do not relate to the experiences of those who live in chronic poverty.

Lastly, because people from disadvantaged backgrounds rarely frequent sports and vacation facilities, they do not benefit from the health advantages such facilities offer. And yet people in chronic poverty have the most need of leisure and recreation as a respite from bad living conditions and from the constant struggle to survive with its accompanying worries and stress.

C. A Problem of Mutual Misunderstanding

Disadvantaged people often seem not to know how to take advantage of the programs we have described. Beyond the financial and administrative obstacles that hinder access to health care, there remains the difficulty of reconciling two different worlds - the world of chronic poverty and that of health professionals.

Poverty affects people's attitudes toward health. Adults in very poor families put off seeking medical help. Taking time away from work becomes a difficult choice for heads of families when their job is not steady and every penny counts. Mothers hesitate, even when family aid services exist, because there is no one to take over all their household tasks.

In addition, people are distrustful of health professionals. Workers will avoid medical examinations or try to hide an illness because occupational health doctors might forbid them to continue working on a job that was difficult to find in the first place. Mothers may smile and nod their heads at the advice given by infant care workers, when in fact they lack the financial or material means to put the advice into practice. Children are often absent from school on days of medical checkups because their parents fear that if the family's living conditions became known, social workers might intervene and place their children in foster care. Poor families are still obsessed by the fear of losing their children to foster care, even though such an event is increasingly less common.

Some types of treatment, such as psychiatric care, detoxification clinics, and even long hospital stays, have a stigma attached to them. For people who have undergone these treatments, it is often more difficult to find a job or to obtain housing.

When life is one continual crisis after another, people pay little attention to their health and well-being. They associate any symptoms more with their current worries than with any possible medical problems.

In such situations, it is impossible for people even to think of keeping themselves fit through exercise and sports. Relaxation and vacations remain inaccessible for people with no job and no money.

Meanwhile, small illnesses that are left untreated can give rise to serious complications, and physical problems can lead to psychological ones.

We have already mentioned the difficulty that poor people have in following medical advice and prescriptions. Their housing conditions may not permit the needed calm or isolation. Following a strict diet is impossible when people do not know from one day to the next if they will have money for food. Disadvantaged people are more likely not to understand prescribed treatments, much less the cause of the illness. The language of modern medicine is complicated even for the well-educated.

Finally, a successful treatment may not be lasting when the patient goes home to the same living conditions that caused or aggravated the original illness.

II. SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES

Our observations have been based on interviews with administrators and health professionals. Many of them are working on the factors affecting a person's well-being. Others are experimenting with new ways to give people better access to health care.

Several initiatives were described by Dr. Debionne in his testimony. They were tried first in the Lorraine region and over the years have led to other experiments.

A. Preventing Medical Costs from Being an Obstacle to Health Care

1. Eliminating prepayment

- In Metz, an association of women who were previously or are now in a family shelter set up a "loan fund" for prepayment of medical expenses in conjunction with the Departmental health commission. Other women can join this experiment, which is called "Helping Hand" *(Coup de Pouce).*

- The Departmental Council and the Prefecture of Meurthe-et-Moselle, the national health insurance fund in Nancy, and ATD Fourth World have together established an association called Health Care Fund *(Fonds d'action-santé).* The purpose is to remove the financial obstacles to obtaining health care. The association currently facilitates access to care of the eyes, ears and teeth for children ages three to eight in a poor area of Luneville, and for 50 very poor families in southern Meurthe-et-Moselle.

The association created a guarantee fund that enabled people to receive free care. The national health insurance office will reimburse the fund for the share of the expenses it would normally cover. The fund also assumes responsibility for third-party payments, expenses in excess of set fees, and the expenses of uninsured persons.

This project promotes cooperation between health professionals, social service organizations and representatives of disadvantaged families. Its purpose is to promote an understanding of people's right to good health care.

- Some Departments have experimented with "health credit cards." Two examples are the "Dispadent" system, introduced in at least 14 Departments by the National Confederation of Dental Unions, and the "health card" created by the Departmental center of health professions in Bas-Rhin. Although differently organized, these programs allow those covered by health insurance to be reimbursed before the medical fees of the cooperating practitioners are charged to the clients' bank accounts.

2. Simplifying public medical aid

- In a neighborhood of Metz, people who are registered for public medical aid receive identity cards that allow them to go directly to a doctor or dentist as often as needed and to obtain prescribed medications from a pharmacy. The card is good for one year and is renewable.
- In the 19th arrondissement of Paris, the public assistance office processes its medical aid files directly by computer using a standard payment scale. Only contested cases are referred to a committee.

3. Involving the participants

- In Lorraine a "watchdog" system was developed in conjunction with the Regional Health Data Center *(Observatoire regional de la santé).* Health and social service professionals have set up a procedure for reporting difficulties they encounter in providing their services and the way in which they deal with the difficulties. For example, school health doctors are following up on the results of their advice to families after school medical checkups.
- The Faculty of Medicine at the University of Nancy has invited a medical team working in disadvantaged neighborhoods to assist in teaching its public health courses.

B. Bringing Preventive Health Care to Where It Is Needed

1. Children's programs

- Mutualité Française, a large insurance company, has conducted an extensive experiment in oral-dental hygiene. The experiment involved 100,000 children ages 6 to 9 in four Departments. After a large-scale public awareness campaign, free checkups were given to all the children. The families' financial situations and any apprehensions they had about participating were taken into account. Free follow-up dental care at the dentist of their choice was offered to all the children.

  Even these exceptional efforts were not sufficient to make all the children take proper care of their teeth.
- In Metz, school health nurses realized that the pamphlets used in hygiene curriculum sessions were quite foreign to disadvantaged children's own experience, and they set out to make them more relevant. Working with a group of disadvantaged children, the nurses made videotapes about sleep, and later about tobacco, which the children were able to understand.

2. Young adult programs

- In Nancy, a local youth employment program *(Mission locale pour l'emploi des jeunes)* collaborated with, the preventive medicine center in offering free health checkups to young people enrolled in training courses. The program also informed the young people about health issues in their lives and how they affect job prospects. The initial results have led the organizers to seek out doctors who are good at communicating with these young people. They are studying the possibility of enrolling the young people in a health care plan they can afford. Special sessions were arranged for the employment counselors to show them how to include information on health and social services in their training course.

3. A neighborhood program for women

- In a run-down area of Grigny-La Grande Borne, the child welfare service and the municipality have installed a laundry room in a public housing apartment building. A health worker goes regularly to speak with the women while they do their laundry. Group sessions are also organized with social workers, child-care workers and doctors. A day-care center for children has been set up next door to the laundry room.

4. Family programs

- We should note here the efforts of the Rural Family Associations, which work especially with migrant families. The theme of their 1986-87 campaign, "Hygiene and Social Work in Rural Areas," was intended to make preventive health measures and information available to families in precarious situations.
- ATD Fourth World has a year-round vacation home in the Jura region, which provides disadvantaged families with the opportunity to relax and enjoy themselves together, often for

the first time in their lives. Their stay has many benefits: the chance to spend time with children who have been placed in foster care, to make new friends, to feel supported in their efforts, to take a step back from their everyday lives and see things differently, and to find encouragement in taking on new projects. Local associations in the neighborhoods where the families live play an essential role in the program. They encourage families to go on the vacation trips and help them prepare; they also maintain a supportive relationship with the families after the vacations.

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In conclusion, we see that efforts are being made to extend programs of preventive medicine and health care. But, as we saw in the discussions on housing, routine procedures that can create inequality and even exclude people have been incorporated into the programs involved. In most cases these situations are caused by lack of funds.

A certain number of people are still excluded from health insurance. In these cases, public medical aid is not always effective; sometimes people even avoid applying for it because of the procedural difficulties.

The health services have found it difficult to meet the needs and expectations of very poor people, which are not always clearly expressed or easily understood. Several voluntary initiatives by doctors, especially free medical consultations, have made health care more available to the poor.

Research is being carried out on better ways to absorb payments for health coverage, to adapt medical practices to the needs of poor people and to create better communication between health care professionals and very poor people.

Experience has shown that merely paying more of the cost of medical care, although certainly necessary, is not sufficient to provide disadvantaged people with real access to health care. There are also social and cultural obstacles to overcome. In addition, we see that when poor people have a chance to relax, to exercise and to go on vacation, when they can speak of and overcome their fears about health care, they experience a sense of well-being they have never known before. They discover the satisfaction of better understanding the body and its relationship to good health.

CHAPTER V

DO THE EXISTING SERVICES PROVIDE EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR THE POOREST PEOPLE?

Although very poor people still lack basic security, society has not been indifferent to their situation. It has provided aid and services to improve their lives. Sometimes the system resorts to administrative or judicial measures, sometimes to programs targeting a specific aspect of poverty.

In this chapter we shall examine these various efforts and see how effective they are for the poor. Our discussion of social work practices will be confined to the impact of social services on the poorest segments of the population.

I. THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN SUPPORTING THE VERY POOR

A. Social Workers as the Primary Contact for the Very Poor

Social work is one of society's responses to situations where basic security is absent. Government agencies create certain policies that social workers are expected to implement. Social work is a diversified profession, each area having its own organization, objectives and methods. The common goal is to help individuals, families and groups by offering material aid, counseling, education, advocacy and assistance in obtaining aid.

In some ways, social work has replaced the networks of mutual aid that families and communities no longer provide. In addition, the increasing complexity of our society demands more professional help. It may be said that social workers have become the sole point of contact for many individuals and families in chronic poverty.

While very poor people need social services, they cannot choose the social worker who will handle their case.

Consequently, people have to reveal much of their personal lives -their setbacks and lack of resources as well as their hopes- to someone they have not chosen. Worse yet, the poorest people often have no one else to act as advocates or intermediaries for them. They are not free to choose a social worker as the more prosperous are free to choose a doctor or a lawyer. Nevertheless, they are completely dependent on the social worker's understanding, competence and diligence. As people become poorer, they have fewer alternatives and this dependence becomes much more difficult to bear. Most social workers are aware of the injustice and dangers inherent in this situation. At the same time, they often have a considerable responsibility for very vulnerable families while lacking the means to provide the support that the families need.

Social workers say they cannot provide an appropriate response to chronic poverty because:

- Most are not trained to understand the very poor or to develop a positive relationship with them.
- The means at their disposal are insufficient or provide only a temporary remedy. The social worker's energy is taken up in short-term or emergency help that does not attack the root causes of poverty and may well lead to greater dependence.
- They cannot coordinate their efforts with those of other agencies to meet the multiple needs of the poorest people.

- Often they do not know how to initiate a process that could lead to a fundamental change in people's lives.

For these reasons, social workers now look beyond themselves to involve public and private organizations as a way of better adapting institutional responses to the needs and capacities of the very poor. Their aim is to give the poorest people a belief in the future and to free them from having to put all their energy into survival. Some social workers have readily gone beyond their normal responsibilities and have helped initiate future-oriented projects, such as intermediate business enterprises for employing poor people.

The goal of many social work teams is to help the poor to organize themselves until they can assume responsibility for their lives and become recognized as social partners.

B. Poverty - A Fundamental Question for Social Workers

In their contact with very poor people, social workers are confronted with the ambiguity of their role. They are forced to question their practices and to go beyond what is normally expected.

When social workers encounter chronic poverty, they often have to deal with unexpected situations. There are no guidelines. Still, they are free to adapt their approach to individual situations, depending on the nature of the need. While they can choose a strategy, they cannot change policy, and it is precisely such a change that they see as the real solution for chronic poverty. Which side are they on? If they work within the structure, they will tend to make their clients fit the rules. If they are on the side of their clients, they may appear to undermine the institution.

Social workers are not expected to represent their client population; they are rarely asked for an opinion on social policies or programs. At most, they are involved in day-to-day decisions about the details of applying existing policies. In other words, social workers are not expected to make common cause with their clients, and any solidarity with the client is an individual choice of the social worker. Often it means that the workers must step out of their professional role and act like any other citizens. They have been extraordinarily inventive in doing this. A more important role for social workers might be to show others how to put this solidarity into practice.

Social workers in both the public and the private sector would like to be intermediaries and spokespersons for the poor, to encourage social participation by all, and to have more time to support the most disadvantaged through individual or community action.

At an individual level, social workers can seek to influence existing institutions. They can document the situations of chronic poverty they encounter and they can recommend innovative solutions. Many social workers have done this; without their efforts, the poorest people would be in a worse situation than they are now. Unfortunately, there is no requirement that social agencies take notice of the workers' recommendations.

This awareness among social workers has penetrated some institutions, but it has not led to a new definition of social work - for instance, one based on the experience of the very poor.

The next section explains how some social work institutions currently function.

II. SPECIFIC AGENCIES AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE POOREST PEOPLE

We shall now examine three agencies with which poor people have to deal:

- supervision of aid payments;
- child protection services;
- youth services.

A. Supervision of Aid Payments

In certain cases, a supervisor appointed by a family court judge takes over management of a family's aid payments. This often happens to very poor families. The purpose of this supervision is to ensure that aid payments are used in the best interests of the children. It is also intended to teach a family how to budget its money. Increasingly, families are put under supervision when they have debts, especially for rent. Some public housing authorities even demand some supervision as a rent guarantee for very poor families.

In 1983, there were 23,175 families under supervision, an increase of 9.8% from the previous year. This was the largest annual increase in ten years. Families under supervision represent 0.47% of all those receiving family allowances and 1.49% of all families in the system having three or more children [1]. A survey of new cases placed under the supervision of the Union of Departmental Family Associations (U.D.A.F.) between January 1 and June 30, 1985, showed that two out of three families had at least three children living with them. When data from the survey was compared to a 1978 survey by three other family associations, it was found that single-parent families under supervision increased from 21.5% to 28.5%, and the number of fathers holding jobs decreased from 70.4% to 45.0%. Of all the families, 92% were in debt.

A family may ask for supervision as a way of avoiding eviction, seizure of property or placement of children in foster care. According to a study by the National Center for Research on Physical and Mental Handicaps (C.T.N.E.R.H.I.), 43% of requests for supervision were made by the family, but, in reality, 25% were made under pressure from creditors or social workers [2].

For many families in temporary financial difficulty, supervision is a chance to straighten out their situation and start over from a more stable financial base. Some, however, see the supervision as an unfair intrusion into their private lives and a shaming experience in front of others. Families feel less constrained under supervision if they have other sources of income and if they have a positive relationship with the

guardian. This relationship can be a real educational experience or a penny-pinching ordeal; it may even lead to complete control over the family's expenditures.

Some supervising guardians find that when the family's income is very small, they hardly do better than the family itself. In this case, the guardian represents a form of security only for the creditors. The supervision is hardly justified in these circumstances and the practice has often been criticized by, for example, the Association of Magistrates (1972), the general accounting office (1985) and even by offices of family supervision.

Alternatives to supervision have been tried.

In most social service agencies, counselors for household budgeting are available to families.

Social workers have a dual role: to provide assistance to families and to help them regain their independence. If supervision is not to be prolonged, social workers must work with the families to find other intermediaries, especially self-help organizations.

B. Child Protection Services

The trend in legislation and in administrative and judicial practice has been to limit the placement of children in foster care, following the proposals in the reports by Dupont-Fauville in 1971 and Bianco-Lamy in 1980. The 1980 report led directly to a memorandum on January 23, 1981, concerning child assistance policy and to a law on June 6, 1984, concerning the status of wards of the state and family rights. This law marks an advance in the attempt to involve parents in decisions regarding their children. For instance:

- It introduces a new concept of families as "users" of children's aid services (A.S.E).
- It allows parents to be accompanied by a person or organization of their choice in discussions with the authorities.
- It requires an annual written report on the situation of the children.
- It recommends a written contract with the parents regarding the education of their children.

This law is a new approach, although its application varies from Department to Department. Several child welfare offices (D.D.A.S.S.) have issued clear explanatory pamphlets for use by parents. They have also involved interested organizations in helping parents and children in their dealings with the children's aid services. But the consensus is that progress is slow for the very poor.

An annual review of foster care cases is meant to prevent children from being left in an unstable situation for too long. Unfortunately, the law does not clearly state that the children's aid services must give parents the opportunity to "show interest" in their children and must work toward a speedy return of children to parents, except when specific unusual circumstances make this unwise. When the parent-child relationship seems unsatisfactory, blame is often placed on the parents. However, emotional distress and financial hardship can prevent parents from visiting their children or writing to them as often as they would like. Sometimes parents do not even know the address of the foster family or institution where their children are living; and sometimes the foster families and institutions discourage the parents from maintaining ties with their children.

Since 1976, Article 350 of the Civil Code has stated that a child in foster care may be considered abandoned if its parents "have not shown interest" for a year or more. Lack of interest by the parents is defined as "failing to maintain the relationship necessary to foster emotional ties." Studies of court decisions show that many declarations of abandonment concern families in chronic poverty [3].

Legal interventions in child protection cases are relatively frequent. Ministry of Justice statistics show a large increase in the number of such interventions in 1983 and 1984. The number remained steady at about 68,000 per year from 1978 to 1982, but then rose to 78,000 in the next two years. Many of these interventions (40%) did not go through normal administrative channels, often at the request of child welfare authorities who wished to enforce an action opposed by the family or to ratify an emergency action already taken.

In her testimony to the Social Affairs Section of the Council on March 4, 1986, Ms. Pisarra, a children's judge in Paris, said that the relationship between a family and a family court judge can be positive when the parents feel that they are listened to and that their views are being taken into consideration. However, the parents' own past experience may impair the relationship from the outset.

Often the court decisions only require attendance at parenting classes (between 1982 and 1984, such decisions increased from 45,000 to 54,000). The law of January 6, 1986, prohibits such orders from requiring more than two years' attendance. During this time, more severe measures can be taken, such as placement of the child in foster care, perhaps with forfeiture of parental rights. An order of this sort can be revoked only if the parents show a clear improvement in their situation. The social services that are responsible for children said to be "at risk" tend to be less concerned with families whose children are already in foster care than they are with those whose children are at home.

The way in which children are removed from their families is also important: As late as 1986, there were instances where children were removed without the family being notified. Sometimes, the children were taken directly from school without the parents knowing. Such practices, even if infrequent, completely undermine the confidence that the very poor might have in social, educational and health services.

There have been improvements in the regulations, but families with serious difficulties are still not receiving the proper assistance in raising their children or exercising their parental rights and responsibilities. Cooperation gives way to coercive

measures because parental education is not accompanied by a guarantee of basic security for the family [4].

While public assistance benefits for children and their families are now accepted in principle (for example, the law of January 6, 1986), much remains to be done in practice.

C. Youth Services

In the past, youth services have been largely repressive in their dealings with disadvantaged young people. In the last few decades, social and educational programs have begun to appear. This change started with the establishment of juvenile courts and the introduction of bail and probation in 1912. Another major advance was the youth delinquency regulation of February 2, 1945, which called for an educational approach in place of solely punitive measures. In 1967, a program of course work leading to a diploma in services for troubled youth was created. This brought more support for non-institutional educational programs that operate through independent youth clubs and are staffed by teams of workers who contact young people in their everyday environment.

Departmental and community councils for the prevention of juvenile delinquency were established in 1983. The councils are intended to support programs that develop the individual and group skills of young people. They bring together elected officials, associations and social workers, and they draw on local resources to provide disadvantaged young people with opportunities for learning about the world outside their daily environment.

A memorandum of March 23, 1983, about the "Summer '83" program recommended activities that combine recreation with training in job skills, so that young people may "learn about the world of work without the initial constraints imposed by a strictly working environment." A memorandum of March 30, 1984, encouraged the coordinators of "Summer '84" to organize activities that "introduce modern technology."

Youth clubs and street worker teams have been working toward the same goal. Beginning in the 1960's, they have moved from activities that focused exclusively on young people to activities that involve the entire community. Today, these programs devote less time to recreation and more to "introducing young people to the work environment, and helping them to communicate with adults and represent themselves before local institutions and government."

Thus, in line with the directives of the interministerial delegation for the integration of youth at risk, social work with young people has become more comprehensive, affecting their lives more broadly. The purpose is to allow all young people to find their place in society. If the more disadvantaged young people are to benefit from such programs, social workers, employers and instructors need to provide constant support and encouragement.

The Ministry of Social Affairs has accepted an initial group of 300 young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (50% foreign-born) for training in community work in disadvantaged neighborhoods. A pilot experiment of this type was started in 1977 (at the suggestion of ATD Fourth World) by the school for training community workers in Lille. The fact that disadvantaged young people are taking on such responsibilities is a significant change. Social workers have a key role in identifying potential candidates and supporting them throughout the training period.

III. THE ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAM AND THE ROLE OF HUMAN SERVICES

The Ninth Plan contains an explicit anti-poverty program.

The program has four objectives:

- to identify the characteristics of poverty;
- to improve the functioning of existing institutions;
- to encourage cooperation among institutions;
- to respond with development programs.

The comprehensive approach to poverty recommended by the Ninth Plan has inspired a number of programs in the past few years.

Two of them are described below.

A. Social Development of Neighborhoods

"Habitat and Social Life" *(Habitat et vie sociale),* launched in 1977, was intended to renovate buildings and facilities in large run-down housing complexes; then the Plan for 1982-1983 contained provision for continuing the campaign and extending it to new sites.

A new feature of this program was the attempt to redress some of the traditional faults of social work (for example, the isolation of services from each other, an overspecialized approach and a failure to see problems in a broad context). The aim was to persuade the various community organizations to work together, to seek the cooperation of local residents and to obtain agreement on common goals that would benefit the neighborhood.

In 1984, three years after the start of the program, the Pesce report made an initial evaluation. It noted the practical results of the effort to foster community life: child-care centers, community centers, multi-service centers, outreach programs, senior citizen facilities, kindergartens, libraries, sports teams and cultural activities had all been strengthened. Obviously, community relations had been improved, and those who were most able to profit from the changes did so (see Part Two, Chapter III).

But what about the poorest families, those described as "driven to a hopeless outlook on life" by the National Commission for the Social Development of Neighborhoods (C.N.D.S.Q.)? Did they escape their isolation? Were their lives better as a result of the program? Did other people in their neighborhoods reach out to them? The Pesce report is silent on these questions. But it does stress that the lack of economic opportunity and the dismal job prospects for young people

remained major difficulties. Local organizations were trying to find solutions to these problems. The report cites examples of efforts to create jobs in Vénissieux and in Grande-Synthe. But it does not state whether the most disadvantaged youths were among the small number who benefited from these efforts.

In short, the "social development of neighborhoods," as a comprehensive anti-poverty approach, can help overcome the isolation of the very poor, provided that this goal is defined specifically in the program and that the necessary resources are made available.

B. Anti-Poverty Programs and Emergency Measures

The anti-poverty program agreed upon by the government in January 1983 consists of a series of social and administrative measures very similar to those proposed in the Oheix report of February 1981. The proposals are intended to tackle, directly or indirectly, specific poverty situations by using the following resources:

-existing shelters and emergency services;

-existing financial, health and social benefits;

-specific education and training programs (for example, literacy campaigns).

These proposals envision a coordinated effort with voluntary and humanitarian organizations.

The anti-poverty program is a significant advance. It is generally accepted that even the recent changes in the minimum wage, the improvement in family benefits, the social development of neighborhoods, the establishment of priority education zones and other local efforts have failed to reach many individuals and families. We still need to identify those who remain outside the social protection system and to give them access to their rights and to the means to participate in society.

In the meantime, each year since the winter of 1984-85, the government has had to take emergency measures. A number of improvements have been made. For instance:

- Emergency shelters have been enlarged (extra spaces provided in centers and temporary shelters).
- Programs to prevent people from being evicted have been extended (for example, through rent guarantee funds and forgiveness of rent arrears).
- Food programs have been introduced.
- Services have been coordinated by a designated agency in each Department.

The "Matignon letter" of April 15, 1985, [5] estimated that during the first winter, the emergency measures helped about one million people. In August 1985, the social service administration emphasized that these measures were flexible and could be adapted to local needs. But they recommended that "the emphasis should be to change existing structures and allow the very poor to reenter society through intense efforts in the areas of housing and economic opportunities (for example, public works and community employment)."

An evaluation made in June 1985 by the National Association of Private Health and Social Agencies (U.N.I.O.P.S.S.) follows the same reasoning. According to this group, the continued need for emergency aid demonstrates the necessity of developing a long-term approach. For example:

- Providing emergency shelter is essential, but the right of people to have a real home is more fundamental.
- Providing temporary housing for individuals and families is essential, but the reform of housing allocation rules and changes in the regulations governing rent and utilities are more essential. If such changes are not made, the same situations will continue to occur.

Temporary measures are always needed to deal with the consequences of chronic poverty. But the need for a different approach, involving more extensive social work, is now recognized. For example, the Ministry of Social Affairs wrote to the Commissioners of the Republic on October 30, 1985:

"We must continue our efforts to reintegrate people permanently into society .... In particular, we must seek to develop initiatives that will provide decent housing for all citizens, together with jobs that will enable them to meet their own needs and those of their dependents."

Government proposals have spoken of "structural measures": for example, intermediate business enterprises and youth community employment programs (T.U.C.). While these measures will certainly help some people in some areas, we wonder whether they will reduce poverty as a whole. Besides such structural measures, social workers are needed to provide help to individuals.

The program called "social development of neighborhoods" and the various emergency measures, while differing in purpose, all contribute to reaching the goals of the Ninth Plan. But the social development programs have mainly benefited those who have the means to take advantage of them. That is why many social workers have been energetic, imaginative and tenacious in their efforts to ensure that structural changes also benefit the poorest people.

CONCLUSION:

HOW SUCCESSFUL ARE SOCIAL WORKERS IN REACHING THE VERY POOR?

We have seen that social work has its limits. Nevertheless, social workers, who are often in close contact with persons in chronic poverty, are constantly trying to push those limits back. In her testimony before the Social Affairs Section of the Council on February 18, 1986, Marie-Thérèse Reynaud gave examples of these efforts. The cases she cited are representative of the innovative work being done in the field.

- As part of a neighborhood renovation program, social workers persuaded the authorities to give priority to the requests the poorest families made for new mailboxes. The fact that their request was accepted encouraged these families to become more involved in the community. For once, they felt that they were taken seriously.

- In setting up a literacy program for women, the organizers arranged in advance for the women to be assured of a minimum income so that they would be able to participate more easily.
- The social workers in a priority education zone developed a close relationship with the poorest families. The workers helped the parents prepare for school meetings and then accompanied them to the meetings. The parents were thus better able to take part in discussions and to express their views.

These small-scale initiatives clearly illustrate the role that social workers could have in a comprehensive anti-poverty program. Among other things, they could help:

- to create dialogue with specific groups of the population;
- to understand those groups' difficulties and aspirations;
- to establish a range of activities corresponding to the groups' desires, with the benefit of input from outside sources.

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We can now better appreciate the role of social workers in efforts to eliminate chronic poverty. Social workers and some voluntary organizations have in fact often been the only contact and the only resource for very poor people. They have also been the only people other than the poor themselves to have acquired an understanding of what it means to live in chronic poverty.

Much of a social worker's time is still taken up in dealing with emergencies. If social policy provided the basic security that people need and gave them the means to participate in mainstream society, social workers could do their proper job. If social workers were trained to have a real understanding of poverty, they could make it easier for the poorest people and those who work with them to build a partnership. Social workers can call forth the solidarity that the poor need from others, as can voluntary organizations. In his report to the Social Affairs Section [6], Mr. Thery said: "They are the catalysts of solidarity... intermediaries between slow institutional change and rapid social change .... They listen to needs, invent appropriate responses and mobilize newly freed energies in effective ways." We should keep in mind that the current process of decentralization has changed both the practices and the responsibilities of social workers [7].

In the future, social workers could continue to provide the very poor with individual support while devising new ways for them to participate in society. The social work profession, currently undergoing a major transformation, might aim toward this goal.

CHAPTER VI

POVERTY AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION: PROSPECTS AND DIFFICULTIES

In Chapter IV of Part One, we concluded that failure in school causes or aggravates the difficulties that disadvantaged people must deal with throughout their lives. It is clear that cultural differences can have a more adverse effect than economic poverty. A sizable portion of the school population encounters serious difficulties in elementary and secondary school, even when they do not have mental or physical handicaps. Repeating grades and attending special education classes do not prevent many young people from being illiterate after ten years of compulsory education.

This high incidence of school failure has been the subject of much concern and study because of its increasingly negative impact on all aspects of daily life. The school system created by Jules Ferry was meant to prepare young people for their civic and democratic responsibilities. Today, however, the school reflects the need to provide young people with the skills they need to find employment in an increasingly complex and technological world.

The report on the "National Consultation," begun by the Ministry of Education in 1983, contains the following statement:

"Less than half of all the pupils enrolled in primary schools in the early 1930s actually graduated, but those who did not could still find a sense of accomplishment in jobs and society. Today, children who by age 11 or 12 fall seriously below grade level run a real risk of never holding a job and of feeling or actually being left out of society."

In the following section, we shall first attempt to explain the apparent disjunction between the school system and the performance of disadvantaged children. Next, we shall examine present trends in the school system; finally we shall look at some experimental programs devised by educators in the search for appropriate responses.

I. DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The school system has a real problem understanding children from very poor backgrounds. As for the children, the school is another world, with a language and code of behavior that are foreign to them. The children have grown up in an environment where parents and other adults have little experience in reading or writing. In this environment, books seldom are a source of discovery. Some children arrive in school without ever having heard adults clearly explain concepts or without having seen people write, other than filling out forms.

Schools expect children to be punctual, to attend regularly, and to pay attention in class. They also assume that children will

come to school suitably dressed and that their families have some financial resources. These expectations can be incompatible with the living conditions of very poor children. "I can't send my child to school on an empty stomach," a mother says. She has nothing in the house for breakfast. No doubt, she thinks that her child will not be able to concentrate in class, but she fears another more serious consequence: that the teacher notices the child is hungry and notifies social services. Very poor families constantly fear that their children will be taken from them.

Children from disadvantaged families are "economically handicapped" in school. Children need school supplies; they are expected to pay for meals and special activities. As a result, poor children are generally absent on field trip days and, having missed those experiences, have nothing to contribute to any subsequent discussion of them. Poor children are exposed to references in school that they do not find at home. Their way of life is far from that referred to in school books. They have nothing to say when their classmates talk about vacations or weekend outings.

They quickly learn not to talk about what goes on at home: money problems, utilities cut off, father out of work, police coming to the house, social workers or financial supervisors checking on the family.

All of this so preoccupies the children that they cannot pay attention to their school work. These children often repeat grades; and every time they do, the difference between them and their classmates becomes greater. Because they are older than their classmates, they feel out of place.

If the children are put in special education classes, they often feel they are being excluded from normal classes, no matter how good the special education program is. Special education is generally viewed as being for mentally handicapped children. The children sense this and say, "We are with the crazy kids." Special education becomes a dead end for them. This defeats the purpose for which special education was established. The same happens in other remedial programs, such as psycho-pedagogical action groups (G.A.P.P.).

When disadvantaged young people leave school at age 16, they are not prepared for adult life or for the work force. Moreover, they are put off by anything that resembles school. This explains in part the relatively poor results from training programs for disadvantaged young people despite the large investment in them (see next chapter).

II. TEACHERS AND DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Teachers often find themselves at a loss with very poor children from the time they enter school. The teachers' training in remedial education is not sufficient to deal with these children; and above all they have not been prepared to consider the children's parents as partners in the educational process. Lack of understanding between teachers and parents creates difficulties for many children; and when the children have learning problems, the lack of a parent-teacher relationship is a major obstacle.

The usual system of teacher assignment places the less experienced teachers in the most difficult classes. Ideally, such classes should be the first priority of an experienced team of instructors.

Teachers are rated on the general atmosphere in their classes and on how well they follow the curriculum and prepare their lessons. Less attention is paid to whether they help children with learning difficulties. In other words, the school system forgets that one of its roles is to create equal opportunity by compensating for inequalities in the students' background. The teachers' training does not make them aware in particular of the situation of very poor families. Such a training was introduced in 1981 as an optional course in teachers' colleges, but the students who take it are those who already have some awareness of poverty.

Some teachers do go out of their way to help children who have great difficulty in school, but their efforts are largely a personal initiative and not part of a broader educational program. This point was strongly made by Ms. Ligier, a primary school teacher in Paris, when she testified before the Social Affairs Section of the Council on March 4, 1986.

It is understandable that teachers give special attention to those children who show the greatest promise. But this concern for more gifted pupils influences the way children are channeled in the system. Because this process of selection puts emphasis on results rather than potential, teachers are given little incentive to concentrate on children who are having problems. Those children are then put into special education classes under the pretext of "mild retardation," into psycho-pedagogical programs under the pretext of emotional problems, or into a program that includes psychiatric treatment for behavior disorders. Because they have little choice, both children and parents resent such moves, and this accounts in part for their hostility toward the school system. Staff members in the special programs are usually competent and understanding, but they receive little support from the administration. Both the children and the special education teachers suffer from a lack of clearly stated objectives and procedures to lead pupils back into the mainstream system. Disadvantaged children are still not recognized as a group that must be given its place if the school system is to provide for the full diversity of its students.

III. CURRENT RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

National leaders and the general public are concerned by these situations, and by other serious but less urgent matters, which affect a substantial part of the school population. As we mentioned in Chapter IV of Part One, much was written in the 1960s on educational inequalities and their causes.

Today, much of the literature deals with failure in school [1].

The profusion of research in this field indicates that the concern extends beyond the teaching profession to experts in other fields.

The report on the "National Consultation," mentioned earlier, describes the worries that parents, teachers, elected officials and administrators have about the educational system and what they expect of it. They see schools as places where young people should learn about the world and receive the means to play an active part in it. The deepest concern remains the rate of failure in school.

The participants in the "Consultation" said that schools should teach the basics - reading, writing and arithmetic -and that they should answer the children's questions and help the children to express themselves. The participants placed great importance on early childhood education and the need for consistency in school instruction for children ages 5 to 8. They expect schools to deal with differences in the children's backgrounds, which may require separate activities within the school system. They stressed that teachers' initiatives should be encouraged and evaluated. Finally, they saw the need for positive interaction between school personnel and the outside community.

The report concludes with recommendations for strengthening instruction in basic learning skills and making school more relevant to real life.

The report gives prominence to the failure of disadvantaged children to succeed in school:

- "The question must be asked why the school system seems unable either to understand or to involve disadvantaged children and their parents, and why society does not help the schools in this regard. If school attendance is compulsory, then the system must work for all."
- "The school system must equip each child for life."
- Schools must "understand their children, not to label them, but to adapt instruction to each of them as individuals and so ensure that they succeed."
- "Teachers must be helped to adapt to students who come from backgrounds that are economically, socially and culturally different from their own."
- "Beyond their training, teachers must acquire a sensitivity to their students' backgrounds - something that is not always easy. Not many teachers can do this spontaneously for so-called `problem' children, for whom regular education does not seem to work."

This report presents its observations in a logical order, which has not always been the case in similar studies. First, schools must get to know the children and their "different economic, social and cultural backgrounds." Then they can begin to devise methods that will work for the children.

The report demonstrates that there is a consensus by all involved to end the exclusion of disadvantaged children and to take steps to enable them to succeed in school.

Besides its general observations, the report highlights certain programs and experiments, some of which have been in existence for some time. Even before school became compulsory, there were schools for deaf and blind children. Special education programs for children who did not respond to conventional methods were introduced at the turn of the century. A whole series of reforms was undertaken to "democratize" education.

Educators like Celestin Freinet, Ovide Decroly and Maria Montessori developed methods based on their experience with children who were not learning in the normal system. Their work created new ideas in education that are still applied today and have at times served to help disadvantaged children.

Sometimes these experiments have been encouraged by the authorities; sometimes it is individual teachers who have tried to implement them.

A. Priority Education Zones: A Nationwide Experiment

Priority education zones were first set up in the school year of 1981-82. They are a nationwide attempt to "channel additional resources to children experiencing the greatest learning difficulties" and to "fight failure in school" [2]. Their creation was a significant step because it was recognized that schools were not reaching all children equally. The priority zones have given rise to many new experiments.

In the city of Nanterre, for example, preschool centers were established and provision for naps was included in some preschool programs.

To improve parent-teacher relations, celebrations and gatherings were organized on a regular basis.

In a neighborhood of Tours, the children decorated the entrance halls of a public housing complex to bring school and community closer together.

Efforts were made to stimulate reading by establishing library/media centers, while local associations promoted literacy and provided school support groups and individual tutoring.

In Chatellerault, workshops were organized to help teachers understand the lives of disadvantaged families and their hopes for the future.

In a report to the 1983 congress of the Association of Preschool Teachers (A.G.I.E.M) in Lyon, G. Chauveau, director of the Research Center for Special Education (C.R.E.S.A.S.) spoke of new ideas arising from the priority zone experience. Among these were recognition of socio-cultural differences, emphasis on the needs of children from low-income or "disadvantaged" groups, collaboration with diverse community groups, and the need to give priority to certain instructional areas or to groups of students.

When the priority zones were reviewed in 1985, the major questions were how students moved through the system and what they learned there.

From the standpoint of disadvantaged social groups, it can be emphasized that priority zones:

- benefit immigrant children most;
- include schools in which the general performance seems poor;
- aim to raise the average achievement level of all children. We view this as fundamental. What we have said about the social development of neighborhoods applies to the priority education zones as well. While such efforts undoubtedly reduce inequalities, they still do not aim to deal with the most serious forms of exclusion, and they lack the resources to tackle them.

B. Small-Scale Local Experiments

1. Early childhood education

Pre-elementary education has been attracting much interest and it had an important place in the 1983 "National Consultation." One of the three objectives of the priority zones is to ensure that all children, starting at age three, have some educational experience. Pre-elementary education continues to provide many new ideas, and several experiments have proved effective.

The Information Center on Social Innovations (C.I.I.S.) mentions a number of these experiments. In Lyon, foreign students wrote folk tales to be told to preschool children. In Nancy, mothers of different ethnic groups showed foods, objects and photographs from their countries to preschool children.

An experiment in the Department of Val-d'Oise uses an apartment in a large public housing complex for a program called "school for life."

In the Department of Mayenne, a van with educational materials makes the rounds of ten schools in a county, spending half a day at each.

ATD Fourth World runs a preschool program involving parents; the work is done in the children's homes [3].

As we saw in Part One of this report, pre-elementary education cannot compensate for all the inequalities in educational opportunity. It does, however, prepare disadvantaged children for a better start in elementary school. Any attempts to improve pre-elementary education should be encouraged.

2. Experiments within the school system

In her testimony, Ms. Ligier gave an example of a group of teachers whose school was not in a priority zone. They were determined, as she said, "to overcome the school's negative image" by having children put on special events (for example, a costume party, celebrations and exhibits), as well as succeeding in school subjects. According to Ms. Ligier, the teachers invested a good deal of energy in getting students and parents involved and, even more, in persuading the rest of the school personnel to participate.

The Information Center on Social Innovations has gathered information on recent alternative programs both inside and outside the school system.

In the Departments of Val-d'Oise and Seine-St. Denis, mobile "class vans" travel throughout the countryside to conduct classes for children in itinerant camps and to introduce them to regular schooling.

In the city of Nantes, two teachers wrote a reading textbook based on the life of Gypsy people, to help teach Gypsy children who were failing in school.

In a low-income housing complex near Alençon, a secondary school was housed in small buildings scattered throughout the complex, The intention is to integrate school activities into the life of the community.

Some teachers use ingenious methods to motivate students in their classes. Among these are a student radio station in the north of France, student art displays in the city of Toulouse, student bookmaking in Montpellier and a student-operated library in Argenteuil.

A number of schools encourage students to take part in local activities. In Vannes-le-Châtel in the Vosges region, students visit local businesses and farms and organize "light and sound" shows that involve the entire village. In Dijon, students in a technical high school helped in the construction of a 50-unit low-income housing complex. In St. Etienne, parents helped to organize classes from a single school in different parts of the city; the same school is also an active member of a neighborhood network of voluntary organizations and social workers.

3. Experiments outside the school system

In Marseilles, young people run after-school activities for elementary school children in their neighborhood and tutor those with learning problems. In Seyne-sur-Mer a similar service is provided by retired people.

In the 14th arrondissement of Paris and in the towns of St. Quentin, Ermont and Garges-les-Gonesses, facilities are provided in run-down neighborhoods to help associations and parents to run remedial education programs. Similar efforts have been launched in Lille, using personal computers and in Marseilles, using audiovisual techniques.

An individual initiative worth mentioning is that of a director in the special education section (S.E.S.). He finds employment opportunities for his students with local businesses and associations. If necessary, he will keep students in his program until age 18 to prepare them for the jobs he has found.

Also noteworthy are the street libraries, cultural centers and learning clubs of ATD Fourth World. They all make books available to children who would otherwise have little access to them, organize activities around written expression, open up new sources of knowledge for children and make learning a shared activity. Key to these programs is the involvement of parents in

their children's progress, despite their own educational difficulties. In another initiative, "traveling book-lenders" make the rounds of families to take books to the home, organize activities around the books and support whatever learning projects the families are pursuing [4].

This short list of experiments, both in and out of school, gives an idea of the wide range of work going on in different parts of the country. Some are carried out in priority education zones, some in special education classes. Our reservations about these classes do not apply to the quality of teaching in them. Our concerns are about the failure of special education to reintegrate the poorest children into mainstream classes. Some interesting approaches are being used in special education that could be used in regular classrooms. The special education commission of the Cooperative Institute of Modern Schools (I.C.E.M.) states: "What children do in special education classes should also be available in the regular classroom." [5]

4. Experiments directed at adults

The extent of adult illiteracy in France has only recently been discovered. In response, large-scale measures have been taken. The report entitled "Illiterate People in France" *(Des Illettrés en France)* reviewed a number of experiments, both large and small. The report stressed that such programs must go beyond the mere teaching of reading; they must be anchored in the everyday life of the participants. According to the report, private experiments have shown the way, and the government's role is to work out a national strategy to combat illiteracy.

Following publication of the report, the Standing Committee Against Illiteracy (G.P.L.I.) was created. Its purpose was to encourage associations to create literacy programs, to facilitate communication between them and to gather support for them from various agencies and services. Unfortunately, the committee's future is no longer certain. In several regions, notably Nord-Pas-de-Calais, agreements have been reached, or are in the process of being drawn up, between regional and national authorities. The National Council for the Prevention of Delinquency *(Conseil national de prévention de la délinquance)* has made the literacy campaign one of its priorities.

The report entitled "The Literacy Campaign: A First Priority" *(Lutte contre l'illettrisme, une priorité à suivre) [7]* describes the activities of various organizations involved in youth and adult training within the framework of the national antipoverty plan. Some examples are: the Association for Adult Vocational Training (A.F.P.A.), the National Employment Agency, local administrations and the community employment program for young people.

Some teacher training sessions have been thrown open to non-teachers involved in the literacy campaign (for example, in Poitiers in March 1986). This is a useful model for the future.

While these programs are still too new to be fully evaluated, they are evidence of the general desire for everyone to have the chance to acquire basic skills.

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The many concerns expressed about the scholastic failure of young people shows that no one, neither teachers nor education officials, wants this situation to continue.

The experiments described above prove that disadvantaged children can learn if certain conditions are met.

First of all, a good relationship among students, parents and community is essential. Teachers must be ready to learn about the circumstances of their students, to understand how they influence their development, and to recognize the children's ambitions. They must also maintain a dialogue with the parents. School activities should be supplemented by other social and cultural services, such as local libraries and the maternal and infant care program. The experiences and knowledge of disadvantaged children must be recognized; their background represents a cultural experience that must be respected. Schools have to be prepared to provide disadvantaged children with the opportunities that other children have as a matter of course (for example, access to books, computers, arts and music).

The schools must prepare children for the world of work and for the society in which they will have a place.

It seems clear that children's failure in school begins very early and worsens in later grades. The causes must be addressed in the first years of elementary school or even in preschool. Similarly, adolescents who leave school early are totally lost. They can be rescued only by efforts to help them prepare for the adult world. Finally, we know that helping parents to overcome their own illiteracy will help to prevent their children from failing in school.

CHAPTER VII

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNSKILLED WORKERS

In today's society, the principal security of individuals and families is employment, and it determines, to a large extent, whether people have basic security in other fields. Disadvantaged people are no different in wanting the security of a job. In Part One of this report, particularly in Chapters II, IV

and V we noted the difficulty unskilled adults have in finding work in today's job market. In this chapter we shall first examine the situation of the disadvantaged and then look at recent efforts to provide job opportunities for people in chronic poverty.

I. THE WORKER FROM A DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUND AND THE JOB MARKET

As today's job market requires greater work skills, the least skilled find themselves progressively losing their jobs. Reentering the labor force is difficult because the qualifications for even the lowest-level jobs are being raised. What do we really know about workers who have traditionally held low-skilled jobs?

A. Employment Categories of Low-Skilled Workers

In his study of low-skilled workers, Xavier Godinot [1] established three categories:

"Relatively stable" workers, who have stayed with the same employer for more than five years. Generally, they have no serious health problems and have acquired on-the-job skills, as opposed to formal training. They usually work in small enterprises and have specific tasks that are often physically demanding and that they perform alone.

"Sporadic" workers, who have jobs that tend to be irregular by nature (temporary, seasonal or manual labor in construction and public works). After searching for months for regular work and being turned down because of their illiteracy or past problems with the law, they are ready to take any kind of work. It does not matter if the work is unhealthy, dangerous or illegal, just as long as it brings home some money. Because such jobs are usually short-term, the workers rarely qualify for unemployment benefits. Each time they are fired or laid off, their hopes of finding a permanent job become more distant.

"Occasional" workers, who have been unemployed for long periods. They pick up odd jobs, but generally live from hand to mouth. Often, they have poor health, due to past accidents or the hard life they have led. All their energy is devoted to surviving. To feed and house their families, they may collect scrap metal, do errands and small jobs, or help out when an extra hand is needed. They often have to seek aid from local public assistance offices or private charities.

Today, the situation of all three categories seems to be worsening. "Relatively stable" workers are falling back on temporary jobs; "sporadic" workers are finding fewer and fewer opportunities; survival is becoming more desperate for the "occasional" workers. Pickup jobs are scarce; even salvaging items from trash is becoming more difficult. Some workers, giving up all hope of ever finding regular work, try to be classified as handicapped in order to obtain assistance.

B. Starting Adult Life Without a Job

We need to examine the situation of young people who, from the outset, have great difficulty finding jobs. While their parents probably worked hard from early adolescence, disadvantaged youths of this generation find themselves idle after leaving school. They often spend years trying to find their first job.

Like other young people, they want to become independent by earning their own money and to feel part of a society that is permeated by consumption and communication. The jobs they do find are unappealing and require considerable physical effort - for example, building maintenance and cleaning - or they are temporary -for example, distributing handbills, unloading trucks and serving as short-term replacements.

Some young people receive an allowance as handicapped adults because they are considered "socially inadapted" rather than because of any real health problem. They escape the consequences of unemployment by being classified as invalids, but then they are marked by a stigma that stays with them for life. In earlier times, parents could search out a merchant or a small business person who would give their older children odd jobs or take them in as apprentices. Today, there are programs to help young people find jobs, but these programs are not accessible to the more disadvantaged young people. Even apprenticeships or vocational training centers require an educational level that these young people lack. For the same reason, they fail the theoretical exam for the certificate in trade proficiency (C.A.P) even when an apprenticeship is available. There is another difficulty. On-the-job training usually does not pay as much as can be earned from odd jobs. This is an important consideration for young people who often have to help support their families.

All this explains the increased numbers of young people reported by social services as being on public assistance, in shelters for the homeless, or confined to mental institutions. Their families are too poor to support them, and they are forced into unemployment and made to feel frustrated by not being able to put their energy to use. Parents, educators and all who are in contact with young people are worried about what they are seeing. Young men and women withdraw into themselves or join gangs that are prone to violence and delinquency. Their whole being rebels against a life constrained by lack of skills and lack of money.

There is a real risk that they will be trapped, as their parents are, in the "inevitable minimum" percentage of unemployed persons. There is no justification for accepting a certain minimum level of unemployment, whatever the economic situation.

There is much discussion about creating jobs that would be useful but not necessarily cost-efficient. But today even cleaning services are mechanized, and it would be difficult to create jobs that require no special skills. Jobs for low-skilled workers now require a certain educational aptitude and a capacity for deductive reasoning.

Given this difficult situation, we shall examine government and private initiatives to provide training and jobs for people with few job skills.

II. EVALUATION OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR LOW-SKILLED YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

Because of the increase in unemployment and the resulting problems, the government has launched a major effort to encourage job creation, to redesign training programs, and to bring people back into the job market.

We shall concentrate on efforts aimed at low-skilled young people and adults.

Their work prospects are affected by major economic trends. Factors such as the level of gross national product, fluctuations in international trade, changes in corporate tax rates, readjustment of work-week schedules, and management policies toward workers all affect hiring and training practices. But the attention focused on the rising unemployment among skilled workers has obscured the urgency of providing work and training for the least skilled workers, who are more seriously affected. The "White Paper on Poverty," prepared by the Social and Economic Committee of the Midi-Pyrénées region, is worth citing here. This study provides much statistical material on unemployment among the most disadvantaged.

The government realizes that unemployment affects people differently according to their socio-economic level. Similarly, employment and training programs differ in the way they benefit the participants.

In fact, it has become clear that general policies to stimulate employment do very little for the most disadvantaged. In particular, the selection process for training programs discriminates against them. There have been local and national initiatives to rectify this situation. In certain member countries of the European Community, jobs have been created or reserved for these workers. For example, people are employed to clean streets with brooms in one part of a city while street cleaning is mechanized in the rest of the city.

In France, the emphasis has been placed on job training. The evaluation of such programs meets with the same difficulties we mentioned with regard to community social development projects (Chapter V) and experimental school programs (Chapter VI). The following is what we know from these evaluations:

- a description of the program;
- the approximate number of potential and actual participants (the former figure is somewhat biased by the omission of unemployed persons who are not registered with the national employment service). In some cases, we can learn what happens in the short term to those who complete the training.

We find here the same problem that we found in the evaluations of other programs designed to combat chronic poverty: we do not know how the results correlate with the participants' socio-economic backgrounds.

Nevertheless, at a forum held in Lyon [2], Ms. Dhuicque, deputy director of employment in the Ministry of Labor, gave a quantitative and qualitative account of what has been done by the government.

Some figures:

- The 1984 campaign, "Young People," which included career information, work preparation and skill training, involved 95,000 people ages 16 to 18 and 35,000 people ages 18 to 25 at a total cost of three billion francs. The 1985-86 campaign is expected to reach 50,000 people ages 16 to 18 and 35,000 people ages 18 to 25.
- Since its creation at the end of 1985, the youth community employment program has enrolled 263,000 young people out of an estimated 306,000 potential participants. Estimates for 1986 call for 220,000 full-time jobs (out of 300,000 potential participants) at a cost of 3.5 billion francs.
- An individualized modular training program was designed to "prevent discrimination in job training and employment." The program includes specially designed instruction in work discipline, punctuality and relations in the work place; it helps bring job skills up to level and continues to help until a job is found. By the end of 1985, some 20,000 long-term unemployed persons had been enrolled out of a previously estimated target group of 49,000 persons. The program was financed by the National Employment Fund (F.N.E.) and allotted 100,000 training positions for "people who are in the worst situation because they have been unemployed for a long time, are not receiving benefits and have severe financial difficulties." (Memorandum of July 9, 1985.)
- Intermediate business enterprises were given 50 million francs in 1985 and 100 million francs in 1986, with the aim of creating 5,000 jobs nationwide.

The above training programs differ from the social development projects and school-based training we previously examined in that some are clearly intended for participants from a certain socio-economic background. The regulation of March 26, 1982, which created training programs for persons ages 16 to 18, stated that they were specifically for unemployed young people who had neither prior training nor any current skills. Here we are clearly dealing with very disadvantaged young people with a background of chronic poverty, and these programs represent real progress. It is still difficult to know how to evaluate the results and to ascertain whether the most disadvantaged participants benefited. We know, for instance, from official estimates that in certain localities 20 percent of the most disadvantaged young people did not benefit from the programs, although the programs were specifically aimed at them.

Some facts:

- In the campaign "Young People," between 15 and 30 percent of those who completed the training found employment. It is true that the purpose of these courses is not so much to help young people find jobs as to provide a transition between school and work for those who failed in school at Levels VI and Vb. That is to say, the campaign targets young people who have less chance of benefiting from on-the-job training or from programs that alternate

work and training periods. About 50 percent of the young people enrolled in the youth community employment programs had an educational level of intermediate secondary school or less. The training associated with the program helped only 25 percent of them.

- In general, the training courses for the long-term unemployed who are registered with the National Employment Fund hardly affect those at intermediate secondary school level or below (20 to 25 percent of entrants).

A special effort was made to help disadvantaged single women. Through access to training and employment opportunities, the women were to become economically independent instead of depending solely on the temporary allowances to which they were entitled.

The women not only had priority access to training programs, they also received financial incentives. In addition, a program was started in 1983 that helped single mothers who were receiving the single-parent allowance to rejoin the labor force. It proved quite successful.

In 1986, government policy was redirected to emphasize the employment and training of young people. Jobs that had training associated with them were encouraged. Thus, employers who hired young people could be given up to 100% exemption from the social security tax they paid for such employees. The employer had to undertake to perform one of four training functions for the young person: introduction to the work environment (S.I.V.P.), acquisition of a recognized skill, an apprenticeship, or retraining.

The youth community employment programs continue and are even being expanded, and training for the long-term unemployed continues.

These initiatives reflect a renewed determination in the country to include the most disadvantaged in the work force. However, it is too early to evaluate their impact on the people who had the least chance of finding work.

These few examples show that much still remains to be done before the most disadvantaged obtain real training and jobs. They will begin to believe that their situation will change when they experience a continuing and simultaneous progress in work, training and social acceptance. People are motivated when they feel that they are being given what young people in poor neighborhoods call "real work." They, more than anyone else, are wary of small, insignificant jobs that may well become the only work ever available to them.

III. INNOVATIVE EXPERIMENTS

Documentation from the Information Center on Social Innovations describes a considerable number of initiatives by individuals or organizations that are designed to help the most disadvantaged people to find employment. Some merely offer people something to do. These might be called "make-work enterprises." Others give supervised on-the-job training, like the introduction to the work environment program and the Manpower Training Associations (A.M.O.F.). Finally, some emphasize social integration over skill training.

There are interesting ideas in some of these ventures. Some include literacy training during work time, others help the unemployed join organizations or form their own groups for mutual support, and others provide training activities. It is also worth noting that funds have been created at the Departmental level to increase job opportunities for unemployed young people ages 18 to 25. The memorandum of February 25, 1985, which established these funds, stressed that they should be used to "systematically encourage the most disadvantaged young people." However, genuinely new insights and practices are mainly to be found in the intermediate business enterprises and the "new skill acquisition" programs *(nouvelles qualifications).*

A. Intermediate Business Enterprises

Intermediate business enterprises had their beginning in private associations that were first called "economic integration agencies." In 1985 they officially became "intermediate business enterprises," which the memorandum of April 24, 1985, [3] described as "true business enterprises... that reintegrate people into a work environment while serving the community." The memorandum also states:

> "The economic crisis and the consequent increase in unemployment of the last few years have resulted in a process of exclusion that particularly affects the young.
>
> "To deal with this difficult situation, the government decided on September 26, 1984, to strengthen existing measures that help integrate young people into the work force, namely job-training programs, programs that alternate periods of work and training, and youth community employment programs. Thanks to an unprecedented response by business, voluntary associations, and local communities, several hundred thousand young people will be reached by this campaign.
>
> "To deal with the special circumstances of certain young people who have great difficulty entering the work force and do not benefit from present programs, the government has decided to add to these efforts an experimental program to be known as "intermediate business enterprises.' For the second half of 1985, the government will make a special appropriation of 50 million francs to finance them."

The intermediate business enterprises receive a subsidy to make up for their lower productivity and the cost of additional supervisory staff. They are generally small undertakings, where disadvantaged workers can acquire new skills in a setting that encourages good relationships and exchanges of knowledge.

To be effective for very poor workers, the following conditions appear necessary:

- Priority must be given (but not in exclusivity) to hiring those who would have the least chance of finding other work;
- Basic training must be included, and the participants must be paid the equivalent of the minimum wage to give them

the status of workers and the means to support their families;

- Employment must last long enough for the participant to move into regular employment or advanced training;
- Staff must be technically competent and be able to stimulate a shared learning process among the participants.

These conditions are not easy to meet for an enterprise that also has to make a profit.

A small number of enterprises manage with the government's minimum subsidy, which averages 30,000 francs per person per year. But they tend to be highly specialized enterprises that have a good market outlet, such as microcomputer assembly. They usually hire better-prepared trainees with a level equivalent to the certificate in trade proficiency.

The great majority of enterprises, however, hire really disadvantaged workers and are mainly subcontractors in the building industry or are involved in construction work. These enterprises are less profitable and require larger subsidies.

No large-scale evaluation of these enterprises has been undertaken to determine whether the participants are better integrated into the normal work force. A few pilot projects were evaluated and these showed encouraging results. But many companies have great difficulty remaining viable while giving priority in hiring to those in the greatest need.

According to a 1983 evaluation by a delegation of job-training professionals, two thirds of the participants in the enterprise at Noisy-le-Grand had found jobs on leaving the program, and half of those jobs became permanent. But, by 1986, only half of those leaving the program had found jobs.

As this report was being written, the experimental financing of intermediate business enterprises was ended. The desire to continue the concept is apparent in legislation on the new "intermediate associations."

B. "New Skill Acquisition" Programs

Many of the experimental programs in France have their equivalents in other countries of the European Community. But the initiative called "new skill acquisition" is uniquely French. It was conceived and put in operation by Professor Bertrand Schwartz, who was responsible for creating the Interministerial Committee for the Integration into Society and Employment of Young People at Risk, various local groups, and the Reception-Information-Orientation Centers (P.A.I.O.). All these initiatives are based on the following principles:

- close cooperation and coordination among all involved;
- an awareness that young people need to see a clearly defined progression from training to employment;
- a need to collaborate with many associations in order to facilitate the entry of young people into the workforce (for example, with organizations that will pay for what would otherwise be voluntary work or that offer part-time work; also with manpower training associations and intermediate business enterprises).

Schwartz sees two things that affect the supply of and demand for labor. Industry is eliminating positions requiring the certificate in trade proficiency. In many businesses there are hardly any personnel at levels between skilled technicians and semi-skilled workers. Employers can then hire unemployed skilled workers to do unskilled jobs. As a result, unskilled young people cannot find jobs, and skilled young people have to be satisfied with jobs that are really beneath their capacities.

On the supply side of employment, Schwartz sees that all young people, if given the means, can learn a trade or acquire skills at the level of the certificate in trade proficiency. Employment opportunities could then be made available if businesses agreed to try different career paths until the young people become properly qualified.

The "new skill acquisition" program works in the following way:

- A young person just out of a vocational or special education school is assigned to an experienced technician in a firm. The technician gives the young person increasingly harder tasks that are part of the technician's work but do not require technical skills. At the end of the training period (which is intended to last two years), all the different tasks the young worker has learned are written up in a new job description, and a new post is created for the young worker. The worker will have obtained a new type of on-the-job certificate in trade proficiency.
- The technician, now free from some work, can take on tasks normally done by an engineer. In turn, the engineer has more time to invest in research. The whole process is still too new to allow for a serious evaluation. But it is worth noting that by raising the competence and status of the young worker, the firm also raises the level of others. The procedure lets unqualified young workers start their work life in modern sectors of the economy. In fact, the human resources of the firm will be enhanced throughout.

What can we conclude from this chapter? It is clear that the high unemployment rate, especially among young people, has led the French government to experiment with many different training programs. It is less sure whether the programs directed at less-skilled young people do in fact combat chronic poverty or whether they mainly benefit those in more or less temporary difficulty. The latter seems more likely.

Until recently, the country's experts were trying to forecast movements on the demand side of the job market. The idea was to match the demand by providing suitable training, particularly for young people. But, in the present appalling situation of unskilled young people, the possibility of changing the nature of the jobs to be filled is now being considered. The progressive disappearance of jobs for people who are unskilled or have only a certificate in trade proficiency has led to experiments in which technicians train young workers on the job to qualify for an upgraded certificate in trade proficiency. It is therefore not simply a matter of adjusting the supply of labor to the demand,

but of creating new types of jobs. The attempts to provide jobs for the most disadvantaged people reemphasize the importance of human resources in the work place.

All this is still in an experimental stage; only about fifty firms are involved. Meanwhile, few efforts are under way for the many long-term jobless adults - mothers and fathers in chronic poverty - whose unemployment weighs heavily on their children, both now and for the future. It is difficult for adults who did not receive a solid educational grounding as children to benefit from educational opportunities in later life.

Still, real progress has been made in reducing unemployment through the many training programs for disadvantaged young people. For young people with a background of chronic poverty, there are new grounds for hope but still few concrete results. For their parents, there is little optimism. It is unacceptable that young adults over 25 should be condemned to join the long-term unemployed and that this situation might last the rest of their lives.

CHAPTER VIII

POVERTY IN RELATION TO CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES

In the preceding chapters, we often referred to the interdependence of economic, social and cultural rights on the one hand and political and civil liberties on the other. If a segment of the population lacks a minimum of basic security, it cannot participate in the life of society. A person without an official address cannot register to vote. A person who is illiterate cannot be adequately informed about political issues. Families who have hardly any resources or are homeless have no real choice about where they can live. Some parents cannot even visit their children in foster care because of the distance and the money required for travel.

The situation of the chronically poor alerts us to a reality that concerns every citizen but is often ignored: namely, that the exercise of political and civil rights presupposes certain conditions. Even if a government does not interfere in the lives of its citizens, they are not necessarily free to think or act as they want or to associate with whomever they please, especially when they are chronically poor. In fact, their situation helps us to understand the interdependence of all human rights. We cannot compartmentalize different human needs; we have to consider the whole person. In this chapter, we shall develop this theme, showing how the basic rights of one family were violated. We shall then take the example of the right to family life and examine how administrative regulations and practices can deny the poor the rights they have by law. In conclusion, we shall explain why the poor must have the chance to appeal decisions that affect them and to participate in organized groups and political life, and we shall propose some conditions that will make this possible.

I. A FAMILY'S STRUGGLE FOR ITS BASIC RIGHTS

The following case was cited in testimony given to the Social Affairs Section of the Economic and Social Council by Nicolas Jacob, a lawyer of the Paris bar. He used it as an example of the abuse of power to which families in chronic poverty are sometimes subjected and against which they have no real defense.

In the early 1960s, the W. family had settled about half a mile from a village in the Department of Bas-Rhin.

The family set up a wooden shed and a camper without wheels at the end of a dirt road that led to fields belonging to two farmers. The couple had ten children, born between 1950 and 1965; six were still at home. The father earned money by selling baskets he weaved himself.

The neighbors tolerated the family's presence for 15 years, until two of the children were suspected of minor thefts. Some villagers became hostile and threatened the family. On January 13, 1974, a group from the village, accompanied by local police, arrived at the family's encampment. The family, in terror, threw some clothing and cooking utensils into a baby carriage and fled. The next day, the mayor ordered the domestic animals left by the family to be killed, their house to be burned down, and the site bulldozed.

For more than three years the family was driven out of one community after another, tolerated for a few days, then told to leave and at times even forcibly removed by official order.

At first the family took refuge in the woods, using a canvas stretched between trees as a makeshift shelter. Then they were given the use of a trailer, but they could not stay at any one place for more than 48 hours. In May 1977, they were housed in an old cottage, formerly used by a gatekeeper of a railroad crossing. They finally had a legal address.

It was not until March 26, 1985, that the national court of appeals found the mayor guilty of "destroyong personal and real property belonging to others" (Article 434 of the Penal Code). The court ordered the payment of 20,500 francs for damages plus interest. The process had taken ten years, involved four verdicts by the criminal court of appeals, four by the city court of Colmar, two by the appeals court in Metz, and one by the criminal court of Metz.

A. Civil Liberties and the Judicial System

In his testimony, Jacob could not cover all the violations of basic rights that this family suffered. It is clear from the texts of the various indictments against the mayor that the notion of civil rights and liberties was at stake.

On February 10, 1977, the court in Colmar agreed to hear the complaint of "unlawful entry and destruction of an inhabited dwelling" brought by ATD Fourth World against the mayor of

the village. Six years later, after a change in the law, the appeals court in Metz upheld a verdict of guilty against the mayor for "destroying personal and real property belonging to others."

Jacob pointed out that the court in Colmar took an important step in allowing an organization of solidarity with the very poor to enter the case. The court's decision, he said, was a recognition of the right of the association to defend this family. Until then, the family could only count on the discretion of the public prosecutor to act, which he did not. Poverty, it seems, is not a condition deserving special consideration, such as is granted to war crimes victims, abused children, dissatisfied consumers, and even animals. In fact, it would have been easier for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to start proceedings against the mayor for having killed the family's cats and dogs than it was for ATD Fourth World to bring a complaint against him for having wronged the family. The court in Colmar redressed this anomaly by hearing the case.

Moreover, in the course of this case, the national court of appeals stated that the home is the place where someone lives, whether it is a normal house, a trailer or a shack. As long as a person or a family lives there, even the most modest dwelling is inviolable. The first charge against the mayor made clear that no degree of poverty could excuse his illegally entering the home. The second charge accused the mayor of "destroying personal and real property belonging to others." At issue here is the right to own property and to protect it. Again, it did not matter how poor the dwelling or the objects in it; according to the court in Metz, they were someone's belongings and so were protected. Ambiguity in the definition of "belonging" lends itself to abuse and often leads to the destruction of objects that a family considers its property. In a final appeal, the mayor stated that he had burned down the family's shelter as a public health measure but the court rejected this argument.

B. Charges Never Brought to Trial

Apart from the case against the mayor, the family was victimized in other ways that did not reach the courts.

It is irreconcilable with the Constitution that a family could be driven out of one village after another for three years and not be able to settle down anywhere. For the W. family, the right to freedom of movement was distorted into an obligation to keep moving [1].

Both the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights link freedom of movement with freedom to choose a place of residence:

- "Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State." (Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.)
- "Anyone who habitually resides within the territory of a State has the right to move around freely within that State and to choose the place of his or her residence within the State." (Article 2, Protocol N°. 4 of the Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties, adopted by the Council of Europe and ratified by the French government.)

The W. family was rejected by local authorities in every community and was forced to wander from place to place. Yet having a permanent residence goes far in identifying people with regard to their rights and obligations. People need an address to register to vote, to receive official letters, to belong in a legal jurisdiction, to register their children in school, to receive social benefits, and to request public assistance or public medical aid. Having a residence gives people the opportunity to find employment and to associate with others.

Mayors are not required to grant residence to individuals or families they consider undesirable. But, without residence in a given municipality, an application for public housing may be turned down and the applicant loses any chance to establish a legal address. The result is a kind of enforced vagrancy that has nothing in common with the life of itinerant peoples. In fact, the poorer itinerant people now travel less.

We are reminded of the situation of the Hornaing family (Part One, Chapter VI) when they were obliged to move from place to place. It shows that the very poor often cannot choose where they live; they are rehoused by force.

The W. family suffered other deprivations of civil rights: their right to have privacy, to stay together as a family, and not to be discriminated against. For example:

- Local authorities provided the family with emergency help, but offered nothing that would change its situation (for example, when the family was given a piece of canvas for shelter).
- The family would have been entitled to receive a family allowance under the supervision of a guardian after staying for six months in one locality, but everything was done to force the family to move.
- Pressure was put on the parents to give up four of their children.

These measures effectively deprived the parents of any sense of dignity and of the means to carry out their responsibilities to their family and to the community.

C. No Recourse Against Discrimination

Mr. and Mrs. W. knew that their way of living was held against them. In official reports they were called "nomads," "gypsies," or *"manouches"* (a Gypsy tribe). Some of Mrs. W.'s ancestors were, in fact, *"Yenniches"* (a Gypsy tribe living in Alsace), but they had long ceased to be itinerant and had intermarried with rural families as poor as themselves. An identity invented for them by others had been imposed on the family. In effect, they were deprived of their own history and culture and of any honorable social status. They alternated between feeling guilty for who they were and feeling that they had been unjustly humiliated.

As Jacob pointed out, the family came to fear the authorities because the authorities had all the power, including the power to

take away their children. Jacob said that, in general, very poor families are "vulnerable to many abuses of power, even at the lowest levels of government administration. This is why it was first necessary to obtain the right for a private organization to bring the complaint on the family's behalf."

Such families are readily victimized because they have neither the means of seeking legal redress nor the idea that legal action is possible for them. "We just play dead," is what poor families often say. But this is not a way to defend basic rights. For people who have no organized group behind them, it is only a way to back off from danger for a time.

II. IS CHRONIC POVERTY AN OBSTACLE TO HUMAN RIGHTS?

The case of Mr. and Mrs. W. against the mayor is exceptional because it was initiated and pursued by a private association. There are many examples of basic rights being violated. When it becomes routine to ignore basic rights, the right of people to live in dignity is called into question. We shall illustrate this point by examining the right of chronically poor people to live as a family.

A. The Right to Live as a Family and the Responsibility of the State Toward the Family

To start a family and live within it is a fundamental right. Family members have obligations toward one another, and the state has the obligation to guarantee conditions in which family life can thrive:

- "The nation assures individuals and families the conditions necessary for their development." (Preamble of the Constitution of 1946, referred to in the Preamble of the Constitution of 1958, still in force.)
- "The contracting parties undertake to foster the economic, legal and social protection of the family in order to provide circumstances conducive to the full development of the family as the basic unit of society." (Article 16 of the European Social Charter, ratified by France.)

The second statement has been interpreted by the committee of experts who oversee its application to mean there is a co-responsibility of the family and the state. In other words, not only must the state protect the family, it must also provide the means to ensure the family's development. Theoretically, the state's commitment should take the form of appropriate legislation in the areas of social, fiscal and family life. Thanks largely to the efforts of family associations in France, the state's responsibilities toward the family have been more clearly defined. Nevertheless, the legal system still includes provisions that infringe on the right of the very poor to live as families. This right is also often denied through accepted practices.

B. When People Lose the Right to Their Possessions

The current laws governing possessions that cannot be seized (Law N° 72-626 of July 5, 1972; Decree 77-273 of March 24, 1977) admittedly added to the list of belongings protected against seizure, but they also established that all possessions, including those otherwise protected, may be seized if they were bought on credit and money is still owed on the original purchase. This is a retreat from former articles 592 and 593 of the Code of Civil Procedure, under which the following were declared absolutely protected against seizure, regardless of the nature of the debt:

- "...the bedding of the person whose goods are being seized and that of dependent children, together with the clothes they are wearing" regardless of the status of the persons concerned;
- "Furniture, linen, clothing and household utensils" of persons receiving public assistance for children or for the entire family.

Today, people have no right to retain even a minimum of furniture. This retreat from the original law strikes essentially at the poorest families. While the threat of seizure of property would induce others to pay, it is useless against the poorest families, who are simply unable to pay.

Families are now being subjected to seizure of possessions that are considered essential to life and work. The poorest families thus become more vulnerable to evictions, homelessness, the removal of children and the breakup of the family. Moreover, the goods seized bring the creditors little return when they are resold or auctioned [2]. In 1978 a law was proposed that would reestablish for very poor people the protection of essential belongings.

C. Protection of the Family Against Eviction

According to current law, leases may carry a standard clause under which a landlord, by official letter, may demand immediate payment from a tenant who has missed a single rent payment. If no payment is made within a month and if the tenant does not respond in court during this time, the court has no alternative but to order the tenant to be evicted. The only thing a judge can do at that point is delay the eviction for up to two years. A tenant's lease can also be cancelled for failure to meet other provisions in the lease. In fact, the poorest families live in constant fear of being evicted. Even when landlord and tenant can reach some sort of settlement, as often happens, the landlord always has the power to evict tenants if they cannot pay the rent or to find some clause in the lease to use against them. A judge has no authority to look into the reasons why rent was not paid or why a condition in the lease was not met.

Article 26 of the law of June 22, 1982, made provision for future legislation that would set out conditions under which a judge could annul the cancellation of a lease when a tenant became destitute and could not pay rent or other expenses. This future legislation was also meant to establish procedures for compensating the landlord and for relocating the tenant. Unfortunately, none of this seems likely to happen in the near future. The provisions of Article 26 were not retained in the law of December 23, 1986, which superseded that of June 22, 1982.

Tenants are always at the mercy of an automatic application of clauses in a lease. But nothing in the law assures tenants of

alternative housing when they are evicted. In effect, our legislation allows destitute individuals or families to be put in the street without also immediately giving them the right to be rehoused.

There are provisions in the law to suspend evictions during the winter. But there is no legal obligation to rehouse the homeless, even in winter. The lack of an effective guarantee of the right to housing compromises the future of any tenant who cannot pay rent and poses a constant threat to family unity.

D. Poverty and Family Breakup

1. The poor family and the individual rights of its members

Anyone involved with poor families knows that the law considers the family to be a group of individuals, each with their own rights. What action can be taken, then, in the case of a family in which the father has been unemployed or in and out of work for several years and receives no benefits?

Should the efforts concentrate on helping the husband so that his wife and children will eventually be provided for? Or should the wife be advised to leave her husband and so become eligible for the allowances for single parents? Similarly, when a household cannot ensure the healthy development of the children, should the children be helped outside their family, or should the help go to the family as a whole?

The value that social services, government agencies and judicial authorities place on preserving chronically poor family units depends on how they perceive the parents in such families. The various agencies face difficult decisions that, for the poorer families, are crucial to family integrity and dignity. Yet the poorer the family, the less able it is to defend itself.

This might explain, in part, the high rate of couples breaking up, and the large number of single-parent households and of children in foster care among families in the lowest socioeconomic level. The high rate of family breakup again illustrates that when economic and social rights are not fully assured, civil and political rights are eventually impaired. In turn, the weakness of civil and political rights accentuates the denial of economic and social rights.

2. Is the value of the poor family recognized?

We have to realize that men, women and children struggle, often desperately, to stay together as a family. Nevertheless, chronically poor families remain threatened by the placement of children in foster care, either temporarily or permanently (see Part Two, Chapter V).

Although the official reason for child placement may not be the poverty of the family, poverty is always an aggravating factor. We have seen throughout Part Two of this report that protective measures become less effective, or even nonexistent, when families have little to offer in return. In the end, the family is not protected and its right to exist is denied. It seems that the value of a family is assessed on a sliding scale: the poorer the family, the lower its worth. The poorest families are always suspect, and people readily intrude in their lives. "We can't shut our doors," the families say. "Anyone who wants can just walk in."

E. Questioning the Right to Have Children

The right to have children is a serious matter. This right, more than any other, involves a person's conscience and freedom of choice. The previous chapters have shown that a minimum of security must be ensured if a family is to freely choose and plan its future. The choice of how many children to have is connected to the question of what resources the family has to provide for the children's future. The answer should be sought in policies designed to provide security, educational opportunity and the means to participate in society.

Certain current practices must be denounced. There are cases in which socio-medical institutions exceed their prerogatives because they have few means to deal with a family's deprivation. In such cases, for example, they may exert pressure on a woman to have an abortion or tubal ligation, without her really understanding the full implications of the operation.

III. THE RIGHT TO APPEAL AND TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC LIFE

In a democracy, injustices can be redressed when people have the right to be heard and to bring pressure to bear on appropriate institutions. They can achieve this in two ways: by contesting administrative or judicial decisions; and by participating in civic associations, labor unions and political parties.

A. The Avenues for Appeal

Most citizens find the process of appealing a decision to be complex. An appeal is possible for people able to understand the process, hire a lawyer, analyze the situation and express their opinion about it. When people seek redress against an injustice, their lifestyle and conduct are important considerations; it is better for them not to be seen as having done wrong themselves.

We saw this in the case of the W. family. They did not even consider filing an appeal about what happened to them. For persons from a poor background, communication with lawyers and judges can be difficult. The cause of this problem often lies with the professional who lacks the necessary training to deal with such situations. Examples involving doctors, social workers and teachers have already been cited. The same lack of understanding affects communication between the poor and members of the legal profession, on whom the poor depend to untangle their often complicated situations. If there is a lack of understanding, a lawyer can begin to mistrust a client. This can also partly explain the reluctance of the very poor to seek legal help, even when it is free of charge.

A person involved in a court case can request legal aid. The legal aid office decides whether to help, based on the applicant's resources and the validity of the case. The approval process can be long, and only a senior judge can grant emergency assistance. In criminal matters, the public defender's office is poorly remunerated by the government, and lawyers, by giving many

other reasons, may refuse to accept clients. However, in the Department of Seine-St. Denis, the bar association has set up a system of advance payments for lawyers acting as public defenders. This simple step has greatly improved the availability of public defenders.

A person who has been assigned a lawyer by legal aid or through the public defender's office may ask the president of the bar association for another lawyer if he or she is not satisfied. In the case of legal aid, people may choose a lawyer from those registered with the court involved (Article 11 of the law of December 31, 1982). This is not yet possible in criminal cases, where there is no choice of public defender. But, slowly, the very poor are beginning to have some freedom to choose the lawyers who will defend them.

B. Participating in Public Life

1. The right to participate in associations: a privilege or a necessity?

Throughout Part Two, we have seen many examples of laws that do not adequately cover the situations of extremely poor people. This is almost to be expected, because the poor have had no voice in establishing the laws.

French democracy has shown itself ready to propose legislative remedies for many social ills. Society pays attention to new needs and hardships as they become known through the workings of national institutions and especially through civic groups and labor unions. Sometimes new organizations arise in response to new needs. For any issue at stake, they sort out what is the responsibility of citizens and what the responsibility of government.

Being part of an association can provide people with necessary information. It can also be an opportunity for them to take on a civic or political commitment on behalf of fellow citizens in difficult circumstances.

We have already explained that it is essential for individuals and families in poverty to be part of associations (see the reference to the Théry report in Chapter V of Part Two). When people belong to an association, it helps ensure that they are part of society. In this regard, the role of government cannot simply be to avoid placing obstacles in the way of the poorest people joining associations. The right to free association must be accompanied by the means for people to become part of a group in which they are genuinely interested. Otherwise the group does not serve its function for the people for whom it was intended; and society fails to broaden the scope of public life if it does not include new partners in a potentially richer dialogue.

Very poor individuals and families sometimes do participate in various groups. Their participation, however, is often at the level of mere attendance rather than active involvement. And their attendance is generally very irregular. A mother may attend a parents' meeting at school or a father may go to a tenants' meeting, but it is difficult for them to be part of what is going on. The topics discussed may be foreign to them, while their own concerns may not interest the average participant. Initiating a dialogue requires a learning process on both sides.

2. Conditions for participation by the very poor

The very poor want to participate. The fact that they come together in local and national groups is a proof of this desire. These associations can promote the progressive involvement of the poorest people in the following ways:

- The group must reach out to people who are in a very insecure situation and, at the same time, respect the liberty of people to choose how they are involved. Whether they choose to come to meetings or not, people must be informed and have the chance to contribute their ideas and knowledge.

- The disadvantaged must find people with whom they can speak on an equal level, in a comprehensible manner, about subjects that are important for them.
- The very poor have concerns that are crucial for them. But they know that they will not be given the attention they deserve unless fellow citizens and specialists in various areas are on their side.

Associations, both small and large, that work according to these principles have shown that real participation by the very poor is possible. Some examples are the Workers' Mutual Aid Society *(Entraide ouvrière)* in Tours, various groups working among Gypsy people, and a number of projects launched by ATD Fourth World, a movement that brings together very poor families.

The approach of such groups demands that the members know how to integrate the more disadvantaged participants into the workings of the group. People who are constantly struggling against poverty need to find ways to come together in a common cause. Existing organizations have to take this into acount and defend the interests of the poorest.

3. Participation in the political process

Direct participation in the political process is not easy for the very poor. It requires a minimum of education, self-assurance and security. For people who are illiterate, who depend on public assistance, who lack proper housing, or who do not understand the different agencies that dominate their lives, political involvement is very difficult. If they visit a local party office, it is only to seek emergency assistance.

Poor people abstain from political involvement, or even from voting, for various reasons. They find the voter registration procedure difficult to follow, or they miss deadlines to register. They cannot always offer proof of residence. Some of them think that having been in prison deprives them of the right to vote. But, besides these reasons, many of the poorest people think that politics is not concerned with their situation.

In such a context, the current move toward decentralization may be both an opportunity and a danger for the more

disadvantaged. The Foundation for Developing Participation in Associations *(Fondation pour le développement de la vie associative)* states:

"At the local level, where each community is now being given greater control over its affairs, it is evident that marginalized groups will have greater difficulty in finding their place in the community. When responsibility for social assistance is shifted to the Departmental level, people who are largely dependent on public assistance are more likely to be viewed as a financial and social burden, and even more so when they are considered incapable of integrating into the community. In such circumstances, there will be a greater temptation to exercise social control over them or even to exclude them."

In this context, government officials and the general public should be aware that the most deprived people are potential partners and should resolve to give them the means to achieve the equality that such a relationship demands. A number of associations, especially at the local level and often at the urging of social workers, are already trying to include the very poor and to incorporate the interests of the very poor into their agenda. For the very poor, as for anyone, participation in organized groups is essential if they are to express themselves publicly and to be initiated into the political process.

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It would seem that chronic poverty, in itself a contradiction of the notion of human rights, is also a major obstacle to the attainment of those rights. The economic, social and cultural deprivation that chronic poverty entails makes a dead letter of civil liberties and political rights. If people have no means of redress and no way of participating in social and political life, they cannot regain economic and social rights that have been denied to them.

Before concluding this chapter, we call attention to an important development. In 1976, as a result of 15 years of prompting by an association, a number of representatives in the National Assembly formed a nonpartisan group to study the problems of the Fourth World. The Senate formed its own group in 1980. In itself, the existence of those study groups is not unusual. The groups are unique, however, because the initiative came from an association whose members are families from some of the poorest neighborhoods. What is even more unusual is that the families are linked in a nationwide association that keeps the representatives informed of their situation and their views. Following the French example, members of the European Parliament established their own "Fourth World Committee." This group meets regularly, both during and between sessions, with representatives from areas of poverty throughout Europe.

The members of the Fourth World Committee consider that the contribution of the poorest is not simply an exercise of their right to speak out, but something that the members of the Parliament need to know. They consider that defending the interests of the poorest is not a choice, but a permanent obligation whatever the current social and economic trends. In France, where the idea originated, there is potential for much more collaboration of this kind.

APPENDIX

To complement this examination of initiatives taken in France to deal with chronic poverty, we shall briefly discuss what is being done in other member countries of the European Economic Community. They generally face very similar situations and have the same difficulty in ensuring that every citizen has a minimum of security in the basic areas of income, housing and medical care. We shall concentrate on the situations in Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

These countries' systems of income supplements, family allowances, and retirement, sickness and unemployment benefits are roughly the same as in France. The major difference is that these four countries provide a guaranteed minimum income. This is added to other benefits a household receives and brings income up to a certain minimum level. The beneficiaries must be ready to accept employment or training that may be offered to them.

In the area of housing, rent subsidies, similar to rent allowances in France, are provided in the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom. In the latter two countries, local authorities must provide shelter for the homeless. In the United Kingdom, there is an appeals process that reinforces this right.

In the area of health care, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom do not require a patient to pay medical costs before being reimbursed. Also, the patient pays only a portion of total prescription costs.

The main consequence of practically free health care in these countries is that poorer families have much more access to health care, although other obstacles, such as bad living conditions and fear of health institutions, may still remain.

Also, when the guarantee to housing exists, families have a certain measure of security. There is still no guarantee, however, that housing meets the desires or needs of a family (for example, having reasonable access to a place of work).

The most important factor for very poor families, according to people who know them well, is a guaranteed minimum income. However, they also point out that when payment is in the hands of local authorities, the homeless may be excluded. Also, requirements that relatives help support a family may discourage some families from applying for the benefit. Above

all, a guaranteed minimum income does not seem to ensure real integration into society. One of the most difficult problems facing policy makers is determining how to link a guaranteed income with training programs and employment.

While guarantees in housing, income and health care offer indispensable security to many citizens of these four countries, they still do not completely safeguard everyone from experiencing a lack of basic security or even from falling into chronic poverty. The experience of these countries, like that of France, shows that the most deprived individuals and families will really be safe from chronic poverty only when they can provide for themselves.

CONCLUSION

PROPOSALS FOR A POLICY TO ELIMINATE CHRONIC POVERTY AND GUARANTEE BASIC SECURITY FOR ALL

We are now at the point of formulating proposals in response to a serious situation. First, we have seen from the limited information at our disposal that approximately 2.5 million people in France are living in serious financial insecurity. Second, more and more people lack basic security in other essential needs, and we fear that the country is now in a period of increasing chronic poverty.

There is a national awareness that something must be done, and government, private organizations and individuals are working to improve existing measures. But their efforts fall short, either because extreme situations of poverty have not been taken into account and sufficiently analyzed, or because the means to resolve these situations remain inadequate. Thus, part of the population does not participate in the economic and social life of the country and cannot assume its responsibilities or enjoy the most elementary rights.

The inescapable reality is that the most impoverished members of the population are in a state of almost total dependence. They have no control over decisions that might lead to their autonomy and they lack the means to escape from this trap.

Any policy designed to eradicate chronic poverty and to ensure the development of the individual and the family, which the Constitution states is a duty of government, has to take these facts into account. The nation cannot allow the current economic difficulties to diminish the freedom of some of its citizens to exercise their rights and responsibilities. We have seen that this freedom is compromised when people are not assured of a minimum security in income, housing and health, when they do not have access to schooling, training and job opportunities, and when they cannot come together in associations that correspond to their interests and plans for the future. These conditions are not independent of one another ; achieving security in each of these areas depends on the others.

All this has led us to formulate a number of proposals that take into account the following considerations :

- Given the present economic situation, two factors rule out the immediate application of all these measures. First, there is still too little experience to launch a national campaign. Second, the immediate financial costs would appear too high because the nation would not yet be reaping the financial benefit of eliminating chronic poverty. The savings to be gained when the disadvantaged become participating citizens has to be demonstrated in a practical way, and the suffering and the loss of human potential that poverty entails has to be understood. At the same time, these are the very reasons why we cannot put off long-term action. A realistic approach to the eventual adoption of a national anti-poverty campaign would be based on simultaneous pilot projects in several Departments and some general proposals.
- For the measures to be effective, they must :
  - involve several aspects of life at the same time ;
  - be the starting point for a support system that would be progressively expanded in the years to come. ;
  - incorporate a clear national sense of a step-by-step process that leads to a society in which no one will again be threatened by chronic poverty. Most of the proposals will fall within the responsibility of individual government agencies ; their administrators are best placed to discover where their programs leave people out and to provide remedies.

Therefore, based on what we have seen in this report :

- We propose that measures already available to other citizens be adapted in application, number and duration to cover different situations. In this way, the entire population will be better assured of basic security and, therefore, better protected against chronic poverty.
- We want to see emergency measures, such as aid in the form of money, food or shelter, linked to long-term solutions. This means that a concerted support system in the form of human services would be provided from the outset. This support must continue until people can reassume their responsibilities, either individually or as part of an association.

Society is advanced enough in the 20th century to understand that "assistance to persons in danger" must entail solidarity in helping people move toward a positive future.

We shall indicate objectives to be met in each area of essential needs. They are based on the analysis and situations described throughout this report. They address the short- and long-term interests of disadvantaged people in regard to individual, family and community development. Acting in the interests of the poorest people creates a solidarity that is in the best interests of the entire country.

I. UNDERSTANDING, PLANNING AND EVALUATING

This report has shown that the country lacks statistical data on chronic poverty. It is therefore essential to start with a statistical assessment. Then following general guidelines - such as taking long-term interests into account, involving the poor themselves in program development and establishing priority needs - it should be possible to work out with

government, social agencies, unions and associations a real program of worthwhile objectives that would clearly manifest the nation's intention that all people should be included in this movement of solidarity. At every level, it is essential to develop a practice of planning and evaluating measures that ensure basic security and prevent chronic poverty.

The Economic and Social Council and its regional committees could undertake to regularly review poverty-related information and action, and to formulate constructive proposals along the lines of this report.

II. THE FIGHT AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION AS A NATIONAL PRIORITY

A. Public Awareness and Solidarity

The fact that a large part of the public is poorly informed about the nature and extent of chronic poverty poses a danger for national unity. The general population, and especially young people, have to know more about the situation of the chronically poor in order to be able to offer their own skills and solidarity in a cooperative fight against poverty. In this regard, young people should have the possibility of doing their national service among the most disadvantaged citizens in their own country just as they do in the "cooperative" service in developing countries. Education on human rights and on the situation of chronically poor people would promote solidarity as a countermeasure to social exclusion. At the local level, this process could lead to programs of sharing knowledge and skills.

B. Meeting the Most Disadvantaged People as Social Partners

Any policy of social development must be based on the life experiences of the very poor, their own view of their situation and their efforts to help each other. Such a policy must protect their interests and create opportunities for them to participate and to be represented.

If for no other reason, the most disadvantaged people need to be in partnership with others because their situation is so alarming and few understand what they experience and what they are asking. In particular, they have the right to speak as equals with authorities, such as local officials, administrators in education and housing, and representatives of unions and other associations.

Such a partnership, which the most disadvantaged people need but have rarely experienced, depends on the support of public officials and civic leaders. They have to take the initiative in informing and consulting with the most disadvantaged people, who will then see themselves as active citizens. We would emphasize that both public authorities and public interest groups have their respective responsibilities in promoting this partnership.

Participation in community life is an essential step for people who rarely succeed in being part of mainstream society. Community life is where people learn to express themselves in public, to listen to others and understand their viewpoint, and to find a common ground for cooperation in achieving shared goals. People also learn how to assert their own view in groups where the majority do not have the same interests. In a parent-school association, for example, most parents may be concerned with their children's preparation for secondary education, while parents from a disadvantaged background are more concerned that their children cannot read or write properly.

Many people acquire skills in group participation during their everyday lives, especially in school and at work. For the most disadvantaged people, however, it is a new experience that demands considerable effort on their part to overcome their initial apprehension.

Some teams of social workers who are involved in community development projects make group participation an objective of their action. Other associations do this through close contact with disadvantaged populations. For example, the people's universities of ATD Fourth World (see Part Two, Chapter V) specifically seek to create a dialogue with the social partners of the chronically poor. Such efforts could be multiplied using the existing school and university structures, and, in the process, educators would also gain a more realistic view of people's lives. This process, which has an important socio-cultural aspect, would need local support and trained organizers who could generate interest in localities where it has not yet been established.

III. EDUCATION : TO ENSURE ESSENTIAL LEARNING

In Part One of this report we saw that the educational system often fails to work for the poorest children. There are, however, many examples where it does work because the right conditions are present, such as :

- good relations with parents who themselves have been drawn into the educational dynamic ;
- preschool programs backed by a conviction that the children already have an experience that must be taken into account ;
- sustained contact with students and parents to prepare young people to handle their role as adults.

In urban and rural areas where a high proportion of young people leave school without certificates or diplomas, administrators in primary and secondary education have to invest more to bring about the above conditions. Where the school dropout rate is high, the extent of chronic poverty is also great. The experiences of the priority education zones should be used in developing a corresponding strategy.

To set this in motion demands a willingness on the part of national policymakers to reaffirm that the role of the educational experience, particularly early education, is to guarantee the acquisition of essential learning starting from early childhood. Adapting the educational process to the students is as important as the content of the education itself.

The Ministry of Education should help teachers become aware of the problems facing the most disadvantaged families. It should also provide teachers with the means to gain the knowledge and experience their role requires, especially in disadvantaged communities.

IV. EMPLOYMENT AND JOB TRAINING

In this report we have observed that :

- It is difficult to have precise information on unemployment rates among unskilled workers, how long they have been unemployed, what training they would need and what jobs would suit them.
- A large number of young people finish compulsory schooling without acquiring any qualification or diploma.
- These young people risk long-term unemployment or unemployment without compensation - a particular hardship when they start their own families.
- At the local level, different groups are experimenting with new work environments that are adapted to people's situations.

It is difficult for people with few or no skills to assert their right to work. But all persons who are able to work and who leave school without a certificate or technical skills should be able to find training courses to qualify them for employment. This is particularly important when people have been out of work for a long time or when they are responsible for a family.

Even if it takes some time to reach this objective, the country must adhere to it. Otherwise we risk establishing a dual society, already becoming evident, in which unskilled workers have no place.

We can work toward this goal in the immediate future by trying out different initiatives that will allow us to :

- assess the extent of the need for employment and job training, the number of people concerned, what jobs and training are necessary and the cost of providing them ;
- measure the effects of this operation on the households that have the greatest difficulties.

In any case, all attempts to return unskilled workers to the labor market should be encouraged by government.

V. A SAFETY NET

In this report we have observed that :

- A large number of families have insufficient income on which to live and must depend on different forms of assistance, which in most cases were intended to be only short-term aids.
- A persistent lack of economic security leads to a lack of basic security in other areas.
- Family and social background play a large role in how individuals are affected by the lack of financial resources. The effects on people's lives can be very different if they have other resources to fall back on.
- An assured minimum income over sufficient time is necessary for households to establish their independence and to achieve individual and family goals, especially when the household has experienced chronic poverty.

Although we are fully aware that employment is the primary source of income and that work opportunities suited to people's abilities need to be provided, a safety net has to be established for individuals or families who have been without sufficient financial resources for a short or long time. This is, in fact, an essential step in getting people back into the job market.

We realize that the government has moved to provide an allowance at the local level to help people looking for work. This is a step in the right direction, but by itself it is too limited.

The long-term aim should be to gradually provide a guaranteed minimum within the various branches of public assistance.

VI. THE RIGHT TO HOUSING

When people do not have a decent place to call home they have no incentive to work, to earn a living, to stay in good health or to bring up a family. Anything that they succeed in accomplishing unravels eventually without the security of decent housing.

We want to see conditions set in place to assure all people of the right to decent housing.

Government needs to give a new impetus to public housing policy. At the Departmental level, we would like to see a "Housing Solidarity" commission set up within the Departmental committee on habitat. This commission would search for solutions to the urgent problems of keeping disadvantaged families in their homes, facilitate access to housing and administer a "Housing Solidarity" fund. Changes should be made to certain forms of financial assistance to individuals.

VII. ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

Throughout this report we have pointed out the close link between low income, poor health and underuse of existing health services. The link seems to be due to :

-gaps in social protection programs ;

-poor living conditions, which impair people's health ;

-insufficient health personnel to deal with certain problems ;

-not taking into account people's socio-cultural background.

The proposals in the preceding sections are meant to improve general living conditions. Specific objectives in the

area of health would aim to fill the gaps identified in public health programs and to promote preventive health measures.

In regard to health care coverage, the government and the administrations involved should aim to drastically reduce reliance on public medical aid and replace it by a health insurance system.

These measures should give better access to health care for those whose present health coverage is poor or nonexistent. They should also reduce the cost of hospital care, on which disadvantaged people rely more than others.

VIII. INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY ADVANCEMENT

Without adequate human services, all these proposals for reintegrating people into mainstream society would have little effect. These measures cannot alleviate a lack of basic security unless the people concerned have the means to take charge of their own lives. This means that the role of social workers is not simply to provide individual support, but also to :

- -ensure that their support is part of a coordinated effort ;
- -bring individuals and families to a point where they can benefit from the normal services available to the rest of the community.

A. Legal Aid

Every citizen has the fundamental right to seek redress from the justice system.

People need to know what their rights are and how to ensure that those rights are respected.

Poverty should in no way interfere with a person's right to justice.

The legal aid system thus needs to be improved, and associations that defend the interests of the poor must have the chance to initiate legal proceedings on behalf of disadvantaged people when their fundamental rights are violated.

B. Reintegrating People into Mainstream Society

In Part One of this report we said that a disproportionately high number of poor people are in prison and that many, after they leave prison, remain as poor as before or become even poorer. Ways have to be found to make the time of incarceration a starting point for facing the future with better prospects.

Because the Economic and Social Council has been mandated to study this problem in another report, we shall not make any proposals here.

C. Protection of the Family Unit

The family unit needs to be protected because it is the base on which a person first develops an individual personality and social relationships with others. Beyond that, the family provides its members with an indispensable security on which personal and social development depends.

When families are in a state of chronic poverty, all possible efforts should be made to prevent the family unit from breaking up.

In child welfare services, parents should be able to find positive interaction and the support they need to assume their responsibilities toward their children.

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The general principles we have just considered are the basis for the recommendations attached to this report. The underlying theme is the need for joint and simultaneous action in the different areas where people lack basic security and where the absence of security in more than one area can lead to chronic poverty.

APPENDIX

PERSONS INTERVIEWED IN PRIVATE SESSION BY THE AUTHOR

Other than the delegates of organizations represented at the Economic and Social Council, the reporter met with various persons, in particular the following :

Ms. Marinette Girard	Director of social action at the Ministry of Social Affairs
Mr. Semiclay	Inspector at the Ministry of Social Affairs in charge of the dossier Poverty-Insecurity
Mr. Andre Ramoff	Head of job-training office at the Ministry of Employment and Job Training
Mr. Gaborit	Youth activities director at the Ministry of Youth and Sports
Mr. Robineau	Head of job qualifications service of young people at risk
Mr. Colcombet	Director of supervised education at the Ministry of Justice
Mr. Alain Maugard	Director of building at the Ministry of Urban Affairs, Housing and Transportation
Mr. Leclainche	Representative of ombudsman
Mr. Mignot	Executive Director of U.N.E.D.I.C.
Mr. Pierre Berton	Project manager at the National Council of Prevention of Delinquency
Mr. Lalu	Director of the Association of Mayors of Major French Cities
Mr. Giraud	President of the Regional Council of Ile-de-France, President of the Association of French Mayors
Mr. Renaudin	In charge of social affairs at U.N.F.O.H.L.M.
Mr. Andre Chaudieres	President of Emmaus housing projects
Mr. Jacques Perrier	Project manager at the National Committee for Immigrant Housing
Mr. Xavier Benoist	Project manager at P.A.C.T.
Mr. Didier Martin	Project manager at the trust fund *Caisse des depôts et consignations,* in charge of poverty affairs
Ms. Josselin	At the social action office of the S.C.I.C.
Mr. Patrick Hanquet	Administrator of the National Association of Child Care Social Workers.
Mr. Jacques Bennetot	Institutional Director at the National Association of Child Care
Mr. Galliet	Director of social action at the Farmers Mutual.
Ms Gobert	Associate of Mr. Galliet
Ms. Hélène Meunier	President of the Movement for Local Social Development.
Ms. Panhuis	Staff member at the National Association of Social Workers.
Dr. Louis Kremp	Secretary General of the French Association for the Protection of Children and Young People
Mr. Ladsous	Director of the Paris Regional Center for Children and Young People at Risk
Mr. Lejeune	Secretary General of U.N.C.C.A.S.
Chief Attorney of St. Denis	National Board of Bailiffs
Mr. Deschamps	Magistrate in Paris, Secretary General of the Union of Magistrates
Mr. Chiroutre	Vice President of F.O.N.D.A.
Ms. Anne David	Staff member at F.O.N.D.A.
Mr. Eric Eudeline	Permanent Representative of C.N.A.J.E.P., accompanied by national representatives Ms. Nadia Py from U.F.C.V, Ms. Fabienne Daul from the French Scout Movement, and Mr. Antoine Lejay from *Federation Relais*
Mr. Quaretta	Vice President of the National Federation of Orientation and Social Rehabilitation Associations
Mr. Rouquette	President of the Commission of Economic and Social Rights at the League of Human Rights
Mr. Maurice Pagat	Secretary General of the Union of Unemployed Workers
Mr. René Boué	Secretary General of the, Syndicated Confederation of Families
Ms. Perrin Riss	President of the Syndicated Federation of Single-Parent Families
Mr. Queyla	French Federation of Families
Mr. Kaltenbach	President of the Protestant Family Associations, accompanied by Mr. Delarbre of the Protestant Social Center of Montpellier and Mr.

	Werner Borki of the Protestant Mutual Aid of Lyon
Ms. Krempsdorf	United Jewish Social Fund
Ms. Simon	Family supervision service of U.N.A.F.
Mr. Maillet	Department head, family supervision service of U.D.A.F., Val d'Oise
Mr. Varnier	Chief of regional family supervision service of Seine-St. Denis at the French Association for the Protection of Children and Young People and the group of family supervision representatives
Mr. Jean-Pierre Chevalier	Secretary General of the National Union of Gypsy Organizations
Mr. Bernard Provost	Editor of the periodical *Gypsy Studies (Etudes tziganes)*
Ms. Jacqueline Charlemagne	Author of the 1980 report "Itinerant Populations and Poverty"
Mr. Dany Peto Manso	Secretary General of the National Office of Gypsy Affairs
Mr. Joel Viarteix	Secretary General of the Ile-de-France Regional Union of Associations of Gypsy People
Mr. Henri Bartoli	Professor Emeritus of Political Economy at the University of Paris I Pantheon-Sorbonne, Director of the seminar on labor economics
Mr. André Clement Decoufle	Laboratory of Applied Science in Perspectives
Mr. Gontcharoff	Editor in Chief of the periodical *Municipal Correspondence (Correspondance municipale)*
Mr. André Aumonier	President of Catholic Relief Services
Mr. Emmanual Blanc	President of the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul
Mr. Louage	Secretary General of the Little Brothers of the Poor
Mr. Lefebvre	Emmaus Community

The following members of a working group met six times :

Mr. Leon Dujardin	National Secretary for the struggle against poverty of the French People's Aid organization
Mr. Philippe Guerif	Conference of St. Vincent de Paul
Ms. Quito	French Red Cross
Ms. Anne Darcet	Foundation of France

The following persons sent a written contribution to the working group :

Major Pierquin	Salvation Army
Ms. Guillon	Director of the social services office for aid to immigrants

The reporter also consulted study groups on Fourth World issues at the National Assembly and the Senate.

Contributions were sent by the following regional Economic and Social Committees :

- Nord-Pas-de-Calais
- Ile-de-France
- Auvergne
- Lorraine
- Midi-Pyrénées
- Picardie
- Rhône-Alpes

POLICY STATEMENT ADOPTED BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

On February 12, 1985, the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council asked the Council's Section on Social Affairs to prepare a report with recommendations on "Chronic Poverty and Lack of Basic Security." The Section designated Father Joseph Wresinski as the reporter [1].

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BACKGROUND

The Council wanted a report that proposed coherent, comprehensive and forward-looking solutions. The decision was made to examine the question of "Chronic Poverty and Lack of Basic Security" in a broad context as a follow-up to the 1978 paper entitled "The Struggle Against Poverty" by Professor Péquignot. Most of the recommendations in the present report are consistent with the policies already being pursued by French government agencies.

This policy statement is presented at a time of serious economic and social difficulties that highlight the contrast between the extreme deprivation experienced by some and the relative affluence of others.

Individuals and families are living at bare subsistence levels because :

-they cannot provide for themselves through work ;

-they have few or no financial resources ;

-they live in improvised, dilapidated or unsafe housing ;

-they have not been able to acquire basic skills or, consequently, the new skills of a modern society.

The country as a whole is now aware of this situation. Political, labor and civic leaders have been unceasing in their efforts to mitigate the problem. But the means to eliminate chronic poverty have remained inadequate in recent years. Chronic poverty continues to affect others because a growing number of people lack basic security. In fact, the rationales of some social protection programs actually aggravated the situation.

This policy statement reflects the Council's desire that the objective of eliminating chronic poverty and lack of basic security be more clearly defined and then progressively attained.

The Council therefore proposes a step by step process based on the experimentation of pilot projects. Its recommendations distinguish between :

- immediate responses to emergency situations. These should provide a security threshold while providing the starting point for a process by which people are able to assume a recognized and productive role in society ;
- more long-range measures directed toward the successive elimination of the causes of chronic poverty that are identified in this report.

I. Defining Chronic Poverty and Identifying the Target Population

A person's or family's security rests on certain foundations such as employment, health, housing and education. When these foundations are sound, people are able to meet their responsibilities to their work, their families and their communities and to enjoy their basic rights. When the foundations are undermined, the insecurity that results can have lasting and serious consequences. This insecurity leads to chronic poverty when it affects several areas of life at the same time and when it becomes persistent. This in turn compromises the person's or family's chances of reassuming their responsibilities and of regaining their lost rights in the future.

The proposals that follow are directed toward people who are currently living in chronic poverty or are threatened by it. Many are in their working years and are largely unskilled, unemployed and lacking a minimum of financial resources. The proposals focus on both the individual needs of adults, children and adolescents and on the needs of the family unit as a whole.

II. Major Findings

A. Understanding situations

Little is understood about chronic poverty and its relation to lack of basic security. There is a real difficulty in relying solely on the statistical norms and administrative categories in general use. This demonstrates the need for a qualitative analysis of the extent and seriousness of the situation. It also shows the limits of present information-gathering methods and the need to improve them.

1. Statistics

Some statistics show the impact of a lack of basic security on living situations, but the data are incomplete. The extreme cases do not appear in any records : the unemployed who have given up on the normal channels of finding work, inhabitants of dilapidated housing that was never included in any census, or persons eligible for social assistance who are too overwhelmed by their situation to apply. Also, we have no idea of the effect when several or all of these forms of deprivation affect an individual or family at the same time.

Because the statistical information does not give us a unified and complete picture of poverty, we will not use a list

of deprivations to designate someone as being poor (in the overseas territories and Departments, the statistics are even more unreliable). Instead, we have tried to identify situations of extreme hardship in the areas that our society recognizes as being critical to human well-being : income, housing, health, education, job training and employment.

2. Qualitative assessments

There are descriptive studies showing that a lack of basic security engenders deprivation in other fields. This does not necessarily mean that one form of deprivation leads to chronic poverty, nor does it mean that an initial deprivation is necessarily followed by all the others. On the other hand, the breakdown of basic family supports, often related to urbanization and the increasing mobility of the population, may push families already in difficulty toward a state of chronic poverty. Moreover, the tendency in the labor market to require ever higher skills adds momentum to this downward slide, particularly among unskilled workers and those suffering from physical or mental handicaps. Just how much of an impact such deprivation has on different individuals or families seems to depend very much on their socioeconomic background, their financial reserves, cultural factors, levels of education and job training, and their chances of participating in civic, labor and political associations.

Case histories of families and neighborhoods have revealed an entire social milieu of chronic poverty, often resulting in a social exclusion that is passed on to successive generations. These histories, when part of field work programs, often reveal informal support networks and positive relationships, but this support can also reinforce the feeling of social isolation. The problems and the low self-esteem of individuals weigh on the entire community. More attention is paid to the negative factors in people's lives than to seeing the positive efforts, such as the determination of parents to find work, to see their children succeed in school, to learn a trade and to have a better life.

B. General considerations

- Lack of basic security and chronic poverty are part of a continuum. For this reason, the remedial measures to be proposed are based on the social protection available to all citizens, but the application of these measures in number, intensity and length will be adapted to specific situations.
- Population groups living in extreme poverty have often thought extensively about their lives, and their observations should serve as important reference points in the formulation of policies. Any measures should take into account the experiences and opinions of these population groups, as expressed through their participation in community associations and their contact with field workers.
- A lack of security in one area - material, cultural, social or civic - can lead to the loss of any security in another and may result eventually in people losing their basic rights as guaranteed by the Constitution. For this reason, we propose measures that simultaneously provide a minimum of security in several aspects of life. This approach is especially necessary when people can no longer exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens, family providers, workers or social partners, and even more so when people no longer believe that their situation can change.
- The measures intended to answer immediate needs will not lead to lasting solutions unless these efforts reintroduce people into the normal working of society. It follows that all emergency measures (financial assistance, food aid and shelter) should be starting points toward a better future. From the outset they include human services, collaboration between different social services, housing and employment programs [2]. It is therefore necessary to begin with adequate support structures designed to promote reintegration into normal society, including close cooperation between officials concerned with such issues as housing, employment and job training.

C. Current means available to provide basic security and help people regain a productive and recognized social role

1. Social integration

The country's educational efforts have concentrated on improving school attendance and overcoming scholastic failure. These initiatives are designed to help young people become part of the working population and to encourage the economic sector to participate in this effort.

Nevertheless, approximately seven percent of young men reporting for military service every year have not mastered reading and writing, and young people come to the labor market with no qualifications. (In 1983, 219,000 young people left school either without a diploma or with only an elementary school certificate.) These young people are much more likely to experience unemployment and social exclusion because having a place in society generally depends on having a job.

There are a number of experiments both inside and outside the school system showing that children from a disadvantaged background can succeed if relationships are created with their parents and their communities. Also, the public and private sectors are experimenting with new work concepts and job training programs designed to encourage the participation of those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

2. Basic security

Since its beginning, the French system of social protection has been steadily widened to cover new groups of beneficiaries and to take into account new forms of social risk. For example, a minimum old age pension has been created and social security coverage broadened.

Nevertheless, approximately 2.5 million people in France do not have sufficient resources to meet their basic needs. The

situation of all or many of these people is the subject of the different proposals in this policy statement, including at least one million unemployed people who receive no unemployment benefits. In addition, the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies reports that among the population it has studied, 400,000 receive no social aid at all ; half of these, as well as 370,000 who do receive some form of social aid, must depend on public medical aid. This means that a significant part of the population has a long-term dependence on public assistance and remains outside the normal social security coverage, which requires a contribution by the beneficiary.

Despite the increase in housing grants, the most disadvantaged either experience great difficulty in finding public housing or are in danger of being evicted. They end up homeless or in makeshift housing. It is very difficult to estimate the number of people in France who have inadequate housing or none at all. Estimates extrapolated from a regional survey suggest that in the country as a whole, between 200,000 and 400,000 persons are homeless or living in makeshift conditions.

Existing national policy and local initiatives can be the basis for guaranteeing adequate housing for the disadvantaged -something the Council was the first to demand in its policy statement on housing for low-income workers in January 1956.

3. Individual and family advancement

Human services have an important role in assuring basic security and helping people move beyond chronic poverty. Social workers are the key element in the human service system. But since they are so involved in finding solutions for day-to-day emergencies, they have little time for counseling, getting projects started or coordinating efforts that advance the individual or family.

Despite real progress in child protection programs, the poorest families still do not have the support they need to prevent situations in which family stability is threatened, to avoid the placement of their children in foster care, or to help the parents reassume their full family responsibilities.

A related difficulty is obtaining legal aid or appealing judicial and administrative decisions.

4. European experience

Some European countries that face the same social realities have adopted measures similar to the ones we propose here to halt the impoverishment of their citizens.

III. Continuing Experiments

The Economic and Social Council proposes remedies in all the areas mentioned above where the particular protection system fails in regard to the very poor.

These proposals are based on :

- the objectives and responsibilities that have been set for the institutions responsible for different services (for example, social security as defined by the ordinance of 1945) ;
- the observed effects both of general policies and of those specifically designed for the most disadvantaged ;
- the results of experimental programs currently being tested in the public and private sectors.

Given this foundation, the present recommendations should help formulate coherent, comprehensive and forward-looking solutions. Initiatives already under way should be developed and reforms already begun should be pursued.

The Council stresses the importance of coordinated and simultaneous action in the different domains where a lack of basic security places people in a situation of chronic poverty. In this perspective, the Council proposes that the government undertake a large-scale experiment in ten Departments in view of a broader national anti-poverty plan.

The Departmental experiment would involve coordinated programs in the following areas :

-education

-housing

-health

-employment and training.

Such an experimental program would need accompanying human services in order to help those in chronic poverty assume a responsible and active social role. The Departments would also have to guarantee the resources that people need to cover their basic necessities and fulfill their family and social responsibilities.

Departments should be selected on the basis of local initiatives already under way, particularly those involving the payment of allowances under the recent government plan for social and economic integration.

The experimentation in the pilot Departments would last three years and would be rigorously evaluated before the programs are extended to the entire country.

The Economic and Social Council emphasizes that its proposals will require not only the redirection and more efficient use of existing financial resources, but also the appropriation of additional funds. While local governments must play their part in financing these programs, the overall requirements and the experimental nature of the undertaking are such that the national government will have to make a substantial contribution through an appeal to national solidarity [3].

The progress in French society toward fuller realization of civil and political rights must be accompanied by a fuller realization of economic, social and cultural rights as well. The

measures proposed here represent a new step in that direction, provided they are carefully followed and not allowed to stray from their original purposes.

PROPOSALS

The following proposals, whether general or representing a specific innovation, are grouped according to the government administration responsible for the relevant service. The effectiveness of these proposals in helping people move beyond chronic poverty will depend on :

- making all the different stages and actions part of a coherent whole ;
- creating from the outset a working relationship between the different levels of national and local administrations, including finances ;
- coordinating the different services involved. In this regard, the Council regrets the abrogation of Article 1 of the law of January 6, 1986, which established Departmental social development councils.

I. Understanding, Planning and Evaluating

A. Undertake a preliminary study and act on its, findings

1. In following the lead of the work done by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (particularly its survey on the situation of the disadvantaged), the first urgent step should be to evaluate the nature and extent of chronic poverty and the lack of basic security.

2. The data should be periodically updated ; for example, every five years.

- In this regard, regional research centers (such as those of the Health Ministry and the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies) could provide statistical data and qualitative reports. The reports would be especially helpful in identifying the risks that the most deprived face (for example, one deprivation leading to others) and in providing a better understanding of their daily life.
- National surveys such as the census should be improved through a country-wide "benchmark" survey. Such a project would have three objectives :
  - to ascertain whether surveys that supposedly cover all households take into account the most disadvantaged ;
  - to measure the difference in the number of potential beneficiaries and the number of those who are actually registered with government services ;
  - to develop survey questions that are more relevant for the groups concerned.

B. Develop a planning and evaluation strategy

One step toward eliminating chronic poverty would be for government to establish a coherent course of action, simultaneously touching all aspects of people's lives. The Social and Economic Council considers such planning essential if all the different undertakings are to complement each other and lead to lasting and reproducible results. This requires that a real methodology for planning and evaluating action be developed.

II. The Struggle Against Social Exclusion : A National Priority

The Council would like to see a national commitment to defend the interests of the most disadvantaged at the individual, family and collective levels.

A. Informed public and national solidarity

The Council sees the need for a better-informed general public, especially among young people. The media have an important role in alerting people to the nature, the extent and the causes of chronic poverty and lack of basic security. Through such information, the national reserves of knowledge, experience and solidarity can be mobilized on behalf of the poorest.

1. National service as an alternative to military service

The Council proposes that young people who want to take on a commitment of solidarity with the very poor be given an opportunity to do so as an alternative to military service. This commitment would be undertaken with public or private associations involved in supportive and educational programs for especially disadvantaged people. This service, however, must not be allowed to compete with paid employment, particularly in the social protection sector.

2. Creating awareness of the situation of the most disadvantaged

Young people from primary school through university should be able to understand the reality of poverty through human rights education and to develop the capacity to interact with the most disadvantaged. At the local level, initiatives for sharing of knowledge and skills should be encouraged. The media are essential for stimulating participation in such projects.

A special effort in creating awareness should be directed toward those preparing for public service professions such as teaching, medicine, law, police work, community services, and journalism. This also applies to those who will be in management positions and even the military.

B. Recognizing the poorest as partners

Partnership - a sense of a mutual involvement and acceptance - is essential for the development of the population as a whole ; yet the poorest people rarely have the chance to experience such an association with others. The participation of the poorest depends largely on the will of political and social leaders to involve them. When leaders make the effort to inform the most disadvantaged people, solicit their views and show that they are taken into account, then the poorest

will be able to exercise full citizenship, be recognized as having rights and responsibilities and be helped to assume them.

1. The responsibility of public officials

A disadvantaged population has great difficulty in expressing itself and in organizing. Associations that help this population benefit from available social protection look to public officials to make their role easier. For example :

- official forms should be simplified and made more intelligible using modern communication techniques ;
- funds should be available for social work teams and private organizations working in the field to help the poorest represent themselves and regain a place in society ;
- local groups and community organizations that support these families in their social reintegration should be represented in various consultative bodies ;
- a coordinating structure should be developed between the different government ministries involved.

2. The responsibility of public-interest organizations

Associations representing the common interests of the general public should place a greater emphasis on making their aims known to the most disadvantaged. Many organizations with social and educational programs already play an active role in the fight against poverty.

Special training sessions for officers and elected officials of such associations could be developed with the support of the national fund for civic associations. Appropriate funding would have to be made available.

The aim would be to understand a very disadvantaged population that has no place in most organized groups, to make the interests of this population a priority for their association and to devise ways of helping this population organize itself with a view to promoting the general good of all.

III. Education : Assuring Basic Skills

Many of the difficulties children encounter in school are linked to their social, economic and cultural background. The lack of basic education will be the main factor that will later exclude them from the labor market. Given this reality, the Council considers that for disadvantaged children, access to basic education and skills training is a basic part of the fight against chronic poverty and lack of basic security.

The role of the school and especially the preschool as vehicles of social advancement must be reaffirmed.

To ensure that educational policy takes the most disadvantaged groups into account, the Council proposes :

A. To sensitize school personnel, teachers and administrators to the circumstances of the most disadvantaged

Sensitivity to the situation of children from very disadvantaged backgrounds is important because these children are present in almost all schools.

All school personnel should be exposed to such sensitization in professional training.

Their training should also impart a knowledge of programs and actions on behalf of disadvantaged children.

Improved awareness should lead to :

- more efficient and better-directed management of existing personnel and resources ;
- better application of existing legislation and administrative regulations ;
- better utilization of resources due to a better understanding of how they can be used for disadvantaged children ;
- more coherent relationships between the various programs involved ;
- a better understanding in the overseas Departments and territories of specific problems affecting disadvantaged children and their special needs in regard to language and culture.

A better awareness would also benefit existing literacy campaigns for adults and young people and programs for children with learning difficulties.

Furthermore, the Economic and Social Council would like to see periodic evaluations of literacy campaigns for young people and adults and greater support for the programs in terms of personnel and material resources. The enrollment of mothers in literacy programs should be encouraged because of the positive transfer to their children.

B. To make preschool a priority

The preschool should be at the center of all efforts involving young children.

Within its structure the following objectives should be pursued :

- working to ensure good communication between the most disadvantaged families and the school community ;
- enabling children to acquire a good preparation for school ;
- coordinating the efforts of others involved with the children and the efforts of parents to receive help with the development of their children.

Any cooperative actions with the parents should take into account :

-the importance of language and communication in personality development and socialization from earliest childhood on ;

-the fact that children learn better when they see adults around them also involved in applying their intelligence and developing their aptitudes.

Everything possible should be done to help children get started in preschool. Preschool programs within the family have been tried experimentally and the results show that these initiatives should be encouraged.

All preschools should be equipped with bed linen, showers, a reserve of children's clothing, facilities for naps, etc.

Preschools, like primary schools, should offer the chance for classes away from school (in the country, seaside, or mountains) and should employ the services of child psychologists.

C. To continue the development and strategy of educational priority zones

Within each pilot Department, it would be important to identify localities that have large numbers of young people who leave school without diplomas. These areas are likely to have the largest number of the most disadvantaged families ; they are the ones in which the most educational resources should be invested.

The goals of the teaching staff in the priority zones should follow the pattern proposed for the preschools, namely :

- to assure good communication between the most disadvantaged families and the educational community ;
- to give children the means to acquire basic leaming skills.

The priority zone program would encourage outreach into the community and contact with especially poor families in order to :

- encourage regular school attendance ;
- support the child's leaming experience outside the formal school structure (for example, street libraries, cultural centers, tutoring and special courses offered free of charge) ;
- acquaint families with available services, such as career counseling, that would help their young people to become productive and responsible members of society.

Within the school the teaching team should :

- ensure that children learn to read by providing classes for those who need them in later school terms ;
- regularly evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of the teaching for the most disadvantaged children.

It is especially important that special education programs receive additional resources to enable them to reintegrate children into normal school channels and help them eventually to become productive and responsible citizens.

Increased and better use of funding in priority zones is recommended in order to :

- finance the construction of new schools and the acquisition of educational materials. The purpose is to :
  - introduce children in primary school to the methods and instruments of new technologies, such as computers ;
  - and to ensure that all school activities are free of charge ;
- extend financial help and scholarships, beginning in primary school, to children from the most disadvantaged families.

Incentive programs should be created to recruit personnel for particularly difficult schools.

Priority zones should have preference in receiving educational resources and support services in order to establish effective team teaching.

To this end, it is proposed that :

- six teachers be assigned for every five classes ;
- the number of children per classroom be appropriate to the difficulty of the subject taught and the variety of tasks involved in teaching it ;
- every school offer adult education facilities.

IV. On-the-Job Training

The Council proposes that in each pilot Department there should be created an authority on training whose members are chosen from all the concerned parties : national and local officials, labor leaders, business executives and representatives of job training programs. These authorities would establish a job training structure based on contracts between employers and disadvantaged workers. The programs would update workers' skills or help them acquire the skills they need to find employment.

These experimental programs should be specifically designed to help disadvantaged adults acquire educational or job qualifications. When necessary, the programs would include classes in reading, writing and mathematics leading to a certificate of professional aptitude or beyond.

Organizations engaged in job training would be helped to adapt their teaching methods to the new programs.

The concept of training credits should be examined ; one such idea would be "rehiring vouchers." The training authority would grant these to unqualified employees or unskilled persons seeking employment, and the vouchers would enable them to receive their training while on the job.

In all these programs, preference would be given to persons who have entered into an "employment reintegration contract" as a condition of receiving a guaranteed minimum income (to be explained later).

The Council would like to see numerous employers undertake such preventive schemes in their enterprises.

In times of economic difficulty, those who are barely literate or who have worked for decades in unskilled jobs have little chance when it comes to changing to other types of employment and reentering the productive economy.

The Council therefore proposes that, after consultation with workers' representatives, employers create appropriate training programs offering workers the chance to acquire marketable skills.

The Council also encourages the expansion of intermediate business enterprises and related associations where they prove viable and help reintegrate unskilled workers into the labor market. Social security should cover all eligible workers in such businesses. Care must be taken that the non-profit nature of the businesses does not give them undue advantage over businesses operating in the normal market economy.

The Council would also like to see Bertrand Schwartz's proposal for "work-place counseling" continued, because of the conclusive results in the 200 businesses where it has already been adopted. These firms have hired young people with very low job qualifications ; their skills have improved to a point where they can handle the jobs created by this program.

Finally, the Council proposes that the central social security
collection agency simplify its administrative procedures in regard to part-time and temporary work. The administrative decree of December 24, 1986, on home sales and services could serve as an example.

V. Threshold Income

The Council recognizes that employment should be the first consideration in establishing sources of income that are adapted both to a person's possibilities and to the needs of the economy. The Council equally emphasizes the need for unemployment compensation and for a better solution to the problem of those whose unemployment benefits run out, leaving them without economic security.

Nevertheless, the Council would like to see an arrangement adopted by which individuals and families who have little or no income, for short or long periods, can count on a guaranteed minimum income from which to begin the process of economic and social reintegration.

The Council considers the recent government initiatives of "reintegration" allowances a step in this direction. While it recognizes the advance these allowances represent, it feels that they do not go far enough. Therefore, the Council proposes the establishment of a minimum threshold income along the following lines :

A. Basic principles

1. In keeping with the principle of decentralization, the concept of income supplements should be applied at the local level with the contributions coming from the different parties : national and local governments, private and public agencies. The principle of local control would make for a more efficient system and better guard against abuses.

2. People would receive this allowance in conjunction with a reintegration contract. Such a contract would provide for an employment or training program. The ultimate objective would be for the beneficiary to obtain permanent employment. Included in the contract would be the mutual obligations of the beneficiary and those providing associated services, until the person no longer needs the guaranteed income.

Nevertheless, when work or training are not available, the involved parties should envision the continuation of the threshold income. In all cases, the individual should be required to take an active role in working toward the aims of the contract, according to his or her capabilities.

B. Practical implementation

Assistance would be in the form of a monthly differential allowance that would bring the total income up to a threshold level. A certain period of residence in the Department would be required, but family allowances, special children's allowances and rent assistance would not be counted in the calculation of resources.

There would be an eligibility review every six months.

During the experimental phase proposed by the Council, the threshold assistance would be set at 2,000 francs per person and 3,000 francs per couple. These amounts would be indexed to the national minimum wage.

The Council is aware that this level of income is a bare minimum. The income level is realistic only if the beneficiary receives assistance in other areas such as housing, health, job training and education. We reiterate that, in each of the pilot Departments, the combination of all of these different aids and not any one allowance will be the basis of the anti-poverty program proposed in this policy statement.

The Council recommends that in a subsequent phase the entire social protection system should be reformed in accordance with the recommendations of the Oheix Report.

The purpose of the reform would be to move toward guaranteed security in every area of social protection.

In the meantime, until family benefits can be increased, it would be useful to institute a supplemental family allowance payable to all families entitled to threshold income. In

addition, the Family Allowance Fund should increase its social assistance to the more disadvantaged families.

Finally, the Council notes that, in the case of older children not in school and still dependent on their parents, the extension of the family allowance to age 18 would aid the most disadvantaged families ; it is their young people who are most likely to be without work or job training.

VI. Housing

A. Reaffirm the right to housing for all

The Council recommends that priority be given to persons or families who are denied access to new or renovated public housing, either because they lack the resources or because there are insufficient places to accommodate the demand. The number of people denied access to public housing is so large that improvement in the housing conditions of the poorest families can come only from an explicit national commitment to ensure the right to housing for all.

On the occasion of the International Year of Shelter For the Homeless, 1987, the Council suggests that public commitments to housing be encouraged, especially in the pilot Departments.

B. Assure priority to the most disadvantaged

The individuals and families who would be given priority in housing would be those who cannot afford decent housing and :

- are homeless, or face eviction with no alternative accommodation ;
- live in slums, unsafe buildings or makeshift shelters ;
- seek to escape an overcrowded living situation with relatives or others ;
- are staying in public shelters.

The needs of this population require a commitment on the part of elected officials and concerned agencies to specific responses and the commitment to a housing allowance that puts decent housing within their reach.

A number of proposals in Petrequin's report, "Low-Income Housing," adopted on May 28, 1986, lay the foundations for giving priority to the population in most need.

1. Responsibilities of the national government

In particular, the Council recommends :

- giving a new impetus to the construction of public housing ;
- expanding public housing agencies and giving them more resources, as they are the primary providers of low income housing ;
- revising the system of individual financial housing aid.

2. Responsibilities of local governments

In the pilot Departments, the Council suggests that "housing solidarity" commissions be established within the Departmental housing committees and that they handle unfilled requests by priority claimants.

In order to provide claimants with suitable housing, the housing committees would administer a "housing solidarity" fund, to be described later. These committees would have three responsibilities :

a) handling emergencies :

- prevent evictions unless alternative housing can be proposed for tenants without resources ;
- collect aid from other agencies, supplementing it if necessary, to enable indigent tenants to remain in their housing until a more satisfactory solution is found ;
- provide homeless individuals or families with decent shelter until a long-term solution can be found.

b) helping disadvantaged families keep their housing :

Since the accumulation of debts often leads to families losing their housing, the Council recommends that providing support services for families in financial difficulty should be a normal procedure. The services, which could take different forms, would provide the occasion for discussing with the families ways to reestablish financial security and to get financial aid or loans.

The Council favors establishing more family transitional housing centers and expanding social and information services related to housing.

c) providing better access to housing :

- by directing credit incentives and the construction of public housing in the communities where the largest priority demand for housing exists ;
- by ensuring that available public housing first goes to priority claimants ;
- by creating an adequate number of properly equipped sites for itinerant families and setting up emergency housing centers with apartments immediately available for temporary use ;
- by encouraging the practice of public housing authorities renting units to private associations who, in turn, sublet them to needy individuals or families. After a probation period, the occupants may become tenants in their own right. This arrangement already exists in certain Departments ;
- by encouraging national and local governments to restore unoccupied units and return them to the housing stock ;
- by giving priority to the most disadvantaged in renting units in publicly owned or controlled housing ;
- by ensuring that the allocation procedures for such accommodations are open to public scrutiny ;

- by ending the practice whereby high-income occupants pay low rents for luxury accommodation.

3. Changes in regulations governing personal housing subsidies

a) Families who are priority claimants for housing should receive housing allowances only in exceptional cases and for limited periods, and only if they are in overcrowded or unsafe housing.

b) Financial aid should be granted to recipients to help them get into decent housing. For this purpose, the Social and Economic Council proposes that, within the pilot Departments, a pre-housing allowance be given to approved priority claimants whose requests for housing have not yet been met.

These grants would be held in escrow in a Departmental housing solidarity fund.

When the beneficiaries find suitable housing but lack the necessary resources to pay for it, they could draw on this fund to cover part or all of the first month's rent and rent deposit, to make repairs and to obtain needed appliances.

c) As a follow-up to the proposals in the Pétrequin report, we propose that the housing solidarity fund absorb both the existing "Aid to households in temporary difficulty" fund and the "Rent security and guarantee" fund. This new fund would :

- administer the pre-housing allowances ;
- issue any exceptional supplementary grants made by the Departments and provide necessary guarantees to enable applicants to obtain or retain housing and to ensure that utility services are not cut off.

The money for the housing solidarity funds should come from a lump-sum grant by the national government, from Departmental public assistance budgets and from the public assistance budget of social security funds. Other related agencies could also contribute.

VII. Comprehensive Health Services for All

The Council considers that priority should be placed on making comprehensive health services available for all.

A. A generalized coverage of medical expenses

The Council envisions a system of health insurance gradually replacing the present public medical aid. This system would give the most disadvantaged the right to both basic coverage and supplementary coverage.

In line with the provisions of the Law of January *2, 1978,* on the extension of social security, we propose the following :

1. A form of personal insurance should be made available to those who have no social security coverage.

2. Provision should be made for those who are covered by a health insurance plan through their job, but who risk losing the coverage because they cannot make the regular contributions. The aid might take the form of unsecured loans, permission to delay payments, etc. Such benefits would be granted only on specific application and after careful examination of each case.

3. For persons with social security insurance who are unable to meet their share of the medical expenses (deductibles, advances before reimbursement, hospital down payments, less than 100 percent reimbursement), the Council envisions that the pilot Departments set up supplementary coverage and a procedure for third-party payments.

In this regard, local experiments could provide useful models. One such effort is presently operating in the Department of Meurthe-et-Moselle, where formal agreements between the local government, the social service agencies and the health insurance fund have led to the establishment of a program providing free dental, eye and ear treatment for persons who could not otherwise afford it. The program may be extended to other health services at a later date. Experiments of this kind help to identify and overcome the financial obstacles to health care for the most disadvantaged.

Everyone, regardless of means, should have access to health services, particularly in hospitals providing public health care.

B. Development of preventive health care

1. In the present system, give greater attention to the needs of the most disadvantaged

Departmental health authorities should insist on :

- accurate reporting by regional health boards on the number of people who have little or no health protection and the reasons for this situation ;
- extensive exchange between the concerned agencies on health-related information and experiences ;
- training programs for all medical and paramedical personnel, to include information on the special health needs of people living in chronic poverty.

Departmental officials should involve the target population in the efforts of health care committees to promote better health. For example, more community health information centers could be set up.

2. Develop health care programs for individuals and families living in chronic poverty or lacking basic security

The following should be encouraged :

- periodic intensive health campaigns targeting the most disadvantaged populations ;
- free regular medical check-ups for those who otherwise are unable to afford them or who have no access to

preventive health examinations. This could be done through contracts with health insurance funds or child welfare offices that have health examination facilities available to them ;

- creation of a medical record for every child entering preschool, which would be maintained by the Maternal and Infant Care program.

In regard to preventive health services, the Council draws attention to the importance of public health services for the most disadvantaged, which in recent years have not received sufficient funding : for example, the Maternal and Infant Care program and especially health services within the school system.

VIII. Human Services for the Individual and Family

A. The role of social work

The proposals in this report will be effective to the extent that they involve the human services that provide them. The active involvement of those for whom the proposals are intended is part of the effort to provide them with basic security. This implies an expanded role for social workers which goes beyond the individual client relationship to include :

- ensuring that all human services are part of a coordinated effort ;
- reintegrating individuals and families into the normal supply of services.

Once freed from meeting basic needs, social workers can better assume their role as counselors, facilitators and coordinators of efforts on behalf of the most disadvantaged.

Social work training should include greater emphasis on understanding the environment of chronic poverty and developing cooperative projects with the beneficiaries.

Social workers who deal with situations of chronic poverty should have periodic refresher courses to help them in their role as guarantors of the right of the poorest to have access to human services.

Local social services should be encouraged to develop their own initiatives to improve human services for the poorest.

The Council also stresses the importance of human services in the juvenile probation system.

B. Legal aid

The Economic and Social Council sees the need for certain changes in criminal and civil proceedings in order to protect the interests of the poorest.

1. Improved legal aid

The procedure for obtaining legal aid should be simplified so that those who have the greatest need for competent legal defense and advice will receive it.

- The examination of requests for legal aid in court proceedings should be accelerated and there should be a right to appeal when legal aid is denied.
- The practice of first having to establish the merits of a case before legal aid is granted should be abolished. Where vital interests are at stake (income, housing, family, employment, personal liberty, social security benefits, etc.) and when decisions are urgent, conditional approval of legal aid should be granted immediately.
- As is the case in certain localities, professional legal consultations on matters not requiring a court hearing should also be available under legal aid.
- The principle of choice of counsel when receiving legal aid, as established by the Law of December 31, 1982, should be extended to criminal cases and to public defenders. The counsel, in turn, should receive appropriate remuneration from public funds.

2. Possibility of initiating civil proceedings

When very poor persons become the victims of arbitrary decisions or acts of aggression, they should have ready access to the information and means of starting legal proceedings. It is important for them to realize that they can defend their rights within the legal system. In such instances, organizations that work closely with the very poor should be allowed to initiate civil suits on their behalf.

C. Protecting family integrity

Because the family unit is so essential for social and personal development and for providing basic security, everything possible should be done to preserve its integrity and the interdependence of its members.

All the agencies responsible for the protection of children and families (courts, public assistance for children, probation offices, child welfare offices, family allowance offices, etc.) should :

- allow parents to be helped or represented by a person of their own choice in any proceedings involving their relationships with their children (as stipulated in the Law of June 6, 1984 on public assistance for children) ;
- whenever possible, allow parents to state their choice of the person or institution that will take temporary care of their children. Such temporary care should include conditions that safeguard family ties (for example, respecting the children's confidence in their parents and giving parents visiting rights). Parents should, as a normal procedure, be allowed to retain part of the family allowances they would receive if their children were at home. The money would help defray the expenses of visiting the children in their foster homes or having the children home during weekends and vacations ;

- provide the human services that can help parents assume their responsibilities when children are returning home from foster care, or when parents first feel they need this support to avoid the placement of their children in foster care. In effect, parents should feel that they can count on society having a co-responsibility in the task of bringing up their children. One way to promote this co-responsibility would be to expand the present educational out-services for families with problems.

The Council further encourages local Departmental officials who are concerned with the welfare and strengthening of family life to create transitional housing facilities and family vacation centers. The latter would be available even outside normal vacation periods to all families with serious problems.

In the overseas Departments and territories, where large numbers of people are affected by chronic poverty and the lack of basic security, the Council recommends that research be conducted on ways of applying the present policy. The Council also draws attention to its policy statement of September 24, 1986, and the need to develop accurate statistics on chronic poverty and lack of basic security in the overseas Departments.

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CONCLUSION

Most of the proposals made in this policy statement fall within the policies administered by the major government agencies. The premise is that officials responsible for policy in the different domains of education, employment, housing, health, etc., are in the best position to know those who are not reached by their initiatives and to propose solutions. The agencies charged with carrying out policy need to develop effective defenses against chronic poverty and lack of basic security.

It is clear, however, that the main task is to end the chronic poverty engendered by an accumulation of deprivations in various aspects of life. This means that the policies should be coherent and applied in a concerted and long-lasting fashion if they are to have a comprehensive effect.

The Council insists on the need for close cooperation between the social partners involved in a national anti-poverty campaign, for example, central government, local communities, private associations and social-action groups. Such cooperation should exist at both the local and the national levels.

The Council suggests the creation of an inter-ministerial agency that will answer to the Prime Minister and be in charge of the implementation, coordination, follow-up and evaluation of the pilot projects proposed in this policy statement.

At the end of the experimental phase and after evaluation, new legislation and administrative regulations should be enacted to provide a permanent and comprehensive response to chronic poverty and lack of basic security. The ultimate goal is to enable :

- those living in chronic poverty to escape from it ;
- those on the verge of chronic poverty to be protected from it ;
- the whole population to enjoy more lasting protection from poverty because of a clearer understanding of national solidarity by a greater number of citizens.

This would be new step toward national progress based on solidarity and, by giving priority to the fight against chronic poverty and social exclusion, would involve the entire country. From this perspective, the implementation of the measures proposed here constitute a goal toward which everyone devoted to the defense of human rights should strive.

APPENDIX TO THE POLICY STATEMENT

VOTES

VOTE N°. 1

On the policy statement as a whole

Number voting 194
Voted in favor 154
Voted against 0
Abstained 40

Adopted by the Economic and Social Council

Voted in favor : 154

C.F.D.T. delegation : Mr. Autexier, Ms. Beauville, Messrs. Billon, Gauzelin, Hureau, Le Boterff, Jean-René Masson, Ms. Milhomme, Messrs. Murcier, Rabardel, Ms. Rafga, Messrs. Respaud, Rousselot, Ms. Scavennec, Messrs. Trogrlic, Vergnolle.

C.G.T.F.O. delegation : Ms. Adenis, Messrs. Bernard, Bolut, Bouchet, Jenet, Lalonde, Lepresle, Lequoy, Margot, Mertz, Paris, Robert, Roulet.

C.F.E.C.G.C. delegation : Messrs. Bordes-Pagès, Cros, Flattet, Mandinaud, Marchelli, Menu, de Santis.

CFTC. delegation : Messrs. Bomard, Bergamini, Gruat, Ms. Lingelser, Messrs. Etienne Simon, Veyssière.

F.E.N. delegation : Messrs. Baunay, Paul Faure, Ms. Laroche-Brion, Mr. Simbron.

U.N.A.F. delegation : Messrs. Bichot, Burnel, de Crdpy, Duffaure, Frahier, Jacquet, Ms. Marotte, Messrs. Maurize, Niol.

Agriculture delegation : Messrs. de Bretteville, de Caffarelli, Castaing, Chatellier, Ms. Chezalviel, Messrs. Collaudin, Cormorèche, Devienne, Douroux, Fauconnet, Garinois, Guézou, Guyau, Laur, Meinrad, Munet, Perrin, Perromat, Ragot, Rigaud, Steib, Teyssedou.

Overseas Departments and territories delegation : Messrs. Crusol, Jarnac, Lutui.

Private enterprises delegation : Messrs. Bocquet, Rebuffel.

Government-operated industries delegation : Messrs. Aubert, Calandra, Escande, Matteoli, Renon, Ruault, Vélitchkovitch.

Trades delegation : Messrs. Cabut, Della-Chiesa, Duport, Goguet, Letertre, Léon, Martel, Paquet.

Prominent persons delegation : Messrs. Aicardi, Andrieu, Arrighi de Casanova, Bourbon, Buard, Chaigneau, Delarue, Delouvrier, Ms. Franck, Messrs. Girard, Huntzinger, Ms. Iff, Messrs. Langlade-Demoyen, Le Vern, Luchaire, Machizaud, Magaud, Méraud, Moatti, Oudot, Ms. Parent, Messrs. Poujade, Renouvin, Rosius, Schapira, Schmit, Schwartz, Steg, Ms. Sullerot, Messrs. Teillac, Trigano, Vignau, Wresinski.

Cooperatives delegation : Messrs. Chambaud, Chevalier, Duchalais, Espagne, Gaudinat, Hallot, Lacroix, Morel, Regis.

Delegates of French living abroad, of savings and housing : Messrs. Carasso, Courbey, Delmon.

Private associations delegation : Ms. Cheroutre, Messrs. Davezac, Gudnde, Paillou, Théry.

Independent professions delegation : Messrs. Beaupère, Salmon, Talandier.

Mutual insurance companies delegation : Messrs. Optat, Salanne, Teulade, Vattier.

Abstained : 40

C.G.T. delegation : Messrs. Alezard, Bauduret, Ms. Brovelli, Messrs. Calvetti, Caussé, Chollier, Desmaison, Le Duigou, Madieu, Magniadas, Obadia, Parrot, Scat, Ms. Rey, Ms. Scipion, Mr. Stoquert.

Agriculture delegation : Mr. Mineau.

Private enterprises delegation : Messrs. Bernasconi, Bizard, Brunet, Chesnaud, Chotard, Cldment, Dermagne, Fabre, Flornoy, Gattaz, Gauthier, Giral, Lagane, Lanusse-Croussé, Le Baud, Netter, Nocturne, Parrotin, Pinet, Salvanès.

Government-operated industries delegation : Mr. Quin.

Prominent persons delegation : Mr. Herzog.

Delegate of French living abroad, of savings and housing : Mr. Petri-Guasco.

VOTE N°. 2

On an amendment proposing an action on the economic and social determining factors of poverty

Number voting 180
Voted in favor 46
Voted against 112
Abstained 22

Not adopted by the Economic and Social Council

Voted in favor : 46

C.G.T. delegation : Messrs. Alezard, Bauduret, Ms. Brovelli, Messrs. Calvetti, Caussé, Chollier, Desmaison, Le Duigou, Madieu, Magniadas, Obadia, Parrot, Scat, Ms. Rey, Ms. Scipion, Mr. Stoquert.

C.F.T.C. delegation : Messrs. Bornard, Bergamini, Gruat, Ms. Lingelser, Messrs. Etienne Simon, Veyssière.

F.E.N. delegation : Messrs. Baunay, Paul Faure, Ms. Laroche-Brion, Mr. Simbron.

Agriculture delegation : Mr. Mineau.

Overseas Departments and territories delegation : Messrs. Crusol, Jarnac, Lutui.

Government-operated industries delegation : Mr. Quin.

Prominent persons delegation : Messrs. Buard, Chaigneau, Delarue, Delouvrier, Ms. Franck, Messrs. Girard, Herzog, Huntzinger, Ms. Iff, Messrs. Le Vern, Moatti, Ms. Parent, Messrs. Renouvin, Vignau, Wresinski.

Voted against : 112

C.F.D.T. delegation : Mr. Autexier, Ms. Beauville, Messrs. Billon, Gauzelin, Hureau, Le Boterff, Jean-Rene Masson, Ms. Milhomme, Messrs. Murcier, Rabardel, Ms. Raga, Messrs. Respaud, Rousselot, Ms. Scavennec, Messrs. Trogrlic, Vergnolle.

C.F.E.C.G.C. delegation : Messrs. Bordes-Pagès, Cros, Flattet, Mandinaud, Marchelli, Menu, de Santis.

U.N.A.F. delegation : Messrs. Bichot, Burnel, de Crépy, Duffaure, Frahier, Jacquet, Ms. Marotte, Messrs. Maurize, Niol.

Agriculture delegation : Messrs. de Bretteville, de Caffarelli, Castaing, Ms. Chezalviel, Messrs. Collaudin, Cormorèche, Devienne,

Douroux, Fauconnet, Garinois, Guézou, Guyau, Laur, Meinrad, Munet, Perrin, Perromat, Rigaud, Steib, Teyssedou.

Private enterprises delegation : Messrs. Bernasconi, Bizard, Bocquet, Brunet, Chesnaud, Chotard, Clement, Dermagne, Fabre, Flornoy, Gattaz, Gauthier, Giral, Lagane, Lanusse-Croussé, Le Baud, Netter, Nocturne, Parrotin, Pinet, Rebuffel, Salvanès.

Government-operated industries delegation : Mr. Matteoli.

Trades delegation : Messrs. Cabut, Della-Chiesa, Duport, Goguet, Letertre, Leon, Martel, Paquet.

Prominent persons delegation : Messrs. Aicardi, Andrieu, Arrighi de Casanova, Bourbon, Langlade-Demoyen, Machizaud, Méraud, Oudot, Poujade, Schwartz.

Cooperatives delegation : Messrs. Chambaud, Chevalier, Duchalais, Espagne, Gaudinat, Hallot, Lacroix, Morel, Regis.

Delegate of French living abroad, of savings and housing : Mr. Petri-Guasco.

Private associations delegation : Ms. Cheroutre, Messrs. Davezac, Guénée, Paillou, Théry.

Mutual insurance companies delegation : Messrs. Optat, Salanne, Teulade, Vattier.

Abstained : 22

C.G.T.F.O. delegation : Ms. Adenis, Messrs. Bernard, Bolut, Bouchet, Jenet, Lalonde, Lepresle, Lequoy, Margot, Mertz, Paris, Robert, Roulet.

Prominent persons delegation : Messrs. Luchaire, Magaud, Rosius, Schmit, Steg, Teillac, TrigaN°.

Delegate of French living abroad, of savings and housing : Mr. Courbey.

Independent professions delegation : Mr. Salmon.

VOTE N°. 3

On an amendment proposing to link the financing of the proposed measures to a tax on financial holdings and major assets.

Number voting 180
Voted in favor 28
Voted against 136
Abstained 16

Not adopted by the Economic and Social Council

Voted in favor : 28

C.G.T. delegation : Messrs. Alezard, Bauduret, Ms. Brovelli, Messrs. Calvetti, Caussé, Chollier, Desmaison, Le Duigou, Madieu, Magniadas, Obadia, Parrot, Scat, Ms. Rey, Ms. Scipion, Mr. Stoquert.

Agriculture delegation : Messrs. Chatellier, Mineau.

Overseas Departments and territories delegation : Mr. Jarnac.

Government-operated industries delegation : Mr. Quin.

Prominent persons delegation : Mr. Herzog, Ms. Iff, Mr. Luchaire, Ms. Parent, Messrs. Renouvin, Schapira.

Cooperatives delegation : Mr. Regis.

Delegate of French living ahroad, of savings and housing : Mr.Carasso.

Voted against : 136

C.F.D.T. delegation : Mr. Autexier, Ms. Beauville, Messrs. Billon, Gauzelin, Hureau, Le Boterff, Jean-Rene Masson, Ms. Milhomme, Messrs. Murcier, Rabardel, Ms. Raga, Messrs. Respaud, Rousselot, Ms. Scavennec, Messrs. Trogrlic, Vergnolle.

C.G.T.F.O. delegation : Ms. Adenis, Messrs. Bernard, Bolut, Bouchet, Jenet, Lalonde, Lepresle, Lequoy, Margot, Mertz, Paris, Robert, Roulet.

C.F.E.C.G.C. delegation : Messrs. Bordes-Pagès, Cros, Flattet, Mandinaud, Marchelli, Menu, de Santis.

C.F.T.C. delegation : Messrs. Bornard, Bergamini, Gruat, Ms. Lingelser, Messrs. Etienne Simon, Veyssière.

U.N.A.F. delegation : Messrs. Bichot, Burnel, de Crépy, Duffaure, Frahier, Jacquet, Ms. Marotte, Messrs. Maurize, Niol.

Agriculture delegation : Messrs. de Bretteville, de Caffarelli, Castaing, Ms. Chezalviel, Messrs. Collaudin, Cormorèche, Devienne, Douroux, Fauconnet, Garinois, Guézou, Guyau, Laur, Meinrad, Munet, Perrin, Perromat, Rigaud, Steib, Teyssedou.

Private enterprises delegation : Messrs. Bernasconi, Bizard, Bocquet, Brunet, Chesnaud, Chotard, Clement, Dermagne, Fabre, Flornoy, Gattaz, Gauthier, Giral, Lagane, Lanusse-Croussé, Le Baud, Netter, Nocturne, Parrotin, Pinet, Rebuffel, Salvanès.

Government-operated industries delegation : Messrs. Aubert, Calandra, Escande, Matteoli, Ruault, Vdlitchkovitch.

Trades delegation : Messrs. Cabut, Della-Chiesa, Duport, Goguet, Letertre, Leon, Martel, Paquet.

Prominent persons delegation : Messrs. Aicardi, Andrieu, Arrighi de Casanova, Bourbon, Delouvrier, Langlade-Demoyen, Machizaud, Meraud, Oudot, Poujade, Schwartz.

Cooperatives delegation : Messrs. Chambaud, Chevalier, Gaudinat, Hallot, Lacroix, Morel.

Delegates of French living abroad, of savings and housing : Messrs. Courbey, Pétri-Guasco.

Private associations delegation : Ms. Cheroutre, Messrs. Davezac, Guénée, Paillou, Théry.

Independent professions delegation : Mr. Salmon.,
Mutual insurance companies delegation : Messrs. Optat, Salanne, Teulade, Vattier.

Abstained : 16

F.E.N. delegation : Messrs. Baunay, Paul Faure, Ms. Laroche-Brion, Mr. Simbron.

Overseas Departments and territories delegation : Messrs. Crusol, Lutui.

Prominent persons delegation : Messrs. Buard, Chaigneau, Delarue, Ms. Franck, Messrs. Girard, Huntzinger, Le Vern, Moatti, Vignau, Wresinski.

STATEMENTS BY PARTICIPATING GROUPS OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Delegation representing agriculture

The agriculture group would like to thank Father Wresinski. Through his knowledge of the Fourth World, the author of the report is the spokesman for those who are absent from our society's many institutions ; his experience was the starting point for our discussions which, though difficult, were nevertheless aimed at coming up with precise, concrete solutions.

We would like to add three observations:

First, we feel it should be understood that the hardships described have been aggravated by the exodus to the cities, with the corresponding loss of the community spirit and support found in villages.

Second, we feel the suggestions for protecting the integrity of the family do not go far enough. We are convinced that family unity is one of the basic elements that make for a cohesive and responsive society.

Finally, conscious that we are building for the future, we wish to express our concern at the statistics contained in the report : that large numbers of young people (7 percent of those reporting for military service every year) are functionally illiterate. This is especially worrying in an advanced society where there is an increasing emphasis on job skills.

The policy statement taken as a whole reveals conditions of growing insecurity in the fields of work, health and education. We are faced with numerous unemployed people no longer receiving benefits, sick people with no health insurance and young people who cannot read or write. The report emphasizes the need to improve already existing support systems and puts forward a number of recommendations along these lines.

However, the agriculture group would have wished for greater emphasis on the population groups living in extreme poverty outside all social systems and in marginal situations that tend to become permanent. We believe that, to reintegrate these groups into society, exceptional measures must be developed before they can be expected to become full participants in the social system.

The discussions within the section confirmed that attempts to integrate people directly into society are doomed to failure ; they are too far removed from its rules and customs. In such cases specific measures are preferable, as experiments in the field of education and health have shown. For these population groups, exceptional and quite specific measures are required, rather than a general policy of increasing coverage and benefits. This last point is of fundamental importance in the opinion of the agriculture group.

Delegation representing the trades

One of the great merits of the report on which the policy statement and recommendations are based is that it approaches the problem of extreme poverty in its totality. This approach, which owes much to the personality of the reporter and to his practical knowledge of the matter, has resulted in a proposal for a concerted effort to combat extreme poverty.

It appears from the Economic and Social Council's factual report and analysis that the most effective way to attack poverty is to institute programs in those areas where the population groups concerned are shown to be particularly vulnerable : that is, education, employment, housing and health, as well as financial resources and the access of families and individuals to certain rights.

These coherent, long-term programs must be carried on simultaneously. For this reason, the creation of an inter-ministerial coordination committee appears essential.

The proposed first step, of an experimental nature, also seems sensible. Such an approach should in the long run lead to the setting up of a nationwide program, defined and spelled out in detail within a framework of legislation.

Thus the responsibilities at different levels would be clearly defined (state, local authorities, mutual assistance associations, social agencies and private citizens).

The members of the trades group are in agreement with the proposed solutions and with the means of carrying them out, and have therefore voted in favor.

Delegation representing private associations

The associations group approves the general direction and proposals of the report and the policy statement, presented by Father Joseph Wresinski on behalf of the Social Affairs Section.

The report emphasizes the fact that poverty cannot be considered solely in terms of numbers, but must be perceived as resulting from an accumulation of disadvantages in various aspects of daily life : economic, social and cultural. It shows that extreme poverty is the culmination of a process that may stretch over several generations, ending in an inherited situation from which there is no way out. But today this process can be suddenly set in motion and accelerated as witness the new poor - in a society that is still one of the most highly developed and richest in the world. Unemployment is one of the chief causes, but geographic mobility and changing mores also play a part. These phenomena have been inadequately investigated, and we therefore wish to emphasize how much importance we attach to further study, which is among the main proposals of the policy statement.

Moreover, the proposals have the dual merit of considering all aspects of extreme poverty and, while granting the importance of emergency measures, of also showing concern for the conditions that precede extreme poverty as well as those that result from it. Only through this approach will extreme poverty be treated not as a condition in which people are trapped forever, but as a bad period which they must find their way out of. This is the case of the many associations whose approach to the war on poverty is preventive, as well as offering remedies and access to a better life. With this aim they act as intermediaries in many ways, facilitating -the transition from education or training to employment, from temporary shelter to normal housing, from a life dependent on welfare to a normal way of

life. However, it is important that these actions should not become counterproductive by permitting temporary situations to continue or by severely limiting the rights of the people concerned. We refer especially to the intermediary associations that are now being set up and to the problem of social security coverage for their beneficiaries.

This leads us to the question of financial responsibilities for the programs of these associations and for the war on poverty as a whole. It is unthinkable that the emergency measures to be taken should involve a lessening of financial support at the national and local levels or an overall reduction in social services.

On the contrary, it is only through better use of existing means, backed by additional budget resources, that the proposals contained in the draft policy statement can be carried out. These proposals are fully supported by the associations group.

Delegation representing French Democratic Federation of Labor (C.F.D.T.)

Poverty has never been entirely eradicated even in times of economic growth. The economic crisis, with its attendant increase in long-term unemployment (including almost a million unemployed without benefits), has caused a spread of poverty among high-risk population groups.

Such a state of affairs calls for both emergency measures to supply immediate needs and long-term programs to attack those adverse conditions that are the root causes of poverty : poor health, illiteracy, lack of skills, unemployment and poor housing.

The C.F.D.T. group votes in favor of the policy statement for four main reasons:

1. By targeting precisely those population groups in situations of extreme poverty, the policy statement sets as its primary goal assistance to the most deprived families while not limiting its concern only to them.
2. The proposed strategy is based on coordination between the various social partners and aims at a coherent, global policy of assistance, reintegration, training and employment. The proposal for a guaranteed minimum income combined with an individual social integration contract would confirm the link between work and income.
3. The proposal for local action, involving the financial responsibility of all the social partners, should result in a more effective approach to extreme poverty, without reducing responsibility at the national level.
4. The final reason for the group's approval is the method of financing, calling for a redistribution of existing resources, which have not always been wisely used, combined with new sources of government funding.

The C.F.D.T. approves the proposed pilot program, to take place in ten Departments and to be followed by an evaluation. But in order to permanently eradicate extreme poverty and permit the reintegration of those now living in a state of social exclusion, priority must be given to job creation and economic initiatives.

The C.F.D.T. also emphasizes the extreme inadequacy of the means devoted to the government's poverty plan in light of the proposals contained in this policy statement.

Delegation of unions representing supervisory personnel (C.F.E.-C.G.C.)

While extreme poverty is not a recent phenomenon, the draft policy statement has the great merit of shedding new light on it.

The C.F.E.-C.G.C. group appreciates the precise and pertinent definition of extreme poverty and the lucidity with which the problem is confronted and the means to resolve it set forth.

The group is in complete agreement with the fields of action chosen (housing, health, employment, training) as well as the approach (an experimental program limited in time and place).

The group wishes to associate itself with the proposed approach to combating social exclusion, necessitating the development of additional information as well as a program of education and training ; we support the measures relative to preschool teaching and social integration contracts.

We approve the introduction of a guaranteed minimum income but would like it to be adapted to French culture and outlook.

Access to health care for all must be a priority measure ; and in this respect the C.F.E.-C.G.C. group supports the various measures under the law of July 2, 1978, on the broadening of social security. Decent housing for all is another priority.

These various projects will involve financing by the government authorities, and we support the demand that responsibility for their oversight be entrusted to an inter-ministerial committee. However, the prime importance of private initiatives should not be overlooked. We support the goal of treating the most disadvantaged as first-class citizens, restoring to them the right to human dignity ; as a group we have voted in favor of the draft policy statement.

Delegation representing the Confederation of Christian Workers (C.F.T.C.)

While we note with satisfaction that public opinion, the media and political leaders have become more aware of the existence of poverty, we feel that the programs that have been set up may not always benefit the poorest. They may lead one to believe that everyone benefits, whereas some people are excluded on the grounds that they do not fulfill all the criteria (that of residence, for example).

The C.F.T.C. has always attached great importance to helping the most disadvantaged. The broadening of the social services and unemployment benefits as well as the introduction within these systems of minimum allowances, have helped to save large numbers of people from extreme poverty. We would therefore underline the importance of preserving and continuing these services. There are in addition health and social welfare emergency funds devoted to assisting cases that fall outside strict eligibility rules.

The draft policy statement recommends the development of family preschools, cultural centers, street libraries and special classes free of charge. We strongly support this proposal. Having worked in the field with the teams providing such assistance to children with learning problems, we were able to observe their. effectiveness.

The C.F.T.C. group, having already commented on the Pétrequin report on housing for the poorest, would like to emphasize again that public low-cost housing projects are primarily intended for low-income families.

We look with favor on the idea of creating more family guidance centers and broadening educational and social assistance in the field of housing. This proposal addresses C.F.T.C.'s concerns as expressed in its study on the right to housing, namely the organization of a

"housing training program" for the poorest families who are unused to living in society.

We also favor the idea of a generalized system of health insurance, but with the following stipulations:

First, a balance must be maintained between benefits based on welfare eligibility and those based on contributions, which must be taken into account if the families are to assume their responsibilities. The question of a contribution by those who receive allowances should not be overlooked.

Second, the C.F.T.C. approves wholeheartedly the approach outlined in the policy statement, which aims not only to help the most deprived, but also to provide them with the means of standing on their own in mainstream society.

Finally, the C.F.T.C. approves the decision, given the difficulty of setting up the programs, to try them out first in a few Departments. In this way lessons can be learned and the programs adapted to become a permanent response to the poverty situations they are intended to combat. We also support the idea of involving all institutions and organizations concerned in the follow-up to these experiments.

Since we share the great majority of the concerns expressed in the draft policy statement we will vote in favor.

Delegation of the General Confederation of Labor (C.G.T.)

The draft policy statement, with its somewhat underestimated figure of 2.5 million people in extreme poverty, is right to propose seeking a deeper knowledge of the population groups concerned and of their living conditions ; these conditions, involving great physical and mental suffering, are an affront to human dignity and basic human rights. We are gratified that light has been shed on the reality of France today, which is damning in more ways than one.

Now that the 21st century is almost upon us it is inadmissible that poverty should continue to exist and even to spread and that palliative measures, however generous, should become institutionalized. We should aim at eradication.

Poverty is spreading with the economic downturn ; unemployment is the main reason for this, and at the same time the unemployed population is growing younger. It is therefore clear that the economic system prevailing in our country is the fundamental cause.

This recognition is not a reason for us to reject "inegalitarian" measures which are used in the war against social and economic inequality, as long as they are included in an overall program of social progress for all.

We have always demanded that in all research and statistical studies on poverty and insecurity (both quantitative and qualitative) comparisons should be made with the constant increase in profits achieved on the backs of the wage-earners and with the fortunes of the very rich in this country.

We consider that the primary need is for industrial development, with real and effective modernization, stable and lasting work prospects, high skills, adequate wages, full social services and a response to all social needs. Only in this way will our country come through the economic crisis and will poverty in all its degrees be reduced and finally eradicated.

Government measures institutionalize and aggravate social insecurity, and those who pay the price are families, the retired, the handicapped and the contributors to social security.

The lack of any condemnation of this situation and the refusal to include in the draft policy statement the question of the financing of the programs - while still taking it from the same people's pockets -greatly lessen the credibility of the proposals.

We also regret that no demand is made for an end to the huge waste of food represented by the E.E.C. surpluses (due mainly to underconsumption) and the spending of 158 billion francs annually for their storage. We regret the report does not demand that these surpluses be regularly distributed to those who are hungry or malnourished.

This should be done soon before more enormous sums are spent on destroying spoiled stocks.

Delegation of the General Confederation of Labor - Work Force (C.G.T.- F.O.)

The end of the 20th century is marked by an increase in social and economic inequality, both between the industrialized and the less developed countries and between different social classes within the industrial countries. An increase in unemployment and in job insecurity and in situations of extreme poverty for many have led to the alienation of a large segment of the population.

Force Ouvrière considers that one of the main essentials of democracy is openness, which means that we must not pretend ignorance when it comes to social problems.

The draft policy statement rightly discusses the problem as one of exclusion, avoiding a charitable or welfare approach. We agree with the reporter that one of the essential questions is that of respect for fundamental human rights.

Similarly, we approve the distinction between necessary short-term measures and fundamental programs for the medium term. We agree on the necessity for evaluation and the priority accorded to education, housing, health, jobs and training.

We would point out, however, first that the experimental and follow-up evaluation phases should not be unduly prolonged so as to serve as a pretext for avoiding permanent solutions.

Second, we wish to reaffirm that unemployment is the major cause of the current spread of poverty. Force Ouvrière has already stated that the main effort should be directed toward sustained economic growth, with its attendant creation of new economic activity and new jobs.

The management approach to unemployment is not a solution to the problem, even if accompanied by speeches on pseudo-modernization, which is a way of treating the economy as other than a social problem.

As regards on-the-job training, we note that the creation of partnership committees at the Department level is likely to be ineffective if they are cumbersome and lack clearly defined mandates.

Financing is one of the essential aspects of the program. The concept of "national solidarity" is too often invoked against wage-earners, especially those who - we are told - are privileged in having a job ; whereas the history of trade unionism shows that it is thanks

to the workers' "solidarity" that gains have been made in the face of public and private employers, by establishing collective social coverage which some people would now do away with in the name of "modernizing". C.G.T.-F.O. renews its call for fiscal reform based on equity, specifically on payment of a fair share by capital and business.

Cooperatives group

The fact that in 1987 the number of those living in extreme poverty is estimated at 2 million raises numerous questions about the functioning of our society.

But rather than theoretical discussion we need practical and rapid solutions. The cooperatives group accordingly approves the admirably coherent set of measures which are proposed in the policy statement.

We wish to make three observations, however:

The first, to confirm the findings of the report. It quotes Fourier and Freinet and these names are not without significance for the cooperative movement. Our organizations, based on cooperation, have as their aim the improvement of the situation of the most disadvantaged. They have partly achieved this aim simply by the way in which they function. But they have partly failed, as has been shown by an English study which clearly showed the constraints imposed by the "written" word and the "skimming" factor, linked to socio-cultural status. The benefits of instruction, either in family budget management for adults or in basic economics for school cooperatives, are unattainable or at least very difficult to access for people who live from day to day and are burdened by the accumulation of handicaps described in the report.

Our second observation concerns the guaranteed minimum income. Consumers' cooperatives proposed this a long time ago, in the form of a negative income tax, while fully aware of the cost and the possible adverse effects. These justify the cautious, experimental approach and the timeframe proposed in the policy statement. In stating that a "different logic from that of insurance compensation" is required, it should also demand a different logic in the method of financing. By this we mean a broad fiscal approach rather than through the social security system.

Third, the policy statement makes no mention of distributions of surplus foodstuffs. The experience of soup kitchens, linked with the fact of E.E.C. agricultural surpluses, suggests that it is perhaps premature to exclude the idea of assistance "in kind," even though it would limit the choice offered to recipients.

These observations do not in any way affect our agreement with the proposals contained in the draft policy statement, which are aimed at reinforcing the social welfare safety net and consolidating the role of local relief agencies ; these can most effectively compensate for the inadequacies and lack of flexibility of programs at the national level.

Delegation representing private enterprise

The group is aware of the importance and gravity of the problems raised in the policy statement and approves the principle of experimental programs designed to combat poverty to be carried out in ten Departments over a period of three years.

However, we fear the possible adverse effects of some measures, as indicated by certain experiments in other countries. Indeed the policy statement attacks the effects of extreme poverty rather than its causes, especially as it concerns the young.

Moreover, understanding of the nature and breadth of the problem appears inadequate.

We would also have wished that the report were more specific as regards the conditions under which the various classes of poor might enter the world of production.

Our group has formulated its position in order not to hamper a desirable experiment, of which it awaits the results.

Delegation representing government-operated industries

The policy statement presented to us contains a series of statements that have an immediate impact.

We are told that 2.5 million people have an income insufficient to live on, and that the necessary minimum is estimated to be 2,000 francs for a single person and 3,000 for a couple.

We are also told that "the proposals are directed toward population groups living in or on the verge of extreme poverty, consisting of people of working age but mostly without work, without skills and without a secure minimum income."

The revelation of such a state of deprivation in a civilized country with an advanced industrial and agricultural economy and a skilled labor force is surprising, even shocking ; we hope that it will have the necessary salutary effect.

The proposals outlined concerning education, housing, health, employment and training have the merit of being based on preliminary pilot programs in certain Departments ; they also aim to develop a spirit of responsibility and partnership in the various operating agencies.

Our group has reservations on the following points:

The policy statement considers the fight against social exclusion to be a national priority.

We are of course in agreement with this in principle, but we feel that an ordering of priorities should be made at the highest level, taking into account costs and methods of financing.

Without denying the prime importance of attacking the problem of social exclusion, and especially the lack of jobs, we would also point out that the modernization of the economy, and especially of industry, is an absolute priority. Only in this way can more jobs be created, which will then contribute to a solution of the problem.

Perhaps the "future of the plan" should lie in its emphasis on this modernization, so much desired by all.

Meanwhile special and, we hope, to some extent temporary measures must of course be taken to deal with extreme poverty.

Our second reservation concerns the conclusion of the draft policy statement, which expresses the wish that at the end of the pilot programs and their evaluation new measures will be adopted, whether in the form of laws or regulations, which will constitute a permanent global solution to the problems of poverty and economic and social insecurity.

Our wish is that future legislation should be reduced to the minimum and that a broad scope for initiative and coordination should be left to local authorities and associations.

Given the nature of the subject, which concerns all of us, and the exceptional quality of the work submitted to us, the majority of the public sector group votes in favor of the draft policy statement, in spite of the reservations mentioned above.

Delegation of the Federation of National Education (F.E.N.)

F.E.N. notes that poverty today is at once more visible and more intolerable. More visible because of the vast amount of information available, more intolerable because the economic, technical and scientific means to alleviate it are within our reach.

There must be something wrong with our economic and political system if it allows such wealth and opportunities, and such poverty, to exist side by side.

F.E.N. supports the policy statement, because a deliberately chosen policy of collective action is needed. Poverty will never be overcome and may even be increased by the laissez-faire attitudes inherent in the present economic system. The agreed proposals, though limited, should lead to a better understanding of the problem, a better coordination of efforts and a better evaluation.

The proposals are in line with the advances in social protection which the F.E.N. considers to be among the most important achievements of this century.

For all these reasons the F.E.N. will vote in favor of the draft policy statement.

Delegation representing mutual insurance companies (Mutualité)

The *Mutualité* group approves the general direction of the Wresinski Report's proposals for a genuine plan of action to combat extreme poverty.

The necessary measures must be part of an overall program which attacks all the areas of insecurity simultaneously (jobs, training, housing, health and social security coverage, and insufficient resources) Only in this way can the country go beyond the "emergency plan" approach, lasting through the winter, with no guarantee of continuity

The first stage is one of pilot programs in certain key areas, with the necessary follow-up and evaluation at each step of the way. A condition of success is to coordinate the action of the various public and private partners at the local level, with a view to coordinating the financing of social services. This is only a preliminary ; additional financing is necessary, which for a nationwide program of this scope must be a national responsibility, that is, it must come from the national budget. If we do not admit this nationwide action to be within our means we resign ourselves to the prospect of a divided society, in which the weakest are marginalized and excluded.

The group would like to emphasize the urgency of resolving the problem of the half million persons with no social security coverage, almost ten years after passage of the law intended to make it available to all. Ways can be found to avoid such situations of hardship, which are unacceptable in modern society, as was shown by certain programs carried out recently by doctors supported by *Mutualité Française.* These include making conditions of eligibility more flexible and facilitating access to private health insurance.

Delegation representing the independent professions

The independent professions group approves the general direction of the policy statement on extreme poverty and social and economic insecurity. It believes in both the need for an overall approach to the problem of extreme poverty and the necessarily experimental nature of the proposed actions, which must be tried out and evaluated before becoming the basis for legislation.

Our group particularly supports certain proposals concerning:

- reliable statistics and regular surveys of situations of extreme poverty ;
- a program of education and training of the child starting in nursery and primary school. Disadvantages must be overcome at this level ;
- a minimum income which would be tied to work of public interest or to appropriate training organized at the local or municipal level. This should be subject to strict periodic reviews of the situation of the recipients to avoid the risk of life-long dependence on welfare. We should therefore be cautious about extending this measure ;
- the principle of personal health insurance for the most deprived, on condition that the burden is borne by the national budget and not by the subscribers to health insurance policies, whether they be wage-earners or self-employed ;
- the development of a program of thorough medical check-ups starting in nursery school ;
- the extension of measures to provide legal aid to the most disadvantaged.

The independent professions group has voted in favor of the draft policy statement as a whole.

Delegation representing the National Union of Family Associations (U.N.A.F.)

This group has always been concerned with poverty and with families suffering from social exclusion. We have therefore followed the work of the Economic and Social Council very carefully. Among the questions raised by the policy statement there are several proposals of special interest to us.

It is important to have a better knowledge of the population groups concerned. While organizations such as I.N.S.E.E. should continue to gather information by their own methods, we believe that the authorities at the Departmental level should ask the local councils to gather information on all these groups. They are in a better position to identify them since they know who lives within their boundaries. This is especially important as the people concerned may sometimes have rights they are unaware of. Through these contacts they can find out about them.

The chapter on education is constructive and rightly centered on the most disadvantaged : It emphasizes the need to make teachers aware of these problems, to inform and train them, and to reaffirm the importance of nursery school and other priority areas of education. The proposals will be strengthened by the plan to involve parents in programs to combat illiteracy.

On the subject of employment, U.N.A.F. supports the reporter's emphasis on the need for training to make up lost ground. For the most disadvantaged, it is often essential to go back to the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic before they can hope to enter vocational training programs. We have frequently found that without

this basic minimum of education, people cannot really profit from any kind of training.

The U.N.A.F. approves the proposal for a minimum income, linked with a contract and reintegration plan, through either a job or training. Wherever possible we should get away from the idea of welfare and make it clear that our aim is to work in partnership. These measures must be temporary and the means must be'sought to deal with the causes of poverty - it being understood, as the reporter states, that the aim is to ensure a guaranteed minimum income gradually, within the framework of the various branches of the social services.

Finally, U.N.A.F. believes that insanitary, run-down housing is a contributing factor to the marginalization of disadvantaged families, who become increasingly trapped in ghettos of the poor. We believe that the housing allowance should not be used otherwise than for its main purpose, which is to help people to be housed in normal conditions. If it is to be allocated in cases of substandard housing, as the reporter proposes, this should be done as an exception to the rule and for a limited time, with the stipulation that the families concerned should be rehoused very shortly or their housing rehabilitated.

From our experience in the field of helping. the most disadvantaged we can only regret the large number of social services involved. A single representative could coordinate the action of the various authorities and help the family in its numerous applications. Social workers, with their persistent enquiries, their special jargon and complex case files, are discouraging. The families will not take the necessary steps if they have to go to one place after another to apply for housing, schooling, the minimum income, employment, etc. A single responsible coordinator who knows the family and is known to it seems to us essential.

NOTES TO THE TEXT

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. The report was written in 1986.

Chapter I

1. See article by Claudine Offredi. *Revue française des affaires sociales,* April - June, 1985.

2. Ministry of Justice, administration for the prison system, division of studies and organization ; cf. *Travaux et Documents* N°. 31, August 1985 : "Statistical Data on the Incarcerated in 1984" *(Les incarcérations de 1984 ; données statistiques).* (Source : *statistiques informatisées de la population pénale.)*

3. See Social Data, National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (I.N.S.E.E.), 1984, page 526.

4. Breakdown of total labor force:

-blue-collar workers:	35.0 %
- white-collar workers:	16.8 %
-small business owners and self-employed:	8.1 %
-service workers:	6.5 %

5. See "Health and Social Security" *(Santé sécurité sociale)* in *Statistiques et commentaires* N°. 5, 1979. (The survey seems never to have been brought up to date. It gives figures as of September 30, 1978, for people under 60 living in adult-care institutions, government retirement homes, or geriatric wards in hospitals.)

6. Statistical services of the Prefecture of Police, Public Security Division.

7. Bloc-notes, May 1985.

8. "Poor Families in a Moderate-sized City" *(Les families pauvres d une ville moyenne)* by Michele Debonneuil, in *Economie et statistique,* N°. 105, November, 1978.

Chapter II

1. Consumption unit for an adult : 1 ; for spouse : 0.7 ; for child under 15 : 0.5. Most countries have adopted this scale.

2. "Poverty-Insecurity : Preliminary Efforts" *(Pauvreté-Précarité-Tentatives de mesures),* Research Center for Study and Observation of Living Conditions, February 1986.

3. The term "families" is equivalent to what the survey calls "core families," that is, families in the narrow sense of the word (father, mother, children) or single people living alone or with another family as defined in the narrow sense (for example, relatives or parents-in-law of the head of the family). This definition differs from that of "household," which includes all persons sharing one lodging.

4. The questionnaire specified the term "obliged" to mean as a result of a divorce, death of a spouse, etc., but also because "your household did not earn enough money," a rather vague reason that lends itself to subjective evaluation.

5. This involved an examination (a) by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of all the National Union for Employment files active on September 30, 1984, and (b) an in-depth investigation by Brûlé/Ville Associates of 2,000 persons who had been on the rolls of the national employment agency (A.N.P.E.) for at least nine months.

6. Survey carried out in 1985 and published in the Research Center document cited in note 2 above, "Poverty-Insecurity : Preliminary Efforts," February 1986.

7. Net minimum wage at the time equaled 3,800 francs per month and was calculated on the basis of a 39-hour work week.

8. Cited in "Surveys on Food Assistance" *(Enquiêtes sur les secours alimentaires),* Catholic Relief, Rhone agency, September 1982.

Chapter III

1. For example, a family of four persons consisting of father, mother, daughter and son of 7 years or more is considered to be in moderately overcrowded housing if they have only three rooms ; extremely overcrowded if they have two rooms or less.

2. P.A.C.T. - Protection, Improvement, Preservation and Conversion of Housing.

3. Answer by Guy Fougier, the prefect of police, to Henri Malberg, president of the communist group in the Council of Paris, March 4, 1986.

Chapter IV

1. Source : Information Note #85-40 of the Planning, Statistics and Evaluation Division (S.P.R.E.S.E.) of the Ministry of Education.

2. A teaching program under the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Health intended for physically or mentally handicapped children, or those considered to be mildly or partially retarded when measured against the standard LQ. or to have behavioral problems.

3. Particularly those by M. Schiff, M. Duyme, A. Dumaret and S. Tomkiewicz, "Children of manual workers who were adopted by professionals" *(Enfants de travailleurs manuels adoptés par des cadres),* Paris, Presse Universitaires de France, 1981.

4. Bulletin N°. 82.09, March 14, 1982.

5. Statistical indicators and references on schooling and training programs *(Repères et références statistiques sur les euseignements et la formation),* Planning, Statistics and Evaluation Division, Ministry of Education, 1985.

6. Young people still in apprenticeship status are included in the figures of those leaving the education system.

7. Level VI : Prevocational class (C.P.P.N.) and apprenticeship preparatory class (C.P.A.). Level Vb : the first and second year of the three-year certificate in trade proficiency program. Level Vb is also the first year of the vocational training certificate.

8. Source : *Social Data,* 1984, and a report on training and jobs in the process of being published.

9. Article in the review *Futuribles* (January-February 1985).

10. See C. Baudelot and R. Establet, "Continuing training programs : a reinforcement of inequality" *(Formation continue : un redoublement des inégalités)* in the review *Education et Societé,* N°. 1, May-June 1982 : a discussion of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (I.N.S.E.E.) survey "Vocational skills training in 1977" *(Formation qualification professionelle en 1977).*

Chapter V

1. "Poverty and economic insecurity. A survey in a working-class neighborhood in Caen" *(Pauvreté précarité économique. Enquête dans un quartier populaire de Caen),* Editions Science et Service Quart Monde, 1986.

2. For a study of the social structure and of mutual help within a complex of substandard dwellings, see in particular Jean Labbens, "The Subproletarian Condition - an Inheritance of the Past" *(La condition sous-proletarienne, héritage du passé),* Editions Science et Service, 1964, and Jean-Francois Lae and Numa Murard, "Hidden relationships within a transitional housing complex" *(Les réseaux souterrains en cité de transit),* research undertaken by the Family Allowance Fund (C.N.A.F.) and the Construction Plan, Epsilon, 1982-1984.

Chapter VI

1. The names of all the persons mentioned in this chapter have been changed. Any resemblance is purely by chance.

2. Family profile taken from a study by Alwine de Vos Van Steenwijk, "Like the Bird on the Branch" *(Comme I'oiseau sur la hranche),* Editions Science et Service, Fourth World, 1986.

Chapter VII

1. "How to manage a budget when you have no money" *(Comment gérer son budget quand on n'a pas d'argent),* December 1985.

2. Some notable examples : "A Day Off' *(Le jour de Congé* by Inès Cagnati, Denoël, 1973 ; "When I Grew Up" *(Quand j'étais grande)* by Denise Gault, Mercure de France, 1982 ; "The Story of My Mother and My Uncle Fernand" *(Histoire de ma mere et de mon oncle Fernand)* by Constant Malva, Bassac plein chant, 1980.

3. See "I, you, he, she learns" *(Je, tu, il, elle apprend),* a documentary study on some aspects of illiteracy, by Jean-François Lae and Patrice Noisette, conducted as part of a research-experimentation group of the Ministry of Social Affairs. La documentation française. November 1985.

4. "Now I don't have any problem reading" *(Maintenant lire n'est plus un problème pour moi),* Editions Science et Service, 1983.

PART TWO

Chapter I

1. We owe much of the information here to the works of Professor Michel Mollat and to a paper by André-Clément Decoufle based on a number of earlier works, entitled "Elements in an Introduction to a History and Perspective of Extreme Poverty" *(Eléments d'introduction à l'histoire et à la prospective de !'extrême pauvreté),* Laboratory of Applied Science in Perspectives *(Laboratoire de prospective appliquée* and ATD Fourth World, July 1980).

2. See "The French Revolution and the Poor" *(La révolution française et les pauvres),* Alan Forrest, Ed. Perrin, 1986.

3. Order issued to the General Assembly held in the town hall of Caen by His Highness the Duke of Longueville "to prevent begging and idleness on the part of the poor, and to provide for their subsistence, starting on the first day of April, 1655."

4. "The Class Struggle in France, 1848-1850" *(La lutte des classes en France, 1848-1850),* Editions sociales, Paris, 1946.

5. Director, Human Rights Division, Council of Europe.

Chapter II

1. See report by M. Daniel Benoist, "Medical and social problems of the dependent elderly" *(Les problèmes médicaux et sociaux des personnes agées dépendantes),* 1985.

2. See Christine Colin, "Motherhood and Chronic Poverty" *(Maternité et extrême pauvreté),* University of Nancy, 1980.

3. "Marital status and its legal, financial and social consequences"*(Le statut matrimonial et ses conséquences juridiques, fiscales et sociales),* report presented by Ms. Sullerot and adopted on January 25, 1984.

4. Laurence Bloch and Michel Glaude, "An approach to deal with the cost of child-raising" *(Une approche du coût de l'enfant), Economie et Statistique,* May 1983

5. "Insecurity and the logic of supplementary social aid" *(Précarité et logigues des prestations sociales facultatives),* L.A.R.E.S., Family Allowance Fund (C.A.F.) research, Ille-et-Vilaine, 1985.

6. "The different recourses to public assistance, consumption and lifestyle" *(Diversité des recours à !'aide sociale, consommation et modes de vie),* March 1986.

7. The legal requirement to establish such a body was rescinded by a law of August 19, 1986. However, the functions of the proposed council may be carried out by an already existing coordinating body.

8. In 1795. The decision provided for payment by the parishes of a supplement to wages that fell below the "necessary minimum" based on the price of bread and the number of a man's dependents. It remained in effect until its replacement by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.

9. See particularly "The Shadow of Speenhamland" *(L'Ombre de Speenhamland),* Ph. Van Parijs, la Revue Nouvelle, April 1985.

10. The experiment was carried out from February 1985 to June 1986 by ATD Fourth World, the Family Allowance Fund, the Departmental children's aid service and the Rennes community social action center. The sums appropriated for it were in the range of 5 million francs.

Chapter III

1. In the original appropriation the aid was 22,489 million francs.
2. The government's contribution to the National Housing Aid Fund and the personal housing subsidy was 14,400 million francs in 1986.

3. *Note de service* N°. 17, Ministry of Health and Social Security, March 17, 1981.

Chapter IV

1. French social data *(Données sociales de la France), 1984.* The figure given is for the years 1975-80.

2. This is a mixed population : Men comprise 45.2 % and are mostly young, single and looking for work ; women comprise 54.8 % and most are over 50 years old, single, widowed or divorced, not working or looking for employment.

3. "Health Education" *(L'éducation pour la santé),* June 1982.

Chapter V

1. Family Allowance Fund file N°. *3-4, 1985,* "Social action of the Family Allowance Fund" *(L'action sociale des caisses d'allocations familiales).*

2. National Center for Research on Physical and Mental Handicaps (C.T.N.E.R.H.I.), "The supervision over social aid benefits" *(La tutelle aux prestations sociales),* 1st quarter, 1980.

3. See "To Live in Dignity. Fourth World Families in Europe" *(Vivre dans la dignité. Familles du Quart Monde en Europe),* November *1984,* published on the occasion of an international gathering of lawyers at the Council of Europe.

4. In regard to the need for sharing responsibility between the government and parents, see "To Live in Dignity," referred to in note *3* above and in Chapter VIII of Part Two.

5. Released by the information service of the Prime Minister's Office.

6. Report commissioned by the Social Affairs Section, "The place and role of private associations in the development of education, health and social policies" *(La place et le rôle du secteur associatif dans le développement de la politique d'action éducative, sanitaire et sociale),* June It, 1986.

7. See the report on the consequences of decentralization in the social service field, being prepared by the Section on Regional Economies and the Improvement of the Nation's Infrastructure.

Chapter VI

1. Some recent studies are:
   - "School failure is not inevitable" *(L'échec scolaire n'est pas une fatalité),* Research Center for Special Education (C.R.E.S.A.S.), 1981.
   - "A century of school failure" *(Un siècle d'échec scolaire), P.* Pinell and M. Zafiropoulos, 1983.
   - "About school" *(De l'école),* J. L. Milner, Seuil *1984.*
   - "The Bac Street Experience : New Information for School" *(Rue du Bac : Une nouvelle donnée pour l'école),* Claude Pair, Syros, 1985.
   - A conference on this theme was held by the National Committee on Schools *(Comité national de l'école)* during the Bichat symposium in 1984.
   - A paper on the causes of success and failure in school was given at the congress of the Association of Preschool Teachers *(Association générale des instituteurs et institutrices de l' école maternelle -A*.G.LE.M.) in 1983.

2. "The Policy of Priority Educational Zones" *(La politique des zones prioritaires),* Ministry of Education, May 1985.

3. For children under three years of age.

4. See "An Important Day When the Poorest Are Heard" (Il *fera beau le jour où le sous-prolétariat sera entendu),* Alwine de Vos Van Steenwijk, Editions Science et Service, 1977.

5. Special educational report in *"Integration*" 110-111, July-August, 1985.

6. Report to the Prime Minister by Véronique Espérandieu and Antoine Lion, with Jean-Pierre Bénichou, January *1984.*

7. Ministry of Social Affairs, March 1986.

Chapter VII

1. "The Subproletarian Worker and Changes in the Labor Market" *(Les travailleurs sons-proletaires face aux mutations de l'emploi),* Editions Science et Service Quart Monde, 1985

2. Forum : "Disadvantaged workers and their families as social partners" *(Les travailleurs les plus défavorisés et leurs familles, partenaires de la société,* organized in Lyon in December 1985 by ATD Fourth World.

3. Interministerial memorandum of April *24, 1985,* dealing with an ad hoc program for support of intermediate business enterprises.

Chapter VIII

1. "Fourth World Families and Human Rights" *(Famines du Quart Monde et Droits de l'Homme),* a seminar organized by ATD Fourth World in conjunction with the office of Human Rights for the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, December *9* to 11, 1981.

2. See "Speaking of a step backward : The revision of the laws on seizure of property" *(A propos d'un rajeunissement néfaste : celui des textes sur l'insaisissabilité),* Danièle Mayer, Recueil Dalloz, 1977, Chronical, p.241.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. The policy statement was adopted in a plenary session with 154 votes in favor and 40 abstentions.

2. An amendment proposed by the trade union C.G.T. was rejected by a vote of 112 against, 46 in favor and 22 abstentions. It read as follows :

"Emergency measures that are required by the problems arising from chronic poverty should not contribute to making chronic poverty a permanent situation. Rather, they should involve action on the social and economic causes."

3. An amendment proposed by the trade union C.G.T. was rejected by a vote of 136 against, 28 in favor and 16 abstentions. It read as follows:

In this paragraph, eliminate the phrase, "an appeal to national solidarity." In the last sentence, substitute "the national government will have to make a substantial contribution by imposing a tax on financial holdings and major assets."

KEY FRENCH TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A.E.M.O. *Action Educative en Milieu Ouvert :* Support for Education in an Open Environment. Authorizes courts to order payment from public funds for professional services to a child if such services will keep that child from being placed in foster care.

Allocations Familiales : Family allowances. See FAMILY.

A.F.P.A. *Association pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes :* Association for Adult Vocational Training. Private with public funds. Organizes wide variety of training programs for adults.

A.G.I.E.M. *Association Générale des Instituteurs et Institutrices de l'Ecole Maternelle :* Association of Preschool Teachers. Private. Promotes improvement and growth in the profession.

Aide judiciaire Legal aid.

Aide sociale Public assistance.

A.M.G. *Aide Médicale Générale :* Public medical aid. Locally operated with national public funds. Provides financial help to pay medical expenses of those not covered by national health insurance. See *SECURITE SOCIALE.*

A.M.O.F. *Associations de Main-d'Oeuvre et de Formation :* Manpower Training Associations. Private. Provides between-job training for workers with frequent periods of unemployment.

A.N.P.E. *Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi :* National Employment Agency. An important source of manpower statistics.

A.P.I *Allocation de Parent Isolé :* Single-Parent Allowance. Differential allowance to bring income of single parents up to a predetermined minimum level during the first three years of the youngest child's life. See FAMILY.

A.P.L. (A.L.) *Aide Personnalisée au Logement :* Personal Housing Subsidy. Rent subsidy based on (a) family resources, (b) family size and (c) apartment needed. A similar program called *Allocation logement is* operated for special categories of recipients ; i.e., handicapped, aged and recently married couples. See also H.LM.

A.R.S. *Association d'Accueil et de Réinsertion Sociale :* Association for Social Reintegration. Private with public funds. Operates shelters for homeless people.

A.S.E. *Aide Sociale à I'Enfance :* Aid to Children. Public. Provides (a) budget support for local services and programs (see *DEPARTEMENT*) and (b) financial help to needy families with children. It was the single most important source of family income of the very poor before enactment of guaranteed minimum income. See R.M.I.

A.S.E.L. *Action Socio-Educative liée au Logement :* Housing readaptation program. Budget support for local services and programs to help traumatized families adapt to life with neighbors in housing projects. Has financed, among others, interim housing operated by Mouvement A.T.D. Quart Monde. See *MOUVEMENT.*

A.S.S.E.D.I.C. *Association pour I'Emploi dans l'Industrie et le Commerce* : Association for Employment in Industry and Commerce. Disburses payments under national unemployment insurance system. Operated jointly by labor and employer federations under government direction. See also U.N.E.D.I.C.

A.T.D. *Aide à Toute Détresse.* See *MOUVEMENT.*

Associations The right to free association was not definitely acquired until 1901 and is exercised enthusiastically. Annual lists of associations receiving small grants from municipalities can cover several newspaper columns. Their purposes may range from judo, soccer and stamp collecting to the ubiquitous "clubs *du troisième age"* (clubs for old people) and worthy causes. The term *"vie associative"* refers to this lively aspect of French life. See FAMILY.

B.E.P. *Brevet d'Enseignement Professionel :* Vocational training diploma.

B.E.P.C. *Brevet Elémentaire du Premier Cycle :* Certificate after leaving first cycle of secondary education.

B.V.A. Brûlé/Ville Associés Privately operated polling organization

Cadre Roughly executive-level personnel. Begins just above shop foreman and ends just below company president.

C.A.F. *Caisse d'Allocations Familiales :* Family Allowance Fund. Departmental office disbursing not only family allowances, but a wide range of other social welfare payments. see *DEPARTEMENT* and FAMILY.

Caisses Mutuelles : Literally : Mutual Insurance Companies or Funds. Owned by their policy holders. Together they form a wide and well-organized network to provide practically universal supplements to government-provided health insurance and retirement pensions. Usually the union elects the *"caisse"* and the employer makes the payments on behalf of the workers. Left out, until recently, were those without a history of regular employment. See R.M.I.. for recent changes.

C.A.P. *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle :* Certificate in trade proficiency. Diploma attesting to an individual's attainment of an acceptable level of skill in a trade (for example, plumbing, secretarial work, television repair) with appropriate level of literacy and numeracy. Basic entry-level requirement for all but the least skilled jobs.

C.C.A.S. *Centre Communal d'Action Sociale* : Municipal social services office.

C. D. E. S. *Commission Départementale d'Education Spéciale :* Departmental Commission on Special Education. See *DEPARTEMENT.*

C.E. 1 *Cours Elémentaire première année.* See ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL.

C.E. 2 *Cours Elémentaire deuxième année* See ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL.

C.E.E. *Communauté Economique Européenne.* European Economic Community (Common Market).

C.E.P *Certificat d' Etudes Primaires :* Former elementary school diploma.

C.F.D.T. *Confédération française Démocratique du Travail :* Labor federation formed in break-away from C.F.T.C. (below). Left-leaning, not Communist

C.F.E.C.G.C. *Confédération française de l' Encadrement. Confédération Générale des Cadres :* Unions representing supervisory personnel. See *CADRE*.

C.F.T.C. *Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens :* Christian Unions. No political affiliation.

C.G.T. *Confédération Générale du Travail :* Oldest and largest labor federation. Traditional links with Communist Party.

C.G.T.-F.O. *Confédération Générale du Travail - Force Ouvrière :* Labor federation formed in breakaway from C.G.T. Non-Communist without specific political affiliation. *(Force Ouvrière* means workforce.)

C.I.I.S. *Centre d'lnformation sur les Innovations Sociales :* Information Center on Social Innovations. Government-operated data bank.

C.M. 1 *Cours Moyen premiere année :* See ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL.

C.M. 2 *Cours Moyen deuxième année :* See ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL.

C.N.A.F. *Caisse Nationale d' Allocations Familiales :* National Family Allowance Fund. National office serves regional *"caisses."* Sets broad policies, publishes authoritative statistics. See C.A.F. and FAMILY.

C.N.A.J.E.P. *Conseil National des Associations de Jeunesse et d'Education Populaire :* National Council of Youth Organizations and Continuing Education. Private lobby.

C.N.D.S.Q. *Commission nationale pour le développement social des quartiers :* National Commission for the Social Development of Neighborhoods.

Compagnons-Bâtisseurs: Partners in Building. Private group that organizes people from all walks of life who volunteer for manual workshops.

Conseil économique et social : Economic and Social Council. See ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

C.O.T.O.R.E.P. *Commission Technique d'Orientation et de Reclassement Professionnel :* Commission for Technical Training and Reclassification. Provides classification of the disabled into administrative categories according to the handicap, with repercussion on employment for both employees and employers.

C.P. Cours Préparatoire : See ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL.

C.P.A. *Classe Préparatoire à I'Apprentissage :* Preparatory apprenticeship class. Special class in which those who leave school prepare for entry-level and, if possible, apprenticeship jobs.

C.P.A.M. *Caisse Primaire d'Assurance Maladie :* Health insurance fund. Disbursing agent for national health insurance.

C.P.P.N. *Classe Préprofessionnelle de Niveau :* Pre-vocational program. National education program providing extra tuition for students without the required standards to have access to vocational training.

C.R.E.D.O.C. *Centre de Recherche pour l'Etude et l'Observation des Conditions de Vie :* Research Center for Study and Observation of Living Conditions. Government-operated think tank.

C.R.E.S.A.S. *Centre de Recherche de /'Education Spécialisée et de l'Adaptation Scolaire :* Research Center for Special Education. Research on special education and adaptation to school. Part of the Ministry of Education.

C.T.N.E.R.H.I. *Centre Technique National d' Etudes et de Recherches sur les H*

Département : Department : Geographic region and important administrative subdivision of French territory. There are close to 100 of them. Departments are headed by a centrally appointed prefect and locally elected parliament, the

D.D.A.S.S. *Direction Departementale de !'Action Sanitaire et Sociale :* Departmental directory of health and social action. Child welfare office. See DEPARTEMENT.

Economic and Social Council : Established by the French Constitution as an integral part of the French government. Quasi-parliamentary body. Advises government and serves as deliberative forum in which leading personalities representing different segments of the population can debate issues of economic and social policy and, if possible, achieve a measure of agreement. Issues may be presented by the government or raised on the Council's own initiative. The Council debates, then votes. The result, in the form of a Policy Statement (Avis) is submitted to both the Cabinet and the Parliament. Constitutionally the Council must be consulted on the four-year plan (see *PLAN*). Reporters of Council committees are often asked to testify before parliamentary bodies.

The Council has 230 members, 70 % of whom are drawn from the private sector ; e.g. employers, trade unions, agriculture, the professions, small business and family associations (see FAMILY). The 30 % nominated by the government includes, among others, 40 persons appointed by the Council of Ministers on the basis of personal achievement in areas of the Council's interest.

E.D.F. *Electricite de France :* Government owned electric power monopoly.

Elementary and Middle School:

Elementary School (*école primaire*). Age 6 to 11.
1st year: *cours préparatoire* C.P.
2nd year: *cours élémentaire* C.E.1
3rd year: *cours élémentaire* C.E.2
4th year: *cours moyen* C.M.1
5th year: *cours moyen* C.M.2
Middle School (college), age 12 to 16, leads to *brevet de college*. Results obtained in college decide whether pupil will pursue academic route, technical education or leave school system altogether.

Entreprise intermédiaire : Intermediate business enterprise. These enterprises are run by non-profit organizations to provide employment and training to poor people who have been out of the work force for a long time and to young people without any diploma.

Family France has instituted a wide range of measures to support the family. Together they amount to a national family policy, although the term is not used officially. For example:

Allocations familiales, family allowances, are paid monthly, regardless of other income, to anyone responsible for bringing up two or more children ; allowances go up as the number of children increases. For example, in 1990 the allowance was 566.45 francs a month for two children and 2,018 francs for four children. Allowances are paid through age 16, but can be extended to age 20 if studies or training are pursued.

Other subsidies *(prestations familiales) :* A widely distributed brochure appropriately entitled "Happiness" *(bonheur)* describes close to 40 different benefits available to families, most but not all on demonstrated need. Many of them apply to maternity and infant care, but they also cover health of children and parents, vacations, housing, handicaps, aid with schooling, aid to single parents, etc.

Family Associations *(associations familiales)* and even federations of family associations deal with government at all levels : municipal, Departmental and national. They have ten representatives on the Economic and Social Council (see above).

Fédération Relais : Federation of shelters for homeless people.

F.E.N. *Fédération de l'Education Nationale :* Influential teachers union.

Ferry Jules Ferry, Minister of Education and Prime Minister (1879-1885), is generally considered the father of universal education and the public school in France.

F.N.A.L. *Fonds National pour les Aides au Logement :* National Housing Aid Fund. Organization centralizing the receipts (from private employers and State contributions) and the expenses relating to the housing subsidy for the elderly, the handicapped, young people still in school and some unemployed people.

F.N.A.R.S. *Fédération Nationale des Associations d'Accueil et de Réadaptation Sociale :* National Federation of Orientation and Social Rehabilitation Associations. See ARS.

F.N.E. *Fonds National pour l'Emploi :* National Employment Fund. Money for job creation, for example, in projects of regional development.

F.O.N.D.A. *Fondation pour la Vie Associative :* National lobbying organization. See ASSOCIATIONS.

Fonds d'action santé : Health care funds.

Fonds nationale de solidarité : National solidarity fund.

G.A.P.P. *Groupes d'Action Psycho-Pédagogique :* Psycho-pedagogical action groups. Counseling service for elementary school children.

G.D.F. *Gaz de France :* Government-operated gas monopoly.

G.P.L.I. *Groupe Permanent de Lutte contre l'lllettrisme :* Standing Committee Against Illiteracy. Interministerial committee on illiteracy.

Grande pauvreté : Chronic poverty.

H.L.M. *Habitation à Loyer Modéré :* Public housing. Literally : middle-income housing ; in fact the country's most important low-cost housing program. Origins date back to the 1920s and 1930s. H.L.M.'s can be seen in just about all French towns ; some even exist in rural areas.. Quality varies widely. H.L.M. projects are sponsored, built and administered by associations that may be formed by employers, trade unions, municipalities or similar bodies. Sources of financing are (a) tax enterprises equal to about 1 %a of their payroll, (b) financial participation by sponsors and (c) contributions from national government. The program has many variants, some politically inspired.

I.C.E.M. *Institut Coopératif de l'Ecole Moderne :* Cooperative Institute of Modern Schools. Private organization promoting the Freinet system of instruction, which encourages learning through the full participation of children in activities based on their own interests.

I.N.S.E.E. *Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques :* National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies. Undertakes research, compiles statistics, and handles various data to provide economic and social indexes and classifications.

I.R.F.R.H. *Insititut de Recherche et de Formation aux Relations Humaines.* Institute of Research and Training in Human Relations. Research and study arm of International Mov

L.A.R.E.S. *Laboratoire de Recherche et d'Etudes Sociales :* Center for Research and Social Studies. Associated with Universite de Haute Bretagne.

La Salle *Jean-Baptiste de La Salle* (1651-1719), French priest and reformer of education. Established schools for the poor.

LO.PO.FA. *Logement Pour Familles : Housing* for poor families. Variant. See H.L.M.

Matignon Official residence of the prime minister of France.

Mouvement International ATD Quart Monde : International Movement ATD Fourth World. Human rights organization fighting with, for, and on behalf of the poorest families and population groups. Founded by Father Joseph Wresinski in 1956 in a transit camp for homeless families near Paris. Headquartered in France. Has active presence in many countries and has consultative status in major international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Economic Community and the Council of Europe. Its spearhead is a corps of more than 300 full-time, long-term volunteers. Among them are men and women, married and single, of different nationalities and religious beliefs. They share the hopes and aspirations of the populations they serve and try to live on the minimum income of countries in which they are active.

Mutualité Sociale Agricole : Farmers Mutual. Farmers' health and social fund.

Ninth Plan Plan in effect when the report was written. See PLAN.

Nouvelles qualifications : New skill acquisition.

O.N.U. *Organisation des Nations Unies :* United Nations Organization.

O.P.A.C. *Office Public d'Amenagement Concerté :* Concerted Development Office. Semi-public organization administrating H.L.M.

O.P.H.L.M. *Office Public d'Habitation à Loyer Modéré :* Departmental and municipal offices dealing with H.L.M. matters. See H.L.M.

O.S. *Ouvrier spécialisé :* Specialized worker. Actually describes worker who has no recognized specialty, but has acquired a limited skill in a single operation. Other classifications of workers are : *manœuvre* (laborer) and *ouvrier qualifié* (skilled worker).

P.A.C.T. *Protection-Amélioration-Conservation-Transformation de 1'Habitat :* Protection, Improvement, Preservation and Conversion of Housing. Center for Housing Improvement. Private. Engaged in rehabilitation and management of existing housing stock.

P.A.I.O. *Permanences d'Accueil, d'Information et d'Orientation :* Reception-Information-Orientation Centers. Provide professional orientation for young people 16 to 25 years old through information, shortterm training, and practical programs.

P.A.L.U.L.O.S. *Prime à l'Amélioration des Logements à Usage Locatif et à Occupation Sociale :* Subsidy for improvement of low-income rental units. National program that provides for renovating public housing to bring it up to standard.

Plan French post-war reconstruction followed a succession of four-year plans directed by the late Jean Monnet. Four-year "indicative" plans, which establish broad goals but do not prescribe how to reach them, are still part of the French governmental process. See also ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

P.L.R. *Programme à Loyer Réduit :* Reduced Rent Program. Variant. See H.L.M.

P.M.I. *Protection Maternelle et Infantile :* Maternal and infant care program. Important nationwide free service with visiting nurses and storefront clinics. Charged with prevention from start of pregnancy until the child is six. All newborns must be registered with the service, which also has authority to enter homes without parental permission.

P.R.I. *Programme de Résorption de I'Habitat Insalubre :* Program for elimination of unsafe housing. Variant. See H.L.M.

Précarité Lack of basic security.

Prestations familiales : Family allowances.

P.S.E.R.E. *Personne sans Emploi à la Recherche d'un Emploi :* Unemployed person seeking work. Official classification.

P.S.R. *Programme Social de Relogement :* Social rehousing program. Subsidized rehousing of persons who have lost their home. Variant. See H.L.M.

P. U. F. *Presses universitaires de France :* Publishing house specializing in studies and research, especially at university level.

R.F.A. *République Fédérale d'Allemagne :* Federal Republic of Germany.

R.M.I. *Revenu Minimum d'Insertion :* Minimum Income for Integration. Program adopted in 1988 as result of the Wresinski Report, whose recommendations it follows in part. Provides financial supplement to bring income up to minimum level. Potential beneficiaries *(Erémistes)* must be at least 25 years old or be heads of families. They must also agree to enter into contracts to pursue courses of action (for example, training, health measures, improvement in housing) which will enhance their chances of participation in the life of organized society. Hence the term *"insertion"* translated here as "integration." In a separate major advance the same law also provides state financing of government-provided health insurance. Both minimum income and health insurance now come to individuals as a matter of right rather than discretionary authority.

S.A.F.A.L. *Service d'Aide aux Familles en Arriéré de Loyer :* Help to families owing back rent. Private.

S.A.H.R. *Societé Anonyme d'Hahitations Rurales :* Rural housing authority. Public housing in rural areas. See H.L.M.

S.C.I.C. *Société Centrale Immobilière de la Caisse des Dépôts :* Public fund. Collects 1 % payroll tax. See H.L.M.

Secours Catholique : Catholic Relief organization. French branch of Caritas International.

Sécurité Sociale: Governmental organization *(secu)* concerned solely with basic health insurance to which *"Caisses"* provide supplements. It was this basic insurance that the 1988 law extended to the very poor (see R.M.I.). The term *sécurité sociale* is also used more broadly to describe the whole range of national social concerns.

S.E.S. *Section d'Enseignement Spécialisé :* Special education section in schools. For children with learning difficulties. Typically alternates 15 days of instruc tion with 15 days of practical work.

S. E. S. I. *Service des Statistiques, des Etudes et des Systèmes d'Information :* Division of statistical service, studies and information systems. Section of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

S.I.V.P. *Stage d'Initiation à la Vie Professionnelle :* Program of Introduction to the Work Environment. Scheme of incentives for companies to hire those who leave school and to introduce them to a work environment.

S.M.I.C. *Salaire Minimum Interprofessionel de Croissance :* Minimum wage.

S.N.C.F. *Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer :* French National Railways.

Solidarité Term introduced by organized labor, but in France absorbed into everyday language. Often used as an umbrella term for public intervention on behalf of the needy or of victims of natural disasters. For example, "This should be a matter for national solidarity" means "the government ought to do something about this."

S.P.R.E.S.E. *Service de la Prévision, des Statistiques et de I'Evaluation :* Planning, Statistics and Evaluation Division of the Ministry of Education.

S.U.R.F. *Supplément Unifié des Ressources Familiales :* Family income supplement. General supplement to family resources. Temporary measure that preceded adoption of the Minimum Income for .Integration. See RM.I.

T.U.C. *Travaux d'Utilité Collective :* Youth community employment program. Work of public usefulness. Large-scale emergency program to provide temporary community work for young unemployed persons.

U.D.A.F. *Union Départementale des Associations Familiales :* Departmental Union of Family Associations. See *DEPARTMENT* and FAMILY.

U.F.C.V. *Union Française de Centres de Vacances :* French Federation for Vacation Centers. National association organizing vacation centers for children. It provides for training of counselors and management staff and well as work integration and job training for young people.

U.N.A.F. *Union Nationale des Associations Familiales :* National Union of Family Associations.

U.N.C.C.A.S. *Union Nationale de Centres Communaux d'Action Sociale* : National organization representing communal services. See C.C.A.S.

U. N. E. D. I. C. *Union Nationale pour I'Emploi dans l'Industrie et le Commerce :* National Union for Employment in Industry and Commerce. Holds obligatory contributions to unemployment insurance. See also A.S.S.E.D.I.C.

U.N.F.O.H.L.M. *Union Nationale des Fédérations d'Offices d'Habitation à Loyer Modéré :* National body representing federations of H.L.M. associations. See H.L.M.

U.N.I.O.P.S.S. *Union Nationale des Institutions et Oeuvres Privées Sanitaires et Sociales* : National Association of Private Health and Social Agencies. Umbrella group of organizations dealing with handicapped and elderly.

U.R.S.S.A.F. *Union pour le Recouvrement des Cotisations de Sécurité Sociale et des Allocations Familiales : Col*lects all contributions from employers and self-employed persons to government-operated insurance schemes and redistributes them to specialized funds. For an example, see U.N.E.D.I.C.

Vie Associative See ASSOCIATIONS

Zone d'éducation prioritaire : Priority education zone

Z.U.P. *Zone d' Urbanisation Prioritaire :* Priority redevelop-ment zone. An area set aside for low-cost housing development. See H.L.M.

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"The facts presented in this report show that people continue to live in chronic poverty or to lack basic security in their lives. We do not question the premises on which our social protection system is based, but we must ask why the institutions charged with providing it become increasingly ineffective when people have the most need of them."

"The inescapable reality is that the most impoverished members of the population are in a state of almost total dependence. They have no control over decisions that might lead to their autonomy. Any policy designed to eradicate chronic poverty and to ensure the development of the individual and the family has to take these facts into account. The nation cannot allow the current economic difficulties to diminish the freedom of some of its citizens to exercise their rights and responsibilities."

"New legislation should be enacted to provide a comprehensive response to chronic poverty. This would be a new step toward which everyone devoted to the defense of human rights should strive."

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