

Nation's Poor Scrutinized

Alinsky Assails Johnson's War on Poverty

By PHIL SEMAS
Associate Editor

Saul Alinsky doesn't think much of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty.

He calls it "a war against the poor, not a war against the causes of poverty," "65 per cent political pork barrel, 35 per cent chicken salad for the welfare industry," and a "a perfect piece of political pornography."

Saul Alinsky is the organizer of "community action groups" who has gotten the poor together to organize rent strikes, picket lines, boycotts, demonstrations, and sit-ins to force change in slum conditions in America's cities.

He runs his organization from a two room office in Chicago with a staff of 16 people. He never sends in more than one of his "organizers." And he never sends them in unless they're asked for.

Alinsky, a paunchy, bespectacled, quiet-looking man in a brown suit, yellow shirt, and purple tie, was talking at the Thursday night session of the ASUO-sponsored Poverty Conference. And he had some unkind words for the War on Poverty.

POLITICAL PATRONAGE

"The anti-poverty program is emerging as a huge political pork barrel," he charged, "the wielding of funds a form of political patronage."

"Unless there are drastic changes in direction, rationale, and administration," he added, "it may well become the worst political blunder and boomerang of the present administration."

There's plenty of dissatisfaction with the program, Alinsky says. "I haven't addressed a meeting on the poverty program where I haven't found a lot of angry people," he told an afternoon press conference.

In his speech he said, "The American people will accept to a certain degree the variance of programs from professed purposes and a certain amount of wasteful administration. Even some plain graft."

MODERN SIR GALAHAD

His raspy drawl lowered a notch in volume. "But when this occurs in a program that has burst forth like a modern Sir Galahad, the American will react and is reacting in a rage."

"The American people," he added, "are repulsed by a phony hypocritical piety."

The War on Poverty is the kind of program it is because it did not come in response to a threat, Alinsky says.

"Progress usually comes in response to a threat," he says. He cited Lincoln's emancipation proclamation and the American foreign aid program ("We already have one poverty program, but it's called the foreign aid program.") as examples. The threat in the first case was the break-up of the Union. The threat in the second case was Communism.

"The threat was lacking in the poverty program," Alinsky says. "We are an affluent society. The poor are not organized. The poor are a small minority."

But Lyndon Johnson started the War on Poverty anyway. "Hence out came the program as it is," says Alinsky.

THREAT DEVELOPING NOW

"What I'm felling you," he emphasizes, "is that the threat is developing now. Rarely a day passes that there isn't some scandal about the poverty program on the front pages. I predict that there will be sweeping changes in the poverty program as the 1968 election approaches."

What is wrong with the War on Poverty, says Alinsky, is that it is a program to give the poor jobs, instead of power. "I use the word power in its strictest sense, according to Webster's," he says, "the power to act."

Alinsky maintains that instead of giving the poor that kind of power—which is what Alinsky's own organizations have tried to do—the War on Poverty stifles efforts of the poor to gain power.

Poverty funds, he says "are used to suffocate militant leadership and action organizations seeking to arm the poor with their share

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Theobald Talk, Debate to End Poverty Confab

A speakers' debate at 1 p.m. today will close the ASUO-sponsored Poverty Conference.

British economist Robert Theobald will give the fourth and final speech at 9 a.m. It will be followed by a discussion.

The speaker's debate will have all four speakers—Theobald, Saul Alinsky, Arthur Pearl, and Robert Lampman—debate their varying views of the poverty problems and the solutions to it.

There were indications at the Thursday session that the debate might be heated. Pearl, an education professor at the University, attacked the views of the other three in his morning speech.

And his statement that Alinsky and conservative columnist William Buckley are "brothers under the skin" because both say the poor must solve their own problems drew a scathing reply from Alinsky.

I've never heard anybody make that kind of statement," said Alinsky at his afternoon press conference. "But then I've never been inside the psychiatric wards at Bellevue either."

He pointed out that Buckley is identified with the status quo while he is trying to change the status quo.

In his short opening address Thursday morning University President Arthur S. Flemming called the conference "the high water mark for the University of Oregon."

He expressed his "deep appreciation to Steve Goldschmidt (ASUO president, who organized the conference) and the ASUO for developing as significant a program as this."



ROBERT LAMPMAN, University of Wisconsin economics professor, described his "negative income tax," increased "transfer payment," and full employment solutions to the poverty conference to a full crowd in the SU Ballroom Thursday.

Negative Income Tax Proposed

By NOMI BORENSTEIN
Assistant Managing Editor

"A poor person is someone whose income is under \$3,000 a year," according to Robert Lampman, professor of economics at the University of Wisconsin.

In order to raise the income of the approximately 35 million poor people in the United States, Lampman advocates a family allowance, a "negative income tax" and making the present economic system work more effectively.

"The number of poor people has been going down," Lampman said. "The purpose of the poverty program is to hasten this trend." In 1947, 32 per cent of the population were considered poor but in 1963 only 19 per cent could be listed as poor.

This means that approximately one million people have left the ranks of the poor every year and now earn at least \$3,000 a year, Lampman said.

Lampman outlined three broad solutions to the poverty problem:

- making the present economic systems work better,
- adapting the system to the needs of the poor, and
- changing the "basic culture of the poor" which would adapt the poor to the needs of the system.

Lampman said that he favors "bettering the workings of our present economic system" to best solve the war on poverty.

"People always sell our system short," he continued "and they just don't realize how good it is."

If the present rate of economic growth continues and the program is supplemented with some of Lampman's "welfare proposals," he predicted that poverty can be abolished within 20 to 35 years.

"Economic growth would insure full employment," he said, and according to Lampman's philosophy employment is the key

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'New Careers for Poor'

Pearl Suggests Solution, Criticizes Other Experts

By BOB CARL
Managing Editor

The first of four experts to speak at the ASUO-sponsored Poverty Conference, Arthur Pearl, University professor of education, explained his solution to the poverty problem and criticized the approaches that he "expects" the other speakers to take during the two-day conference.

Speaking to 1,100 persons early Thursday morning, Pearl outlined his proposal, which he has explained in a recently published book, "New Careers for the Poor."

He said America has "never had a perfect society," explaining that there have always been "very pronounced barriers" which keep disadvantaged per-

sons from being absorbed into society.

Pearl described American society as "one of prejudice; one of three hundred years of poverty, with a tradition of slavery."

Even though the methods of absorption into American society have always been inefficient according to Pearl, he explained that many of these methods have become obsolete. "The situation is worse today than ever before," he said.

For example, Pearl cited agriculture—"now the most automated industry"—explaining that "in 10 years, Oregon won't need one bean picker." In 10 years "the absolute number of jobs will have declined" in agriculture, according to Pearl.

"The traditional absorption systems have disappeared," he said.

Pearl also said that "fewer people are producing goods now than 5 years ago—and 40 per cent more goods are produced yearly." The jobs that are created call for highly skilled people, he said, as another example of an absorption system that has failed.

As still another example to prove his point, Pearl said that small businesses can no longer compete with today's industrial giants. "Barry Goldwater's grandfather could push a cart from one settler's house to another," he said, "but it's impossible to think of a street peddler

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ROBERT THEOBALD, right, British economist and advocate of a "guaranteed income" as a solution to the problems of poverty, will give the final speech in the ASUO Poverty Conference at 9 a.m. today. His speech will be followed by a debate among all four speakers at 2 p.m. Arthur Pearl, left, delivered the first speech Thursday.