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# From New Deal to Termination: Liberalism and Indian Policy, 1933–1953

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ONE OF THE MOST ABRUPT turnabouts in federal Indian policy occurred during the liberal era of 1933 to 1953, when the Harry S. Truman administration reversed the approach of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The outlines of these contradictory policies emerged with unusual clarity during World War II in a clash over another ethnic minority, Japanese Americans. At issue in June 1942 was the sort of community to be encouraged at the Poston, Arizona, internment camp that the Bureau of Indian Affairs ran for the War Relocation Authority (WRA). Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier feared five or more years might elapse before the “bitter and shocking ordeal” of the Japanese Americans ended. He pledged that the Bureau of Indian Affairs would in the meantime encourage substantial self-government, cooperative economic enterprises, and traditional Japanese cultural activities. Collier hoped to make Poston a place where people would give themselves “utterly to the community” and provide for the rest of the

United States a “demonstration of the efficiency and the splendor of cooperative living.”<sup>1</sup>

WRA Director Dillon S. Myer wanted to apply a uniform policy to all the camps, however, and by 1944 the BIA had turned its Poston experiment over to central WRA control. Myer circumscribed camp self-government, curtailed the co-ops, and discouraged Japanese cultural expressions. “Americanization can never be wholly effective within the confines of relocation centers,” he argued. He intended to resettle the internees as quickly as possible, but not in their “little Tokyos.” “I have found no one who thought that these concentrations of populations were desirable even in peacetime,” Myer said. The internees would be distributed widely across the country so that “they can be absorbed readily.”<sup>2</sup>

As Roosevelt’s commissioner of Indian affairs from 1933 through 1945, Collier fostered traditional culture and community. As Truman’s commissioner from 1950 to 1953, Myer promoted instead assimilation and individualism. Previous accounts attribute the weakening of Collier’s Indian New Deal from 1945 to 1953 largely to conservative opposition in Congress, and some date the reversal of his policy from the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration’s adoption of termination in 1953. But it was the Truman administration that reversed the Indian New Deal as liberalism changed from supporting traditional community to finding community in the nation. Indian policy provides an especially good index of liberal values: In formulating policy for native American societies, mainstream Americans often reveal not so much their concern for Indian realities as their image of what society at large should be. The purpose of this article, then, is twofold: to chart

<sup>1</sup>Collier address at Poston, June 27, 1942; Collier to John G. Evans, Jan. 19, 1944; Howard R. Stinson to Secretary of the Interior, July 6, 1943; “Community Enterprises Policy Statement and Criteria,” n.d. (ca. June 1942); Wade Head to Dillon S. Myer, Dec. 13, 1943; Collier to Secretary Ickes, Aug. 17, 1943, all in WRA folders, Collier Office File, Records of Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives (hereafter cited as Collier Office File); Alexander H. Leighton, *The Governing of Men: General Principles and Recommendations Based on Experience at a Japanese Relocation Camp* (Princeton, N.J., 1945), 45–50, 61, 79, 103–104, 110–120, 130.

<sup>2</sup>Myer address to Commonwealth Club, San Francisco, Aug. 1943; Head to Collier, Feb. 6, 1943; Myer to all project directors, June 15, 1943, WRA folders, Collier Office File; Leighton, *Governing of Men*, 152–153; Myer, *Uprooted Americans* (Tucson, Ariz., 1971), 61–62, 268.

the course of Indian policy from 1933 to 1953; and to use Indian policy, the epitome of the “community New Deal,” to suggest some modifications in the interpretations of the continuity of liberalism from the New Deal to the Fair Deal.<sup>3</sup>

By 1933 the continued existence of the Indian community had become problematic. For the previous half-century federal policy had driven towards assimilation—“Americanization”—by eradicating Indian traits and merging Indians with society at large. The key to assimilation was individualization as embodied in the General Allotment Act (Dawes Severalty Act) of 1887, a reform measure that mandated the division of communally held lands among individual Indians. Private property, augmented by education, would free the Indian from the traditional community, “awaken in him wants,” and make him a competitive individual citizen with full legal

<sup>3</sup>In this paper I am considering liberalism chiefly in its political expressions of the New Deal of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Fair Deal of Harry S. Truman. Assimilation I am considering as “such modifications as eliminate the characteristics of foreign origin” with the modifications being “made by the weaker or numerically inferior group.” Henry Pratt Fairchild, ed., *Dictionary of Sociology* (New York, 1944), 276–277; see also Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York, 1964), chap. 3.

The fullest study of the termination period interprets liberals as responding largely to conservative initiative (Larry J. Hasse, “Termination and Assimilation: Federal Indian Policy, 1943 to 1961” [Ph.D. dissertation, Washington State University, 1974], 50, 60, 108, 122–125). Other studies that recognize a break with the Indian New Deal in the Truman period either emphasize the conservative drive or attribute the change in the executive branch largely to Myer. See William Brandon, *The Last Americans* (New York, 1974), 432; Angie Debo, *A History of the Indians of the United States* (Norman, Okla., 1970), 303–304; Harold E. Fey and D’Arcy McNickle, *Indians and Other Americans: Two Ways of Life Meet* (New York, 1959), 134–135; Wilcomb E. Washburn, *Red Man’s Land/White Man’s Law: A Study of the Past and Present Status of the American Indian* (New York, 1971), 82–86; S. Lyman Tyler, *A History of Indian Policy* (Washington, D.C., 1973), 136–186; William T. Hagan, *American Indians* (Chicago, 1961), 161; William E. Zimmerman, “The Role of the Bureau of Indian Affairs since 1933,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, CCCXI (1957), 34; Donald R. McCoy and Richard T. Ruetten, *Quest and Response: The Truman Administration and Minority Rights* (Lawrence, Kan., 1973), 302–306. Some studies see little break until the Dwight Eisenhower administration. See Gary Orfield, “A Study of the Termination Policy,” in Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, Subcommittee on Indian Education, “The Education of American Indians: The Organization Question,” *Committee Print*, 91 Cong., 1 sess., (1969), 673–817; Kenneth R. Philp, “John Collier and the American Indian,” in Leon Borden Blair, ed., *Essays on Radicalism in Contemporary America* (Austin, Tex., 1972), 79; Carl N. Degler, “Indians and Other Americans,” *Commentary*, LIV, (Nov. 1972), 71; Nancy Oestreich Lurie, “Menominee Termination,” *Indian Historian*, IV (Winter 1971), 33, 36. Felix Cohen, who was well aware of the reversal in policy, stressed bureaucracy in “The Erosion of Indian Rights, 1950–1953,” *Yale Law Journal*, LXII (1953), 348.

equality. The policy backfired disastrously. By 1933 the Indians had lost two-thirds of their land, and had allotment continued for another generation, Indians would have been virtually landless. The loss of land, augmented by arbitrary and minute BIA controls, sapped the life of many once vital Indian communities. Individualization had undermined community but put little in the community's place.<sup>4</sup>

The allotment policy seemed to John Collier a microcosm of Western civilization since the eighteenth century. The Industrial Revolution and nineteenth-century thought had shattered community, he felt, and produced instead an aggregation of isolated, mobile, economically motivated individuals. Man was divorced from nature: human actions were explained by mechanical rectilinear constructs, and economic activity threatened to destroy nature itself. The diversity and freedom bred by many small communities were replaced by the "pulverizing uniformities" of the free market and the "denaturing uniformities" of the state. These atomistic tendencies produced the hallmarks of mass society—conformity and alienation. Collier's social theory, which closely resembled Ferdinand Tönnies's classic spheres of *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society), undoubtedly applied the dichotomy too sharply. Yet in posing alternative ideal types he called attention to some of the severe problems of modern society and the need for a better balance among individual, community, and society.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Address by Merrill E. Gates, president of Amherst College, to Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian, 1896, in Francis Paul Prucha, ed., *Americanizing the American Indians: Writing by the "Friends of the Indian," 1880–1900* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), 334; see also Prucha's introduction, esp. pp. 6–8; William T. Hagan, "Private Property: The Indian's Door to Civilization," *Ethnohistory*, III (1956), 126–137; Henry E. Fritz, *The Movement for Indian Assimilation, 1860–1890* (Philadelphia, 1963); Felix Cohen, *Handbook of Federal Indian Law* (Washington, D.C., 1942; rpt., Albuquerque, N.M., 1971), 216; Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Indian in America* (New York, 1975), chap. 11.

<sup>5</sup>John Collier, *Indians of the Americas* (New York, abridged ed., 1948), 7–16, 20–24; Collier, *From Every Zenith* (Denver, 1963), 10–12, 93–94, 466–467; Ferdinand Tönnies, trans. by Charles P. Loomis, *Community & Society: Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (East Lansing, Mich., 1957), esp. 33–39. The standard work on Collier's career is Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920–1954* (Tucson, Ariz., 1977); on the future commissioner's early life and thought, see pp. 7–22. Also helpful in understanding Collier's intellectual development are Jessie Bernard, *The Sociology of Community* (Glenview, Ill., 1973), 4, 6–7, 91–120; Stephen J. Kunitz, "The Social Philosophy of John Collier," *Ethnohistory*, XVIII (1971), 213–229; and Kunitz, "Equilibrium Theory in Social Psychiatry: The Work of the Leightons," *Psychiatry*, XXXIII

Collier, who combined mysticism, social-science understanding, and political and administrative shrewdness, devoted his life to rebuilding community. As a settlement-house worker in New York City from 1907 to 1919 he strove, like many other social-justice progressives, to preserve the culture of ethnic groups and to maintain a community sense among immigrants. After World War I, disillusioned and under surveillance by Justice Department agents for his "subversive" beliefs, he paid a chance visit to the Taos pueblo in New Mexico. There he found a community such as he thought had vanished, but which offered "gifts without price" that "the world must have again, lest it die." The Indians' organic community was not isolated in time nor divorced from nature but united with past and future in ecological harmony. Nor was the Indian community static; it showed remarkable adaptability. The group shaped individual personalities and placed them in touch with the spiritual. Yet the individual did not lose his identity: There remained a perimeter of freedom and autonomy—even idiosyncrasy—around each person. Because of its intensity, the primary group as experienced by one of its members could be more complex and diverse than an entire nation as experienced by one of its citizens.<sup>6</sup>

(1970), 312–328. Kunitz suggests that the *Gemeinschaft* ideal reflected a conservative response by status-anxious individuals who were upset by the Industrial Revolution and saw community as a way of staving off class conflict ("Social Philosophy of John Collier," 215, 223–224, 226, and "Equilibrium Theory," 312, 315–316, 320). While community may be turned to conservative uses, it may also be grafted to radical theory, as Kunitz at one point concedes ("Social Philosophy," 226). Collier was initially impressed by the Communist Revolution in Russia and after World War II was sympathetic to the Third World and certain aspects of the People's Republic of China (*From Every Zenith*, 12, 117–119, 390–403). Collier does not stress class conflict, probably because of his essentially non-materialistic values. On individualism and community, see also Don E. Fehrenbacher, ed., *History and American Society: Essays of David M. Potter* (New York, 1973), 319, 331–333; Robert A. Nisbet, *The Quest for Community* (2nd ed., New York, 1969), 129–188; and Wilson Carey McWilliams, *The Idea of Fraternity in America* (Berkeley, 1973), chap. iv.

<sup>6</sup>Collier, *Indians of the Americas*, 7–16, 20–24; Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 68–94, 117–119; Collier, "The Red Atlantis," *Survey*, IL (Oct. 1, 1922), 15–19, 62–63; Collier, "Mexico: A Challenge," *Progressive Education*, IX (Feb. 1932), 95–98; Collier, "Needs in Administration of Indian Property," in *Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work* (Chicago, 1932), 627–639; Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 2–3; Clarke A. Chambers, *Seedtime of Reform: American Social Service and Social Action, 1918–1933* (Minneapolis, 1963), 111–112; Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York, 1961), 75–76, 105–106, 109–110, 169–185; Morton and Lucia White, *The Intellectual versus the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), 150, 161, 170–176.

The one gift whites could give Indians—continued existence—became Collier's passion. He sought first to reverse the allotment policy, for it was "chiefly . . . 'Americanization' which beats down and drives underground the community life." During the 1920s he battled in the forefront of the Indian rights movement for Indian religious freedom and preservation of the Pueblo lands. When the seedtime of reform blossomed into harvest in 1933 Collier had his chance to encourage the "cooperative community action" he had admired in the indigenist revival in Mexico.<sup>7</sup>

The native communities of the Southwest and Mexico had a particular appeal for many artists and intellectuals of the 1920s and 1930s who pondered the relationship of the individual to mass society. Figures as diverse as Joseph Wood Krutch, Lewis Mumford, Ruth Benedict, Mary Austin, Oliver LaFarge, Stuart Chase, D. H. Lawrence, and John Dewey were deeply impressed by the native peoples' spiritual, nonmaterialistic, communal lives. These communities seemed to offer a means of retaining some of the best qualities of liberalism while reconciling individualism with collectivism. These thinkers hoped to transplant some of the best qualities of Robert Redfield's Mexican village Tepoztlán to Robert and Helen Lynd's Middletown.<sup>8</sup>

During the "collectivist" phase of Roosevelt's first term, Collier and other officials sensed a unique opportunity to implement

<sup>7</sup>Collier, "The Red Atlantis," 62; Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, chaps. 2–5; Randolph C. Downes, "A Crusade for Indian Reform, 1922–1934," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXV (1945), 334–345; Lawrence C. Kelly, "Choosing the New Deal Indian Commissioner: Ickes vs. Collier," *New Mexico Historical Review*, XLIX (1974), 268–288; Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 293–299; Ickes to Collier, Feb. 22, 1934, box 5, Ickes Office Files, Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, Record Group 48, National Archives.

<sup>8</sup>Richard H. Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years* (New York, 1973), chap. 3, esp. pp. 101–121; D. H. Lawrence, "New Mexico," in *Phoenix* (New York, 1936), 142; Mary Austin, *Earth, Horizon: Autobiography* (New York, 1932), esp. 365–368; Stuart Chase, *Mexico: A Study of Two Americas* (New York, 1931), esp. 318–325; John Dewey, *Impressions of Soviet Russia and the Revolutionary World: Mexico—China—Turkey* (New York, 1929; rpt. 1932), 153–167; D'Arcy McNickle, *Indian Man: A Life of Oliver LaFarge* (Bloomington, Ind., 1971); Van Wyck Brooks, *The Confident Years: 1885–1915* (New York, 1952), 357–370; R. Alan Lawson, *The Failure of Independent Liberalism, 1930–1941* (New York, 1971), 103, 109, 112, 126, 130, 133–134, 150–155, 183; Elémire Zolla, trans. by Raymond Rosenthal, *The Writer and the Shaman: A Morphology of the American Indian* (New York, 1973), chaps. 9–10; for the continuing relevance and appeal of the communities of the Southwest and Mexico, see F.S.C. Northrop, *Meeting of East and West* (New York, 1946), esp. chap. 2; and Vincent Scully, *Pueblo: Mountain/Village/Dance* (New York, 1975).

what might be termed the "community New Deal." These programs transcended mere economic interest groupings, and their collective action attempted to forge bonds among individuals on a basis of shared values, usually at the local level. Cooperation would replace competition, especially in economic activities; people would involve themselves deeply in group life and self-government; and indigenous arts and crafts would flourish. The Resettlement Administration of Rexford G. Tugwell and M. L. Wilson—and its successor, the Farm Security Administration—sponsored community centers, communal farms, and green-belt towns. Arthur E. Morgan tried to preserve the community-planning potential of the Tennessee Valley Authority against the power-oriented ambitions of David Lilienthal. The Civilian Conservation Corps not merely gave work to youths but fostered group life. Group solidarity, grass-roots participation, and a community aesthetic suffused the Federal Theatre Program, Federal Writers Project, and Federal Arts Project.<sup>9</sup>

The community emphasis was not synonymous with the New Deal as a whole, many aspects of which carried on individualistic and traditional ideas. The community New Deal

<sup>9</sup>Paul Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World: The New Deal Community Program* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1959), esp. 107, 192–193, 203–211, 226–227, 267, 329–331; Otis L. Graham, Jr., *Toward a Planned Society: From Roosevelt to Nixon* (New York, 1976), 19–21, 103. More conventional liberal interpretations of the New Deal have largely overlooked the community emphasis by stressing the New Deal's pragmatic, nonmoralistic temper (e.g., Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* [New York, 1955], esp. 316–318, 325). Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., shows little sympathy for the community New Dealers (*The Age of Roosevelt*, Vol. 2: *The Coming of the New Deal* [Boston, 1958], 371–373; and Vol. 3: *The Politics of Upheaval* [Boston, 1960], chap. 20). William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932–1940* (New York, 1963) is more sympathetic but dubious about the effects of the programs (pp. 140–141, 165–166); he discusses the Indian New Deal in the context of procedural reform and the broker state (pp. 85–86). Tugwell discusses the split between "collectivism" and "atomism" in *The Democratic Roosevelt* (Garden City, N.Y., 1957), 218–229, 328–329, 545–547. On specific persons and programs, see Sidney Baldwin, *Poverty and Politics: The Rise and Decline of the Farm Security Administration* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1968), esp. 203–208; Edward C. Banfield, *Government Project* (Glencoe, Ill., 1951), esp. chaps. 2, 14, and 15, and the foreword by Tugwell, esp. p. 12; Walter J. Stein, *California and the Dust Bowl Migration* (Westport, Conn., 1973), chap. 6; Thomas K. McCraw, *Morgan vs. Lilienthal: The Feud within the TVA* (Chicago, 1970), 10–11, 33–36; John A. Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933–1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, N.C., 1967), 132, 144; Richard S. Kirkendall, *Social Scientists and Farm Politics in the Age of Roosevelt* (Columbia, Mo., 1966), 112–113, 129–130; Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams*, 258; Orlando W. Miller, *The Frontier in Alaska and the Matanuska Colony* (New Haven, 1975), 36–37, 106–107, 136–143; and Jane De Hart Mathews, "Arts and the People: The New Deal Quest for a Cultural Democracy," *Journal of American History*, LXII (1975), 318, 323, 331.

remained chiefly the domain of second-level officials, but it attracted support among the administration's high command. Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace, who had a keen appreciation of Indian spiritual life, shared some of the community vision. Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, a veteran of the settlement-house, conservation, and Indian-rights movements, placed support of the Indian New Deal and a balanced conservation program of both use and preservation among his primary objectives. President Roosevelt's life-long devotion to conservation, "so nourishing to the impulse to see things in their total web of relationships," made FDR what Otis L. Graham, Jr., has termed an "instinctive collectivist" with an organic view of society. The importance of the community New Deal transcended the number of programs and their degree of success. The community programs became a focal point of ideological conflict. The very term "community" became, as Paul Conkin has noted, an antonym of individualism and a symbol of a new organic vision of society. The community New Deal thus represented more than a political program; it was also an intellectual and cultural challenge to the older liberalism.<sup>10</sup>

Collier's Indian New Deal represented the fullest expression of the community ideal, for it tried to unite ethnic identity, collective land management, and group self-government into a functional whole. His draft legislation was sweeping. Since land ownership was central to Indian affairs, Collier proposed a package designed to end allotment, return fractionated allotments to the tribe, and add land to the tribal estate. To encourage community self-government the draft provided for the organization of tribal governments with all powers typical of municipal corporations, for specific authority to delegate all BIA functions to the tribes, and for limitations on federal interference in tribal affairs. An Indian court would apply

<sup>10</sup>Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 4: *Launching the New Deal* (Boston, 1973), 78, 80–81, 255–266, 351; McCraw, *Morgan vs. Lilienthal*, 33–36; Norman D. Markowitz, *The Rise and Fall of the People's Century: Henry A. Wallace and American Liberalism, 1941–1948* (New York, 1973), 1–2; Elmo Richardson, *Dams, Parks & Politics: Resource Development and Preservation in the Truman-Eisenhower Era* (Lexington, Ky., 1973), 6–8; Linda Lear, "The Aggressive Progressive: The Political Career of Harold L. Ickes, 1874–1933" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1974), 239–242; Collier to Wallace, Feb. 27, 1934, box 19, Collier Papers, Yale University Library.

traditional Indian concepts of justice. A revolving credit fund would facilitate community economic development. Finally, one section endorsed the furtherance of Indian culture. "Great stuff," Roosevelt scrawled on the draft.<sup>11</sup>

Congress was willing to go only part way. As passed in June 1934 the Indian Reorganization Act was limited to those tribes in which a majority of members voted to accept; it exempted Oklahoma from its provisions. Congress eliminated the endorsement of Indian cultural preservation and the Indian court. The IRA halted almost entirely the allotment process and authorized \$2 million per year for tribal land acquisition. But to Collier's chagrin the act eliminated the authority to consolidate fractionated allotments, which would have returned millions of the best acres to tribal ownership. Land assumed particular importance for Collier not merely because of its economic value but because it secured the geographic base he considered necessary for community.<sup>12</sup>

The self-government provisions were a shadow of their original form. The IRA allowed tribes to organize tribal councils, draft a constitution, organize as business corporations, and tap the credit fund. There was little new in these provisions; some tribes already exercised some self-government, and the IRA added nothing to the tribes' inherent powers of self-government. The sections that required the transfer of certain federal powers to the tribes were eliminated; these remained the "uncontrolled discretion of the secretary of the interior." In fact the tribal constitutions usually gave the agency superintendent or the Secretary of the

<sup>11</sup>Collier to Ickes, Feb. 24, 1934, box 11; drafts of bills, box 23, Collier Papers; Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, chap. 7; Lawrence C. Kelly, "The Indian Reorganization Act: The Dream and the Reality," *Pacific Historical Review*, XLIV (1975), 293–296. Collier denied that his policy amounted to a "glass case" or "back to the blanket" philosophy. He stressed the adoption of modern ways to bolster community life on the reservation, and he clearly favored Indians remaining there; but he also wanted to equip Indians to enter competitive white society, if they so chose. Zimmerman, "The Role of the Bureau of Indian Affairs," 34; Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 199, 203.

<sup>12</sup>"Major Provisions of Original Wheeler-Howard Bill Omitted from Bill as Passed," n.d. (ca. June 1934), box 23, Collier Papers; Collier, *Indians of the Americas*, 157–158; Kelly, "Indian Reorganization Act," 296–298; Kenneth Philp, "John Collier and the Controversy over the Wheeler-Howard Bill," in Jane F. Smith and Robert M. Kvasnicka, eds., *Indian-White Relations: A Persistent Paradox* (Washington, D.C., 1976), 171–200.

Interior a veto over the tribal council's acts. The principal advantage a tribe derived from the IRA government provisions was that, once adopted, a constitution could be changed only with the consent of the tribe or by act of Congress.<sup>13</sup>

Congress's part-way measures proved enough for Collier. Indeed, as Lawrence C. Kelly has noted, the commissioner acted as if Congress had approved his original draft.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps more than any other federal activity, Indian affairs are determined more by administration than legislation. The IRA was the legislative cornerstone, but the Indian New Deal edifice more nearly resembled Collier's blueprint.

Collier and Ickes used their vast administrative powers to extend the Indian New Deal to most of the tribes, regardless of whether they voted to accept the organizational structures of the IRA. Though Congress had struck the cultural sections, Collier made preservation of Indian culture one of his first objectives. He created an Indian Arts and Crafts Board. He guaranteed freedom for traditional Indian religion, ending the preferred position of Christian missionaries, who had often been the advance guard of individualism and assimilation. His director of education, John Dewey-influenced Willard Beatty, promoted Indian culture in the schools, began to replace boarding schools with day schools, and tried to broaden schools

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*; Cohen, *Handbook of Federal Indian Law*, 122, 129–133. Lawrence C. Kelly has called attention to the confusion surrounding the number of tribes that came under the IRA. If the 99 small California bands, which Kelly rightly argues distort the tabulations, are excluded, the final figures appear to be 120 tribes accepting the IRA and 33 opposing, or 77.7 percent in favor (Kelly, "Indian Reorganization Act," 302–304). The reasons why tribes voted against the IRA varied considerably and often had little to do with the act itself; the Navajo, for instance, turned down the act by a narrow margin, apparently because they associated it with the stock-reduction program (Donald L. Parman, *The Navajos and the New Deal* [New Haven, 1976], 77). Moreover, some tribes, such as those in New York, voted against the IRA but nonetheless opposed assimilationist legislation in the early 1950s (Wilcomb E. Washburn, ed., *The American Indian and the United States: A Documentary History* [4 vols., New York, 1973], III, 2011–2023). It is, therefore, misleading to interpret a vote against the IRA as indicating a desire to "spurn" Collier's program (Kelly, "Indian Reorganization Act," 305), especially since the act was but a part of his overall policy. Nor does the failure of a number of tribes who came under IRA to incorporate for business purposes seem especially telling. The loan fund was a small part even of IRA, and the paltry \$5 million that Congress appropriated for it—compared to \$72 million for the Indian CCC—probably discouraged incorporation. See Donald Parman, "The Indian and the Civilian Conservation Corps," *Pacific Historical Review*, XLI (1971), 54.

<sup>14</sup>Collier, *Indians of the Americas*, 155; Kelly, "Indian Reorganization Act," 298.

into community centers. To maintain the Indian's close relationship with nature, Collier established wilderness areas on several reservations.<sup>15</sup>

Collier's ideal was indirect administration: The BIA would outline broad policies, grant power and funds to the local community, and then allow each group to devise indigenous means of implementation. He curbed the powers of bureau agents, who had held virtually "every arbitrary power short of the right to slay," and he usually scrupulously observed Indian rights. Towards the end of his term he was considering abolishing some superintendencies altogether and having whites perform solely advisory functions. Secretary Ickes vetoed very few acts of tribal councils, and most of those were ordinances contravening federal statutes. Tribal courts began to function, staffed by native judges. Land allotments all but ceased, even on non-IRA reservations. Guided by Assistant Solicitor Felix Cohen, the bureau scored some notable advances in Indian legal rights, especially in winning Supreme Court recognition of native possessory title.<sup>16</sup>

Mixed with these successes were serious problems. Congress appropriated only half the \$10 million authorized for the credit fund. Only \$5,075,000 was forthcoming for land acquisition, although the National Resources Board estimated that \$120 million was needed to raise Indian living standards to those of their white neighbors, which often approximated rural poverty. Administrative difficulties troubled Collier. Many veteran civil servants resisted his ideas, and policy suffered the inevitable bureaucratic slippage. The commissioner sometimes negated his expressed objectives, as when he resorted

<sup>15</sup>Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 168–203, 269–284; Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 184–185; Margaret Szasz, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination, 1928–1973* (Albuquerque, N.M., 1974), 48–55; Lawrence C. Kelly, *The Navajo Indians and Federal Indian Policy* (Tucson, Ariz., 1968), 170; address by W. Carson Ryan to National Conference of Social Workers, Kansas City, May 25, 1934, Collier Office File; "Wilderness Areas on Indian Lands," box 79, Collier Papers.

<sup>16</sup>Collier, "Red Atlantis," 19; Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 345–346; Cohen, *Handbook of Federal Indian Law*, 107–108, 130; *United States as Guardian of the Hualpai Indians of Arizona v. Santa Fe Pacific Railroad Co.*, 314 U.S. 339 (1941); Ward Shepard to Commissioner, June 17, 1942, box 19; W. V. Woehlke to Commissioner, Dec. 3, 1942, box 24, Collier Papers.

to coercion in the face of Navajo opposition to his stock-reduction program.<sup>17</sup>

But perhaps Collier's most serious failure lay in his expectation that the tribal council would foster community solidarity. The tribal council often introduced formal Anglo-Saxon majoritarian procedures in place of the Indian's consensus-oriented forms and imposed a divorce between church and state that was foreign to Indian theocratic governments. In some cases the more assimilated tribesmen captured the governmental machinery, exacerbating factionalism. Community spirit flowered best among the tribes of the Southwest, whose lands had remained largely intact. On the Great Plains, and particularly in Oklahoma, where allotment had advanced furthest, recreation of the community proved difficult.<sup>18</sup>

Critics charged that the Indian New Deal, like the community New Deal at large, was tender-minded or idealistic. But the supposedly utopian Farm Security Administration frightened vested agricultural interests into opposition, and Collier presented ample evidence to prove his policy's realism. Under his regime the Indian land base had been stabilized, and through the use of the CCC and other funds, the land had been put into its best condition in recent history; blinding trachoma had been wiped out in large blocs of Indian country; and the Indian death rate had been halved. Collier had

achieved the first part of his dream—guaranteeing the Indian community continued existence. But more than that, his administration had been instrumental in reviving Indian hope and pride so that even so severe a critic of federal policy as Vine Deloria, Jr., termed the 1930s “the greatest days of Indian life in the twentieth century.”<sup>19</sup>

Collier's nearly twelve years as commissioner—the longest in the history of the office—had been only a start. His administration, he recognized, had met the Indians' immense problems only “in spirit and by intention.” During Roosevelt's second term, shifting political and intellectual trends had begun to undermine the Indian New Deal. In 1937 Democratic Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana repudiated his sponsorship of the Indian Reorganization Act, denounced Collier, and returned to his earlier belief in assimilation. Wheeler's defection foreshadowed the conservative resurgence, which particularly attacked the community New Deal programs for their lack of private property and their supposed resemblance to the collectivist programs of the Soviet Union. The totalitarian example, left and right, led many liberals, radicals, and intellectuals to reassert the individual against the community. National unity became increasingly important, and cultural pluralism seemed divisive as intellectuals and politicians stressed the similarities that united Americans. As community and ethnicity both grew suspect, Collier found it increasingly difficult to maintain a program fusing the two ideals.<sup>20</sup>

American entry into World War II sharply accelerated the community New Deal's slide. Most of its programs were emasculated or dropped altogether. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, deemed a “nonessential” wartime agency, was exiled from Washington to the Merchandise Mart in Chicago; most of

<sup>17</sup>Kelly, “Indian Reorganization Act,” 306–309; E. R. Fryer to Collier, Feb. 18, 1941, and other correspondence on Navajo affairs, Navajo folders, Collier Office File; Kelly, *Navajo Indians and Federal Indian Policy*, chap. 9; David F. Aberle, *The Peyote Religion among the Navajo* (Chicago, 1966), 52–90; James F. Downs, *Animal Husbandry in Navajo Society and Culture* (Berkeley, 1964), esp. 18–22; George A. Boyce, *When Navajos Had Too Many Sheep: The 1940's* (San Francisco, 1974), 54–55, 69; Graham D. Taylor, “Anthropologists, Reformers, and the Indian New Deal,” *Prologue*, VII (1975), 151–162; Peter Iverson, “The Evolving Navajo Nation: Diné Continuity within Change” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1975), 63–81; Ruth Roessel and Broderick H. Johnson, compilers, *Navajo Livestock Reduction: A National Disgrace* (Chinle, Ariz., 1974).

<sup>18</sup>Graham D. Taylor, “The Tribal Alternative to Bureaucracy: The Indian's New Deal, 1933–1945,” *Journal of the West*, XIII (1974), 128–142; Kelly, “Indian Reorganization Act,” 309–311; Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 186; Gottfried Otto Lang, “The Ute Development Program: A Study in Culture Change in an Underdeveloped Area within the United States” (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1954), 112–114, 383–385; Joseph C. Jorgensen, *The Sun Dance Religion: Power for the Powerless* (Chicago, 1972), 98–100, 139; Nancy Lurie, “The Contemporary American Indian Scene,” in Eleanor Burke Leacock and Nancy Lurie, eds., *North American Indians in Historical Perspective* (New York, 1971), 437–438.

<sup>19</sup>Jennings C. Wise, *Red Man in the New World Drama*, ed. by Vine Deloria, Jr. (New York, 1971), 360; Collier, *Indians of the Americas*, 159; Parman, “The Indian and the Civilian Conservation Corps,” 54; Hazel W. Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1971), 287–290.

<sup>20</sup>Collier, *Indians of the Americas*, 164; Philp, “John Collier and the American Indian, 1920–1945” (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1968), 215–217, 220; Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams*, 346–362; Lawson, *Failure of Independent Liberalism*, 231, 246, 254; James T. Patterson, *Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal: The Growth of the Conservative Coalition in Congress, 1933–1939* (Lexington, Ky., 1967), 115–119.

the bureau's best young talent was drained into the military; deep budget cuts curtailed vital services. The conservative attack in Congress was partly to blame; by 1944 the House Committee on Indian Affairs was calling for repeal of the IRA and a return to individual land holding and assimilation. But liberals also were falling away from their positions of the 1930s. At the Interior Department's institute on postwar resources in late 1945 strong sentiment surfaced for abandoning the community-oriented programs. Departmental participants emphasized the need to reduce federal obligations, impose the "interests of the Nation upon the Indians," and equip them "for ultimate integration into society." Liberals in the Bureau of the Budget in 1944–1945 likewise emphasized economy and assimilation. When Collier left office at the end of 1945 and Ickes fell out of the Cabinet six weeks later, the Indian New Deal was in disorderly retreat.<sup>21</sup>

The years 1946 through 1949 were characterized by drift. The attack in Congress mounted as conservatives applied a familiar array of arguments to Indian affairs: federal responsibilities should be handed over to the states; welfare programs encouraged shiftlessness; the BIA should trim its programs to help balance the budget; federal regulations hamstrung individual freedom. The community emphasis seemed especially sinister. Republican Senator George "Molly" Malone of Nevada exclaimed: "While we are spending billions of dollars fighting Communism . . . we are at the same time . . . perpetuating the systems of Indian reservations and tribal governments, which are natural Socialist environments." The number of bills to force the Secretary of the Interior to split up tribal lands rose sharply, and a number of bills proposed rapid dissolution of the BIA.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Evelyn Cooper to C. Girard Davidson, April 30, 1946, box 79, Joel D. Wolfsohn Files, Records of the General Land Office, Record Group 49, National Archives; Collier to Flickinger, Nov. 23, 1944, box 24, Collier Papers; Oscar L. Chapman to Secretary of the Interior, Oct. 23, 1943, box 67, Chapman Papers; Baldwin, *Poverty and Politics*, chaps. 11–12; Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, chap. 9; Hasse, "Termination and Assimilation," 41–57; Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States, 1941–1945* (Philadelphia, 1972), chap. 3.

<sup>22</sup>A. J. Liebling, "The Lake of the Cui-ui Eaters—IV," *New Yorker*, XXX (Jan. 22, 1955), 68; Hasse, "Termination and Assimilation," 69–87, 90; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1949* (Washington, D.C., 1949), 379–385.

The executive branch, lacking leadership in Indian affairs, had neither the will nor the vision to mount a counter-offensive. President Harry S. Truman, though willing to veto the most vicious Indian bills, had little interest in Indian affairs or the community New Deal. Julius A. "Cap" Krug, a protege of David Lilienthal and Bernard Baruch and former head of the War Production Board, succeeded Ickes. Krug knew little about Indian affairs and exhibited a limp hand in departmental matters generally. Collier's handpicked successor, New Mexico attorney William A. Brophy, showed promise but fell ill soon after assuming office in 1946. As acting commissioner, William E. Zimmerman, nominally Collier's second-in-command, did little more than keep the office open from mid-1946 to early 1949. Sponsored by New Mexico's proassimilation senator, Clinton Anderson, John R. Nichols, president of New Mexico A&M, became commissioner in spring 1949. But Nichols, whom Krug considered one of the few people who knew something about Indians but "still isn't a screwball," spent most of his time on reservation inspection tours and left little imprint on policy. During this parade of commissioners, bureau morale plummeted and the barnacles of bureaucracy accumulated. Felix Cohen, feeling a "sense of repression," resigned in December 1947. A. L. Wathen, veteran head of the bureau's engineering branch, complained that no one knew what policy was. The bureau's "negativism, defeatism, and non-feasance" angered nearly everyone connected with Indian affairs and made defining a policy and reinvigorating the BIA of utmost importance.<sup>23</sup>

As policy drifted within the bureau, assimilation increasingly was mixed with laudable goals. The BIA and the Interior Department endorsed the Indian Claims Commission Act of 1946 as elementary justice for the Indians, but they also approved the measure's per capita money compensation

<sup>23</sup>Clayton R. Koppes, "Oscar L. Chapman: A Liberal at the Interior Department, 1933–1953" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1974), 33–54; transcript of telephone conversation between Krug and Anderson, March 4, 1949, box 50, Krug Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division; Cohen to Brophy, Dec. 5, 1947, box 16, Brophy Papers, Truman Library; Wathen to William E. Warne, Nov. 12, 1947, File 5-11, RG 48, NA; Oliver La Farge, "Restatement of Program and Policy in Indian Affairs," Feb. 8, 1950, box 76, Philleo Nash Files, Harry S. Truman Papers, Truman Library.



instead of restoration of land to tribal control. And the act probably could not have been passed without the support of assimilationists in Congress, who saw a final settlement of claims as a step to ending Indians' special status entirely. In 1947 the Department of the Interior worked closely with the Justice Department in the successful effort to have restricted housing covenants declared unconstitutional. Not only were these clauses unjust, they also discouraged Indians from moving off the reservations to look for work. Education lost much of its Indian emphasis. "The basic purpose of the Federal education program," said Interior Under Secretary Oscar L. Chapman in 1948, "is to assist the Indians in understanding, accepting and adjusting to the culture of the white man." Teachers were instructed to stress that when Indians left school they would be "required to compete with their white neighbors in every respect."<sup>24</sup>

After Truman won office in his own right in 1948 the liberal assimilationist trend gathered force, for it proved to be a logical application of his Fair Deal. The Fair Deal attempted to expand some of the New Deal social-welfare programs, but its distinctive approach lay in economic growth and civil rights. "A great, continuing expansion in our domestic economy . . . is the very essence of our development as a Nation," Chapman averred. Fair Dealers believed that an expanding capitalist economy would provide enough job opportunities so that each individual would attain prosperity through his own competitive efforts; government-mandated income redistribution would be unnecessary. Since 1948 the Truman administration had moved toward the "integration of all minority groups," Donald R. McCoy and Richard T. Ruetten have pointed out. The struggle for civil rights expressed a sincere desire to end discrimination; it was also a logical development in the liberal tradition of freeing the individual from supposedly invidious group identity, especially that of race, so that he or she could compete freely and form associations voluntarily in the great society.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Chapman to Fred G. Gurley, Oct. 26, 1948, box 110; Chapman to Attorney General, Sept. 11, 1947, box 107, Chapman Papers; Koppes, "Oscar L. Chapman," 34–35; Hagan, *American Indians*, 167.

<sup>25</sup>Koppes, "Oscar L. Chapman," 384; Alonzo L. Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism* (New York, 1973), 296–303; McCoy and Ruetten, *Quest*

The economy and equality seemed to offer the keys for "a permanent solution for the Indian problem." In the nineteenth century Indians had been "segregated" on reservations, which at best could provide "an adequate American standard of living" for only about half the Indians. Reservation resources should be developed and individual land holding encouraged. Forty to fifty percent of the Indians should be moved off the reservations, legal distinctions between Indians and other citizens abolished, and BIA services transferred to the federal, state, and local agencies that provided such programs for non-Indians. The goal was gradually "to place the Indians on exactly the same basis as the rest of the population."<sup>26</sup> The Fair Deal Indian program was in all essential respects the same as the Eisenhower administration's termination policy.

The major legislative expression of the Fair Deal's gradualist phase was the Navajo-Hopi Rehabilitation Act, passed in April 1950 after a severe blizzard threatened to embarrass the administration. The act authorized \$88.5 million over ten years for such projects as irrigation, roads, and schools to lure industry to the reservations and for relocation of a thousand families in urban areas. The BIA-formulated plan assumed the tribes needed and wanted economic development patterned after white society, and relied on heavy capital spending and a centralized white-staffed organization instead of an indigenous structure. For all its seeming modernity, such a program, as Monroe E. Price has pointed out, announced a return to nineteenth-century concepts of assimilation. Emphasizing jobs for individuals instead of wealth for the community, development and relocation revived the individualistic ethic. The Indian was to become a worker instead of a farmer, but either path led to civilization. The Interior Department said as much when it lauded the measure as "a long step toward assimilation." Truman hailed the bill as a model for "the complete

and Response, 304; *To Secure These Rights: Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights* (New York, 1947), 4; A. A. Berle, Jr., "A Liberal Program and Its Philosophy," in Seymour E. Harris, ed., *Saving American Capitalism: A Liberal Economic Program* (New York, 1948), esp. 43, 57; Nisbet, *The Quest for Community*, 224–228; cf. Linda K. Kerber, "The Abolitionist Perception of the Indian," *Journal of American History*, LXII (1975), 290, 295.

<sup>26</sup>"A Permanent Solution for the Indian Problem," n.d. (ca. Dec. 1950), box 58, Official File, Harry S. Truman Papers.

merger of all Indian groups into the general body of our population."<sup>27</sup>

But the gradualist ideal withered in the administration of Indian affairs from 1950 through 1952. Oscar Chapman, usually considered one of the staunchest liberals in the Truman Cabinet, became Secretary of the Interior on December 1, 1949. As Ickes' assistant secretary, Chapman had enthusiastically supported the Indian New Deal and most other community New Deal programs. As Krug's under secretary, he gradually abandoned most of the community New Deal and eased towards Indian assimilation. At his confirmation hearings in January 1950, he assured the assimilationist senator, Arthur V. Watkins of Utah: "The Indians should be intermingled gradually and mixed with our people." Two years later the gradualness evaporated as the Secretary called for a "full-scale drive toward the goal of full independence for the Indian people."<sup>28</sup>

Chapman shunted Nichols to the sidelines and appointed the man he had wanted since 1946, "one of the ablest administrators in the Federal Service," Dillon S. Myer. The nominee's WRA experience convinced Chapman that Myer "combined administrative ability with a sympathetic understanding of human nature." Myer was representative of the professional civil servant who had gained prominence in the 1930s. He had begun his federal service as a county agricultural agent, teaching good farmers to become bigger and better farmers, and the poorer yeomen to move to the city. He had worked through the ranks to become assistant director of the Soil Conservation Service, when he was tapped for the WRA position. Truman, whose decisiveness Myer praised, had named him head of the Federal Housing Administration and the Institute of Inter-American Affairs. The new commissioner relished his reputation as a man for whom no admin-

istrative job was too tough: "I never ducked," he boasted. His immediate superior, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Dale Doty, put it another way: "For Myer everything fit into squares."<sup>29</sup>

The new commissioner rejected Collier's celebration of Indians. Collier had extrapolated from the unique case of the Pueblos to Indians at large, he argued. The rest of the tribes, which Myer mistakenly believed to have been hunters exclusively, had lost their economy and hence had lost their culture. Indians would die out as a separate people. Reservations, however, thwarted the inevitable by perpetuating "certain old ways of life." He saw little but poverty in these traditional ways; his public and private statements were all but devoid of appreciation of Indian culture. Indians presented solely an economic problem. Emphasizing the efficient use of taxpayers' dollars, he tailored his administration to what he saw as the inevitable course of history.<sup>30</sup>

Myer almost completely abandoned the gradual approach for what he termed "withdrawal programming." He inaugurated a program division that began filling in squares with masses of statistics, chiefly economic, to schedule the tribes for withdrawal of federal protection and services. Despite much confusion and opposition among Indians, Myer ordered withdrawal programming to proceed at full speed in August 1952, "even though Indian cooperation may be lacking in certain cases." It made little difference whether tribes had come under the Indian Reorganization Act. The Menominee had accepted the IRA, the Klamath had not; but Congress terminated both during Eisenhower's first term on the basis of plans drawn up by Myer's administration.<sup>31</sup>

The commissioner used his administrative latitude to roll back many of the remaining fragments of the Indian New

<sup>27</sup>Koppes, "Oscar L. Chapman," 47-54; Ward Shepard to Brophy, Nov. 9, 1946, box 8, Brophy Papers; Monroe E. Price, "Lawyers on the Reservation: Some Implications for the Legal Profession," *Arizona State Law Journal* (1969), 184-185.

<sup>28</sup>Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Hearings on Nomination of Oscar L. Chapman to be Secretary of the Interior*, 81 Cong., 2 sess. (Jan. 16, 1950), 12; Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Hearings on Interior Department Appropriations for 1953*, H.R. 7176, 82 Cong., 2 sess. (April 16, 1952), 8; Koppes, "Oscar L. Chapman," 16-17, 43-44, 205-214.

<sup>29</sup>Chapman to Joseph C. O'Mahoney, April 17, 1950, box 115, Chapman Papers; author's interviews with Myer, May 5, 1975, and Doty, Aug. 21, 1973; Koppes, "Oscar L. Chapman," 39, 218-224; Myer, "An Autobiography" (Oral history transcript, University of California, Berkeley, copy, Truman Library), 261-297.

<sup>30</sup>Myer, *Autobiography*, 286; author's interview with Myer, May 5, 1975.

<sup>31</sup>BIA Commissioner to all bureau officials, Aug. 5, 1952, box 1, Myer Papers, Truman Library; Hasse, "Termination and Assimilation," 108-164, 222; Lurie, "Menominee Termination," 33-43; Orfield, "A Study of the Termination Policy," 673-817.

Deal. Since he thought Indians had lost their culture, Myer abolished the arts and crafts board. Boarding schools began to replace day schools. Myer all but halted the revolving credit fund, advising Indians instead to mortgage their individual lands and borrow from banks. He abandoned earlier efforts to secure native land claims, especially for the Pyramid Lake Paiutes in Nevada, and supported an Alaska statehood bill that would have extinguished native claims. Disregarding Indian opposition, he actively sponsored bills to bring certain tribes under state and local laws, moving faster and farther than Congress was prepared to do.<sup>32</sup>

With one hand Myer reduced federal responsibility; with the other he expanded federal control. Increased uniformity and rigidity—virtual “administrative privacy”—characterized Myer’s administrative style. He replaced almost all the remaining key Collier holdovers with former WRA administrators. He inserted a level of area offices between the commissioner’s suite and the local superintendents, ostensibly to decentralize administration, but which also had the effect of insulating him from tribal consultation. When the Pyramid Lake Paiutes sought to remonstrate with him about an adverse decision, he refused to approve their using tribal funds to send a protest trio to Washington. (The Paiutes pooled personal funds and set out from Reno, Nevada, by Greyhound on a trip that lasted four days, including a stopover in Chillicothe, Ohio, when the bus broke down.) In 1952 Myer sought congressional approval of a bill allowing BIA employees to carry firearms and to arrest Indians without a warrant, but when even Senator Pat McCarran of Nevada demurred, the bill died.<sup>33</sup>

One of Myer’s potentially most far-reaching actions was his three-year campaign against the Indians’ attorneys. He tried to impose regulations that would have kept a tribe from hiring an attorney until the commissioner agreed the tribe needed a

lawyer, approved the tribe’s choice, and set the attorney’s fee. Shady dealings characterized too many Indian legal affairs, as Myer argued; but since the tribes needed lawyers to combat the BIA as much as practically any other adversary, the proposal left an aura of the fox guarding the hen yard. After prolonged criticism from such organizations as the National Congress of American Indians, the Association of American Indian Affairs, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the American Bar Association, the commissioner grudgingly capitulated.<sup>34</sup>

Indians and their defenders raised a chorus of protest against Myer’s policies. Ickes and Collier again assumed the role of anguished critic they had played in the 1920s. “We simply must hog tie Myer,” Ickes told his former commissioner. The “old curmudgeon” advised Chapman in 1951 that Myer “should be scourged from his office as an unfaithful public servant who has been persistently recreant to his trust.” Near an open break with his erstwhile assistant secretary, Ickes appealed personally to Chapman to square his Fair Deal performance with his New Deal record. Indians expressed nearly unanimous opposition to withdrawal, a surprised Myer acknowledged. But he did not moderate his approach; the bureau would gladly withdraw its services from any tribe that felt the BIA was a hindrance, he said. Even the right of protest was converted into a tool to further assimilation.<sup>35</sup>

Withdrawal and termination proved disastrous economically. In a virtual reenactment of the aftermath of the Dawes Act, if on a smaller scale, many Indians of terminated tribes rapidly lost their land and wound up on welfare rolls. Indians who moved to the cities all too often found discrimination and unemployment. Moreover, the resurgence, not the disappearance, of Indian culture and community has been one of the most salient features of Indian life since World War II. After two decades of termination, the Menominee petitioned to have

<sup>32</sup> Koppes, “Oscar L. Chapman,” 221–225; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1952* (Washington, D.C., 1952), 389–395.

<sup>33</sup> McNickle, *Indian Man*, 189; Harold Ickes, *Diary*, Oct. 14 and 20, 1951; Hasse, “Termination and Assimilation,” 118, 128–129, 144–146; Koppes, “Oscar L. Chapman,” 221–225. When Chapman heard of the Paiute incident he ordered Myer to approve their using tribal funds.

<sup>34</sup> Koppes, “Oscar L. Chapman,” 225–250.

<sup>35</sup> Ickes to Collier, Dec. 6, 1950, box 61, Ickes Papers; Ickes to Chapman, Aug. 30, 1951, box 47, Chapman Papers; Ickes to Chapman, Sept. 14, 1951, box 6, Doty Papers, Truman Library; Ickes to Secretary of the Interior, Nov. 5, 1951, File 5-6, RG 48; Koppes, “Oscar L. Chapman,” chaps. 6–7. The Ickes and Collier collections bulge with correspondence detailing their opposition to the Chapman-Myer policies and procedures; see esp. boxes 61–63, Ickes Papers, and box 34, Collier Papers.

their tribal status restored. Scornful of the Indian New Deal and the “good, soft-hearted people,” Myer and the terminationists proved to be more unrealistic than the “utopians.”<sup>36</sup>

Indians had fallen victim to a false uniformity. How could one oppose the recognition of special group status, as in Nazi Germany or in United States Jim Crow laws, but then support Indian community? Harold Ickes answered: A ghetto was “a segregation along racial lines for the purpose of denying equal rights”; but “a reservation was the setting up of a cooperative society for the protection of rights.” Antidiscrimination, vital though it was, was not enough. Civil rights laws guaranteed the rights of individuals, not groups, and to the extent that civil rights encouraged integration and assimilation, they tended to weaken community. It was scarcely paradoxical, therefore, that Indian rights were badly eroded under the first administration to have a civil rights program.<sup>37</sup>

The abandonment of the Indian New Deal was representative of the Truman administration’s handling of the community New Deal. The Truman administration made no attempt to revive the community programs that had died, and it supervised the dismantling of those, such as parts of the Farm Security Administration, that remained. Greenbelt towns had been a characteristic response of the New Deal; community-destroying urban renewal was emblematic of the Fair Deal. In Ickes’s old department the balance between conservation for use and preservation collapsed and dam-building developers threatened the integrity of the national parks. The Truman administration did preserve and extend some aspects of the New Deal, as most overviews of the period contend. Alonzo Hamby goes further to argue that, in addition to institutionalizing the New Deal, Truman moved liberalism

<sup>36</sup>Hasse, “Termination and Assimilation,” 276–303; Orfield, “A Study of the Termination Policy,” 673–817; Lurie, “Menominee Termination,” 33–43; William A. Brophy and Sophie Aberle, *The Indian: America’s Unfinished Business* (Norman, Okla., 1966), 193–207.

<sup>37</sup>Ickes, Diary, June 10, 1950; Price, “Lawyers on the Reservation,” 169–175; Vine Deloria, Jr., “Implications of the 1968 Civil Rights Act in Tribal Autonomy,” in *Indian Voices: The First Convocation of American Indian Scholars* (San Francisco, 1970), 85–104; McWilliams, *Idea of Fraternity in America*, chap. 20. In the 1960s Indians—and, indeed, a chorus of blacks increasingly conscious of their community life—began to question whether civil rights without an awareness of community were adequate.

“beyond the New Deal.” But these extensions tended to be of the more individualistic and traditional liberal programs. The shifting liberal policies toward community, as embodied in Indian administration, suggest that interpretations which stress continuity between the New Deal and the Fair Deal require important qualifications.<sup>38</sup>

The Fair Deal had not abandoned the quest for community, but the means of finding community were now very different. Indians, like other Americans, were to find community in consumerism, as in the “consumption communities” praised by Daniel Boorstin, and in various voluntary and usually transient associations. Yet the multiplicity and specialization of these groups meant that they were drained of the intensity and shared values found in community. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.,

<sup>38</sup>The most comprehensive study of the Truman administration, and the one that addresses the question of the continuity of liberalism from New Deal to Fair Deal most fully, is Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism* (New York, 1973). Other overviews which stress continuity include Richard E. Neustadt, “From FDR to Truman: Congress and the Fair Deal,” *Public Policy*, V (1954), 351–381; Richard Kirkendall, “Harry Truman,” in Morton Borden, ed., *America’s Eleven Greatest Presidents* (Rev. ed., Chicago, 1971), 255–288; Cabell Phillips, *The Truman Presidency: The History of a Triumphant Succession* (New York, 1966); Dewey W. Grantham, *The United States since 1945: The Ordeal of Power* (New York, 1976), chap. 3; Eric Goldman, *The Crucial Decade—and After: America, 1945–1960* (New York, 1960), 92; Barton J. Bernstein, “America in War and Peace: The Test of Liberalism,” in Bernstein, ed., *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History* (New York, 1969), 289–321. An exception to the continuity interpretation is Bert Cochran, *Harry Truman and the Crisis Presidency* (New York, 1973). For assessments of Truman period domestic historiography, see Harvard Sitkoff, “Years of the Locust: Interpretations of Truman’s Presidency since 1965,” and Hamby, “The Clash of Perspectives and the Need for New Syntheses,” both in Richard Kirkendall, ed., *The Truman Period as a Research Field: A Reappraisal, 1972* (Columbia, Mo., 1974), 75–145; Richard Polenberg, “Historians and the Liberal Presidency: Recent Appraisals of Roosevelt and Truman,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, LXXV (1976), 20–35; and Geoffrey S. Smith, “‘Harry, We Hardly Know You’: Revisionism, Politics and Diplomacy, 1945–1954,” *American Political Science Review*, LXX (1976), 568–582. Moving away from overall interpretations, most of which emphasize continuity because they repeat familiar social-welfare themes, some incisive topical studies call into question the assumptions of New Deal-Fair Deal continuity. Two such are Graham, *Toward a Planned Society*, chap. 3, and Richardson, *Dams, Parks & Politics*, both of which emphasize continuity between Truman and Eisenhower. One of the problems in assessing the differences between the New Deal and the Fair Deal is that serious work on domestic politics during World War II is only beginning. See Polenberg, *War and Society*, chap. 3; John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture during World War II* (New York, 1976), chaps. 7–9; and David Brody, “The New Deal and World War II,” in John Braemen, Robert H. Bremner, and David Brody, eds., *The New Deal: The National Level* (Columbus, Ohio, 1975), 267–309; and John A. Salmond, “Postscript to the New Deal: The Defeat of the Nomination of Aubrey W. Williams as Rural Electrification Administrator in 1945,” *Journal of American History*, LXI (1974), 417–436.

recognized as much when he devoted the final chapter of his apotheosis of midcentury liberalism, *The Vital Center*, to the need for community. He seemed to suggest that individuals found community by giving themselves with “passionate intensity” to the nation. National unity and individualism were not inconsistent but complementary and tended to produce midcentury uniformity and conformism. The vision of John Collier and the community New Dealers, which encouraged “a sense of variousness and possibility” by posing the community between the nation and the individual, was discarded as an object of liberal policy.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* (New York, 1973), 147–148; Morton Grodzins, *The Loyal and the Disloyal: Social Boundaries of Patriotism and Treason* (Chicago, 1956), 29; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center* (Boston, 1949), 256; Karl Mannheim, *Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning* (New York, 1950), 10–12; Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination* (Garden City, N.Y., 1950), xii; Carl J. Friedrich, “The Concept of Community in the History of Political and Legal Philosophy,” in Friedrich, ed., *Community* (New York, 1959), 23.