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INTERVIEW II

DATE: March 15, 1969

INTERVIEWEE: THEODORE BERRY

INTERVIEWER: STEPHEN GOODELL

PLACE: Mr. Berry's office, Office of Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

G: This is the second session with Mr. Theodore Berry, the director of the Community Action Program, in the Office of Economic Opportunity. Today's date is March 15, 1969.

I think we might begin by taking up where we left off last time. I had asked you, in the context of the general discussion about the early Community Action agencies back in 1965, whether you thought that the confrontation which actually was sought in a particular kind of form by Community Action could have been productive. I has asked you if there was a feeling amoung people within the organization of Community Action here in Washington, as well as in the outlying regions, that confrontation could indeed be productive.

B: I don't think there were distinct schools of thought on that subject within the agency. At various times it clearly appeared that as these particular critical issues arose in various communities there were many who felt that confrontation was a necessary part of our mission of effecting institutional change and that in many communities it became inevitable that the attitudinal rigidity that existed within the power structure meant that if

they did not perceive that changes were necessary, that confrontation was inevitable. This depended upon the sophistication of the decision-making people, institutions. Those communities that sensed it made their accommodation without confrontation, and in those that did not, confrontation flowed. Because the poor and the newly emerging advocacy leadership of the poor read the act not only in the words, but in the spirit of what they meant. There was already, of course, the climate conditioned for this because of the civil rights movement that had developed this kind of technique of forcing the issue on critical matters of principle.

G: Could you identify geographical areas at that time where this kind of rigidity might have been prevalent?

B: Well, two communities come to mind. Chicago clearly indicated that they were going to interpret the act in a way that was consistent with their own political tradition. In those communities that had rather long-standing political institutions or political structure it became apparent that they were going to interpret Community Action within that context. Syracuse eventually became a confrontation center, because in 1965 there was a demonstration project funded in Syracuse with the university to test out how you could organize the poor to enable them to be sensitized, both in the direction of self-help and in meeting the critical issues that affected the ghetto. In actually implementing that it became a matter of very great concern to the Mayor. He felt that it was generating a political force in opposition.

G: He was a Republican mayor, was he not?

B: That's right. He was very concerned. He made it an issue at the mayor's conference in St. Louis that summer. Eventually, after another year of this kind of confrontation, plus the emboldened feeling by the leadership that the Community Action agency ought to be completely controlled by the poor, they went to extremes. They ousted members from the board, left it completely stripped of the elements to have it a viable, acceptable, legal entity, and for the first time in the history of the agency, we established a trusteeship. There were visits from delegations from Syracuse, and I remember very distinctly telling the new chairman that they could not substitute an authoritarian organization of the poor as a substitute for an authoritarian political organization. That was a rocky period. The trusteeship finally resulted in the dissolution of the Community Action agency and in the re-establishment of another. Those are the two that come to my mind.

Philadelphia had its problems, also. Cleveland in the beginning had its problems of making the adjustment to what maximum feasible participation meant. Cleveland was several months in making its adjustment to having bona fide representatives from the target areas. They went through the process of an election and finally brought one into being. But the communities where there was a strong political institution frequently posed the problems of accommodation to this new tripartite representative body that would constitute a Community Action agency.

G: Was the Syracuse organization the result, to some extent, of the influence of Saul Alinsky?

B: Not in the beginning, I don't believe. My recollection may be fuzzy on this. Actually, I don't know whether Alinsky was brought into Syracuse or not. I know he was invited by a church organization into Rochester. Certainly some of the Alinsky concepts and techniques may have been introduced by the special project officers of the University of Syracuse. I don't recall even the personalities, the names of the people.

Sander Kravits, who was our research director at that time, was largely responsible for conceiving and assisting in formulating this demonstration, which continued for one year and then was terminated. We were accused that we were selling out the poor, but our position was that we thought that they had moved in the direction of community organization, and that a Community Action agency having been established subsequent to this demonstration ought to be incorporated in as part of the Community Action agency program and not continued as two competing forces in the community funded by OEO. We sought to bring them in closer concert with the Community Action agency since they were dealing with the same people in the target areas.

G: Was it at this time that guidelines were developed, out of these kinds of experiences?

B: Oh, I think our guidelines, as I think I mentioned in our previous interview, were being drafted at the time that I came aboard. I participated in the review and the final approval of them and signed

their issuance. They bore the official date of February, and I think they were issued in April or May of that year, so that they were being formulated while some of these demonstration programs or pilot projects were actually getting off the ground. So I think they predated the results of any [such programs]--particularly the Syracuse project.

G: I'd like to go back to some unanswered questions which were raised by the first interview that we had. You had said that you felt that community orgainzations should be as far as possible without political overtones or influence. This was with regard to the Cincinnati Community Action project, or the grant proposal. Could you elaborate on what you mean by this?

B: I thought, and I still believe, that a Community Action agency can be of benefit in a community in developing its capabilities for planning, coordinating other institutions, without the heavy hand of political decisions being made about them. I think this is illustrated by perhaps the Baltimore Community Action agency, where everything was approved by the city council. The policy determinations, the budgets, the programs that were to be included, [all those decisions] made by the Community Action board were subject to the review and the final approval of the city council. This constituted a sort of a second-guessing, and programs that were conceived of by the Community Action board to meet the needs of the people, if they were not looked with favor upon by the total council, went down the drain. They were sort of blocked.

It's my recollection that some of the leaders in the council who were opposed to what was taking place in another ward represented a constituency that were not poor and they were very vocal in opposing this kind of institutional change, if you want to call it that.

It became a deterrent, a negative influence, in the selection of some of the staff. The most recent occurrence, which has been within the last few months, was when Perrin Mitchell [?] resigned. The Mayor nominated a successor who was recognized, had the confidence of the community, and the council blocked it. They had to take a second choice as the director. He's just recently come aboard. I met him just a week or so ago, and he's making an effort. But it created a disruptive atmosphere. The people had the feeling that the council was thwarting [them]. And this was one of the reasons historically--at the time that I conceived the Community Action agency for Cincinnati, being a member of the City Council, I felt that it was subject to the vagaries of political change that might take place in the council. It was a potentially inhibiting influence on organizations [and] citizens who really wanted to establish a program and have some continuity without the imposition of political judgments.

G: Is it fair to say that before 1967 and the Green Amendment, that OEO had a method by which it could cope with this kind of situation, and that after the Green Amendment, OEO lacks that method?

B: No. I think the fact that the act provided that there were alternatives, there were options that a community might pursue [is significant], and the fact that many communities, the political leadership

in the communities, perhaps did not address themselves to potentials that were in the act. They sort of stood on the sidelines to see what would happen and nonprofit corporations came into existence, with the result that perhaps 80 per cent of the Community Action agencies took the form of a nonprofit organization in most communities. In rural communities we encouraged them to move into consortiums, that is multi-county. In a good many instances in the rural communities the county officials did involve themselves. The Green Amendment, I think, in retrospect and in the future may prove to be a benefit, because it required public officials to take an active interest and to take their proper place at the conference table of a Community Action agency.

Our recent study by Yankelovich--it was [done] because Congress required that a study be made of the implementation and effects of the Green Amendment--I think comes to the conclusion, as I have read the preliminary report, that the great majority of public officials in the various communities felt that it was a wholesome and salutary influence to have public officials not only have a certain number of seats on the board, but that by virtue of their taking those seats, it was establishing a broader base of public acceptance and participation in the boards. The report seems to indicate that many political leaders felt that it would have been too disruptive for them to have taken it over, that this was their first try at it to see how their role with the Community Action agency in the first year works, since they have another bite at the apple after a year,

and to see what the future of OEO will be. Because we are in a transition; we're waiting the direction that both Congress and the new administration will go.

By and large, I think we were moving in the direction of encouraging governmental interest in Community Action programs because the agencies at the community level were importuning governmental participation because Congress increased the non-federal share. The resources of a Community Action agency had to have some participation of government as well as welfare and social institutions.

G: At the time that you applied for the initial Cincinnati grant, you mentioned on the first tape that you were pleasantly surprised at the attentiveness that the incipient Community Action organization gave to you. Were you under the impression that the priority item was to get the program underway quickly and to get the money out fast? If so, were there political reasons behind this?

B: Yes. There was a great necessity for getting the funds out and getting viable organizations identified in communities that might be dealt with. We received our appropriation in October, I believe, 1964. I think I mentioned this earlier, that the President, the Chief Executive, did not want to have this appear to be a political move, and there were no grants made until after the election of 1964. Congress was expecting a report. We were only authorized to exist until the end of the fiscal year, which would have been June 30 of 1965, and there was a question of accountability. What had OEO been able to launch, to get started?

For instance, the largest number of grants, the largest number of Community Action agencies suddenly appeared to be in the state of Georgia, because we latched on to economic development organizations that had been authorized under Georgia legislation. They were principally multi-county, economic development entities. As we examined them as they came up for funding it became clear that they did not meet all the requirements of the statute, and we spent a year, after making the planning grants to these entities, following up, to point out to them that representation of ethnic minorities [was necessary]. Because none of these boards as they then existed had any Negro or even the poor white representatives on them.

We were in our process of effecting institutional change and getting these entities reconstituted to make them representative within the context of our legislation. I would say with all deliberate speed we were trying to expedite both the identification of acceptable institutions that would qualify under the statute and to get planning grants out to them. I would say the agency was looking for the sophisticated communities that could put together packages so that they could make operational grants. The great bulk of our grants in the first year were planning to enable communities to organize themselves and to plan programs that could be funded.

There was some delay with some of the big cities, as I indicated, when I first came aboard in February. Cleveland--Mayor[Ralph] Locher was making a trip down here to find out what Cleveland had to do to qualify. Mayor [James] Tate in Philadelphia--there was a long delay

because we felt that they were not meeting the basic minimal requirements of what constituted a viable and acceptable Community Action agency.

G: What were some of those deficiencies, if you can recall?

B: Well, some of them were the hand-picking of the representatives and the institutions and organizations. Very early we had to make it clear that maximum feasible representation meant representation in which those who were to be represented had some meaningful role in identifying who would represent them, rather than following the tradition and custom of the power structure selecting those whom they thought were most acceptable. This was particularly true in the southern communities. There were many instances in which we had to indicate that some process should be established whereby those to be represented had a role in selecting their representation. Now I won't say that we made an error, but we modified that substantially in recognizing the city of Atlanta's initial Community Action agency. And then, having recognized it, we didn't say, "This is perfect, this is final." It was sort of a provisional recognition, pointing out that there were steps to be taken to broaden the base of representation on that Community Action board to afford the target areas an opportunity to be represented.

I remember the press tried to needle Mr. Shriver about the fact that there were only two Negroes on the initial Community Action agency, and neither one of them was poor. One of them was Martin Luther King's father. Well, Sarge said that with the history and tradition

of Atlanta and the southern communities this was a forward step. It wasn't the end; this was the beginning. And I think the Atlanta Community Action agency is quite different, both in structure and organization, today from what it was in the initial funding of the city of Atlanta's community program.

G: Atlanta has a different mayor now, is that correct? Ivan Allen?

B: Yes, I think so.

G: Would it be to some extent the result of this? He seems to be much more sympathetic to this kind of representation.

B: No, let's see. I think the same mayor was there then as is now. Allen has been mayor for a long time.

G: I don't know how long he has.

B: Yes. I don't think that has had anything to do with it, because the city government did not manifest any strong influence. This was part of the economic and social institutional structure that brought the Community Action agency into being.

G: What kind of sign off procedure or clearing procedure or technique was used in that first year? Community Action grants, as I understand it, were subject to revision, not only by this office, but by other offices as well.

B: The grant packages were worked over by staff when they were ready to be recommended for funding. There was the Office of Inspection, the Office of Civil Rights, General Counsel. Those were three offices that were expected also to sign off on these packages.

G: Excuse me, would that have been [William F.] Haddad, [Samuel] Yette and [Donald M.] Baker, respectively?

B: Yes, Sam Yette and General Counsel's office. These were the three OEO offices under Shriver in which he said, "We want to involve those three offices in sign off before they are finally approved." In those early days all the grant packages were carried to the eighth floor and Sarge participated. It was usually in those sign off sessions that the concurring offices would debate the Community Action agency, not so much the programs as the entity that was being funded. Well, we had some heated debates. Sometimes Civil Rights would say, "We don't think this is an adequate representation of the black community," or that the representatives on the board were hand-picked. And Haddad's office, I don't know how they were set up, but they were making sort of an advanced test run on all of the forces that were at work in the community. And they frequently, not on the question of civil rights, would make their observation that, "This is just part of the power structure, and we ought to go slow."

But as the number increased, and the volume, it just became impossible to review every one of these grants. In the fall of 1965 there was a delegation from Shriver to me of authority to make grants. I went through this process in this room frequently, this debate process, this refining, this getting concurrence. Then at the same time that there was delegation to me, there was redelegation to the regional offices for authority to sign grants up to, I think $250,000.

G: When was this made?

B: December of 1965, I believe. We were regionalizing and increasing our staff to the seven regions. Then later in 1966, with the appointment

of all of the OEO regional directors, who were the counterpart of Shriver at the regional level, greater authority was then delegated to the regions for authority to sign off on grants.

Civil Rights [concurrence] continued through Yette's insistence and with representatives at the regional level. There was insistence on Office of Inspection and Civil Rights concurrence on packages, so that they could at least put on the record any exceptions as to the non-compliance with federal civil rights standards. And since 1966 or early 1967--I'd have to look at the delegation. I think there is one dated in February of 1967--there [has been] delegation to regional offices for sign off on all Title II programs with the exception of migrants, Indians, research and demonstration, and comprehensive health programs which we went into in 1967. These programs are still retained in headquarters for funding.

G: When did Yette resign?

B: I guess it's been more than a year ago. Let's see, Sarge left here in March of 1968, and Sam left sometime in 1967, mid-1967 I believe.

G: I'm not clear on the circumstances of his resignation, but as I understand it there was some objection on his part to this regionalization process. Am I correct in that?

B: There wasn't an issue involving regionalization with reference to his resignation. At the time of regionalization I believe Sam wanted to have headquarters Civil Rights sign off on all regional grants. This I think was accommodated to by having Sam's office also regionalized, so that in each region there was a civil rights person appointed by

Sam and delegated to the regional office. And that continues.

G: This accommodation was made?

B: Yes. So that the Civil Rights office was regionalized also, with representatives of OEO's Civil Rights office as part of the staff of the OEO regional director. Just like Civil Rights was part of Sarge's staff, OEO's staff. They were responsible for sign off and recommendations and oversight of civil rights issues in the region.

G: You've suggested, or implied, that in this initial sign off procedure and the involvement of these other divisions within OEO that there was a difference of opinion on the part of, for example, the Office of Inspection and General Counsel. Could you assign to these various divisions a particular kind of attitude? You mentioned that Inspection was more concerned that the power structure be diffused in terms of the organization of Community Action. What, for example, was the attitude on the part of the General Counsel's office, if there was a consistent attitude?

B: I think the General Counsel's office was more often a legalistic position as to whether or not the agency met the legal requirements of the act. They did not get into any ideological issues or questions as to whether or not a Community Action agency was or was not controlled by the power structure, in other words, these ideological questions. Haddad was a crusader; he felt that we had a very definite mission, and he was looking, you know, at all of those who had a tradition or a background of being, shall I say, old hat, or traditionalist. He felt that OEO had a distinct mission to maximize the institutional

change, to open the doors of opportunity for the poor, and for other resources in the community to play a part in this new effort. Of course Civil Rights, as I did also, was looking constantly at how flexible and what new opportunities were opened for ethnic minorities who had formally been excluded from the decision-making process. We were going to play a part and give them an opportunity.

G: So that there was no fundamental division of interest between Haddad's office and your own office?

B: No. The real questions, of course, where we collided is that we felt in too many instances Inspection and Civil Rights were also getting involved in program. Our responsibility was to validate the worthiness of a program concept for which funds were being sought. In many instances we challenged their saying, "Well, this program is no good!" Our question was, "How do you know it is no good until the community has an opportunity to put it to work? We think that it's worth giving the community an opportunity to validate this particular program," whether it was a health component, an educational concept or whatever it might be.

G: The program office within Community Action was under the responsibility of Bozman [?] at that time, is that right?

B: Yes.

G: So if there was any collision it would have been between Bozman and his people and Haddad and his people?

B: That's right. Those were frequently some real knockdown sessions. I often marveled at Boz's equanimity that came out in some of those

sessions, because Sarge was of the kind that sort of egged this kind of debate on. He thrived on controversy it seemed. I used to have to comfort Boz, "Your head is bloody, but it's unbowed."

G: Sort of the technique of the dialectic.

B: Yes.

G: After Haddad left and May became the director of inspection, was there a change?

B: Oh, I don't think so. I would say there was less abrasiveness. Edgar May had a very deep conviction about OEO and Community Action, OEO generally, because he was also interested in what Job Corps and Vista were doing. Answering your question, there was not only basic change in philosophy; there was a change in method. Edgar was more open and, how shall I describe it, less police-oriented. You know, we sometimes got the feeling that Haddad's office was going out of its way to sort of develop a Gestapo method of inquiry and investigation.

G: In the field?

B: Yes. The Office of Inspection under May was a very valuable adjunct to Community Action, and we worked very closely together. In my early coming to this position I got the feeling that Haddad was trying to run his shop and run ours, too, and we had some moments of confrontation on that question.

G: Just to pursue this inspection technique and coordination with Community Action, does Community Action, working through Inspection or with Inspection, go out into the field to periodically review the operations of these Community Action organizations? Or do you

simply respond in a bad situation to it? I've had the opportunity to see some Inspection Office reports after the fact, when there has been an incident, for example in 1967, the riots in the Newark program at that time. Could you answer that?

B: The Office of Inspection was a trouble-shooting operation. It investigated complaints, indicated any misconduct by a Community Action agency. As it was more fully staffed it was also trying to develop a system for routinely taking a look at how a Community Action agency was functioning. Within the last year they have sought to improve on this by periodically and on a selective basis doing what they call an in depth look-see. This has served I think a salutary purpose because it has afforded us an opportunity to compare an Office of Inspection's look at a Community Action agency with our own monitoring team review. They share them with us, and we in turn compare them with our own monitoring reports, because our method is that the regional offices are expected to have an evaluation or monitoring inspection of each Community Action agency annually. And [we use] people who are familiar with various programs of management, child development. If there's a health program [we] have someone who knows something about public health, Manpower . We send in a team of persons who have a background of experience, and the monitoring visit usually covers as many days as necessary to deal with the various components of the program, and then they compile a report.

So that Inspection does serve three distinct functions, it seems to us: their investigation of immediate reports of any misconduct,

wrongdoing; the periodic surveillance; and then the in-depth look at both what is going on and their views as to how programs are operating. We have not found that in any way disruptive to Community Action. I think they have complemented each other.

G: Is it important to know the personal bias, if any, on the part of individual inspectors? It seems to me that this could influence a report one way or another.

B: Well, it can.

G: Have there been instances where there have?

B: There have been instances in which the bias of an inspector has been challenged by the agency that has been inspected. I have one right now in which I am going to discuss it, because the same inspector against whom the criticism was made has now made a second report in which the people are saying that he doesn't present all the facts. This is why it has been helpful, because if it's only the inspector who is evaluating or commenting on a program we might have a distorted view. But we have a monitoring report on the other hand, and if they're completely at variance with one another, we have a reason to say, "Who's wrong?" Has he failed to report something, as in this one that I'm referring to?

He made the comment that some of the municipalities within the area of this Community Action agency weren't represented, but he neglected to report that the reason they weren't represented is because they were all white and didn't want to sit on a Community Action board that was initiated and was chaired by a Negro and had a Negro director.

This is in Los Angeles County. The white communities that were in that general area had been offered seats, and for over a year declined to accept them. Well, he completely omitted that from his report, leaving the report to appear to say the Community Action agency was deficient and ignoring other areas for which they were responsible. That's just a sidelight, but we haven't encountered too many instances of biased reports. I think by and large the overwhelming majority of the inspectors do a good job.

G: In line again with this question, does either Community Action or the Office of Inspection provide a sort of intelligence--I won't say a network, but coordination with, for example, city hall--in the event that something may happen such as in 1967, if you can key in on that there might be trouble in a city? What happens? You take it upon yourself to sound warnings and so on?

B: I can't speak for Inspection. I do know that they, in some instances, offer their services in critical issues, but generally they operate independently so that they are not equated with any side in a community. They call it as they see it. But in the summer riots of 1967 when we were inspecting or at least trying to ferret out the facts as to whether or not Community Action employees were involved in riotous circumstances, our inspection information was made available to city officials responsible for maintaining peace and harmony in the community.

G: Was this done in the case of Newark?

B: Yes.

G: I've seen some of the inspection reports on Newark, which are hardly complimentary to the Newark officials.

B: Well that's right. We made the offer but it wasn't accepted.

G: I'd like to turn now to the child development program, Project Head Start. What kind of support or push did his program receive from the White House?

B: Tremendous support, both from the President and Mrs. Johnson. Sarge had consulted with the President and with all the related departments of government about this idea. It received full endorsement from the very beginning. The first group of consultants were invited to participate and become the national planning sponsoring group of citizens. The first meeting was held at the White House. So that from the very beginning and throughout the entire development of the Head Start program I think it had the unequivocal and enthusiastic support of both the President and Mrs. Johnson.

G: Why was the Head Start program a part of Title II? Simply because it was permissible under that section of the act?

B: It was permissible, and it was part of the recognition on the part of Shriver and others that OEO needed to sponsor a national program that would both challenge and involve all segments of the community and all segments of the nation. This, together with the recognition that the education of children had a very important part in the attack upon poverty, and the Economic Opportunity Act, seemed to indicate initially an intention to direct or save the youth of the nation. There were youth-oriented mandates in the legislation: the

Neighborhood Youth Corps, the Work Study Program, the Job Corps. In Community Action it was felt that the address of a national program to correct the imbalance in preparation for education of poor youth was an important thrust. And it was also felt that while communities were groping there had to be a real front opened on the War on Poverty, and the front of dealing with poor youth was a major one.

G: Was this also a technique by which Community Actions could be welded?

B: Yes. Frequently it was stated that the concepts--the involvement of parents, the involvement of teachers, the use of teachers' aides, the medical, the dental, health, all of the elements of Head Start--were, as we frequently said, the microcosm of Community Action. And if the community could be welded together to mobilize its resources and plan and direct one program aimed at preschool children, they could see, by the very success of their working together, the possibilities inherent with broadening their perspective, broadening the participation of other groups to move from a Head Start into a Community Action program. With the result that in the summer of 1965, we had Head Start programs launched all over the country through single purpose agencies, through church groups, through a variety of organizations, even before a Community Action agency came into being.

Of course the second phase of that was they did not become so select and exclusive that they wanted to avoid participating. We had to broaden their sights. Many of those who started with Head Start just wanted to settle for that. That would be their hobby, their interest, their mission. So that when Community Action agencies

came into existence these were few, but they were indicative or examples of the tendency to become parochial. There were a few instances in which they didn't want to be a part of the Community Action agency; they wanted to continue to receive their funding direct. They had established, you know, another institution. But that has been substantially modified and no longer is a problem. There are still Head Start programs that are funded where no Community Action agency exists. But where they do exist they are now part of the Community Action program.

G: In 1966--I believe it was in 1966 for fiscal year 1967--Congress earmarked funds in OEO proper for Head Start in particular. Did this cause any problems? Was there any division of interests between the Head Start people within CAP and CAP in toto because of the large amounts that were going to Head Start?

B: Yes, it did pose some problems. Many communities who had established Community Action agencies were very anxious to broaden their programs, to diversify, to balance in response to the identified needs of the community. The earmarking of three hundred twenty-five dollars of our appropriation for Head Start alone posed administrative problems for us, because it also resulted in our having to cut back on programs which had been partially funded, and on their annualized basis in a local community [they] would have required additional funding. We had the heartache, as well as the administrative ache, of telling communities, "Although you have a very healthy pot for Head Start, you have to reduce your other programs." And communities were constantly

asking, "Why? Here you've got all this money for Head Start, and yet you say that our other programs have to be reduced. Why can't we spread it out?" We said, "No, Congress says you can have this amount, but you can only use it for Head Start."

Many communities were expanding their Head Start while reducing other programs, when we had in the previous year anticipated the same pattern of funding, that an increased appropriation would enable us to spread the funds and enable a community to at least annualize programs which they had started with this increase in funds. It didn't work that way, and we had many, many difficulties with communities trying to explain to them why this was so. With the result that the following year they didn't so rigidly earmark, although administratively we earmarked to the extent that we would maintain programs at their annualized rate. But we could not expand them. As programs of a national nature like legal services, Upward Bound, became accepted we did, even with our appropriation, administratively say, "These amounts will be maintained," so that shrinkage or reduction of a program or community could not arbitrarily say, "Well, we'll cut out this program." If you've got it and it's good, funds are going to be available to maintain it. And within the limits of expanded funds, flexible, local initiative funds, they could fund additional programs.

G: Were there early difficulties in the implementation of a program such as Head Start? I'm thinking specifically of the one of large magnitude, and that is the Child Development Group of Mississippi, CDGM. Were there other incidents such as that?

B: CDGM was the largest funded Head Start program. It was conceived by those who were active in the civil rights movement. I think it evidences that wherever there is a vacuum something is going to move in to fill it, and in Mississippi at the outset there was almost complete indifference to participating in the War on Poverty. Here was one of the poorest states, but there seemed to be no interest in local communities participating. The Child Development Group of Mississippi came into existence and made an application with a program in which they would carry the Head Start program into Mississippi, and Shriver funded it. Probably it was the greatest stimulus to Community Action in Mississippi, because when this group began to organize the parents and the resources for starting Head Start units local communities became interested.

But it also indicated that a temporary measure soon takes on the characteristics of becoming permanent. It's hard to change it. CDGM was funded with the express and explicit condition that when and if Community Action agencies did come into existence in areas in which they were serving, they would collaborate with and become a part of the Community Action agency. Well, it developed that there were instances in which, when Community Action agencies were started, the CDGM groups in the community took the position, "We already have a program, why should we join the traditional power structure who wants to dominate and tell Negroes what to do anyway? Why should we be a part of that?" So they resisted. Well, it's a longer story. It is a story for a book in itself, and I suppose there are those--I

understand Marion Wright is planning to write a book on it. Because there are a number of different elements that cannot be narrated briefly.

But, you see, we never envisioned maintaining as a matter of policy a statewide Community Action agency, and once CDGM was funded they envisioned themselves as becoming a statewide framework for extending Community Action concepts and programs under the aegis of a state organization. Now they may not have wanted to acknowledge it, but this was the posture they took, "We want to stay as we are. Give us more money to extend it." It was a contradiction, in a sense, to our attempting to establish viable Community Action agencies either at the county or in a multi-county area, where the residents in the community could become part of an agency that would represent the needs and the interests of the people there, rather than having it run from a monolithic, tightly knit state body which was virtually going to duplicate what they had been complaining about.

G: Was this the MAP, or Mississippi Action for Progress group? Are you talking about that group being in competition with CDGM?

B: No. MAP came into existence as possibly a countervailing element in the community, so that there would not be a monopoly in any one group. CDGM was moving in the direction of being the monopoly of the Head Start program in Mississippi. You know, as soon as an organization gets control of several million dollars it's pretty hard to dislodge them.

G: As I understood it the initial crisis arose because of objections

which were raised to Shriver by Senator [John] Stennis of Mississippi, and subsequently other political representatives from the state such as [Senator James] Eastland and John Bell Williams. Is this the case? Was there political pressure?

B: I would say yes and no. The programmatic and administrative difficulties with CDGM became apparent to OEO before either Senator Stennis or Eastland involved themselves in it. Of course there was opposition, local opposition, to CDGM. There were criticisms about the involvement of the Delta ministry and the civil rights people. There were always those who were taking pot shots at CDGM.

G: Including the Ku Klux Klan, is that right?

B: Well, really I don't recall the Ku Klux Klan as active. They may have through their members been a harassing, guerrilla activity. There were instances in which the facilities were burned, and participants threatened. There was always this guerrilla aspect. It was known that this was possibly going to be the life of an emerging new program. They were willing to buy it, and we were willing to buy it. But there were also administrative weaknesses and the use of vehicles to carry on other activities other than the child development program.

G: Was that definitely established?

B: I think it was established by our own investigation. These deficiencies and weaknesses we sought to correct. Our audits became a subject of review by CDGM; there were administrative changes that we were requiring. It was after we had identified these adminstrative problems, at the time we went up for our appropriation, that Senator

Stennis began to ask questions, you know, that were intended to impose such sanctions, because he was on the Appropriations Committee.

G: Didn't he charge that there was a connection between CDGM and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party?

B: Oh, there were so many charges of various kinds. I don't recall distinctly whether he made that allegation, but they were made by some. He may have picked it up and repeated it. I don't know that he originated the idea.

G: What I was getting at, I'm curious to know whether or not in the use of money other than child development, of renting cars and so forth, whether or not this was in fact for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party or for political activities, as had been charged?

B: No, I don't think so. I don't think there was every any establishment of any funds of CDGM directly. There may have been individuals. By the very nature of the civil rights movement the leadership was identified in many different movements, and there were perhaps some of the workers who were interested and active in the political activities that were developing in Mississippi at that time.

G: How much in CDGM was found to be amiss? You say that some evidence of administrative failure was discovered.

B: We had an audit of the 1965 operation in 1966. I'd have to refresh my memory from the record, but we made a substantial disallowance in various categories. The Presbyterian Board of Home Missions was a sort of a guarantor on the second grant, and the disallowances were made against Mary Holmes College and the Board of Missions and the

disallowances were paid.

G: All of this is by way of getting at an answer to the charge which has been made that CDGM, the affair, the whole incident itself was caused and perpetuated by a form of political harassment, that after all there was an identification between, as you point out, the civil rights movement and various kinds of activities such as this in Mississippi. I was wondering if all of this was in fact the result of political harassment, or was it that OEO in fact had found before any of these charges were made that there were deficiencies in the program and so on and that it would have happened no matter whether the senators from Mississippi had become involved or not?

B: If what would have happened?

G: Well, for example, the refusal to fund CDGM. I think twice that happened.

B: Yes. They would have happened, I think, without political harassment, if you want to use that term. I think there was certainly political sniping at CDGM, and of course sniping at us because we funded them. I don't think we ever had any second thoughts about the wisdom of our having made the first grant, because if it hadn't been made to CDGM, Head Start would not have been started in Mississippi. But I think we would have also, programmatically and administratively, reached the conclusion that CDGM had to be brought into realistic proportions, otherwise we were creating a social and possibly political monster. In pursuit of our mission we felt that CDGM should adhere to what it originally conceived as its mission of

bringing a program, helping to train local people as to what they could do for themselves with this program, and to use it as a basis of generating the community action concept in communities where leadership was limited, resources were limited. But this was to be ad interim. This was to be the seeding of Community Action agencies and not to create a statewide power structure of another kind, and they were moving in that direction. This is the first time that any organization could command six million dollars. This is why MAP came into existence. It was a sort of a diffusion and creating competition.

G: It was charged, I think in either a New York Times or a New Republic article--I've forgotten offhand which one it was--that Harry McPherson in fact in the White House had created MAP. Do you have any knowledge one way or the other on this?

B: No. I think that's a misstatement of fact.

G: I think Hodding Carter, as a matter of fact, replied to these charges that had been made and called them lies.

B: That's right. I suppose I have some direct responsibility, because I called Aaron Henry myself and asked him who he would suggest, whether it was possible to bring together a group of Negro and white citizens in Mississippi that could work together in developing a program to reach communities with the Head Start program that had not yet been reached, rather than continuing to fund CDGM to go into these counties also, to repeat the kind of harassment and the shooting. I firmly felt that there was a value in having two organization, if

they had to be statewide, rather than one that was going to become monopolistic. They had not fulfilled their commitment to cooperate where there were white citizens in communities that were willing to take up the cudgel of developing a Community Action agency to work in concert with them. Rather, they were moving in competition with [them]. It was provoking more controversy, where hopefully we were trying to instill the ideas of community action and the biracial aspect that it had to have rather than creating an all black one and leaving the whites to come in to try to get at the table also.

G: Was this the case of CDGM?

B: What?

G: Being all black rather than integrated?

B: I think so.

G: Which was the situation almost in reverse in some of the other areas of the country.

B: Yes. Now they had one or two white members on their board, but I think they were very--and they had a young fellow from the North, Mudd [?], who was the executive director. He had developed a certain charisma, but as an administrator there was much to be desired.

G: He was pretty young at the time, wasn't he?

B: Yes.

G: How did Shriver respond to all this? I know that the New York Times ran at one point a full page article saying, "Sarge, say it isn't so," and made a point by point series of accusations against Shriver to which he replied later in a letter.

B: Well, the waters were pretty rough during those days. Sarge had multiple responsibilities. I think Sarge was deeply committed to the extension of the program of Head Start into Mississippi, a state that needed it. I don't think that he had any hesitancy about making that beginning with CDGM. But I think he also perceived--in other words, we were caught between the cross currents of . . . .
(Tape ends abruptly)

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II]

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