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By

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Frederic Clemson Howe (1867-1940) is remembered today, if at all, as an apostle of the Single Tax and a disciple of Tom L. Johnson, Cleveland's charismatic reform mayor between 1901-1909. His interests were extensive—law, public administration, city planning, taxation and finance, labor, cooperatives, and social work—but he made no striking contributions to any of these fields. He never possessed great personal power or influence. Yet Howe deserves rescue from the historical no man's land.

Howe was an American Ulysses, embarked upon a lifelong quest for the meaning and promise of democracy. His intellectual odyssey explains a great deal about twentieth-century American liberalism, especially that version known as the progressive movement. Howe's career illustrates the extent to which urban liberalism was inspired by the values of agrarian equalitarianism and small-town evangelical Protestantism. His personal evolution from Mugwump to statist to prophet of cooperative democracy directs attention to the complexity of the liberal experience; he embodied, in microcosm, several of its dominant manifestations. Finally, Howe's odyssey suggests a measure of unity despite the diversity of expression. No single theme can link all liberal ideals and personalities, but one can explain much in terms of a quest for community—the restoration of social cohesion in our cities. This was an especially significant element in progressive reform; in the case of Frederic Howe it was everything.

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Howe was born in Meadville, Pennsylvania. His paternal ancestry was Scotch-Irish, his maternal roots, Swedish-Quaker. He lived in Meadville until graduation from Allegheny College in 1889, but never really left home in one sense. Physical liberation from the "embraces of evangelical religion did not mean moral

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escape. From that religion my reason was never emancipated. . . . It was with difficulty that realism got lodgment in my mind; early assumptions as to virtue and vice, goodness and evil remained in my mind long after I had tried to discard them." In a small, postbellum town in western Pennsylvania, virtue was synonymous with Republicanism, Methodism, frugality and a careful, sober-minded respectability. It was a "comfortable little world" which nobody wanted to alter.[1] Change entailed challenge to the sources of authority and morality; it threatened the security which derived from consensus. Howe belonged to a generation of marginal Americans who rebelled against Meadville's particular authorities and moral norms, but yearned for the community coherence it represented.

One summer during his college years Howe listened to Richard Ely lecture at Chautauqua. He wanted to learn more about that "big world" beyond Meadville. The desire intensified after Howe met John H. Finley, then a student at Johns Hopkins, who was editing *The Chautauquan*. The idea of becoming a newspaperman took hold and led Howe in 1889 to Johns Hopkins, where he hoped to acquire a background in economics and history. Under the tutelage of Ely, Woodrow Wilson, James Bryce and Albert Shaw, he "came alive" for the first time. He discovered that the world needed change. Ely described the harsh industrial system. Wilson and Bryce discoursed on corrupt party politics and espoused ideals of redemption through the leadership of scholars and disinterested statesmen. The greatest influence, in the long run, was exerted by Albert Shaw, editor of the *Review of Reviews*. Shaw roused Howe's interest in cities which were honestly and efficiently governed, beautiful and orderly. He dreamed of participation in the "brotherhood of service" which would wrest control of the city from the spoilsmen.[2]

Howe later realized that he had brought Meadville to Baltimore; and merely exchanged one set of authorities for another. It was still the case that "authority was proper, necessary, probably the first of the moralities." Only it was to be the authority of "educated men, of scholars, of intellectual reformers" in alliance with enlightened businessmen. If anything was certain, it was that the people were "hungry for guidance."[3] The goal remained the consensus and order, the community cohesiveness of Meadville.

[1] Frederic C. Howe, *The Confessions of a Reformer* (New York, 1925), 16-17, 10. This is the major source of information on Howe's life before 1925. For an evaluation of his career see Robert H. Bremner, "Honest Man's Story: Frederic C. Howe," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 8 (July 1949): 413-14, 419-22. A sketch by Hoyt Landon Warner appears in the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

[2] Howe, *Confessions*, 20, 1, 8.

[3] *Ibid.*, 33-34, 8.

Howe studied at the University of Halle (Germany) in 1891 and acquired his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins the following year. Unable to find a newspaper job, he studied law at the University of Maryland and New York Law School. Howe then returned to Meadville, where he worked in his uncle's law office. Appointed secretary of the Pennsylvania Tax Conference, he resigned within a few months in the belief that it represented the interests of the large corporations. He moved to Pittsburgh, intending to practice law, but stayed only a few weeks. The filthy, dreary physical environment was paralleled by an oppressive intellectual smog. The Iron City was Meadville all over again, writ large. Boss Quay, the protective tariff, and conventional religion were among the staples of orthodoxy; dissent was unwelcome.

Howe visited other cities, settling finally in Cleveland where he secured a position in the law office of Harry and James Garfield, sons of the former president. He never enjoyed law practice, which lasted until 1910 when investment income provided a measure of financial independence. Howe's extra-legal career always absorbed more time and interest. In the 1890s he embarked upon volunteer settlement and charity organization work and served as secretary of the Municipal Association. He was elected to a term in the city council (1901-03) and Ohio senate (1906-08). Howe went to England in 1905 as a special federal commissioner to study municipal ownership. In 1909-10 he worked with the Cleveland Tax Commission. Most important, he was associated with the brilliant brain trust gathered by Tom Johnson after his election as mayor in 1901.[4]

[4] Besides Howe, Johnson's inner circle included Newton D. Baker, lawyer, and later Mayor of Cleveland and Secretary of War under Wilson; Harris R. Cooley, a minister, and Johnson's director of the Department of Charities and Correction; Peter Witt, Populist, Single-Taxer, head of the Mayor's "Tax School," and city clerk from 1903-1909.

The most complete published account of the Ohio civic revival is Hoyt Landon Warner, *Progressivism in Ohio, 1897-1917* (Ohio State University Press, 1964). Unpublished material includes Robert H. Bremner, "The Civic Revival in Ohio: The Fight against Privilege in Cleveland and Toledo, 1899-1912" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1943); Harvey S. Ford, "The Life and Times of Golden Rule Jones" (Ph.D. dissertation. University of Michigan, 1953); Eugene C. Murdock, "Buckeye Liberal: A Biography of Tom L. Johnson" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1951).

There is an extensive bibliography of primary literature in Warner, *Progressivism in Ohio*. For other secondary accounts see the series of articles by Robert Bremner which appeared in the *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, vols. 8-12, 14-15; the articles by Samuel Milton Jones, III, in the *Northwest Ohio Quarterly*, vols. 31-33; and those by Eugene C. Murdock in *Ohio Historical Quarterly*, vols. 63, 65-67.

Johnson converted Howe from Mugwump to prophet of the service state. Former traction magnate, inventor, and congressman, Johnson quickened the Ohio civic revival launched in 1898 by Mayor Samuel (Golden Rule) Jones of Toledo. Howe acquired, from Johnson, three deeply rooted convictions. The first was a belief in the validity of the Single Tax as a critique of American society and a program for its redemption. More broadly, Johnson transformed the small-town moralist into a "realist" who saw "privilege" as the main obstacle to social progress. Howe, finally, absorbed Johnson's vision of the city as something more than the protectorate of good men who governed honestly and efficiently. The new ideal was the organic community whose citizens transcended superficial class and ethnic differences. This cohesiveness would be nurtured by an expansion of municipal welfare and service functions. Its attainment hinged, to a great extent, upon the disinterested leadership of experts.

The abolition of privilege and the creation of the municipal welfare state were the means to the fulfillment of a recurrent dream: the "city whose ideals rose above mere business, a city that was built like a home, that had a communal bigness of vision, that was planned by city builders, and that served its people as a father might serve his children."[5] Many of Howe's contemporaries, including Brand Whitlock, were possessed by the same dream. Whitlock called it the oldest one in the world: the "dream of social harmony always prefigured in human thought as the city."[6]

4

The City: The Hope of Democracy represents the first comprehensive formulation of Howe's new insights. It is, like Adna F. Weber's *The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century,* published a few years earlier, a classic of American urban literature. Weber's brilliant synthesis of demography, statistics, and economics provided insight into the nature of the urbanization process. Howe, on the other hand, explained little about urbanization but a great deal about urban reform ideals and objectives in the early twentieth century. Indeed, his book played a significant role in shaping the new reform program.

Publication of *The City* moved Charles Zueblin, a University of Chicago sociologist, to proclaim the appearance of a "genuine herald." Howe had seized the "psychological moment" to show that "the city, hitherto abused by all of its enemies and many of

[5] Frederic C. Howe, "Düsseldorf: A City of To-Morrow," *Hampton's Magazine* 25 (December 1910): 698.

[6] Brand Whitlock, *Forty Years of It* (New York, 1914), 374.

its friends, is the hope of democracy."[7] Clinton Woodruff, a municipal government expert, asserted that the delineation of the "growth of cities in number, size, importance, and extent" was no novelty, but *The City* did shed light upon "how powerful has become the city influence in an every day life." Coupled with Howe's "recognition of the greath growth of municipal functions . . . we find an intelligent and forceful justification of them" and a prophecy of more to come.[8] Contemporaries thus recognized that a new perspective on the American city had appeared, one which was critical but optimistic and, most important, committed to a substantial expansion of municipal welfare functions to insure that urban dominance would mean a constructive influence in American life.

Howe's *City* was one of a small group of publications which appeared by 1905 and broke sharply with the conventional wisdom about the implications of urbanization.[9] The late nineteenth century had produced a voluminous literature describing the city as the Achilles heel of American democracy. Howe contested both the funereal prophecies and the standard reform programs. The conventional interpretation was embodied in the critique of James Bryce and Andrew White. Howe impressed one reviewer because he saw the city as the hope rather than the despair of democracy when "most critics . . . including even so able and

[7] *The Dial* 40 (April 1, 1906): 230, 232.

[8] *Yale Review* 15 (February 1907): 463, 464.

[9] Albert Shaw, *Municipal Government in Continental Europe* (New York, 1895); Shaw, *Municipal Government in Great Britain* (New York, 1898); Frank Parsons, *The City for the People; or, The Municipalization of the City Government and of Local Franchises* (Philadelphia, 1900); Delos F. Wilcox, *The American City: A Problem in Democracy* (New York, 1904); Charles Zueblin, *A Decade of Civic Development* (Chicago, 1905).

All these publications touch on the collective nature and interdependence of city life, and therefore go beyond Mugwump political formalism (or the moralizing of a Josiah Strong) in their stress upon the positive and constructive responsibilities of municipal government. Wilcox and Parsons, particularly, shared with Howe an interest in the relationship between privilege, municipal utilities, and urban regeneration. The similarities between Parsons and Howe are especially striking. "The problem of the city," Parsons wrote, "is the problem of the future, and the problem of the city is the problem of monopoly." Public ownership of monopoly, he continued, "produces conditions favorable to the rapid growth of a New Political Economy and a New Conscience that shall recognize manhood as the supreme product of an industrial system and demand intelligent scientific and persistent effort to subordinate all other objects, and adjust all powers of industry, education, and government to the development of the highest character and the noblest manhood." (*City for the People*, 9, 173.) One of Howe's chapters in *The City: The Hope of Democracy* is entitled "The City for the People." Howe never explicitly acknowledged Parsons as an intellectual mentor in contrast to Albert Shaw and, above all, Tom Johnson. Parsons is discussed at length in Arthur Mann, *Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954).

impartial an observer as Mr. Bryce, have agreed that the government of our cities is the one conspicuous testimony to the very partial success, if not to the failure, of our democracy."[10] A century of urban growth, Bryce had argued, "has been among the most significant and least fortunate changes in the character of the population of the United States." White, similarly, did not doubt that the "city governments of the United States are the worst in Christendom—the most expensive, the most inefficient, and the most corrupt."[11]

The late nineteenth-century reform model was, in essence, the business corporation—limited in function but administered efficiently. According to White, the city, conceived as a corporation, "had nothing whatever to do with general political interests . . . Under our theory that a city is a political body, a crowd of illiterate peasants, freshed raked in from Irish bogs, or Bohemian mines, or Italian robber nests, may exercise virtual control."[12] It could not be asserted too often that "municipal government is essentially a business, and should be conducted like any other large business."[13]

Reform proposals centered upon the election of respectable citizens to office, a retreat from partisan politics, and changes in the political machinery compatible with these objectives: home rule for cities, separation of municipal from state or national elections, centralization of authority, and greater interest in civic affairs on the part of the "decent and intelligent" populace. New York's Seth Low insisted that urban reform was largely a matter of securing "simple honesty on the part of its officials."[14] Municipal government was a disgrace "simply because corrupt and corruptible men are elected to office."[15] There was no better guarantee of good government than the "election to office of honest and capable men."[16] Such men were deterred from seeking office, in part, because of political partisanship. Satan, as Bryce put it, had succeeded in turning "his heaviest batteries on the weakest part

[10] *Independent* 59 (December 7, 1905): 1342.

[11] James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (New York, 1891), 1: 593; Andrew D. White, "The Government of American Cities," *Forum* 10 (1890-91): 357.

[12] *Ibid.*, 368.

[13] Preble Tucker, "The Good-Government Clubs," *North American Review* 159 (1894): 384. Also, Frank Morison, "Municipal Government: A Corporate not a Political Problem," *Forum* 13 (1892): 788-94.

[14] Seth Low, *The Problem of Municipal Government in the United States* (pamphlet, based upon an address before the Historical and Political Science Association of Cornell University, March 16, 1887), 7.

[15] "The Science of Municipal Corruption," *Forum* 15 (1893): 43.

[16] Bird S. Coler, *Municipal Government (as Illustrated by the Charter, Finances, and Public Charities of New York)* (New York, 1900), 16.

of the ramparts" because of political partisanship, combined with absence of home rule, the ignorance of the immigrant, the apathy of the better citizens.[17]

Conceding many of the conventional criticisms, Howe approached the problem from a radically different direction. Like Lincoln Steffens, he emphasized that the respectable citizen or businessman did not ignore municipal affairs; on the contrary, he was deeply involved in an effort to gain valuable privileges. Most important, Howe wanted charter reform, home rule, and other political-administrative reforms described in *The City* as a means to the creation of the municipal welfare state; and, beyond this, the creation of a cohesive political organism.

5

Permeating *The City: The Hope of Democracy* is the pseudo-realism of the progressive muckraker. Intellectuals, journalists, and social critics in the early twentieth century aspired to penetrate beneath the forms of American democracy in the hope of exposing the real dynamics of power and influence. The Beards, Tarbells, Steffens, and Howes were linked in a common revolt against textbook orthodoxies describing a democracy which no longer existed. The problem with the muckrake approach to

[17] Bryce, *American Commonwealth,* 1: 613. One of the most comprehensive statements of the municipal reform tradition which saw the challenge of the city in terms of the substitution of the "municipal corporation" for boss, machine, and saloon-immigrant politics is Dorman B. Eaton, *The Government of Municipalities* (New York, 1899).

By the early twentieth century a more sophisticated version of this tradition appeared, expressed in the Bureau of Municipal Efficiency idea, and the movement for commission or city manager government. The institutional embodiment of this streamlined Mugwumpism was the National Municipal League. For these developments see Charles A. Beard, *American City Government: A Survey of New Tendencies* (New York, 1912); Henry J. Bruere, *The New City Government: A Discussion of Municipal Administration Based on a Survey of Ten Commission Governed Cities* (New York, 1912); Ernest S. Bradford, *Commission Government in American Cities* (New York, 1912); Morris L. Cooke, *Our Cities Awake: Notes on Municipal Activities and Administration* (New York, 1918); Tso-Shuen Chang, *History and Analysis of the Commission and City-Manager Plans of Municipal Government in the United States* (Iowa City, 1918); Edward A. Fitzpatrick, ed., *Experts in City Government* (New York, 1919); Frank Goodnow, *Municipal Problems* (New York, 1907); William B. Munro, *The Government of American Cities* (New York, 1920); Ford H. McGregor, *City Government by Commission* (Madison, Wisc., 1911); Clinton R. Woodruff, ed., *A New Municipal Program* (New York, 1919); Woodruff, ed., *City Government by Commission* (New York, 1911). Two useful secondary works are C. W. Patton, *Battle for Municipal Reform* (Washington, D. C., 1940), covering the period 1875-1900; and Frank M. Stewart, *A Half-Century of Municipal Reform: The History of the National Municipal League* (Berkeley, Cal., 1950).

reality, strikingly evident in Howe's case, was the frequent substitution of a glib economic determinism. This, in turn, barely disguised a fundamentally moral and ethical perspective. A superficial economic analysis, centering on the relationship between economic self-interest and politics, was conditioned by the belief that American democracy had been betrayed.

The source of the internal subversion was privilege, which had usurped the authority of the people. Howe's obsession with privilege was characteristic of progressivism as a whole, and was closely related to two other aspects of progressive social theory: the persistence of the agrarian ethos, and the Single-Tax legacy of Henry George. Historians have recognized the influence of older agrarian values, but the impact of the Single Tax is often overlooked.[18]

Howe's crusade against privilege was firmly rooted in an agrarian fundamentalism. Central to his interpretation of American history was that hoary staple of the Jeffersonian-Jacksonian creed which distinguished between producers and non-producers, or creators of wealth and exploiters. Howe saw America before the 1880s and 1890s as a land of genuine "economic equality." In this equalitarian framework the competitive mechanism really worked. Since intermediaries between producer and consumer were few, and production localized, wealth was "exchanged from man to man on a competitive basis that kept prices to production cost." Toward the end of the nineteenth century, however, the equilibrium was disturbed by a "new class" which sprang from privilege and usurped the "wealth produced by others."[19]

Before the advent of privilege, American political life had reflected the economic equalitarianism and producer hegemony. Power was diffused, and government acted as an agent of the people rather than special interests. After the 1880s government became an instrument of class domination, "an agency for the distribution of wealth," to the detriment of farmer and worker. The nation then confronted a "line of natural political division"; it was "between those who produce wealth and those who exploit it."[20]

What, exactly, was privilege—the intruder which had under-

[18] See, however, R. E. Noble, Jr., "Henry George and the Progressive Movement," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 8 (April 1949): 259-69, which deals predominantly with the efforts of Single-Taxers to expand the machinery of direct democracy as a prelude to enactment of their economic program.

[19] Frederic C. Howe, *Revolution and Democracy in America* (New York, 1921), 93.

[20] *Ibid.*, 123, 96. Howe had published a lengthy critique of privilege a decade earlier. See *Privilege and Democracy in America* (New York, 1910); also *The Confessions of a Monopolist* (Chicago, 1906).

mined the agrarian republic? Howe defined it as "an advantage gained by statute law to one person or class of persons to enjoy something that is not open to enjoyment by all citizens; the perversion of the function of national taxation to private ends; the law-made wealth, capitalized into a series of institutions empowered to levy tribute on or command the labor of other people."[21] The strategic forms of privilege included private land ownership, private ownership of railroads and utilities, and the tariff. In all cases privilege was rooted in some statutory advantage which contributed to monopolistic control of a basic resource or function. Along with the distinction between producer and nonproducer, the antimonopoly component of agrarian and Loco-Foco democracy thus inspired the progressive war against privilege.

It was not, however, Jefferson or Jackson but Henry George who kindled the latter-day antimonopoly crusade. His influence led to an emphasis upon private land ownership as the ultimate source of all privilege, and thus monopoly. George and his disciples, including Howe, insisted that land, by its very nature as the source of life and wealth, was a common heritage. It was distinctive, furthermore, because its value was determined by the growth of population and other factors unrelated to individual labor. The Single-Taxer like Howe employed a rather generous definition of land, the crucial feature for purposes of municipal reform being the emphasis upon franchise values. Land was interpreted to include "everything that lies hidden in the land; that is, the oil and the coal, the mineral resources, the water power, the land values of the railroads and the franchise corporations; the value of docks and waterways; every kind of land value in fact that is not the result of the labor of man."[22]

The Single-Taxer was never disturbed by the thought that his labor value theory could be extended to any commodity, and its value found to inhere in social factors rather than individual effort. Nor did he consider that franchise monopolies often fostered population growth and did not simply respond to it. He had found the panacea through which society could "recapture its freedom without revolution."[23]

The chief benefit of the Single Tax upon land (including franchise) values would be release of the productive energies of the nation, now throttled by privilege and monopoly. True com-

[21] Frederic C. Howe, "Choose Your Congressman," *Everybody's Magazine* 23 (November 1910): 595.

[22] Frederic C. Howe, "The Way Out? Single Tax!," *Christian Century* 49 (November 2, 1932): 1337.

[23] *Ibid.*

petition, between producers of wealth, would be restored. Homes and industry would be liberated from the burden of taxation, but government revenues would increase. As land values declined, along with land speculation and monopoly, wages would rise and congestion would diminish.

The enmity of the Single-Taxers and foes of privilege, in the urban context, focused upon the public utilities. It requires a feat of imagination to appreciate the intensity of the struggle over regulation and ownership of these institutions; it seems so irrelevant to present-day urban concerns.

6

Nowhere was the conflict more virulent and prolonged than in the Cleveland of Johnson and Howe. To those in the movement, Howe recalled, "it was a moral crusade, rarely paralleled in American politics."[24] On the outcome of the struggle, they believed, hinged the question of whether privilege or the people would rule.

"I saw," Howe explained, "that the city must own its transportation system before it could begin to plan anything else; it ought to own its electricity supply; most important of all, it must end class war, which I was beginning to see was caused by the fight for franchise rights of great value involving most of the prominent men in the city."[25] As long as these franchise rights remained a source of private wealth, the ablest and most talented citizens would align themselves with privilege rather than the people. In order to acquire or protect their franchise privileges, they corrupted legislators. They sustained the political boss, who served as the broker between the government which controlled

[24] Howe, *Confessions*, 113.

[25] *Ibid.*, 116. Howe published numerous articles on Johnson and the effort to make Cleveland a "'City upon a Hill.'" These include: "'The Best Governed Community in the World,'" *World's Work* 3 (February 1902): 1723-28; "Cleveland—A City 'Finding Itself,'" *World's Work* 6 (October 1903): 3988-99; "Plans for a City Beautiful," *Harper's Weekly* 48 (April 22, 1904): 624-26; "Cleveland's Education through its Chamber of Commerce," *Outlook* 83 (July 28, 1906): 739-49; "Tom Johnson and the City of Cleveland," *Reader* 10 (October 1907): 502-16; "The Cleveland Group Plan," *Charities and the Commons* 19 (February 1, 1908): 1548; "A City in the Life-Saving Business: How the City of Cleveland Makes Men of Its Workhouse Prisoners," *Outlook* 88 (January 18, 1908); "A Golden Rule Chief of Police," *Everybody's Magazine* 22 (June 1910): 814-23.

For evaluations of the Johnson administration by others see Edward W. Bemis, "The Significance of Mayor Johnson's Election," *Arena* 29 (June 1903): 582-85; Bemis, "Tom L. Johnson's Achievements as Mayor of Cleveland," *Review of Reviews* 43 (May 1911): 558-60; and Carl Lorenz, *Tom L. Johnson: Mayor of Cleveland* (New York, 1911).

the franchise prizes and the businessmen who lusted after them. In short, the powers and prerogatives of government were perverted to serve private ends. According to one advocate of municipal ownership, "municipal utilities are too often the city's actual governing power. If the utilities cannot, unaided, dominate a city's governmental machinery, they dominate it through alliances with other interests, such as the liquor interest, vice interests. . . ."[26] It was not simply that the profit motive dominated under private ownership, resulting in overcapitalization, excessive rates, and poor service. More important, the concentration of wealth and power in private hands was "corrupting and vitiating our civic life." Municipal ownership, "tending as it does to a diffusion of wealth and power, contributes to democracy in the industrial and economic life of the people."[27] A great deal thus hinged upon the eradication of this form of privilege: political and economic equalitarianism, the elimination of class conflict, and the cooperation of the community's men of ability in the planning and administration of the municipal welfare state.

7

Howe interpreted the war against privilege as an episode in the evolution of a cooperative urban ethic. "The city," he observed, "has destroyed individualism. It is constantly narrowing its field. And in all probability cooperation, either voluntary or compulsory, will continue to appropriate an increasing share of the activities of society."[28] Public utilities were among the "visible symbols" of the cooperative relationships upon which the survival of an urban community depended. Public ownership, however, liberated the people and their government from the

[26] Clyde L. King, "Introduction," in King, ed., *The Regulation of Municipal Utilities* (New York, 1912), 18.

[27] Carl D. Thompson, *Municipal Ownership* (New York, 1917), 59, 99. According to Brand Whitlock, "these public utilities are public property; these immense values were created by the people's toil, and the people will redeem the city from all its evils only when they recognize their rights and their powers, and protect their own property by taking it over and caring for it themselves." Whitlock, "The City and the Public Utility Corporation," *World To-Day* 19 (September 1910): 964. The utilities problem is discussed at length in, "Proceedings of the Conference of American Mayors on Public Policies as to Municipal Utilities," American Academy of Political and Social Science, *Annals* 57 (January 1915).

[28] Frederic C. Howe, *The Modern City and Its Problems* (New York, 1915), 4. Delos F. Wilcox similarly described the cities as the "most favorable fields for the working out of democracy. The very nature of city life compels manifold cooperations. The individual cannot 'go it alone'; he cannot do as he pleases; he must conform his acts to an ever increasing degree to the will and welfare of the community in which he lives." Wilcox, *Great Cities in America: Their Problems and Their Government* (New York, 1910), 12.

"compelling influence of invested private capital"; it nurtured in them a "new sense of responsibility, a new sense of civic loyalty and a new attitude of conservatism, all of which are of the utmost importance in the orderly development of our civilization."[29]

Socialization of the utilities thus reflected and cultivated the cooperative ideals necessary for the creation of the municipal welfare state. It diminished class antagonism and allied the former servants of privilege with the community. It gave rise to a new attitude toward the role of government and a new meaning to democracy in an industrial age. Freedom and liberty had, in the past, been associated with the individualism of an agrarian society. Their realization in an urban society depended upon a view of government as "positive in its services" rather than "negative in its functions." The new democratic theory implied that "solicitude for people will take the place of solicitude for property; the ideal of human welfare will be substituted for the ideal of economy. The measure of the city of to-morrow will be the service it renders to the people."[30]

8

Progressive municipal reform—a compound of the pseudo-realism of the muckraker; the obsession with privilege rooted in agrarian equalitarianism and the Single-Tax; the emergence of a cooperative ethic which legitimized the expansion of governmental welfare functions—was greatly influenced by European experience. Howe admired English cities for their efficient business administration and progress in municipal ownership.[31] The German city, however, most fully embodied his vision of the cooperative ethic in action. Here were communities which were planned, administered by experts and, most important, dedicated presumably to human happiness rather than to the protection of property. The idealization of the German community is one respect in which *The City: The Hope of Democracy* is unrepresentative of Howe's later urban theory. He had not yet discovered his operating utopia in Denmark.

The freedom of the German city was a key to its achieve-

[29] Delos F. Wilcox, "Fundamental Plans in a Public Utility Program," *Annals* 57 (January 1915): 18.

[30] Howe, *Modern City*, v, 375.

[31] Frederic C. Howe, "Glasgow," *Scribner's Magazine* 40 (July 1906): 97-109; "London: A Municipal Democracy," *Scribner's Magazine* 40 (November, 1906): 589-96; "The American and British City—A Comparison," *Scribner's Magazine* 41 (January 1907): 113-21; "Municipal Ownership in Great Britain," U. S., Department of Commerce and Labor, *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor*, No. 62 (1906); *The British City: The Beginnings of Democracy* (New York, 1907).

ments. In sharp contrast to American cities, German municipal socialism eliminated the domination of privilege. Equally important, the extensive home rule made experimentation and collective action possible. The German city, as Howe saw it, "seeks to make life as full of sweetness, of beauty, of variety as is possible through co-operative effort." The American city remained an "industrial accident, with the ideals of the successful business man"; its German counterpart was "an organized, living thing with a big and far-seeing programme of the needs of humanity, and bending its intelligence and its powers to their satisfaction."[32] Düsseldorf particularly impressed Howe because it did more than any city he knew. It owned street railways and interurbans, harbors, docks, abattoirs, gas, electricity, light and water plants. It operated banking enterprises, wineries, milk depots, restaurants, suburban estates and apartments. It served the leisure needs of its people.[33]

Howe envied the authority of German planners and administrators. Municipal home rule, socialism, and land-use controls enhanced the role of experts as opposed to politicians or businessmen. Everything suggested "intelligence, oversight, and application of art and science to the city's building." Individual license was subordinated to the "will of the community acting through its permanent and expert body of city officials." Architect, engineer, artist, and health official alike were "called upon to contribute to the city's making."[34] Howe aspired to have American cities "designed by experts." He frequently cited the fabled alabaster city that arose on the shores of Lake Michigan in 1893 in celebration of the Columbian Exposition. Here was an Ameri-

[32] Frederic C. Howe, "The German and the American City," *Scribner's Magazine* 49 (April 1911): 492.

[33] Howe, "Düsseldorf: A City of To-Morrow," 698.

[34] Frederic C. Howe, *Socialized Germany* (New York, 1915), 300; "City Building in Germany," *Scribner's Magazine* 47 (May 1910): 603, 602. Besides *Socialized Germany,* Howe's other major account of the German city appears in *European Cities at Work* (New York, 1917). He published numerous articles including: "A Way Toward the Model City," *World's Work* 21 (December 1910): 13794-801; "The German and the American City," *Scribner's Magazine* 49 (April 1911): 485-92; "City Sense: Introductory," *Outlook* 101 (August 24, 1912): 945-53; "City Sense: Cities that Think," *Outlook* 102 (September 28, 1912): 209-18; "A People's Versailles," *Survey* 57 (January 1, 1927): 456-58.

Howe considered Wisconsin under La Follette to be the closest American approximation to "what Germany is doing for the world. It is an experiment station in politics, in social and industrial legislation, in the democratization of science and higher education. It is a state wide laboratory in which popular government is being tested in its reaction on people, on the distribution of wealth, on social well being." *Wisconsin: An Experiment in Democracy* (New York, 1912), vii.

can precedent for planned urban beauty and order.[35]

9

The city was the hope of democracy because there, in the end, the cooperative ethic would triumph. Americans would transcend their class conflicts or racial heterogeneity and achieve a true sense of community. Urban reform, as exemplified in Howe, was permeated by an evangelical perfectionism which aspired to create the community of visible saints. The people had sinned. Conscious of their guilt, they had embarked upon a quest for salvation. Americans, Howe proclaimed, "stand before the world to-day as a nation— a whole nation of men and women who, before all the world, have confessed their sins." They had allowed privilege to usurp their sovereignty and foster class enmity, but now they were ready to transform "delegated" government into "popular" government.[36] Howe was infected by Tom Johnson's dream of a "free society, in which law-made privileges were abolished. It would be ample enough for all. The fear of poverty would disappear and a new psychology of kindliness, generosity, and justice would take its place."[37]

Nothing was more characteristic of Howe and his generation than this quest for community. Their object was not merely to institutionalize or minimize conflict, but to obliterate it. They took for granted the existence of a public interest which was more than the sum of private interests. If privilege were eliminated, the public interest could express itself, substituting unity and harmony for dissension. Howe and his contemporaries could not escape their respective Meadvilles. In the face of the powerful centrifugal

[35] Frederic C. Howe, "The American City of To-Morrow: Progress Already Made and Plans Now Being Perfected to Remake Scientifically Our Cities," *Hampton's Magazine* 26 (May 1911): 575. The White City near Chicago, Howe asserted, gave rise to a "vision that did not fade; it was a permanent denial of the assumption that the city must of necessity be an uncontrolled behemoth of ugliness and disorder forever dedicated to mills, factories, and workshops. If millions could be spent on a play city and experts be employed to make it beautiful, why could not the same intelligence and harmony be adjusted to everyday use?" "The Remaking of the American City," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 127 (July 1913): 188. Also, "The City as a Socializing Agent: The Physical Basis of the City; The City Plan," *American Journal of Sociology* 17 (March 1912): 593.

Another model of large-scale urban planning which impressed Howe was the English garden city, village and suburb. See "The Garden Cities of England," *Scribner's Magazine* 52 (January 1912): 1-19.

[36] Howe, "Choose Your Congressman," 593; "Ask Your Congressman: Something You Can Do Now to Help Us All Get Our Interests Represented in Washington," *Everybody's Magazine* 23 (August 1910): 166.

[37] Howe, *Confessions*, 134-35.

pressures which fragmented the community, they idealized the order and consensus of the ancestral town. Their evangelical legacy compelled them to reaffirm the existence of transcendent moral norms to which all men could subscribe.

The leaders of the Ohio civic revival frequently employed a religious rhetoric. The New Zion would be founded in the spirit of brotherhood, love and service.[38] Proclaiming that "society is a unit," Golden Rule Jones urged a "new definition of freedom and independence which will harmonize them with co-operation and brotherhood."[39] Brand Whitlock anticipated the emergence of a "city sense" which would "build cities not only for dignity and beauty, but for the grace and art of common life. There will be a comradeship in labor and a unity of ideal. . . ."[40] Howe frequently referred to this "city sense," by which he meant a "feeling of unity and dependence of common obligation and purpose." We desperately needed it to attach the citizen to his community "just as were the burghers of the mediaeval towns."[41] The more government did for the people, the more they would identify with it and each other, thus nurturing the city sense.

10

Howe's faith in the people and city of the future remained firm, although Tom Johnson was repudiated in the mayoralty election of 1909, and municipal ownership in Cleveland proved a fiasco. Johnson's defeat, followed by his death, did contribute to Howe's decision to leave Cleveland for New York as director of the People's

[38] "Our generation in its childhood," Howe explained, "was deeply saturated with the idea of sin; sin in ourselves, sin in the other fellow. We cannot shake off the impressions made on us in the Sunday School, in the prayer-meeting, in the revival by the exhorter. . . . The progressive movement, the liberal movement, the radical movement, all were largely moralistic." "Where are the Pre-War Radicals?," *Survey* 56 (April 1, 1926): 33. In this connection Richard Ely spoke of the city as "destined to become a well-ordered household, a work of art, and a religious institution in the truest sense of the word 'religious.'" *The Coming City* (New York, 1902), 71. And as Josiah Strong explained, "when the social spirit has been Christianized we shall have, not a fraternity of convenience but a genuine brotherhood of love sprung from a common fatherhood." The ruling laws would be "service," "sacrifice," and, most important, "love." *The Twentieth Century City* (New York, 1898), 122, 123, 127, 128. Also, Washington Gladden, *Social Salvation* (New York, 1902), 228, 229.

[39] Samuel M. Jones, "American Workingmen and Religion," *Outlook* 65 (July 14, 1900): 640; *The New Right: A Plea for Fair Play Through a More Just Social Order* (New York, 1899), 285.

[40] Brand Whitlock, "The City and Civilization," *Scribner's Magazine* 52 (November 1912): 631.

[41] Howe, "Cleveland's Education through its Chamber of Commerce," 740; *The City: The Hope of Democracy*, 292.

Institute.[42] Living in the vicinity of Greenwich Village, he found his faith in America fully justified. The vigorous intellectual and literary life of lower Manhattan mirrored his own passion for justice, commitment to democracy, confidence in the power of mind to effect change. In 1914 he accepted an appointment from President Wilson as Commissioner of Immigration at Ellis Island. His motives were consistent with his quest for community. Here was an opportunity not only to "ameliorate the lot" of humanity but to mold a total environment.[43]

Howe served as Commissioner of Immigration until 1919. The experience transformed the prophet of the welfare state into the advocate of cooperative democracy. The quest for community, the faith in democracy persisted. Yet Howe was never the same. A measure of weariness and disillusionment, an unaccustomed bitterness, tempered his incorrigible optimism. An awareness of the dynamic, creative possibilities of class conflict tempered the earlier infatuation with harmony. World War I was the catalytic agent. For Howe, as for other progressives, it posed an agonizing psychic and moral dilemma.

Like many contemporaries, Howe projected domestic reform ideals onto the international scene. The war against privilege was universalized, along with the crusading, evangelical impulse. Dreams of human brotherhood and progress could be reconciled with the holocaust only if, in Wilsonian terms, it was truly a war to end war which eradicated privilege and established an international community of saints.

The same muckrake pseudo-realism which explained domestic class conflict also explained the origins of World War I. Beginning around 1880 Europe launched a new imperialism. Centering in the Mediterranean and Near East, it was instigated by the financial and commercial classes, seeking profitable outlets for surplus wealth. As at home, "weak and defenseless peoples" lost their

[42] The street railway struggle which contributed to Johnson's defeat is described in Paul L. Haworth, "Mayor Johnson of Cleveland: A Study of Mismanaged Political Reform," *Outlook* 93 (October 23, 1909): 469-74. Johnson's aide and disciple, Newton D. Baker, later served two terms as mayor. On Baker's efforts to continue Johnson's program see E. C. Hopwood, "Newton D. Baker's Administration as Mayor of Cleveland and its Accomplishments," *National Municipal Review* 2 (July 1913): 461-66; Burton J. Hendrick, "'Mayor Tom's' Successor," *World's Work* 27 (April 1914): 670-78; C. C. Arbuthnot, "Mayor Baker's Administration in Cleveland," *National Municipal Review* 5 (April 1916): 226-41; Frederic C. Howe, "Baker: Trained Administrator," *Independent* 85 (March 20, 1916): 415.

[43] Howe, *Confessions*, 253. Howe had interpreted his work at the People's Institute in relation to the broad question of public responsibility for the creative use of leisure-time in a democracy. "Leisure," *Survey* 31 (January 3, 1914), 415-16.

liberty.[44] More generally, Howe interpreted both domestic and international affairs in terms of a struggle between the people, on the one hand, and privilege and special interest groups on the other. The World War, he insisted, was "not a people's war."[45] They did not want it; it was unrelated to their lives and interests.

Howe feared that the United States, goaded by the privileged classes, was beginning to suffer from imperialist delusions. This was the gravest of all threats to democracy. If dollar diplomacy advanced further, the state department and military would be converted into agents of "Wall Street interests, concession seekers, munition makers and those who would exploit weaker peoples under the philanthropic assurance of promoting their development."[46] Imperialism, he insisted then and afterwards, was a false internationalism which thwarted domestic progress. Labor ultimately paid the price in money and blood. We would experience a domination of privilege and reaction beyond anything in the past if the "nation itself is made to serve the will of a small but interested class."[47]

World War I would be the last international frenzy of destruction only if imperialism was prevented; this, in turn, required the "abolition of privileges of any kind" in the relationship among nations. Howe expected Wilson and the United States to assume leadership in the establishment of an "idealistic peace". For a time he thought his hopes would be fulfilled. Howe believed, when the armistice was signed, that the "international millennium was at hand." It seemed that Wilsonian idealism, the Fourteen Points, would constitute the foundations for a permanent peace. Spheres of influence and closed doors would be abolished, liberty restored to subject nations, freedom of the seas assured, free trade proclaimed, and trouble spots like the Mediterranean supervised in the interests of "freedom and equality of opportunity to all."[48]

Through George Creel, Wilson's propaganda czar, Howe acquired an unofficial appointment to the Peace Conference. It was

[44] Frederic C. Howe, "The Flag and the Investor," *New Republic* 7 (June 17, 1916): 170, 171.

[45] Frederic C. Howe, *Why War?* (New York, 1916), 3.

[46] Frederic C. Howe, "Dollar Diplomacy and Financial Imperialism under the Wilson Administration," American Academy of Political and Social Science, *Annals* 68 (November 1916): 312.

[47] Frederic C. Howe, "Democracy or Imperialism—the Alternative that Confronts Us," American Academy of Political and Social Science, *Annals* 66 (July 1916): 253.

[48] Frederic C. Howe, "The Heart of the War," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 136 (April 1918): 734; "New Ideals for Peace," *Century Magazine* 96 n.s. 74 (May 1918): 97, 104; *Confessions*, 287. Howe's most ambitious attempt to describe the imperialistic origins of the War, and the fullest statement of his peace program appears in *The Only Possible Peace* (New York, 1919).

as if nothing he had known or believed had any relevance to reality. Fact and reason meant little at Paris. Evangelical Americans had no place there, least of all the scholar in disinterested pursuit of truth. Plunder and conquest were the realities and the "amateurs seeking to right the world by moralist appeals" looked absurd blowing their trumpets while the walls held firm.[49]

The War, all the sacrifice at home and abroad, had been in vain after all. The lessons of the Peace Conference were as valid here as in Paris. The evangelical and the scholar were dismal failures, if not curios. They were antediluvians who seriously believed that fact and morality controlled human affairs. The truth was that privilege could never be deposed by an appeal to truth and equity. These interested no one when "economic interests were at stake.[50]

The Ellis Island experience took on a new meaning. Howe had tried to humanize the bleak, oppressive atmosphere. He introduced educational and recreational diversions and generally tried to substitute kindness for the bureaucratic tyrannies to which aliens awaiting deportation were subjected. He allowed immigrants whom he felt were unjustly accused of immoral behavior to enter the country.[51] To protect the immigrant against exploitation he attempted to have the government usurp the prerogatives of a private food concession. His efforts were rewarded with the kind of hostility reserved for those accused of high crimes against society. One congressman, charging that he had failed to separate the sexes on the recreation grounds and had admitted prostitutes, described Howe as a " 'half-baked radical who has free-love ideas.' "[52]

Other works by Howe on the same subject include: "Reservoirs of Strife: The Distribution of Wealth in Relation to the Invisible Causes of War," *Survey* 33 (March 6, 1915): 614-15; "The Struggle for the Mediterranean," *Scribner's Magazine* 59 (May 1916): 621-24; "Incomplete Preparedness," *New Republic* 6 (February 26, 1916): 94-96; "Financial Imperialism," *Atlantic Monthly* 120 (October 1917): 477-84; "With the Armies of Occupation in Germany," *Scribner's Magazine* 65 (May 1919): 622-29; "Economic Foundations of the League of Nations," American Academy of Political and Social Science, *Annals* 83 (May 1919): 313-16; "The Syrian Imbroglio and the Turkish Settlement," *Nation* 111 (July 10, 1920): 37-38; "Some Overlooked Dangers in Foreign Investments," American Academy of Political and Social Science, *Annals* 138 (July 1929): 19-25.

[49] Howe, *Confessions*, 305.

[50] *Ibid.*, 322.

[51] Frederic C. Howe, "Turned Back in Time of War," *Survey* 36 (May 6, 1916): 147-46. A brief description of his campaign for " 'humanizing' " appears in, "Turning Ellis Island Inside Out," *Survey* 33 (October 17, 1914): 63.

[52] "The Bennet-Howe Controversy," *Outlook* 113 (August 2, 1916): 763; "Investigation of Ellis Island Proposed," *Survey* 36 (July 29, 1916): 445-46.

None of this troubled Howe so much as the impact of war hysteria upon the alien. His determination to protect the immigrant against the Department of Justice, and other zealous protectors of internal security, was his "worst offense." He felt a new emotion—hatred—for the patriots who used the national security as a guise for crushing nonconformist opinion. America had reverted backwards to a dark age, when men were persecuted and exiled for their opinions—"for believing in Government ownership of railroads; for having books in their possession on the Single Tax and on socialism."[53] The desecration of civil liberties, "an incident in the ascendency of business privileges and profits acquired during the war," changed Howe's views on the state.[54] All these years he had believed in the state as the embodiment of the collective ethic, the fountain of freedom and liberty in post-agrarian society. Now he realized that the state could crush as well as liberate:

> I can only speak for myself as to the war. It all but destroyed my picture of America. It does not come to life again. I felt a moral obligation for our personal and political liberties. Also for the protection of those men and women who were more courageous than I was. . . . And when I saw liberty laid prostrate by those from whom I had expected protection, when I found my kind of Americanism under suspicion, if not denounced as criminal, when I saw my government using its power in a hysteria of fear to crush civil and political liberties, when I saw these things, much of my belief in men, in the political state and in my own America all but died.[55]

Howe's disillusionment with the state had another source. He discovered bureaucracy. During the Ellis Island years his efforts to humanize the environment were constantly thwarted by "petty clerks." The government belonged, apparently, not only to privilege but to officialdom. He had exalted the administrative state—control by permanent, expert, and disinterested officials—but found instead "only a petty struggle of groups and individuals to retain and exalt their own power."[56]

11

Howe did not end his war against privilege or his quest for community. The vacuum created by loss of confidence in the state was filled by the cooperative movement. Leadership this time

[53] Frederic C. Howe, "Lynch Law and the Immigrant Alien," *Nation* 110 (February 14, 1920): 195.

[54] Howe, *Confessions*, 277.

[55] Howe, "Where are the Pre-War Radicals?," 50.

[56] Howe, *Confessions*, 255, 256.

would come from the producers—workers and farmers—rather than the expert and educated. He supported the Plumb Plan for government management of the railroads and aided the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in establishing a cooperative bank in Cleveland. In 1922 he participated in the establishment of the Conference for Progressive Political Action, leading to the organization of the Progressive Party two years later.[57]

The old strategy had been futile. Exhortation would never convince men of his class to give up their privileges. Justice was not given, it was taken. The antebellum "dream of order . . . in the city," was superceded by the "order of a class rather than a locality." Labor necessarily had to work against privilege and exploitation. Only the few could enjoy privilege. The liberal, therefore, belonged in the camp of the producers, whose instinct "would be to produce as much wealth as possible, to distribute it as equitably as possible; to insure a free field and no favors to themselves and their children."[58] Howe's convictions and class affiliation converged for the first time.

Producer hegemony would be achieved through the cooperative movement, rather than the political state. Cooperative institutions provided the foundation, not only for economic progress, but for a new way of life. They were a medium for self-expression and training in organizational technique. Representing a state within a state, they would enable workers and farmers to acquire political power. Cooperation seized Howe's imagination more than capitalism or socialism ever had. Through cooperation privilege would be eradicated, equalitarianism and social harmony achieved, but without bureaucratic controls. Howe's career implies that progressive idealism did not die in the 1920s; it changed in content and strategy.

Howe's repudiation of the welfare state in favor of cooperation suggests that, to some extent, he was finally liberated from Meadville. The evangelical impulse—the internalized moral norms expressed in a search for external authority as a source of order—had lost some of its potency. In the cooperative society self-autonomy superseded external authority. Indicative of Howe's new perspective was the elevation of Denmark over Germany as the model state. For the rest of his life he lauded Denmark as the

[57] Frederic C. Howe, "The Wage-Earner's Innings," *Independent* 87 (August 28, 1916): 297-98; "Wanted—A National Railroad Program," *Nation* 110 (May 29, 1920): 716-17; "The Necessity for Public Ownership of the Railroads," American Academy of Political and Social Science, *Annals* 76 (March 1918): 157-66; "The Railroads and the New Democracy," *Public* 21 (January 4, 1918): 14-17; *Confessions*, 329-37.

[58] *Ibid.*, 331, 334-35.

"most inviting field of political and sociological study that the Western World offers."[59]

It was somewhat ironic that Howe stumbled inadvertently into the final phase of his intellectual odyssey. His interest in Denmark and the cooperative movement was aroused, initially, by conversations with the Irish poet, George W. Russell (AE), and by peculiar markings on the eggs served in a London hotel during a postwar tour of Europe. He found that the eggs came from Denmark. The markings certified to their quality. His curiosity piqued, he visited Copenhagen, interviewed public officials, and left Denmark a convert to cooperation.[60]

As a Single-Taxer, Howe had long been critical of tenant farming and large-scale landholding in America.[61] The Danish system of dispersed, small-farm ownership made a strong impression. This was the economic foundation of cooperation and political democracy. Howe described at length Denmark's cooperative banking, agricultural, and consumer institutions. Combining economic, social, and educational functions, they were "almost coextensive" with the life of the citizen.[62] He urged for the United States the same system of cooperative enterprise, supplemented by state control of certain crucial functions. Howe emphasized, specifically, the need to socialize through cooperation or the state all credit, transportation, storage and processing facilities. An important feature of any program designed to eliminate privilege, monopoly, and farm tenancy was a land credit and colonization scheme. Denmark, Australia, and Ireland had already demonstrated the success of state-sponsored farm colonies.[63]

After several false starts Howe discovered the true substance of democracy. It consisted of cooperative self-autonomy, supplemented by state control of limited strategic functions. This meant, in essence, the transformation of the state from a "mere political agency into . . . a freely operating cooperative association of the most democratic sort." Cooperation, not the welfare state he had

[59] Frederic C. Howe, "The Most Complete Agricultural Recovery in History," American Academy of Political and Social Science, *Annals* 172 (March 1934): 123.

[60] Frederic C. Howe, *Denmark: The Cooperative Way* (New York, 1936), xiii, 1-3.

[61] Frederic C. Howe, "The Lure of the Land," *Scribner's Magazine* 46 (October 1909): 431-36; "The Problem of the American Farmer," *Century Magazine* 94, n.s. 72 (August 1917): 625-32.

[62] Howe, "The Most Complete Agricultural Recovery in History," 125.

[63] Frederic C. Howe, *The High Cost of Living* (New York, 1917); "A Constructive Program for the Rehabilitation of the Returning Soldiers," American Academy of Political and Social Science, *Annals* 80 (November 1918): 150-52; "Land Settlements and the Soldier," *Nation* 108 (March 22, 1919): 426-27; "The Soldier and the Land," *Nation* 108 (March 15, 1919), 391-92; *The Land and the Soldier* (New York, 1919); *Denmark: A Cooperative Commonwealth* (New York, 1921), ch. 13, "Some Lessons From Denmark."

once idolized, could minimize "those undemocratic elements which spring from entrusting power to a few persons; with endowing them with authority to do the thinking for the many."[64]

Another feature of Denmark which gratified Howe was its diminutiveness. He had always shown a preference for smaller political entities like the city-states of Greece and the Renaissance, or pre-Bismarck Germany. He equated this with creativity and, more important, with a community sense. His condemnation of imperialism was rooted, in part, in this preference for smallness. "Have we not," he asked, "exacted a senseless tribute not only from subject people but from the world as well by the assumption that civilization is promoted by bigness and population and power?"[65] A small country like Denmark made possible a "common objective." Government was "close to the people and reflective of their interest in an intimate neighborly way."[66] Howe ended as he began—in quest of community.

From a latter-day perspective, perhaps the most significant aspect of Howe's ideological mutations was his disillusionment with the proto-welfare state ideal. Like other urban progressives of the early twentieth century, he believed in the reality of a "public interest" which could be defined and implemented by a cadre of enlightened social technicians and experts. Democracy and social engineering could be reconciled because the public interest was rooted in the expansion of governmental welfare and service functions. But the World War I experience dramatized to Howe the conflict between democracy and the welfare state, between the principle of self-government and the creation of an administrative leviathan to achieve redistributive justice.

Government, he discovered, existed to serve the political and bureaucratic interests of which it was composed as well as the public; more important, government which possessed the authority to perform good works on a large scale could also oppress more effectively. Howe ultimately embraced the ideal of cooperative democracy because he recognized that as the administrative and judicial prerogatives of the state expand, administrative-judicial fiat tends to supersede family and local autonomy.

[64] Howe, *Denmark: The Cooperative Way*, viii, 10; "A Political Utopia," *Nation* 127 (August 22, 1928): 179. During the New Deal Howe served as Consumers' Counsel in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and was a member of the Consumers' Advisory Board of the National Recovery Administration. See Frederic C. Howe, "Watchdogs for the Consumer," *The Rotarian* 44 (February 1934): 29-31, 53-54. In 1935 he became special adviser to the Secretary of Agriculture and in 1937 was appointed consultant to the president of the Philippines on questions relating to cooperatives and farm tenancy.

[65] Howe, *Only Possible Peace*, 223.

[66] Howe, *Denmark: The Cooperative Way*, 21, 22.