

Creger, Ralph. *The Lord Will Wipe Them Out*. Secaucus, New Jersey: A Community Action Book, Distributed by Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1976, 210 pp.

Ralph Creger's book, *The Lord Will Wipe Them Out*, is a three dimensional book in that it deals with his own background and dedication to racial and poverty issues, an historical overview of the Office of Economic Opportunity and Community Action Programs, and finally, political corruption within government agencies, particularly during the Nixon Administration.

Ralph Creger was raised in Monroe, Iowa, a small rural community of 1300 population. He followed in his father's footsteps and worked for the Rock Island Railroad for twenty-five years. After working in Des Moines, Iowa as a dispatcher, he was transferred to Little Rock, Arkansas where he lived for ten years and finally terminated his railroad career to become involved in the war on poverty.

Little Rock was where Mr. Creger's political education really began. He was transferred to Little Rock in 1955 and observed the racial turmoil during the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School. While in Little Rock, Mr. Creger wrote two books, one of which dealt specifically with the issue of racial justice in Little Rock. Excerpts from these books were published in the Arkansas Gazette and certainly didn't endear him to Governor Orval Faubus, who Mr. Creger feels played a direct part in sabotaging Creger's efforts to make poverty and racial issues a part of his vocation. Arkansas Congressman Brooks Hays had encouraged and supported Creger's effort to find a place in a government agency. Mr. Hays and Mr. Creger both agreed that he would work well within the framework of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and shortly thereafter Creger received word from Congressman Wilbur Mills that he would be called to Washington in the near future for an interview in regard to his forthcoming appointment. Mr. Creger resigned his job with the railroad and waited for further word from Mills. It is at this point that Mr. Creger first became aware of the power, skill, and expertise involved in political warfare. As time passed, it became apparent that his appointment had been blocked. Mr. Creger feels

that the credit for this must be given to Governor Faubas because of his awareness of Mr. Creger's references to him in his books. It was only after Faubas announced that he would not seek re-election that Mr. Creger received an appointment to the Office of Economic Opportunity's Regional Office in Kansas City.

In May 1966, Mr. Creger reported for work and for his initial training period. O.E.O.'s purpose was to assist rural and urban communities in mobilizing their resources to fight poverty through Community Action Programs. Mr. Creger became an effective and productive member of the Region VII team, and even during the first year or two of the Nixon administration continued to enjoy some success. He was able to enlist the help of Rev. Donald Bakely, a Kansas City, Kansas minister who was directing the Kansas City churches in a massive volunteer effort to help the poor through Bakely's Cross-Lines project. By 1970, with Rev. Bakely's assistance, Mr. Creger was able to accomplish a similar project throughout the Midwest.

But the successes in Region VII were short-lived because the Nixon people soon infiltrated the ranks of O.E.O. Regional directors were replaced with people whose main goals were to destroy past successes and future efforts. Funds were misappropriated and misused. An example of this was the sabotage of the plan to co-ordinate the efforts of Community Action Programs and Jaycee Programs. After having been given permission to work out the details, Mr. Creger was told by the Region VII director that "there were no funds available", while at the same time this director's office was being renovated at the price of \$100,000, which was several times the \$5,000 Creger was requesting for his pilot project. The following year the national O.E.O. director made a \$275,000 grant directly to the Jaycees. It became quite apparent at this time (1973) that there was money available, but that it was being given to organizations with which the national director had been affiliated. Vast amounts of money went for research rather than to the Community Action Programs.

During this time, the O.E.O. was undergoing continual change. The reorganization didn't stop with the position of regional director. New positions and new regions were created in order to provide more patronage jobs for Nixon supporters. In

addition, highly paid employees were demoted to meaningless jobs. Activities in Region VII did not come to a complete standstill until January of 1973, when it was announced that O.E.O. was being dismantled and that O.E.O.'s only concern would be to help the Community Action Programs achieve an orderly "phase-out". This became a time of idleness and card-playing for O.E.O. employees in Region VII, but with the Watergate hearings came a hint of optimism and hope. O.E.O. was finally saved by court rulings and congressional actions, but with the change in our country's leadership, as a result of Watergate, also came a name change for O.E.O. Name identification is an important political device, and I personally feel that the change to Community Services Administration has been detrimental in that it served to destroy this identification mechanism.

Although there is a problem of objectivity with Mr. Creger's book, due to his personal involvement, the political tactics used by politicians in connection with federal agencies, and particularly O.E.O. in this case, cannot be disputed. Furthermore, since the book is a recollection of Mr. Creger's career experiences in Region VII of the Office of Economic Opportunity, it would be a grave omission to ignore the personal aspect of the book. His character, dedication and determination serve as an example of the personal strengths required for success and survival in a government agency during a state of turmoil. Mr. Creger's rural Iowa background, in contrast to his observations while serving with the Rock Island Railroad in Des Moines and Little Rock, not only brought the inequalities of the "haves" and "have-nots" to his attention, but further served to re-enforce his belief in equality for all people. The defensiveness and bitterness that is sometimes slightly less than obvious in Mr. Creger's writing undoubtedly stem from his idealistic motivation and dedication to poverty and racial issues.

As a learning tool, the book should be beneficial to anyone who plans to be involved with a service agency in that it does bring to light the importance of the political environment. Mr. Creger's book is invaluable in that it presents, although with some bias, a portrait of political situations that are present in government agencies. The success or failure of an agency is affected by those in power at a given time. Every administration does, in fact, have it's

pet programs. Mr. Johnson's was poverty; Mr. Nixon's obviously was not. An unsympathetic administration or one that employs outright harrassment, such as Mr. Creger and his fellow workers experienced, can be extremely detrimental to the programs of an agency and to the services that can be provided for those the agency is intended to benefit. Federal administrative changes are often accompanied by reorganization, and in extreme cases, as almost happened with O.E.O., agencies can be "reorganized" right out of existence.

In addition to exposing the corruptness of politics within agencies, Mr. Creger's book does what appears to be a very thorough job of explaining the basic principles of Community Action Programs and effectively dispelling the myth that it is a "give away" or welfare program. Since the program involves participation on the part of the poor, it not only serves to benefit the poor materially, but by eliminating total dependency it also serves to benefit them psychologically. Mr. Creger believes Community Action Programs to be the most beneficial of all government programs in alleviating poverty, and potentially they could be. The ideas are there, and there is dedication on the part of those directly involved, but public and political support is the essential element that seems to be lacking. The disorganization and lack of leadership during the Nixon years dealt a crippling blow to an agency that gave the poor a sense of control over what was happening to them. The loss of efficiency and the blatant misuse of funds during these years left scars that will take a tremendous amount of time and effort to heal.

In the forward of the book Hubert Humphrey says: "It is a story which should be read by legislators, administrators, and those contemplating a career in government service, and by anyone who wants a more humane and responsive society for his tax dollars." Even after taking into consideration the problem of objectivity and the geographical limitations of Mr. Creger's Midwest background and experience, there is much to be learned by reading Ralph Creger's book, *The Lord Will Wipe Them Out*.

Kansas State University

Sharon L. Mickey

Ginzberg, Eli (ed.). *Jobs For Americans*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976, vii+ 210 pp.

*Jobs For Americans* is the timely product of eight papers prepared by economists for a national conference on "Manpower Goals for American Democracy" at Arden House in May, 1976 in conjunction with the American Assembly. Ginzberg's assumption that the American economy has fallen short of its aim to provide productive jobs for all who want to work is an underlying current throughout the selections in the book. The problem of high unemployment accompanied by significant inflation, with emphasis on the recent period (1969-1976), is approached by discussions of the relative merits and "best mix" of demand management and manpower programs, two methods for effecting full employment. Federal administrative measures are analyzed by each author in an effort to place labor market structures and policies since the Employment Act of 1946 in relation to the goals of current manpower policies in the United States.

The thrust of *Jobs For Americans*, even given the slightly different orientations of the papers contained in it, is not sociological, but one of macroeconomic and microeconomic theoretical foundations. Yet the consistency of effort displayed in the book adds to its readability and allows at least two appealing elements for the sociologist to surface. First, the healthy use of historical examples and second, the descriptive narrative, often comparative in nature, are lucrative tools that have often been overlooked but aspired to in the sociology of work, occupations and professions, and their use by the authors in this book offers a linkage between the complementary studies of sociology and economics.

A brief highlighting of examples from the individual papers is in order. Abramovitz, who focuses on the relationship between, evaluation of, and prospects for aggregate demand policy and specific manpower programs, provides a historical-comparative analysis of demand management from the Truman administration through the Nixon administration.

Solow utilizes unemployment data, which he admits is not perfect, to provide a rudimentary comparison between the U.S.