

Chapter 1

The Lees in Historical Context: Moral Reform and the Origins of American Sociology

AWARDS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Lees were the founders of two professional associations, the Association for Humanist Sociology (AHS) in 1976 and the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) in 1953; since 1981 this latter association has honored others by giving an annual award in the Lee's name: "Established in 1981, this award is made in recognition of significant achievements, that over a distinguished career, have demonstrated continuing devotion to the ideals of the founders of the Society for the Study of Social Problems and especially to the humanist tradition in sociology, as exemplified in the contributions of Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee." The criteria for the award include the following: "These achievements may be in the areas of scholarly research, teaching or service leading to the betterment of human life. Recipients of the award must have demonstrated a commitment to social action programs that promote social justice."¹ This could include study of war and peace, religious conflict, or the mass media and propaganda as related to social problems and inequality including sexism, racism, and poverty. A decade prior to the establishment of this award Al was honored in 1971 for "his years of dedicated service to SSSP."²

A long-term friend and colleague of the Lees describes their achievements as follows: "In the history of American sociology, the Lees were among the first to appreciate the importance to the field of the study of social problems and to insist that the sociological perspective be broadened to enlist sociology in the development of social action programs that promote social justice. . . . The basis for the proposed [SSSP] award is not so much the dedication, enthusiasm and

commitment of the Lees to the SSSP as it is the well-known fact that they represent its ideals and aspirations and, indeed, did more than anyone else to define them."³ Betty and Al also were catalysts in the formation of the Clinical Sociological Association in 1978, later renamed the Sociological Practice Association.⁴ Al's presidential address to the Eastern Sociological Society, "The Clinical Study of Society," is mentioned frequently in discussions of the founding of this association.

Al was elected president of the American Sociological Association (ASA), the SSSP, the AHS, the Eastern Sociological Society, and the Michigan Sociological Society. Al was the second president of the ASA who was nominated by petition.⁵ Betty has also been president of the AHS, vice president of the SSSP, and for many years served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Eastern Sociological Society. In 1975 Betty and Al were made the first two honorary members of the Sociological Association of Ireland in recognition of their longstanding interest and research on the conflict there. "The Eastern Sociological Society recognized their partnership and contributions by awarding them jointly the 1974 Merit Award,"⁶ and in 1989 Betty was given an additional award by the ESS for "her many years of service to the Eastern Sociological Society and to a humanistic ideal of knowledge and practice."⁷ In 1990 they were jointly given the ASA Distinguished Career Award for the Practice of Sociology.

Even with all of these high offices and distinguished awards, neither of the Lees ever held a permanent position in a major graduate department. As noted earlier, Betty never held a full-time, tenure-track position, and Al held permanent faculty positions only at institutions—the University of Kansas, Wayne State University, Brooklyn College, and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York—all well outside the realm of the nation's most prestigious sociology departments. Being denied institutional support makes their accomplishments even more remarkable. Along with their other achievements, both Betty and Al became accomplished artists. In recent years, Betty has had public exhibitions of her works. In the Lees' dining room hangs a powerful oil painting by Al Lee vividly depicting the environmental ravages of the Pittsburgh steel industry.

ETHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

From the beginning Betty and Al Lee's careers have been firmly rooted in an explicit ethical position. The significance of this becomes apparent when we compare the Lees with leading nineteenth and early twentieth-century sociologists who preceded them: "From the

beginning social thought in the United States had its roots in Christian religion, especially Protestantism. . . . Nearly all of the major proponents of American sociological thought have hoped that sociology would contribute to the forming of a better world, even a utopia. Frequently they thought of their science as an instrument that would help carry forward the Christian religious promise."⁸

At the turn of the century, if sociology was taught in colleges and universities, it often was in conjunction with courses on charities and social welfare. And not surprisingly, many of the early sociology instructors had backgrounds in the clergy. Their backgrounds combined with the new social science to produce a discipline that had both moral and technical dimensions: "Ultimately, meliorist northern Protestants made their peace with Comtean Positivism, rejecting its agnosticism . . . but adopting its scientific outlook. They perceived the new discipline of sociology as both a social science and a source of moral regeneration."⁹

GOD AND SOCIOLOGY AT YALE

One famous nineteenth-century sociologist, William Graham Sumner, was an Episcopal clergyman who was later on the faculty at Yale. Sumner was of considerable importance to the Lees. A William Graham Sumner Club was founded to promote and honor his ideas. In 1940, Al Lee was named director of the club,¹⁰ and in 1941 and 1942 he served as editor of the club's bulletin. Sumner represents a complex case and thus there is some debate about his legacy. The Lees quote Sumner's comments on the abuses of capitalists that are similar to those of Marx: "Capital, as it grows larger, takes on new increments with greater and greater ease. It acquires a kind of momentum."¹¹ And in modern plutocracy "the real controlling force is wealth. . . . Modern plutocrats buy their way through elections and legislatures, in the confidence of being able to get powers which will recoup them for all the outlay and yield an ample surplus besides."¹² Sumner is quoted elsewhere by the Lees as saying: "It is inevitable . . . that the classes which constitute the masses should go on to win all the power which is thrown into their hands by the facts of the situation." And: "Industrial war is a sign of vigor in society. It contains a promise of a sound solution." According to the Lees, Sumner held that "militarism, expansion and imperialism all favor plutocracy" and oppose democracy.¹³ In the introduction to a collection of Sumner essays edited by the Lees, they again note Sumner's contention that an "imperial policy" on the part of the American government abroad was inconsistent with, and would destroy, de-

mocracy at home, and note also Sumner's contention that the United States is "under no obligation to maintain great armaments."¹⁴ Here the Lees quote Sumner's complaints about American environmental pollution, including this prophetic assessment: "We are . . . cutting down our forests with appalling waste, ruining the land, squandering our resources. The time will come when Americans will pay for all this."¹⁵

Others have emphasized additional and quite different components of Sumner's work. Sumner argued that workers could not ask the government for much protection or they would risk losing their rights as independent citizens and "throw the republic open to plutocracy."¹⁶ Sumner correspondingly had a firm belief in the capacity of human beings to exercise a free will. Thus no matter how good the intentions, no government controls should be designed to fetter the natural human capacity for free will and individual initiative: "Drawing primarily on Spencer and Darwin and on the Puritan aspect of his Protestant heritage, [he] produced a sociology that emphasized the doctrines of individualism and self-reliance."¹⁷ "[E]spousing the Puritan value of individualism—every man and woman in a personal relationship with God—Sumner denied that the state could act as a surrogate for upholding the utopian ideal of a Kingdom of Heaven on earth."¹⁸ Thus "Sumner's society is lacking in both love and compassion and is always severe in its demands."¹⁹ The fact that all people—the rich and the poor alike—were individuals, alone in their relationship with God, coincided nicely with the requirements of *laissez-faire* capitalism. Lester Ward was Sumner's chief intellectual opponent during the 1880s, for Ward was a firm believer in liberal social reform: "History, society, and culture were governed by laws, and therefore were subject to human direction."²⁰ Indeed, Ward called for "social engineering."²¹

For Sumner, monopolies and war represented irrational intrusions into the operation of an unfettered capitalist system, which he saw as most desirable. Given this jaundiced view of developments in capitalist society, not surprisingly Sumner did not want to die for it. The Lees have noted that Sumner apparently was opposed to war, refused to serve in the Union army, and instead pursued his studies abroad.²² The Lees' view of this Episcopalian sociologist from Yale is of considerable significance, for the strengths the Lees see in Sumner tell us as much about Al and Betty Lee as Sumner himself. This special affinity the Lees have had for Sumner's ideas may attest to the similarity in their backgrounds. Betty and Al, like Sumner, have been associated with both Yale as well as the Episcopal church, and have been unalterably opposed to war. This defense of Sumner also reflects

Al's dogged determination to support and defend those he believed to be politically and morally correct.

In defending his view, Al observed: "There are two W. G. Sumners. One was presented again and again by his student A. G. Keller, who made a career of reinterpreting Sumner's work, and one you can see by looking directly at the works of Sumner. Sumner was actually a radical who was a thorn in the side of Yale." Indeed, by looking at Sumner's *Folkways* we see a much different view of capitalism and classes than that of a Social Darwinist defending laissez-faire capitalism. Sumner speaks plainly: "There is no class which can be trusted to rule society with due justice to all, not abusing its power for its own interest. The task of constitutional government is to devise institutions which shall come into play at the critical periods to prevent the abusive control of the powers of a state by controlling classes in it."²³ Actually, there may be three W. G. Sumners: one as interpreted by Keller, and two very different Sumners seen by looking at different parts of his voluminous writing.

CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The lives and careers of the Lees, we will demonstrate, were much influenced by Christianity and Christian principles. And the early history of American sociology clearly shows how the Lees' predecessors in the discipline were influenced by these ideas. There is no doubt that the University of Chicago was the major American center for graduate training in sociology during the late 19th and early 20th century. And while Christianity seemed to encourage heartlessness among some scholars, in the hands of Albion Small (1854–1926) at Chicago a somewhat different theme was created. Small is known to have closed his sociology course with a prayer asking God to control social and economic activity. Small was the son of a Baptist minister and a clergyman himself.²⁴ Small's belief that sociology could be used to inform public policy places him much closer to Ward than to Sumner, and certainly close to the Lees. According to Small, "Sociology looks to the equalization of social relations [and was] the ally of any class which was temporarily at a disadvantage against any other class."²⁵ Elsewhere, he stated: "Indeed, sociology was called into existence by socialism, which has mercilessly exposed social evils, but . . . has not been equally positive in proposal of remedies . . . Socialism is nevertheless a challenge which society cannot ignore."²⁶ As early as 1895, Small wrote that the ideas of Karl Marx were among the most important of the 19th century, and thus, after the revolution in Russia, he felt these ideas would be greatly feared by the Christian

community. To combat Marxism, a Christian moral crusade was required to humanize and Christianize capitalism.²⁷ Thus, Small's position was conditioned not merely by justice but also by instrumental politics. We will demonstrate below that a similar commitment to equality, as well as a suspicion of Marxism, is also reflected in the lives of the Lees.

In addition to Small, the University of Chicago had several other Christian sociologists on its faculty during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Charles Henderson was a Christian sociologist who left a pastorate in Detroit to teach sociology at the university. Yet another Christian sociologist in the Chicago department at the turn of the century was George E. Vincent, son of a Methodist bishop.²⁸ Even during the 19th century, not all social scientists agreed with the religious foundations for sociological reasoning. For example, Franklin Giddings of Columbia University ridiculed Small's Christian socialist sociology.²⁹ For his part, Small vacillated: his own radical comments made him increasingly uncomfortable, because elites both within and outside the University of Chicago put great pressure on him to conform.

While the reform tradition of Small and Ward did not die, it took on a very different character during the Progressive Era, the first two decades of the twentieth century, when academics became major figures in the progressive movement. On the faculties of several prestigious universities, Edward Allsworth Ross (1866–1951) believed that capitalism would inevitably create inequality; he sought to counter the consequent class conflict with new methods of social control.³⁰ By this time Chicago sociologists increasingly insisted that building an objective science and not social reform was their top priority.³¹ This objectivism represented a rejection of the values of nineteenth-century American Protestantism.³² Thus, by the early 1900s, a new generation of sociologists was rebelling against the Protestantism of parents and teachers. During the 1920s, private funding agencies spurred the development of scientism and accelerated the movement away from religion. Correspondingly, in 1938, when *The Polish Peasant* was ranked by social scientists as the most influential work since the war, the Social Science Research Council [SSRC], originally funded by Rockefeller money, held a conference to reappraise it. In line with the demands of scientism, the conference severely criticized it for not being sufficiently rigorous and statistical.³³ In the chapters which follow we will see that the impact of research funding on the development of scientism in sociology has long been a complaint of the Lees.

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, the

University of Chicago could claim the top-ranked and most influential American sociology department.³⁴ In this department the drive toward science did not go unchallenged. Two important strains of thought supporting this challenge developed there, one theoretical, the other empirical. As for theoretical influences, from 1900 onward George Herbert Mead's (1863–1931) significance spread through his social psychology course, where he worked to transform the theory of symbolic interactionism.³⁵ Another Chicago sociologist, Robert E. Park (1864–1944), had worked as a journalist early in his life, but in 1914 joined the Chicago sociology department. Park became well known for his studies of race relations and was elected the first President of the Chicago Urban League.³⁶ He was a close associate of Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Institute and was also associated with Fisk University. Park has been described as an activist and “wrote a series of muckraking exposés of the Belgian colonial atrocities in the Congo for *Everybody's Magazine*.”³⁷ He had a firm commitment to alleviating the social problems of society and wrote discussions of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations, which was appointed to investigate and report on the causes of the Chicago race riot of 1919. He wrote approvingly that the “Chicago report is unique in one respect: More than any previous study it has succeeded in uncovering the sources of racial friction.”³⁸ Building on this study, he made detailed suggestions for the study of the Asian population in Pacific coast states, including firsthand information on community life through the collection of case studies and life histories. A productive collaborator with Park, Ernest Burgess also emphasized fieldwork and direct observation of urban social problems.³⁹ Burgess taught in the Chicago department from 1916 to 1951.

The humanist-scientist dispute continued during the 1930s at the University of Chicago, and University President Robert Hutchins claimed that if value-free modern scientists could be faulted, “it is only from the standpoint that rigorous analysis plays too small a role in it.”⁴⁰ Herbert Blumer, from Chicago's department of sociology, rejected the religious foundations of sociology,⁴¹ but in a lead article in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1931 singled out statisticians as the archetype for value-free scientists clinging too closely to facts and thus becoming mere “artisans,” rather than “scientists,” as they claimed to be.⁴² “Occasionally, to be sure, in the career of any science there may arise a crop of technicians coincident with the appearance of some new technique. . . . Such individuals may be called scientists because of academic affiliations; actually, they are mere artisans using the technique as a tool to the fulfillment of immediate ends.”⁴³

Later, Blumer criticized public opinion researchers for the rigidity

of their methodology and the "depressing frequency" with which social science methods are equated with the use of quantitative techniques.⁴⁴ Blumer became the primary spokesperson for the symbolic interactionist orientation and its emphasis on the use of fieldwork and participant observation, methods also championed by the Lees. Blumer later would become an ally of the Lees in many professional activities. Among these early sociologists there were all varieties of opinion on religion, social reforms, and the scientific method. Nonetheless, as the 20th century wore on, the patterns of beliefs among social scientists began to narrow as a more definite disciplinary normative structure was being developed.

SOME CONSEQUENCES OF CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY

After his 1929 appointment at Duke, Charles Elwood indicated he would hire no one who was not "an avowed Christian."⁴⁵ There were many Christian sociologists from which he could choose. E. A. Ross "hoped to build a Christian society, using sociology as a major resource. . . . In Ross's evolutionary scheme of things, Christianity was the highest stage of religion in a civilization that had reached the highest stage of development."⁴⁶ Ross also judged that for this stage of development: "The right kind of propagators were to be found in only two collectivities: native-born white Americans and Nordic immigrants. Jews, Italians, southeastern Europeans, and Asiatics would have to be disregarded as marriage partners by the favored Anglo-Saxons."⁴⁷ Thus the individualism of Sumner is joined by the blatant racism of Ross. Richard T. Ely (1854–1943), at the University of Wisconsin, was another Christian sociologist who, like Small, espoused a type of socialism. Early in their careers the Lees would come to a similar conclusion. But in Ely's view, the "new ecclesiastical welfare state would be exclusively Protestant, admitting to full citizenship only those who exhibited the requisite signs of visible saintliness, and encouraging the unregenerate to emulate them."⁴⁸

In 1893, Ely helped establish the American Institute of Christian Sociology, "a society devoted to applying a distinctly socialist version of Christian teaching to relations between labor and capital."⁴⁹ He had earlier been involved with the prolabor Episcopal Christian Social Union. During the late 1890s Ely was involved in founding yet another professional association, the Social Reform Union. Along with other social scientists he was joined by well-known social reformers, including Jane Addams, Clarence Darrow, and Eugene Debs. The goal of this group was nothing less than to influence the policies of both major political parties so that significant progressive

reforms could be enacted. These reforms included opposition to imperialism and commitment to public ownership of many monopolies. The efforts of Ely and others caused concern among more conservative social scientists and none of these organizations long endured.⁵⁰ The chapters which follow demonstrate the great importance the Lees have attached to the creation of reform-minded professional associations. Unlike these pioneer social science reformers such as Ely, the Lees founded reform-oriented professional associations with considerable durability.

During the late nineteenth century, summary dismissal from a university post was increasingly the object of collective outrage among these social scientists. There was growing support among social scientists for academic freedom for university professors, which produced ironic consequences. The justification for this newfound demand for academic freedom was an increasing claim to objectivity and value neutrality among social scientists whereby these professionals could police themselves.⁵¹ Ely's career is illustrative of these changes. There were considerable pressures on Ely to conform to the demands of his more conservative colleagues. Growing out of his support of liberal reforms and appeals to the general public, Ely was investigated by the administration of his university and ousted by colleagues at other universities from his position as an officer of the American Economic Association. Chastened by these developments, Ely thereafter "relinquished his claim to activism, he exchanged advocacy for acceptability."⁵² During much of the twentieth century, the Lees championed the cause of academic freedom much like many of their predecessors, but rejected out of hand the price of value neutrality.

THE GENERATION GAP AND THE BEGINNING CRACKS IN CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY

The typical alternative of those rejecting Christian sociology was to adopt a value-free, objective sociology dedicated to precise empirical observation. This growing generation gap can be seen in the careers of two Chicago-trained sociologists who were at the peak of their careers when the Lees entered the profession in the 1930s: Edwin H. Sutherland and Luther L. Bernard. As could be expected at the time when Sutherland and Bernard entered graduate study in sociology in the first two decades of the 20th century, both came from families with the same type of traditional Protestant values. Edwin Sutherland was reared by a father who was a domineering, sober, and religious minister-educator.⁵³ In 1906, when the younger Sutherland first ar-

rived at the University of Chicago for graduate training in sociology, he studied under Henderson, who as a committed Christian felt that religion should guide all intellectual activities. Bernard was in the same cohort of Chicago graduate students. Bernard's father has been described as a Baptist and a "petty tyrant," which caused his son to lead an adult life opposed to conservatism and religious orthodoxy and hostile to organized religion.⁵⁴

Bernard's first real intellectual stimulation came during his college years from contacts with two Darwinists who were completely opposed by church officials.⁵⁵ Unlike Sutherland, from the beginning of his graduate studies at Chicago Bernard disliked Henderson.⁵⁶ By the later phases of his graduate training Sutherland also began to reject both the influences of Henderson and that of his own father.⁵⁷ Bernard received his Ph.D. from Chicago in 1911. Later he hoped to be hired by the University of Chicago, but in the mid-twenties he was vetoed by Ellsworth Faris, a former missionary who was then department chair.⁵⁸ A decade later Sutherland was hired by Chicago, but his contract was not renewed while Faris was still chair.

Yet if Sutherland and Bernard were similar in some ways, in many others they were different. It is instructive to see how each approached the newly accepted canon of objectivity and value neutrality. Describing these two careers provides a comparison with the life and work of Betty and Al Lee. This comparison will further our understanding of the social context in which the Lees began their careers, as well as the role of criticism, conflict, and reward and punishment existing in the academic community. The Lees always strongly rejected this developing value-free perspective, much as had an earlier generation of Christian sociologists.

SUTHERLAND'S ALTERNATIVE TO CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY

Edwin Sutherland clearly thought of himself as diametrically opposed to the Christian role models provided by his father and Charles Henderson. *The Professional Thief*, an often-cited example of value-free analysis and careful empirical description, was published by Sutherland in 1937.⁵⁹ This study illustrates Sutherland's famous differential association theory of criminal behavior, which holds that human actors essentially are prisoners of their social environment. This book became the benchmark for the study of criminal careers by making no value judgments, much as one would in studying any other professional career.

Curiously, Sutherland's other research on sexual psychopath laws shows no such dispassionate analysis and reflects many obvious lapses

in judgment, suggesting that his reputation for careful empirical observation and measurement has been highly overrated. Sutherland appears to have ignored letters from other scholars warning him that he was on the wrong course in his psychopath legislation research. For example, he neglected to include all the states that had passed such laws, incorrectly blamed psychiatrists for such legislation, and also claimed that serious crimes caused the passage of such laws even though the crimes occurred *after* the laws had been passed.⁶⁰ Widely accepted explanations for these lapses included Sutherland's concern that these laws abridged constitutional freedoms and his contempt for the psychiatric ideology they reflected. So it appears that Sutherland's values got the best of him and seriously distorted his analysis. Rejecting Christianity appeared easier for him than avoiding all moral value judgments.

Sutherland passionately rejected out of hand all except social causes of crime. In developing his own theoretical understanding of crime he again demonstrated that he was far from being value-free, for he rejected consideration of both economic and psychiatric theories of crime: "Poverty seldom forces people to steal or become prostitutes in order to escape starvation."⁶¹ In his view economic theories of crime were not even applicable to corporate crime.⁶² He even questioned the integrity of Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, whose research indicated some significance in biological causes of delinquency: "Quite simply, Sutherland went so far as to imply that the Gluecks had fudged their data."⁶³ Sutherland's intellectual fervor and disciplinary boundary maintenance are clearly reflected in the following passage: "There is no more reason for turning over to the psychiatrist the complete supervision of a criminal who is found to be psychopathic than for turning over to the dentist the complete supervision of a criminal who is found to have dental cavities."⁶⁴

Marshall Clinard recalled that Sutherland became increasingly anti-psychiatric as his career progressed. "The first edition of his textbook in 1924 was a multiple-factor approach which gave the same weight to psychological factors as to others. But if you trace his ideas through the different editions you will see that he became more anti-psychological."⁶⁵ Indeed, Sutherland's whole career was devoted, in one way or another, to a political and emotional defense of the discipline of sociology. Sutherland also defended the prerogatives of sociology in the study of crime against those of law, as seen in his famous debate with Paul Tappan. While the lawyer-sociologist Tappan maintained that only offenses that resulted in a criminal conviction could be properly referred to as crime,⁶⁶ Sutherland asserted that all harmful behavior of business leaders where any type of penalty existed

could be referred to under the general heading of white-collar crime.⁶⁷ Sutherland insisted on a behavioral rather than a legalistic definition of white-collar crime and thus all this activity comes under the professional purview of sociologists.

Along with his strident defense of sociology, Sutherland appears to have cared deeply about victims of white-collar crime. He questioned the patriotism of corporate leaders and even compared them with Nazis, for he felt they endangered the capitalist system itself.⁶⁸ In 1939, the Lees, with their very new Ph.D.s, were pleased to hear Sutherland's criticisms of the greed and law violation of American corporations, which was the theme of his American Sociological Society (ASS) presidential address. Sutherland's obvious moral passion impressed the Lees much more than his claims of value neutrality. The Lees quote one of Sutherland's prophetic conclusions which envisioned a more just society: "The violations of antitrust law by large business concerns . . . have made our system of free competition and free enterprise unworkable. We no longer have competition as a regulator of economic processes; we have not substituted efficient government regulation. We cannot go back to competition. . . . We must go forward to some new system—perhaps communism, . . . perhaps much more complete government regulation than we have now."⁶⁹ On the other hand, Sutherland celebrated the expertise of the professional thief Broadway Jones and gave no consideration to such thieves' victims.⁷⁰ Sutherland did no better with violent crime:

Charges of forcible rape are often made without justification by some females for purposes of blackmail and by others, who have engaged voluntarily in intercourse but have been discovered, in order to protect their reputations. Physicians have testified again and again that forcible rape is practically impossible unless the female has been rendered practically unconscious by drugs or injury; many cases reported as forcible rape have certainly involved nothing more than passive resistance. Finally, statutory rape is frequently a legal technicality, with the female in fact a prostitute and taking the initiative in the intercourse.⁷¹

While Sutherland attacked women and corporate criminals, he never criticized the discipline and always championed it. Predictably, he was widely respected by his colleagues. Sutherland was elected President of the ASS in 1939 and President of the prestigious Sociological Research Association in 1942, a group that denied Bernard membership. If the Lees were inspired by Sutherland's moral and intellectual passion, they could also easily see that his claims of value neutrality were just that, claims and nothing more.

LUTHER L. BERNARD AND SECULAR HUMANISM

L. L. Bernard was a contemporary of Sutherland's, as well as a classmate and long-time friend. Bernard was an extreme behaviorist, environmentalist, and an outspoken critic of the Chicago sociology department.⁷² Bernard demanded a sociology that was more quantitative.⁷³ He felt sociology should be applied to human values and could provide an "objective standard of social control."⁷⁴ For Bernard, "Sociology is in large measure a response to this demand for effective and functional unity in the world under the guidance of science."⁷⁵ In other words, science could provide the ethical guidance that religion could not. As an example of this guidance, he criticized the New Deal for not being radical enough for his tastes.⁷⁶ In this way, Bernard contrasted his own brand of scientific objectivity with value neutrality, which he rejected.

Bernard was elected president of the ASS in late 1931 and in this role helped to sever the association's ties with the University of Chicago sociology department and its journal the *American Journal of Sociology* (AJS). In its place, the *American Sociological Review* (ASR) was established as the association's journal. Bernard wanted the ASS constitution revised to make the society more democratic and opposed hiring a paid executive secretary. As ASS president, Bernard proposed 1) open committee meetings, 2) a new constitution, 3) unrestricted membership, 4) more women on the programs and on association committees, and 5) recommended that the association "should provide more guidance to society in a time of crisis."⁷⁷ These proposals were much like those of Al Lee when he was elected ASA president over four decades later. In 1933, the association adopted a new constitution, written largely by Bernard which allowed for greater democracy, including regional representation at every level; in addition, nominations were henceforth to be allowed from the floor at the annual meetings, and a new association journal was established that was independent of the University of Chicago: "Behind these questions lay more important ones concerning the nature and control of the discipline."⁷⁸ Other sociologists wanted to keep the association free of social activism and the humanistic emphasis of earlier Chicago sociology. Due to such disputes, Bernard ultimately resigned from the association in 1938.

The opposite of Sutherland, Bernard's contributions to sociology are largely forgotten, including his original version of *The American Sociologist* (TAS), which he founded in 1938 and continued until 1947. Toward the end of his career, his health failing, he could no longer continue this publication and it folded. The explicit purpose of

his *TAS* was to serve as a "medium for discussion of outstanding professional problems in sociology."⁷⁹ The journal had few prestigious editorial supporters, although it had many such subscribers. The original *TAS* criticized an American Sociological Society proposal to have active and nonvoting, associate members and argued for representation of regional associations on the ASS executive committee. Indeed, the former plan was never implemented and the latter was. *TAS* editorial statements condemned value-free sociology. Moreover, Bernard obviously considered foreign policy relevant for sociology. In 1945, he complained about the willingness of allied governments to cooperate with Nazis as a way of countering the Soviet Union. When a new *TAS* was begun in 1965, no recognition was given to the earlier version. In fact, Talcott Parsons, the new *TAS* editor, noted that it was "an entirely new venture,"⁸⁰ which of course it was not. If others ignored Bernard's *TAS*, the Lees did not. They commented on Bernard's failure to maintain this "rebel" journal, standing alone as it attempted to do without a professional association to give it nurturance and support.⁸¹

Despite all his efforts, "Bernard left no school, nor a radical tradition."⁸² Perhaps Bernard has been forgotten because his career was so filled with contradictions. For example, at various times he appeared to support women, at other times to attack them.⁸³ While he endorsed the use of statistical techniques, when foundations expressed an interest in such research he rejected their participation out of hand. Bernard rejected the support or, more precisely, the controls exercised by the foundations. In his 1932 ASS presidential address he concluded: "I have little sympathy with research projects that grow out of an institution's or a person's desire to get money from a foundation."⁸⁴ As Vidich and Lyman have observed, Bernard seemed trapped between "the bureaucratic mentality of statisticians" and his commitment to creativity.⁸⁵ These criticisms of the professional association and of foundations would be echoed a generation later by Betty and Al Lee.

From these two cases we can see that neither Sutherland nor Bernard actually practiced a value-free sociology. While the career of Sutherland might make it appear that a truly value-free sociology is impossible, nonetheless the value-free posture has thrived. Clearly, both Sutherland and Bernard distrusted women and said as much. Perhaps most importantly, one criticized the profession and the other defended it against all outsiders. Both of these early twentieth-century sociologists have something in common with the Lees. For example, Sutherland was a fearless critic of the power of corporations, which the Lees as newcomers to the profession greeted with great enthusi-

asm. As a reformer with much in common with the Lees, Sutherland's complaints were that the corporations were corrupting and destroying a truly capitalistic economy. For his part, Bernard not only was ready to criticize leaders of business and government, he was just as ready to criticize the profession. As we will see, Betty and Al Lee have been more like Bernard than Sutherland with regard to issues of criticism.

THE WANING OF CHICAGO SOCIOLOGY

By the early 1950s, the influence of Columbia University and Harvard began to surpass that of Chicago. The focus of study of the Chicago department continued to be dictated by urban social problems, including crime, poverty, and the lives of Black Americans.⁸⁶ Instead of developing a new tradition, the leaders of the SSSP drew on Chicago sociology and worked against heavy odds to maintain its traditions. Betty and Al and the other early leaders felt that the ASA discouraged social problems research and humanistic ideals and that this bias was well represented at Columbia and Harvard and "personified by Talcott Parsons, Paul Lazarsfeld and George Lundberg."⁸⁷ Howard Becker's study of the process of becoming a marihuana user, published in an early issue of the SSSP journal, *Social Problems*, clearly reflects the influence of his Chicago training.⁸⁸ It involved fieldwork among marginalized individuals using symbolic interactionism as a guide to both data collection and analysis. A study of the permanent black male underclass by Harold Finestone was written while a graduate student at Chicago. He describes the tastes and preferences of black male drug users, including the value they place on their "kicks" and "hustle."⁸⁹ Both are described as a cultural preference, as are tastes for expensive clothing and the use of personal charm, together with a "large, colorful, and discriminating vocabulary." All are portrayed from the drug users' point of view as a "gracious work of art" and one finds no hint of either pity or contempt in this analysis. Finestone's study reflects the fieldwork and race relations tradition of Chicago sociology, as well as analysis based on the symbolic interactionist perspective. By contrast, Harvard and Columbia were never interested in Black Americans.⁹⁰ At Harvard, Talcott Parsons became the primary proponent of structural functionalism, carried on by his able student Robert Merton at Columbia. Columbia also could boast Paul Lazarsfeld, a leading proponent of scientific sociology.

Robert S. Lynd, a colleague of Merton and Lazarsfeld at Columbia, is well known for his book *Knowledge for What?*⁹¹ Here Lynd distinguishes between "scholars" working on abstract intellectual

riddles aloof from society and its problems as opposed to “technicians” mired in the practical affairs of humankind.⁹² Originally trained as a Christian minister, Lynd deplored the reluctance of social scientists to become fully involved in the human enterprise by claiming to be disinterested observers. He noted that this avoidance of “what ought to be” actually assumed that the prevailing order was the most desirable state of affairs.⁹³ Lynd emphasized the contradictions inherent in American life: poverty is thought to be deplorable yet impossible to erase; total honesty is considered the best policy but in actual business affairs is recognized as naive and impossible; equality is prized even while extremes of inequality are everpresent and growing. Lynd formulated a number of “outrageous hypotheses” dealing with both society and social science, illustrated by the four listed below:

The chance for the survival of democracy and the prospect of increased human welfare would be enhanced by explicit recognition of the fact that men are unequal; by the discovery and elimination of cultural causes of inequality.⁹⁴

Private capitalism does not operate, and probably cannot be made to operate, to assure the amount of general welfare to which the present stage of our technological skills and intelligence entitle us; and other ways of managing our economy need therefore to be explored.⁹⁵

Current social science plays down the omnipresent fact of class antagonisms and conflicts in the living all about us. . . . The body of fact and theory around the highly dynamic situation of class conflict will have to be much more realistically and centrally considered if social science is to deal adequately with current institutions.⁹⁶

It is possible to build a culture that in all its institutions will play down the need for and the possibility of war.⁹⁷

The work of scholars such as Lynd, Sutherland, and Bernard provide a reflection of the state of the conflict in sociology between the value-neutral and the value-committed positions held at the time the Lees were entering the profession. Lynd’s book was published near the beginning of the Lees’ careers. With its calls for equality and peace it had a significant impact upon their thinking. In the Lees’ hands, Lynd’s *Knowledge for What?* was translated into publications with titles such as the question, *Sociology for Whom?*⁹⁸ and then answered with *Sociology for People*.⁹⁹

C. WRIGHT MILLS AND ALVIN GOULDNER: A NEW GENERATION OF AMERICAN RADICALS

In the early 1940s, shortly after the Lees began their careers, another prominent sociologist entered the field. He was C. Wright Mills,

born in Waco, Texas, to Roman Catholic parents. He attended both parochial and public schools and was equally lonely and unhappy in both.¹⁰⁰ His first real happiness came during his undergraduate years at the University of Texas. Later, during graduate study at the University of Wisconsin, he almost instantly became the department's star student, publishing numerous term papers in major journals. One of the first of these, "The Professional Ideology of Social Pathologists," was a biting critique of the domination of rural Christian ideology in the sociological analysis of social problems.¹⁰¹ Similar to Giddings, Sutherland, and Bernard before him, Mills had great reservations about the significance of Christianity in the quest for human freedom. Moreover, Mills criticized the clergy for not publicly condemning the military definition of reality.¹⁰² Like the Lees, Mills demanded that social science address social problems with a critical eye.

Mills had no illusions about communism as a political and economic system—a skepticism shared by the Lees. From the beginning Mills dismissed both the leaders of capitalism and communism as domineering autocrats.¹⁰³ In addition, Mills opposed WWII, for he saw "little difference between Hitler's Germany and Roosevelt's America."¹⁰⁴ Unlike Marxists, Mills was not a proponent of revolution and argued that economic power is subordinate to legal and social relations, with business, as well as government and military leaders, actually running the nation. Mills demanded freedom for all people and thus the determinism of Marxism was far from his ideal. He rejected the possibility of a value-free science.¹⁰⁵ Often sociologists confined themselves to grand and abstract theory unconnected to the real world, reflected, he argued, in the work of Talcott Parsons, or to microscopic statistical techniques also unconnected to actual human problems.¹⁰⁶ Mills increasingly criticized intellectuals for their failure to help influence society. In *Listen Yankee*¹⁰⁷ and *The Causes of World War III*,¹⁰⁸ Mills directed his message to the general public. He published frequently in nonsociological journals and magazines, which was uncharacteristic of most sociologists who were his contemporaries.¹⁰⁹ Like Bernard, Mills hoped that sociology could provide guidance to a truly democratic state, precisely the goal of the Lees.

After the Holocaust, the pervasive cultural relativism of the allegedly value-free sociology came increasingly under attack. Could one actually study Nazism and the Holocaust without making value judgments regarding these atrocities? And were the practices of the Third Reich merely different than other cultures of the world, but no better and no worse? Surely not. By isolating human values from science, Alvin Gouldner concluded:

I believe that, in the end, this segregation warps reason by tinging it with sadism and leaves feeling smugly sure only of itself and bereft of a sense of common humanity. [Gouldner continues by observing that if students are not apprised of the values of the researcher this would] usher in an era of spiritless technicians who will be no less lacking in understanding than they are in passion, and who will be useful only because they can be used. . . . If sociologists ought not express their personal values in the academic setting, how then are students to be safeguarded against the unwitting influence of these values which shape the sociologist's selection of problems, his preferences for certain hypotheses or conceptual schemes, and his neglect of others. For these are unavoidable and, in this sense, there is and can be no value-free sociology.¹¹⁰

Gouldner was a graduate of Columbia University following WWII. He was extremely critical of the work of Talcott Parsons and noted that such work as his with its emphasis on order "can do no other than accept the kind of order in which it finds itself."¹¹¹ He also noted that the Parsonians in the ASA had repeatedly nominated Parsons for president even after two defeats and finally pitted him against a likely loser to insure an easy victory.¹¹² Yet Gouldner was also a critic of Marxism, at least as practiced in the Soviet Union. In Marxism he found essential contradictions stressing both freedom and determinism. He argued that this could be expected since contradictions are an essential part of human existence. His obituary, published in *Transaction* magazine, included his initial editorial statement of purpose for the publication which he helped establish: "*Transaction* attempts to span the communication gap between two communities now poorly connected . . . sociology—and the general public. . . . The main function of social science is to help men understand and solve the problems of modern societies,"¹¹³ including racial segregation. Gouldner was vitally interested in applied sociology that would deal with social problems, including reducing tensions through work in race relations.¹¹⁴ As we will see below, the parallels between the Lees and Mills, and Gouldner are remarkable. All have been committed to refuting the possibility of a value-free sociology, committed to the use of sociology to solve social problems, and critical of the contributions of Talcott Parsons.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF VALUE-FREE SOCIOLOGY

For much of his career at Columbia University Lynd felt isolated and unappreciated by his colleagues.¹¹⁵ For their part Bernard, Mills, and Gouldner were all considered outsiders from the sociological

establishment and, thus in spite of all their efforts, allegedly value-free neutrality was spread widely in the profession. In a 1953 recording containing advice from 20 former American Sociological Association (ASA) presidents, only Harry Pratt Fairchild mentioned a concern for social justice.¹¹⁶ All others emphasized the need for a value-free science. Frank W. Hankins noted the discipline's passage from moral reform to scientific measurement: "Yet we have learned much in fifty years. We now seek understanding rather than reform or uplift. Statistical competence has become a professional necessity."¹¹⁷ Leonard S. Cottrell mentioned this first requirement, "A thorough grounding in both quantitative and qualitative research methodology and research design. This includes sufficient competence in mathematics."¹¹⁸ George A. Lundberg agreed and advised new sociologists: "get as soon as possible, a thorough grounding in logic, mathematics, and semantics. . . . [and] if you feel you already know the answers and merely want a pulpit from which to expound them, keep out of the profession of research and teaching in academic institutions."¹¹⁹ For Lundberg there was a belief that, almost like a secular religion, "science could save us."¹²⁰ Al and Betty later would reprint a Lundberg article using this line of reasoning as a foil for their own ideas.

Yet Ernest W. Burgess, who was to become the first president of the Society for the Study of Social Problems started by the Lees, found these new priorities somewhat troubling: "Statistics, has in recent years had a tremendous development. At present it overshadows the other method, that of case study. This imbalance greatly hampers the progress of sociology and should be corrected."¹²¹ And finally only Fairchild noted the anticommunist hysteria and political oppression of the early 1950s: "There will be many temptations and opportunities to relax your standards in the interest of recognition, preferment, or even pecuniary compensation. Just now in this year 1953 there are especially powerful inducements to sacrifice our ideals on the altar of personal tranquility and security. Expediency presses you to trim your sails to the winds of orthodoxy, conformity, and subservience. Betrayal of your profession lies in that quarter."¹²²

In stressing their value-free purity, none of these other former ASA presidents seemed to recognize the scourge of McCarthyism sweeping the nation at the time. These comments of the leaders of the profession provide a clear indication of the fate of the perennial conflict between value-neutrality and value-commitment in the discipline. In the chapters which follow we will see how the Lees attempted to address attacks on individual liberty and value-commitment in sociology, again placing them at some distance from the mainstream sociology of the time. During this period Howard P. Becker wrote

that "the sociologist is resigned to the fact that the age of prophecy is over. . . . In the scientific role, prophecy has no place; prediction must be our guide."¹²³

VALUE-FREE SOCIOLOGY AND INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

William Ogburn was a prominent University of Chicago sociologist who throughout WWII maintained a "studied silence" regarding Nazism, for to criticize it would have violated his earlier public commitment to an objective, value-free sociology outlined in his 1929 ASS presidential address.¹²⁴ Admittedly, he was not alone, for between 1933 and 1947 the *American Journal of Sociology* published only two articles on National Socialism. If Ogburn made no public utterances on Nazism, in more private communications his attitudes became clearer. In a letter to a friend in 1930 concerning possible faculty recruitment Ogburn wrote: "Another possibility is Louis Wirth at Tulane. He has a very keen mind. He is a Jew, however."¹²⁵ In his diary his views became even clearer. There he complained that it was not possible to say any "kind words" about Hitler without being condemned.¹²⁶ Here he even admitted grudging admiration for the efficiency of the Nazi propaganda machine. In yet another entry he asked himself "why I have to be so damned nice to the Jews if I do not enjoy them."¹²⁷ Ogburn's silence, masking an underlying anti-Semitism, illustrates both the heartlessness and deception of the value-free mythology always condemned by the Lees.

In the chapters which follow we will show that there was considerable personal conflict between the Lees and Talcott Parsons. This same conflict involving Parsons is found in the work of both Mills and Gouldner. Just senior to the Lees, Parsons began teaching sociology at Harvard University in 1931. Buxton and Turner report that during WWII Parsons engaged in many activities relating to national defense.¹²⁸ We will see that during the 1930s and 1940s the Lees developed a critical interest in propaganda. Parsons did as well. But their methods of approaching this subject could not have been more different. For example, in 1940 and 1941 Parsons was a regular commentator on the news over a radio station and became a contributor to the American war propaganda effort itself. During one of these broadcasts he argued that the Axis alliance with Japan represented "an explicit and direct challenge" to the very existence of American democracy.¹²⁹ As will be seen in Chapter 2, the Lees were pacifists during all of their adult lives. On the other hand, in a 1940 speech to a rally of Harvard students sympathetic to military intervention, Parsons claimed such noninterventionist positions represented a threat