Vicos as Cold War Strategy: Anthropology, Peasants and ‘Community Development’¹

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ABSTRACT: This article examines how anthropology’s emphasis on the traditional values of peasants reflected the general precepts of ‘modernization theory’, the dominant development discourse of the Cold War era. It explores how such ideas lent credibility to the U.S. strategy of ‘community development’ as a central part of its response to radical rural change. Special attention is paid to the Cornell-Peru Project at Vicos in the Peruvian highlands, which attained legendary status as a case of applied anthropology, but is here examined in relationship to the strategies of the U.S. power elite and Cold War government policies.

KEYWORDS: modernization, applied anthropology, peasants, community development, Cold War

Introduction

Despite the long standing role of peasant societies in human economic and political development, peasants themselves did not become an explicit subject of modern anthropological study until just after the Second World War (Foster 1967: 4). Thus, when Ralph Linton had published The Study of Man in 1936, there was no mention of peasants in the index. Twelve years later, George Foster, then Director of the Smithsonian’s Institute of Social Anthropology and author of a classic monograph on the Mexican community of Tzintzuntzan (Foster 1948), still wrote of rural Mexico’s ‘folk economy’, (Foster 1948) and, through the early 1950s, the few articles on peasants that appeared in anthropological journals still generally referred to them largely in terms of ‘folk culture’ (Lewis 1955: 145).

The timing of the new post-war focus on peasants, which is scarcely accounted for in any major work on anthropological theory (e.g., Harris 1968), cannot therefore be seen as a logical development of anthropology’s theoretical history. On the contrary, it was a product of the discipline’s place in the historical development of Western political economy and specifically of the impact of the Cold War on the social sciences (see Nader 1997; Price 2004). As such, the growing interest in peasants that characterized anthropology—and that led to such famous projects as the Cornell-Peru Project at the Andean hacienda community of Vicos, to be discussed below—was associated, openly or implicitly, with ‘modernization theory’, an influential body of writing through which Western academics and policy-makers described certain goals as desirable for the developing world (cf. Latham 2000), which was largely dominated by peasant communities.

However, writing on modernization was also a part of the West’s strategic and ideological response to a post-war world of insurgent peasants whose aspirations filled it with profound anxiety (Ross 1998b, Cumings 1998). These aspi-
rations—and Western apprehensions—had been growing for decades. Challenges to U.S. and European colonialism had been evident prior to the Second World War and had even continued during it. It was not surprising, therefore, that the West’s planning for the post-war era had often focused less on the immediate task of how to defeat Nazi Germany than on how, after that eventual defeat, to contain the Soviet Union and minimize its growing influence in the Third World. Thus, as early as 1941, even before entering the war, the U.S. had joined the U.K. in planning for the long-term financial stability of the world capitalist economy. By the summer of 1944, the two allies had forged their chief institutional mechanisms to achieve this at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire.

The ultimate importance of the so-called Bretton Woods institutions—the IMF and the World Bank—reflected the fact that, in contrast to the pre-war years, the threat posed by the socialist model of development then had to be seen in terms of its potential attractiveness to anti-colonialist movements throughout Africa and Asia. From this point of view, the triumph of the Chinese communists in 1949 fuelled a sense of urgency that, in turn, brought modernization theory to the fore in the following decades. That theory not only helped to define the future of the developing world within the market framework of the West, but also reflected the latter’s sense of foreboding, which was so well expressed by former U.S. Secretary of Defense and ex-World Bank president Robert McNamara, when he referred to a ‘sweeping surge of development … [that] turned traditionally listless areas of the world into seething caldrons of change’ (cited in Shafer 1988: 80). Such uncontrolled development—closely associated with the conviction that the chief source of unstable and unpredictable change was Malthusian pressures—was widely regarded as an invitation to communist influence.²

Hence, the academic focus of modernization writing, the Center for International Studies (CENIS) at MIT, was closely connected to two of the most influential determinants of U.S. global strategic thinking,³ the CIA, on the one hand, and the Ford Foundation, on the other. As a place whose ‘ultimate aim’, according to its Deputy Director, economist Walt Rostow, was ‘the production of an alternative to Marxism’ (Rosen 1985: 27–29), CENIS became a major source of the literature on the psychology of development, through the work of people such as Daniel Lerner, Lucien Pye and Everett Hagen, whose Weberian conceptualizations of the so-called modernization process emphasized the vital role of groups with ‘a rationalist and positivist spirit’, whose values were entrepreneurial (Lerner 1958: 45).⁴ These did not include peasants. Far from it, modernization was regarded as virtually synonymous with vigorous participation in the capitalist world market economy, while the conflicts and disruption which often accompanied it and in which peasants were widely involved were, in the CENIS view, less the product of inequalities than of the way that new ideas were said to clash with the ‘stabilizing elements in traditional society’ (Millikan and Blackmer 1961: 16).⁵ The main challenge, as Rostow, a hawkish White House advisor during the Vietnam War years, would observe in a talk to the graduating class of the Counter Guerrilla Course at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was not to bring justice to the countryside, but for the West to use the modernization process to its own advantage, while cutting off the opportunities it offered to peasant or communist insurgency (Latham 2000: 167–168). Hence, many of his CENIS colleagues offered their expertise to government agencies engaged in counter-insurgency operations.

Problematizing Peasants

Before the Second World War was over, peasants were already regarded as the problem at the heart of most Third World insurgency. One possible way to deal with this was to modify indigenous cultural values—a goal that beckoned
anthropology, at a point when it was transform-
ing itself into a modern professional discipline. This was partly reflected in the reorganization of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in the late 1940s, when the promise of government and foundation funding—much of it related to the priorities of the Cold War—drove this process (Price 2004: 4–6). But, it also took place against the background of McCarthyism, when the AAA was under great pres-
sure, as one of its most eminent members, Julian Steward, observed, to dissociate itself from any hint that it was anything other than a purely scientific organization without political orient-
ation (Steward 1954). At such a time, many anthropologists were not only reluctant to be seen to voice criticisms of the West’s stance during the Cold War, but often particularly eager to benefit professionally by demonstrating how anthropological research and analysis could contribute to the shaping and implementation of Western policy, especially in regard to the ‘modernization’ of peasant society.

One early indication of this was the creation of the Society for Applied Anthropology in 1941. Over the next twenty years, the view of many of the most renowned practitioners in this subfield came to reflect dominant Wash-
ington development policy, with its antipathy to radical social and economic change. Thus, in 1961, Charles Erasmus, in a book entitled *Man Takes Control: Cultural Development and American Aid*, proclaimed that ‘[e]ven in countries that have not yet had land reforms, I do not think that the major problem is who owns the land or how large the holdings are’ (Erasmus 1961: 326).

That this was said with such startling convic-
tion at a time when peasants around the world were engaged in armed struggles for land and rural justice and in the first years of the Cuban revolution, when one of its priori-
ties was land distribution, demonstrates how remote ‘applied anthropology’ could be from the vicissitudes and aspirations of peasant life. But Erasmus’s view was also at odds with the experience of many professional observers, not least, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (UNECLA 1968) and writers such as Erich Jacoby (1949) and Daniel Thorner (Thorner and Thorner 1962), who firmly regarded land as the salient issue at the heart of rural develop-
ment. Erasmus’s values, however, were those of a time when the Western power elite held that developing countries (and the West) would be far better off, if they could only be refashioned in the image of the United States, and when it was being said in Washington by policy-makers, whose feet had never touched peasant ground, that ‘The ideal of every sincere agrarian reformer…is to produce a situation something like that in the United States, where on a relatively small farm a family cannot only live but live in comfort’ (Berle 1962: 55). The main prob-
lem, in Erasmus’s view, was only for the U.S. to ‘make sure that we are providing sufficient incentive for those best qualified to help win the race for free society’ against what he called ‘coercive society’ (Erasmus 1961: 331). The fact that the number of small U.S. farms (particularly those owned by Afro-Americans) had been in steady decline through most of the twenti-
eth century (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1973: 59; Cummins 2006; Flanagan and Inoyue 2006) was obviously beside the point.

Erasmus’s position was also hardly condu-
cive to an objective appraisal of the contradic-
tions of market-driven rural development, the realities of peasant livelihoods or demands for agrarian justice. But it did help to make anth-
thropology an obvious ally of Western policy-
makers during the years of the Cold War, when a significant number of anthropologists who sought to work for government agencies, often under the heading of ‘applied anthropology’, aligned themselves with U.S. government pol-
icy, without seeming to feel any need to criti-
cise the aims of that policy. On the contrary, they appeared more than willing to demon-
strate how anthropology could help to justify or make such policy more effective. This was certainly the import of the address to the twenty-
third annual meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in 1962 by Ward Goodenough, author of Cooperation in Change: An Anthropological Approach to Community Development (1963), when he noted that anthropologists could meet a growing demand by government for the behavioural sciences, but that this required the discipline to be more operational if it was really to fulfil what he openly called the ‘intelligence-gathering function’ that he felt applied anthropology did so well (1962: 174).8

Meanwhile, anthropology was not lax. It was refining a view of peasants which emphasized, not their potential collective radicalism, but their local, cultural conservatism. Thus, one of post-war anthropology’s most notable contributions to the Western discourse of the Cold War era—and especially to modernization theory, which seemed to provide a compelling theoretical framework for Western policies—was its timely conceptualization of peasant conservatism. Culminating in such constructions as George Foster’s ‘Image of Limited Good’ (Foster 1965), anthropologists steadily elaborated an argument that peasants were more constrained by ‘tradition’ than by agrarian structures and, therefore, could not really be expected ‘to improve their living standards at their own initiative’ (cited in Huizer 1972: 53). It was a view that not only contributed significantly to the West’s efforts to defuse rural unrest through what it called ‘community development’, but which, in the process, made an objective understanding of such unrest virtually impossible.

The concept of community development was first applied in a significant way in India, which, from the war years onward, had seemed, in Washington’s view, to be following the same revolutionary process coming to fruition in China. India’s first experiment in community development therefore began in 1947 with a pilot project in the Etawah district in the state of Uttar Pradesh (then United Provinces), a region with a long history of agrarian unrest and where the Communist Party of India had been founded over twenty years earlier (Taraqqi 2000). If Etawah succeeded, according to George Rosen,

It would serve as a model for meeting the revolutionary threats from left-wing and communist peasant movements demanding basic social reforms in agriculture. (Rosen 1985: 49)

Community Development and ‘Controlled Change’: The Road to Vicos

Meanwhile, in the United States, where universities were lured by research money flowing out of Washington on an unprecedented scale during the early years of the Cold War, a new relationship was emerging between government policy objectives and the social sciences. It was encouraged by the major foundations, such as Ford, Rockefeller and the Carnegie Corporation, which, through the fifties, helped to turn anthropology, sociology and psychology toward issues of foreign policy relevance (cf. Simpson 1998), helping to create what Lowen and others have termed ‘the Cold War University’ (Lowen 1997).

By the early 1950s, in the wake of the communist victory in China, Cornell was a prime case of such an institution, so it was not surprising that, with the sponsorship of Ford (which, by then, was also a major influence on India’s Planning Commission) (Bowles 1954: 340), it was enlisted to introduce a major anthropological project, led by Morris Opler, to examine ‘the impact of the community development program at the local level’ (Rosen 1985: 35). By then, however, the India Project had also become one of a number of interconnected activities that were part of ‘an ambitious worldwide anthropological undertaking’ by Cornell’s anthropologists to study ‘an accelerated process of global change’ (Doughty 1977: 144), not only in India, but also in Thailand, Peru and on a Navajo reservation in the U.S. (Keyes 1994). This was inevitably embedded in the kind of modernization thinking that Ford was promoting through
CENIS, with its close links to the CIA, and that the Carnegie Corporation of New York was also subsidizing through support for an increasingly intimate relationship between the U.S. intelligence community and academia (Diamond 1992).

In 1936, Lauriston Sharp had joined the Cornell economics department (Bowen 2003: 4). He soon became Chair of the new Sociology and Anthropology Department and at the end of the Second World War, during which he briefly had worked for the State Department’s Division of Southeast Asian Affairs (Bowen 2003: 4), he hired the psychiatrist Alexander Leighton, who had not only worked for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)—the war-time precursor of the CIA—and the Office of War Information (OWI) (Simpson 1994: 26), but also—as Chief of the Morale Analysis Division for the U.S. Navy Medical Corps—conducted research on Japanese Americans in the internment camp at Poston, Arizona, run by the War Relocation Authority (WRA) (Davies 2001: 321–322; Tremblay 2004: 7–8). (As it happened, his Cornell colleague, Morris Opler, had also worked for the WRA at the Manzanar camp and for the OWI as well) (Unrau 1996; Webster and Rushforth 2000: 328; Price 2002: 18). Out of such similar wartime backgrounds, Leighton and Sharp (with support from Opler) developed a grand scheme to study and direct culture change in the postwar world. According to Leighton, the new program ‘addressed the question of facilitating the introduction of modern agriculture, industry, and medicine to areas that are deficient in those technologies.’ The program attempted to do so without evoking hostility towards the innovator. (Davies 2001: 323)

Very much in keeping with the lessons learned through Cornell’s longstanding association with agricultural missionaries (Thomson 1969: 150), such a project, with its rather uncritical confidence in the benefits of Western technological innovation (Davies 2001: 327), helped ensure that Cornell in general and its anthropologists in particular would be credible allies of Washington policy-makers and major U.S. foundations. Through the Cold War years, they would reflect a common ideological and tactical commitment to modernization through directed change at the community level.

Part of the Cornell programme involved a field seminar in applied anthropology, centred on the Navaho, which was run by Leighton into the early 1950s. It was meant to ‘provide applied anthropology training for specialists and administrators actively involved in the introduction of new technology to underdeveloped regions of the world’ (Davies 2001: 317). But, it was particularly in the Peruvian side of the programme that the idea of community development found unprecedented expression. It was there that the Carnegie Corporation—already backing the general programme developed by Sharp and Leighton—supported the creation of the Cornell-Peru Vicos Project, which leading figures in anthropology would soon extol out of all proportion to its substantive achievements.

Situating Vicos

Goodenough, for one, characterized the project as ‘a very visible example’ of where ‘cultural knowledge has been successfully used to accomplish objectives that would have been unattainable without it’ (Goodenough 1962: 174). Taken along with Goodenough’s view that anthropology should make itself relevant to the cause of counter-insurgency, this characterization of Vicos should long ago have invited deeper scrutiny of the project. Unfortunately, this has never been done. Nor has Vicos been discussed in the wider framework of Cornell’s Carnegie-funded cross-cultural study in modernization (it certainly was not considered in Barbara Lynch’s USAID-commissioned assessment of the project in 1982), despite the fact that, in the late 1960s, Sharp’s work in Thailand, which was part of this comparative proj-
ect, raised many questions about its relationship to U.S. counter-insurgency efforts, in which USAID was involved (Wolf and Jorgensen 1970). But, again, no such questions were ever asked about Cornell’s project in Peru or, for that matter, about the association of its director, Allan Holmberg, with the International Cooperation Agency (ICA), the predecessor of USAID, although, according to Richard Adams, within the ICA, anthropologists in Bolivia and southern Peru were, I presume, more than coincidentally, utilized in areas where there were thought to be serious problems of communist agitation. (Adams 1964: 2)

Yet, as Adams also noted, even two decades after its inception, much about the Vicos project—including its sponsorship—was still not entirely clear from what was openly published by its leading anthropological participants (Adams 1973). The ‘fuller scholarly and research reporting’ that he hoped for and anticipated over thirty years ago never materialised, and Dwight Heath’s observation in 1980, that the Cornell work at Vicos was a ‘tangled skein of theory and practice, individuals and institutions, progress and problems’ (Heath 1980: 455), remains just as true today. The contradictions are only compounded by the fact that internal Carnegie Corporation memoranda suggest that, by, 1954, the foundation itself was already fed up with the pretensions of the project, which far exceeded its actual output (Marvel 1954: 4).

This, of course, raises the possibility that analytical clarity was never the most important aim of the project, which Holmberg initiated after Peru had been taken over in 1948 by a military coup. By July 1950, when General Manuel A. Odría, the leader of the coup, was elected president, without any effective opposition, Holmberg already had plans well advanced to have Cornell rent ‘Hacienda Vicos and its 1800 peons for the going rate of $500 per year’ (Doughty 1977: 144). Under a national administration which had seized power to forestall fundamental reforms, his ostensible aim was, as with Etawah in India, to develop Vicos as a model whose ‘anticipated results’, according to William Mangin, could be ‘diffused throughout Peru and the world’ (Mangin 1979: 67).

However, did anyone involved in the project really take such rhetoric seriously? According to Lynch, the sublease of the hacienda to Cornell by the Public Benefit Society—which ‘represented the regional elite’ (Lynch 1982: 16)—required existing relations of production to be maintained. In light of this, the rather grand aspirations of the Cornell anthropologists—so circumscribed from the outset—would seem to have been rather detached from Peruvian reality. The extent to which this was the case was indicated when Paul Doughty wrote:

Just why the conservative Odria dictatorship would permit such a project to begin with was often conjectured by the [Cornell Peru Project] personnel, but plausible reasons or policy have never been identified. (Doughty 1987a: 441)

Vicos as Cold War Strategy

Yet, it was not really that difficult. Land reform in Peru, as elsewhere, had become a key aspiration of peasants since the end of the Second World War and had been stubbornly resisted by a ruling oligarchy which was now securely in power (Lastarria-Cornhiel 1989: 127). There can be little doubt that Holmberg and his Cornell colleagues and their Peruvian partners were aware of such developments (after all, army generals sat on the executive board of the Instituto Indigenista Peruano, which cosponsored the Vicos project with Cornell) and, in fact, in a 1962 paper, Henry Dobyns and others noted that, in the departmental capital of Huaraz, there was resistance to the Vicos project from the Communist Party ‘which appears to recognize that every success of the project diminishes by that much their chances of fomenting a violent revolution’ (Dobyns et al. 1962: 112–113).

That this was perceived early as a major selling point of the Vicos Project is clear from the
proposal that the Cornell Anthropology Department submitted through Sharp (then the department Chair) to John Gardner, Vice-President of the Carnegie Corporation, on 19 April, 1951, in which it was observed that:

the hope of the Andean countries as a whole lies in the mountain regions where their masses of hard-working Indians live, and unless these are soon given opportunities and assistance in changing and improving their lot considerably, present conditions of rest and dissatisfaction are apt to lead to more and bloodier revolutions within the next few years ... We would like, therefore, to attempt to change these conditions in as controlled a manner as possible. (Sharp 1951: 18–19)

This goal was certainly in accord with Gardner’s views. A former member of the wartime OSS, he wrote to Sharp in June:

If native people are to be taught to take their fate in their own hands, then they had better be educated as to the various ways in which they can be gulled by unscrupulous leaders. This means, I should think, fairly intensive indoctrination in local forms of ‘democratic’ group action with strong emphasis upon active and realistic political participation. It seems to me that without this, the whole effort to raise the status of backward peoples may be the greatest device ever invented for playing into the hands of unscrupulous demagogues. (Gardner 1951: 2)

There is little doubt that Washington, whose power brokers Gardner knew very well, was becoming increasingly aware of the possibilities inherent in the community development model that Vicos embodied. But, so, too, were many anthropologists. Within a decade, the Vicos approach was being unambiguously situated in the context of the Cold War by such figures as John Gillin who, in his comments to the Society of Applied Anthropology, observed:

The experience of Vicos contains numerous suggestions for the ‘cold war.’ Through our foreign-aid programs, I presume that we are trying to bring the peoples of the modern world to our side. The numerous defects in our national programs can be corrected on the basis of the experience of Vicos. (Informaciones 1961:142, my translation)

Cornell’s intervention there not only was represented as offering a real hope to the campesinos of the Peruvian highlands—as well as to the policy-makers of Washington—but its proponents even went so far as to imply that it was ‘nothing less than revolutionary’ (Doughty 1977: 144). Doughty and Dobyns called Holmberg ‘a truly revolutionary anthropologist’ and explicitly put him on a par with Jomo Kenyatta, the leader of Kenya’s Mau Mau uprising (Adams 1973: 444) (who himself had been trained in anthropology).

Since Mau Mau was a true peasant insurrection (cf. Furedi 1989), this was a quite extraordinary and rather presumptuous claim. But, considering that, in the immediate aftermath of the Cuban revolution, Vicos was seen as a model for reclaiming political ground that the United States had lost in some of the potentially most volatile regions of Latin America, it may be understandable. So, Vicos, backed by Carnegie, was elevated to a high status in the West’s Cold War strategy of ‘community development’ and John Gardner’s call for a ‘fairly intensive indoctrination in local forms of ‘democratic’ group action with strong emphasis upon active and realistic political participation’ was suitably translated into the academic jargon of the Cornell anthropologists and their most eminent collaborators as ‘directed value accumulation’ (Lasswell and Holmberg 1969).

One of those collaborators was Harold D. Lasswell. The fact that an author or editor of some of the major works on the psychological dimension of modernization thinking over a period of three decades (see Lasswell and Lerner 1951; Lasswell, Lerner and Speier 1979), a member of the planning committee which directed the disbursement of a substantial Ford Foundation grant for CENIS’s communication studies—which, as Simpson observes, ‘were from their inception closely bound up with both overt and covert aspects of U.S. national security strategy of the day’ (Simpson 1994: 82–83)—a long-term consultant to the RAND Corporation, and a member of the influential Council for For-
eign Relations, came to be the coauthor of one of the most important works to emerge out of the Vicos Project, underscores the relationship of the latter to the ideological and strategic aspects of the Western development model during the Cold War. That Lasswell himself would write an article in *Human Organization* in the early 1960s (Lasswell 1962) highlights the importance that such tactical and influential thinkers attached to applied anthropology and its practitioners.

**Conclusions**

The real value of Vicos, during the Cold War, was that it seemed, like Etawah, to offer a way to counter radical rural change. But the deeper import of the Cornell-Peru project, for anthropology at least, is that it represented a ‘road not taken’. As William Foote Whyte, an associate of the project, and Giorgio Alberti wrote, long after its hey-day:

> Provocative as the Vicos case is, it hardly provides an intervention model that can be widely used. There just are not enough available people or institutions with money to invest in taking over haciendas for the purpose of transforming them into progressive, democratic communities. (Whyte and Alberti 1976: 247)

It would have been far better, in their view, for an outsider to

> [h]elp organize the peasants against the hacendado and link them with other outsiders in this struggle. In other words, he must become a leader or supporter of a peasant movement. (Whyte and Alberti 1976: 247)

By the late 1940s, when the Cornell project at Vicos had begun, such highland communities were already far from being the isolated exemplars of ‘folk culture’ that modernization thinking—or Holmberg and his colleagues—presumed. Indeed, in her USAID assessment of the project, Lynch concluded that the evidence from Vicos actually supported a very different view: that its inhabitants were just pragmatic and that their resistance to change was dictated more by economic factors than by traditional cultural values (Lynch 1982: 78). In a similar vein—and, again, contrary to the assumptions of the Cornell anthropologists—the community was not isolated from the national economy. ‘Prior to the project,’ she wrote,

> Vicos had not been a highly stable, traditional society, but a society constantly adapting to the changing consequences of its integration into Peruvian national society on extremely unequal terms. (Lynch 1982: 75)

By the 1940s and 1950s, a worldwide process of market-driven unequal development was giving rise to peasant mobilizations from Peru to the Philippines. Yet, the point of such communal action was effectively obscured by the Cornell anthropologists, when they grandly described their project at Vicos as ‘one of the few programs of planned change which set about to employ a truly holistic, anthropological approach’ (Doughty 1977: 145), yet, at the same time, paid little attention to the structural linkages between those communities and the wider political economy and to how and why the latter’s impact had given rise to rural struggles for change. This was possible because anthropology’s sense of ‘holism’ was highly localized and therefore rarely questioned the relationship between local culture and global system or, as a result, the origins and consequences of the Western development model.

On the contrary, by lending their expertise to the emphasis on local cultural values and controlled innovation at the community level, anthropologists such as those in the Vicos Project ensured that peasant aspirations for systemic change simply were not their starting-point. Had it been otherwise, as Huizer has noted, they might have ‘come to help [local people] to struggle against the repressive system, rather than with minor improvement schemes’ (Huizer 1972: 53). But most tended to adopt the Rostow
model, with its roots in the CENIS view of modernization. To the extent that anthropologists like Holmberg subscribed to such a view of the development process, it certainly ‘increased [their] employment possibilities’ (Bonfil Batalla 1966: 91) in the eyes of Washington policy-makers. A focus on communities—and on the shifting of their attitudes and values toward a Western standard—rather than on their structural context, undoubtedly gave anthropologists a unique and useful vantage point that ensured them a professional role in the burgeoning, foundation-supported community development field. It just did very little to place anthropological expertise at the service of the dispossessed (cf. Stein 1985: 249).

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Notes

1. This article was presented in the session, ‘World War Two Anthropology: Reconsidering the War’s Past in the Present’, at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., 30 November–4 December 2005. It was adapted from a longer essay, ‘Reflections on Vicos: Anthropology, the Cold War and the Idea of Peasant Conservatism’, which is still being developed. Through its many forms, this article has been indebted to a variety of friends and colleagues, among them: Haroon Akram-Lodhi, David Barkin, Janice Harper, Helen Hintjens, William Mitchell, David Price, Karen Woodards and David Stoll. I am especially grateful to the Columbia University Rare Books and Manuscript Library for the opportunity to look at the archives of the Carnegie Corporation of New York and to the University of Illinois Archives, Urbana, for access to letters from their collection of the Julian H. Steward Papers.

2. Cold War Malthusian thinking was exemplified by the prominent demographer Frank Note- stein, who became director of the Rockefeller-sponsored Population Council, and his colleague, Kingsley Davis, at Princeton’s Office of Population Research (OPR), who claimed that it was ‘the glut of people in the poorer areas’ of that region that made them ‘conducive to communism’ (cited in Wilmoth and Ball 1992: 647).

3. MIT had been chosen as the site for CENIS because of its existing associations with the U.S. military and industrial establishment (Snead 1999: 56–57). The Advisory Board on Soviet Bloc Studies at MIT, for example, included Allen Dulles of the CIA (Horowitz 1969) and MIT president James Killian, who had played a central role in Project Troy, which had been one of the first important post-war efforts to incorporate social scientists into the U.S. Cold War policy and intelligence process (Needell 1993: 405ff.; 1998). As a direct product of Project Troy, the first head of CENIS was the economist Max Millikan, who had worked on Troy before he became assistant to the director of the CIA (Rosen 1985: 28; Needell 1993: 415–416; Bird 1998: 139). He remained a consultant to the agency while the head of CENIS (Simpson 1994: 82). Meanwhile, the Provost (later Chancellor and President) of MIT, Julius Stratton, went on to become a member of the Ford Foundation’s board and the Foundation’s president in 1966 (MIT Libraries 1995).

4. The focus on the modification of traditional values not only meant that CENIS scholars placed great emphasis on communications theory (cf. Simpson 1994). In 1951, Lerner, for example, had edited Propaganda in War and Crisis: Materials for American Policy, and twenty-five years later would write an article, ‘Is International Persuasion Sociologically Feasible?’, for the U.S. Army publication The Art and Science of Psychological Operations: Case Studies of Military Application (1976).

5. For McNamara, this was especially troubling because the Soviet Union and China seemed to regard such clashes as ‘an ideal environment for the growth of Communism’ (McNamara 1968: 147).

6. However, both Jacoby and Thorner paid a price for their intellectual positions. Born in Germany in 1903, the former fled to Denmark in 1933 when Hitler came to power, and fled Europe in 1940 when Germany invaded Denmark. Back in Denmark after the war, his book Agrarian Unrest in Southeast Asia generally was looked on with disfavour because it drew connections between U.S. colonialism and rural poverty, while in Denmark, as he wrote, ‘it was proba-
bly feared that my critical analysis of American colonialism would damage the financial contributions being made by large American foundations to Danish scientific research’ (Hvidt 2002: 99). Daniel Thorner and his wife and collaborator, Alice, were compelled to settle in India, the area that was the focus of much of their work, between 1952 and 1960 (when they moved to Paris), as a result of McCarthyism (Patel 2005: 6). He lost his teaching position at the University of Pennsylvania—in no small part, because of pressure from the Carnegie Corporation—and had his passport confiscated after he refused to name names for the Senate Internal Security Sub-committee (Gardner 1951; Patnaik 2005).

7. Adolf Berle, a prominent member of FDR’s government, close associate of Nelson Rockefeller and member of the Council on Foreign Relations, also said that proper respect must be shown to the large-land owner because ‘under his management the land produces more per man and per acre than it does in the hands of the small farmer’ (Berle 1962: 51). The result was that U.S. development policy tended to make the needs of large-land owners more central than the ideal of the U.S. small farmer.

8. Goodenough called for anthropologists to provide government with the “dictionary” and “grammar” of social conduct that its agencies wanted (Goodenough 1962: 176), as a way of interpreting between one cultural system (e.g., Micronesian islanders) and another (North American), for administrative purposes.

9. The origins of Sharp’s work in Thailand are not entirely clear. But, the OSS had a keen interest in the future of Thailand (and the rest of southeast Asia) before the end of the Second World War. By that time, Sharp had joined the State Department’s new Southeast Asia Policy Division (Cady 1974: 13; Bowen 2003: 4). Five years later, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, he created the southeast Asian programme at Cornell (Keyes 1994).

10. Founded for the U.S. Army Airforce in 1946 by Douglas Aircraft as Project RAND—the name was an acronym, ‘Research and Development’—RAND was reestablished the following year as an independent corporation, supported by the Ford Foundation and still closely associated with the U.S. Airforce. It subsequently developed into an important link between the U.S. academic community and the U.S. military and intelligence services (cf. Ross 1998b).

References


