No changes have been made in the text of the book for this printing. I do not mean to suggest that there are not changes I would make were I writing the book today. Such changes are inevitable: the product of time and circumstance, but chiefly of one's own development of thought. Any effort to incorporate these in a book written nearly twenty years ago would surely, however, be abortive. Far better, it seems to me, to leave the book with its imperfections rather than to try vainly to recapture the setting, mind, and mood from which the book originally sprang.

The changes would not be, in any event, changes of central theme or conclusion. I believe today, as I believed throughout the 1940's, when this book was beginning to take form in my mind, that the single most impressive fact in the twentieth century in Western society is the fateful combination of widespread quest for community—in whatever form, moral, social, political—and the apparatus of political power that has become so vast in contemporary democratic states. That combination of search for community and existing political power seems to me today, just as it did twenty years ago, a very dangerous combination. For,
as I argue in this book, the expansion of power feeds on the quest for community. All too often, power comes to resemble community, especially in times of convulsive social change and of widespread preoccupation with personal identity, moral certainty, and social meaning. This is, as I try to make clear throughout the book, the essential tragedy of modern man's quest for community. Too often the quest has been through channels of power and revolution which have proved destructive of the prime sources of human community. The structure of political power which came into being centuries ago on the basis of its eradication of medieval forms of community has remained — has indeed become ever more — destructive of the contexts of new forms of community.

No, the central argument of the book would remain the same, were I writing it today instead of twenty years ago. There would be, however, some changes of emphasis, if only as a means of making clearer the central argument of the book. Let me indicate briefly what these few changes would consist of.

In the first place, I would, to the best of my ability, preclude any possible supposition on the reader's part that there is in this book any lament for the old, any nostalgia for village, parish, or other type now largely erased form of social community of the past. Rereading the book today, I am frank in saying that I cannot find a nostalgic note in the entire book. It is not the revival of old communities that the book in a sense pleads for; it is the establishment of new forms: forms which are relevant to contemporary life and thought. What I have tried very hard to do, however, is to show that a structure of power capable of obliterating traditional types of community is capable of choking off new types of community. Hence the appeal, in the final pages of the book, for what I call a new laissez-faire, one within which groups, associations, and communities would prosper and which would be, by their very vitality, effective barriers to further spread of unitary, centralized, political power.

There is, second, the theme of alienation. I would, I think, give it even greater importance in the book today than I did when I wrote it twenty years ago, well before the contemporary deluge of books and articles on alienation had begun. For it has become steadily clearer to me that alienation is one of the deters-

mining realities of the contemporary age. It will not do to relegate it to the realm of the symbols which influence intellectuals and which do not, at first thought, seem to implicate the lives of others in society. In the first place, intellectuals' symbols, taken as a whole, widely and often deeply influence popular behavior. For we live in an age of rather high literacy. And in the second place the same currents of thought and feeling which have caught up intellectuals have also, in different ways, at different levels, caught up large numbers of persons who do not pretend to be intellectuals but who are responsive nonetheless to the urgencies of the time. For many of them, too, alienation is a conspicuous state of mind.

By alienation I mean the state of mind that can find a social order remote, incomprehensible, or fraudulent, beyond real hope or desire; inviting apathy, boredom, or even hostility. The individual not only does not feel a part of the social order; he has lost interest in being a part of it. For a constantly enlarging number of persons, including, significantly, young persons of high school and college age, this state of alienation has become profoundly influential in both behavior and thought. Not all the manufactured symbols of togetherness, the ever-ready programs of human relations, patio festivals in suburbia, and our quadrennial crusades for presidential candidates hide the fact that for millions of persons such institutions as state, political party, business, church, labor union, and even family have become remote and increasingly difficult to give any part of one's self to.

There is another way of noting this: through the prevailing reactions of intellectuals to social and economic issues. Schumpeter, in his great book Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, wrote that one of the flaws of capitalism is its inexhaustible capacity for alienating the intellectuals. This is true, but it needs qualification. For a long time capitalism at least supplied the motive power for revolt among intellectuals. This was not only an important manifestation of social energy but also a subtle form of identification. (No one revolts against what he is totally alienated from.) I am thinking of such matters as the struggle for the rights of the underprivileged, labor unions, ethnic equality, and the like. But it is hard to miss the fact that today there is a kind of alienation even from the ide-
logical issues of capitalism, leading one to wonder what is to supply the friction in the future for social change.

There are several common ways of describing, or specifying, alienation—all to be found in the literature of the West, at least since the Conservative revolt against rationalism at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Let me indicate them briefly. They should be noted even though I do not, as I shall explain, regard them as fundamental to our problem.

There is, first, alienation from the past. Man, it is said, is a time-binding creature; past and future are as important to his natural sense of identity as the present. Destroy his sense of the past, and you cut his spiritual roots, leaving momentary febrility but no viable prospect of the future. In our age, as we are frequently told, past and present are not merely separated categories but discontinuous ones in the lives of large numbers of persons, more than a few of whom have consciously sought escape from their past. It is sometimes said that this detachment from past is an inevitable consequence of popular democracy; it is not easy for an equalitarian, status-based present to remain on terms of intelligibility with an inequitarian, class-based past. Whatever the basis, loss of a sense of the past is an important matter, if only for its functional necessity to revolt. How can there be a creative spirit of youthful revolt when there is nothing for revolt to feed upon itself?

Then, there is alienation from physical place and nature. In many societies, and for long periods of time, men identify themselves by where they are born and sink their roots. We still pretend interest in place of birth on job and school admission forms, but it has become at bottom a useless ritual and will probably disappear as have race and religion, identifying attributes which also were once deemed important as marks of identity. Given the slow erosion of regions and localities in present-day mass culture, under the twin impact of nationalism and economism, it doesn’t really matter where one comes from—that is, in terms of business and politics. Psychologically it may be an important matter, for disruption of a sense of place is no venial matter in the human being’s effort to identify himself—to himself as well as others. It is said that our spreading technological insulation from nature—form heat and cold, the changing seasons, the visible stellar bodies and the whole landscape—is also a factor in this type of alienation. Surely, no civilization, no group within a civilization, has ever removed itself as far from nature as we have.

Closely related is alienation from things. Here I mean property, hard property, the kind that one can touch, be identified with, become ennobled or debased by, be driven to defend against attack. One remembers the use Galsworthy made of property in The Forsyte Saga. And Schumpeter warned us that the transition from capitalism to socialism would not even be noticed by a population whose idea of property is not hard property but soft property—shares and equities in something distant, personally unmanged, and impersonal. It is said that the passion for automobiles among American boys, a passion which can destroy or weaken educational aspiration, and account for much juvenile delinquency in this country, is a consequence, at least in part, of the deep-seated desire for hard property that is thwarted in so many areas of our society today.

All of these are indeed manifestations of alienation, but I do not regard them as fundamental types. Not, at least, as they are stated. For, in each of them, an important link is left out: the social bond; that is, community. I would suggest, for example, that man has never had a creative or sustaining relation to the past except through certain types of communal relationship that themselves bind past, present, and future. When we find a society or age rich and creative in its sense of the past, we are in the presence of something I can only think of as the telescoping of generations. In genuinely creative societies—the Athens of Aeschylus, the Florence of Michelangelo—there is a telescoping of the generations that is not hidden by all the more manifest facts of individual revolt. Past and present have a creative relationship not because of categories in men’s minds but because of certain social bonds which themselves reach from past to future.

These are ties which have become, like many others, weak and rootless in the present day. And this, I suggest, is why alienation from the past so obviously affects youth, and helps make the problem of coming to adulthood so widely painful.
and baffling. How, apart from stable ties with preceding generations, can the image of adulthood be kept clear in a society? There are natural barriers between boyhood and manhood in all places and all times, but these become formidable only in a society where responsibility for making men has devolved almost exclusively upon the small and isolated conjugal family. Other ages had kindred, class, race, and similar ‘genetic’ units. Only the archaic would say these specific bonds are necessary, but it is difficult to see any new relationships in our fragmented and often atomized society that show signs of replacing the old ones.

Similarly, I think alienation from place and property turns out to be, at bottom, estrangement from close personal ties which give lasting identity to each. Native heath is hardly distinguishable from the human relationships within which landscape and animals and things become cherished and deeply implanted in one’s soul. So far as love of, and affinity with, nature is concerned, we have to remember that we are dealing here with a state of mind that has itself cultural roots—chiefly in the romantic revival at the end of the eighteenth century. It is not easy to find love for natural elements in most of the world’s literature. Nature was, and remained for our forefathers in this country down until two or three generations ago, a vast force to cope with, to attack, to be often defeated by, but seldom admired or loved. And I know sections of the world where dense communities of persons have been separated from nature for centuries, but where, whatever else may be wrong, alienation is hardly to be noticed. The same is true of property. It is not hardness or softness of property; it is the kind of relationship within which property exists that is crucial. If it is a close and significant relationship, the sense of ownership will be a vital one no matter what the form of property.

I believe, then, that community is the essential context within which modern alienation has to be considered. Here I have reference not so much to a state of mind—although that is inevitably involved—as I do to the more concrete matters of the individual’s relation to social function and social authority. These, I would emphasize, are the two supports upon which alone community, in any reasonably precise sense, can exist and influence its members.

There are countless persons today for whom the massive changes of the past century have meant a dislocation of the contexts of function: the extended family, neighborhood, apprenticeship, social class, and parish. Historically, these relationships had both depth and inclusiveness in individual life because they themselves had functional significance; because, however informally, they had a significant relationship to that distribution of function and authority which is a society’s organization. And because they had this, they had meaning in the lives of individuals. Having function, they could create a sense of individual function, which is one of the two prime requirements of community.

The other is authority. By authority, I do not mean power. Power, I conceive as something external and based upon force. Authority, on the other hand, is rooted in the statuses, functions, and allegiances which are the components of any association. Authority is indeed indistinguishable from organization, and perhaps the chief means by which organization, and a sense of organization, becomes a part of human personality. Authority, like power, is a form of constraint, but, unlike power, it is based ultimately upon the consent of those under it; that is, it is conditional. Power arises only when authority breaks down.

Apart from authority, as even the great anarchists have insisted, there can be no freedom, no individuality. What the anarchists said, and this is the splendid essence of anarchism and the link between it and such conservatives as Tocqueville and Acton, is, first, that there must be many authorities in society, and, second, that authority must be closely united to objectives and functions which command the response and talents of members. Freedom is to be found in the interstices of authority; it is nourished by competition among authorities.

It is well to emphasize this, for it is the essential context of my treatment of the problem of freedom. We are prone to see the advance of power in the modern world as a consequence, or concomitant, of the diminution of individual freedom. But a more useful way would be to see it in terms of the retreat of
authority in many of the areas of society within which human beings commonly find roots and a sense of the larger whole. The alleged disorganization of the modern family is, in fact, simply an erosion of its natural authority, the consequence, in considerable part, of the absorption of its functions by other bodies, chiefly the state.

The abandonment by a university faculty, a labor union, or a church, of authority over its membership and its essential functions and responsibilities will inevitably be accompanied by the expansion of external, administrative power, for a vacuum is intolerable. Unhappily, remote power, however omnipotent and encompassing, can oftentimes come to seem preferable to authority at close quarters, a fact that has much to do with the history of centralization and bureaucracy.

Authority and liberation, convention and revolt—these are the creative rhythms of civilization. They are as vivid in the history of politics as in the histories of art and poetry, science and technology, education and religion. If there is not a recognized authority or convention, how can there be the occasional eruption of revolt and liberation that both the creative process and the free mind require? Apart from authority there can be no really vital social relationship in society; this is as true in the family as it is in the university or the church. It is power, not authority, that seeks homogeneity, regimentation, and the manipulated articulation of parts by hierarchies of administrators. And it is the competition of authorities within society at large that, above all things I can think of, keeps a society mobile and free. 'Multiply your associations and be free,' wrote the great Proudhon.

It is the ideology of power, I believe, that has had the most to do in the history of modern society with the general reduction of social differences and conflicts, the leveling and blurring of social authorities, and the gradual filling of the interstices within which creativeness and freedom thrive. It is power of this type—not merely absolute but often bland, providential, minute, and scaling—that has reduced so many of the social and cultural frictions that cultural advancement has depended upon, historically, that even intellectual energy depends upon. And it is power in this same sense that has destroyed or weak-

ened many of the established contexts of function and natural authority—and, by its existence, choked off the emergence of new contexts and thus created a great deal of the sense of alienation that dominates contemporary man.

Here I come to another point that I wish I had given stronger and clearer emphasis: the wide diffusion of the ideology of centralized power in contemporary society. Except for a few paragraphs in the final chapters, I have dealt with centralization as though it were confined to processes of formal political government. This is inadequate.

The ideology of power that I am concerned with is to be seen in other and frequently decisive areas of modern society—in city government and planning, business enterprises, public housing projects, churches, great universities, and school systems. It would be hard indeed to say that centralized power over human life and aspiration, and all the administrative techniques that go with it, is more dangerous in the larger areas of national government than it is in the relatively small institutional areas. (Small is perhaps not the word for some of the school systems, corporations, labor unions, churches, and cities of the present age.) For it is in the latter that we have our direct and day to day relation to society.

From the ideology of unified and total power has come all too often a conception of human organization not very different, at bottom, from a military post. No relationship must exist that is not contemplated by central command and assimilated into formal hierarchy of external administration. We see this in school systems today, especially in large cities (the danger of Federal assistance to public schools is not the source of the money but the predictable incorporation of such assistance in both established and emerging bureaucracies which, like all bureaucracies, especially at the lowest levels, will make fidelity to letter of the law a transcending objective, making it even more difficult to keep alive the spirit within which good teaching alone can thrive). We see it in our vast and choked cities where to talk of community is to talk nonsense. We see it in a great deal of the planning—both governmental and private—of housing.

Consider some of the tragedies perpetrated in the name of
slum clearance. To be moved from a slum, which, after all, if it is old enough, has a culture and more or less natural gathering places, to an architecturally grim, administratively monolithic, housing project may indeed ‘clean up’ the streets for a time and give surrounding areas higher economic value to absentee owners. But the ultimate consequence, a depressing amount of experience shows all too often, may be a new type of slum, one with little hope of culture or community, one in which gangs and violence as well as alienation will be the logical and predictable consequence.

There are countless other aggregates in modern society not very different, in terms of function and authority, from the public housing project. One thinks of the innumerable suburbs that have sprung up since the Second World War, particularly bedroom suburbs, where there is little more sense of community than there is in the housing project. How could there be? Community is the product of people working together on problems, of autonomous and collective fulfillment of internal objectives, and of the experience of living under codes of authority which have been set in large degree by the persons involved. But what we get in many sections of the country is a kind of suburban horde. There is no community because there are no common problems, functions, and authority. These are lacking because, under a kind of ‘rotten borough’ system, effective control is vested elsewhere—in boards, councils, and offices of counties, districts, or adjacent cities.

It is not different, at bottom, in other types of association. Where power is external or centralized, where it relieves groups of persons of the trouble of making important decisions, where it is penetrating and minute, then, no matter how wise and good it may be in principle, it is difficult for a true community to develop. Community thrives on self-help (and also a little disorder), either corporate or individual, and everything that removes a group from the performance of or involvement in its own government can hardly help but weaken the sense of community. People do not come together in significant and lasting associations merely to be together. They come together to do something that cannot easily be done in individual isolation. But when external absorption of power and function threatens to remove the basis of community, leaving functionless and authority-less aggregates, what else but the social horde and alienation can be the result?

It will be said that the problems presented in this respect are difficult, perhaps impossible, given the orientation toward mass democracy that so much of our recent history shows, given an industrialism that seems to leap over communities and even regions, and given the craving for irreconcilable cultural and social ends that a great deal of popular behavior exemplifies in present-day America. They are indeed difficult problems, although I question whether the scale involved is any greater, really, than the transformations of society and landscape that we have seen taking place under other compulsions during the past thirty years.

The main, and perhaps insuperable difficulty is perspective. May I repeat here what I wrote in Chapter Eleven: ‘The modern facts of political mechanism, centralization, and collectivism are seen in the perspective of inevitable development in modern history. They seem to be the very direction of history itself.’ It is this view, I continue to think, that presents our greatest difficulty, for, as Martin Buber pointed out to us so brilliantly a decade ago in his Paths in Utopia, the intellectual’s dread of utopianism, his pious desire to be historically ‘realistic,’ his premise of a track of historical development that somehow we must remain on, whatever the costs in regimentation, is, of all obstacles, the most decisive in the problem of social planning. This is one reason why, I think, so much social thought, until recently, has seemed sterile from the point of view of those whose business it is to make the basic decisions in organizational and community work.

More than anything else it is the massive transformation of the American social scene since the Second World War that has focused attention upon the relative poverty of resources in the social sciences. Vast industrial relocations, redevelopments of central cities, city and regional planning, community organization, serious efforts on the part of civic agencies to prevent, rather than merely punish, crime, the innumerable social and psychological problems involved in the administering of both governmental and private social security systems—all of these
and other problems have led to an almost desperate turning to social scientists for help.

Of a sudden, a good deal of so-called social science was proved empty or irrelevant despite the public pretense to the contrary of some academic intellectuals. It became evident that more reliable knowledge—thin though it was—frequently lay in the experiences of social workers, businessmen, architects, city-managers, and politicians than in whole volumes of the social science journals. Several generations of social thought based upon determinism had produced very little of value to society. The familiar prescriptions of governmental ownership or management, by which liberals had for decades salved their social consciences, began to turn sour in the mouth when it became apparent that the real problem often was not whether the government shall render aid, but how. In any event, the prescriptions themselves have begun to pall, and this may be a healthy sign even if it does mean national elections with issues resembling epitaphs of the past rather than battle cries of present and future.

Happily there have been some major changes in the social sciences in recent decades. It seems to me that more knowledge concerning groups and communities—usable, relevant knowledge—has come forth in the last fifteen years than in the preceding fifty. There are, of course, many reasons for this, but high among them, I think the evidence shows clearly, is a widespread abandonment of deterministic premises concerning history. This done, it has not been really difficult to disengage moral and political predilections from research in a way that would have seemed inconceivable in the 1920’s and 1930’s when so-called social science was all too often a witches’ brew of moralism, social work, and philosophy of history.

At first thought, utopianism and a genuine social science may seem to be incompatable. But they are not. Utopianism is compatible with every thing but determinism, and it can as easily be the over-all context of social science as can any other creative vision. I make no apology for the frankly utopian cast of the final pages of my book. I wish only that I had made it even more emphatic. Utopianism, after all, is social planning, and planning, as I have stressed in the final pages, is indispensable

in the kind of world that technology, democracy, and high population bring. Conservatism who aimlessly oppose planning, whether national or local, are their own worst enemies.

What is needed, however, is planning that contents itself with the setting of human life, not human life itself. To plan for masses of individuals is not merely a hopeless exercise in human calculus; it is, of all ways I can think of, the one most likely to produce that combination of externally contrived goals and unconditional power in support of these goals that is the substance of tyranny and the path to annihilation of personality. It is in this light that I plead, at the end of the book, for a new laissez faire, one concerned, not with imaginary economic atoms in a supposed legal void, but with the groups and associations that we are given in experience, and the integrity and reasonable autonomy of which are the prime conditions of individual integrity and autonomy.

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