

HANDOUT 3: Shriver's Thoughts on the War on Poverty

Quotations from the Film *American Idealist*

Sargent Shriver: "You have to have that sense of human respect and dignity and equality before these other specific programs like a health program or an educational program could have its maximum effect."

Shriver describing his plan for the War on Poverty: "It's not a program of federal hand-outs to alleviate poverty."

Prof. James T. Fisher describing Shriver's approach to fighting poverty: "Shriver hated the idea of handouts which he equated with what he called cheap grace—a kind of charity which does not empower people."

Shriver describing one of his programs in the War on Poverty: "Community Action, as its name implies, is local action. We depend completely on local communities to come to Washington with their own programs of combating poverty, in ways that they see fit to do it, in their own hometown."

Laura McEnaney describing Community Action, one of Shriver's programs in the War on Poverty: "From the perspective of the activists themselves it's an opening, it's a voice, it's an opportunity and it's a stepping-stone for them to get their issues heard and to finally get the city to pay attention and do something about their problems."

Shriver justifying the Legal Aid program: "The poor need and deserve the same quality of legal services that the profession owes to all citizens."

Shriver describing the value of Legal Aid: "We're creating life at the community level, and when you've got life, you've got movement, you've got dissension, you've got action, that's what you want."

Shriver, venting his frustration at not getting adequate funding for his programs while the United States spent its resources on fighting a war in Vietnam: "I think it would be a gross deception to delude the American people that something substantial is being done about problems here at home, such as lack of education, lack of health, lack of justice, lack of housing, lack of opportunity. To delude them that something is being done about that when you appropriate so little money that you can't do something substantial about it."