ization of the family... it is possible, but on an entirely new basis—that of a moral, reflective co-ordination and harmonization of individual attitudes for the pursuit of common purposes.

CHAPTER III

DISORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

It is difficult to draw an exact dividing line between facts illustrating the disorganization of the community and those showing family decadence, since, as we have seen, the community keeps control over family life and overstepping the principles of the latter means also offending against social opinion. The community is the bearer of all traditions and in view of this the break of tradition in any line by its members may be interpreted as showing a decay of its influence. On the other hand, however, the standards of the community as a whole may evolve and the latter may drop certain traditions while remaining strong and consistent. It is not therefore the preservation or dissolution of any particular rule of behavior which is indicative of the status of a given community, but the question whether there are common rules and how well they are observed. The community is vital when social opinion concerns itself with all matters, outside happenings or individual acts, which possess a public interest, when its attitudes toward these matters are consistent and able to reach approximate unanimity, and when any common action considered necessary to solve the situation as defined by social opinion is carried on in harmonious cooperation. When the community is decaying social opinion degenerates into gossip, that is, instead of being interested in matters of a public character, it becomes absorbed in details of private life. Of course, the cri-
refuses to see the validity of any standards than those of his group.

Disorganization of the community starts in fact as soon as its members begin to define situations exclusively as economic, intellectual, religious, hedonistic, nor as social, where their need for success—that of course, as they see it themselves—in any specific line becomes more important subjectively than the need for social recognition—when they dissociate social opinion about a case from the merit of the case.

Thus some disorganization of the community is unavoidable as soon as the latter gets in touch with the outside world and becomes acquainted with other standards than its own. This incipient disorganization can, however, be in a large measure counteracted if the members of the group have a special interest in maintaining its unity. Up to a certain degree the new tendencies may be simply suppressed. This happens mostly when they are radically opposed to the traditions of the group and, if left free to develop, would be socially destructive. When not distinctly anti-social but merely different from the set of attitudes sanctioned by tradition, the new tendencies are very often, after a period of struggle, simply left outside of the sphere controlled by public opinion, are treated as being of private concern. Thus the more intense and extensive the contact, between a community and the outside world, the wider usualy becomes the sphere of privacy which its members are allowed to have.

The interest by which members of a primary group are moved to keep the group together in spite of disorganizing external influences is the same general interest which underlies family life, that is, the desire for response, manifesting itself in unreflective social soli-
other members of the community and thus break the communal solidarity; c) the study of the relation between these two types of causal processes.

2. [From the village Oszarowice in reply to request for a comparison with description of the village published forty years before.]

There is no music and revelry on Sundays as there was none then, forty years ago, but if it happens somewhere occasionally, one cannot notice mothers watching their daughters as carefully as it was written in that paper Miastek 40 years ago. There is no tavern, thanks to God, but there is sometimes even too much strong drink which kills the body and the soul. It happens that people do not begrudge it to themselves, treat themselves with it up to their ears, particularly the youth who go to hired work. There reigns also card-playing for money. In summer, when you pass through the village, you see sometimes a crowd of people upon the lawn. . . . Perhaps they read some book or newspaper? Far from it. They play cards so that they whit in the air, and so they waste the vesper-time till night. I do not except myself; from the example of others I have been accustomed to these stupid cards, but I do not play for money.

And so, alas! things seem to have turned worse here as compared with what was forty years ago. The girls here mostly go under Prussian domination for work. How much they earn there I do not know, nor what is their life there; but everybody will guess what a girl can commit without parental care. Therefore German women laugh that a Polish girl earns more in Prussia than a Polish man. To tell the truth we have here already two such German acquisitions, which girls brought from Prussia to Poland as seeds [as if for propagation purposes].

Forty years ago there were fewer farmers and thus everybody had a more liberal quantity of land than now. Therefore their daughters did not go to Germany to work and were under better supervision of their mothers. And yet even among strangers one can have self-respect, keep one's self from ignominy and not bring shame upon the whole family.
22. The old folks dress modestly in this locality but the same can not be said of the youths. It is pitiful to see so many girls who as soon as they see a stylish skirt or jacket or bobbed hair worn, by one of the worst kind perhaps, want to dress accordingly, but do not realize that it is shameful and disgraceful for the village youth. There are, I dare say, some good-for-nothing boys who, having donned a pretty, nice looking overcoat or a stylish suit of clothes and shoes, not only would not salute reverently one who wears a peasant’s coat, but would not even stop to converse with him. Every one of these profligate boys reflects thus: “I dress better than that one does, I uyy possess a bigger fortune; then why should I speak to him.” Should you visit his home, however, you would never suppose that such a dressy young man lives there, for the house is filled thick with dirt and filth. Such was not the state of affairs in Ostrow years ago. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that Such Szoczewa, during his stay here several years ago, did not find any elegance and reported to the Gazeta that all the inhabitants of Ostrow dress modestly. Today nearly one half of the girls dress above their means and there are also several who are not worthy of mention.

23. The common folk in our community are quite discreet and well developed. The youth might be termed a promising one, except that great opportunities for corruption are afforded across the German boundary line. As soon as spring comes every boy, girl and even married women, go across the boundary to seek work and stay there throughout the summer without any protection from evil. They do as they please; consequently the girls return home ruined and corrupted and the boys addicted to drinking.

Their parents are aware of the corruption but they do not mind it as long as their children give them their earnings. Decent girls refuse to go to work the next season because they cannot attend to their religious duties properly, must eat meat on Friday and Saturday, are cursed into an immoral and indecent life and compelled to work until noon on Sunday, etc., etc. Priests plead and beg from the pulpit at every opportunity that parents see to it that their children are morally and religiously reared, but their words have no effect whatever.

24. Our girls don’t know how to dress. When one of them enters the church, the dress rattle upon her. She does not know suitably before the holiest Sacrament, only knocks once with her knee, as a mere matter of custom, and does not even think what she is doing, for she is interested in something else: she pushes her companion with her elbow, showing how some other girl is dressed. But I don’t speak of all of them; on the contrary, there are in Samorždzki modest and good girls and women who can be an example for others.

25. Some young men, sons of the best known parishioners [in Osieki] came to the Pastoral Mass on Christmas, was stood in the middle of the church, put their hands in their pockets and looked around, and whenever they saw a bald-headed old man or a girl in a hat, they took a handful of peas from their pockets and threw it upon them. . . . It was difficult to believe that these Christians, Catholics, dared to amuse themselves in such a way in the church.

26. They play [cards for money in the commune Sarnów] every day, but particularly from Saturday to Sunday. They sit at cards over this whole divine night; they break up only when the sun begins to rise. After coming home they go to bed and sleep during the whole time of the divine service . . . and whoever did not go to bed, angry and sleepy, quarrels at home and fights with his wife. And this is not yet the end of it; more than one such card-player takes his son to this devilish amusement, a boy hardly 16 years old, makes him sit at his side, takes the tobacco-bag out and treats him with a cigarette. Cards are spread out, the father plays and the son plays. . . . How will this son respect his father in his old days?

27. Some years ago we read in Przyjacieł some correspondence from the neighborhood of the town Kryniki. There were
complaints about the wildness and ignorance of the people, instances were quoted of theft and even banditry, under the influence of drinking; but we hoped that time would bring a change for the better, that the parents, seeing such sad happenings, would try to educate their children better. Instead of this it is a shame to say that there is no change in this respect for the better.

In a village of this parish... only old people are decent; they are the only ones who "praise God" when meeting any one and with whom it is possible to converse. And the young have gone completely wild; they regard it as an amusement to throw stones at the passers-by. They have no respect even for their parents, to say nothing of other old people, no obedience at all, and they practice habitually the most shameless theft. Many of them go to work in a leather-factory at Krynki; they are well paid and could dress well and live better and put something back for later years. Instead of this they spend their wages in drinking and rioting in the town and in the village. Even among children no good heart can be seen. Some poor crippled children cannot show themselves in the village; the others laugh at them so and deride their deformity.

To a large extent it is the fault of the parents who raise their children like pigs, not caring about their souls, not developing virtue in them. So long as the children are small they fondle them; but when they can walk the parents don't concern themselves much about what they are doing. Many parents say to themselves: "People will teach them." But if the child has no good principles implanted at home and sees no good examples... neither people nor school will teach him. We have a proof of it, because in the village about which I write, there has been a school and its pupils are growing worse and worse.

Prejaciel, 1913, 46.

27. We have very little fruit in our neighborhood [Stobiecko] because we care little to plant trees and a nasty custom prevails among us; the young people do not respect the property of other people. When fruit is ripening on the trees the owner has unhappy days and nights, because the boys wander in gangs at night and where there are apples or pears ruin them and destroy branches. Scuffles often happen at night and sounds of swearing are heard many times in the air. Then they are dragged into courts and carry on law-suits... [The parents allow the young people to smoke cigarettes and to dance.] Many a girl who danced in her youth lost her garland [innocence] and lived to see herself disgraced. But her parents care very little and to such a disgrace they agree willingly. They rather get along, as they say, without bread, provided their children have everything they need. But there are people who bring up their children perfectly; they don't allow them to go to any revelries. When Sunday comes the young people amuse themselves under the observation of their parents reading the Gazeta Swiatecka or singing religious songs in church."

Gazeta Swiatecka, 1904, 27.

28. Fairs for children... take place in Kolno. Of course... the children are not bought and sold, but hired for work... From villages in the neighborhood fathers and mothers come to Kolno with their children and gather before a tavern. To such a crowd come Prussians who want workers under age and ask how much one boy or another costs. If the boy is 12 years old, the Prussian gives for his work thirty or forty roubles, three suits of clothes and a pair of shoes. The parents of the boy don't agree, ask fifty roubles; they clamor and bargain up to the last, until finally the agreement is concluded. Then they go to seal it in a tavern and the Prussian offers liquor that not only the parents, but also the little hired servant drink.

Gazeta Swiatecka, 1909, 18.

29. The ground in Skomlin is good, but there is enough misery, and this is because there is not enough enlightenment and too many leeches who live on the weakness of their neighbors. These leeches are the tavern-keepers and the dealers who teach the country boys to steal, giving them cigarettes or candy for things taken by stealth from their parents. The young people, growing up, go to Prussia to work and they return entirely demoralized. In the winter time, having no occupation, they spend their days and evenings in the shops and waste all their earnings. And all that the father harvests during the summer from his grounds is eaten up by the "Prussian" during the winter and it is necessary to borrow money for taxes. And

*The original is in verse.
in this way a greater and greater misery steals into our village. Strangers come flowing, buy the land and the local inhabitants go down. . . .

The worst defect of the peasants of Skomlin is stubbornness and jealousy when there is a question of the public good. A few weeks ago, for example, the priest, and the owner of the estate of Skomlin at a meeting advised a vote for a general survey and unification of the farms, because each farmer has lots scattered in 6 and even in 8 places. . . . Persuaded by the priest, the majority of the farmers had signed their names; but after leaving the office some stirred up the others against it. The local shop-keepers, Jews, contributed to this a great deal because they were afraid that in a unified village they would be unable to get a dwelling and that their trade would be ruined.

Gastra Święcienka, 1903, 37.

30. The young people of Zagnańsk have been lately committing doings worthy of penalty. They break windows, throw sheaves out of the barns, tear clothes, fight among themselves, etc. When I asked once a farmer, "Whose fault is it?" he answered me: "Money." It means that in our country increasing earnings and increasing license go together.

Zarnie, 1903, 37.

31. There are here [Ulan] store-keepers who teach children to steal. For gingerbread, candy, they take barley by the quarter. And when the child is accustomed to it, he will take a bushel. When the "rogues" notice that he is a sincere rogue, they take him "in company." They steal together, they drink together. . . . [Continuous thefts are reported from another village in the same community. The community represents a purely traditional stage of cultural development and a rather low one; no reconstruction, no schools, poverty. But costumes have changed, which proves disintegration.]

Gastra Święcienka, 1906, 32.

32. Our youth [of Duba] is getting very spoiled. Young boys steal grain from their father and give it away for liquor, for in every village here clandestine tapsters trade in liquor. In Perespa boys in a drunken state cut one another with knives, and one of them will probably pay for it with his life. All this is caused by liquor. In the same Perespa live 17 Jewish families, of whom only 3 have small shops and 14 trade in liquor.

Gastra Święcienka, 1903, 12.

33. In one village near Frampol . . . frequent robberies began to occur lately. Robbers attacked even on the roads people returning from fairs or from the town. And in the village nobody was sure of his property, for not only linen left in the pantry did not stay, but even what was hidden in the pantry under a lock was not secure. . . . The farmers, older men in this village, are honest, well-to-do and laborious. . . . The father works and the son steals, for he wants to dress in the city fashion, he wants to revel, whereas everything is expensive and the father gives no money for luxuries. So they collude to rob. And this succeeded for 3 years, but finally it broke down. One of them went by night to a wealthy farmer and broke open a whole window, with the irame. The farmer threatened that the thieves would remember windows, but with iron bars. He brought constables from Frampol and the investigation began. And it was not difficult to discover the thieves, for they called to each other: "You took this," and "You took that." . . . One got one year of prison, another half a year and three of them three months each.

Gastra Święcienka, 1903, 25.

34. In the first days of this month the provincial court in Kielce judged a case of 33 persons accused of having belonged to a gang which, about 1895, was for a long time the fright and plague of the inhabitants of the province. . . . The investigation disclosed that in the district of Włoszczowa alone during a few years more than 700 robberies were committed. In some villages the farmers, as they now testified in court, "for several years did not get out of dung," because, fearing for their stock, they had continually to spend their nights in horse or cattle stables. In spite of this, in the village Balkowo, commune of Radków, during 3 years 35 horses and 5 cows were stolen, in the village Lachów near Włoszczowa during 6 years 22 horses and 4 cows, and in the little village Belnow during only one year 8 horses. The thieves were robbing unpunished because if anybody among the wronged people complained about one of them the others went to court as witnesses and testified falsely in favor of
ski, a rancorous man, decided to burn the house of his neighbor for vengeance. One night he took a bottle of kerosene and matches and went to fulfill his wicked intention. But Rak evidently foresaw what was threatening him and kept a good watch, for before Ziółkowski had the time to set to work the sons of the owner jumped at him and began to beat him so awfully that under the sticks he breathed his last.

Gazeta Świętokrzyska, 1899, 8.

59. In Nasielsk, province of Warsaw, there was a fair. Many people came together and among them were Mikołaj Fabi
siak from Psucin, a boy of 21, and Rebecki from Ruskow, who had a grudge against Fabišiak. When he saw him he burned with a still greater anger and decided to avenge himself. Fabišiak went into a tavern, and Rebecki brought his companions, Welcz and Czyka, and taking a piece of wood out of the cart, gave it to Czyka, saying: "As soon as Fabišiak comes out, strike him right away." Czyka hid himself behind the cart and, having waited for Fabišiak to come out, gave him such a stroke that the skull broke in two places. Fabišiak fell down and the murd
ers fled. . . . He lived 3 days in great sufferings and Friday gave his spirit to God. The criminals were arrested.

Gazeta Świętokrzyska, 1913, 3.

Among these documents which we have selected to illustrate the disorganization of the peasant community those give us the easiest access to the problem in which the new attitudes of the young generation are described; and at the same time these are perhaps the most typical, and have the greatest importance for sociology, since it is everywhere the young generation through which new attitudes mainly penetrate a community and the struggle between social tradition and social novelty always becomes, in some measure at least, identified with the opposition between the old and the young.

If we had to find the most general difference of attitudes underlying this opposition, we should perhaps search for it in the standpoints taken by the individ-

uals toward their personal and social future. Among the members of primary groups the desire for new experience seems to die out much earlier than among those who lead a more complete, more changing and higher intellectualized life; because of the early developing de
sire for security and because of the relative stability of external conditions the field of new possibilities which the individual sees in the future narrows rapidly. If the individual is transported to new conditions, this field becomes indefinite, for he does not know how to control the future; but, conscious of this inability, he faces the possible new experience with fear rather than with hopeful expectation. And in view of the great dependence of the primary-group member on his social milieu, it is quite natural that his desire for security should extend to his community and he is as much or more concerned about the stability of the community organization as about that of his economic or family situation, and as much afraid of new possibilities appearing there.

In the new generation, on the contrary, the desire for new experience is always stronger originally than the desire for security and becomes checked only by a social training which limits the field of possible novelties. Even in the most conservative primary-group, where the methods of social control are particularly ef
ficient in producing an early stabilization, the period when new experiences outside of the social routine still have a strong appeal for the individual certainly extends beyond the age of twenty. This means that there is a period of five to ten years during which almost every individual is both open to socially prohibited or unforeseen suggestions and able to act in accordance with these suggestions.
with the outside world, the youth are naturally the first to develop new attitudes and to import new values. It is evident that under these conditions the movement, if not directed by educated and mature leaders, is not likely to be constructive, since only those attitudes tend to develop and only those values appeal to the individual which he is prepared to accept. The undirected attention of the peasant youth is thus most easily captivated by superficial aesthetic and hedonistic objects—clothes, trinkets, smoking, fancy foods and drinks. Our documents show that the disorganization of the old social system starts in this way. We have also confirmed this while personally investigating the effects of season emigration. Only a small percentage of youth remains uninfluenced by the attraction exercised by foreign dress and foreign pleasures, so that any locality in which this emigration is intense loses after a time all the superficial social traditions. Usually, however, the effects of foreign influences do not go much deeper. At first, indeed, the changes of dress, of manners, of leisure activities, which the young emigrants introduce after their return, arouse a violent reaction of the older generation, and this sometimes has disastrous effects in the fact that the youth, once revolted against tradition and its bearers, may reject not only the superficial and external mores but even those social rules of behavior without which the community cannot exist. After a time, however, we see a gradual reciprocal adaptation between the old and the young generation, mediated by those older members of the group who participate in season work abroad and by those young emigrants who settle and become regular landed members of the community. The young comply with those traditional mores for which they find no substitute in their life abroad and which therefore appear to them as essential as long as they feel dependent on the primary-group—in particular, with the principles of social solidarity as expressed in mutual help and response. The old accept, not for themselves but for their children, the new aesthetic, hedonistic and ceremonial standards imported from abroad and, as some of our documents note, show a remarkable leniency toward the young generation and a sympathetic interest in ambitions and pleasures which they do not share personally—an interest which is explained by that conversion of personal into familial aspirations which, as we know, usually follows the social maturity of the peasant. The most important permanent effect of this periodical absence of young people is a marked decrease of the seriousness with which the community and family systems are treated by their members when the place of those whose life was completely absorbed in these systems is taken by individuals who have learned to live for certain periods away from a regulated social milieu.

Emigration to America plays a relatively unimportant part in the progress of disorganization of the community. Our documents contain almost nothing bearing directly on this problem, and we know from personal investigation how small is the influence which returning emigrants exercise over community life. This influence limits itself almost entirely to the economic field—a certain improvement of the standards of living—and we may add perhaps a slight democratization of social relations. But emigration to America is much lower numerically (its highest tide, in 1912-1913, reached 130,000 as against 800,000 of season-emigrants), and this number includes a certain percentage of town population, whereas the season-emigration re-
cruits itself exclusively from the country population. Further, no more than 40 per cent of transoceanic emigrants return. Finally, many of these leave Poland at an age when social attitudes are in a large measure fixed, and find in this country a community organization which to some degree at least is a substitute for that of their home communities. Thus, an emigrant returning from America may for a short time attempt to play the rôle of an innovator, but soon becomes absorbed in the life of the group and of his innovations only those have a social influence which bear the tests applied by social opinion. He may contribute to the evolution of the community positively in certain special matters, but can hardly be a serious factor of social disorganization. Transoceanic emigration has indeed a disorganizing effect on the life of the primary group, but in an indirect way, by acting on the imagination of those who remain. The community is no longer the only possible social milieu, in which the individual has to stay for ever, and to which he must adapt himself; there are unlimited possibilities outside of it, and he feels much less dependent on it than in the past.

Much deeper, because more permanent, is the disorganization of the young generation in the community when it is produced by strangers who settle among the local inhabitants, bringing with them different mores, and either fail to become assimilated through racial reasons or are numerous enough to be independent of the social opinion of the community. The Jewish shopkeeper represents the first class; city workers near industrial centers, and released criminals sent to settle in a small town represent the second. The Jewish shopkeeper in a peasant village is usually also a liquor-dealer without license, a banker lending money at usury, often also a receiver of stolen goods and (near the border) a contrabandist. The peasant needs and fears him, but at the same time despises him always and hates him often. The activity of these country shopkeepers is the source of whatever anti-Semitism there is in the peasant masses. We have seen in the documents the methods by which the shopkeeper teaches the peasant boy smoking, drinking, and finally stealing; the connection established in youth lasts sometimes into maturity, and almost every gang of peasant thieves or robbers centers around some Jewish receiver's place, where the spoils are brought and new campaigns planned. Gangs composed exclusively of Jews are frequent in towns, rare in the country; usually Jews manage only the commercial side of the questions, leaving robbing or transporting of contraband to peasants.

Evidently the connection between such a shopkeeper-receiver and the youth demoralized by him remains a purely business proposition; race difference prevents even that solidarity which unifies the members of a gang of professional criminals. On the contrary, the influence exercised upon peasant youth by incomers of Polish origin, particularly by city workers, or by members of the lower middle class, is of a purely personal character and works by imitation. It is interesting to note in this connection that the peasant seldom directly imitates any of the members of the country nobility or of the city middle class; the social difference of degree seems to him too white so that imitation appears as absurd or meaningless, whereas it is quite normal when the imitated person is only slightly higher in the social hierarchy. The disorganizing effect of this influence of incoming strangers depends, of course, on their character, their number and the closeness of their connection.
with the autochthonic group; in the most radical cases, in villages situated near large centers and whose population includes more strangers than original inhabitants, nothing is left of the old community except the official organization of village and commune autonomy from which the incomers are excluded unless they own real estate within the limits of the village or commune. But this invasion and dissolution of the community does not go on without struggle on the part of the old generation, and the point where the resistance of the old community is the strongest, precisely in admitting strangers to land-ownership. Here, in connection with the land problem, the solidarity of the group reasserts itself, leading sometimes even to violent group-action (p. 1181). Nevertheless, in the long run the struggle is always unsuccessful; a community which has a continual influx of strangers cannot preserve its integrity and sooner or later dissolves itself into a vague and incoherent social body within which organizations of a completely different type are formed.

Still more radical and rapid is the process of disorganization when the community becomes connected with some industrial or commercial center where the young generation goes to work. This has been a very frequent occurrence during the last fifty years, when in consequence of economic development of many old cities and of the appearance of new ones, innumerable peasant communities became practically nothing but suburbs whose population has a character intermediary between peasants and industrial workers. In such cases the social contacts between members of the young generation working in the city and various city groups become as close or even closer than those which they maintain with the rest of their community; the latter is reduced to a rôle similar to that of a “neighborhood” in an American city. City mores penetrate rapidly into the community; but as they offer little or nothing which could take the place of the old country mores in organizing individual life, social disorganization is often accompanied by personal demoralization. Those suburban localities usually stand in rather bad repute. Of course this is also due in a large measure to an influx of many undesirable elements from the city. We must also notice that there are interesting exceptions. And perhaps, generally speaking, demoralization is not as far-reaching as might be expected. Even as a mere permanent neighborhood, the community preserves some influence upon the individual and its opinion, divided on secondary matters, remains unanimous whenever the fundamental standards of social solidarity are concerned. There is not only a common human, but a common national stock of morals, and while an individual or a small group may act against it, he can do it only by concealing his doings from his wider social milieu; he may try to fool the opinion of the community, but he seldom dares to defy it. In general, therefore, personal demoralization is much easier among those who have immigrated into the city from more distant villages and find themselves outside of any social control, than among those who still live in their old milieu. What sometimes happens, indeed, is that in certain respects the morality of the whole group is lowered. This concerns in particular honesty in economic matters, and we have tried to explain in Volume I how this happens. Economic dealings between members of a primary group have the character of social relations subordinated to the principle of solidarity, not that of plain business relations subordinated to quantitative impersonal economic valua-
tions. When the peasant begins to deal with outsiders, he usually extends to them at first the principle of solidarity and is more than fair. Later, however, if the relations multiply and he finds that the principle of solidarity is not applied by the outsiders, he goes to the other extreme and implicitly, or even explicitly, assumes that economic exchange is not regulated by any principles whatever, that the only policy is to give as little as possible and to get as much as possible by any means; it takes some time to learn and appreciate business honesty as a method of economic success. And one of the most marked signs of community disorganization is when he begins to apply to the members of his own group the dishonest methods used with regard to outsiders. But this is a problem which concerns rather the old than the young generation which we are discussing now.

A very interesting feature of the disorganization which starts with the youth is that it seldom, if ever, is purely individual but assumes a group character. This is perfectly natural when it is the effect of season migration, for season emigrants from the same village or the same neighborhood usually go and work together, and thus common interests and memories unify them with each other and separate them in some measure from the rest of the community. But even when the source of disorganization is infiltration of strangers or work in a neighboring city, there is a general tendency of the young people with new and socially non-sanctioned attitudes to form more or less close associations, ranging from a vague group united by mere frequency of intercourse to an organized gang. Moreover, we usually notice efforts to proselyte the rest of the youth of the community and a very marked ill will toward those who fail to respond. The individual seems to be able to emancipate himself from the dependence the large community only by relying for social recognition on a smaller community with common interests. This tendency seems stronger among young than among older people, probably because the former are less able to escape the censorship of public opinion by way of concealment, and also because the larger community does not satisfy sufficiently their desire for recognition, whereas in a group of the same age they can aspire for prominence. From the latter standpoint the formation of groups of young people seems almost a social necessity. It was limited until recently by the powerful cohesion of family groups, which prevented any solidarity of the young generation against the old from appearing, so that the youth of a village came together only for amusement, but the decadence of family life going on parallelly with the breakdown of the isolation of communities made the formation of solidarity groups of young people for any purposes possible. Of course, these groups, as some of our documents show, are far from possessing the same degree of cohesion and solidarity as the original community. Nevertheless, their importance can hardly be underestimated. As factors of social disorganization they not only help the individual to free himself from the control of social opinion but serve as centers of attraction for those in whom the socially non-sanctioned attitudes have not yet developed. Moreover, through them the field of disorganization is apt to widen; it often happens that the group is formed under the influence of some relatively innocent interest—dress, smoking, games—and gradually its activities begin to extend to more dangerous matters. On the other hand, under proper leadership such groups have been often utilized for purposes of
social reconstruction, as we shall see in later chapters.

This type of disorganization of the community in which the process starts with the young generation is essentially and primarily a dissolution of social opinion. The community begins by losing the uniformity of social attitudes which made common appreciation and common action possible; the introduction of new values breaks it into two or more camps with different centers of interest, different standards of appreciation and divergent tendencies of action. If the process continues, social opinion degenerates into gossip; public interest centers on matters of curiosity instead of those of social importance, and except in the condemnation of the most radical crimes, no unanimity can be reached on any point. As a consequence of this dissolution of social opinion, unless a new basis of unity is reached, there comes a more or less marked decay of social solidarity, both because divergence of appreciation and action breeds hostility and because most of the forms in which solidarity used to manifest itself are no longer adequately enforced by social opinion and rely only on individual moral feeling or desire for response.

It must be understood, of course, that the process of disorganization which starts with the young generation is a complicated matter. As a certain group of young people grow older and take the place of their parents, they have to moderate their new attitudes in adaptation to traditional problems and to old responsibilities which they are forced to face; they bring indeed a new and discordant element into the community, but not as radically new and discordant as might have been expected judging by their earlier attitudes. At the same time, however, a new group of young people has taken their place as the revolutionary factor; the attitudes of these are different from those of the old generation, but may be also different from those of the preceding young group. And so on, with increasing complexity. We shall see later how this apparently chaotic evolution which, if left to itself, might lead to a complete decay of all social cohesion, is directed into definite channels by conscious leadership and tends toward the formation of a new social system, less rigid, more multiform, wider and better organized than the old one.

A very different type of disorganization of the community manifests itself not in a divergent evolution of the young generation but in a social disharmony within the old generation. Here the unity of social opinion is not originally affected; we find no revolt against tradition, no attempts to contest the validity of old standards. The individual who behaves in a socially prohibited way either has the consciousness of being wrong and tries to conceal his actions from the community, or else interprets the traditional standards in his favor and tries to justify his behavior from their standpoint. There is disorganization of the community only because, and in so far as, the individual members act against the principle of solidarity.

Now, this form of disorganization is not a new phenomenon, does not need external contacts to be produced; it has always existed even within isolated communities. For its origin lies in the original, temperamental attitudes of the individual. Although communal solidarity is psychologically founded on the desire for response which is, for the sociologist, one of the original individual attitudes, this attitude frequently conflicts with other equally original ones, and these conflicts can be harmonized only by an adequate social education.
In Part IV of this volume (Introduction) we shall see that the temperamental attitudes of an individual are not spontaneously regulated in their social manifestations but express themselves from moment to moment, independently of each other, under the pressure of actual personal needs. The aim of social education is precisely to organize their manifestation by subordinating them to rules. Every case of anti-social behavior which is not due to the explicit rejection of social rules but is a lack of compliance in practice with rules which the individual implicitly or explicitly acknowledges in theory, marks a failure of social education, an imperfect organization of temperamental attitudes into a character demanded by the given social environment. And since individual temperaments differ, while the educational methods used by a primary group are rather uniformly applied to all its members, some educational failures are bound to happen in every community, however strong and coherent, and breaks of communal solidarity, more or less far reaching and frequent, have occurred always and everywhere.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the number and importance of these breaks have greatly increased in peasant communities since the isolation of the latter disappeared. The explanation of this seems to be that the new values introduced from outside into the community life open the way for many new situations which the traditional rules of behavior did not foresee. The social education which the old generation received did not prepare them sufficiently for the difficult task of maintaining their social character in its integrity in the face of all the new suggestions which their more or less changed environment offers. Under these conditions, every individual's life-organization becomes more or less dis-

DISORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

tered and his instincts, inadequately controlled, may easily express themselves in anti-social activities. Thus, the economic evolution of the last fifty years brought before the peasant, even the most conservative one, problems which put to a serious test his principles of social solidarity, made him find or accept new definitions of economic situations to which the traditional rules could not possibly apply and which often, directly or indirectly, led to an antagonism to other members of the community. Similarly, as we have mentioned in the preceding chapter, the growing acquaintance with law made the peasant aware of the existence of standards of human relations somewhat different from his own, and at the same time put into his hand weapons of social struggle which he is more and more frequently tempted to use and abuse, particularly if somebody else has already used them against him.

We have seen that the first type of disorganization, beginning with a disintegration of public opinion due to the new values accepted and new attitudes developed in the young generation, brings with it usually a decay of social solidarity. The second type of disorganization, manifesting itself in the beginning as a decay of solidarity between the members of the old generation, cannot fail to affect in turn the unity and consistency of social opinion. As long as anti-social behavior is limited to a few isolated members of the group, the latter continues to treat it as abnormal and has no doubts as to the validity of the standards on which public opinion bases its judgments. But when breaks of social solidarity become frequent and when in view of the changed conditions every individual sees the possibility of situations to which the traditional rules can not be applied, the faith in the validity of the accepted
standards is gradually shaken. The standards are not explicitly rejected, but begin to be treated as mere pious wishes which it would be desirable but which it is impossible fully to realize in practice. Public opinion is not divided at once into opposite camps, as it is when the young generation revolts against the old, but is weak and hesitant in its approvals and condemnations and loses all interest in facts which it does not know how to control, however vital these facts may be for the existence of the community. And, by a curious contrast, while in the first type of disorganization it is usually the superficial traditions—dress, ceremonial, leisure time organization—which begin to decay before all the others, and the fundamental principles of social morality remain often unshaken, in this second type the very foundation of social cohesion is weakened while the formal observances sanctioned by tradition may be kept as rigidly as ever.

This decay of the active moral control which the community exercises over its members results in turn in the growth of a specific form of social disharmony which we have already mentioned in the preceding chapter—the tendency to individual self-redress. As long as the community is efficient and its standards generally believed and applied, the individual who is or imagines himself wronged can obtain redress through his group, and either voluntarily accepts or is forced to accept whatever redress the group thinks justified. But when the community is inactive or its standards are no longer seriously and unquestioningly acknowledged by its members, its judiciary and executive authority can no longer have any influence. According to modern ideas, of course, the individual should seek redress through the state, and in most cases the peasant does this. But we must remember that during the period of Russian domination the state was run by an inefficient, corrupt and nationally foreign, even hostile, bureaucracy. Naturally therefore, there were many cases in which the peasant, not trusting in the ability or the justice of the state authorities, took redress into his own hands. Then, of course, he measured his revenge by his wrong and his wrong by his subjective grievance. Moreover, he had little choice generally as to means and forms of redress and often took the first opportunity to avenge himself, however disproportionate the vengeance might have been as compared with the wrong. This explains the numerous cases of arson and murder through vengeance which we find in popular press and of which we have quoted a few. A similar explanation will be found, in Volume V, with reference to similar cases among the immigrants in this country, where the state jurisdiction, though less inefficient, seems even more unfamiliar to the Polish peasant than the Russian system. We may also add that a primary-group member, when passing from the community control under the state jurisdiction, is never satisfied with the standards of justice and the forms of redress which he can obtain, and there are always cases in which he will be inclined to resort to self-redress; compare, for instance, the long survival of duels.

It must be realized, of course, that the two types of disorganization of the community which we have tried to analyze and to explain separately, viz., the disorganization which affects the young generation and begins by a disintegration of public opinion, and the disorganization which bears directly on the old generation and begins by a decay of social solidarity, usually go on simultaneously, though either may prevail in a given
CHAPTER IV

STRUGGLE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE OLD SOCIAL SYSTEM

When the disorganization of a social group becomes the object-matter of reflective attention on the part of its members, the spontaneous tendency immediately arising is that of strengthening the existing social system against the process of decadence. The phenomena of disorganization appear at first as a mere negation of the traditional order, and the problem which faces the group seems to be a simple alternative—either the old order or complete chaos. It is only later, when, as a consequence of a closer contact with other social milieux or of the growing realization of new forms of social life, a different social order appears as possible, that the problem loses its seeming simplicity and discloses itself as a very complex and very difficult problem of social evolution, offering an indefinite variety of more or less satisfactory solutions. From this broader standpoint, disorganization itself is a secondary matter, a social symptom rather than a social factor. But as long as viewed exclusively with reference to the existing system which is being disorganized, phenomena of disorganization are judged to be the real and important matter, the social evil which the chief task of society is to overcome.

Such judgments are found not only in primary peasant groups; they constitute still the main content of social reflection in the most complex and most civilized societies, they are the backbone of all coercive and repres-