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FROM ORGANIZATION TO SOCIETY: VIRGINIA IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

Virginia in the early seventeenth century may be taken as an example of a social system established in accordance with the model of a commercial organization, in which the behavior of the members was expected to be entirely determined by their positions within the organization. The concessions that were offered to induce them to accept positions within the organization so multiplied the number of statuses they held as to alter decisively their behavior and to transform Virginia from a formal organization into a society. The analysis of the early history of Virginia is an illustration of the way in which historical knowledge may be used to suggest problems of interest to sociological theory.

Fad and fashion play their roles in the world of scholarship as elsewhere, and often products of the intellect may assume the quaint air of artifacts for no better reason than that, with the passage of time, they are made obsolete by the appearance of new, if not necessarily better, models. But in scholarship, if not in manufacturing, novelty is a virtue that has limits; and even old ideas and interests may be resurrected if they demonstrate the existence of problems or give promise of solving problems for which more recent ideas have proved inadequate. So it is that historical sociology, though conceded to be one of the roots from which the discipline itself emerged, has, in this country at least, suffered from the competition of more stylish fashions. And so it is, too, that there is increasing evidence today that historical sociology, so long an outmoded form of inquiry, is once again commending itself as an important subject of research. What follows is, frankly, an attempt to aid in the rehabilitation of historical sociology, not by exhortation, but, it is hoped, by a persuasive demonstration that questions of considerable importance for sociological theory may be raised when problems are examined in historical perspective. Our interest in this essay is in the utilization of certain aspects of the history of Virginia in the early seventeenth century to suggest significant questions concerning the creation of new statuses and the circumstances under which the character of an organization may be so altered as to be transmuted into something which is not, properly speaking, an organization at all but a society.

I

It must be conceded at the outset that the group we have selected for study was pathetically small. In 1607, when the Virginia Company established a settlement at Jamestown, its population numbered 105; and in 1624, when the crown revoked the charter of the Company, the population of Virginia amounted to just over 1,200, de-

spite the fact that the Company had sent more than 5,000 emigrants during that seventeen-year period.[1] But, just as a limited duration of time is no necessary detriment to a study of this kind, because there are periods of history when the rate of change is accelerated, so, too, the limited size of the group affords no accurate measure of the importance of the enterprise. Judged in terms of its outcome, its importance is self-evident. But, judged even in terms of the criteria of importance imposed by contemporaries, the verdict must be the same. The articles on the Virginia settlement in the *Kölnische Zeitung* and the *Mercure françoise;* the running series of reports from the Venetian ambassadors in London to the Doge and Senate; the letters from Jesuit priests in England to the Propaganda Fide in Rome and the newsletters from Venice and Antwerp in the Vatican archives; the continuing stream of dispatches from the Spanish ambassadors to King Philip III, pressing him to attack Jamestown, advising him of the latest decisions of the Virginia Company, and relating their efforts to recruit English spies; and the existence in the royal archives at Simancas of a description of the layout of Jamestown and the earliest known map of the town, the work of an Irish spy in the service of Spain[2]—all this is eloquent testimony of the position of Virginia in the international relations of the seventeenth century and of the concern felt in the capitals of Europe in the Virginia Company's undertaking. Nor was the expression of this concern merely verbal. In August, 1613, when the population of Virgina barely exceeded 200, the settlement at Jamestown had a decidedly cosmopolitan cast, for it contained eighteen prisoners—fifteen Frenchmen, including two Jesuits and several members of the nobility; a Spanish spy, Don Diego de Molina; a renegade Englishman in the pay of Spain; and an Indian princess, Pocahontas.[3]

At the May Day, 1699, exercises at the College of William and Mary, one of the student orators—who must have been a sophomore—exclaimed:

> Methinks we see already that happy time when we shall surpass the Asiaticians in civility, the Jews in religion, the Greeks in philosophy, the Egyptians in geometry, the Phoenicians in arithmetic, and the Chaldeans in astrology. O happy Virginia.[4]

We may be intrigued by the ingenuousness of the student, but we are interested in the statement as evidence of the fact that in 1699—and for some time earlier—Virginia was a society and Virginians were nothing if not ebullient about its prospects. For it had not always been so.

At its inception—and for a number of years thereafter—it had been a formal organization, and, if the joyous outburst of the student reflects its character at a later date, its earlier character is better revealed by the instructions given by the Virginia Company to Sir Thomas Gates on the eve of his departure for Jamestown in May, 1609:

> You must devide yo^{r} people into tennes twenties & so upwards, to every necessary worke a competent nomber, over every one of w^{ch} you must appointe some man of Care & still in that worke to oversee them and to take dayly ac-

[1] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Social Life of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (Richmond, 1907), pp. 15, 17–18; "The Virginia Census, 1624–25," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography,* VII (1899–1900), 364–67; Edward Channing, *A History of the United States* (New York and London, 1905–25), I, 204–5.

[2] See, e.g., Alexander Brown, *The Genesis of the United States* (Boston and New York, 1897), I, 142, 180, n. 1, 244–45, 393–99; II, 595–96, 738, 741; *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs . . . in the Archives and Collections of Venice . . . ,* Vol. XI, Nos. 52, 466, 794, 821; Carl Russell Fish (ed.), *Guide to the Materials for American History in Roman and Other Italian Archives* (Washington, 1911), pp. 150 ff.; Henry Chandlee Forman, *Jamestown and St. Mary's* (Baltimore, 1938), pp. 37, 38; Alexander Brown, *The First Republic in America* (New York and Boston, 1898), pp. 48, 50, 51–52, 62, 79–80, 121, 123, 125, 152, 160, 184–85, 218–19.

[3] Brown, *Genesis,* II, 700–706.

[4] Quoted in Louis B. Wright, *The First Gentlemen of Virginia* (San Marino, 1940), p. 109.

counte of their laboures, and you must ordayne y^t^ every overseer of such a nomber of workemen Deliver once a weeke an accounte of the wholle comitted to his Charge . . . you shall doe best to lett them eate together at reasonable howers in some publique place beinge messed by six or five to a messe, in w^ch^ you must see there bee equality and sufficient that so they may come and retourne to their worke without any delay and have no cause to complain of measure or to excuse their idleness uppon y^e^ dressinge or want of diet. You may well allowe them three howers in a somers day and two in the winter, and shall call them together by Ringinge of a Bell and by the same warne them againe to worke.[5]

And, if in later years "O happy Virginia" could be a spontaneous outcry of its citizens, it could not have been earlier. Testifying in 1625 about conditions under the administration of Sir Thomas Dale in 1614–16, Mrs. Perry, one of the fortunates who survived more than a few years in the first quarter-century of Virginia's history, revealed that

in the time of Sr: Thomas Dales Government An leyden and June Wright and other women were appoynted to make shirts for the Colony servants and had six nelds full of silke threed allowed for making of a shirte, w^ch^ yf they did not p'forme, They had noe allowance of Dyott, and because theire threed naught and would not sewe, they tooke owt a ravell of y^e^ lower p^te^ of y^e^ shirte to make an end of y^e^ worke, and others y^t^ had threed of thiere owne made it up w^th^ that, Soe the shirts of those w^ch^ had raveled owt proved shorter then the next, for w^ch^ fact the said An leyden and June Wright were whipt, And An leyden beinge then w^th^ childe (the same night thereof miscarried).[6]

Our first inquiry, then, must be into the characteristics of the original settlement at Jamestown—characteristics which changed so markedly during the course of the next quarter-century.

Virginia was not established as a colony to take its place among the territories governed by the British crown; it was not a state, and, properly speaking, it was not a political unit at all. It was property, the property of the Virginia Company of London, and it was established to return a profit to the stockholders of that company. Under the political and economic conditions of seventeenth-century England, speculators in overseas expansion could count on no support from the government except verbal encouragement and some legal protection—and sometimes precious little of these. Under the circumstances, therefore, colonization had to be undertaken as a private business venture, and the first charge imposed on the property was the return on the shareholder's investment. Traditionally, this episode has been dealt with primarily in terms of the motivation of participants —did they come to establish religious freedom, to seek a haven for the politically persecuted, or to found a "First Republic"?— and it is true that those who joined the Virginia enterprise did so for many reasons. Some, like Richard Norwood, were footloose and fancy-free after having completed their apprenticeships. Robert Evelin wrote his mother that he was "going to the sea, a long and dangerous voyage with other men, to make me to be able to pay my debts, and to restore my decayed estate again . . . and I beseech you, if I do die, that you would be good unto my poor wife and children, which God knows, I shall leave very poor and very mean, if my friends be not good unto them." In its promotional literature the Virginia Company took advantage of this broad spectrum of motives and cast its net wide to snare the purses and bodies of all sorts and conditions of persons in support of a venture in which

> . . . profite doth with pleasure joyne,
> and bids each chearefull heart,
> To this high praysed enterprise,
> performe a Christian part.[7]

[5] Susan Myra Kingsbury (ed.), *Records of the Virginia Company* (Washington, 1906–35), III, 21.

[6] "Minutes of the Council and General Court," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, XXIII (1915), 138.

[7] Wesley Frank Craven and Walter B. Hayward, *The Journal of Richard Norwood, Surveyor of Bermuda* (New York, 1945); Brown, *Genesis*, I, 442; "London's Lotterie," *William and Mary Quarterly*, V (3d ser., 1948), 259–64.

But, from the point of view of the managers of the enterprise, recruitment was perceived less as a problem of motivation than of achieving an organizational form through which the resources and energies of the participants could be mobilized. The basic objectives of the promoters in establishing a plantation in Virginia are quite clear: to exploit the mineral resources which they were certain were there; to search for that elusive will-o'-the-wisp—a water route to the Pacific through North America—and to monopolize whatever local trade existed and whatever oriental trade would be developed with the opening-up of the northwest passage.

The organizational form adopted for the venture was not created by the promoters; the roots of the joint-stock company, though it was still subject to considerable experimentation, lay deeply imbedded in English history. Nor were the proprietors themselves totally without experience in the establishment of plantations or unaware of the experience of others. Sir Thomas Smythe, a leader of the Virginia enterprise, was one of the merchant princes of London, a governor of the East India Company, the Muscovy Company, and many others. And they had before them the experience—which was, as we shall see, not entirely an unmixed blessing—of the colonizing efforts of Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Humphrey Gilbert, of the trading posts established by the great commercial companies, of Spain and Portugal, and of the founding of plantations in Ireland.[8]

What they established was a business organization; and, though the form of that organization was changed at various times during the Company's history, those changes were at all times dictated by the need to make the business pay, which, in the words of Sir Edwin Sandys, one of the two great leaders of the Company, was "that whereon all men's eyes were fixed."[9] Its problems were those of any business organization. It sold shares, begged contributions, and organized lotteries to raise the necessary funds; it was concerned to recruit a proper labor force; it had to cope with the problem of adequate supervision and administration so as to maintain its authority; and it engaged in a full-scale advertising campaign to sell to potential adventurers and planters the glories of a land where the "horses are also more beautiful, and fuller of courage. And such is the extraordinarie fertility of that Soyle, that the Does of their Deere yeelde Two Fawnes at a birth, and sometimes three." And it was confronted with the petty harassments of cajoling those whose good will was needed for the success of the organization. "Talking with the King," wrote the Earl of Southampton to Sir Robert Cecil, "by chance I told him of the Virginia Squirrills which they say will fly, whereof there are now divers brought into England, and hee presently and very earnestly asked me if none of them was provided for him. . . . I would not have troubled you with this but that you know so well how he is affected by these toyes."[10]

But though the Company's plans were eminently rational, its grand design suffered from a fatal flaw: reality was far different from what the Company expected. Its model had been the East India Company, and its dream had been to reproduce the Spanish looting of a continent; but conditions in Virginia were not those of India or Mexico and Peru. "It was the Spaniards

[8] Herbert Levi Osgood, *The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century* (New York and London, 1904, 1907), I, 32–34; II, 30–32; Philip Alexander Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (New York and London, 1896), I, 3–4.

[9] Wesley Frank Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company* (New York, 1932), p. 24. For an account of the structure of the Company see William Robert Scott, *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint-Stock Companies to 1720* (Cambridge, 1910), II, 247–59, 266–88.

[10] *A Declaration of the State of the Colonie and Affairs in Virginia* (London, 1620), in Peter Force (ed.), *Tracts and Other Papers, Relating . . . to the . . . Colonies in North America* (Washington, 1836–46), III, 5; Brown, *Genesis*, I, 357.

good hap," wrote Captain John Smith later in the history of the Virginia Company,

> to happen in those parts where were infinite numbers of people, whoe had manured the ground with that providence that it afforded victuall at all times; and time had brought them to that perfection they had the use of gold and silver, and the most of such commodities as their countries affoorded; so that what the Spaniard got was only the spoile and pillage of those countries people, and not the labours of their owne hands. But had those fruitfull Countries been as Salvage, as barbarous, as ill-peopled, as little planted laboured and manured, as Virginia; their proper labours, it is likely would have produced as small profit as ours. . . .
>
> But we chanced in a land, even as God made it. . . . Which ere wee could bring to recompence our paines, defray our charges, and satisfie our adventurers; wee were to discover the country, subdue the people, bring them to be tractable civil and industrious, and teach them trades that the fruits of their labours might make us recompence, or plant such colonies of our owne that must first make provision how to live of themselves ere they can bring to perfection the commodities of the countrie.[11]

But though the error in conception made by the leaders of the Virginia Company was, from their viewpoint, a grievous one, it is also thoroughly understandable. It is true that the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century was a period of rapid expansion in the organization of trading companies; no less than thirty-four were chartered during that time. But the significant point is that the Virginia Company was the eighteenth to be founded, and, of the previous seventeen, whose experience could be taken as models, all dealt with countries within the European seas, with settled communities along the African coast, or with the advanced societies of Asia. For them, the problem was to exploit the already existing labor force of a settled society.[12] For the Virginia Company, the problem—and it is in this that the crucial difference lies—was to recruit a labor force.

It must be understood, therefore, that, in conformity with its objectives and organizational form, the establishment planted by the Virginia Company at Jamestown was a private estate, which, in the absence of an amenable local labor force, was worked on the basis of imported labor. Basic policies were laid down in London by the General Court of the Company, the body of those who had purchased the £12 10*s*. shares or who had been admitted for favors in the Company's behalf; the management and direction of affairs were intrusted to agents of the shareholders; and the supervision of those whose labor in Virginia was necessary for the attainment of the Company's objectives was placed in the hands of officials appointed in London.

Under the circumstances there were many potent inducements to English investors to purchase the Company's £12 10*s*. shares, a price, incidentally, which was the Company's estimate of the cost of transporting a settler to Virginia. Under the charter of 1606 they were guaranteed that after a five-year period, during which the settlers in Virginia would be supported by a stream of supplies sent at Company expense, the profits gained through trade and the discovery of minerals would be divided among the investors in proportion to the number of shares they held, and grants of land would be made to them on the same basis. But what were to be the inducements to become the labor force of a company trading post?

It should be noted at once that the English imitated the Spaniards in attempting to mobilize native labor. For the Company the key to the integration of the Indians into the labor force was in the ease with which, it was anticipated, they could be

[11] John Smith, *Description of Virginia and Proceedings of the Colonie* (Oxford, 1612), in Lyon Gardiner Tyler (ed.), *Narratives of Early Virginia* (New York, 1907), p. 178.

[12] Susan Myra Kingsbury, "A Comparison of the Virginia Company with the Other English Trading Companies of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1906* (Washington, 1907), pp. 162–63.

converted to Christianity and thereby won over as well to the secular values of Europeans. To them would accrue spiritual benefits; the Company, already blessed with those, would receive something more substantial. As a certain "Maister Captaine Chester" put it:

> The land full rich, the people easilie wonne,
> Whose gaines shalbe the knowledge of our faith
> And ours such ritches as the country hath.[13]

But though the Company succeeded for a time in exacting some tribute from the local tribal chiefs in the form of goods and weekly labor services, the Indians proved unwilling to accept the Company's spiritual and secular offerings. Long before the Indian uprising of 1622 gave an excuse to the settlers to engage in a campaign of extermination, it was clear that the Virginia Company would be forced to import its own labor force.[14]

Between 1607 and 1609, when its charter was changed, the Virginia Company sent over 300 persons to Jamestown. They were a disparate crew of adventurers and roughnecks, imbued with the hope that after a short period in Virginia they would return home with their fortunes in their purses. The social composition of the original labor force, the tasks they were expected to perform, and the nature of the settlement they were expected to establish can all be inferred from the passenger lists of the first expedition and the three subsequent supplies that were sent out by the Company before its charter was modified in 1609. The original expedition numbered 105 persons, of whom we have the names of 67. Of these 67, 29 were listed as gentlemen and 6 were named to the local council; the rest were listed by occupation—1 preacher, 4 carpenters, 12 laborers, 1 surgeon, 1 blacksmith, 1 sailor, 1 barber, 2 bricklayers, 1 mason, 1 tailor, 1 drummer, and 4 boys —and 2 were unidentified. In the three succeeding supplies, the rather high proportion of gentlemen was not substantially reduced, nor did the range of occupations alter significantly. Seventy-three of the 120 persons in the first supply of 1608 can be identified. In this group, gentlemen exceeded laborers 28 to 21. The remainder was made up of an odd assortment of craftsmen, including jewelers, refiners, and goldsmiths—bespeaking the expectations of the Company—apothecaries, tailors, blacksmiths, and—mute testimony to the fact that gentlemen must be gentlemen whether in the wilds of Virginia or a London drawing room—a perfumer. In brief, the two most striking characteristics of this original labor force are the presence of so high a proportion of gentlemen and the absence of any occupations indicative of an intention to establish a settled agricultural community.[15]

From the point of view of the promoters of the Virginia enterprise, these men were not citizens of a colony; they were the occupants of a status in—to use an anachronistic term—the Company's table of organization, and the status was that of workman. Such other qualities or attributes that they possessed might have been of importance when they were in London, Norwich, or Bristol, but what counted in Virginia was that they should accept the directions of their superiors and that they should be willing to work.

Even under the best of circumstances, the problem of maintaining discipline and authority would have been crucial to the success of the Company. But these were hardly the best of circumstances, for the very social composition of the original labor force intensified what in any case would

[13] Quoted in Keith Glenn, "Captain John Smith and the Indians," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography,* LII (1944), 231, n. 12.

[14] Wesley Frank Craven, "Indian Policy in Early Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly,* I (3d ser., 1944), 65–82.

[15] John Smith, *Description of Virginia,* in Tyler (ed.), *op. cit.,* pp. 125–26, 140–41, 159–60; Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, *Patrician and Plebeian in Virginia* (Charlottesville, 1910), pp. 5–9; Bruce, *Social Life,* pp. 39–43.

have been a grievously difficult problem. In the long intervals between the arrival of supplies under the direction of the Company's admiral, Christopher Newport, conditions in Jamestown bordered on anarchy; men were beaten by their officers, plots were hatched to escape the country, and insubordination was rampant. The Company's administrative methods, characterized by the utmost laxness, could not cope with the situation. "I likewise as occation moved me," wrote President Wingfield, discussing the supplies in Virginia, "spent them in trade or by guift amongst the Indians. So likewise did Captain Newport take of them . . . what he thought good, without any noate of his hand mentioning the certainty; and disposed of them as was fitt for him. Of these likewise I could make no accompt." Nor did the high percentage of aristocrats help matters. Unused to the heavy work of axing timber, they cursed so much at their blisters that the president of the council ordered that at the end of the day's work a can of cold water be poured down the sleeve of each offender for every curse he had uttered. To Captain John Smith, the problem was the presence of too many gentlemen: "For some small number of adventrous Gentlemen . . . nothing were more requisite; but to have more to wait and play than worke, or more commanders and officers than industrious labourers was not so necessarie. For in Virginia, a plaine Souldier that can use a Pickaxe and spade, is better than five Knights."[16]

Clearly, even if the mortality figures had been less gruesome than they were—in July, 1609, between 80 and 100 were alive of the 320 who had been sent since 1607[17]—qualitative considerations alone would have dictated a change in the composition of the labor force. For the Company the situation was brought to a head with the realization that there were to be no quick returns from metals and trade and that profits would have to be made through the exploitation of agricultural resources.

Never did the Company rely fundamentally on the recruitment of involuntary labor, but so desperate were its labor requirements and so necessary was it to keep the good will of those authorities who favored the transportation of undesirables that it felt compelled to resort to forced labor.

As early as 1609, a letter from Lisbon revealed that the Portuguese were transporting fifteen hundred children over the age of ten to the East Indies and suggested that the same be done in the case of Virginia. Shortly thereafter the Privy Council notifified the mayor of London that the plagues of the city were due mainly to the presence of so many poor persons and recommended that a fund be raised, with the help of the commercial companies, to send as many of these as possible to Virginia. The Virginia Company promptly gave an estimate of the expenses involved and of the terms that would be offered to the emigrants; but, though a large sum of money was raised, no persons were actually transported at that time. In 1617, however, the City of London raised £500 to pay the cost of shipping one hundred children to Virginia, where they were to be apprenticed until the age of twenty-one, thereafter to be the fee-simple owners of fifty acres of land each. So delighted were the Company and the Virginia planters that they continued the practice, but it is evident that not all the children were equally pleased by the future arranged for them. In January, 1620, Sandys wrote to Sir Robert Naunton, the king's principal secretary, that "it falleth out that among those children, sundry being ill-disposed, and fitter for any remote place than for this Citie, declare their unwillingness to goe to Virginia: of whom

[16] The quotations are in Osgood, *op. cit.*, I, 46–47; Smith, *Generall Historie,* in Tyler (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 331–32; John Smith, *The Proceedings of the English Colonie in Virginia* (Oxford, 1612), in the A. G. Bradley edition of Edward Arber (ed.), *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith* (Edinburgh, 1919), I, 149. See also Osgood, *op. cit.*, I, 50, 54–55; Bruce, *Economic History,* I, 197.

[17] Channing, *op. cit.*, I, 204.

the Citie is especially desirous to be disburdened; and in Virginia under severe Masters they may be brought to goodness." Since the City could not deliver and the Company could not transport "theis persons against their wills," Sandys appealed to the Privy Council for the necessary authority. It was quickly given. Exact figures cannot be determined, but, before the demise of the Company in 1624, additional shipments of children had been delivered to Virginia, and it is evident that several hundred must have been involved.[18]

Concerning the shipment of convicts and rogues and vagabonds the information is scanty. Some convicts were certainly in Virginia before 1624, though we do not know how many; but the Virginia Company was antagonistic to the importation of such persons, and, in any case, convict-dumping on a large scale did not become a characteristic of the colonial scene until the second half of the seventeenth century.[19] So, too, was the Company antagonistic to the importation of rogues, possibly because, unlike the case of the London children, it was forced to assume the cost of transportation. It engaged in the practice under pressure from King James I. For one group of fifty boys sent out in 1619, the Company expected to receive £500 in tobacco from the planters to whom they were indentured; but as late as October, 1622, it had received only £275.15.6, and Governor Yeardley was told that the planters "should be caused to make satisfaccon for the 224^{li}4:6:w^{ch} is remayninge due unto the Companie this yeare in good leafe Tobacco." That still others were sent is certain; the Court Book of Bridewell Hospital records that in 1620 Ellen Boulter was "brought in by the Marshall for a Vagrant, that will not be ruled by her father or her friends," to be kept at her father's charges to go to Virginia.[20]

But throughout its history the Company was dependent upon the recruitment of voluntary labor, and especially was this true when it realized that profits would have to be made from agricultural staples and not minerals. The change in objective not only emphasized the necessity of recruiting a larger labor supply but required that it be qualitatively different from the earlier one, for now that the glitter of gold was vanishing the Company needed not soldiers of fortune but sober workmen who would be able to extract from the land the food supplies necessary for their own support and the staples whose export would produce profit for the shareholders.[21] But what could the Company offer as sufficient inducement to motivate large numbers of persons to come to Virginia, especially when—as the evidence indicates—enthusiasm for emigration from England was confined to the wealthy, who themselves were hardly likely to exchange the comforts of life in England for the dangers of life in Virginia?[22] The difficulties the Company faced in this respect were exacerbated by the whispering campaign started by settlers who had already returned from Virginia. "Some few of those unruly youths sent thither," said a Virginia Company broadside in 1609,

> (being of most leaued and bad condition) and such as no ground can hold for want of good direction there, were suffered by stealth to get

[18] *Calendar of State Papers, East Indies, 1571–1616,* No. 432; Brown, *Genesis,* I, 252–54; E. Ribton-Turner, *A History of Vagrants and Vagrancy* (London, 1887), 141; Kingsbury (ed.), *Records,* I, 304–6, 270, 359; III, 259; *Acts of the Privy Council of England, Colonial Series,* Vol. I, No. 42; Abbot Emerson Smith, *Colonists in Bondage* (Chapel Hill, 1947), pp. 147–49; Richard B. Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America* (New York, 1946), p. 385.

[19] A. E. Smith, *op. cit.,* pp. 94–95; Morris, *op. cit.,* p. 323.

[20] Kingsbury (ed), *Records,* I, 520, II, 108; A. E. Smith, *op. cit.,* pp. 139–40.

[21] Craven, *Virginia Company,* pp. 29–33; Scott, *op. cit.,* II, 250–52; Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (New York and London, 1910), II, 237–41.

[22] A. E. Smith, *op. cit.,* pp. 44–46.

aboard the ships returning thence, and are come for England againe, giving out in all places where they come (to colour their owne misbehaviours, and the cause of their returne with some pretence) most vile and scandalous reports, both of the Country itselfe, and of the Cariage of the business there.[23]

The Company now determined to be discriminating in the selection of settlers:

And for that former experience hath too clearly taught, how muche and manie waies it hurtheth to suffer Parents to disburden themselves of lascivious sonnes, masters of bad servants and wives of ill husbands, and so to dogge the business with such an idle crue, as did thrust themselves in the last voiage, that will rather starve for hunger, than lay their hands to labor.[24]

It was conceded that some "base and disordered men" might inveigle themselves into the body of settlers, but they could not do too much harm, for, as the Reverend William Crashaw said on the departure of Governor de la Warr to Virginia, "the basest and worst men trained up in a severe discipline, sharp lawes, a hard life, and much labour, do prove good members of a Commonwealth. . . . The very excrements, of a full and swelling state . . . wanting pleasures, and subject to some pinching miseries," will become "good and worthie instruments."[25]

Clearly, if prospective settlers in Virginia faced "severe discipline, sharp lawes, a hard life, and much labour," substantial concessions would have to be offered to induce them to emigrate. The status the Company was asking them to accept was that of servant, employee of the Company, but it was one thing to create a position and quite another to get men to fill it. Since perpetual servitude was obviously no inducement, the Company was required to limit the period of service and to make other concessions. Every settler over the age of ten, whether he paid his own way or was shipped at Company expense, was promised one share of stock in the Company, with potential dividends from the profits of trade and a land grant to be made at the time of the first division after seven years. Every "extraordinarie" man —such as "Divines, Governors, Ministers of State and Justice, Knights, Gentlemen, Physitions" or such as were "of worth for special services"—was given additional shares according to the value of his person. The Company expected, in return for assuming all the costs of maintaining the plantation and providing supplies to the emigrants, that each settler would work at tasks assigned him under the direction of Company-appointed officers. For a period of seven years, all supplies were to be distributed through the Company store, all exports were to be shipped through the Company magazine, and all land was to be held by the Company.[26] In effect, the Company created the status of landowner in order to induce persons to accept the status of non-landowner; it was asking emigrants to accept the present burdens of membership in a lower status in anticipation of the future benefits they would receive upon promotion to a higher status. From the point of view of the structure of an organization, this was simply automatic progression—promotion to a higher position in the table of organization after a limited tenure in a lower position. From the point of view of a society, however, this was a guaranty of social mobility, and, as we shall see, it seriously compromised the Company's abil-

[23] Brown, *Genesis,* I, 355.

[24] *Ibid.,* I, 356.

[25] *A Sermon Preached in London before the Right Honourable Lord la warre, Lord governor and Captaine Generall of Virginia* (London, 1610), quoted in Perry Miller, "Religion and Society in the Early Literature: The Religious Impulse in the Founding of Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly,* VI (3d ed., 1949), 31; Brown, *Genesis,* I, 364.

[26] James Curtis Ballagh, *White Servitude in the Colony of Virginia* ("Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, 13th Series," Vols. VII–VIII [Baltimore, 1895]), pp. 15–17; Craven, Virginia Company, pp. 29–33; Craven, *Southern Colonies,* pp. 85–90; A. E. Smith, *op. cit.,* pp. 8–10; Kingsbury, "Comparison," *op. cit.,* pp. 163–69.

ity to secure its organizational objectives.

That the Company expected the combination of limited servitude and potential landownership to solve its labor problem is quite clear; sufficient numbers of workmen would be induced to emigrate to Virginia and, having arrived, would be motivated to do the work that was essential to the Company's success. Virginia planter and London adventurer were to be united in a single relationship. Do not discourage the planters, the London stockholders were admonished, "in growing religious, nor in gathering riches, two especiall bonds (whether severed or cojoined) to keepe them in obedience, the one for conscience sake, the other for fear of losing what they have gotten." How the planter's concern for his own interests was to benefit the Company was quite clear. "The Planters," wrote Alderman Johnson, "will be in such hope to have their owne shares and habitations in those lands, which they have so husbanded, that it will cause contending and emulation among them, which shall bring foorth the most profitable and beneficiall fruites for their ioynt stock."[27]

But land for the settlers and profits for the stockholders were affairs of the future, and both were dependent upon the skill and speed with which the planters could be molded into an efficient labor force. It was of the utmost importance, therefore, that the Company establish its authority in Virginia and maintain discipline, and for the achievement of these purposes the Company was not content to rely simply on the self-discipline it hoped would be the by-product of the effort to obtain profits. The first step was taken with the issuance of the new charter of 1609. During its first three years in Virginia, the Company felt, "experience of error in the equality of Governors, and some out-rages, and follies committed by them, had a little shaken so tender a body." To avoid the evils of divided authority, "we did resolve and obtain, to renew our Letters Pattents, and to procure to ourselves, such ample and large priviledges and powers by which we were at liberty to reforme and correct those already discovered, and to prevent such as in the future might threaten us . . . under the conduct of one able and absolute Governor."[28] But changes in the formal structure of authority were not sufficient.

Religion, too, was counted upon to do its part in maintaining order. Doctrinal conflict was minimized from the start by the ban on Catholics, but what really distinguishes the role of religion under the Virginia Company was its conscious utilization for disciplinary purposes. No less an authority on colonization than Richard Hakluyt had pointed to the advisability of taking along "one or two preachers that God may be honoured, the people instructed, mutinies better avoided, and obedience the better used."[29] The Company was quick to take the hint. Religion was used to screen prospective planters before their arrival in Virginia, and it was used to discipline them after their arrival. "We have thought it convenient to pronounce," stated the Company in a broadside of 1609, "that . . . we will receive no man that cannot bring or render some good testimony of his religion to God."[30] And during the time that Sir Thomas Dale's code of laws was sovereign in Virginia—from May, 1610, to April, 1619—the settlers were marched to church twice each day to pray for relief from dissension and for the showering of blessings upon the shareholders:

> O Lord . . . defend us from the delusion of the devil, the malice of the heathen, the invasions of our enemies, & mutinies & dissentions of our own people. . . . Thou has moved . . . the hearts of so many of our nation to assist . . . with meanes and provision, and with their holy praiers . . . and for that portion of their sub-

[27] *The New Life of Virginea . . . Being the Second Part of Nova Britannia* (London, 1612), in Force (ed.), *op. cit.*, I, 17–18; *Nova Britannia,* in Force (ed.), *op. cit.*, I, 26.

[28] *A True and Sincere Declaration* (London, 1609), in Brown, *Genesis,* I, 352.

[29] Quoted in Craven, *Southern Colonies,* p. 64.

[30] Appendix to *A True and Sincere Declaration,* in Brown, *Genesis,* I, 352.

stance which they willingly offer for thy honour & service in this action, recompence it to them and theirs, and reward it seven fold into their bosomes, with better blessinges.[31]

In a society of ranks and orders, deference is owed to certain persons by virtue of their social position, and the Company attempted to maximize the potentiality for discipline in such an arrangement by appointing to leading posts in Virginia those persons to whom obedience was due because of their high status. Insofar as it was possible, the Company selected only persons of high birth to be governor; when it was not possible, as in the case of Governor Yeardley, it quickly, and it seems surreptitiously, secured for him a knighthood.[32] And at all times the governors were urged to surround themselves with the pomp and circumstance of high office, the better to impress the governed. "You shall for the more regard and respect of yo^{r} place," read the Company's instructions to Sir Thomas Gates,

> to beget reverence to yo^{r} authority, and to refresh their mindes that obey the gravity of those lawes under w^{ch} they were borne at yo^{r} discrecon use such formes and Ensignes of government as by our letters Pattents wee are enabled to grant unto you, as also the attendance of a guarde uppon your pson.[33]

Ultimately, however, the Company relied upon a military regimen and upon the imposition of force to obtain labor discipline. Governor de la Warr had been instructed that his men were to be divided into groups and placed under the charge of officers "to be exercised and trayned up in Martiall manner and warlike Discipline."[34] Settlers were forbidden to return to England without permission, and their letters were sealed and sent first to the Company in London before being forwarded.[35] But the full code of military discipline was not worked out until the arrival in Jamestown of Captain Thomas Dale, marshal of the colony, who had been granted a leave of absence from his post in the Netherlands army at the behest of the Company. Dale supplemented the usual list of religious offenses and crimes against the state and the person with a series of enactments designed to protect the Company's interests. Slander against the Company, its officers, or any of its publications; unauthorized trading with the Indians; escaping to the Indians; theft; the killing of any domestic animal without consent; false accounting by any keeper of supplies—all were punishable by service in the galleys or death. Failure to keep regular hours of work subjected the offender to the pain of being forced to lie neck and heels together all night for the first offense, whipping for the second, and one year's service in the galleys for the third.[36]

Moreover, Dale created a military rank for every person in Virginia and specified the duties of each in such a way as to provide us with important clues into the nature of labor discipline and what was expected to provide the motivation to work.

> Because we are not onely to exercise the duty of a Souldier, but that of the husbandman, and that in time of the vacancie of our watch and ward wee are not to live idly, therefore the Captaine . . . shall . . . demand . . . what service, worke, and businesse he hath in charge, from the Governor . . . in which worke the Captaine himselfe shall do exceeding worthily to take paines and labour, that his Souldiers seeing his industry and carefulnesse, may with more cheerfulnesse love him, and bee incouraged to the performance of the like.

Of the corporal:

> His duty is to provide that none of his Squadron, be absent, when the drumme shall call to any labour, or worke, or at what time soever they shall be commanded thereunto for the

[31] *For the Colony in Virginea Britannia, Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall, &c* (London, 1612), in Force (ed.), *op. cit.*, III, 68.

[32] Kingsbury (ed.), *Records*, III, 216–19.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[36] For the full text of the code see *For the Colony in Virginea Britannia. Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall &c* (London, 1612), in Force (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. III.

service of the Collonie, in the performance of which said workes he is to be an example of the rest of his Squadron by his owne labouring therein . . . that thereby giving incoraging to his superior officers he may be held by them worthy of a higher place.

Of the private soldier:

He shall continue at his worke until the drumme beat, and . . . be conducted into the church to heare divine service, after which he may repayre to his house or lodging to prepare for his dinner, and to repose him until the drumme beate shall call him forth againe in the afternoone . . . the Generall having understanding of his promptitude and dilligence may conferre upon him, and call him into place of preferment and commaund.[37]

What is so striking about Dale's Code is the way in which it stripped from people all attributes save the one that really counted in the relationship which the Company sought to impose on them—their status in the organization. Behavior was expected to conform to a set of prescriptions the major characteristic of which was that the rights and obligations of persons depended on their position within the organization. In this respect, the contrast between Dale's Code and the first set of laws the settlers were able to enact for themselves at the General Assembly of 1619 is startling. For then, considerations other than status within an organization were fundamental:

All persons whatsoever upon the Sabaoth days shall frequente divine service and sermons both forenoon and afternoone. . . . And everyone that shall transgresse this lawe shall forfeicte three shillinges a time to the use of the churche. . . . But if a servant in this case shall wilfully neglecte his Mr's commande he shall suffer bodily punishment.

Or consider the following petition drafted by the Assembly:

. . . that the antient Planters . . . suche as before Sir T. Dales' depart were come hither . . . maye have their second, third and more divisions successively in as lardge and free manner as any other Planter. Also that they wilbe pleased to allowe to the male children, of them and of all others begotten in Virginia, being the onely hope of a posterity, a single share a piece.[38]

For the planters in Virginia, considerations of length of residence and of varying degrees of freedom now affected the rights and obligations of persons. No longer could relations be determined exclusively by the positions persons held within a single system—the organization of the Company. By 1619 Virginia was becoming a society, in which behavior was in some way determined by the totality of positions each person held in a network of sometimes complementary, sometimes contradictory, relationships. The key to this transformation from organization to society lies in the concessions the Company was forced to offer to induce persons to accept positions in the organizational relationship; for those concessions so multiplied the number of statuses and so altered the status of persons that a system of relationships was created where only one had existed before.

The fact is that the reforms the Company instituted in 1609 were not sufficient either to swell the supply of labor migrating to Virginia or to motivate the planters who were there to work with the will the Company expected. The Company had hoped that by its reforms it would be able to obtain not "idle and wicked persons; such as shame, or fear compels into this action [but] fit and industrious [persons], honest sufficient Artificers."[39] Yet so unproductive were they that as late as 1616 John Rolfe could indicate to Sir Robert Rich that what had been was still the Company's most serious problem. Our greatest want, he wrote, is "good and sufficient men as well of birth and quality to command, soldiers to marche, discover and defend the country from invasion, artificers, labourers,

[37] *For the Colony in Virginea Britannia,* in Force (ed.), *op. cit.*, III, 44, 55, 61–62.

[38] Kingsbury (ed.), *Records,* III, 173, 160.

[39] Appendix to *A True and Sincere Declaration* (1609), in Brown, *Genesis,* I, 352; Virginia Company broadside of 1610, in Brown, *Genesis,* I, 439.

and husbandmen."[40] And so dissatisfied had the settlers become with their situation that, in a letter smuggled to the Spanish ambassador in London with the connivance of English sailors, Don Diego de Molina, the prisoner in Jamestown, reported that "a good many have gone to the Indians . . . and others have gone out to sea . . . and those who remain do so by force and are anxious to see a fleet come from Spain to release them from this misery."[41] The hope that Don Diego attributed to the colonists was, no doubt, the wish of a patriotic Spaniard; but it is nevertheless true that some settlers did flee to the Indians, that the Company did succeed in obtaining authority to deport to Virginia those settlers who had escaped back to England, and that Coles and Kitchins, who had been Don Diego's guards, were executed in 1614 for organizing a plot to escape to Florida.[42]

Nor did the concessions granted to superior colonists in 1614, including a kind of modified right to private property and some relief from the obligation to work on the Company lands, suffice to solve the labor problem.[43] For the simple fact was, as Captain John Smith wrote, that "no man will go from hence to have less liberty there then here."[44] The Company, determined in 1619 to make a final effort to create of Virginia the profitable investment it had always hoped it would be, took his advice to heart. Though it was faced with declining financial resources, with internal bickering, and with increasing evidence that the king was losing patience with its meager achievement, the Company decided to pin its hopes on a quick return. The key to profits, it felt, lay in raising the value of the Company lands through increasing population and in diversifying products through the importation of labor skilled in many trades. The success of the effort, obviously, rested upon the strength of the additional inducements that could be offered to both investors and potential emigrants.[45]

As always, one of the principal devices used by the Company to attract labor and to increase productivity was that of easing the terms on which land could be acquired. The effect of the reform was to create within the Company a new group of statuses differentiated from one another in terms of the amount of property attached to each or the length of time required to obtain land on the part of those who were not yet entitled to it:

1. "Ancient planters" who had come to Virginia at their own cost before 1616 received 100 acres per share in perpetuity rent-free.

2. "Ancient planters" who had come to Virginia at Company expense received 100 acres at an annual rent of 2*s.* after the completion of their seven-year period of servitude on the Company's land.

3. All persons who came to Virginia after 1616 at their own expense received 50 acres at an annual rent of 1*s.*

4. All persons who came to Virginia after 1616 at Company expense were to receive 50 acres after having worked on the Company's land for seven years, during which time half their produce belonged to the Company and half to themselves.

5. All tradesmen received a house and 4 acres of land so long as they plied their trades.

6. All persons who paid for the transportation of emigrants received 50 acres per person.

7. Company officers not only were entitled to their regular land grants but were supported by the labor of tenants-at-halves on large tracts

[40] Quoted in Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History* (New Haven, 1934–38), I, 113–14.

[41] Brown, *Genesis,* II, 648–49.

[42] Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 169–71.

[43] Ballagh, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–23; Osgood, *op. cit.*, I, 75–77; Bruce, *Economic History,* I, 212–15; Craven, *Southern Colonies,* pp. 116–17; A. E. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 10–11.

[44] Quoted in Miller, "Religion and Society," *op. cit.*, p. 37.

[45] Craven, *Virginia Campany, passim,* but esp. pp. 168–71; Craven, *Southern Colonies,* pp. 145–47; Scott, *op. cit.*, II, 266–88; Susan Myra Kingsbury, *An Introduction to the Records of the Virginia Company of London* (Washington, 1905), pp. 34–35, 40–41, 94–95.

of land reserved by the Company for that purpose.[46]

8. Indentured servants, whose transportation was paid by the Company or by private associations of investors and who were then sold to planters on their arrival in Virginia, were entitled to "freedom dues"—including a land grant—on the expiration of their servitude.[47]

Nor was this all. Determined to improve the morale of the colonists and, eventually, to relieve the Company of the burdensome cost of transporting labor from England, Sandys also began in 1620 to ship women to Virginia to become wives of the planters. There had been marriages in Virginia before, of course, but the supply of single women, restricted to the few female servants of married couples, was far smaller than the demand. Now, however, the Company organized the shipment of women on a business basis, forming a separate joint-stock company for the purpose. Though the women were, in any case, to be paid for by the planters at the rate of 120 pounds of the best leaf tobacco per person and though the Company conceded that it was dubious as to its authority to control marriages—"for the libertie of Mariadge we dare not infrindg"—it nevertheless discriminated between classes of planters in the bestowal of the women. "And though we are desireous that mariadge be free according to the law of nature," the Company wrote to the Governor and Council of Virginia, "yett would we not have these maids deceived and married to servants, but only to such freemen or tenants as have meanes to maintaine them."[48]

Finally, in a radical departure from previous policy, the Company limited the scope of martial law and ordered Governor Yeardley to convene an assembly of elected representatives from each district in Virginia. The Company did not intend to diminish its own authority, for the Governor was given the right to veto all enactments of the Assembly, and the General Court of the Company in London retained the right to disallow its decisions. Rather was it the Company's hope that the degree of acceptance of its program would be increased if it had the added sanction of approval by representatives of the planters themselves.[49]

In a sense, the Company's reforms succeeded too well. Lured by the new prospects in Virginia, about 4,800 emigrants departed from England between November, 1619, and February, 1625, nearly twice as many as had gone during the entire period from 1607 to 1619.[50] But, while the Company's propaganda could refer blandly to "each man having the shares of Land due to him" and to "the laudable forme of Justice and government,"[51] actual conditions in Virginia were quite different. Goodman Jackson "much marviled that you would send me a servant to the Companie," young Richard Freethorne wrote to his parents:

> He saith I had beene better knocked on the head, and Indeede so I fynde it now to my great greefe and miserie, and saith, that if you love me you will redeeme me suddenlie, for wch I doe Intreate and begg. . . . I thought no head had beene able to hold so much water as hath and doth daylie flow from mine eyes. . . . But this is Certaine I never felt the want of ffather and mother till now, but now deare freinds full well I knowe and rue it although it were too late before I knew it.

[46] "Instructions to Governor Yeardley, 1618," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography,* II (1894–95), 161–62; Bruce, *Economic History,* I, 226–33, 511–14; Ballagh, *op. cit.,* pp. 25–28, 31; Craven, *Virginia Company,* pp. 50–57; Craven, *Southern Colonies,* pp. 127–29.

[47] A. E. Smith, *op. cit.,* pp. 11–17; Ballagh, *op. cit.,* pp. 28–30; Bruce *Economic History,* II, 41–48; Morris, *op. cit.,* p. 395.

[48] Kingsbury (ed.), *Records,* III, 115, 493–94, 505.

[49] Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, *Virginia under the Stuarts* (Princeton, 1914), pp. 38–39; Craven, *Virginia Company,* pp. 70–80; Craven, *Southern Colonies,* pp. 127–29; "Proceedings of the First Assembly in Virginia, Held July 30, 1619," in *Colonial Records of Virginia* (Richmond, 1874).

[50] Samuel H. Yonge, "The Site of Old 'James Towne,' 1607–1698," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography,* XI (1903–4), 399–400.

[51] *A Declaration of the State of the Colony* (1620), in Force (ed.), *op. cit.,* III, 5–6.

"To write of all crosses and miseries wᶜh have befallen us at this tyme we are not able," said Samuel Sharp. "So the truth is," Edward Hill wrote to his brother, "we lyve in the fearefullest age that ever Christians lived in."[52]

Though Company policy was not responsible for all the suffering endured by the settlers, it was responsible for intensifying their sense of deprivation by having promised too much. "My Master Atkins hath sould me," Henry Brigg wrote to his brother, Thomas:

> If you remember he tould me that for my Diett the worst day in the weeke should be better then the Sonday, & also he swore unto you that I should never serve any man but himselfe: And he also tould us that there they paled out their groundes from Deare & Hoggs. But in stead of them we pale out oʳ Enemyes.

"If the Company would allow to each man a pound of butter and a pounde of Chese weekely," wrote a planter to Sir John Worsenholme,

> they would find more comfort therin then by all the Deere, Fish & Fowle is so talked of in England of wᶜh I can assure youᵘ yoʳ poore servants have nott had since their cominge into the Contrey so much as the sent.

"I am pswaded," George Thorp wrote to John Smyth of Nibley,

> that more doe die of the disease of theire minde then of theire body by having this country victualls over-praised unto them in England & by not knowing, they shall drinke water here.[53]

No doubt the chasm between expectation and reality contributed to the planters' alienation from the organizational relationship into which they had been lured by the Company's promises. But that relationship was affected even more by the development of a network of relations that followed inevitably from the inducements to get men into the Company.

At one time in Virginia, the single relationship that existed between persons rested upon the positions they occupied in the Company's table of organization. As a result of the efforts made by the Company to get persons to accept that relationship, however, each person in Virginia had become the occupant of several statuses, for now there were rich and poor in Virginia, landowners and renters, masters and servants, old residents and newcomers, married and single, men and women; and the simultaneous possession of these statuses involved the holder in a network of relationships, some congruent and some incompatible, with his organizational relationship.

Once the men in Virginia had been bachelors who lived in Company-provided barracks. Now they lived in private houses with their families, and, though the Company attempted to make use of the new relationship by penalizing each "Master of a family" for certain crimes committed by those under his authority[54]—hoping thereby that the master would use his authority to suppress crime—it can hardly be doubted that its action involved the head of the family in a conflict of loyalties.

Once all persons had been equal before Company law, and penalties had been inflicted solely in accordance with the nature of the offense. Now, the General Assembly found that "persones of qualitie" were "not fitt to undergoe corporall punishment."[55]

Once length of residence was irrelevant in determining the obligations of persons to the Company. Now, however, it was enacted that all "yᵉ olde planters, yᵗ were heere before, or cam in at yᵉ laste cominge of Sr. Tho: Gates they and theire posteritie shalbe exempted from theire psonall service to yᵉ warres, and any publique charge (Churche dewties excepted)."[56]

Once Virginians had been governed administratively through a chain of command

[52] Kingsbury (ed.), *Records,* IV, 59, 61–62, 239, 234; see also *ibid.,* pp. 41–42, 232, 235–36.

[53] *Ibid.,* pp. 235–36, 312–32; III, 417; see also *ibid.,* III, 456.

[54] Proclamation of Governor Wyatt, June, 1622, in Kingsbury (ed.), *Records,* III, 659.

[55] Act of March, 1623/24 (*ibid.,* IV, 584).

[56] Act of March, 1623/24 (*ibid.,* IV, 582).

originating in the Company's General Court. Now an authentic political system existed, and the members of the Assembly demanded the same right to disallow orders of the General Court that the Court had with respect to the Assembly.

Once all land had been owned by the Company. Now much of it was owned by private persons, and even more had been promised to them, and the opportunities for the creation of private fortunes involved the planters in a new relationship with the Company. No longer was the planter willing to have his tobacco exported through the Company at a fixed price, when, as a free landowner, he might strike his own bargain with the purchaser. No longer was the planter willing, at a time when labor meant profit, for the Company to commandeer his servants. Even officers of the Company, expected to administer its program in Virginia, saw the chance to subvert it to their own purposes; "The servants you allow them, or such as they hire," Captain John Smith told the Company, "they plant on their private Lands, not upon that belongeth to their office, which crop alwaies exceeds yours." Indeed, it became increasingly difficult to get planters to accept Company positions:

> S^{r} George is taken up with his private. . . . Capt. Hamor is miserablie poore and necessities will inforce him to shift. . . . Capt: Mathews intends wholie his Cropp, and will rather hazard the payment of forfeictures, then performe our Injunctions. . . . M^{r} Blanie is now married in Virginia, and when he hath discharged your trust in the Magazine wilbee a Planter amongst us. . . . And I would you could persuade some of qualities and worth to come out.[57]

The increase in private wealth tended to subordinate status in the Company to status in a different relationship among the planters. The muster roll of early 1625 shows 48 families bearing various titles of distinction, most of which had been earned in Virginia. They alone held 266 of the approximately 487 white servants in Virginia, 20 of the 23 Negro servants, and 1 of the 2 Indian servants.[58] These were the families at the apex of Virginia society, determined to uphold their rights as over against other persons and sometimes going beyond their rights. Acting through the General Assembly, they insisted upon scrupulous enforcement of contracts of servitude, forbade servants to trade with the Indians, and, so as not to lose their labor, regulated the right of their servants to marry. Nor, as the chronic complaints bear witness, were they loath to keep their servants beyond the required time.[59] That aspect of the relationship between master and servant was eloquently revealed in a petition to the Governor by Jane Dickenson in 1624:

> [She] most humblie sheweth that whereas her late husband Ralph Dickenson Came ov^{r} into this Country fower Yeares since, obliged to Nicholas Hide deceased for y^{e} tearme of seaven yeares, hee only to have for himselfe & yo^{r} petitioner y^{e} one halfe of his labors, her said husband being slaine in the bloudy Masacre, & her selfe Caried away wth the Cruell salvages, amongst them Enduring much misery for teen monthes. At the Expiration it pleased God so to dispose the hartes of the Indians, y^{t} for a small ransome yo^{r} petitioner wth divers others should be realeased, In Consideration that Doctor Potts laid out two pounds of beades for her releasement, hee alleageth yo^{r} petitioner is linked to his servitude wth a towefold Chaine the one for her late husbandes obligation & thother for her ransome, of both w^{ch} shee hopeth that in Conscience shee ought to be discharged, of y^{e} first by her widdowhood, of the second by the law of nations, Considering shee hath already served teen monthes, two much for two pound of beades.
>
> The pmises notwthstanding D^{r} Pott refuseth to sett yo^{r} peticioner at liberty, threatning to make her serve him the uttermost day, unless she pcure him 150^{li} waight of Tobacco, she

[57] *Ibid.*, IV, 564, 581; Smith, *Generall Historie,* in Tyler (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 356; George Sandys to John Ferrar, April 11, 1623, in Kingsbury (ed.), *Records,* IV, 110–11.

[58] The figures are derived from the muster rolls in John Camden Hotten, *The Original Lists of Persons of Quality; Emigrants, Religious Exiles . . . Who Went from Great Britain to the American Plantations, 1600–1700* (London, 1874).

[59] A. E. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 226–29; Kingsbury (ed.), *Records,* IV, 128–30.

therefore most humbly desireth, that you[u] wilbe pleased to take w[t] Course shalbe thought iust for her releasement fro' his servitude, Considering that it much differeth not from her slavery w[th] the Indians.[60]

But that was only one aspect of the relationship. Conditions in Virginia were now more fluid than they had been, and persons of low estate might also rise. Secretary of State John Pory wrote Sir Dudley Carleton that "our cowekeeper here of James citty on Sundays goes accowtered all in freshe flaminge silke; and a wife of one that in England had professed the black arte, not of a scholler, but of a collier of Croydon, wears her rought bever hatt with a faire perle hat band." The Company was opposed to such unseemly displays of wealth on the part of persons of low estate,[61] but it could not prevent them.

The ultimate stage in the transition of Virginia from organization to society was reached when the settlers came to feel that the new relationships in which they were now involved were of greater importance than the Company relationship, when their statuses outside the organization came largely to dictate their behavior. For at that point they were no longer willing to accept the legitimacy of their oganizational superiors. William Weldon warned Sir Edwin Sandys that the planters who now had land were grumbling at Company policy:

> I acquainted them w[th] my restraint of plantinge Tobacco w[ch] is a thinge so distastefull to them that they will w[th] no patience indure to heare of it bitterly Complayninge that they have noe other meanes to furnish themselves with aparell for the insuinge yere but are likely as they say (and for aught I Can see) to be starved if they be debarred of it.[62]

From general discontent it was but a short step to ridicule of Company officials and outright refusal to accept a Company assignment. Wrote planter William Capps to John Ferrar:

> The old smoker our (I know not how to terme him but) Governor, so good so careful mild, Religious, iust, honest that I protest I thinke God hath sent him in mercie for good to us, he undergoeth all your cares & ours and I feare not but god will bless him in all his pceedinges but who must be th'Instrument to make all this whole againe? Why Capps: all voyces can sett him forth about the business: But who must pay him his hyre? The Contrey is poore and the Companie is poore and Cappes is poore already, & poorer he will be if he follow this course.

Like other men, planter Capps believed that "Charity first beginnes at home," and he divorced his own interest from that of the Company:

> I will forsweare ever bending my mind for publique good, and betake me to my own profit with some halfe a score men of my owne and lie rootinge in the earthe like a hog, and reckon Tobacco ad unguem by hundrethes, and quarters.[63]

That the Company could no longer expect to command obedience was clear, for even its officers in Virginia perceived themselves as having a set of interests distinct from those of their London superiors and turned their backs to their authority. "Such is the disposicon of those who glorie in their wisdomes," wrote George Sandys, the treasurer in Virginia, to his brother, Sir Miles,

> that they will rather Justifye and proceed in their Errors than to suffer a supposed disgrace by reforming them. . . . Who clere themselves by the wrongings of others; objecting unto us their Instructions, whereof manie are infeasible and the most inconvenient, for to say the truth they know nothing of Virginia.

"Such an Antipathy is there between theyr vast Comands and o[r] grumbling Obedience," Sir Francis Wyatt wrote to his father:

> Mingling matters of honor and profitt often overthrow both. They expect great retournes to pay the Companies debt. . . . For me I have not a third part of my men to inable me to either. . . . I often wish little M[r] Farrar here, that to

[60] Kingsbury (ed.), *Records,* IV, 473.

[61] Pory to Carleton, September 30, 1619, in Tyler (ed.), *op. cit.,* p. 285; Kingsbury (ed.), *Records,* III, 469.

[62] Kingsbury (ed.), *Records,* III, 263.

[63] *Ibid.,* IV, 38–39.

his zeale he would add knowledge of this Contrey.[64]

In 1607 there had been no "Contrey," only the Virginia Company. It was the Company's fate to have created a country and to have destroyed itself in the process. More than a century later, James Otis wrote bitterly: "Those who judge of the reciprocal rights that subsist between a supreme and subordinate state of dominion, by no higher rules than are applied to a corporation of button-makers, will never have a very comprehensive view of them."[65] His comment was intended as an observation on contemporary political affairs, but we can detect in it a verdict on the past as well.

The Company had been faced with the problems of motivating its members to work for the ends which it was created to achieve and, at the same time, of maintaining the discipline that was essential for its organizational integrity. The solution it adopted for the first problem made it impossible to solve the second; and the burden of achieving order and discipline now became the responsibility not of an organization but of a society.

Among the papers in the Sackville collection is a document entitled "A Form of Policy for Virginia," written when it was already apparent that the Company had failed. The proposal was never adopted, but it is significant nonetheless, for, as Professor Fernand Braudel reminds us,

> victorious events come about as a result of many possibilities, often contradictory, among which life finally has made its choice. For one possibility which actually is realized innumerable others have been drowned. These are the ones which have left little trace for the historians. And yet it is necessary to give them their place because the losing movements are forces which have at every moment affected the final outcome.[66]

The significance of the document, drafted as a royal proclamation, lies in its awareness of the problems of motivation and order, in its realization that they could no longer be solved by instructions handed down through a chain of command, and in its conscious application of particular social inventions to solve them:

> Wee . . . knowinge that the perfection and happinesse of a commonwealth, lyeth . . . first and principally in the government, consisting in the mutuall duties of commandeing and obeyeing, next in the possessing thinges plentifully, necessarie for the life of man, doe professe that . . . we intend wholely the good of our subjects . . . endeavouringe to cause both England and Virginea, to endowe each other with their benefittes and profitts that thereby layeing aside force and our coactive power, we may by our justice and bountie marrye and combinde those our provinces to us and our soveraigntye in naturall love and obedience.

The problem of order was solved by the meticulous enumeration of every social status that was to exist in Virginia, with a specification of the rights and obligations that inhered in each. The problem of motivation was solved by the granting of both economic rewards and social privileges to each status and by the opportunity given to move from one to another:

> The meanest servant that goeth (God soe blessing him and his endeavours, that hee can purchase and [an] estate in England or compasse to carrie over or drawe over with him of his friends and adherences the number of 300 men) he may become a lord patriot which is the greatest place the commonwealth canne beare.

The problem of consensus was solved through devices to enhance the mutual affection of persons in these statuses:

> To the end that love may be mayntayned, and that theise degrees may not estrange the upper orders from the lower, we wish that the heires and eldest sonnes of the upper orders may marrie with the daughters of the lower orders. . . . And that the daughters of the upper

[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 237; see also *ibid.*, pp. 455–57.

[65] *The Rights of the British Colonies asserted and proved* (Boston, 1764), in Samuel Eliot Morison (ed.), *Sources and Documents Illustrating the American Revolution* . . . (2d ed.; Oxford, 1929), p. 8.

[66] Quoted in Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "Public Opinion and the Classical Tradition," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, XXI, No. 1 (Spring, 1957), 53.

orders being heires may marrye with the sonnes of the lower orders, makeing choice of the most vertuous . . . that all degrees may bee thereby bound togeather in the bonds of love that none may be scorned but the scorner. To this end alsoe, although we would not have you imitate the Irish in their wilde and barbarous maners, yet we will commend one custome of theires unto you, which is that the poorer sort sueing to gett the nurseing of the children of the lordes and gentrie, and breedeinge upp in their minorities as their owne, this breedinge . . . doth begett anoether nature in them to love their foster children and brethren, as if they were naturally bread of the same parentes.

Written in the margin of the document, by whom we do not know, is a lengthy commentary. Concerning the importance of status and order, the following is written: "This maintenance of theire degrees will immoveably fixe the frame of the collonie." Concerning the importance of mobility and motivation, the following is written: "Soe framinge the government that it shall give all men both liberty and meanes of riseinge to the greatest places and honours therein, whereby they will receave such content that they will all strive to maintaine it in the same forme we shall now settle it."[67]

Shakespeare had written:

> Take but degree away, untune that string
> And hark, what discord follows.

The author of the document agreed. He rested his hopes for stability on the attachment of each person to a position in which recognized rights and responsibilities inhered. What he did not realize is what may be learned from the history of the Virginia Company—that each man is attached to many positions, that each position involves him in a separate relationship that imposes its own necessities, and that his behavior is the product of all the positions he holds and, because he has a memory, of all the positions he once held.

II

The generalizations that emerge from our study are of two kinds: those directly tied to the events of the time and place that we have analyzed and those of a more abstract kind that derive from the analysis of these historical particulars but can be stated in such a way as to be of more general applicability.

There seems little room for doubt about some of the conclusions we have drawn: that the character of seventeenth-century North American society was shaped decisively by the fact that, in contrast to the situation in Latin America, the creation of the society was accomplished through the recruitment of a voluntary labor force; that higher statuses in that society were created as a result of the need to induce persons to accept positions in lower statuses; and that the behavior of persons in that society was determined not only by opportunities for advancement, as Whiggish interpreters of our history would have us believe, but, as well, by the fact that these opportunities were less than people had been led to expect.

With respect to more general hypotheses, it may be suggested that the mechanism by which the change from organization to society was accomplished lay in the very effort to apply the blueprint that was intended to govern the relations between persons, for this so multiplied the number of statuses persons held, and therefore the relationships in which they were involved, as to alter their behavior in a decisive fashion.

The testing of these hypotheses, of course, would involve the examination of still other consciously selected historical situations for the purpose of comparison—the experience of the British in establishing other colonies in North America and in coping with a totally different problem in India, of the French in Canada and the Spanish in South America, of the reasons for the difference between the blueprint in accordance with which utopian communities were planned and the outcome of their establishment, and the like. Herein lies the design for a research in historical sociology.

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[67] Kingsbury (ed.), *Records,* IV, 411, 417, 424–25, 416, 419.