

THE
RESPONSIVE
COMMUNITY



RIGHTS *and*
RESPONSIBILITIES

Volume 2, Issue 4 Fall 1992

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Toward the Third Year

This issue marks the completion of the second year of *The Responsive Community*, the only communitarian quarterly. As we reflect on these past two years and consider the future of *The Responsive Community*, it seems appropriate that we pause to acknowledge the considerable accomplishments thus far achieved. The achievements we are celebrating are not merely the result of the hard work of the editors, writers, and staff, but also the product of a joint project with many in the community. It truly is *our* two years.

Two years ago, *The Responsive Community* was a gleam in my eyes; the communitarian movement—not even a remote possibility. Indeed, several members of the small group that launched *The Responsive Community* had grave doubts that we could publish a quarterly at all. We started in the depth of a recession; other publications were collapsing left and right. We wondered whether the \$30,000 we had raised would suffice. By comparison, another journal also just starting to roll off the presses, had over a million dollars to its name.

As the countdown to our first issue continued, there was another sound that seemed to drown out what we were trying to say: the countdown to the Gulf war. Our first issue appeared on January 10, 1991; President Bush had given Saddam Hussein an ultimatum to withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, 1991, or face war. The public mind was focused on events 8,000 miles away.

And yet our communitarian ideals and ideas gained a surprising hearing. First *Business Week*, then *The Washington Post*, soon *Time* and *National Public Radio* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, followed by many others, found the new communitarian message compelling. Several columnists and editorial writers—John Leo, Joe Klein, E.J. Dionne, Jr., Donald Kimelman, and David Boldt—quite openly pointed

out that they shared our belief that the time has come to shore up the family, promote moral education in schools, restore neighborhoods, and re-instill a sense of responsibility to the community and to the society at large.

Soon foundations chipped in; we were able to increase our printing. By the fifth issue we had articulated the communitarian philosophy in a 12-page platform, which more than 70 leading Americans endorsed. Letters poured in, 1,100 by our last count. Community leaders, ministers and rabbis, organizers, and many other fellow citizens wrote in support of communitarian values and approaches.

Politicians, of both parties, followed. Two Democrat and two Republican senators joined our first Teach-In. We received letters of support from Senator Bill Bradley (D-NJ) and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp. The communitarian perspective was picked up during the 1992 election campaign, whether or not the movement was acknowledged. While none of the 1992 presidential candidates explicitly endorsed The Communitarian Platform, all of them sounded communitarian themes. We are working towards convincing the next president, Congress, and local community leaders to advance communitarian approaches much further. The first steps, though, have been taken.

Meanwhile, the communitarian movement is benefitting from grassroots participation. Readers keep renewing their subscriptions and telling others about us, at a most gratifying rate. As much as our ideas have reached a national audience, the heart of our movement still lies with our readers. We still have no funds for mass mailings; we rely on word-of-mouth; that is, on your generosity in passing the message to others, to expand the communitarian community. We still depend on you to extend the communitarian dialogue, to keep these renewals and referrals going.

All this progress (we are entitled to a short moment of being pleased on this second birthday) will not go to our head. We are only at the beginning of a movement aimed at shoring up our moral, social, and political environment. We are at about the same stage as the “other” environmental movement, the one aimed at shoring up Nature, was shortly after the publication of Rachel Carson’s book *Silent Spring*, before

the first Earth Day.

We seek to restore commitments to values we share, and to raise our moral voices that encourage people to act ethically and civilly, without relying on coercion. Progress will require changes in the habits of the heart, mind-sets, and public policies.

To advance communitarian ideals takes more than a quarterly; it takes a social movement. Hence, the next step is to forge a network of people and organizations who seek to work together to shore up the moral, social, and political environment. Members of The Communitarian Network will exchange position papers and suggestions. The day is short; much needs to be done.

A.E.

If you wish to join The Communitarian Network, write to: Gelman Library, 2130 H Street NW, Suite 714-J, Washington, DC 20052. Or call (202) 994-7997.

A Communitarian Campaign

No one should complain that the 1992 presidential election campaign has been devoid of real issues. Indeed, many of the issues that are being raised are communitarian. Heading the list is the focus on family values. It was no accident that the first article in the first issue of this communitarian quarterly stated the liberal case for the two-parent family, or that we run a pro-family article in every issue. Shoring up the family is a major plank in our November 1991 Communitarian Platform, precisely because communitarians fully recognize the central importance of the family for the moral and civil foundations of society.

There are those who argue that family values are a personal, private, social matter about which the government can and should say nothing, and are not a legitimate subject for a presidential campaign. This uninformed approach ignores the fact that the presidency in our society

is not just about management but also about leadership, and the presidency is not just the highest office of the land, but also our society's pulpit—secular, not religious—but nonetheless moral. The president uses it to reaffirm or reject, advance or undercut, values such as mutual tolerance or racial hatred, reaching out to other nations or ignoring their plight, and so on. *The president's position is never irrelevant to the moral direction of the country.* Hence it is quite appropriate, indeed necessary, for voters to demand that presidential candidates lay out the moral directions they plan to chart for the nation in the next four years, and for us all to participate in a dialogue as to what these directions ought to be.

Equally important is the fact that family matters are not merely private; they have major social consequences. If families send children who are emotionally or intellectually underdeveloped to public schools (where about 88 percent of all young people end up), the schools will end up overburdened. And because personalities that are warped at an early age prove difficult to straighten out, the community ends up paying for the consequences of the parenting deficit. The price is often much higher and more tragic than the mere expenditure of billions of dollars that otherwise could have been channeled to other pressing needs.

Note also that the same liberals who see any candidate's discussion of family values as a violation of a taboo would be dancing in the aisles if the same politicians endorsed the values they seek to advance. Would liberals have raised a fuss if Vice President Dan Quayle had welcomed single motherhood, or spoken in favor of gay rights?

The manner in which these issues are raised in the 1992 campaign is, unfortunately, much closer to a shouting match than to a real discussion, and invites legitimate criticism. Candidates and their spokespersons, surrogates, staffs and supporters deliberately and systematically fog up their positions, and grossly distort those of their opponents. Asked during the Republican convention what family values he stands for, Pat Robertson answered: believing in God, being against gay marriages, and opposing abortions for 13-year-olds. Nor does Governor Clinton clarify without a doubt whether he holds the two-parent family as the ideal, and grants that other family structures also have validity and merit, or whether all family "arrangements" are merely interchangeable "life-style options", one no more preferable than the others. And so it goes.

Also troubling is that the recent interest in family values seems to be born of desperation and last-minute political maneuvering. We had not heard much from Vice President Quayle about family values until the Bush campaign was in deep trouble among socially conservative voters in the summer of 1992. One wishes that instead of bashing Murphy Brown, he had celebrated the Huxtables, an egalitarian two-parent family, each with his or her own profession, yet still fully dedicated to one another and above all to their children.

Beyond the sound and fury, several questions do stand out: Is it enough to reaffirm our moral commitment to families, above all to the valuation of children, and to the need of both parents to be highly dedicated to their upbringing? Or do we need to foster governmental policies that are family-friendly, such as parental leave and child allowances? Our candidates have an obligation to make their positions clear so that voters have little difficulty in deciding who represents their views.

Other communitarian themes resound throughout the campaign. A chorus of voices in both parties stresses the need to add social responsibility to our plethora of rights and entitlements, to develop plans for national and community services, and to restore our educational system. Nor are the economic issues bereft of moral, communitarian overtones. The question of what will be done about millions of Americans who are anxiously seeking work but cannot find it is not merely a matter of economic policy but is also a profound moral question. Is it enough to insist everyone ought to seek a job, or do we also have a responsibility to manage the economy so that jobs will be available for those who actively seek them?

Similarly, our concerns about the deficit should focus not only on its immediate and future economic impacts, but also on the moral implications of our fiscal stewardship. To what extent will the American society eat up the heritage left to us by our predecessors, leaving future generations in hock, with a depleted society?

In short, the 1992 campaign is too negative, by far; too histrionic, for sure; but not bereft of major concerns vital to our shared moral, social, and political future. Let the voters choose.

Amitai Etzioni

On Moral Outrage, Boycotts, and Real Censorship

The charge of censorship is now so pervasive it threatens to become meaningless. What would a dissident in some other country whose books had been banned, or an artist whose work cannot be shown lest he or she be tortured or imprisoned, make, for example, of the bathos-ridden claim of rap musician Ice Cube that he is the victim of “censorship” because anti-defamation groups and even the usually unctuous *Billboard Magazine* criticized his recent record album, “Death Certificate”? Should any readers of *The Responsive Community* have missed it, Ice Cube attacked Asians—Koreans were his prime target—describing them as “Oriental one-penny countin’ mother-f...s.” One song on this latest album threatens arson against Korean shopkeepers. They will be burnt “right down to a crisp” unless they are deferent “to the black fist.” Koreans aren’t the only targets of his ire. The Jewish manager of the one-time rap group, N.W.A., is described as a devil “white Jew telling you what to do.” Ice Cube’s remedy for that insult is quite direct: a “bullet in his temple.”

The most recent flap, which embroiled citizens, police, corporate stockholders, and both critics and defenders of the entertainment industry, revolves around Ice-T, whose musical genre is “speed metal,” and whose specialty is violent lyrics. Often the violence is misogyny of the most grotesque sort (as in his songs “K.K.K. Bitch”, or “Momma’s Gotta Die Tonight”—about murdering and dismembering his mother). In the aftermath of the L.A. riots, what got police organizations most concerned were the lyrics to “Cop Killer” in which Ice-T proclaims: “I got my l2-gauge sawed-off/ I’m ‘bout to bust some shots off/ I’m ‘bout to dust some cops off.” The refrain is the ever imaginative: “Die, die, die pig, die./ F...k the police!/ I know your family’s grievin’./ F...k ‘em!”

Asked to justify this sort of thing in light of public concern, Ice-T referred folks to a video he made during the L.A. riots:

I personally would like to blow...police stations up. You know what I’m sayin’? If it was up to me, you know, ‘cause I’m an anarchist. I’m ready to do this...but some people got to die, you know what I’m sayin’? If you ain’t ready to spill no blood, then, you know, get out of here. You know what I’m sayin’?

Shortly after the fracas began, he bought a 1.2-million-dollar sound-proof home in Bel-Air, the better to create in peace. And he decided to pull "Cop Killer" from his album, "Body Count," despite the Time-Warner conglomerate's resounding defense of its corporate duty to defend "free expression." This decision turns out to have been a shrewd move as demand for the album soared once Ice-T proclaimed his desire not to have Time-Warner "punished" for his song. Although Ice-T voluntarily yanked the song, a hue and cry arose about censorship and, astonishingly, his "plight" got compared to that of Salman Rushdie, still in hiding under threat of the death-sentence ordered by the late Ayatollah Khomeini. A spokesperson for the American Civil Liberties Union laments the "highly unfortunate" situation in which an "artist is harassed to the point where he has to self-censor." (That the supposed censorship is self-imposed would seem in and of itself to defeat the analogy to the Rushdie case, but subtlety isn't a strong suit in these sorts of arguments.)

AMERICA THE NONCOMMITTAL

Concern about Ice Cube's and Ice-T's lyrics is not a fixation on their rough and ready vulgarity. Were that the only issue no one would pay much mind. We live, after all, in a graceless age. But what aroused both the attentive (the Simon Wiesenthal Center) and the usually quiescent (*Billboard Magazine*) is the violent action against targeted groups (Korean shopkeepers, Jewish managers, policemen, and women) which Ice Cube and Ice-T celebrate. American society has long been able to accommodate an unusually large number of cranks, crackpots, zealots, even bigots, of all sorts. That is, and should remain, a point of pride. But what we are seeing more and more, and what perhaps this society cannot infinitely and indefinitely tolerate, is a refusal to pass judgment on hate-suffused rhetoric that invites violence.

Let me be clear. Sometimes we are pretty good at declaring war against *political* trash: think, for example, of David Duke's rightly trounced candidacy for Governor of Louisiana and his pathetic non-showing in presidential primaries. American voters demonstrated little enthusiasm for this bigot, and the national media none at all. He was, after all, seeking to govern, and that is a different kettle of fish from popular culture.

We rightly allow far more latitude to those whom we lift up as cultural icons, and the standards to which they are held, in contrast to those whom we want running our public affairs. But this may be somewhat beside the point. Ice Cube and Ice-T proclaim themselves role models for black youth and insist they are speaking to, and for, young inner-city males.

American popular culture shapes and molds, directs and deflects, our sentiments, dreams, hopes, fears, resentments, and aspirations. For this very reason that amorphous entity—the public—has not only the right but the responsibility to assess, interpret, judge, and—yes, in good old democratic fashion—even to call on individuals to refuse to purchase or endorse products that inject venom into the cultural and political bloodstream. *Billboard's* stiffening of its spine to criticize Ice Cube's lyrics as an instance of “the rankest sort of racism and hate mongering,” is a welcome example of responsibility from what is essentially a trade-promoting, commercial organ.

REAL CENSORSHIP?

Now we get to the heart of the matter. Ice Cube's reaction to *Billboard's* criticism, which stopped far short of calls for any sort of consumer boycott or government action of any kind, was to declare *Billboard* “somewhat racist” and to label it guilty of “censorship.” Here are Ice Cube's thoughts:

I'll say the editor of the *Billboard* has a right to give his opinion just like I have a right to my opinion. But when he says...think twice before you buy this, that's a form of censorship.

Why censorship? “Consumer beware” is not censorship but advocacy. Many of the advances made by civil rights activists and concerned citizens historically were precisely through the sorts of actions—from warnings all the way to boycotts—Ice Cube condemns as “censorship.”

Ice Cube isn't alone in needing a short, crash course in civil liberties. No one called for his records to be rounded up and burned. No one insisted Ice Cube or Ice-T be imprisoned. No one called for a restraining order. No one demanded prior vetting of their lyrics. But both the Messrs. Ice stoutly maintain that criticism itself is “censorship.”

Consider, briefly, three very distinct possibilities. The first, a public outcry, the outraged citizen saying “Get this out of my face!”, is part and parcel of civic life and a robust expression of standards by one person or, at times, a particular community. Such public speech is not only acceptable but desirable in a democratic polity.

The second, a consumer boycott, puts on more pressure and can be said to constitute a form of moral and economic coercion. The goals and purposes of boycotts must be ongoingly evaluated, and the possible encroachments a given boycott might make into protected individual liberties assessed, in making judgments about how much pressure is acceptable under what circumstances. But boycotts are not *prima facie* censorship. (This is especially the case when only some shops participate.)

Finally, there is real censorship: the government says, “You can’t read this. You can’t see this. And we’re backing this interdiction up with the police powers.” The flap over Ice Cube’s lyrics never got past possibility number one: concerned and angry citizens, quite moved and well within their rights, decrying his promotion of racism and violence.

We will no doubt be treated to many more spectacles of artists and entertainers crying wolf whenever their words or deeds are criticized from one or another point of view. Surely, however, we should reserve the grave charge of censorship for the real thing.

Jean Bethke Elshtain

Television, Megaphone for Mass Culture

It’s easy enough to be contemptuous of Vice President Quayle’s view—expressed in the aftermath of the Los Angeles riots—that the television situation comedy “Murphy Brown” is a root cause of American moral decay. The implication that the gang members and criminals who were the chief participants in those riots spend their Monday

evenings watching a show for and about the post-feminist upwardly mobile white middle class is on its face ludicrous. My hunch is that Quayle himself has spent far more time than he'd care to admit watching the likes of "Murphy Brown" and therefore assumes, his view of human nature being such as it is, that the rest of the world does likewise.

It is rather more difficult, though, to dismiss out of hand the argument that there is a connection between the behavior patterns of American society and the images, or "values," implicitly promoted by the machinery of mass culture. Just because Dan Quayle was talking twaddle doesn't mean that there is no legitimate reason to be concerned about the socially undesirable effects of mass culture. To the contrary, it may well be that nothing in contemporary society is more injurious to the general well-being than the mirror images we hold up to ourselves in the bazaar of popular culture.

Make such a statement and you immediately slip into murky territory. Although studies have been and are being made about the relationship between entertainment and behavior, they are by their very nature slippery and inconclusive. Much though the sociologists and psychologists would have us believe to the contrary, human behavior cannot be categorized or explained away with the precision of the sciences. To claim, say, that we are a litigious society because we watch "L.A. Law" is, like Quayle's little exercise in mass psychologizing, ludicrous.

It is equally irresponsible, though, to claim as the apologists for mass culture do that there is no connection between what we see, hear, and read and what we actually do. The images of mass culture—especially those of television, the movies, and popular music—are not merely all-pervasive, they also are remarkably consistent in character. That we could go utterly unaffected by them is inconceivable.

Sweeping generalizations about these images are risky and highly susceptible to challenge, but it's worth the effort to make a few. They portray a society in which "traditional values"—the nuclear family, religion, education—are either nonexistent or scorned; in which sexual license is absolute while its consequences, both social and moral, are lampooned or ignored; in which "self-fulfillment" and "self-esteem" are valued more highly than sacrifice and discipline; in which discourse is

imprecise and debased; in which violence is intense, ubiquitous and, like sexual license, oddly devoid of lasting or injurious consequences.

What they portray is, in a phrase, a world of entertainment. It is a fantasyland in which the basest human desires—most of them having to do with titillation in one form or another—are elevated to the heights of legitimacy, given respectability by ceaseless reiteration in everything from situation comedies to feature films to popular songs to paperback novels—not to mention the broadcast and print advertisements that, it can be argued, set the table for American culture in the 1990s.

These images and the “values” for which they argue are quite literally inescapable. They are the dominant images of American life in these last years of the 20th century. They make a mockery of the traditional American assumption, born of our national optimism and naivete, that history is a constant upward process, the inevitable and irresistible march of “progress.” If that is what we call the chain from George Gershwin to 2 Live Crew, from “Mutiny on the Bounty” to “Terminator,” from John Steinbeck to Sidney Sheldon, then fantasyland is indeed where we live.

Perhaps it is a chicken-and-egg question. If American culture is in decline and the American nation is in decline—both of these being entirely defensible judgments—then which came first? Is Murphy Brown having her baby on television because single parenthood has metamorphosed from a plague on the poor to a fad among fortyish yuppies, or are unmarried mothers having their babies because Murphy Brown is? More likely the former than the latter, yet the possibility that people wittingly or otherwise take their cues from mass culture and its icons simply cannot be dismissed.

Those cues seem to be especially alluring so far as sex and violence are concerned. The constraints that civilization has built up around these deep urges have largely been torn away by mass culture. Explicit sexual imagery—imagery that only a few decades ago would have been utterly unthinkable—is routine in everything from advertising to rap music. Equally explicit violent imagery is equally routine, especially in films created and marketed expressly for the young.

In a provocative new book called “Carnival Culture,” James B. Twitchell cites a study of best-selling books made four years ago by the

National Conference on Television Violence. It “found a 61 percent increase in so-called antisocial or pro-violence themes in fiction from 1966 to 1988,” and reported:

In the past 20 years violent books have been more intensely sadistic and gruesome than anything ever making the best-seller list in American history. Satanic and horror themes have become commonplace after being nonexistent before the 1960s. It is clear that modern readers of popular fiction are entertaining themselves with more hate-filled, sadistic and gruesome material than any previous generation of human beings in world history.

The same can be said of movies, television and music, which are far more potent media than print, especially for young people who have been ill-served by American education and over-served by mass culture. Our feel-good high priests prattle on about the “role models” to whom these children look up, but inasmuch as the most vivid exemplars they most often see are people for whom violence is the most effective (and pleasurable) form of justice and self-expression, who’s to say that these aren’t the images that make the most compelling impressions on their minds?

Who’s to say, indeed. Nobody knows. Yet it can’t be mere coincidence that random violence is increasing at the same time that such violence is mythologized in mass culture; that out-of-wedlock childbirth is increasing at the same time that unfettered sexual indulgence is celebrated in the same culture; that respect for education and self-discipline is declining at the same time that the culture places higher value on inarticulate self-expression and unlimited self-gratification.

Here’s something else: Mass culture is giving mass society exactly what it wants. One of the points Twitchell makes is that serving the desires of the lowest common denominator is a lot harder than elitist critics imagine it to be; the mass market is quick and emphatic in rejecting what it doesn’t like or want and thus is resistant to manipulation. The images of violence and sexuality and unbridled vulgarity that dominate mass culture have been filtered through a rigorous process of selection that only a few can survive.

So not merely is mass culture sending us insidious and injurious messages, it is telling us what we want to hear. What that says about us, and about our prospects for domestic comity, is both mysterious and

discouraging. What is certain, though, is that we are listening closely to these messages and taking them to heart.

Jonathan Yardley

Profound Exchange . . .

Bush: Clinton is the failed Governor of a small state.

Clinton: Bush is the failed President of a big country.

The New York Times, August 2, 1992

COMMUNITARIAN ECONOMICS

**Making Responsibilities Clearer:
A New Federal/Local Division of Labor
and Resources**

ALICE M. RIVLIN

A COMMUNITARIAN PERSPECTIVE

A national election focuses attention on federal leadership, policies, and programs. But many of the nation's most urgent problems cannot be fixed at the national level, no matter who is in charge in Washington. Education will not be significantly improved by promulgation of rules or regulations from the top down. Schools will get better when parents, teachers, employers, and other citizens decide they want better schools in their communities and are prepared to work for them. Street crime, drug use, and teenage pregnancy are all problems that the federal government can deplore but cannot do much to change. A resurgence of community concern and effort is needed. Effective action must come from the bottom up.

Where bottom-up reform is needed, the federal government can, of course, point out the problem and offer advice and financial incentives in the form of conditional grants. These interventions can help focus community attention, but the downside is that they create the impression that far-away Washington can solve the problem and can be blamed when a solution does not appear. The success of Headstart, for example, is at least partly outweighed by the presumption it created that preschool education for low-income children is a Washington problem, which

thus cannot be addressed until there are more federal funds for Headstart.

No wonder the public is disillusioned with politics and politicians! Candidates for federal office fill the air with claims that they will address all of the concerns citizens have about their daily lives, including street crime, quality of education, and family values. But these are problems over which the national government has almost no influence at all. A president, senator, or congressman who promises safe streets, good schools, and responsible families simply cannot deliver. Orange-hat anti-drug patrols, PTAs, and supportive neighbors have more influence in these matters than national policy.

In this election year, Americans are searching for ways to revitalize the economy, make government work better, and regain their lost sense of community. Part of the solution may lie in a direction to which few of the candidates are looking: a new division of responsibilities between the states and the federal government. Cutting through the confusing web of overlapping state and federal functions—making clearer which level of government is in charge of what—could contribute to three goals at once. It could help get the economy moving, make government more manageable, and revive citizen participation in public life.

Seekers of federal office should focus their pitch on a more limited set of policies, those they could actually hope to change, such as health care financing or national defense. Candidates for state and local office would have to address, and be held responsible for, most social issues such as schools and criminal justice. Citizens might begin to have a clearer sense of where to put their political effort to bring about change.

THE TAXING DILEMMA

A strong consensus has developed on the major steps that need to be taken to improve the economic prospects of Americans for the 21st century. Scads of committees and commissions have offered prescriptions, but almost all make the same basic points. First, we must invest in increasing future productivity, since rising productivity is the key to higher living standards and effective competition in world markets. Public as well as private investment is needed, including drastic reforms of education and training to enhance the skills of the labor force, and aggressive modernization of transportation and other infrastructure.

Second, we must reform the financing of healthcare, both to insure that everyone has basic health insurance coverage and to cut the rate of growth of total health care spending. Escalating health costs are draining the resources of business, governments, and individuals. If controls on total health spending could halve the rate at which the health share of the economy is growing, more resources would be freed for other uses by the end of the decade than will be freed by the ending of the Cold War.

Third, the federal budget deficit, which is a continuing drain on the nation's inadequate pool of savings, must be eliminated. As long as large deficits persist year after year, interest rates will be higher than necessary, investment and productivity will suffer, and economic growth will be slowed. Moreover, both America's private and public sectors will continue to depend heavily on foreigners for capital, while the government will be forced to devote a rising portion of its revenue to interest on the debt rather than to serving citizens.

Candidates for federal office of both major parties reflect this growing consensus. They talk about improving education, modernizing infrastructure, reforming health care financing, and eliminating the federal budget deficit. They do not, however, offer credible plans for doing all these things simultaneously—for the simple reason that such plans would have to include a sizable federal tax increase.

Even on very optimistic assumptions—recovery from the recession, moderate growth in the economy, declining defense expenditures, and continued restraint on existing federal programs—eliminating the federal deficit would take a tax increase of at least 4 percent of the gross domestic product, without any allowance for new spending for education, infrastructure, or health. Current public disaffection with Washington makes such a large tax increase for general federal support politically unlikely, to put it mildly. Hence, candidates talk earnestly, but vaguely, about saving money by running government more efficiently, reducing bureaucracy, cutting “waste” and fraud. They assert that faster economic growth will increase revenues, but they avoid suggesting major tax rate increases or major specific program cuts.

Whoever wins, the dilemma will still be there after the election. The new president and the new Congress will face a deficit that is rising because health care costs and interest on the federal debt grow faster

than revenues even in a non-recessionary economy. The persistence of the deficit will preclude major new federal initiatives—indeed existing federal programs will have to be squeezed just to keep the deficit from rising. Hence, a likely post-election scenario is a replay of the last decade: acrimonious debates over each budget, minor tinkering with tax and spending programs, and reluctant acceptance of continuing deficits and the necessity of living with a stagnant, slow growth economy.

SOLUTION: A DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

I propose an alternative scenario called “dividing the job.” It involves recognizing that the states as well as the federal government have important roles to play, and rediscovering the limits and strengths of our federal system. The reforms needed to revitalize the economy should be assigned to the level of government most likely to carry them out successfully. Revenue increases should be identified with services that citizens know about and from which they expect to benefit.

Specifically, I propose that the federal government take on the job of reforming the health care financing system. The new system should both ensure that everyone has basic health insurance coverage and control the rise in total health expenditures. The new system need not be full national health insurance—it could be a version of “pay or play” that retains substantial reliance on employer-based private health insurance—but it must include everyone, and set reimbursement rates that will keep total health care costs from rising much faster than national income. The new health system would subsume Medicaid and relieve the states of the rapidly rising cost of Medicaid benefits. Revenues needed to finance the public portion of the new system should come from an earmarked federal health tax.

Second, the states should take full charge of a “productivity agenda” with strong emphasis on reforming education, improving training for work, and modernizing transportation and other parts of the infrastructure. The federal government should withdraw from these functions, eliminating both grant programs and mandates, making clear that the states, not Washington, are responsible for these activities. Getting whole chunks of government functions out of the federal budget will help balance the budget and reduce pressure for federal spending

increases in the future.

Third, state revenue systems should be strengthened by the adoption of one or more common taxes shared on a formula basis; for example, a uniform sales or value-added tax shared on the basis of population. These common, shared taxes would tend to shift the basis of interstate competition from lower taxes to better services. The sharing formula could be designed to reduce disparities in state resources.

“Dividing the job” could provide a way out of the impasse that has paralyzed Washington for more than a decade. It could make it possible to eliminate the federal deficit and enact new initiatives to revitalize the economy without a massive general-purpose federal tax increase. New revenues would still be necessary—there never is a free lunch—but they would come in possibly more politically saleable ways, such as earmarked taxes for a better health financing system and taxes to improve schools and services at the state and local level, where the benefits are more visible to taxpayers than at the federal level.

A MANAGERIAL PERSPECTIVE

The rationale for “dividing the job” involves more than the hope of breaking the logjam over the budget deficit. It involves clarifying lines of authority and making both state and federal governments easier to manage effectively.

The federal government has too much to do. For more than a half century, beginning in the Great Depression of the 1930s, Washington took on increasing responsibilities and enacted new programs to meet the perceived needs of the moment. Many of these, such as the social security system, have been enormously successful and continue to play an essential role in the economy and the social structure. Others have outlived their usefulness. Especially during the 1960s and the 1970s, the federal government enacted a large number of programs in areas of traditional state responsibility that reflected national frustration with the ineffectiveness, unresponsiveness, and racism of many state governments. Some of these grants attempted to improve the lives of low-income people; others responded to a broad range of national concerns. The pattern became: see a problem, create a federal grant. As long as the economy was growing, the federal government, with its progressive and

unindexed income tax, had a ready source of funds. When the money ran out and big federal deficits appeared in the 1980s, only a few programs were eliminated, although many received reduced funding. There are still over 600 federal grants to state and local government, most of them small.

After all these decades of activity acquisition, the federal government has come to resemble a giant conglomerate that has gotten into more different kinds of business than it can effectively manage from central headquarters. It is time to restructure. Many activities should be spun off to the states to reduce the drain on overstretched resources and managerial talent and to allow the federal government to focus on the jobs that can be performed most effectively at the national level.

The need for focus is reinforced by the rapid escalation of international interactions that necessarily preoccupy federal decision-makers in an increasingly interdependent global economy. With both the president and Congress spending growing amounts of time and energy on international matters, it makes sense to rely more heavily on the states to improve domestic services. States are far stronger, more competent, and more broadly representative governments than they used to be. Part of the credit goes to the federal government itself, which worked hard to upgrade state capacities; part goes to internal reform movements; part to the Supreme Court's espousal of "one person, one vote" in state legislatures; and part to the Reagan revolution, which forced states to move into the breach when federal funds were reduced.

In terms of competency, responsiveness, and even honesty, state governments are still far from perfect, but the same can be said of the federal government. Dividing the responsibilities between the two levels more cleanly would make it easier to improve performance of both state and federal agencies. It would clarify which level was in charge of particular functions and whom to blame when things went wrong. Public interest groups lobbying for improvement in particular services would know where to concentrate their efforts.

"Dividing the job" would not necessarily result in a smaller federal sector, just a more clearly defined one. The federal government must retain responsibility for defending and enhancing the interests of the nation as a whole in the international arena. The federal government

must act when problems clearly cross state lines, as in the case of acid rain or air traffic control. Washington should also administer programs whose workability depends on national uniformity. Social security falls in the category, as does control of health care costs.

For many government activities, however, national uniformity is a liability. Housing policy, education, job training, social services, community development, and most infrastructure programs need to be adapted to local conditions. These kinds of programs work best when there is room for experimentation and innovation, when there is strong citizen support and participation, and when visible officials can be called to account if performance lags. In such a large diverse country, these kinds of programs cannot be effectively managed or significantly improved from the national capital.

Community is not a place or a thing; it is a calling, a struggle, a journey. It is worth engaging, but its form is not obvious now nor will it be tomorrow.

Robert Booth Fowler, *The Dance with Community,*

(Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), p. 161.

Communitarian vs. Individualistic Capitalism

LESTER THUROW

In March 1990 the two biggest business groups in the world, Japan's Mitsubishi and Germany's Daimler Benz-Deutsche Bank, held a secret meeting in Singapore to talk about a global alliance. Among other things, both were interested in discussing how to expand their market share in civilian aircraft production.

From an American perspective, everything about that Singapore meeting was highly illegal, violating both antitrust and banking laws. In the US, banks cannot own industrial firms and businesses cannot sit down behind closed doors to plan joint strategies. Those doing so get thrown in jail for extended periods of time. Yet today Americans cannot force the rest of the world to play the economic game as they think it should be played. The game will be played under international, not American, rules.

With economic competition between communism and capitalism over, this other competition—between two different forms of capitalism—has quickly taken over the economic playing field. Using a distinction first made by Harvard's George C. Lodge, the individualistic, Anglo-Saxon, British-American form of capitalism is going to face off against the communitarian German and Japanese variants of capitalism: The "I" of America or the United Kingdom versus "Das Volk" and "Japan Inc." The essential difference between the two is the relative stress placed on communitarian and individualistic values as the best route to economic success.

SHAREHOLDERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

America and Britain champion individualistic values: the brilliant

entrepreneur, Nobel Prize winners, large wage differentials, individual responsibility for skills, easy-to-fire-easy-to-quit, profit maximization, hostile mergers and takeovers. Their hero is the Lone Ranger.

In contrast, Germany and Japan trumpet communitarian values: business groups, social responsibility for skills, team work, firm loyalty, growth-promoting industry and government strategies. Anglo-Saxon firms are profit maximizers; Japanese and German business firms play a game best termed “strategic conquest.” Americans believe in “consumer economics”; Japanese believe in “producer economics.”

In the Anglo-Saxon variant of capitalism, the individual is supposed to have a personal economic strategy for success, while the business firm is to have an economic strategy reflecting the wishes of its individual shareholders. Since shareholders want income to maximize their lifetime consumption, their firms must be profit maximizers. For the profit-maximizing firm, customer and employee relations are merely a means of achieving higher profits for the shareholders. Using this formula, lower wages equal higher profits—and wages are to be beaten down where possible. When not needed, employees are to be laid off. For their part, workers in the Anglo-Saxon system are expected to change employers whenever opportunities exist to earn higher wages elsewhere.

Whereas in Anglo-Saxon firms the shareholder is the only stakeholder, in Japanese business firms employees are seen as the No. 1 stakeholder, customers No. 2, and the shareholders a distant No. 3, whose dividend pay-outs are low. Because employees are the prime stakeholders, higher employee wages are a central goal of the firm in Japan. The firm can be seen as a “value-added maximizer” rather than as a “profit maximizer.” Profits will be sacrificed to maintain either wages or employment.

Workers in the communitarian system join a company team and are then considered successful as part of that team. The key decision in an individual’s personal strategy is to join the “right” team.

In the United States or Great Britain, employee turnover rates are viewed positively. Firms are getting rid of unneeded labor when they fire workers, and individuals are moving to higher wage opportunities when they quit. Job switching, voluntary or involuntary, is almost a

synonym for efficiency. In both Germany and Japan job switching is far less prevalent. In fact, many Japanese firms still refer to voluntary quits as “treason.”

COALESCE FOR SUCCESS

Beyond personal and firm strategies, communitarian capitalists believe in having strategies at two additional levels. Business groups such as Japan’s Mitsui Group or Germany’s Deutsche Bank Group are expected to have a collective strategy in which companies are financially interlocked and work together to strengthen each other’s activities. At the top of the pyramid of Japanese business groups are the major *zaibatsu* (Mitsui group, 23 member firms; Mitsubishi group, 28 member firms; Sumatomo group, 21 member firms; Fuji group, 29 member firms; Sanwa group, 39 member firms; Dai-Ichi Kangyo group, 45 member firms). The members of each group will own a controlling block of shares in each of the firms in the group. In addition, each member firm will in turn have a group of smaller customers and suppliers, the *keiretsu*, grouped around it. Hitachi has 688 firms in its family; Toyota has 175 primary members and 4,000 secondary members.

Similar patterns exist in Germany. The Deutsche Bank directly owns 10 percent or more of the shares in 70 companies: It owns 28 percent of Germany’s largest company Daimler-Benz; 10 percent of Europe’s largest reinsurance company Munich Rai; 25 percent of Europe’s largest department store chain, Karstadt; 30 percent of Germany’s largest construction company, Philipp Holzmann; and 21 percent of Europe’s largest sugar producer, Sudzucker. Through its trust department, Deutsche Bank indirectly controls many more shares that don’t have to be publicly disclosed.

When the Arabs threatened to buy a controlling interest in Mercedes Benz a few years ago, the Deutsche Bank intervened on behalf of the German economy to buy a controlling interest. Now the bank protects the managers of Mercedes Benz from the raids of the financial Vikings: it frees the managers from the tyranny of the stock market, with its emphasis on quarterly profits, and it helps plan corporate strategies and raise the money to carry out these strategies. But it also fires the managers if Mercedes Benz slips in the auto market and prevents the managers from engaging in self-serving activities such as poison pills or golden

parachutes, which do not enhance the company's long-term prospects.

GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN ECONOMIC GROWTH

Both Europe and Japan believe that government has a role to play in economic growth. An example of this philosophy put into practice is the pan-European project called Airbus Industries, a civilian aircraft manufacturer owned by the British, French, German and Spanish governments, designed to break the American monopoly and get Europe back into civilian aircraft manufacturing. Today it is a success, with 20 percent of the aircraft market and announced plans to double production and capture one-third of the worldwide market by the mid-1990s.

Airbus' penetration into the aircraft manufacturing industry has severely affected US manufacturers. In 1990 Boeing's market share of new orders dropped to 45 percent—the first time in decades it had been below 50 percent. McDonnell Douglas' market share has been reduced from 30 percent to 15 percent. In this particular industry, a greater European share can only mean a smaller market share for Boeing and the demise of McDonnell Douglas.

The Europeans now have a number of pan-European strategic efforts underway to catch up with America and Japan. Each is designed to help European firms compete in some major industry. European governments spend from 5 1/2 percent (Italy) to 1 3/4 percent (Britain) of the GNP aiding industry. If the US had spent what Germany spends (2 1/2 percent of GNP), \$140 billion would have gone to help US industries in 1991. In Spain, where the economy grew more rapidly than any other in Europe in the 1980s, government-owned firms produce at least half of the GDP. In France and Italy, the state sector accounts for one-third of the GNP.

"SOCIAL MARKET" VS. "MARKET" ECONOMY

Germany, the dominant European economic power, sees itself as having a "social market" economy and not just a "market" economy. State and federal governments in Germany own more shares in more industries—airlines, autos, steel, chemicals, electric power, transportation—than any non-communist country on the face of the globe. Public investments such as Airbus Industries are not controversial political

issues. Privatization is not sweeping Germany as it did Great Britain.

In Germany, government is believed to have an important role to play in insuring that everyone has the skills necessary to participate in the market. Its socially financed apprenticeship system is the envy of the world. Social welfare policies are seen as a necessary part of a market economy. Unfettered capitalism is believed to generate levels of income inequality that are unacceptable.

The US, by contrast, sees social welfare programs as a regrettable necessity brought about by people who will not provide for their own old age, unemployment or ill health. Continual public discussions remind everyone that the higher taxes required to pay for social welfare systems reduce work incentives for those paying taxes and that social welfare benefits undercut work incentives for those that get them. In the ideal Anglo-Saxon market economy social welfare policies would not be necessary.

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE

In Japan, industry representatives working with the Ministry of International Trade and Industry present “visions” as to where the economy should be going. In the past these visions served as guides to the allocation of scarce foreign exchange or capital flows. Today what the Japanese know as “administrative guidance” is a way of life, and it is used to aim R&D funding at key industries.

An example of this can be found in the Japanese strategy toward semiconductor chips, which was similar to Europe’s Airbus plan in that it was lengthy, expensive and eventually successful in breaking the dominance of American firms. The government-financed “very-large-integrated-circuit-chip” research project was just part of a much larger effort, where a combination of patience, large investments and American mistakes (a reluctance to expand capacity during cyclical downturns) paid off in the end.

The idea of administrative guidance could not be more foreign to the minds of American officials. According to the politically correct language of the Bush administration, the US government has no role in investment funding and a “legitimate” R&D role only in “precompetitive,

generic, enabling technologies.” These rules are sometimes violated in practice, but the principle is clear: Governments should protect private property rights, then get out of the way and let individuals do their thing. Capitalism will spontaneously combust.

HISTORY AS DESTINY

These different conceptions of capitalism flow from very different histories. In the formative years of British capitalism during the 19th century, Great Britain did not have to play “catch up” with anyone. As the initiator of the industrial revolution, Great Britain was the most powerful country in the world.

The US similarly had a head start in its industrial revolution. Protected by two great oceans, the US did not feel militarily threatened by Britain’s early economic lead. In the last half of the 19th century, when it was moving faster than Great Britain, Americans could see that they were going to have to catch up without deliberate government efforts to throw more coal into the American economic steam engines.

On the other hand, 19th-century Germany had to catch up with Great Britain if it was not to be overrun in the wars of Europe. The rulers of German states were expected by their subjects to take an active part in fostering the economic growth of their territories. To have its rightful place at the European table, Prussia had to have a modern industrial economy. German capitalism needed help to catch up.

The Japanese system similarly did not occur by accident. Admiral Perry arrived in the mid-1800s and with a few cannon balls forced Japan to begin trading with the rest of the world. But the mid-19th century was the height of colonialism. If Japan did not quickly develop, it would become a colony of the British, French, Dutch, Germans or Americans. Economic development was part of national defense—perhaps a more important part than the army itself, for a modern army could not be built without a modern economy.

In both Germany and Japan, economic strategies were important elements of military strategies for remaining independent and becoming powerful. Governments pushed actively to insure that the economic combustion took place. They had to up the intensity of that combustion

so that the economic gaps, and hence military gaps, between themselves and their potential enemies could be cut in the shortest possible time. Under these circumstances, it was not surprising that firms were organized along military lines or that the line between public and private disappeared. Government and industry had to work together to design the national economic strategies necessary for national independence. In a very real sense, business firms became the front line of national defense.

American history is very different. Government's first significant economic act—the Interstate Commerce Commission—was enacted to prevent the railroads from using their monopoly power to set freight rates that would rip off everyone else. A few decades later, its second significant act—the antitrust laws—was to prevent Mr. Rockefeller from using his control over the supply of lighting oil to extract everyone else's income. The third major source of government economic activity flowed from the collapse of capitalism in the 1930s, when government had to pick up the resultant mess.

As a result adversarial relations and deep suspicions of each other's motives are deeply embedded in American history. While very different histories have led to very different systems, today those very different systems face off in the same world economy.

Let me suggest that the military metaphors now so widely used should be replaced with the language of football. Despite the desire to win, football has a cooperative as well as a competitive element. Everyone has to agree on the rules of the game, the referees, and how to split the proceeds. One can want to win yet remain friends both during and after the game. But what the rest of the world knows as football is known as soccer in America. What Americans like about American football—frequent time-outs, lots of huddles, and unlimited substitutions—are not present in world football. It has no time-outs, no huddles and very limited substitutions. It is a faster game.

Fostering the New Familism: A Goal for America

DAVID POPENOE

In the past 30 years the American family has been buffeted by a series of what many observers refer to as social revolutions. Sex has become separated from procreation through the contraceptive revolution, and from marriage through the sexual revolution, and marriage has become separated from parenthood through the divorce revolution. The American public is alarmed, and most Americans now believe that something is seriously amiss with our nation's family system.

Is there really anything to be alarmed about? After all, Americans have worried about "family decline" for the past 100 years or more. For example, many turn-of-the-century progressives, deeply concerned about "free love," lower fertility, and several decades of steep divorce increases, deplored what President Theodore Roosevelt called "race suicide." Later, in the 1920s and 1930s, came the famous studies of *Middletown* (Muncie, Indiana) in which Robert and Helen Lynd uncovered strong signs over a 30-to-40-year period of growing marital discord, increasing generational conflict, reduced parental authority, and declining dominance of the home. And in 1939, the famous black sociologist E. Franklin Frazier documented with alarm the great damage done to black families in the move to cities. It appears that only in the 1950s was American society relatively sanguine about its family trends (which is one reason why so many conservatives today long for that era's return), and the basis for today's public alarm is that the family as an institution has progressively weakened since the '50s.

A host of statistics support this fact, the same statistics that have generated the term "revolution." These statistics, now well known, document the unprecedented increases in such phenomena as divorce,

single-parent families, and nonmarital teenage pregnancies. Indeed, the family's decline since the 1950s has been particularly dramatic because that era was an especially familistic period, a time of very high marriage and birth rates and relatively low divorce rates.

If recent family trends were merely a continuation of long-term shifts, we could perhaps rest more comfortably. In many ways the family has been weakening since the beginning of recorded time: first, through a "loss of functions" to other institutions, such as schools, religious organizations, and governments; and second, through a weakening of the extended kin network in which most families traditionally have been imbedded. These trends have led in the Western world to the modern "isolated nuclear family." It is the case, however, that in the past 30 years a new dimension of family decline has been added—the voluntary breakup of the isolated nuclear family on a vast scale. Over thousands of years the institution of the family has stripped down to its bare nucleus, and now that nucleus appears to be splitting apart.

CHILDREN AT STAKE

Despite this disturbing new development, many things in our society have markedly improved over the past 30 years. Women now have an equality and an independence that they never had before. Men, too, now have more freedom and are less subject to the strain of being the family's only breadwinner. More people than ever before may be enjoying a good sex life. And, in general, life today is more fair, a much wider range of individual lifestyles is tolerated, cultural diversity is celebrated rather than despised, and people who simply get a bad draw in life are less stigmatized. For most people, life provides more opportunities than ever. So why should recent family change be a cause for alarm?

In one word, children. Unfortunately, the kind of society that maximizes opportunities for adult expressive individualism (and many of the benefits I just mentioned are of that nature) is not a society that enhances healthy child development. It is a fact that much of the voluntary family breakup occurring recently has had a negative impact on children. Certainly, I have never met the child who did not want to be raised, if possible, by both biological parents who stayed together and cooperated in childrearing at least until the child's maturity (and hopefully for life). Yet the chances of that occurring today are rapidly

diminishing, currently standing at about 50/50. I have also never heard of a successful childrearing approach that did not involve a tremendous amount of contact time between adults and children—for good childrearing there is absolutely no substitute for positive adult-child relationships. Yet the amount of time parents and other adults spend with children is rapidly diminishing. However one looks at the issue, maintaining strong families and successfully rearing children conflict to some degree with the pursuit by adults of opportunistic individualism.

The consequences for children of recent family change can be seen all around us, and the picture is not a pretty one. There are record high, and in many cases increasing, rates among juveniles and adolescents of delinquency, suicide, depression, obesity/anorexia, drug abuse, and nonmarital pregnancies. In studies of these problems, the social factor that invariably emerges as a prime cause is the disintegrating condition of the family. Intact nuclear families can clearly be dysfunctional, but the weight of the evidence strongly points to the generally lower quality of postnuclear families, especially single-parent and stepfamilies.

This mounting evidence is in keeping with the popular view of the situation. In my Marriage and the Family classes at Rutgers, for example, there is seldom a student who comes from a divorced home who does not dearly wish that the divorce could have been avoided, and who does not simultaneously pledge to do everything possible to prevent divorce from happening in his or her own future family. A female student raised by her biological mother and the mother's boyfriend, and whose father was divorced and remarried three times and now lives with his girlfriend, had this to say: "I will be very careful when selecting a husband because I intend for my marriage to last forever. I *never* want to get divorced. I am really looking forward to starting a 'traditional' nuclear family of my own because I think that will add an aspect of peace and stability to my life." A male student from a broken home who is estranged from both parents and was raised by his grandfather said: "I would like to have two children and give them the family setting that I didn't have...the family means everything...I will do my best to obtain the precious family experiences."

SOME POSITIVE CHANGES

In spite of the abundant negative evidence that has accumulated, many among the nation's scholarly and intellectual elite have shown tremendous resistance to the notion that the family revolution of our time should be cast in a negative light. The most commonly heard bottom-line phrase of this resistance is that "the family is not declining, it is just changing," the implication being that it may even be changing for the better. Many scholars have worked overtime to demonstrate that everyone has benefited from recent family changes, even including children; at least, they argue, children have not been seriously hurt. Why has such a resistance developed?

First, many recent family changes *have* been for the good. With easy divorce available, a married woman who is seriously abused by her husband can now get out of the relationship, which she previously might have been stuck in for life. Thanks to increased tolerance, adults and children who through no fault of their own end up in "non-traditional" families are not marked for life by social stigma. Based on a companionship of equals, many marriages today are more emotionally satisfying than ever before.

The major resistance, of course, has come from women. For 150 years, during the reign of what we now call the traditional nuclear family, women were relegated for most of their adult lives to the "separate sphere" of the home as mothers and wives. Especially with declining fertility and the changing nature of work, this role came to be confining for many women. The whole point of the modern women's movement has been to change the role of women as prescribed by this traditional family type so as to secure a more equal place for women in work and public life. This movement has been highly successful, and for most women it represents progress, not decline. It is no wonder that many women are frightened at the mere thought that society could shift back and undo all of their hard-won gains.

Fundamentally, the family problem today is one of cultural overreaction. The good life is always a delicate balance of conflicting values and forces, and it is not difficult for societies to lose their footing. In the family realm, our society's overreaction has grown increasingly serious. The pendulum has swung too far. In seeking to rid ourselves of the

traditional form of the nuclear family, something only a few now wish to recover, we have come close to rejecting the very ideal of the nuclear family itself—a classic case of throwing out the baby with the bath water.

Yes, we can probably get along without the traditional form of the nuclear family. But it is hard to discern a real alternative to the nuclear family—a mother and a father living together and sharing responsibility for their children, and for each other—as the best structure for child development and the smooth continuity of generations. Although the case can be made that it is better still, at least for children, to have some larger structure like an extended family as society’s basic childrearing unit, such larger structures today seem entirely out of the question. If we find it difficult to live with just one spouse, how could we ever think of going back to living with grandparents, aunts, and uncles? Other alternatives have been tried, including communes, group marriages, and collective houses, but all have been found seriously wanting (where are they today?). Some single-parent and stepfamilies are very effective, but the overall success rate of these family types is grim.

It is becoming increasingly clear that if we want successful childrearing, strong local communities, and a smooth continuity among the generations, most children will have to be raised by nuclear families. There are no viable substitutes for families that simultaneously are able to combine—as nuclear families do—emotional intimacy, sexuality of the parents, and the nurturing of children. The nuclear family is not just a social ideal, it is a social essential.

But in view of all that has happened in recent decades, how can we as a society begin to reconstruct the nuclear family as our basic unit? How can we uphold the virtues of the nuclear family without returning to the lifestyles of the 1950s, and thereby compromise the movement of women toward full participation in the economy and in public life, and stigmatize those who are not fortunate enough to have strong nuclear families? That is the task that lies before us, the task, using the title of a recent book, of “rebuilding the nest.”

THE NEW FAMILISM

Fortunately, our task is made easier by what appears to be the

beginning of an important cultural shift toward what can be called “the new familism.” In recent years the issue of “family values” has been the ideological captive of right-wing groups like the Moral Majority, whose very championship of the cause has polarized the nation’s intellectual elite on family matters, causing the left both to react defensively and to defer to other issues. The left-wing rejection of the “family values” issue was strongly encouraged by the fact that the right-wing version of this issue meant not just support for the nuclear family but specifically for the traditional nuclear family, something the left could not abide. The left was pulled further away from this issue by radical feminist, gay, and lesbian groups, who naturally were promoting their own family, or nonfamily, agendas. Roughly at the time of the Moral Majority’s demise, however, a new constellation of ideological forces was seen to be emerging. Today, in a very exciting cultural development, pro-family values are again being openly espoused by the nation’s traditionally left-leaning elite.

What is the source of this immanent cultural shift? The simple answer is that there has been a generational change. In 1990 more babies were born in America than in any year since 1964, the birth rate having returned almost to the replacement level, and there is nothing like having children to shift one’s ideology in a pro-family direction. Many of the nation’s intellectual elite were among those giving birth. Thus, while the dominant-elite ideologies of the past few decades have been generated by the huge cohort of baby boomers who delayed marriage and enjoyed a singles lifestyle as no generation had before it, this cohort has now moved into the thirty-something parental years: the peak of the baby boom was 1957; persons born that year are now 35 years old!

The evidence is growing that the new familism of young adults is also being promoted by the children of the baby boomers; that is, the children born to the early cohorts of baby boomers in the heavily divorce-prone 1970s who are now in their teens and coming into adulthood. A solid case can be made that the baby-boom generation, coming from the strong families of the 1950s, took the family for granted. To this generation, self-expression and self-fulfillment were the pressing values of the age—at least in their years of prolonged youth. To their children, however, often battle-scarred from family turmoil, the world looks quite different. As many national studies—as well as the sentiments of my

students—have indicated, the children of divorce, although their statistical chances of a successful marriage may not be so great, are outspokenly supportive of the importance of marital permanence and strong, divorce-free families.

Each of these indicators bespeaks a certain dialectical quality to cultural change. Many scholars have noted that key cultural values tend to shift in importance over approximately 30-year cycles, or the length of one generation. It may be no coincidence, therefore, that we are seeing the rise of a new familism just 30 years after the momentous cultural changes of the 1960s. Other contributors to the new familism should also be noted, however: AIDS and the quieting of the sexual revolution, the decline of radical feminism, and growing evidence—now widely dispersed in the media—that recent family changes *have* hurt children.

HOW TO FOSTER THE NEW FAMILISM

Whatever its sources, the new spirit of familism could become a powerful bulwark of the national task of rebuilding the nest. I see this task in primarily cultural, rather than political or economic, terms. Government family policies are important, and some economic redistribution is necessary, but ultimately the nest can not be rebuilt unless a new culture of familism overtakes the out-of-balance absorption with self that now dominates American society. Such a cultural transformation can not easily be manipulated, but when the time is right it is amazing how swiftly attitudes and values can change. Witness the enormous changes over the past 30 years in deep-seated cultural attitudes toward blacks, women, the natural environment and, let's add, smoking.

The time is precisely right, in my opinion, for the development of a new culture of familism in America. Here are a few steps that could foster it:

1. Scholarly analysis and expert inquiry should bring the issue more to public attention. Professor Jean Bethke Elshtain and I co-chair a new Council on Families in America, sponsored by the Institute for American Values and made up of leading scholars and family experts, designed to do just that. Combining new research on family values among a cross-section of American families with the

expert opinion of scholars, we hope to influence the national debate and establish a national family agenda.

2. The national family debate should be reshaped. We must break away from the polarized debate (mostly among the elite) that has pitted right against left, the stern moral traditionalists against the free-wheeling advocates of new lifestyles. The overwhelming majority of Americans, whose lives are governed more by personal experience than by ideology, fall between these two poles. They seek a reasonable adaptation to social change, but not one that means giving up the basic family and child-centered values that maintain social order and continuity. They value the nuclear family as society's fundamental institution, but they don't wish to be straightjacketed by rigid moralists.
3. One elite group should be singled out for special attention—the “family life experts.” Belying their professional title, many of these experts have been especially vulnerable to the persuasions of those who would undercut the nuclear family. Their textbooks and advice literature are filled with the call not just for more sensitivity to, but actually open advocacy of, “family diversity.” Again, I have yet to meet the child—or even the single-mother or stepparent—who desires “family diversity” nearly as much as these experts.
4. Finally, a mass movement among parents should be promoted. If a Green Movement can reshape America's environmental attitudes, why can't a New Familism Movement reshape America's family attitudes? Concerned parents across the nation, together with their allies, must find more effective ways to band together at the grassroots level: In a society that increasingly isolates them, not only do parents need new social networks, but a more collective voice on their part could become a powerful force for cultural change.

In the national task of rebuilding the nest, there is one goal that the new familism movement should *not* pursue—the goal of trying to reconstruct the traditional family of the 1950s. That family had two characteristics a growing number of younger Americans today—both men and women—are no longer willing to accept: the lingering male dominance, a legacy of centuries; and the lifelong removal of women from the labor force, a legacy of the past 150 years. The goal should be

to foster a new form of the nuclear family in which there is a 50/50 division of power and decision-making between wife and husband, and a firm understanding that both women and men will share a common (though not necessarily identical) commitment to the work force over the course of their lives.

Two key characteristics of the traditional nuclear family should be restored or preserved at all costs, however: an enduring sense of family obligation, and the desire to put children first. Without these two qualities, the nuclear family becomes a hollow shell. They must be a *sine qua non* of the new familism.

I will conclude by returning to the voice of my students. In discussing their future family plans, here is a fairly typical passage: “I firmly believe in the small nuclear family as the best way to raise children. I do not believe that the husband has to be the breadwinner. Nor do I believe that the wife has to give up everything in order to have a baby. A happy marriage with a lifetime commitment with no divorce is the most important thing.” That’s the new familism—as stated by one of my male students.

Here’s the new familism—as stated by one of my female students: “My marriage will ideally consist of the modern version of traditional roles. I want to work before I have kids, and after, I hope to be able to stay home and raise them. However, my husband will also help me in all aspects of home life... Child care will be a joint responsibility... All decisions regarding everything will also be made jointly... And although I only have a 50/50 chance, I believe that my marriage will last forever.”

Canada's Future as a Community

HAROLD M. WALLER

In a fundamental sense Canada is attempting to grapple with the task of defining just what it means by a political community. Progress toward that objective is well under way in the hope that the process can be completed in time to avert a sundering of the ties that bind the present community together.

Indeed, Canada's current crisis can be seen as an extension of developments over at least a quarter-of-a-century: the dramatic surge in secessionist sentiment in Quebec; growing demands for autonomy from aboriginal peoples; and calls for more equitable arrangements of power-sharing from the western provinces.

The process of coming to grips with these fundamental issues has compelled Canadians to reexamine many of the underlying assumptions about the nature of their federation. In particular they have had to ask whether it is possible to accommodate Quebec as a "distinct society" with special needs and powers while at the same time recognizing that western grievances and alienation also require significant constitutional change.

The nature of Canadian history is such that the country has largely been defined by external forces. In legal terms it was Britain, through the British North America Act of 1867, which created the constitutional structure. More recently, Canada has often defined itself practically in comparison to the United States. Now, under pressure from Quebec, Canada's leaders are striving to find a constitutional formula that will reflect the changes in political reality that have already occurred. Whether or not they succeed, Canada will be a different country. Either its basic constitutional structure will be modified substantially or it will

cease to have a unified structure.

These developments are of great interest to all those who are concerned about the viability of plural societies. If a country with the advantages, traditions, and resources of Canada cannot succeed, one must be concerned about the future of any other plural societies.

QUEBEC DOMINATES

Quebec nationalists try to interpret the present Canadian union, known as Confederation, in the light of the “Conquest” which took place after the British defeated the French in 1759 on the Plains of Abraham. Through that prism, everything that the French in Canada have been given is based on sufferance, not right. Historically, the Quebecois have argued that the interests of the French-speaking population were not being looked after adequately. But now the criticism of the political structure is more fundamental—the nationalists want to reject the entire basis of the relationship that has defined Canada. The more moderate among them are willing to start anew, with an arrangement based on the equality of the French and English groups, while the more militant believe that a separate, sovereign, and independent Quebec is the only proper solution.

This division between moderate and militant nationalists is a relatively new development. As recently as the 1980 referendum campaign, French Quebecois seemed to be divided between federalists and nationalists, with the latter group favoring secession. Now, although the more militant nationalists continue to push for independence, the group identified as “federalist” is really only moderately nationalist, its commitment to Canada is not unconditional. Whereas in 1980 the Quebec Liberal Party was largely federalist and the Parti Quebecois (PQ) strongly nationalist, in 1992 the PQ remains strongly nationalist while the Liberals seem to be divided between moderate and militant nationalists. The type of federalist position articulated by Pierre Elliott Trudeau between 1968 and 1984 no longer has any currency among substantial numbers of French Quebecois.

One of the underlying factors in the greater assertiveness of Quebec nationalism since the formation of the PQ in 1968 was the fear that French Canadians would be overwhelmed demographically, due to

their very low birthrate and to the assimilation of immigrants into the English milieu in Montreal. The language laws were designed to deal with the second problem and to create a “French face” for Quebec. The first problem is less amenable to legislative redress, though the Quebec government has been paying significant bonuses to the parents of newborn children during recent years.

The arrival of the PQ transformed Canadian politics because the PQ challenged the legitimacy of the existing constitutional order by making Quebec independence its *raison d’être*. From that time on the very existence of Canada as we know it would be at issue. Federal politics entered a new era, one which came to be dominated by the Quebec question. The very presence of the PQ on the political scene meant that the threat of taking Quebec out of Canada was very real, in a sense only an election or a referendum away. Now, about a quarter-of-a-century after the creation of the PQ, the threat seems to be more serious than ever before.

Two key trends have developed substantially since the late 1960s to make the PQ’s dream seem to be more within reach. The first is the acceptance of the PQ into the mainstream of Quebec life, especially after its election victory in 1976. With that has come a greater willingness to take the party’s key position seriously. Thus, the debate is often not over the question of whether independence is conceivable or not, but rather how it would work and what the consequences would be. The fact that the Liberal party, back in power since 1985 after a nine-year PQ-interregnum, now toys openly with the independence idea indicates just how far this trend has carried.

The other trend is the escalation of the stakes in discussions between Quebec and the rest of the country. Canada has been talking about constitutional revision for decades. It even took a major step with the patriation of the Constitution and the addition of a Charter of Rights in 1982. But in the debate since 1987’s ill-fated Meech Lake accord, which promised Quebec significant concessions in exchange for its endorsing the 1982 constitution, the stakes have been raised dramatically. When the accord failed because two provinces failed to ratify it within the prescribed time limit, Quebec received the news as a rejection of Quebec, a humiliating slap in the face. Both federal and provincial political leaders have encouraged the view that unless an agreement acceptable

to Quebec can be worked out soon, the country may not hold together. That is, moreover, the more moderate view. The more extreme view in Quebec is that Canada is not worth saving and that Quebec should go its own way.

In a nutshell, Quebec has become increasingly self-confident and assertive during the past 30 years and has in fact achieved many of its objectives, aside from the goal of independence. Its political and especially intellectual elites find the preservation of the federation less attractive. They see themselves as a people, defined by a common language and culture and with a common destiny. The way to protect that endangered language and culture and to fulfill that destiny is through vigorous government intervention. What remains to be seen is whether this process will necessarily lead to a sovereign Quebec state, or whether Canada can accommodate the reality of an increasingly autonomous province. Some argue that it no longer matters; that Quebec is autonomous in fact, if not in name. But there are others who believe that Canada can still mean something, and that a new and long-lasting accommodation can be reached. And so the efforts to find a solution continue.

ENTER THE WESTERN PROVINCES

Negotiations during the spring and early summer of 1992 focused largely on two exceedingly difficult issues: several smaller provinces' demands for a "Triple-E Senate" (elected, equal, and effective); and Native Canadians' demands for aboriginal rights. Quebec, and to a lesser extent Ontario, the two largest provinces, were unsympathetic to the Triple-E concept. The challenge was to modify the proposal enough to get all parties on board. On the question of aboriginal rights, the problem was to give the indigenous peoples enough control of their own affairs to satisfy their demands without compromising the basic constitutional integrity of the country, including the power of the provinces. Despite the great divisions over these issues, not to mention the idea of Quebec as a "distinct society," federal and provincial negotiators were facing Quebec's October 26, 1992 deadline for a referendum, either on sovereignty or on a new constitutional package. Quebec established this deadline in 1990 in the emotional aftermath of the Meech Lake failure.

It might be argued that the answer to Canada's problems lies not so much in the outcome of the negotiations to forge a new deal that will satisfy Quebec without alienating other provincial interests as in the process through which all this is happening. Even though the actors may appear clumsy at times, what is at work here is an attempt to build a new political community in Canada, one which will depart substantially from what presently exists. This new community, if it can be created, must satisfy Quebec's expectations if it is to be viable. But it must also reflect an arrangement that resolves the long-standing and long-neglected grievances of the western provinces, which feel that their interests have also been overlooked in the present Confederation. If these gains are to be made, they will in some sense be at the expense of the federal government, which is likely to see its power diminished, and perhaps of Ontario, which as the largest province by far, has the most to lose in the western effort to reform the Senate on the basis of equality of the provinces. But in the end, this kind of calculus of winners and losers is not productive. Nor is it conducive to laying the foundation for a new constitutional arrangement.

What has plagued Canada for some time now is a narrowness of vision on the part of so many of the provinces and their leaders. Such provincialism is especially serious in a country in which the units of the federal system are so important. The meaningful question is whether the various interests, which now include territories and aboriginal peoples as well as the provincial and federal governments, can surmount their own narrow perspectives and conceive of issues in terms of the welfare of the entire community. Based on the track record, one must be skeptical. Yet the radical nature of the threat of Quebec independence, with all the attendant political and economic dislocation and turmoil, may have spurred Canada's leaders to actions that they could not have contemplated in advance. Thus the present crisis is modifying thinking about just what the political community is.

AN ELITE ACCOMMODATION

Indeed, the prospects of an outcome that few aside from the truly-committed segment of the Quebec nationalists want may have focused the minds and the energies of both the politicians and the people at the crucial time. One of the problems with the Meech Lake accord was that

it represented an accommodation among the political elites that lacked genuine popular support. In the renewed effort to forge an agreement in 1992, there has been more attention paid to the people of Canada—French, English, and other. The people of Canada are now expected to create a new constitutional order themselves, instead of relying on the political class, a process which ultimately failed when tried with Meech Lake. Canada is not a country that has embraced popular democracy with enthusiasm, and certainly does not seem inclined to convene a constituent assembly. On the other hand, three of the provinces, including, of course, Quebec, are committed to submitting any agreement to a referendum. Moreover, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's government is planning to hold a national referendum in order to give the people as a whole the opportunity to speak clearly on such a vital issue. It is encouraging that the population as a whole is now becoming involved. Ultimately it is they who will have to decide just how much another part of the country, speaking a different language, means to them.

CANADA AFTER 1992?

When all is said and done, will Canada be up to the task of accommodating diverse interests, and if so, how? The answer to the first question is that as the moment of truth neared, the concentration of minds was enough to facilitate the required mutual concessions. In 1990, after the failure to achieve ratification of the Meech Lake accord, things looked bleak indeed. Pro-sovereignty sentiment abounded in Quebec, and the federalists in the province ran for cover. Even the supposedly federalist Quebec Liberal Party took a decidedly nationalist stance. To many observers it appeared that Quebec had staked out a position that could not be reconciled with anything that the rest of Canada might produce. But some of the passion generated by the perception that Quebec had been humiliated in 1990 began to dissipate over the winter of 1991-92. Economic realities were no longer ignored. The parties began to talk again, though hampered by Quebec's refusal to participate formally, and at least the possibility of a deal was perceivable in the distance, a distance limited by Quebec's October 1992 referendum deadline. An agreement between the federal government and the nine provinces other than Quebec was hammered out in July but was quickly shot down by nationalist opinion in Quebec. A new resolution to the problem was attempted in August, this time with more

open involvement by representatives of Quebec. With Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa suggesting that the referendum question should deal with a new federal offer rather than independence, it was now possible to believe that there were real alternatives to secession, if not ideal ones. The agreement that was finally achieved late in August 1992 included a novel resolution of the Senate problem by granting Quebec a perpetual 25-percent share of the Commons seats in exchange for substantial Senate reform in the direction desired by the West, aboriginal self-government, and recognition of Quebec as a distinct society.

As for the second question, it is quite clear that Canadians are prepared to weaken the role of the center in their federal system to a greater extent than ever before. The resultant increase in autonomy, especially the recognition of the distinct society concept, offers Quebec the kind of arrangement that will probably satisfy most French Quebecers, an opportunity to pursue their own group destiny within the broad confines of a Canada of which they are also a part. But one of the risks is the possible abandonment of minority language rights across the country. The idea of greater provincial autonomy attracts some of the other provinces as well. The real question, however, was whether it is also possible to deal with western alienation by coming to grips with that region's demands about the Senate: equal, elected, and effective, and to do something about aboriginal self-government, a matter that was omitted during the Meech Lake negotiations but which is now considered an essential element of any package. The 1992 agreement shows that it can be done.

It is difficult to draw conclusions about a process that has not been brought to completion. But it is clear that given the pressures on pluralistic societies today, their persistence within some form of unifying governmental framework cannot be taken for granted. One cannot simply assume that existing arrangements will remain satisfactory. When confronted with centrifugal forces, both politicians and ordinary citizens who are committed to maintaining their political system will have to be willing to consider imaginative, creative, and perhaps novel constitutional arrangements in order to satisfy the array of conflicting forces. In a sense, pluralistic societies have become laboratories for political experiments with great consequences.

There certainly is no guarantee that Canada will be able to overcome the current crisis. Elite opinion in Quebec, which tends to lead mass opinion, has set conditions that are difficult for the rest of Canada to meet and run the risk of exhausting the patience of all concerned. A combination of great political skill and a lot of good will is required for success to be achieved.

Canadians generally do not get very enthusiastic about their community. They are not given to excesses of patriotic display. But deep down they do care about their country. To see it break up and face an uncertain future is a sobering prospect. Events in other parts of the world have demonstrated that one cannot simply declare that Canada will not fall apart. But that very realization may be enough to provide the people of a country that on balance is most fortunate the impetus to redefine the terms of their existence as a political community with a common destiny.

Despite all the rhetoric, heated at times, there is an underlying feeling of good will that unites most Canadians, French and English. That in itself makes Canada worth preserving. Therefore the federal and provincial governments had an obligation to go as far as possible to accommodate the seemingly incompatible expectations of Quebec, the western provinces, and the indigenous Canadians. The August 1992 agreement indicates considerable movement on the part of all concerned. Most of the western demands on the Senate were met, even if the Senate will be neither completely elected nor as effective as some had hoped. Quebec got most of what it wanted, though not as many transferred powers as it had demanded. The agreement represents real concessions and shows that negotiations need not be understood as a zero-sum game, but rather as a search for a win/win outcome that can contribute to the building of a stronger community. It is an honorable one and a genuine achievement for Canada. It ought to be approved and implemented.

Two Cheers for the Electronic Town Hall: Or Ross Perot, Meet Alexis de Tocqueville

DAVID L. KIRP

The cultural elite, to use the phrase of the hour, had a field day with Ross Perot's notion of running the White House like an electronic town hall. "1-800-TROUBLE," *The New York Times* editorialized, fretting that Perot's proposed reliance on the *vox populi*—or at least those "voxes" willing to register their views via a phone call—could be used "to end-run the Constitution." That's mild stuff compared with the dire admonitions of columnist Anthony Lewis, who lambasted the notion as proto-fascist.

The idea disappeared with Perot's departure from the presidential race. That's regrettable, for while his proposal had real flaws, it was hardly Mussolini-in-America. Take the matter of what pollsters call "representative samples." There is every reason to anticipate that, as the critics point out, those who choose to register their opinions on, say, health care or reducing the deficit won't mirror the views of the country—that only the noisiest and the angriest will bother picking up their phones. When CBS aired "America on the Line" in January, for example, it asked callers to register their opinions on George Bush's handling of the economy. By nearly 3 to 1, they were unfavorable, but a true random sample produced a far closer division of the national house.

So what? If, say, one American in ten—that's 25 million people—voluntarily registers a view on any subject weightier than Murphy Brown's pregnancy or Mark McGwire's All-Star credentials, that ought to be cause for rejoicing, not hand-wringing. And suppose the sample were representative, as when the Gallups and Harris and the party pollsters do their jobs: Should that result make up a President's mind for

him?

The fretters also complain that the issues of the day are too complicated to be understood by ordinary folk after hearing an hour or two of pro-and-con presentations, that people would be registering their views on the basis of rigged information. These critics would substitute either some version of a Platonic philosopher-king or, more realistically, the 635 philosopher kings-and-queens of Congress.

It's hard to muzzle a giggle—or suppress a shudder—at this critique. While there has been altogether too much Congress-bashing lately, there is a reason for it. You don't have to believe, with William Buckley, that the first ten names in the Boston phone directory would do a better job of running the country to wonder about Congress' competence. You just need to pay attention to how, during the past dozen years, our representatives on both sides of the party aisle have messed up almost everything they touched—the S&Ls and the health system, the deficit and the tax code and the rest—while leaving real problems like education and the nation's infrastructure entirely untouched.

Moreover, you don't need to believe that subsidized gyms or overdrawn House bank accounts reveal rampant corruption to note that, too often these days, lobbyists' money counts much more than policy ideas. To reread *Showdown at Gucci Gulch*, written before the recent spate of Congress-bashing started, suggests how many light years away from being philosopher-kings many of our representatives in Washington truly are.

The point is not that “the people” will do better than the politicians—Congress, and the Constitution, won't give them that chance—but that any idea which promises to engage the interest of the turned-off and turned-away deserves a better reception than Perot's proposal received. The candidate is onto something.

Political leaders mostly come in three basic varieties. There are those who live by what Finley Peter Dunne once called “the illiction returns” and the polls. Others focus on bringing the interest groups together, hammering out a bill on whaling that somehow satisfies both Save the Whales and Nuke the Whales. Still others believe that politics is a nuisance and that the best policy comes out of an analyst's computer:

Robert McNamara's golden boys in the Vietnam-era Pentagon, Michael Dukakis, even Ross Perot, who paid out big bucks to several of the ablest Berkeley public-policy students in hopes that their recommendations could cure the ills of society.

None of these strategies works—at least not by itself. Polls represent only tossed-off answers to previously unthought-about questions, not real preferences that acknowledge any sort of public good. Interest groups mostly represent themselves; their legitimacy stems as much from the PAC dollars they deliver as from their expertise. As for the claim that there's a computer-generated answer to all our miseries, one staffer at the Office of Management and Budget had a telling response: "If it were true, we'd already be living in Nirvana."

The hope resides in something so old-fashioned as an interested citizenry, a public engaged by the issues of the day, in what political scientist Benjamin Barber calls "strong democracy." With the phantasm of the Cold War finally banished, questions about taxing and spending, fairness and efficiency, shouldn't just be an inside-the-beltway preserve, because they will have abiding affects on ordinary lives. Questions about moral leadership matter too—not the wedge-issues that Dan Quayle has trotted out, but real concerns about what we owe to one another as Americans in the form of national community service, concerns too about the contemporary meaning of tolerance and diversity and solidarity, about the gorgeous (rather than the gory) mosaic.

It was no surprise that Ross Perot, with his career in computers, should have come up with a high-tech approach. If the 800 call-in elicits a broad response, that's all well and good. What would be better is an idea as low-tech as a New England town meeting.

A century-and-a-half ago in *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville, the smartest observer we've ever had, wrote about how Americans make democracy work. Democracy is not primarily a matter of involved officials informing the people about what's needed, Tocqueville said, but instead "self-interest rightly understood." Americans realize they have to work together—to listen and respond to one another—if they're going to get what they want and need.

Although Tocqueville's example of farmers' deciding to tax themselves to build a road that would carry their crops to market is a little

dated, there are vivid contemporary examples of how Washington can learn from Tocqueville and enliven democracy in the process. One of these examples deserves spelling out in detail. In 1983, the Environmental Protection Agency was about to issue national standards that would protect Americans from the pollution caused by arsenic emissions from copper smelting plants. The biggest potential target was located near Tacoma, Washington—a plant that employed more than 500 people in a state with 11 percent unemployment. Since there was no safer smelting technology available, the apparent choice was to keep the plant open, risking one pollution-related cancer death a year, or to shut the operation.

An agency faced with such hard choices typically dons its scientific cap to evaluate the evidence, meanwhile listening to the interest groups behind the scenes. EPA-head William Ruckelshaus chose a different course: he would directly involve the people who were affected in the decision. “For me to sit here in Washington and tell the people of Tacoma what is an acceptable risk would be at best arrogant and at worst inexcusable.”

The national press was outraged. *The New York Times* editorialized that the EPA chief was playing Caesar “who would ask the amphitheater crowd to signal with thumbs up or down whether a defeated gladiator should live or die... To impose such an impossible choice on Tacomans” was “inexcusable.” This criticism missed the point. Ruckelshaus acknowledged that the final decision was his to make—that was his job—but he was inviting genuine public engagement. “What’s the alternative?” he asked the *Los Angeles Times*. “Exclude them?”

Angry voices were initially heard at the workshops. “We elected people to run our government, we don’t expect them to turn around and ask us to run it for them,” said one participant. Another stated: “I have seen studies which show that stress is the main source of cancer. The EPA is one main cause of stress.” But soon people calmed down and started paying attention to one another. There were hard questions raised about the adequacy of the data and painful personal stories told about lives shortened by cancer. Over the month-long process, people discovered both new information and new perspectives about what was

at stake. EPA staffers learned about ways to get technical information across to the public. The copper workers learned that the environmentalists weren't just eco-freaks, while the environmentalists had to confront real workers with jobs on the line.

This face-to-face learning prompted a hunt for alternatives. Even people living on nearby Vachon Island, opposed to the pollution and with no employment stake in the smelter, began thinking about whether—and how—to keep the smelter going. The questions raised sent the EPA back to the drawing boards. Out of such encounters, writes management scholar Robert Reich, who recounts the ASARCO story in a *Yale Law Journal* essay, people realize that they hold “latent public values in common with others... Not incidentally, along the way they achieve a deeper understanding of one another, and refine their political identity.”

Similar events have unfolded under very different circumstances—in deliberations a few years back about how a community should respond to a schoolchild with AIDS in its midst, for instance—with much the same outcome. As I learned in visiting and writing about these towns, what begins with posturing evolves into an exchange, then into real caring. In Tacoma, that meant looking for a way to aid both workers and residents. In the best of the AIDS stories, parents have moved from a “no-never” stance to a recognition that a classmate with AIDS posed no real risk to their own child—then to a what-can-we-do-to-help attitude that amounts to the public equivalent of love.

The Tacoma and AIDS stories are a fair country distance from Ross Perot's idea of an “electronic town hall.” But the intention is much the same: to coax Americans into being more than political and moral couch potatoes, to invite them—us—to discover and express our public values. That's an aspiration Tocqueville would admire.

Crossing the Tracks: A Lesson in Public Service

SUZANNE GOLDSMITH

One of the arguments most commonly given in favor of national service programs—programs that would enroll large numbers of young people to do community service—is that service has a transformative effect, that it has the power to change lives. We are worried about the next generation of Americans, with their guns and their drugs and their sex and their suicide and their seeming lack of respect for anything and anyone, and we want to believe that there is a program out there that would reform them—that would make them see the light.

Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton evoked this hope in an early campaign debate when, asked about furloughs for convicted felons, he answered with an anecdote about a young man who had abandoned a life of juvenile delinquency after joining a nine-month national service program in Boston called City Year. Clinton wasn't saying we should send all felons out into the community to work in child care centers, but he was revealing a basic assumption about service. It has the Power to Save: the answer to the Youth Problem.

NOT A QUICK FIX

This is a dangerous belief. To dream of a quick fix for the sociopathic tendencies that seem to be growing more and more prevalent among youth is to turn our backs on the real causes of problems that begin in early childhood, or even *in utero*. But more specifically, as someone who believes that national service is a good idea, I see this belief as a threat

to a legitimate program with positive benefits. If we set up saving souls as the goal of national service, we are setting the program up for failure.

I spent nine months in City Year last year as a participant-observer, working alongside the young corpsmembers as part of my research for a book about national service. City Year recruits youths aged 17 to 22, gives them uniforms, pays them a stipend of \$100 a week, and at the end of nine months, awards a cash grant of \$5,000, which is tied to enrollment in higher or continuing education, or to the pursuit of other mutually-agreed-upon post-service goals. I knew the young man Clinton was speaking about, and I believe his story is true. I also knew some of the others who were not transformed—like Charles, a member of my team. Charles (a pseudonym) was 21 and he came to City Year straight from jail. His rap sheet included everything from drug possession to car theft. Nevertheless, he was charming and handsome, and at times he worked very hard. But at other times he not only shirked his duties but made it nearly impossible for anyone else to work. During our meetings, he laughed at odd moments, cursed aloud, and fell asleep. He stole people's lunch money, a bus pass, gloves, and a radio. When we were placed as classroom aides in a public school, he bullied the students and slept in class. By the time he was fired, he had claimed almost \$2,000 in stipend payments and had nearly driven others on the team to quit in frustration. Later, he came back and assaulted a teammate in front of children at an after-school program run by the corps.

Another of my teammates failed even more dramatically. Richie (also a pseudonym) had all the cards stacked against him. He was abandoned by his mother at three, and his father went to jail for murder when Richie was 11. He spent his teen years in a whirlwind tour of Massachusetts' group homes and juvenile-detention facilities. But in City Year, Richie showed promise. At the school where we served, the children loved and revered him, and he offered them real thoughtfulness and caring. For a while, Richie did appear transformed; he held his head high when he walked around that school. Other things started to go right for him. He earned a high school equivalency degree. He went back to live with his grandparents. He talked about college and becoming a lawyer, like City Year's directors. He was earnest, smart, and likable, so much so that we all overlooked his shortcomings—lateness, poor attendance, and a general sloppiness that set in late in the year and grew

worse as graduation neared.

Six weeks before graduation, he wrote this: “The biggest lesson I have learned this year is a personal one. I have learned how to complete something. Before this year I had never completed anything in my life. I always found a way out and that doesn’t get you anywhere.”

Richie didn’t graduate, however. A week after writing those words, he disappeared under suspicion of stealing a CD player, a camera, a VCR, and a stereo from a teammate who had given him a key so he could crash at her apartment. Though she was hurt and angry, she still wanted to help him—but nobody could find him. He turned up a couple of months later in the hospital, his body bruised and broken after he had rolled a car over at 100 miles an hour on a highway exit ramp.

National service will not change criminals into angels, nor will it save those who are in desperate need. That’s not what we should expect. That’s not what should be promised.

THE BUSH PLAN

George Bush has his own set of goals for national service. He tried to put his own monogram on the idea back in 1989 by creating, for the first time, a White House Office of National Service. His goal was to boost the volunteer sector. “If you have a hammer, find a nail,” he said. “If you know how to read, find someone who can’t. If you’re not in trouble, seek out someone who is. Because everywhere there is a need in America, there is a way to fill it... There is no problem in America that is not being solved somewhere.”

Fine words. But how did Bush expect to accomplish this? With press releases and cheery pats on the back, it appears. The White House Office of National Service gives out “Points of Light” awards to innovative and committed volunteers. But it offers no money and no national plan.

According to Bush, government money and leadership shouldn’t be needed. When he signed the National and Community Service Act of 1990, which this summer awarded \$63 million in grants to states for full-time youth corps, school- and college-based service, and other community service programs, he did it with reluctance, noting that “Although the use of financial incentives may be appropriate in some circum-

stances, I have reservations about the wisdom of employing 'paid volunteers' to the extent contemplated by S. 1430."

NOT A FREE LUNCH

Research shows that national service participants could, indeed, fill a good many of our nation's pressing needs. A Ford Foundation study found 3.5 million openings nationwide for unskilled youth volunteers in education, health, child care, conservation, criminal justice, and other service fields.

My experience supports the capacity of youth volunteers for real, important work. During my nine months in City Year, my team did the following:

- Painted and repaired a dilapidated greenhouse at a mental hospital to give patients in locked wards a place for controlled, satisfying outdoor activity.
- Rebuilt a community garden and playground that had been claimed by drug dealers who terrified the neighbors.
- Worked in an overcrowded elementary school, helping out with everything from tutoring to crowd control.
- Guttled and began rehabilitation work on an old house that now provides communal living for people who were homeless.
- Organized a community clean-up in the bankrupt city of Chelsea, bringing neighbors together to improve communities that the government had abandoned.

Other City Year teams created after-school programs for latchkey kids; cleaned apartments for, and visited with, elderly homebound people; gave drug awareness and violence prevention programs in schools; organized a recycling drive. All this was done with just 72 kids.

The projects were sponsored by existing social service agencies. There is little question that the work is out there to be done by anyone who has the initiative to get involved. But without pay, who can really afford to dedicate weeks at a time to such demanding projects? Only those with leisure time and disposable income. When President Bush talks about national service, he is talking about the Junior League—not the kind of

gritty, no-thanks work we performed.

City Year is many things, but it is not the Junior League. Instead, my City Year team was a diverse group of youths—black, white, Hispanic, Asian, rich, poor, dropout, college-bound. A Skidmore graduate and a Job Corps graduate. An aspiring diplomat and a convicted drug dealer.

Most of them would not have been able to join without the financial incentives City Year allowed. With supervision and overhead, the total cost came to roughly \$20,000 per corpsmember. That money came from corporate sponsors like Reebok and the Bank of Boston, from individual donations, and from foundations. But three years after City Year began, it is no longer the glamorous new kid in Boston, and corporate seed money has begun to dry up. City Year's founders have had to knock on Congress' door. To sustain the program over the long haul, government funds will be needed. Happily, the new Commission on National Service recently named City Year a model program and awarded it \$7 million of federal money over two years to allow it to expand. National service can accomplish a lot. But make no mistake, it is not a free lunch.

BEYOND THE MELTING POT

If national service doesn't save kids, and costs quite a bit of money, what good is it?

My answer is this. We live in a society that is highly segregated—by class, by income, by ethnicity, by education. We pay lip service to the melting-pot ideal and we identify our exclusive neighborhoods by euphemism (“inner-city,” “suburb”). But the lines are as clear as day and we all know it. Inequality of opportunity, lack of understanding, lack of compassion, lack of ambition—all are fostered by this segregation. And it hurts us all, whether we are on the right or the wrong side of the tracks. We all live with the fear of crossing those boundaries, because to cross them would bring certain rejection. And our social institutions—churches, public and private schools, colleges, the workplace—do little to help us try. They give us very few opportunities to connect—as equals—with those who are different from ourselves. There is no place where we can experiment safely with crossing social barriers.

For the young people on my team, City Year was a chance to break

through this American version of economic and cultural apartheid. It was a place where each of us, no matter what his skin color, gender, SAT score, social class, cultural background, or likability quotient, had something to offer, and where everyone could offer it together. A place where we all learned to cooperate, because we had to cooperate to get things done. The success of each project depended, to a large extent, on trust. Are you going to get up on a ladder to paint the ceiling if you don't trust the guy below? Are you going to hold the stake steady if you don't trust the guy holding the sledgehammer? Are you going to get up and perform before a group of people if you don't trust those performing with you not to embarrass you or let you down? Are you going to go to work in a dangerous neighborhood if you don't trust your teammates to stick together and look out for you?

PRACTICING VALUES

Success also depended on learning to develop—and enforce—a code of conduct. I learned that lesson before going to City Year, when I supervised my own team of youth volunteers in New York's City Volunteer Corps. My team held a tribunal to consider the case of a girl on the team who was stealing candy for the candy drive at the school where we were working. Despite warnings from her friends, she had continued to steal. When she refused to acknowledge wrongdoing, they voted to cast her out. Everybody liked her, but she was destroying the team's credibility in the school.

One of the basic characteristics of community, that elusive thing so many people are talking about these days, is a sense of shared values. We are (rightly, I think) hesitant about teaching values didactically in schools. Values are something that should emerge organically from a sense of shared interest. The teams in City Year, in the City Volunteer Corps, and in other youth service corps around the country (of which scores have emerged in recent years) are mini-communities where values become real and where they can be practiced.

Adding merit to a program like City Year is the fact that the team includes all kinds of people, not just one's own kind. Thus one is forced to realize that shared interests are not necessarily based on race, or class, or culture. For what good is it to talk about community, if what we are talking about is not one community of people together, but isolated,

homogeneous communities, one pitted against the other?

NOT THE ELEVEN O'CLOCK NEWS

One sad but instructive story from my team says volumes about the real lessons that can be taken from an experience like City Year.

Tyrone was somewhat remote and introspective, and since he was with us only a month, I didn't get to know him all that well. But I have some hoarded images: Tyrone sick with a cold but still working hard, shoveling dirt with a drop of sparkling mucus clinging to the tip of his nose. Or shouting angrily at a bus driver who had closed the door before a dawdling teammate could get on. Tyrone had drive and discipline, as well as a finely-honed sense of righteousness.

I knew that he was 21 and had done two years in the Job Corps, and that he was working toward a high-school-equivalency degree. Some of the others on the team also knew that he was using part of his City Year stipend to help his mother pay the rent. And that he had a four-year-old son.

Four weeks after City Year began, Tyrone was killed outside his home in one of Boston's poor black neighborhoods by a person with swift feet and a gun. We still don't know who shot Tyrone, or why, and it seemed the police did very little to find out. But we know how it felt to lose him.

There were 149 murders in Boston in 1990. Sixty-two percent of the victims were black or Hispanic males; one-third were between the ages of 19 and 24. The only one that got significant press and police attention was an aberration: the murder of Carol Stuart, a white woman from the suburbs who was shot in her car while leaving a birthing class in a hospital on the edge of the ghetto. Boston's attention—and the nation's—was riveted as the story unfolded. It turned out that her husband had killed her. In contrast, outside of the minority community, those many young male victims whose blood washed the streets in 1990 were quickly forgotten, if noticed at all—except for Tyrone. Because of his network of City Year friends and acquaintances, Tyrone's death touched hundreds of communities, from the ghetto to wealthy suburbs to corporate sponsors. For some of his friends, Tyrone was yet another on a long

list of lost friends and acquaintances. For others, he was the very first victim of inner-city violence to be more than a sensational headline or a grainy newspaper photo. Tyrone was real to us—we knew the sound of his laughter, the timbre of his voice, the way he walked, what he ate for lunch. When he died, we cared. And now, when we read in the paper about another black male getting shot, we don't just turn the page quickly, relieved that we are not part of that world. We know that we are.

That is what national service can deliver. And that is enough.

AUTHORITARIANS, LIBERTARIANS, AND COMMUNITARIANS

Compiled by David Brown and Sarah Horton

From the Authoritarian Side:

Democratic Witches?

Reverend Pat Robertson called a proposed equal rights amendment to the Iowa state constitution a “feminist agenda” and described it as a “socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians.”

Meanwhile, Representative Newt Gingrich of Georgia, while introducing President Bush to a rally in Georgia, called Woody Allen “a perfect model of Bill Clinton Democratic values.” He went on to say that “Woody Allen having non-incest with a non-daughter to whom he was a non-father because they were a non-family fits the Democratic platform perfectly.”

Associated Press Reports

An Eye for an Eye

There is only one civilized response to looters, and that is to shoot them on sight. Of what possible use is our racial “sensitivity,” when we encourage lower-class blacks to burn down the houses and stores of working- and middle-class blacks and Koreans?

...Middle-class Americans are, to some extent, exasperated with the privileges showered upon minorities, and it is those privileges that have incited blacks into thinking of themselves as a community of victims above the law. It is a reasonable conclusion for them to draw. We pay them for not working; we pay them for having babies out of wedlock; we keep paying them so

long as none of their boyfriends can be talked into a permanent arrangement. There are masses of young black males who can live off their mothers and girlfriends, while pushing a little crack or stealing a few TVs for pin money.

...The fruits of the welfare state are putting out a luxuriant growth in Los Angeles and other major American cities, and the only real “solution” to the problem has to go beyond the immediate crackdown on lawlessness that every decent American is demanding. The only long-term solution is, as all the pundits and black leaders declare, a reform of the welfare system, but instead of expanding the network of services, we need to dismantle the entire welfare state apparatus that has created the mob of urban terrorists who can torch a city and, in the same breath, demand their rights.

Thomas Fleming, Chronicles, July 1992

Guns in New Jersey

The people of New Jersey lost to the National Rifle Association and its New Jersey-affiliate, the Coalition of New Jersey Sportsmen. Twice Governor Jim Florio has introduced legislation placing a ban on *assault* weapons, and twice the legislature voted to repeal the measure. The Governor’s vetoes of the repeals have also been overridden twice.

Republican Assemblyman Robert J. Martin has charged that special interest groups, specifically the NRA and the Coalition of New Jersey Sportsmen, had pressured him to vote against the ban on guns. The gun lobby, which has donated more than \$360,000 to lawmakers in the last three years, has threatened that Martin—a five term Assemblyman—will face a battle in the primaries should he vote in ways the NRA considers inappropriate.

The New York Times, August 11, 1992

No Rights for Homosexuals?

In November, voters in Oregon will decide whether or not to annul the civil rights of homosexuals.

State Ballot 9 is a citizen-initiated measure that would require the state government to discourage homosexuality actively by teaching that it is a moral offense similar to pedophilia, sadism, and masochism. The

text states in part:

State, regional and local governments and their departments, agencies and other entities, including specifically the State Department of Higher Education and the public schools, shall assist in setting a standard for Oregon's youth that recognizes homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism as abnormal, wrong, unnatural, and perverse and that these behaviors are to be discouraged and avoided.

Lon Mabon, who heads a conservative group that promotes the measure, freely acknowledges that the initiative would discriminate against homosexuals, giving employers the right to dismiss employees merely because they are gay, and enabling landlords to evict tenants because of their sexual preference. Portland has an ordinance that prohibits such steps, but under the suggested state measure, the ordinance would be overturned.

Many local newspapers and organizations, including the Catholic Church, oppose the measure.

Associated Press Reports

**Anti-Semitism on the Rise
Knoxville, Tennessee:**

A group of Skinheads harassed and threatened, as well as physically attacked, a local store, its employees, and its Jewish owner. Anti-Semitic materials have appeared on a bulletin board in the store, a rock has been hurled through the store window with a note—embellished with a swastika—that said, "Don't let Jew bastards run the country," anti-Semitic graffiti was painted on the store's front door and a molotov cocktail was thrown.

Southern Connecticut:

At Southern Connecticut State University in 1991, rap "Professor" Griff devoted twenty minutes of his lecture to an anti-Semitic diatribe, including the accusation that Jewish doctors infected black babies with AIDS.

These are just two examples of the rise in anti-Semitic behavior. According to a recent study published by the Anti-Defamation League, more anti-Semitic incidents were reported in 1991 than in the 13-year history of their annual audit. The 1,879 reported anti-Semitic incidents surpass the previous year's 1,685, an increase of more than 11 percent.

Incidents involving “harassment, threats, and assaults” increased by over 25 percent from 1990. In fact, anti-Semitic behavior increased in almost every category except Skinhead-related incidents. The study credits this decline to “effective law enforcement action at the federal, state, and local levels against violent neo-Nazi Skinhead activity.”

1991 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, *Anti-Defamation League*

From the Libertarian Corner

A Right to Bare?

Customers of John Hayes’ hot dog stands this summer may have been getting more than they bargained for...or less, depending on your viewpoint. Hayes’ scantily-clad hot dog pushers, a.k.a. “Bikini Weenie” sellers, have the Yonkers community in a boil over standards of attire. Vincenza A. Restiano, the City Council President, wanted to have the sellers cover a bit more. Feminists are also agitated about the exploitation of those women involved in the controversial hot dog selling business.

James Cirrincione, a member of the National Center for Men, is one of a small group who disagree with the Yonkers community. Cirrincione and company argue that it is their fundamental right to view these bikini-clad vendors unencumbered. “We don’t want...the City Council telling us where to look and what to look at.”

The New York Times, *August 1, 1992*

A Market for Kidneys?

The Kidney Foundation is considering proposals to offer organ

donors financial incentives as a way of replenishing the nation's transplantable organ supply. Although federal law prohibits the direct sale of human organs, proposals under consideration include having recipient families pay the donor's funeral bills or granting a Social Security payroll deduction to the donor's survivors. Even financial consultants are getting in the act—they are discussing a “futures” market for transplantable organs.

However, the Kidney Foundation worries that while the bonus may lure some donors, it may repel those who would donate voluntarily. The Foundation and the United Network for Organ Sharing plan to conduct a survey of public attitudes to proposals aimed at addressing the organ shortage, including offering financial incentives.

reason, *June 1992*

The Nanny State

In Los Angeles, at least three cops who witnessed the notorious videotaped beating of a black motorist last March have filed for worker's compensation, claiming that they suffered anxiety and stress.

Time, August 12, 1991

From the Communitarian Corner

Negative Campaigning, Japanese-Style

Bob Edwards, host:...One of the big differences between politics American-style and the Japanese version is the art of campaigning. T.R. Reid is Tokyo bureau chief for the *Washington Post*. No bus caravans in Japan, Tom?

T.R. Reid reporting: Not too many bus caravans. You only have two people in jeans with their wives. What you do is you get in the back of a truck. You have to wear white gloves. You wear a white sash with your name across it. Everybody does this. And you stand in the truck and give your speech. This is how you

campaign.

Edwards: And there's never any negative campaigning, right?

Reid: There never has been. There's not really TV ads. There are not many ads. There aren't many newspaper ads. It's sort of like the kind of do-gooder reformers want to do it in America. You know, on this plan: We're going to get rid of all the negative ads. We're not going to sell candidates like cereal boxes anymore. We're going to give everybody 10 minutes free on TV and they have to talk about issues. This is what happens in Japan. And guess what? It's really boring...[but] this time there was a negative ad.

Edwards: OK, what about it?

Reid: Well, it was only negative by Japanese standards. For me watching it, it was almost totally inscrutable. You want me to tell you about this ad?

Edwards: Oh, please.

Reid: Here's the head of the Socialist Party, Japan's biggest party. He's walking down the street on Japan's Capitol Hill, and this big black limo comes up and it's Miyazawa, the prime minister, the head of the party that Tanabe's against. And the head of the Socialists says, "Oh, hello Miyazawasan." And the voice from the limo says, "Tanabesan, can I give you a ride?" To which Tanabe answers, "No, I'm walking. Why don't you walk with me?" The Miyazawa voice says, "I'm in a hurry." That's the end of the commercial.

Edwards: Well, I'm shocked.

Reid: Is that a negative ad or what? Now the reason this is controversial and two of the five commercial networks here refused to run this ad is because they said the name Miyazawasan. And if you mention the other guy by name, I mean, my goodness, come on, this is really going too far.

National Public Radio/MORNING EDITION, *July 27, 1992*

God Neither Republican nor Democrat

In an effort to remove God from the presidential race, religious groups running the gamut from Catholic to Protestant to Jewish have issued declarations disapproving of the use of religion in the political campaign. All groups assert that any one party claiming God's favor is blasphemy.

"We need to be very clear that God belongs to no one side, for we believe we all belong to God," reads a statement issued by 23 church

leaders, including members of the National Council of Churches.

People for the American Way, a public-interest group, likewise declared: “No campaign should claim to have God on its side supporting its candidate, platform, or policy agenda. God is neither a Republican nor a Democrat.”

These assertions were sparked in large part by President Bush’s remark that “...the other party took words to put together a platform but left out three simple letters: G-O-D.”

Associated Press Reports

Voluntary but Routine HIV-Testing

In order to slow the spread of HIV-infection, a group of doctors has suggested a program of routine, voluntary testing of hospital patients for the virus. The doctors propose a national strategy of HIV-testing focused on hospitals that have a preponderance of HIV- and AIDS-related cases. Dr. Robert S. Janssen and colleagues from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), have targeted certain demographic and clinical areas because they are believed to be in the most need of immediate medical attention and AIDS counseling. The recommendation is based on data from thousands of hospitals. It shows that if the testing program is adopted, 110,000 infections could be detected this year.

The testing program could bring about a significant rise in the number of HIV-cases that are detected early on. Proponents of the measure argue that early identification of the virus benefits carriers because they can begin medical treatment sooner, and that it benefits the community because awareness of the disease can guard against infecting others. In an editorial that appeared in *The Journal*, Dr. Thomas C. Quinn of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases wrote: “With all the improvements in survival and quality of life for HIV-infected persons, it is imperative that patients be given the opportunity to be routinely counseled and tested for HIV.”

A number of health care officials have voiced concern over the proposed testing, citing that the program would subject many people in low-risk categories to testing and warrant unnecessary costs. The CDC believes that as more information is gathered the test range can be narrowed to include only those groups in which chance of infection is

high. Dr. Roy Widdus, Executive Director of the National Commission on AIDS, is cautious about the program, saying that the plan "is a defensible part of a big strategy if it is handled correctly."

The New England Journal of Medicine, *August 13, 1992*

The New York Times, *August 13, 1992*

Family-Leave Bill

The Senate and House passed a family-leave bill which will require employers to grant workers unpaid family and medical leave. The measure stipulates that companies with over 50 employees provide workers up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave and continued insurance coverage. Senate Majority Leader George J. Mitchell (D-Maine) endorsed the bill, declaring: "This legislation will strengthen families. Those who believe in families should support this legislation."

The bill's fate will be decided by President George Bush.

The New York Times, *August 12, 1992*

Mayor of Baltimore Endorses the Communitarian Platform

Baltimore Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke, reelected to the position in 1991, has recently endorsed The Communitarian Platform. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Mr. Schmoke has served on President Carter's White House Domestic Policy staff. Elected Mayor in 1987, he has expanded literacy programs, placed a priority on education, and has launched major initiatives in housing,

economic development and public safety. He has also successfully implemented policies to improve the participation of minority and women

The NIMBY Phenomenon: Selfish Interest or a Means to Discussion?

Denis L. Brion, *Essential Industry and the NIMBY Phenomenon*
New York: Quorum Books, 1991. 220 pp.

Reviewed by Richard C. Collins

Garret Hardin's well-known essay on "the tragedy of the commons" explains how the rational pursuit of private economic advantage can lead to collective destruction. Each owner of cattle finds it reasonable to add his herd to the number grazing on the commons despite the certainty that if others do the same their combined behavior will destroy the resource that sustains them. The absence of any form of socially and politically acceptable mutual restraint among the owners produces the outcome.

Hardin argues that the answer to the problem lies not in a technical solution—for example, a new grazing policy—but in a change in human values and behavior. A new ethic is required to deflect the inevitable progression towards disaster.

A "not-in-my-backyard" (NIMBY) reaction is a similar phenomenon. NIMBYs represent a category of problems in which a localized community is able to frustrate or paralyze the broader state or national community in its goal to provide for the presumed greater good. Public officials, industries, environmental organizations, planners, and political scientists have all identified NIMBYs as a critical factor in the inability to obtain sites for landfills, energy plants, low-income housing, prisons, roads, even urban parks, if such facilities are perceived to be a threat by those who will live in their shadows.

Brion's book is both a case-study of the Massachusetts Hazardous Waste Facility Siting Act—a proposed technical solution to the im-

passes created by NIMBY opposition to essential facilities—and a discursive and eclectic set of essays on the perennial political and constitutional issue of when individual citizens should be compensated for government actions which impose high costs in pursuit of diffuse benefits for the community.

The Massachusetts Act was considered to be an almost ideal model to deal with the NIMBY phenomenon by encouraging win/win outcomes. Its bywords were information, negotiation, and compensation. Rather than deal with proposed hazardous waste sites on an *ad hoc* basis, the state would actively solicit proposals. After preliminary evaluation, the proposed sites would be subjected to public hearings. For those found to be “environmentally safe and technologically sound,” a newly-formed Site Safety Council would oversee siting negotiations between the developer and the community.

A key innovation of the Act was the provision for the creation of a Local Assessment Committee, which would be assigned the responsibility of developing a package “to promote the fiscal welfare of said community through special benefits and compensation.” By establishing a mechanism that recognized and represented the needs and concerns of the targeted community, the Act intended to move beyond the zero-sum situation in which only one side—the local community or the broader state-wide community—could emerge as a victor. Successful negotiations would make both sides winners. The broader community would be able to site a needed facility without protracted conflict and delay. In return, the targeted local community would be compensated with direct aid, increased public services, or other benefits specifically designed to satisfy locally defined needs. If the negotiations between the parties were unsuccessful, the state could require binding arbitration.

Brion shows, however, that the law failed. In six different communities, all of the proposals were rejected or withdrawn before negotiations had even begun; he describes the process that emerged as more “like a melee than a two-party negotiation.” He maintains that the law failed to produce negotiations because the neighbors concluded that political opposition was more likely to achieve their goals—and he agrees with their assessment.

His solution is to have state governments establish “special districts” with authority to negotiate on behalf of communities that are being considered as sites. Such special districts, which would be similar in concept to those that provide services such as water and street improvements, would have absolute property rights, and thus the right to veto any government requests. That is, the only way a site could be approved is through a negotiated settlement that met the terms of the special district. The Massachusetts Law encouraged the local government to negotiate in good faith because if they did not and an impasse developed, they might lose in the state-imposed arbitration of the conflict. Brion’s proposal, in effect, requires the developer or the state to pay the special district its price or move to another site.

Although such a mechanism is intended to create a “community,” Brion’s “special district” proposal is not a true communitarian response. Brion’s proposal rests upon the primacy of individual property rights and ignores the concept of social responsibility—of balancing individual property rights against the greater community’s benefits. The “special district’s” individual property owners are not expected to sacrifice anything to the greater community; they are not expected to consider the common good, nor are citizens motivated to examine the necessity that lies behind the proposed facility.

Brion’s proposal would serve some constructive purposes. It would have the effect of making waste producers and the state determine how much they were willing to spend for a waste-disposal site. Because the community would receive compensation, developers would presumably try to find the lowest-priced neighborhood that would also meet government standards for risk. The cost of siting such unwanted facilities might also cause the producers to consider recycling, waste reduction, and perhaps substitutions for hazardous materials, since these alternatives might be to their benefit.

But it is not clear whether what Brion is protecting is a community or merely an aggregate of property claims. Rather than a *technical* solution such as Brion proposes, I agree with Garret Hardin’s focus on the need for a new *ethic*. Giving one of the parties involved in negotiations the right of an absolute veto precludes the positive effect of NIMBY: the discussion of how to deal with such undesirable facilities. Out of the local community’s self-interested protest emerge new ideas about how

to treat the greater problem of waste disposal and management. NIMBY protestors give voice to motives and purposes that are not limited to their own neighborhoods. These can and should be nurtured.

ESPECIALLY NOTED

Martin and Susan Tolchin, *The Selling of National Security*. (New York: Knopf, 1992). 448 pp.

Professor Susan Tolchin and *New York Times* reporter Martin Tolchin raise serious questions about how far our country can go in allowing foreigners to gain control over industries vital to our national security.

James Lincoln Collier, *The Rise of Selfishness in America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). 308 pp.

At the core of Collier's thesis is a criticism of the rise of individualism, both economic and social, liberal and conservative, and its role in the disintegration of our communities. Collier's socio-historic study of selfishness offers an alternative interpretation of the Victorian Age, one which questions the traditional stereotypes (sanctimonious, prudish); and, instead paints a picture of self-discipline and self-sacrifice, beneficial to the common good.

Lawrence E. Harrison, *Who Prospers? How Cultural Values Shape Economic and Political Success*. (New York: Basic Books, 1992). 280 pp.

Harrison's "culture is destiny" accounting of the relative success or failure of certain ethnic groups, nations, and communities reintroduces the role of values in determining the prosperity of certain groups. His study focuses on the importance of such cultural traits as a strong ethical code, a positive work ethic, a commitment to education, and a sense of community.

Alan Peshkin, *The Play of Ethnicity in School and in the Community*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). 304 pp.

Peshkin discusses the role that minority ethnicity plays in urban America. He examines the lives of Mexicans, African-Americans, Filipinos, and Sicilians in a town called "Riverview" and in its local high school. Peshkin proposes that the success of Riverview high school is not academic but "social." This success he attributes to the ability of the students to relate to one another, form social and cultural bonds, in a community setting that is racially and ethnically diverse.

Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992). 242 pp.

Scott's historical work documents the existence of women's voluntary societies, or "miniature republics," where civic responsibility and charity were the order of the day. She chronicles the development of pre-Civil War associations of widow relief and orphan groups, to Civil War relief groups, to societies dedicated to temperance, anti-slavery, moral reform and women's rights. Scott's study offers insight into a tradition of community activism and nationwide organization that is not normally seen.

Bill Moyers, *Listening to America with Bill Moyers: Two Episodes Examine Efforts to Create the "The Good Society."* (New York: Public Affairs Television Inc., 1992). August 4 and 11.

For these two broadcasts, Robert Bellah's seminal book *The Good Society* serves as a foundation for discussion of two American cities that are each striving for a better society. Part I examines community activism in Atlanta, Georgia; former President Jimmy Carter and Mayor Maynard Jackson are among those interviewed. Part II focuses on Los Angeles, California, where schools, churches and grassroots organizations highlight some of their approaches to restoring communities in economically devastated areas. To order videocassettes call: 1-800-328-PBS1. To order transcripts call: 1-303-831-9000.

Community Bulletin

Economics and Society

The Fifth Annual Conference of *The Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE)* will take place in New York City, March 26-28, 1993. The theme is "Incentives and Values as Foundations of Social Order." Featured speakers include John Kenneth Galbraith and Robert Heilbroner. To learn more, write: SASE, 714F Gelman Library, 2130 H St., NW, Washington, DC 20052. Tel: (202) 994-8167. Fax: (202) 994-1639.

Teaching Ethics

Not for Sale: Ethics in the American Workplace is a new educational video designed to prepare young people for the kinds of ethical challenges they are likely to face in their first job. To learn more about this exciting new film, or to order *Not for Sale* for your school or business, contact Fred Close, Ph.D., Director of Educational Products, *Ethics Resource Center*, 1120 G St., NW, Suite 200, Wash-

ington, DC 20005.

Diversity & Politics

The 98th National Conference on Governance, "The Diverse Society: Can it Work?", will be held in Los Angeles on Nov. 12-14, 1992. The conference features speakers Angela Blackwell of the Oakland-based *Urban Strategy Council* and US Representative Maxine Waters. For more information contact: National Civic League, 1445 Market St., Suite 300, Denver, CO 80202. Tel: (303) 571-4343. Fax: (303) 571-4404.

Communitarian Network

Be a part of a movement of individuals and organizations joined together to shore up our moral, social and political environment. For more information or to join, write: *The Communitarian Network*, 714 Gelman Library, 2130 H St., NW, Washington, DC 20052. Tel: (202) 994-7997. Fax: (202) 994-1639.

Toward the Good Society

The *Responsive Community* bulletin provides community groups, organizations, and individuals with an opportunity to reach others in the community with news of events, publications, etc. in the New World Order of general interest. To use *RC Bulletin*, place The *Responsive Community*, 714 Berkeley Drive, NW, 2130 and Street, NW, Washington, DC 20052. Tel: (202) 994-7997. Fax: (202) 994-1639. (The cost is \$1.50 per word, with a minimum of 20 words per entry. If four or more entries are ordered, the cost is only \$1.25 per word. Payment must accompany all orders.)

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authors of *The Good Soci-*

Community vs. Public?

A moral viewpoint stressing “both individual human dignity and the social dimension of human existence,” the centerpiece of The Communitarian Platform, is a helpful addition to the public dialogue in our time. Yet I have disagreements with The Platform as a foundation for a *politics* that can make a dent in the current disengagement of Americans from public affairs.

A language of community, even broadly and inclusively understood, still suffers the defects that the Federalists discerned in the position of anti-Federalists. The invocation of shared values, human interdependence, and civic virtue has some important social uses, but it is not an effective basis for politics in an “extensive republic” of great diversity and scope. Indeed, I see the conflation of politics with communal morality as a mistake that runs throughout the work of John Dewey and other 20th-century communitarian thinkers.

What we need today is the reemergence of an understanding of politics whose crux is the remedying of public problems, a politics that is different from either the communitarianism of the anti-Federalists or the institutionalism of the Federalists. “Problem-solving” should not be understood in a narrow fashion here—it is the public process by which people become citizens through engagement in the complex, conflictual, messy work of creating their larger environments. This means attention to the meanings of “public” and a long-term perspective on the course of actions. It involves learned political skills and concepts.

The anti-Federalist tradition of moral communitarianism in which I would locate The Communitarian Platform has a long and rich pedigree with many practical examples: major parts of our religious traditions; service organizations like the Rotary, Elks, Kiwanis, Junior League, the Masons, and so forth.

The practice of citizen problem-solving represents a different, if buried, strand of politics, running from figures like Benjamin Franklin through Jane Addams, Mary Follett, Reinhold Niebuhr, Saul Alinsky,

Ella Baker, and Bayard Rustin, whose call to move “from protest to politics” is still largely unheeded by the advocacy efforts that emerged from the 1960s. This politics also has had many real-world embodiments, ranging from 4-H and the neighborhood school tradition, to urban ethnic machines, the community-based unions of the New Deal, the Workmen’s Circle, and the Citizenship Schools of the civil rights movement. All involved people in the rough-and-tumble, gritty, morally complex problem-solving activities of the public world. Indeed, the crisis in politics in recent years stems, in no small measure, from the collapse of the infrastructure of politics, mediating institutions like those groups which connect people’s everyday lives to the larger world of public affairs.

There are a number of similarities in communitarianism and public problem-solving, the two mainstream traditions of civic action that I identify in American history. Both implicitly share a critique of the deracinated citizen associated with institutional politics. Both address middle America in a way that the utopian/millennial/left wing strand of politics that resurfaced in the late 1960s and continues in the language of “political correctness” and much of political advocacy fails to do. Both differ from the intimate, therapeutic vocabulary that characterizes the modern service apparatus (though I would argue that a therapeutic language tends to color community-service involvements, in a way that communitarians have not addressed).

Finally, practical democratic politics certainly has normative overtones. Questions of character, the moral dimensions of political actions, and the ends of politics—reflected especially in the submerged “commonwealth” tradition of jurisprudence and the purposes of governmental action—are important to reinvigorate in particular. But today, such renewal of the larger commonwealth dimensions of politics cannot be very effectively accomplished except through a political process by means of which citizens forge the connections between their particular interests and the public weal on their own terms.

The communitarian tradition sees the formation of civic character in too one-dimensional a fashion, cultivated simply in localized settings like the family, or religious and voluntary groups. “Vital and thorough attachments are bred only in the intimacy of an intercourse which of necessity is restricted in range,” argued John Dewey in *The Public and Its*

Problems. “Democracy must begin at home, and its home is the neighborly community.”

Such a perspective holds insights. But it overlooks the specificity of a larger, turbulent, practical politics that is transcommunal. The craft of practical remedy in larger public settings produces its own skills, attitudes, and “virtues,” traits essential in the repair or reintegration of the communal itself. Today, in a culture surfeited with therapeutic intimacy, civic education especially needs to stress a repertoire of public, political themes such as practical work with others one might disagree with or even dislike; the dynamics of power; accountability; and understanding others’ self-interests.

Thus, our perspectives clearly have different central emphases (morality versus politics), different axial concepts (community versus public), and different aims (moral interdependence versus public problem-solving). What I call the tradition of citizen politics is more practically oriented, much less idealistic in tone, more cognizant of the positive benefits of acknowledging self-interests (complexly, not narrowly, understood) in politics. In my experience, a sense of civic obligation and a deepened understanding of human reciprocity are more frequently the by-product of effective, practical politics than its premise or goal.

Harry C. Boyte
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A Communitarian Response

Boyte’s valuable commentary assumes that the community The Communitarian Platform and other communitarian writings refers to is the local one. Instead, communitarians see community as a set of Chinese nesting boxes, in which smaller communities nestle in more encompassing ones. Moreover, we see community in the moral voice that people use to appeal to one another, a voice that is carried by a variety of communities.

When we speak about American society, the question arises whether it is simply a larger and more complex community, one that encom-

passes millions of individuals; or a community *of* communities, with social bonds and a moral voice of its own. This voice does not oppose, indeed may welcome, subcultures on most matters from religious observation to cultural tastes, but requires them to unite in support of a limited number of core shared values such as commitment to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, democracy, and mutual tolerance. Indeed, I suggest that recent experiences in other countries, from the former USSR to India, show that when the society-wide community is weak, democracy is either severely challenged or unable to thrive. That is, effective politics *presumes* viable community. Aggregates of atomized, unbounded individuals, masses, are fodder for tyrannies.

Furthermore, much of what Boyte calls politics is actually the work of communities and their institutions. It may seem merely a semantic matter whether one calls mediating institutions or voluntary associations “the infrastructure of politics” or the “expressions of community.” The term used has, though, one significance: as important as politics is, one should not use terms that make it seem even more encompassing than it already is. We should note that community action, such as members of ethnic groups helping one another, businesses volunteering to help schools, and so on, may well contain much more “problem solving” than political processes aimed at affecting the course of government.

In short, we need individuals who act as community members and not simply as self-centered monads. We require their membership not merely to make them better citizens, not only to make politics work better, but also because much joy and “problem solving” lies in the non-governmental, non-political, social realm of action within the community, by the community, through its myriad of non-political institutions.

Amitai Etzioni

This is Part I of the Dialogue between Harry C. Boyte and Amitai Etzioni.

Health Insurance: Community-Rating or Experience-Rating?

MARK A. HALL

We must choose between two fundamentally opposed views of health insurance: community-rating or experience-rating. Health insurance originally followed the community-rating model. Blue Cross sold the same coverage to any purchaser within a given geographic area for a price that reflected an average risk for the entire community of subscribers; 20-year-old triathletes paid the same rate as 60-year-olds who smoked a pack a day. But community-rating is endangered as commercial life insurance companies now offer lower prices to predictably-healthier groups of employees based on their previous years' claims, a practice known as "experience-rating." Blue Cross was forced to respond by categorizing its community rates according to age, or in many locations, to abandon community-rating altogether. The government is now asked to accept responsibility for those who could afford no health insurance, primarily the elderly, poor, and disabled.

Community-rating embodies a social view of the function of insurance, which sees the best form of insurance as that which pools risks across the largest segment of society. Experience-rating embodies a private conception modeled on traditional casualty insurance (fire, automobile, and life). It follows the libertarian logic of the marketplace by holding that the ideal form of insurance is that which most accurately (given the costs of information) prices the risk to each individual subscriber. Under the private model, more health risk information is better; under the social model, risk information is irrelevant since everyone is covered regardless of health status.

For several decades, we crafted a workable compromise among these models: public insurance for the highest-risk groups (those covered by Medicare and Medicaid), commercial insurance for the lowest-risk (employee groups), and modified community-rating for those in-between. Now, with government budgets in the red and employees finding it difficult to afford the spiraling costs of health care, state and federal lawmakers increasingly yearn for a return to earlier days when community-rating prevailed for all private health insurance, as one solution short of nationalizing the entire system. Several states have enacted community-rating requirements of some form (most recently, New York and Vermont), and community-rating is a key element in the major Democratic health-reform bills now before Congress, which would compress the standard deviation in health insurance prices from the median to as little as 10 percent.

Opponents of community-rating argue that the private model embodies important values of efficiency and fairness. In one nationally-placed advertisement, the commercial insurance industry labeled as “unfair to everyone” any form of rating that fails to treat equally policyholders with the same risk. Should a recent college graduate working in the nonprofit sector be forced to subsidize the care of elderly millionaires? Accurate risk-rating is fair because no one should have to pay for another person’s poor health habits, and it promotes efficiency by creating an incentive to minimize risk and hold down expenses. Thus, those who practice safe sex or abstain feel they should not have to pay for others’ AIDS treatment, and setting premiums according to past claims experience encourages subscribers to seek out less costly forms of care. This view is captured in state insurance laws that would, for instance, deem it “unfair discrimination” to charge identical life insurance premiums to a 60-year-old and a 20-year-old.

Community-rating proponents respond that this libertarian ethic “confuses actuarial fairness with moral fairness.” Philosopher Norman Daniels observes that other theories of justice require society to care for the victims of nature’s misfortunes. We are born with genetic defects, trapped in environmental influences we cannot change, and struck with random accidents and infectious illnesses. It is hardly “fair” to say to a young mother who leads a healthy lifestyle but is genetically at risk for breast cancer that others are free to capitalize on her unavoidable misery. Moreover, since most health risks are not self-imposed, the efficiency

arguments against community-rating are also weak. Risk-rating produces no improvement of overall societal health for medical risks that are uncontrollable.

Even conceding that society has a strong responsibility to care for the health of its members, community-rating opponents still have several strong contentions, based on social justice and technical efficiency, about how that responsibility is funded. By prohibiting any pricing differentiation, community-rated insurance requires the young to pay more in order to assist the elderly. This hidden subsidy is a form of taxation that perversely charges the most to those who tend to earn the least and who benefit the least—early career workers with no health problems.

There are also trenchant technical arguments that community-rating does not work smoothly in an open market. If all employers are not forced to purchase community-rated health insurance, then those with healthier work forces will simply drop out of the hidden subsidy by paying their employees' health care costs directly. If employers are forced to buy into community-rating by a law that requires them to insure all workers, then some insurers will suffer by having to accept luck-of-the-draw losers—groups whose predictable costs are much higher than the allowable average community rate. Critics justifiably fear that insurers, to limit their exposure, may adopt devious means for minimizing this high-loss business, such as selective marketing (“redlining”), poor claims service, or what is known as “field underwriting”—tacit encouragement of field agents to keep high-risk applications from ever reaching the home office. This occurred with AIDS when some life insurers who were denied the right to test applicants for exposure to HIV began to refuse coverage based on stereotyped judgments of jobs and mannerisms suggesting a gay lifestyle.

Nevertheless, the commercial insurers agree that some limits on weeding out high risks are necessary to meet their obligations to the community and to prevent health insurance from being nationalized altogether, so the debate is primarily over what pricing latitude is tolerable. Some compression of the range in insurance prices is necessary if they are to remain affordable for those with chronic but treatable diseases such as diabetes. On the other hand, some variation is necessary so that subscribers are not tempted to take a free ride on the high

costs of treatment paid by others. Even Blue Cross opposes flat community-rating.

So, in a world of imperfect options, a modified form of community-rating may be the best we can do, at least in the short term. Employers over a certain size (50-100 employees) would be required to purchase insurance at rates that allow only modest variation (10-25 percent) for individual health risk. Smaller employers and self-employed individuals would not be forced to purchase, but if they did, insurers would have to comply with the same pricing restrictions. The hope is that preventing larger employers from self-insuring and bringing group-based economies and internal subsidies to the small end of the market will keep the frayed ends of the private health insurance rope from unraveling any further.

Drawing by Ed Arno; © 1991 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

Modest Measures Toward Moral Education

Being more of an Aristotelian than a Platonist, Ben Wildavsky ["Can You *Not* Teach Morality in Public Schools?" Winter 1991/1992] is not suggesting a drastic or utopian change as a condition of reform. Instead his final remarks point to some modest measures that may be taken by contemporary teachers, such as using literature to teach the Virtues: *Tartuffe*, for example, to inculcate a disdain for hypocrisy, or *Huckleberry Finn* as a way of encouraging kindness and moral courage. Similarly, works by the Founding Fathers can generate discussions of civic virtue. These and other means of moral education were second nature just half-a-century-ago; it is worth remarking on some of the reasons we have fallen away from them.

Wildavsky mentions the fashionable "preoccupation with dilemmas." One may also note the preoccupation with contentious questions of public policy such as abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, and censorship. Though the curriculum certainly has a place for discussions of these issues, taken by themselves, they provide little or no moral sustenance. They tend to give students the idea that there are no uncontroversial moral principles, that all ethical issues are under a cloud of debate. The student begins to believe there are at least two "reasonable" opposing sides to every ethical question.

The focus on public policy also weakens moral education by subtly suggesting that the seat of moral agency is not in the individual but in the institutions of the state. Students get the message that applying ethics to modern life is mainly a question of learning how to be for or against a social or institutional policy. If, for example, elderly people are not being properly treated in the community, we tend to treat this as an issue of public policy and to assign responsibility to the government. The individual's social and familial responsibilities are bypassed or reduced to the responsibility of making the right political choices, voting

for the right candidates who will put effective institutions in place. Students see themselves as having to become “informed citizens” so that they may vote responsibly, but with that, moral responsibility is discharged. This truncated conception of ethical agency and responsibility goes hand in hand with an inflated conception of rights against the government.

Polls show that parents overwhelmingly want moral education in the schools. The extent of dissent can be exaggerated and it comes from marginal quarters. Most parents want the public schools to inculcate honesty, self-discipline, and respect for others. But few schools are doing it.

The elementary schools in Amherst, New York, offer a very straightforward program in character education that would appeal to most parents. Posters there extol virtues like kindness and helpfulness. Students who exhibit good behavior in the cafeteria are rewarded by being invited to sit at “high table” with a tablecloth and flowers. One six-year-old was given an award for having taken a new Korean student under her wing. Sadly, Amherst is an isolated exception. As Wildavsky notes, the parent who wants character education is being forced to abandon the public school system.

*Christina Sommers
Clark University*

Moral Education in Your Community

Teaching in our schools is a value-laden enterprise, whether teachers subscribe to, or shy away from, explicit instruction in moral education. Wildavsky correctly describes the interest and controversy surrounding moral education today, but he stops short. He describes moral education as the responsibility of “them” (the public schools) rather than “us” (the community) and overlooks, by lack of example, how an ever-larger number of US public schools are pursuing moral education.

Over the past five years, the interest in moral education (also called values-education, character-education, and ethics) has grown rapidly at both state and local levels. Within driving distance of Wildavsky’s

example of an affluent suburban high school with “its problems...and ethical failings” is an outstanding values-education program that addresses Wildavsky’s question, “Whose values?” The public schools of Baltimore County, Maryland, forged a broad consensus within the community on the 23 values to be taught in all county schools. Similar programs are springing up across the United States; and though they are not a substitute for the moral modeling provided by schools as institutions, and by the adults working in them, these programs provide teachers with both skills and confidence as moral educators.

Many of today’s teachers, with an average of about 20 years of teaching experience, came of age in the 1960s and 1970s—an era in which old values were questioned, and new ones included not “laying” your beliefs on others. In talking with teachers from East to West, I find some still uncomfortable with explicitly teaching or sanctioning values. These teachers, as well as those entering the field now, will need our support if we want our schools to function as moral communities.

That support requires us to be active citizens on behalf of young people. You can help by taking the following steps in your community:

- Ask your school district superintendent whether and how values are addressed in the curriculum.
- If values are not included in your school’s curriculum, initiate and participate in activities to build a broad community consensus on what values should be taught in schools.
- Vote for school budgets that include training for teachers and school-level leadership in ways to address values at the school and classroom level.
- Support those values in your interactions with schools as a parent or citizen.

For teachers who are unskilled or uncertain in dealing with moral issues in school, a staff development program is necessary. As adults, we are no different from our students in needing information and guidance, time and support, in building new skills. The complex issues inherent in a moral education program are best addressed by planning, training, and sharing with one another.

In the press toward school reform, the teaching of values is sometimes seen as marginal, or is relegated to the status of merely one more

special interest. Through better communication, you can include moral education as a key to developing a responsive community.

Diane G. Berreth
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Common Sense on Morality and Today's Youth

Like most writers on moral education in the schools, Wildavsky makes much of the controversies surrounding this "hot" subject. I wish that I could take him on a walking tour around some American schools, city or suburban, in this final decade of the 20th century.

We would not use up much shoe leather before encountering one or more of the following incidents: A counselor is calling a student's home about some apparently excused absences, only to find that the parent's letters have been forged. A young boy is in the principal's office for threatening his teacher with a knife. Three students are separated from their class after hurling racial epithets at a fourth. A girl is complaining that her locker has been broken into and all her belongings stolen. A small group of boys are huddling in a corner, shielding an exchange of money for drug packets. In the playground, two girls grab a third and punch her in the stomach for flirting with the wrong boy. Throughout the corridors and classrooms, a palpable spirit of disorderliness and disrespect.

Is there a responsible citizen in our society who would not find any of this appalling? Where is the controversy in educating youth away from such behaviors and towards more virtuous ones? Just such guidance is the first and foremost charge for moral education in our schools, and it is a noncontestable one.

Now it is true that this is not the stuff of all the juicy ideological debates on moral education that make for good media stories. Politicians looking for cultural "wedge" issues would rather air their views on abortion, school prayer, cultural diversity, and the other unresolvable dilemmas that are tearing our social fabric apart. In this case as in others, politics and education do not mix.

In order to salvage the moral futures of our troubled youth, we need as a society to express a consensus of shared values rather than a cacophony of ethical discord and confusion. Young people need clear messages about what is right and what is wrong from all the important people in their lives. It helps enormously when the thrust of all the messages guides the child in roughly the same direction. Frances Ianni has called this consensus of values a “youth charter,” and in a study of over 300 American communities, Ianni found it to be a far stronger predictor of youth adaptation than affluence, ethnicity, geography, or any other extraneous variables. On core matters of respect for authority, truth, concern for others—what Orwell called “common decency”—there is no reason for us to withhold such guidance wherever the young are found.

Schools cannot do this alone, of course. Nor, in all cases, can parents. There is an old-world folk saying, something like: “It takes a village to raise a child.” In fact, the acid test of whether there is a community at all is the extent to which moral guidance for the young is shared among all who come in contact with them. Sadly, ethnographers have noted the decline of precisely such mentoring in neighborhoods all over our contemporary landscape.

As one component in a matrix of influences, schools must assume their part of the responsibility. Not that every values controversy that comes along need be dragged into the classroom: many moral issues are best left to the family, the church, even the peer group. Still, the school must take on all that resides in its territory, which is in itself a world enough of moral concerns.

Moral breaches and ethical conflicts arise spontaneously with stunning regularity. To use such incidents in a constructive way is an essential component of good teaching, though not a widely recognized one in our society. In one recent survey, new teachers reported that ethically-charged incidents were the largest unexpected part of their job and the part that they felt least prepared to deal with. Beyond spontaneous incidents, the curriculum provides endless opportunities for teachers to affirm the community’s moral principles, to project positive, unambiguous values regarding truthfulness, fairness, and respect. They can and must enforce rigorous standards of conduct; and they must not tolerate indecency or dishonesty.

As for the old debate between habit versus reflection, this again is a useless controversy. Naturally, we want young people to act well as a matter of course. Dellatre and others are right in maintaining that the moral life is built primarily on good habits. We want young people to resist immoral behavior in the same automatic way that most people refrain, without hesitation, from robbing a helpless beggar for easy gain. But surely reflection, when grounded in good values, can support rather than deflect the habitual moral response. When habit and reflection marry, sustained moral commitment becomes possible. It is this commitment and no less that we must encourage in our young.

*William Damon
Brown University*

A Liberal/Communitarian Approach to Moral Education

American schools are public spaces full of people who conceive their lives through concepts acquired in diverse private communities. Since values are part of the fabric of institutions and are learned through participation in their practices, value neutrality is no more a solution to moral diversity in schools than holding one's breath is a solution to air pollution. Thus, in response to Wildavsky, I would posit this as the central question of moral education: *How can schools transmit such values as form the basis of civic life and public discourse while also recognizing that the moral resources of private communities are essential to a full and rich life?*

In a society whose members come from varied moral communities, the civic community must be "thin." We need such notions as due process, tolerance, honesty, respect for law, and equal protection of the law. These concepts inform us about our responsibilities to those outside of our immediate communities. They provide a moral basis whereby people who are different can live together in peace. They do not, however, inform us of the nature of a good life, they do not enlighten us about our relationship to God or the salvation of our souls, and they do not tell us who we are or who are ours. To answer such questions in public space would mean the end of peace and cooperation. It invites the violation of

the consciences and heritages of those whose views fail to achieve dominance. To regard the public ethic as a “full-service morality” is a formula for strife and disaster.

Nevertheless, the questions that the civic ethic cannot address are real. One cannot live as a human being without addressing them. Moreover, since the answers to such questions are central to understanding who we are and who are ours, loyalty to the civic ethic will be influenced by how the private side of life is treated. If we find ourselves marginalized, absent, or abused in public space, we are unlikely to display any great loyalty to the public morality.

The conclusion is that schools must promote the public ethic, but they must also find ways to give voice to the private side of life.

These claims have deep roots in the liberal tradition. They are Lockean in that they seek civil peace by dividing society into public and private space. However, they are closer to the Locke of *A Letter Concerning Toleration* than the Locke of the *Second Treatise of Civil Government*. The Locke of the *Second Treatise* sees society as the result of a contract between free individuals, but the Locke of the *Letter* sees people as members of religious communities, deeply committed, but deeply divided. This Locke seeks civil peace by arguing that the functions of the state do not include care for the welfare of souls. This Locke gives Christians Christian reason for toleration. This Locke argues that faith cannot be coerced and cites the example of Jesus. This Locke does not envision a state of contracting moral atoms, but a limited state in which people live in private communities.

Public schools must do likewise. They cannot be full-service moral communities. However, they can be places which respect, affirm, and legitimate the voices of private communities. Since schools cannot be full-service moral communities, they must recognize that moral competence for students requires that they master moral resources that public schools cannot provide. They must also recognize that loyalty to the public ethic will significantly depend on the adequacy of the moral resources children acquire in their private communities. If they are to have reasons for loyalty to the public ethic, they are likely to find these reasons in their private communities. If they are to possess the character required to live justly in public space, they will need to acquire suitable virtues in home, church, or community. If the school disrespects or

marginalizes these moral resources or crowds them out of the lives of children, it will undermine its capacity even to promote the public ethic.

Must the school give passive voice to all moral sentiments? Need it affirm the public ethic, but practice relativism about the private sphere? The answer must be no. An education without criticism is not worthy of a free people. Public schools can provide for two forms of criticism. They can be a source of “thin” criticism. Here they can emulate Locke’s strategy. Locke does not engage the ultimate truth of religion, but he does seek to help believers find reasons in their faith why they should tolerate their neighbor’s errors. He helps Christians reinterpret their faith so as to find in it reasons why they should accept the public ethic, and he urges them to reject constructions of their faith that undermine tolerance. So may public schools help their students to interpret their various private moralities while leaving the question of their ultimate reasonableness aside.

Schools may also provide forums for “thick” criticism. They can do this by giving voice to the multitude of moral perspectives and to criticism of them. Unhappily, Americans often see criticism as a form of disrespect. In fact, it is mindless sentimental relativism that sees all moral views as equally valid that disrespects all views equally by making them all equally arbitrary. A genuine respect for diverse moralities would proceed by taking their claims to truth seriously enough to subject them to examination. A suitable moral education must, therefore, perform the essential task of any good education—it must put important affirmations on the table for debate. Is this approach liberalism or communitarianism? It is both. It seeks a conception of society that sees it as home for diverse, thick, moral communities. It recognizes that thick communities are essential for a full and rich human life, but also that none of these thick communities can claim to be the moral basis of the state or its schools.

*Kenneth Strike
Cornell University*

In mid-1991, Centel Corporation with support from The Joyce Foundation embarked on a three-phase inquiry into the problems facing the nation's political system. In the third and final phase of the Public Accountability Project, Lawrence N. Hansen discussed with 20 distinguished journalists the public's discontent with the press' performance in helping to create an informed citizenry. The following is an extract from his findings and conclusions.

What's Wrong with the Press?

LAWRENCE N. HANSEN

CONCLUSION 1

In reviving and sustaining the conversation of democracy, the nation's mainstream news media are not destined to play an important role. In time, they may become largely irrelevant. The news media's declining influence is an outgrowth of a conscious decision, put in place over a long period of time, to provide citizens with far less information than they need to navigate confidently in a democratic society. Nothing short of a massive change in the news media's values, attitudes, and operations will change the situation, and given the forces at work today within and outside the industry, an epiphany does not appear likely.

Reason: The news media are first and foremost in the business of business, not in the business of civic improvement. News organizations, like other for-profit organizations, are sensitive to the laws of supply and demand, and their daily news offerings to the public reflect this reality. There are exceptions to this rule, but very few. As one reporter told us, "There are only a half dozen news organizations that care even in the slightest about their public responsibilities." In short, the news media

The Responsive Community publishes documents the editors deem of interest to readers without necessarily endorsing them or their implications.

are not the League of Women Voters.

Reason: Journalism, unlike medicine, engineering, or barbering, is not a profession with well-defined and enforceable standards and rules. “Journalism,” we were reminded, “is a very messy and plural craft that does not have standards, does not want standards, and thinks standards interfere with the First Amendment.” Therefore, every unwritten understanding among journalists relating to accuracy, objectivity, balance, and public responsibility carries with it a myriad of exceptions, “outs,” and allowances. No other institution in this country is blessed with a comparable grant of protected authority and freedom or is less obliged to exercise them responsibly, and that is a large part of the problem.

Reason: The news business is plagued by a host of bad habits, practices, and biases. The press’ own characterizations of what passes for public affairs news these days illustrates the seriousness of the problem. “Herd instinct.” “Pack journalism.” “Gotcha journalism.” “McNuggets-of-McNews journalism.” “Gang-bang journalism.” “Horse-race journalism.” “Lowest-common-denominator journalism.” While everyone in the business acknowledges these shortcomings, most journalists doubt that anything practically can be done to curb them. Because of the competitive nature of the news business and the absence of binding professional standards, there are virtually no incentives to modify objectionable behavior.

Reason: The press does not enjoy the confidence of either the public or the political community and, therefore, cannot possibly serve as a sturdy and reliable bridge between them. The public’s distrust of the media rivals its distrust of politicians. Most citizens see the media as a sprawling power center that has its own axes to grind, that is out of touch with the concerns of ordinary people, that is unaccountable to anyone for its behavior, and that, in William Greider’s words, “speaks less reliably on their behalf.” In the historic “us-versus-them” divide within American society, lamented one journalist, big media—like big government, big business, and big labor—find themselves increasingly on the “them” side of the ledger. The time when “power of the press” connoted something good and positive in the public mind has largely vanished. Ward Just, a former editorial writer for *The Washington Post*, has observed that the press itself is to blame for its fall from grace. “This is what’s going on: The fourth branch of government, powerful, numerous, smug, prurient, protected by its own constitutional amendment, is behaving like a gang of arrogant rich kids at an out-of-town saloon, where anything goes and no one pros-

ecutes. And if anyone complains, you blame the process...”

Reason: Even under more favorable conditions, it is unrealistic to expect the news media to provide citizens with all or even most of the political information they need, when they want it, and in forms they can use. As political parties and the educational system continue to atrophy, the news media have assumed “unfamiliar functions” that many journalists admit they “don’t perform very well.” The failure of parties to educate voters and screen candidates, for example, has created a vacuum the public expects the press to fill. The news media have bitten off more than they can possibly chew. “The parties once knew who their candidates were,” one reporter explained. “They were not inclined to let a kook, a womanizer, [or] a drunk who couldn’t be trusted get nominated. They screened candidates. That mechanism is not in place any more. We have been thrust into that role. Hence, character stories. Hence, Gennifer Flowers.”

CONCLUSION 2

Journalistic handwringing and critical post-mortems of the sort that typically occur after every election campaign have not and will not alter the aforementioned realities. The news business is a captive of its own ingrained “habits, folkways, conventions, and peculiarities,” and it is inherently incapable of shaking them off. One reporter summed up the views of other colleagues this way: “To expect the media to sit up suddenly and say we have got to do this, this, and this is to expect collective action from an institution that does not and never has acted collectively.” The bottom line: The news business, as we know and understand it today, will not look or operate much differently in the future.

CONCLUSION 3

The old media order—an order dominated until recently by fewer than a dozen news organizations—is falling apart. Its dissolution is being accelerated on the one hand by an explosion of information, a proliferation of information sources, and a rapid expansion in consumer choices.

The old news media order is also under severe pressure from tabloid, talk show, and “trash journalism” which, to the sorrow of conscientious professionals, is increasingly setting the agenda of the mainstream news media. We were reminded by reporters that Gennifer Flowers was never interviewed by a network news operation in early 1992, and yet she attracted an audience of 20 million people during her appearance on “A Current Affair.” Pandora’s box has been thrown wide open, and

the earnest protestations of journalists will not close it. The fact is, one reporter observed, "It really doesn't matter any longer what the mainstream media do anymore." Worried reporters predict that the news industry will not fight this virus but instead will find a "respectable" way to accommodate it. It may not have much choice. After all, reporters point out, many major news operations are owned and controlled by conglomerates that also "trade in trash."

CONCLUSION 4

As the media, writ large, continues to open up and as information, sources of information, and technology become increasingly "democratized," new and creative approaches for reconnecting people and politicians will emerge. The presidential candidates' reliance this year on 800-numbers, teleconferencing, computer bulletin boards, broadcast talk shows, policy video and audio cassettes, and Ross Perot's call for electronic town meetings are just the tip of an iceberg—the beginning of what is certain to become a determined push by leaders and citizens to find and, if necessary, invent new ways of engaging each other more directly rather than through the news media. Although still in its earliest developmental stages, this movement will gain momentum, and neither the smugness of news media executives nor the ridicule of working journalists are going to slow it down.

CONCLUSION 5

Many criticisms of the news media and the political system are strikingly similar. It is a paradox that helps explain why neither enjoys a high level of public confidence. For example, politicians are routinely accused, often by the news media, of telling voters only what they want to hear rather than what voters need to know. But journalists freely admit that the news media play the same game and just as skillfully. Nor do politicians and the press do a very good job of explaining policy choices to their constituents and consumers. But the symmetry does not end here. Politicians rely heavily on opinion polls to divine the public's political preferences. The media on the other hand employ marketing consultants to gauge and then accommodate the shifting and mostly descending tastes of readers and viewers. The results, even when they are uninformed and wrong, still carry great weight. Both sides are inclined to follow the public than attempt to lead it.

While politicians are criticized for being preoccupied with getting elected and then inflating their reelection margins, the news media are similarly obsessed with "winning"—with making money. One side invokes its perquisites and powers to contain and beat back political competition; the other engages in dumb-dumb journalistic practices to outmaneuver competitors and increase market share. Such survival

strategies are pursued at the expense of the public interest.

The news media communicate in sound bites, and so do most politicians. And yet both simultaneously blame and encourage each other in a habit that they insist undermines democratic discourse. Politicians frequently use burn and slash tactics to defeat opponents, and the news media just as frequently magnify such offenses through uncritical and repeated press coverage. The news media luxuriate in scandal stories, but so do those politicians who seize on and exploit the ethical and procedural lapses of their opponents for partisan political gains. As a result, the public's political cynicism is reinforced by politicians and the press equally—by politicians who intentionally run against the system and by a press that carelessly runs it down.

Politicians and journalists have one other thing in common—a shared view that the public is more responsible than they are for society's failure to subdue serious problems. They see a public that is politically lethargic, self-indulgent, and easily distracted, that behaves as if gains-without-pains is a permanent entitlement. But on this question, like so many others, the public's verdict may carry more weight. In February, a Harris poll asked Americans how much confidence they had in the people who run 12 major US institutions. Predictably, Congress came in last. Only 10 percent of the respondents said they had a lot of confidence in the institution. But not far behind in seventh place was the press which commanded no more than 13 percent of the high-confidence vote. The closeness of these ratings are not coincidental.

Communitarian Ideas Go Overseas

Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, has invited Amitai Etzioni, editor of *The Responsive Community*, to meet with the Chancellor and participate in round-table discussions with leading Germans. The visit will also include a meeting with the President of Germany, Richard von Weizsaker; the new secretary of state, Klaus Kinkel; and the mayor of Berlin, Eberhard Diepgen.

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