

RANDALL BALMER ON EVANGELICALS ■ REPLACING WELFARE IN WISCONSIN

THE NEW DEMOCRAT

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Shall We Overcome?

THE FUTURE OF INTEGRATION

Glenn C. Loury

Fred Siegel

Tamar Jacoby

Douglas J. Besharov

Timothy S. Sullivan

Alan Wolfe

Randall L. Kennedy

THE NEW DEMOCRAT

COVER STORY

10 SHALL WE OVERCOME?

Glenn C. Loury

The future of integration.

13 FREE AT LAST?

Fred Siegel

America at the end of the Second Reconstruction.

15 DIVIDED WE STAND

Tamar Jacoby

The Million Man March and the culture that made it possible.

19 ONE FLESH

Douglas J. Besharov and Timothy S. Sullivan

America is experiencing an unprecedented increase in black-white intermarriage.

22 MOVIN' ON UP

Alan Wolfe

Democrats need to adapt to the reality of a growing black middle class.

24 SUSPICIOUS MINDS

Randall L. Kennedy

Is it ever proper to take race into account on America's mean streets?

ESSAYS AND COMMENT

27 WISCONSIN WORKS

Anna Kondratas

All eyes are focused on the state's plan to replace public assistance.

30 TANNED FOR CHILDREN

Ed Kilgore

The politics of evasion on parade.

31 FUNDAMENTALLY MISGUIDED

Randall Balmer

Evangelicals in the political arena.

33 POLITICAL IDOLATRY

Steve Tidrick

The false gods of the politics of meaning.

34 HOW BIG AN UMBRELLA?

Newt Gingrich, Sam Nunn, Jeremy D. Rosner, and William E. Odom

Four views on the proposed expansion of NATO.

37 UNSUNG HEROES

Susan Ariel Aaronson

Bureaucrat bashing exacts a high price on governance.

39 FRENCH TOAST

Dick Howard

Can politicians anywhere tangle with entitlements without getting burned?

DEPARTMENTS

2 518 C STREET N.E.

3 LETTERS

4 UP FRONT

8 EDITORIALS

42 BOOKS

Navin Girishankar

The Little Platoons by George Liebmann.

44 POLITICAL MEMO

Al From

We'd be better off if both parties competed for the black vote.

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EXPANDING THE NETWORK

One of this magazine's prime objectives is to broaden the network of academics, writers, officeholders, and ordinary citizens who, in whole or part, share our vision of progressive politics. By scanning the table of contents page, regular readers will notice that we've made a great stride toward that goal in this issue. Most of the credit goes to Glenn C. Loury of Boston University.

◆◆◆

Loury, who first appeared in *The New Democrat* as a contributor to our May/June 1995 cover story on affirmative action, is the chairman of the Washington-based Center for New Black Leadership, formed last fall to deepen and clarify the discussion of racial issues in America. Several weeks ago, he called to present us with an outline for a proposed cover story on the future of integration, complete with an impressive short list of prospective authors (himself included).

We agreed it was a great idea, and immediately set out to make it a reality. Working closely with Loury over the next few days by telephone, fax, and e-mail, we refined the outline, discussed illustration ideas, and settled on the final group of authors. He read the writers' drafts along with us as they arrived, and his insights added greatly to the high quality of the final product.

Loury's contribution to this issue was inestimable. We're extremely grateful.

◆◆◆

This issue also marks the *TND* debut of Randall Balmer, the author and host of *Mine Eyes Have Seen the*

Glory, the acclaimed book and PBS television series on American evangelicals. And for that, we have Shawn Landres to thank.

Landres, a Democratic Leadership Council member who is pursuing a doctorate in religious studies at the University of California-Santa Barbara, contacted us some months ago encouraging us to write more articles on the nexus between religion and politics. We threw the ball back into his court, asking him to draft a list of specific topics and suggested authors. Landres accepted the challenge and sent us the list, with Balmer's name at the top. Expect more articles on religion and politics in coming issues.

◆◆◆

Finally, as promised, this issue of the magazine marks the return of our section of short articles "up front" in an expanded and (we hope) improved form. Lee Lockwood, a longtime colleague of ours at the DLC who recently joined us as an assistant editor, is overseeing its production.

◆◆◆

We'd truly appreciate your comments on the changes we've made to the section, or on anything else you've read in this issue. We'll never know if we're meeting your needs unless you tell us. Information on how to submit a letter to the editor is at the bottom of the facing page. And as our experiences with Loury and Landres suggest, we're more than happy to entertain your ideas about articles.

Call us, write to us, or better yet, send us an e-mail at: tnd@dlcppi.org. We're listening. ◆

LETTERS

Can Bias Be Inferred In Effort To Punish The Predators?

To the Editor:

My reaction to Kathleen Sylvester's recent article on the problem of adult men who prey sexually on young girls ("*Punish the Predators*," *TND*, May/June 1996) is extremely positive. But we are living in a racist society, and Sylvester's good intentions may be misread and subject to misinterpretation. America is first and foremost a nation divided along ethnic, racial, and cultural lines. At least, that is the way it looks to most people of color. Therefore, it behooves us to anticipate the playing of the "race card" and plan around it.

Toward that end, I offer Sylvester the following suggestions:

- ◆ Drop the racially loaded term "predators." It conjures up subconscious images of Willie Horton and the mythical black rapist in the minds of the masses, who are bombarded daily with such hidden messages in the popular media. "Urban" is another loaded term to avoid. It is synonymous with "African-American" to most of your readers.

- ◆ Set the problem in the proper demographic context. Remind people that most teenage mothers, and thus most victims of criminal sexual behavior, are white. Most perpetrators are, too. If there are unique patterns within or variances among racial and ethnic groups, address them. For example, what are the patterns among and between Asians, Native Americans, and rural whites?

- ◆ Include the broader issues of aggressive sexual behavior by males and historic and contemporary attitudes toward males in the discussion. Sexual predation (for lack of a better term) is, in my view, a gender issue more than it is a racial issue. It is a violence issue, as well.

Add a quote from a male perpetrator to acknowledge their humanity (albeit latent). It is worth remembering that many, if not most, of these men have been abused, too.

- ◆ Finally, when is the healing to begin? How is the cycle to be broken? Punishment is hot this season, but it is not the key to disrupting the cycle. As women, as compassionate change agents, we must take advantage of every opportunity to gently mold the public dialogue toward a more "healing" perspective. This issue gives us a unique opportunity to touch upon the complex psychological dynamics of generational and cyclical violence.

Again, I applaud Sylvester's work and insight. As an African-American who is concerned with these issues, I welcome her contribution to a terribly one-sided dialogue on teen pregnancy. But let's work together to avoid perpetuating stereotypes that fan the flames of racism.

—Gail C. Christopher

Author, *Anchors for the Innocent: Inner Power For Today's Single Mothers and Fathers*
Washington, D.C.

The Second Generation Of Environmental Action In Portland, Ore.

To the Editor:

I was delighted by your recent cover story on the second generation of environmental action ("*This Land Is Our Land*," *TND*, May/June 1996).

It's been my privilege to serve as a member of the city council of Portland, Ore., and as its commissioner of public works since 1986. During that period, we've built on past environmental successes by using the techniques you outlined. Moving beyond regulation, we've refined our tools, rather than discard them.

By actively engaging citizens in our most difficult environmental issues, we have demonstrated that, by working together, we can solve problems rather than create new ones. Thinking creatively and working cooperatively, we have learned how to spend each dollar several times over to achieve multiple objectives.

Based on our experiences here, I am absolutely convinced the federal government can craft creative partnerships with local governments and citizens to solve the next generation of environmental challenges. The question is, will it?

—Earl Blumenauer

Commissioner of Public Works
Portland, Ore.

The New Democrat welcomes correspondence from readers. Address typewritten letters for publication to: Editor, The New Democrat, 518 C Street N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. You can also e-mail them to: tnd@dlcppi.org. Please include your full name, address, and a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for space and style.

UP FRONT

Staking Out the Center in the Bay State

The first time software entrepreneur Mitchell Kertzman and veteran Democratic operative Tripp Jones teamed up—as chair and manager respectively, of Democrat Mark Roosevelt’s 1994 campaign for governor of Massachusetts—the result was underwhelming. Republican William Weld rolled over Roosevelt by a better than 2-1 margin.

The Kertzman-Jones team is back, but this time it looks like it’s produced a winner: the Massachusetts Institute for the New Commonwealth, a.k.a. MassINC, a year-old think tank dedicated to defining and promoting centrist policies that advance the prospects of the middle class.

Kertzman is chairman and Jones is executive director of MassINC, whose quarterly magazine, *CommonWealth*, made its debut in March to positive reviews. MassINC’s first policy report, “The State of the American Dream in New England,” drew headlines in state newspapers, prompted two television stations to run a series of reports, and was quoted in *The Economist*. With an annual budget of \$600,000 and a full-time staff of six, MassINC is attracting some first-class talent, including Dave Denison, former editor of the *Texas Observer*, to edit *CommonWealth*.

“Our approach is focused on developing innovative solutions to problems regardless of whether they are perceived as more liberal or conservative,” says Jones. “We are trying to capitalize on what we

believe is an opportunity to bring together like-minded, mainstream civic leaders in this community to get above the left-right partisan policy.”

MassINC fills what appears to be a political vacuum in the center of highly partisan Bay State politics. On the right, conservatives have begun to dominate idea politics through an energized network powered by right-leaning think tanks. Most prominent of these, but by no means alone, is the Pioneer Institute, which has sent several of its key thinkers into the Weld administration. On the left,

meanwhile, advocacy groups are usually tied to specific programs or policies.

Explaining MassINC’s origins, Kertzman, who is chief executive officer of Powersoft, a Concord software company, wrote in *The Boston Globe* that he had “grown weary of the partisan bickering that

seems more concerned with scoring short-term political points and catering to special interests than with solving our problems.”

Sounds familiar—and welcome.—Chuck Alston

♦ For more information, call (617) 338-8900, or check out the MassINC web site at <http://www.massinc.org>.

Can Companies Make Kids Care About Their Grades?

At their national “education summit” this spring with the state governors, the CEOs of nearly 50 leading American corporations resolved that, within a year, their

ELEPHANT DROPPINGS

“I’m not the least bit interested in the prestige of NATO.”

—Rep. John Linder of Georgia speaking during congressional debate on Bosnia

Earning a congressional salary of \$133,600 plus \$50,000 a year in police pensions “does not make me rich. That does not make me middle class. In my opinion that makes me lower-middle class. When I see someone who is making anywhere from \$300,000 to \$750,000 a year, that’s middle class. . . . When I see anyone above that, that’s upper-middle class.”

—Rep. Fred Heineman of North Carolina quoted in *The Washington Post* (10-25-96)

The Kennedy-Kassebaum health care bill “is horrible . . . It’s a huge boondoggle. . . . If we do win the White House, we’re saddling ourselves with a bunch of stuff we’re just going to have to cancel. . . . It’s an absolute joke, it’s a total mistake, it need not be happening.”

—Rush Limbaugh, speaking during his nationally syndicated radio program (4-23-96)

“Maybe we ought to take another look at the amount of money we are spending on education. There is a place where we’re getting a declining value for an increasing dollar. It’s in education. If, in fact, we can get some discipline in the use of our education dollar, I think we can make up the difference.”

—House Majority Leader Richard K. Armey, during an appearance on *Meet the Press*, suggesting how Congress might offset the revenue loss from a repeal of the 1993 gasoline tax (5-5-96)

We Couldn't Have Said it Better

"Make no mistake: Democrats are riding high. . . . So what's to worry about? Human nature, for starters. The temptation for Democrats at this point will be to over-read their poll numbers, draw the wrong conclusions, and revert to the old ideological patterns that got them into trouble. A fair number of Democrats probably didn't believe President Clinton when he told them in his State of the Union address this year that 'the era of big government is over.' Like a recovering addict who lets down his guard, they are at the point where they risk slipping back into self-destructive behavior."

—Political columnist Gerald Seib writing in *The Wall Street Journal* (5-1-96)

"All exact estimates [of the effect of an increase in the minimum wage] are suspect. Economists can't predict the precise effects of small changes in government policies. Because wages are rising anyway, a legislated increase may mainly affect the timing of future changes. At most, the poor might benefit slightly, at worst, they might suffer slightly. The real deception is that something important is being done when all that is occurring is a game of political one-upmanship."

—Economist Robert Samuelson writing in *Newsweek*

"As a traditional Democrat, I have always believed that freedom, fairness, and wealth, basic to a modern democracy, required an essentially redistributionist philosophy of wealth . . . The experience of the last two decades, with the advent of the global economy, has very much shaken that view . . ."

Fairness does not require the redistribution of wealth; it requires the creation of wealth, geared to an economy that can provide employment for everyone willing and able to work, and the opportunity for a consistently higher standard of living for those employed. Only strong private sector growth, driven by higher levels of investment and superior public services, can hope to provide the job opportunities required to deal with technological change and globalization. Only higher growth will allow that process to take place within the framework of a market economy and a functioning democracy."

—Investment banker Felix Rohatyn writing in *The Wall Street Journal* (4-1-96)



firms would begin taking a hard look at job applicants' high school grades and other academic records when making hiring decisions.

That certainly sounds like a common-sense way to boost the value of a diploma in the eyes of kids not going to college. There's just one hitch: In some cases, it may be illegal under a 1991 federal job discrimination law.

The business executives' promise was part of their broader plan to advance the cause of tough national academic standards, with the aim being to make America's workforce smarter in this age of fierce global economic competition. Their rationale for tying high school grades to hiring decisions was that it gives students headed for jobs on the lower rungs of the economic ladder a



compelling incentive to take their schooling seriously.

But 25 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Griggs v. Duke Power* that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbade companies from using grades, test scores, and the like as a basis for hiring or promotion if, on average, they harmed racial minorities more than whites and if they were not shown to be a clear "business necessity." The power company's intent—which the court acknowledged was to "improve the overall quality of [its] workforce"—was no defense; what mattered was the policy's presumed adverse effect on minorities as a whole. (*Griggs*, by the way, marked the beginning of the flood of lawsuits in the 1970s and 1980s that based claims of discrimination on statistical dispari-

ties between whites and racial minorities; between men and women; between the general population and people with disabilities; etc.)

In 1991, Congress enshrined the Burger-era court's interpretation of the law when it permanently reauthorized the Civil Rights Act. It also nullified a more recent Supreme Court ruling to make it clear that when a dispute over an employment policy reaches a judge, the company, not the worker, bears the burden of proving its case. In passing the law, however, Congress ducked the politically touchy task of defining just what constitutes a "business necessity," leaving that decision up to the lower courts and federal regulators.

Stanley Litow, an IBM vice president who helped shape the business executives' education proposal, says summit participants' staffs studied the issue carefully and are

“absolutely certain” the resolution can be implemented within the letter of the law.

According to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission lawyer Ellen Vargas, “in plain English, basically you have to have a very good business reason” for basing hiring decisions on grades. The key, she continues, is whether the jobs in question “require the skills that are part and parcel of a high school degree.” So, while it may be OK to require cashiers to be high school educated (or to have high grades in math), it probably would be illegal to set the same requirements for janitors—even though, paradoxically, education is the surest way that a janitor can escape a life of sweeping floors.—Tom Mirga

◆ *For more information about the business leaders’ resolution and others adopted at the national education summit, visit the summit web site at <http://www.summit96.ibm.com/>.*

NEA Catches Charter Fever (Maybe)

In a remarkable turnabout, the National Education Association now says it is ready to spend up to \$1.5 million over five years to help open charter schools in Phoenix, San Diego, Colorado Springs, Atlanta, and Lanikai, Hawaii.

“If done right, charters offer new and exciting possibilities,” NEA President Keith B. Geiger was quoted as saying at a recent Washington press conference to announce the initiative. That endorsement contrasts starkly with statements made over the years by leaders of the union’s state affiliates, who’ve been in the vanguard in the fight against charters in state legislatures. Among other things, these leaders have denounced charters as: a Trojan Horse for full-scale privatization; bloodsuckers

on already malnourished school systems; and the means by which racial and religious bigots plan to balkanize public schooling.

To be fair, the national NEA has been more restrained in its public pronouncements about charters, which have been authorized by roughly half of the states in spite of its state affiliates’ dire warnings.

The NEA’s endorsement does contain some fine print. As Chester E. Finn Jr., co-director of the Hudson Institute’s Educational Excellence Network, recently noted on the network’s web site, the union’s backing depends on 10 criteria being met, including one that appears to cut to the heart of the charter movement’s deregulatory spirit: an insistence that a school’s staff have “the right to a collective agreement regarding their rights, benefits, and working conditions.”

“The crucial issue is whether charter school staff will be freed from the ‘master contract’ that governs the community’s ‘regular’ schools,” Finn writes. “I refer to the voluminous document that typically regulates salaries, hours, calendars, class size, terms of employment, labor-management relations, and sundry other variables that charter schools typically want to do differently.”

“If these can’t be done differently,” warns Finn, “the school isn’t really worth calling a ‘charter.’” —Tom Mirga

◆ *The full text of Chester E. Finn Jr.’s commentary on the NEA’s announcement is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.edexcellence.net/hottopic/nea.html>.*

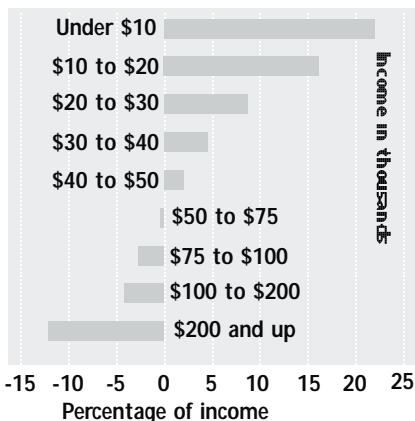
For Most Families, Flattery Won’t Get You Anywhere

Who would gain and who would lose if we eliminated the progressive federal income tax in favor of a flat tax? That’s the burning ques-

tion as Washington’s punditry debates the issue.

The flat tax’s appeal stems mainly from many middle-class Americans’ belief that the current tax seizes an unwarranted share of their income, relative to what they would pay under a flat tax. But that’s not so, according to a new Progressive Foundation study by economist Robert J. Shapiro.

How much more of its income a family keeps under the current system vs. a flat tax



In *Why Fairness Matters: Progressive Versus Flat Taxes*, Shapiro, the vice president of the Progressive Policy Institute, compared Americans’ after-tax incomes both under the current progressive system and under a pure flat or proportional tax.

Families earning between \$30,000 and \$75,000 a year “would have roughly the same disposable income under a strictly proportional tax, or a little less, than they do today,” he writes. Families earning less than \$10,000 annually would keep about 22 percent more of their incomes under the current system; families earning more than \$200,000 would pay out about 12 percent more.—Tom Mirga

◆ *Copies of the report can be obtained by calling the foundation at (202) 546-4482. They are also available on the World Wide Web at <http://www/dlcpfi.org/economic.htm>.*

THE PROGRESSIVE NETWORK

Hunting the Wolves Almost 70 percent of teenage mothers are impregnated by men over the age of 20. Worse yet, the younger the mother, the wider the age gap, with girls aged 11 and 12 being impregnated by men 10 years older, on average. "This is a crime," says **Kathleen Sylvester** of the Progressive Foundation and the Progressive Policy Institute, and yet these "sexual predators" are seldom prosecuted or otherwise held accountable for their acts.

To begin combatting this problem, the Carnegie Foundation of New York has awarded a grant jointly to the Progressive Foundation and the American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law to study ways to arrest this anti-social and unlawful sexual activity by adult males.

Sylvester will head up the PF side of the 16-month project, which will examine existing relevant state laws and prosecutorial policies and attempt to raise public awareness of this problem.



Bullish on this Democrat Here's what *The Wall Street Journal* had to say on March 21 about "genuine New Democrat" **John Norquist**:

"When Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist announced he would seek a third term last year his biggest opposition came from within his own Democratic party . . . This week, Mr. Norquist won a landslide victory with 60 percent, humiliated his liberal adversaries, and taught his fellow Democrats some lessons about how to win elections again.

"Mr. Norquist is one of several non-Beltway Democrats who are reviving their cities using sensible policies. Others include Cleveland Mayor **Michael White** and Chicago Mayor **Richard Daley**. What their success in winning repeated elections in liberal cities shows is that what voters want are results, not ideology. Many Democrats have convinced themselves that the old-time religion of big government can still win, but party dissidents such as Mr. Norquist are pointing the way to a performance-based strategy that can succeed at the polls even when Republicans don't make a lot of tactical mistakes."

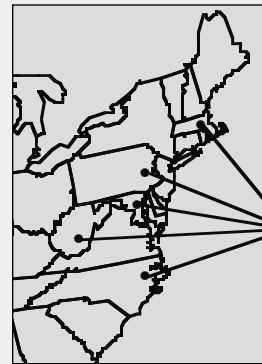


Progressives: The Next Generation The Democratic Leadership Council and PPI have begun a series of leadership training events aimed at communicating a progressive message for 1996 and beyond. The focus is on issues that are high on the public's agenda but

difficult for Democrats to discuss—from crime, to values, to entitlements. The first two were held in Columbus, Ohio in April, and Tampa, Fla., in June, and the third is set for Palo Alto, Calif., in July. Two more are tentatively scheduled—for Washington in early summer and at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in August.



States' Watch Maryland has joined the growing list of states enacting welfare reform legislation based on the "work first" concept promoted by PPI. Approved



in April, the state's new Family Investment Plan will eliminate Aid to Families With Dependent Children and replace it with a new program that will convert local social service agencies into job placement centers; condition cash aid on weekly job interviews; attempt to secure child support from delinquent parents; and allow Maryland

counties and the city of Baltimore to design their own initiatives.

Four other states—Massachusetts, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia—have also adopted reforms patterned on the "work first" concept. Initiatives in six others are being modeled in whole or in part on PPI's work.

For more information on the Maryland program, contact J.C. Shay, Director of Public Information, Maryland Department of Human Resources, 311 W. Saratoga Street, Baltimore, Md. 21201; telephone (410) 767-7758.



Sharpening Ideas, not Rhetoric This spring, PPI joined forces with the centrist Republican think tank Empower America for two policy forums. The first, entitled "Urban Empowerment: New Strategies for Saving America's Cities," was held in March and featured Empower America President **Jack Kemp** and Harvard University professor **Michael Porter** leading a discussion on ways to move from the failed urban policies of the past. Porter presented his ideas on "the competitive advantage of the inner city" as one urban revitalization model.

The second forum, held in June, focused on whether television is demoralizing America. Speakers included Democratic Sens. **Joseph I. Lieberman** and **Sam Nunn** and Empower America co-founder **William J. Bennett**.—Lee Lockwood

IT'S A BLACK AND WHITE THING

The problem of the 20th century," said W.E.B. DuBois in 1900, "is the problem of the color line." The landmark court rulings and civil rights laws of the 1950s and 1960s erased that line as a legal barrier to equal opportunity for black citizens. Now, as the century ends, the question for black and white Americans alike is whether we are prepared to cross the color line that remains etched in our hearts.

Despite decades of unprecedented black progress, black-white relations seem more strained than ever. Starkly contrasting reactions to everything from the O.J. Simpson trial to the Supreme Court's efforts to rein in race-conscious policies illuminate a growing chasm between how whites and blacks view events.

Yet today's racial flare-ups blind us to encouraging underlying trends. The black middle class has grown rapidly, as has the political clout of more than 8,000 black elected leaders nationwide. As Alan Wolfe argues in this issue, the emergence of a large black professional class and its exodus to the suburbs frees us to confront urban poverty as a problem chiefly of class rather than race. But the flip side of an upwardly mobile black middle class is the despair and isolation of the underclass, whose very existence stokes paranoia and prejudice on both sides of the racial divide.

Moreover, as Glenn Loury notes in the article that opens our cover story, the black middle class is deeply ambivalent about its successes and pessimistic about the extent to which racism really has been banished from U.S. society. While determined to win their long deferred fair share of the American Dream, many blacks are reluctant to give up a racial consciousness forged by the bitter experiences of slavery and Jim Crow. In their eyes, black gains are too recent, too tenuous, and too partial to warrant fully embracing the ideal of a color-blind society. Race, they insist, still matters.

This makes many whites uncomfortable, especially when it manifests itself in demands for racial gerrymandering, Afrocentric education, and a political agenda that has government play racial and ethnic favorites under the guise of remedying past discrimination. At the same time, blacks point out that the minority poor bear the brunt of conservative efforts to reduce and dismantle social welfare programs. Many wonder, reasonably

enough, whether widespread public antipathy toward government signals an end to Washington's historic role in defending minority rights.

Clearly, the national consensus forged around the ideal of integration in the 1960s has collapsed. We seem to have reached the end of an era in race relations—America's "Second Reconstruction" in Fred Siegel's apt analogy—that began with the Supreme Court's 1954 decision striking down segregated schools. The urgent question now is whether blacks and whites will continue to drift apart or will try to break the downward spiral of racial recrimination, mistrust, and polarization.

No national task looms larger than finding a new common ground on matters of race. The search should begin within America's civic culture—our core shared beliefs and institutions which create the possibility of an American identity that transcends ethnicity and race. We must revive the integrationist ideal, not by guaranteeing black citizens a proportional share of the nation's jobs and wealth, but by building broad support for new strategies that open opportunities rather than preordain results.

For whites, this will mean revisiting the question of what society owes to a racial minority it forcibly suppressed for centuries. If busing, social programs that underwrite irresponsible behavior, racial set-asides, and quotas are the wrong answers, what are the right ones? It's time for progressives to challenge the white majority to think anew about its responsibility to make equal opportunity a reality rather than a pious slogan.

Black Americans, likewise, face a choice between Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of a society in which skin color declines in significance, and Louis Farrakhan's assertion that race is destiny. As Tamar Jacoby notes in her poignant report on last October's Million Man March, many blacks are torn between the desire to achieve the American Dream and claims of racial pride and loyalty. The problem comes when economic success and rising social status are seen as a betrayal of racial solidarity and when the way to prove you are "authentically" black is to be anti-white. This stance is by definition a formula for intractable racial conflict. Despite the current vogue of victimization and identity politics, however, we remain optimistic that African-Americans, like Jewish-, Irish-, and Italian-Americans among others,

can and will succeed without abandoning their heritage.

Minorities in America traditionally have advanced not by engaging in an unequal struggle for power with the majority, but by demanding that the nation live up to its founding ideals: that basic rights inhere in individuals, not classes or groups; that everyone is entitled to the equal protection of the laws; and that a liberal democracy should promote equal opportunity, not equal results. Only by returning to these first principles can we overcome today's psychological barriers to a truly integrated society.

Duck and Cover, Voters

Beware the Missile Defense Gap

Like the “bomber gap” and “missile gap” of Cold War election years, fearmongering about a new “window of vulnerability” may cloud Election '96. More than a decade after the Reagan administration began its controversial, \$38 billion Strategic Defense Initiative, better known as Star Wars, a new debate has erupted: Republicans want to override Pentagon objections and deploy a national missile defense system by 2003.

We suspect their motive is a desire to manufacture an election year “missile defense gap” between Democrats and Republicans. While legitimate concerns may underlie this initiative, the GOP mantra about inadequate missile defense is burdened by flawed logic, false promises, and significant partisanship. Moreover, the proposed deployment is risky on two counts. First, it could actually endanger American security by engendering new security threats. Second, it would consume defense dollars that could be better used to accelerate deployment of urgently needed theater missile defenses, to develop new technologies, or to bolster readiness.

The Republicans are calling for the deployment, in seven years, of a ground- and space-based national missile defense system to protect all 50 states. The Congressional Budget Office says it would cost up to \$60 billion—a whopping four times more than current plans for missile defense spending.

The GOP has exaggerated its policy differences with the Clinton administration for political effect. The administration's plan does not necessarily preclude any options advocated by the Republicans. Rather, the \$14 billion that the Pentagon would spend on missile defense over the next five years would emphasize the development of defenses against the more likely threat posed by short-range missiles. It would also defer deployment decisions on a national defense system until and unless new threats emerge.

This approach reflects a genuine assessment of threats as well as a realistic weighing of the costs and benefits of missile defenses. Missile defenses are an insurance poli-

cy. As with any insurance policy, you must balance the risk against the cost. Everyone buys fire insurance even though the threat of fire is fairly low. But if the cost of a certain policy was very high, only protected one room in your house, and only under certain conditions, you'd think twice about buying it.

Even the most advanced missile defense systems that Republicans are eager to build cannot provide absolute security. At best, they would be only a leaky Maginot Umbrella. Moreover, they would afford no protection against an Oklahoma City-type terrorist act using nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons.

Even so, the limited protection of a national missile defense system might be worth the price if the threat warranted it. Fortunately, it does not. There is no current ballistic missile threat—nor is there likely to be one over the next 10 to 15 years.

Indeed, deployment of a full-scale national missile defense could be a disastrous case of unintended consequences, making America more—not less—vulnerable to nuclear threat. Why? Because a national missile defense system can't be built without abrogating the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Taking that step almost certainly would unravel our strategic relationship with Russia and reverse the current build-down of nuclear forces.

The chain reaction wouldn't stop there, either. Deployment could also stimulate a buildup of Chinese nuclear forces as well as undercut global efforts toward nuclear nonproliferation.

The better course is to build on our success at keeping strategic missiles in their silos and submarines. The key ingredient is a credible, robust deterrence based on the armed forces of the United States and our allies. Deterrence maintained the peace during the Cold War, and continues to be effective in concert with arms reduction accords, the cooperative threat reduction (Nunn-Lugar) program, and the nonproliferation regime.

There *are* serious missile threats, however, that demand our immediate attention—the short-range missiles (with ranges under 1,000 kilometers) held by Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea. Six years after the Gulf War, we have yet to develop and deploy more capable systems to defend against these theater-specific threats. We must do so now.

The Pentagon missile defense program announced last February reflects the appropriate priorities. It would accelerate deployment of the theater systems while deferring deployment of strategic national missile defenses. Beyond this, the United States should actively research enhanced theater defense systems that do not violate whatever new understanding of the ABM Treaty emerges between the United States and Russia.

Missile defense *is* a serious issue. The debate should continue, and the status of emerging threats must be closely monitored. But from now to Election Day, hold on to your wallet when you hear politicians decry the “missile defense gap.” ♦

SHALL WE OVERCOME?

The Future of Integration

BY GLENN C. LOURY

BOSTON

There is weariness discernible in the conversations Americans now endure across the chasm of race. The integrationists of an earlier era who preached the gospel of “the beloved community” look in hindsight to have been naïve dreamers. What black and white Americans seem to share most today is frustration, and more than a hint of self-righteous anger. Despite progress—a significant, ongoing improvement in the economic situation of many blacks, and a dramatic, continuing reduction in anti-black racism among whites—experience suggests that racial comity is a more elusive, amorphous goal in 1996 than it was at the dawning of the civil rights movement.

We have become confused about goals, and our diminished confidence in the ideal of integration, evident among blacks and whites alike, reflects this confusion. Two generations have matured since that great triumph of American idealism, the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Though the court’s reasoning in *Brown* has rightly been criticized, the morality of its conclusion is beyond dispute. Enforced racial segregation—“separate but equal” public schools, “whites only” lavatories in municipal buildings—inherently contradicts the idea of a civic order in which all citizens enjoy equality before the law. Many of today’s citizens were not yet born when this premise was openly questioned and thus fail to appreciate *Brown*’s revolutionary impact. The ruling marked the beginning of the end of a racial caste system that had been centuries in the making.

The civil rights movement broadened the scope of this moral revolution to the private sphere in the years following *Brown*. Segregated restaurants, housing developments, workplaces, and hotels were declared unlawful by Congress. The power of the federal prosecutor, and the weighty threat to withhold federal funds, were employed to achieve equality of opportunity for blacks.

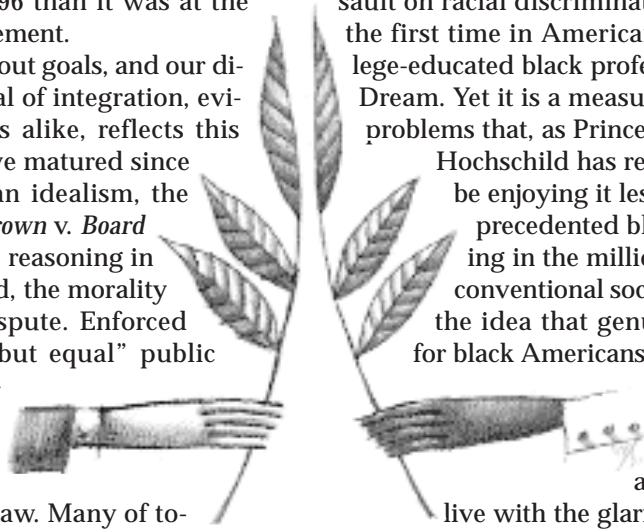
Again, although many conservatives objected at the time, the moral principle embodied in this legislation is now broadly accepted. Racial discrimination, whether the result of public policy or private business practice, will not be tolerated.

The Conflict Between Ideals and Practice

These reforms succeeded, but they also failed. *De jure* segregation is dead. But, due to the continuing desires of whites and blacks to associate with persons of their own choosing, *de facto* segregation is very much alive. The assault on racial discrimination has made it possible, for the first time in American history, for millions of college-educated black professionals to live the American Dream. Yet it is a measure of the gravity of our racial problems that, as Princeton political scientist Jennifer Hochschild has recently reported, they seem to be enjoying it less. Meanwhile, an equally unprecedented black underclass, also numbering in the millions, lives beyond the reach of conventional social remedy, casting a pall over the idea that genuine equality of opportunity for black Americans can ever be achieved.

Moreover, despite our historic achievements, we remain deeply ambivalent about matters of principle. We live with the glaring contradiction between the ideal that a person’s race is an irrelevancy, and the ingrained social practice of attending assiduously to racial difference. On the one hand, we say a person should be judged by the content of his character and not the color of his skin. On the other hand, we sort, count, respond to, cavort with, and assess one another based on racial identity.

This conflict between ideal and practice is in part inescapable. We cannot, for example, adequately enforce laws against employment discrimination without taking note of a gross demographic imbalance in an employer’s workforce. One cannot teach students the lesson that



“not all blacks think alike” with too few blacks on campus for this truth to become evident. No American president would assemble an administration with complete disregard for racial diversity. No prudent business executive would ignore the possibility that racial friction among his employees might impair their effectiveness. Shopkeepers and cab drivers must be expected to notice a huge racial disparity in arrest rates for crimes committed against them.

But some of the race-consciousness infecting American life is unnecessary and deeply unwise. That we are not yet a colorblind society is occasionally relevant for how we conduct our affairs. That we will never become one is a self-fulfilling prophecy. A nation with our history should not draw electoral districts so as to spare black and white representatives the inconvenience of having to solicit votes from across the color line. We should not make it easy for our children to avoid social intercourse across racial lines when in college; we should not countenance politicians who exploit racial stereotypes in their campaigns; we should not gratuitously focus on racial disparities in various social afflictions, when neither the causes nor the cures of these maladies have anything to do with race.

The massive wave of non-European immigration we have experienced over the past quarter-century has multiplied the centrifugal forces tugging at the fabric of American national identity. Bilingual, multicultural, and Afrocentric diversity are the order of the day. This “disuniting of America” involves more, to be sure, than the classical opposition between black and white. Still, the racial breach has always been the greatest of all in the American political community. Our growing national obsession with “celebrating difference,” and the resulting diminution of enthusiasm for notions of assimilation, has made it far more difficult to sustain moral clarity about the idea that eliminating racial distinctions is desirable.

One Nation, Under God, Indivisible?

Thus, we face a racial dilemma today, though not at all like the one Gunnar Myrdal wrote about some 50 years ago with the war against the Nazis as the backdrop. Myrdal’s classic work, *An American Dilemma*, focused on the hypocrisy of a nation founded on the ideals of individual liberty and personal dignity which nevertheless could not bring itself to treat the descendants of slaves as equal citizens. Given the successes of the civil rights movement and the West’s triumph in the Cold War, there is no longer any question that American democracy is up to the task of dealing with blacks as equal citizens. Rather, the question now is whether Americans of all ethnic and racial identities can become “one nation, under God, indivisible.” It remains an open question.

This is not a matter to be decided by majority vote. Blacks and whites alike, caught in their contradictions

between ideal and practice, simultaneously affirm and eschew the colorblind ideal. A defining feature of contemporary American race relations is the fact that ambivalence about integration is at least as strong among blacks as among whites, and operates as powerfully in the black upper and middle classes as in its lower classes. Arguably, the most race-obsessed persons in America today are not Southern rednecks, but well-educated and prosperous black elites.

This fact has enormous political ramifications. A massive demonstration by blacks on the Capitol’s steps that pointedly discouraged the participation of whites would have been unthinkable in an earlier era, as would have black students on an Ivy League campus insisting that they be provided with racially segregated living arrangements. When whites observe these developments, their determination to struggle against their own race-conscious impulses wanes.

The Outrage of Liberation

Tragic ironies abound. Some expressions of rage and alienation within the black middle class arguably are an unavoidable byproduct of the success of civil rights reforms. As Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson has recently argued, integration was bound to increase the racial friction experienced by upwardly mobile blacks. For, as desegregation increased the frequency of contacts across racial lines, chances for problematic encounters between blacks and whites also grew.

More subtly, Patterson suggests the anger expressed by beneficiaries of the civil rights revolution may also be due to what he calls “the outrage of liberation.” As a formerly victimized people emerge from their suppression, they find they are no longer voiceless. They no longer see their former oppressors as strangers, but as neighbors, co-workers—even the handyman one hires to do manual labor. For the first time, they can engage their oppressors in a moral discourse among political equals. Thus, the humanizing and leveling effects of integration give blacks greater scope to express condemnatory judgments of whites. Of course, the most educated and secure blacks experience this effect most keenly. So, whites see an increase in blacks’ sensitivity to racial affront just as the objective impediments to blacks’ participation in society are falling. Their anger at what they perceive as exaggerated black sensitivity only fuels black middle class outrage, creating a tragic cycle of mutually reinforcing, negative reactions.

The fact that the underclass is disproportionately black only amplifies the sense of persecution in the black middle class. Many claim it as direct evidence of ongoing, not merely historical, victimization. While understandable, I believe this claim is extremely unfortunate. As a matter of social causation, it is also dubious. The collapse of family life among the urban black poor, their diminished opportunities for employment, the dysfunc-

tional public schools on which they rely—all are far more culpable than outright discrimination in creating and perpetuating the black underclass.

This assertion of racial injury in the face of the underclass crisis leads many black (and white) liberals into a political *cul de sac*. There are two points to make in this regard.

First, there are no politically feasible, racially based solutions to the problems of the urban black poor. Indeed, it is quite unclear how these marginalized, suffering masses might yet be integrated into the commonwealth. Anyone professing to have *the* answer is either a fool or a liar. Every conceivable response to this social dilemma—education and welfare reform, tax abatements, greater private philanthropy, improved law enforcement, or massive public works—requires significant public (if not always governmental) involvement, a major infusion of resources, and a fair amount of time. Progress depends on the creation of political majorities willing to support such undertakings. And, if recent American electoral history teaches us anything, it is that such majorities cannot be built in an explicitly racial manner.

Second, discussing social dysfunction in racial terms plays right into the hands of society's most reactionary forces. Such a posture invites the view that "those people" in the ghettos are fundamentally different, that "they" are undeserving recipients of public assistance, that "they" are, whether for biological or deep cultural reasons, beyond hope of redemption. Arguably, some of the ugliest (and most sophisticated) recent assaults on the proposition that "all men are created equal" can be understood as reactions to the efforts of racial egalitarians to legislate their way out of the fact of lagging black achievement. The era of *jujitsu* politics—when blacks tried to use the relative strength of whites against them, by holding up black underachievement as proof that whites had failed to extend equal rights—has definitely run its course. The typical response to such advocacy nowadays is the baldly stated "refutation" that, evidently, blacks do not have what it takes to succeed in America, as so many non-white immigrants have done and continue to do.

Trans-Racial Humanism

Our best chance of finding a way out of this impasse, if there is one, is to return to the moral foundations of the original civil rights revolution. Martin Luther King Jr. was fond of saying that "all men are created equal . . . [that] every man is heir to a legacy of worthiness." Once Americans genuinely decided to adhere to this bedrock principle, Jim Crow became intolerable. However, it is now apparent that this principle is not powerful enough to break down all barriers of racial and ethnic identity, thereby producing *de facto* racial integration.

It is arguable that the black inner-city poor do not now enjoy the basic human inheritance of dignity and

worthiness of which King spoke. But this is not because they are the descendants of slaves. Advocacy on their behalf grounded in that historical fact will fail. With the graying of the civil rights generation, it becomes increasingly obvious that historically based arguments for the redress of racial wrongs lack persuasive force. The moral authority of the aggrieved black bemoaning the indignities of a regime of white supremacy just ain't what it used to be. It is a new day, requiring new arguments.

What are those new arguments, and how do they relate to the age-old question of racial integration? Their aim should be the construction of a trans-racial humanism, universally applied to all citizens, and committed to engaging the intractable problems of the socially marginalized. The problems of the black underclass should not be presented on narrow racial grounds, but in their essential human terms. The object should be to inspire in citizens, when they look upon juvenile felons, welfare mothers, or slow learners, the sense that, "there but for the grace of God go I—or my brother, or my child." This approach is consistent with the notions of fairness and equal citizenship deeply rooted in American history. It is also consistent with the American spirit of religiously motivated charity that remains very much alive today.

This assertion of racial injury in the face of the underclass crisis leads many black (and white) liberals into a political *cul de sac*.

Persuading whites that blacks are their brothers is no longer the challenge. Rather, the challenge is persuading working- and middle-class Americans that the underclass consists of people who are not so different from themselves—all of us having been created in the image of God. This is akin to, but significantly different from, the older challenge that integration posed against racial segregation.

This new ideal is one of moral and political integration, of the creation of one people out of many, of the incorporation of the most wretched, despised, and feared of our fellows along with the rest of us into a single political community of mutual concern. If Americans embrace this ideal, the public question will shift from, "What manner of people are *they* who languish in that way?" to "What manner of people are *we* who accept such degradation in our midst?"

The fractured notion of American national identity that has gained currency in recent years is an obstacle to fostering this humanistic outlook. The irony is that, by celebrating "difference" and demanding group rights in the name of equality, we have severed bonds of shared

experience across group lines and eliminated a sense of the mutuality of fate. Re-creating this state of political and moral integration is the key to building a broad commitment to improving the lot of disadvantaged Americans, especially those in racial minority groups.

Political and Moral Integration

America will not become a fully colorblind society anytime soon. Even if interracial marriage between blacks and whites is on the rise, as Douglas J. Besharov suggests elsewhere in this issue, wholesale intermarriage remains an unlikely prospect. And there is little chance we can eradicate all feelings of racial and ethnic pride, nor all links of personal identity to notions of group belongings. Full *social integration* is not a viable prospect.

But neither is it necessary.

One does not have to be a hopeless idealist, clinging

to some dream of a perfectly colorblind society, to affirm that it is both feasible and desirable to foster a broad, racially transcendent sense of belonging to a common cause—one worthy of allegiance, demanding of sacrifice, and suffused with mutual obligation. *Political and moral integration*, not the social integration of the racial assimilationist, is the path to attainment of a just society. Integration in this sense remains an achievable, indeed an essential, goal for our people. But, before it can be attained, we must create a consensus among our political and intellectual elites, blacks and whites, that we Americans are, indeed, “one nation, under God.” I pray it is not too late. ♦

Glenn C. Loury, University Professor and professor of economics at Boston University, is chairman of the Center for New Black Leadership.

FREE AT LAST?

America at the End of the Second Reconstruction

BY FRED SIEGEL

Now explain it to me again,” my neighbor asks, “why is it that we have to integrate our school districts and segregate our voting districts?” It’s a good question to consider as the country marks the centenary of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the tragic 1896 Supreme Court ruling that ended America’s first Reconstruction by validating the doctrine of “separate but equal.”

The first Reconstruction was the post-Civil War political and social movement to find a place for ex-slaves in the new world created by Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment. It ended when whites waned in their commitment to the cause of black freedom and turned their backs on people who were no longer slaves but still not free.

The second Reconstruction took shape with *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court’s 1954 decision that ended America’s shameful history of legally enforced segregation, and with the movement led by Martin Luther King Jr. and others to force the United States to live up to its credo of equal opportunity for all. The promise of the second Reconstruction was to integrate blacks into the American mainstream, in part by making tolerance a central tenet of public life.

The events of this past year—the O.J. Simpson verdict, the Million Man March, and a raft of federal court decisions trimming the scope of affirmative action—

mark both a growing racial separation and the end of the second Reconstruction.

Liberal-Conservative *Mésalliance*

The conservative crusade to build a national majority around racial realignment certainly contributed to this growing chasm. Republicans have played on racial resentment with virtuoso skill, and their ploys helped legitimize practices and sentiments that were often nothing more than coded opposition to integration. The left has contributed as well. The redistricting of Congress following the 1990 census, for example, produced a *mésalliance* between “identity politics” liberals and unprincipled conservatives, who redrew districts along racial lines to benefit the extremes at the expense of the center. The irony is that this time around, Reconstruction has been halted not only by recalcitrant white racists, but by putative proponents of racial equality.

It has taken 30 years for the black nationalist movement, abetted by white suburban secessionism, to displace the original thrust of the second Reconstruction with a new version of “separate but equal.” It is in part due to the civil rights movement that I now live in a highly integrated neighborhood. But over the past three decades, black nationalists and white radicals have redefined integration as a form of white supremacy.

In the 1960s, Black Power radical Stokely Carmichael argued that “integration is a subterfuge for the maintenance of white supremacy.” If the common culture is defined as white, he argued, then for blacks integration means submitting to white culture. What follows is that given the existence, in effect, of two different, independent nations, one black and one white, each has to negotiate with the other as if it were sovereign. For Black Power advocates, even black advancement into the middle class was a form of cultural and political “genocide.” According to Carmichael, “You integrate communities, but you assimilate individuals.”

Carmichael’s assumptions were echoed during a recent House debate over whether to lift federal limits on cross-racial adoption, a practice which the National Association of Black Social Workers has described as “racial and cultural genocide.” During the debate, Republican Rep. Jim Nussle of Iowa questioned why race should be a legitimate consideration in adoptions when it is an illegal factor in employment and housing. Democratic Rep. Charles Rangel of New York, an African-American, responded: “This [is] a new thing being colorblind. This is the wrong time to be colorblind when we haven’t been colorblind for 200 years.”

The Same/Different Gambit

The Charlie Rangels of the world assume that only they are licensed to play what I call the “same/different” gambit, the game in which only blacks can legitimately play the race card. But just as it was wrong in May for a white working-class Philadelphia neighborhood to drive out a newly arrived black family in the name of racial solidarity, it is wrong for universities across America to maintain all-black dorms in the name of racial solidarity. In the past, you could justify the same/different gambit on the basis of some higher, trans-racial common cause. But the elevation of overt racist Louis Farrakhan to a position of black national leadership not only broke the taboo on open expressions of racial hatred in mainstream political life, it made the very idea of a common cause appear anachronistic. Besides, as the white authors of *The Bell Curve* made clear, black nationalists aren’t the only ones who can play the same/different game.

There is another game that is getting harder to play. In the ‘70s and ‘80s, black leaders like Coleman Young of Detroit and Marion Barry of Washington tried to capitalize on the race riots of the ‘60s. The power to disrupt became a claim against the treasury. Playing both the victim and the bully, the Youngs and Barrys capitalized on both white guilt and white fear, without developing either the capacities of their black constituents or their cities’ private sectors. But with vast federal budget deficits and the black and white middle classes fleeing the cities, this public sector approach to peddling pathology proved a dead end. Their threats produced not only

the ruin of their cities, but a level of suffering that surpassed the painful conditions that helped spark the second Reconstruction.

A New Beginning?

In sum, what began as an inspired attempt to right traditional wrongs has been by now botched beyond repair. That’s why we should cautiously welcome the end of the second Reconstruction with the hope that its demise augurs not, as in 1896, a period of racial neglect, but the possibility of a new beginning.

A new wave of black leaders has broken with the past. Mayors like Dennis Archer in Detroit and Mike White in Cleveland are looking to encourage inner-city business and urban-suburban cooperation. There is, former *New York Daily News* columnist Jim Sleeper reports, “more talk now of small business development and home ownership.” Take, for example, the Revelation organization, a group of black churches totaling more than 20 million members which has joined with white developers to finance housing construction and home ownership on an unprecedented scale. Or consider that, in a recent Yankelovich poll, 48 percent of African-Americans agreed that “the failure to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them constitutes a greater problem than discrimination by whites.” This 48 percent is on to something. As the 1990 census showed, household incomes for black immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean were substantially higher than those for American-born blacks.

America’s growing Latino and Asian populations, too, have remade and complicated racial politics. In an era when even Omaha, Neb., has a substantial Hispanic population, consider the warning of Latino anthropologist Jorge Klor de Alva in a recent exchange with black academic and writer Cornell West: “Having been blocked from [jobs in] the public sector [by African-Americans], I am concerned that Latinos turning to the private one will buy deeply into U.S. concepts of race and be even less willing than Anglos to employ blacks.”

The Powell for president boomlet, as brief as it was, suggests there is still significant support for the ideals that once animated the civil rights movement. Eric Foner, the great historian of the first Reconstruction, notes that “it is too often forgotten that integration is a very radical idea, not a stuffy nostrum,” as black nationalists would insist. “Integration has meant not the absorption of blacks into the pre-existing white social order, but the transformation of American society so as to give real meaning to the principle of equality.” Freed from the fetters of a second Reconstruction run aground on racialism, that transformation is the task ahead of us. ♦

Fred Siegel is a New York-based senior fellow with the Progressive Policy Institute. He is writing a book about liberalism and urban America.

DIVIDED WE STAND

The Million Man March and the Culture That Made It Possible

BY TAMAR JACOBY

I went to the Million Man March last October to find out if the dream of integration was dead. It was easy to be pessimistic on the long drive down from New Jersey. This was to be a brazenly exclusive event, led by an avowed separatist. Its themes were “atonement” and self-help, but the goal of the group that had organized the day was the creation of a separate black nation within America. The obvious parallels to the 1963 March on Washington only highlighted the real and troubling differences. Whatever Louis Farrakhan was going to say when he took the podium, one knew in advance it wasn’t going to echo Martin Luther King Jr. on the content of our character.

I didn’t listen much to the speeches, preferring to wander in the crowd talking to the men. I interviewed about two dozen: a postal worker, a mechanic, a college dean, and several corporate managers and elected officials, among others. I spoke to anyone who would catch my eye—in a friendly or hostile way. (As a white woman crashing the all-male, all-black event, I plainly annoyed at least a few marchers.) The surprise in store for me could not have been more complete. Every man I spoke to—with no exceptions—expressed some sympathy for the integrationist vision.

From James Burrell, a middle-aged Virginia businessman and elected official: “I’d like to see the day when we are all one people.” From James Stewart, 67, a retired personnel manager from North Carolina: “You can’t live separate in society. It’s like family. Man and wife can’t live in the same house and carry on as if they were living separately.” From the postal worker, Mark Sheffield, 40, of Atlanta: “King’s message is more relevant today than it was 32 years ago. We [whites and blacks] have to be patient with each other and let go of the past.” “We’re all God’s children,” said one Virginian. “We’re all Americans and we’ve got to learn to ignore skin color.”

For most of the men I spoke with, this inclusive hope was mixed with very different feelings: anger, disappointment, alienation, sadness, sheer provocativeness,

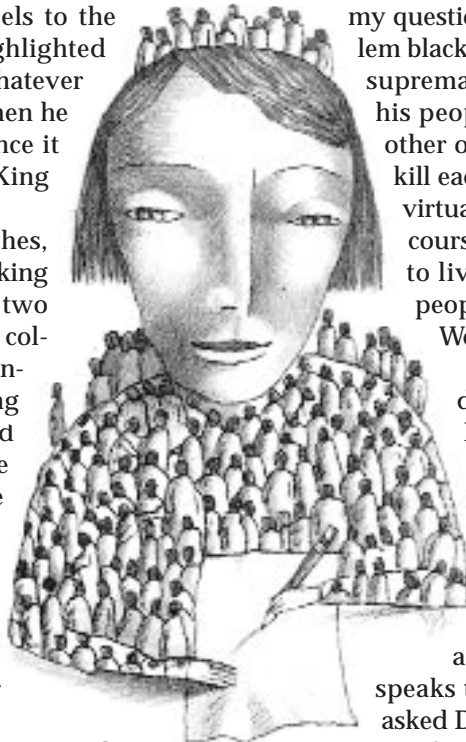
or racial pride, often with a separatist tinge. As I walked around the Mall with my notebook, accosting strangers and scribbling down their thoughts, what impressed me most were the internal contradictions in their views. The most obviously angry man I approached was James Bilal, 37, a supervisor for a Washington air-conditioning company. Plainly irritated to be stopped by a white journalist, he refused to make eye contact and answered my questions with curt monosyllables. The problem blacks faced in America, he said, was “white supremacy.” Nothing was going to change for his people unless whites changed. “The only other option,” he said without smiling, “is to kill each other.” I was about to give up when, virtually without prompting, he offered: “Of course, whites and blacks will have to learn to live together in one country. People are people. We all breathe air and drink water. We all go to the bathroom the same way.”

Others were equally divided. “We don’t want to be separate,” insisted Ricky Jones, 34, a self-employed painter from the Washington area. “We want the same. We want to be equal. We need whites, and they need us as much as we need them.” When I asked him why he had come to the march, he replied, “I like Farrakhan. I admire him. He’s not prejudiced. He speaks the truth and the truth hurts.” When I asked David Herron, an AT&T employee in his 40s from Montclair, N.J., whether by rallying

around Farrakhan he was making a choice between integration and separatism, he answered bluntly, “No, we’ve always been separate.” But then, looking at the American symbols that bracket the Mall—the Capitol and the Washington Monument—the well-heeled manager mused: “There’s the dilemma. My people built that. We planned this city. We have a strong connection here. We’re part of this country.”

Rejected by the Mainstream

None of the dichotomies was more affecting than that of men who longed to join the mainstream but felt it had rejected them. The middle-aged Virginian, James Burrell, confided, “As I see it, we’re Americans. I don’t feel



African-American. I'm American." But at the same time, this plainly successful, soft-spoken, friendly man was driven by the conviction that most whites wished blacks ill and even sought actively to harm them. There is more prejudice now than 30 years ago, he claimed. Whites try systematically to destroy black businesses. The changes since the 1950s mean nothing: They were made under pressure. And even now, whites are making no effort to alter their treatment of blacks. I asked Burrell what, if anything, whites could do to prove their goodwill. He said he wanted a collective apology. But it was hard to believe this would ease his deep and, even to a stranger, wrenching alienation. "We are not happy," he said, his words heavy with disappointment. "We're trying to tell you that. If we were happy, we wouldn't be out here."

Whatever the demonstrators said about integration, however much they complained of their alienation from the mainstream, they were getting on and fitting in better than any prior generation of blacks. Like much of the crowd, the men I traveled to the march with were overwhelmingly middle class, white collar, and suburban. Most held jobs their fathers could only have dreamed of: deputy mayor, college dean, corporate executive, police officer. A survey of the marchers found that nearly two-thirds had been to college and close to 70 percent earned more than \$30,000 a year. Most came to adulthood after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and had never experienced legal discrimination. Whatever slights they had faced, most were successfully pursuing the American dream.

Competing Impulses

So why were they here on the Mall, making a point of their separateness and chanting "We want Farrakhan"? The answer, plainly, lay in the anger and alienation that spilled out in response to my questions. The integrationist dream apparently was not dead. But it was far from clear that this dusty, old-fashioned hope could compete with the estrangement these men felt. They were hardly alone. The ambivalence they expressed is widespread in black America and, among the less privileged, often more damaging. Why, at this time of unprecedented opportunity and historically high black educational levels, do so many black children feel that success in school is shameful—"acting white"? Why, in an era when more blacks than ever are a part of middle-class mass culture—the rainbow world of pop entertainment, mall shopping, and television—are so many resolutely convinced that they can never fit in ("It's a black thing, you wouldn't understand")? The parallel to the 1963 March on Washington came to mind again. When most blacks were locked outside the system, they had wanted in. Now that they had arrived, they were uncomfortable. Riding home from the march, it was hard to know what to think: The men's competing impulses seemed so strong—and in the end irreconcilable.

Blacks certainly are not the first American group to try to balance identity with citizenship. Many Catholics want their kids to marry other Catholics; Jews have bar mitzvahs and still feel American. This is what being American has always been about. But for blacks, the added color-coded resentment that often comes with racial awareness can make the balancing act all but impossible. The men I spoke to at the Million Man March weren't just balancing; they were being pulled apart. Many were enraged at white America, convinced it was at the root of all their problems. They were so alienated they could not see white goodwill when they happened on it. And yet most also yearned to make peace with whites and find a place in the mainstream.

The integrationist dream apparently was not dead. But it was far from clear that this dusty, old-fashioned hope could compete with the estrangement these men felt. They were hardly alone. The ambivalence they expressed is widespread in black America and, among the less privileged, often more damaging.

This extreme ambivalence is nothing new. In the early 1960s, lifelong integrationist James Farmer, head of the Congress of Racial Equality, and Muslim minister Malcolm X, then an unquestioning separatist, traveled the country debating before largely black audiences. Farmer had expected that the way they were received could be read as an informal referendum, a gauge of the strength of ordinary blacks' integrationism and separatism. Instead, he found that both he and Malcolm elicited thunderous, virtually unanimous applause: wild enthusiasm for joining the mainstream, and wild enthusiasm for staying out. The debate audiences, like the men on the Mall, apparently felt no need to choose. "There is a little bit of Martin," the old cliché ran, "and a little bit of Malcolm in every black." Farmer himself admitted a weakness for Malcolm's tough, angry talk. Though he disagreed with every word, Farmer explained, he liked hearing it. Like a strong shot of whiskey, it felt good.

White America's Responsibility

As an outsider at the march, it was easy to think for a moment, "This is not my problem. This is something

blacks have to work out within and among themselves, something no white person can or should hope to influence.” That is a belief that many of the demonstrators might have endorsed. But as the past makes all too clear, it isn’t true. White America as much as black leadership is responsible for encouraging the alienation these men feel, first by failing to include them, but also by patronizing their angry standoffishness.

It is easy to blame Farrakhan, as many whites do. He is part of a long tradition of demagogic, hate-mongering, tribalist leaders who appeal to blacks’ anger and fears of racial inauthenticity. Full-fledged separatists aren’t the only ones working this side of the street. Plenty of black mayors, ministers, and members of Congress make their careers by thumbing their noses at the white man. Like the men at the march, these leaders are sometimes torn between mainstream aspiration and alienation. But whatever their feelings, they along with the Farrakhans have plenty to account for in their people’s marked shift of mood from hopeful to bitter since the 1963 march.

Just how much difference a different leadership would have made is a somewhat nuanced question. Blacks choose their leaders from a wide pool of possibilities; their alienation is reflected in their spokesmen. It is naïve to think that if only King had lived, all would be different in black America. Still, there can be little doubt: Stronger integrationist leadership would at least offer some choice to the ambivalent men on the Mall. It would give them a different pole to rally around, and in the end could make for a very different climate of opinion.

There are obvious villains on the white side too, starting with slavery and continuing into the present. Virginian James Burrell’s skepticism of whites may be exaggerated and blind to the sweeping changes of the past 30 years, but it did not appear out of thin air. “If white America is frightened of Louis Farrakhan,” another marcher told me, “they have to understand they created him.”

Mainstream Culture

But Farrakhan and David Duke are easy targets and, in the end, a small part of the problem. Much more pervasive and insidious are the signals that come from the mainstream culture. Sometimes the message is transmitted by a policy: affirmative action, for example, which reminds young blacks at every turn that what matters most about them is not their ability but their race. More often, though, the innuendo is subliminally laced through a magazine article, a TV sitcom, a disc jockey’s patter. “The racial demagogues are right,” the encoded message goes. “Color *is* the most important thing.”

The assumption runs so deep now that we rarely notice it. Taking their cue from the Black Power activists of the 60s, many Americans, black and white, have bought into the idea that the United States is inherently racist; that there is something inalterably different about

blacks; that skin color equals identity; that blacks are at least as African as American; that they are right to be angry, mistrustful, and defiant; and that it is foolish or worse for them to try too hard to fit in. The disc jockeys and newscasters don’t put it that bluntly. But the message is always there, and it’s unmistakable. If a white man comes across it once a day, a black man comes across it a hundred times. It isn’t hard to imagine the ef-

It is naïve to think that if only King had lived, all would be different in black America. Still, there can be little doubt: Stronger integrationist leadership would at least offer some choice to the ambivalent men on the Mall.

fect on men like those who showed up for the march: young, first-generation middle class, poised on the threshold of mainstream success, but torn between wanting to trust whites and wanting to mistrust them.

How many of the young men at the march went to a college that asked them to arrive a week early their freshman year to attend an orientation for “students of color”? The seminars’ sponsors, no doubt, believe they are encouraging integration. In fact, as one orientation alumnus once told me, “I learned about kinds of discrimination I had never even imagined before, and after that I was looking out for it.” Another example: My town’s weekly newspaper recently ran a front-page story about the teaching staff in the local schools. It reported that 54 percent of the schools’ students were black but only 28 percent of the teachers. I thought this might be followed by a discussion: Some find this discrepancy troubling, others say that what counts is good teaching. Not a chance. The assumption, so deeply rooted it did not need stating, was that black students could only learn from black educators.

‘Black in America’

This spring, *The New Yorker* released a special issue entitled “Black in America.” This kind of group celebration has become so conventional that few questioned the concept. The magazine was devoted mainly to profiles: a black banker, a black Supreme Court justice, a black basketball star, a black sociologist, a black musician, a black actress, several black political figures. The subjects had little in common save for their shared skin color, which to *The New Yorker* was the important thing, trumping

everything else. The opening piece declared itself plainly: This issue of the magazine was committed to “the ‘differentness’ of blacks—what might be called African-American exceptionalism.” Some 150 pages later, it was still hard to say just what that “differentness” was, unless, perhaps, anger and alienation.

If anything, the issue proved how airless and imprisoning racial identity can be. A key theme of the profiles was whether the subject was “black enough”: Did he have the right views on affirmative action, did he care enough about ghetto kids, did he spend enough time among other blacks, did he dress too formally or walk too stiffly? Actress Angela Bassett, who appeals to whites as well as blacks, is presented as only marginally sympathetic—until, it turns out redeemingly, she not only speaks black English, but prefers it. “Bill is a real get-down brother behind closed doors,” another piece quoted a friend saying about the preeminent sociologist William Julius Wilson, as if this were an important qualification. Even Clarence Thomas makes the grade. Conservative as he is, he is no stranger to rage. “I know how to burn with hate,” he is quoted as saying.

The New Yorker wasn’t wrong to highlight this matter of authenticity, a driving concern for many blacks. But do the editors of one of the nation’s leading mainstream journals really want to adopt the black-enough test as their own, without so much as questioning it and its potentially poisonous effects?

By itself, this one issue of *The New Yorker* is unlikely to have a lasting effect. The problem is that each drop of water adds to the larger cultural tide. There is more than enough reinforcement of racial identity close to home. Parental ambivalence about the mainstream, peer pressure, political pandering, casual comments from celebrities, reigning ideas about what’s cool—it all adds up. Combined with the natural clannishness of any group, it is a powerful push in the direction of color-coded mistrust. Add to that the drumbeat of mainstream insistence, and contrary ideas are rendered all but unthinkable.

Offering More Choices

Like it or not, we are all responsible. By suspending its better judgment—its sense of proportion about group identity—white America has helped create not just Louis Farrakhan, but many millions of remote, resentful blacks susceptible to his message.

Nothing white America does is going to wipe out black mistrust in the near future. The men I met at the march will probably live out their lives torn by two impulses: one integrationist, the other wary, if not angry. What the larger society can do is offer the men more alternatives, creating space and encouragement for the side of them that wants to trust white people and thinks that what we all have in common is more important than what separates us. This is not a job for policymak-

ers. We don’t need more busing, more affirmative action, more socially engineered “integration.” Important as it is, racial interaction is occurring already. Whites’ responsibility now is to think through the signals they are sending. Just because some black students say they want separate dorms, does that mean the university should grant them? Does it really help anyone to make it easier to vote by color? Do we want to encourage black children to admire and emulate only black role models? Whites cannot and should not decide anything for black people. But they can avoid closing off choices, or favoring one choice so much that there might as well be no alternatives.

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One of the last men I spoke to at the Million Man March was Shelton Brooks, 35, a Navy officer living in the Washington area. A shy man originally from the South, he had the impeccable manners of a lost era and the earnest, open-faced hope to go with them. “I don’t think we’ve given up on the Martin Luther King idea,” Brooks said. “It got caught in the crossfire. A generation collapsed and it took 25 years to bring back the idea. But it’s not gone. Like bell-bottom pants—things come back.”

Oddly enough, among the other men at the march, his integrationist faith didn’t seem that fragile or naïve. Much more troubling, unless things change, is to think of his hope trying to stand up under the weight of our unrelentingly color-conscious culture. ♦

Tamar Jacoby is writing a book about the fate of integration in New York, Detroit, and Atlanta.

ONE FLESH

America Is Experiencing an Unprecedented Increase in Black-White Intermarriage

BY DOUGLAS J. BESHAROV AND TIMOTHY S. SULLIVAN

In 25 years of teaching, I've only had one person cry in class. A very dark-skinned African-American man in one of my law school courses had snapped at a much lighter-skinned African-American woman who was defending interracial adoption. "You wouldn't understand," he told her. "You're not really black. Your mother is white."

I will always remember the pain on that young woman's face. For years after, I assumed that her family situation was unusual. But then I started noticing that many of my black friends were married to whites. I vowed to learn more about interracial marriage.

Recently, I started an intensive research effort on the subject with economist Timothy S. Sullivan. What follows is a report of what we have learned so far.

A Steady 30-Year Increase

Until the U.S. Supreme Court's 1967 decision in *Loving v. Virginia*, states were constitutionally permitted to ban mixed-race marriages. And many did. More than half of the states had anti-miscegenation statutes in 1945; 19 still had them in 1966. A 1965 Gallup Poll found that 42 percent of Northern whites supported such laws, as did 72 percent of Southern whites.

Marriage license records from various Northern cities document a scattering of black-white marriages even before the Civil War, with a small increase after slavery ended. But for more than a hundred years, such marriages remained rare. According to the 1960 census, for example, less than 1 percent of married blacks, male and female, had a white spouse.

Over the next 30 years, however, the census documents a steady increase in the number of black men married to white women and, more recently, an increase in the number of black women married to white men. In those years, the proportion of marriages between black men and white women more than quintupled (rising from 0.8 percent in 1960 to 4.3 percent in 1990); it about doubled for those between black women and white men (rising from 0.8 percent to 1.7 percent). In 1990, of all marriages in which one or both persons were African-

American, about 6 percent were black-white marriages, compared with only 1.7 percent in 1960.

Because these percentages are for all *existing* marriages, they obscure recent sharp increases in the rate of intermarriage. For the proportion of all marriages involving African-Americans in which one spouse was white to have increased threefold in 30 years, the proportion of *new* marriages between whites and blacks would have had to increase even more.

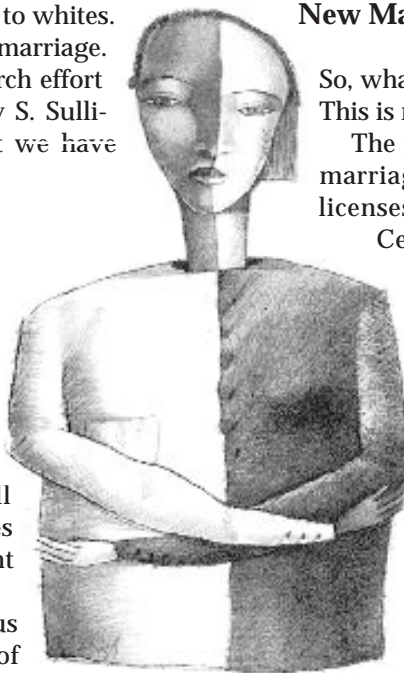
New Marriages Between Blacks and Whites

So, what percent of new marriages are interracial? This is not an easy figure to get.

The primary source of information about new marriages comes from data on state marriage licenses collected each year by the National Center for Health Statistics. Unfortunately, these data are of limited usefulness. States are not required to submit the data and, currently, about 40 states and the District of Columbia do so. Moreover, many states have removed questions about race from their marriage licenses, or have made such questions optional. As a result, since 1970, only 32 states have consistently reported race information to the NCHS.

Even this partial information from marriage licenses reveals a rapidly rising rate of new marriages between black men and white women: up from 1.9 percent of all marriages involving a black groom in 1970, to 8.9 percent in 1993. The incidence of black women marrying white men, although not as common, rose even faster, especially after 1980 (from 0.7 percent of all marriages involving a black bride in 1970, to 1.9 percent in 1980, to 3.9 percent in 1993).

These figures, however, must be viewed as the conservative estimates of new black-white marriages, because so many key states are missing from the data. According to the 1990 census, the five states with the most interracial couples (between all races, not just black and white) are California, Florida, Oklahoma, Texas, and Washington. California, for example, had 26 percent of all interracial couples. Of these states, only Florida is included in the NCHS data.



Because of this limitation, we pursued an alternative source of data that, to our knowledge, has not been previously used to study new marriages: the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The June CPS regularly includes a fertility and birth expectations supplement; its 1985, 1990, and 1995 surveys also contained a set of marital history questions that enabled us to determine the month and year of marriage. With this data, we constructed a file of new marriages in 1985 and 1990. (The data from 1995 are not yet publicly available.)

We believe that we have found a strong, unambiguous trend toward integration within American families—at a time when so many public figures are bemoaning a deterioration of race relations and a further separation of the races.

Using the June CPS, we estimate that, in 1990, 9.5 percent of black grooms married white brides, compared with the NCHS figure of 7.8 percent. (Because of the small CPS sample size, the figures for black women marrying white men are too unreliable to present.) Our estimate for 1985 (5.6 percent) is about the same as the NCHS figure.

Although the interracial marriage rate for African-American women is climbing faster than that for African-American men, it is still only half their rate. Why?

This is a tricky question to answer, especially in these days of heightened sensitivity to gender and race. M. Belinda Tucker and Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, both associated with the University of California-Los Angeles Center for African-American Studies, describe the most common explanation: "Women are more likely to select [a spouse] on the basis of 'earning capacity' or 'ambition,' while men are more likely to choose on the basis of physical attraction. Although it is possible for a given black male to meet the earnings/ambition standard (despite the lower earnings of black males as a group), black women are less likely to meet the currently valued European standards of beauty (e.g., long blond hair, blue eyes, thin noses.) Earnings potential as a standard of mate selection is simply more colorblind than is physical attractiveness, which in American society continues to display a Eurocentric bias."

We would add another possible reason for the lower number of black women marrying white men: children. The presence of children lowers a woman's marriage-

ability, regardless of her race. Having children out of wedlock lowers it further, because she is less likely to receive child support and because it weakens her ability to insist on marriage as a condition for continued cohabitation. The simple fact is that African-American females are more than twice as likely as whites to have had a baby out of wedlock.

First Comes Love, Then Comes Marriage . . .

Another enormously portentous change seems to be occurring along with the rapid growth in interracial marriages. In the past, interracial marriages tended to come later in life, often as second marriages, thus obviating the issue of having children. Now, however, these marriages appear to be more like same-race marriages—with an equal likelihood of producing children. As an unanticipated benefit, our use of the CPS allowed us to examine the timing of interracial marriages and the childbearing expectations of these couples.

First, we found that the proportion of interracial marriages that were the white bride's first marriage rose sharply. We estimate that, in 1985, 32.9 percent of white women married to a black man were in their second (or higher) marriage. By 1990, this proportion had dropped by a third, to 21.7 percent. For the prior marital status of all white women married to black men to have changed this much, there must have been an even greater increase in first marriages among white women who marry black men.

Second, we found no statistical difference in expected fertility between white women in interracial marriages and those in same-race marriages. Actually, a higher percentage of wives in mixed-race marriages said that they planned to have children (35.4 percent versus 29 percent), although part of this can, no doubt, be explained by their relative youth. (Because the intermarriage rate has increased in recent years, the average age in the total pool of interracial marriages would be expected to fall.) We had a similar finding in our new marriage sample.

These certainly appear to be two massive changes in behavior. But two data points, 1985 and 1990, are too slender a reed upon which to conclude that they are actually happening. We would be more hesitant to report these findings were they not so consistent with the overall growth in interracial marriages, with other data concerning education and employment in such marriages, and, most importantly, with a dramatic increase in the number of mixed-race children.

How many mixed-race children are there? This is also a difficult number to get. Many states no longer require that the parents' race be recorded on birth certificates. Researchers at the Census Bureau used census data on the race of adults in primary families to make an estimate. They found that, in 1990, nearly 2 million children resided in homes where the primary adults were of dif-

ferent races. That is about 4.1 percent of the children who lived in two-parent households, and about double the 1 million such children in 1980, and more than four times the number in 1970. Similarly, of the 3.7 million black children who, in 1990, lived with two parents, 6.5 percent had a non-black parent in the household.

This kind of calculation is, of course, an imperfect gauge. Some children living with parents of different races, for example, are stepchildren or are adopted. On the other hand, mixed-race children living with a divorced or never-married parent are not included in this sample. Thus, although the estimate may be off by as much as 20 percent, it seems clear that there has been a tremendous increase in the number of children being raised by adults of both races.

Change Is in the Air

One should not get carried away with the sharp increase in interracial marriage that we have found. It does not prove that a new morning in race relations has arrived. Even by our estimates, African-Americans are substantially less likely to marry whites than are Hispanics, Asians, or Native Americans, for example. And, of course, we have been presenting a trend that is a percentage of new marriages at a time when there has been a society-wide decline in marriage.

Our findings, however, do suggest that positive change is in the air. If they are correct, either racism (at least on an interpersonal level) has declined, or the relative marriageability of African-Americans has risen, or there is more opportunity for races to mix—or all three. But one thing is clear: The rise in interracial marriages is not consistent with a worsening of these conditions. (There may, however, be something of a distributional effect, with African-Americans at the top of the socioeconomic ladder doing much better than those at the bottom.)

We believe that we have found a strong, unambiguous trend toward integration within American families—at a time when so many public figures are bemoaning a deterioration of race relations and a further separation of the races. Moreover, the sharp increase of earlier marriages between the races has already led to a rising number of children who call themselves “mixed”—and promises even more of these children in the very near future.

As these young people grow up and become more

Existing Marriages Between African-Americans and Whites, 1960–1990

(as a percentage of all marriages involving at least one black)

Year	Total	Black husband/ white wife	Black wife/ white husband
1960	1.7%	0.8%	0.8%
1970	1.9%	1.2%	0.7%
1980	3.4%	2.7%	0.8%
1990	5.9%	4.3%	1.7%

Source: Authors' calculations based on Census Bureau data

New Marriages Between African-Americans and Whites, 1970–1993

(as a percentage of all marriages involving at least one black)

Year	Total	Black groom/ white bride	Black bride/ white groom
1970	2.6%	1.9%	0.7%
1980	6.6%	4.9%	1.9%
1990	10.8%	7.8%	3.6%
1993	12.1%	8.9%	3.9%
June CPS data			
1985		5.6%	na
1990		9.5%	na

Source: Authors' calculations based on Census Bureau and NCHS data

visible in society, they will be an immediate reminder of the growing integration of marriage in this country. And like the young woman in my class, they will also be a new force in the race debate. As one mixed-race student at Brown University said about opposition to interracial dating, “It’s indirectly expressing disapproval for [our] existence.”

Even more than their parents, such young people may be the best hope for the future of American race relations. ♦

Douglas J. Besharov is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research and a visiting professor at the University of Maryland’s School of Public Affairs. Timothy S. Sullivan is an instructor in the economics department of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

MOVIN' ON UP

Democrats Need To Adapt to the Reality of a Growing Black Middle Class

BY ALAN WOLFE

BOSTON

If the Democratic Party does not change to accommodate new racial realities in America, new racial realities will change the Democratic Party.

The most important of these is the emergence of a black middle class—one which follows the creation of an Asian-American middle class and which will soon be followed by a Hispanic one. Already, Republicans are watching this development with a certain glee. “We, the party of Lincoln,” they say to black Americans, “can offer you more than the Democrats. Wedded to the idea that race is just a synonym for poverty, Democrats will never speak to your true interests: which, like those of other Americans, are always about money.” Just as Italian-Americans became Republicans as they moved to the suburbs, hopes the party of Newt Gingrich and Trent Lott, so will African-Americans.

Whether this scenario will come true or not is beyond my competence to predict (there is considerable evidence, though, that whatever their class affiliation, black Americans will have a hard time forgetting Republican opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Nixon’s “Southern strategy,” just as they will likely continue favoring Democratic social programs). Either way, the ultimate significance of the *embourgeoisement* of black Americans will not be at the polls, but in the way Americans talk about race. That conversation, if it develops as it should, will be helpful to Democrats, even if—perhaps especially if—more black Americans start voting Republican.

Blacks and the Underclass

American politics has long been coded with respect to race in ways that harm Democrats. Because the problems of the underclass and the problems of black Americans overlap significantly, many people conflate the two. Democrats have rightly asked the hard question of what society should do for those left behind as jobs and opportunities left the cities. But Democrats have remained silent on issues of personal behavior, responsibility, character, and moral conduct for fear that, if they speak up in connection with problems of the inner city, they will be accused of racism. This has opened them to Republican charges that they are out of touch with mainstream values, let alone ordinary common sense.

Splitting the connection between underclass behavior and race is the key to addressing both. It is politically suicidal to ignore the behavioral aspects of poverty—crime really is committed by criminals, many teenagers who have babies really are sexually promiscuous, permanent welfare really does warp values. Moreover, such blindness doesn’t help the poor. We owe them more than money. If we do not extend to them our concern, especially about behavior that perpetuates a vicious cycle of disadvantage, we treat them as objects of pity, not as fellow citizens. If we want to achieve equality, we must start treating people equally. And it is anything but equal to withhold criticism from those who need it simply because they are economically disadvantaged.

The same realism that forces us to confront poverty as it is also should force us to confront race as it is. Ethnicity in America has always contained elements of genius: We divide people into categories and let them take pride in these categories, but then do all we can to render the categories symbolic and weak rather than real and strong. One reason why it has been so hard for the white majority to treat blacks the same as other racial and ethnic groups is that some expressions of black pride—demands for an Afrocentric curriculum, for example—seem wildly disconnected to the economic problems of the inner city. Once we break the link between poverty and race, black pride may become far less threatening to whites, in the same way that Irish pride eventually became less threatening to Jews. If African-Americans are to be treated with full respect, they require the freedom to make something of race—the first step, if our previous history of ethnicity is any guide, in making race symbolic. Surely, there is something amiss in a society that condemns black Americans for their solidarity when all other ethnic groups have used their bonds and loyalties to advance.

In short, the emergence of the black middle class as a major force in American politics could “decode” race, enabling us to discuss important issues without maligning one another’s motives. Consider one such issue: how society views the move of the middle class to the suburbs. Many social critics, including Labor Secretary Robert Reich, view the very existence of suburbia as an affront. Middle-class Americans, Reich charged in his book *The Work of Nations*, have dug a moat around themselves, withdrawing into planned suburban communities or urban condominiums and then turning their

backs on the poor. As long as race and poverty are linked, the poor are often presumed to be black. As a result, middle-class Americans' efforts to enjoy the fruits of their success becomes grist for charges of racism.

Now assume that the middle-class individuals who have moved to the suburbs are black. In many respects, the picture doesn't change at all; we are still dealing with people who have achieved a certain level of success and who desire the trappings of the good life. But the charge of racism loses credibility when those who move share the same race as the people from whom they are allegedly fleeing. Black suburbanization frees us to talk about suburbanization in general: why people find it attractive, how it should affect suburbanites' attitudes toward city dwellers, and what it means for the future of relations between cities and their suburbs.

Middle-Class Values

For the past 18 months, my research assistant Maria Porch and I have been interviewing suburban Americans in the Boston, Atlanta, Tulsa, and San Diego areas. Very few of those we spoke to felt they had fled the city; they moved to or choose to remain in the suburbs, they tell us, because of the suburbs' positive features. Of course, they could have been lying to us, or to themselves, about their fears of urban crime and disorder. But significantly, there was very little difference between white and black suburbanites on these issues. If anything, the black suburbanites to whom we talked—mostly in Atlanta—were a bit more honest in discussing their preferences. After all, some of them moved from the inner city; they know whereof they speak when they speak of urban ills.

The one conspicuous difference between blacks and whites in our study involved matters of racial pride. The fact that we did many of our interviews at the time of the O.J. Simpson verdict may have produced biased responses. Still, we found that, no matter how conservative middle-class blacks may be on religious or economic issues, they believe that racism still exists in America, leaving them with no choice but to take pride in the accomplishments of their group. Hence, many blacks said integration of their neighborhoods or schools was not a high priority; black schools, we were frequently told, can be as good as, if not better than, white ones. As a strong believer in racial integration, I was troubled by their words. But I did not find them especially threatening. Their responses reminded me of the Jewish children with whom I grew up noting how Sandy Koufax refused to pitch on the high holidays.

Taking Voters for Granted

As more African-Americans move to the suburbs, some portion will, in all likelihood, become Republican. Democrats should realize that a situation in which 90 per-

cent of a particular group votes for them is not healthy, whether that group is composed of farmers, the elderly, or members of a racial minority. When a party assumes it has a group's allegiance, or vice versa, political laziness replaces the need to build alliances and develop new ideas. For every African-American who becomes a Republican, someone else—black, white, Asian, or Hispanic—will be attracted to a Democratic Party that can speak to common concerns, not particular identities. It is in the long term interests of both Democrats and African-Americans when the former can no longer take the votes of the latter for granted.

As more African-Americans move to the suburbs, some portion will, in all likelihood, become Republican. Democrats should realize that a situation in which 90 percent of a particular group votes for them is not healthy, whether that group is composed of farmers, the elderly, or members of a racial minority.

Socialists used to believe that working-class solidarity would render ethnic nationalism harmless. They were wrong. In the long run, the hope that black *embourgeoisement* will similarly defang the virulence of racial talk also may prove to be more of a dream than a reality. But I think there are aspects of the middle-class experience that are different from that of the working-class experience. For the middle-class dream and the American dream have always been the same. And the American dream has drawn its power from its attraction to people from many different racial and ethnic backgrounds. This dream is still alive, as the number of immigrants in pursuit of it daily testifies. For the first time in our history, African-Americans are entering the middle class in striking numbers. This could easily make the situation of African-Americans who are left behind worse. But it also could give the rest of us, once we are no longer divided by race, all the incentive we need make their conditions better. ♦

Alan Wolfe teaches sociology at Boston University and is writing a book on middle-class morality.

SUSPICIOUS MINDS

Is It Ever Proper To Take Race Into Account on America's Mean Streets?

BY RANDALL L. KENNEDY

Little has poisoned race relations more than the resentments generated by crime and the efforts to avoid or deter it. Fearing crime, people of all hues engage in all sorts of race-sensitive tactics. They include decisions to avoid blacks in public spaces for fear of encountering a "menace to society"; decisions to disfavor blacks in hiring on the grounds that they are more likely than others to prey on their employers; decisions not to show blacks certain properties for fear that crime will follow them; and decisions to police blacks more closely than others on the grounds that blacks commit a disproportionate number of street crimes relative to their share of the population.

These decisions create a circle of resentment. The practitioners of discrimination feel angry at blacks for compelling them to take expensive and inconvenient protective measures. Blacks subject to discrimination, in turn, feel resentful because they must pay for the fear generated by criminals with whom they are lumped by dint of color. Many of them voice this resentment by attacking as racists those who view blackness as an indicator of potential criminality.

That charge, in turn, deepens the anger of the targets of that allegation. In the playing of the "race card," they see yet another denial that blacks, too, bear some responsibility for the sorry state of racial affairs. Why, after all, do Jesse Jackson and many others feel relief when they hear footsteps on a city street late at night and then, turning around anxiously, see a white face? They are relieved not because they are racists, but because they are responding to a vital calculation that many believe is crucial to safety on America's mean streets: the fact that a person stands a greater chance of being robbed by some-

BOSTON

one who is black as opposed to someone who is white.

This observation, of course, kicks off yet another round of resentment. And on and on the wheel turns.

How should we respond?

First, we must recognize that this is a complex issue and acknowledge that each of the contending sides has a strong point. Indignation should give way to tentativeness as we seek to answer whether, or in what circum-

stances, it is proper to take racial identity into account when deciding whom to suspect and whom to trust.

One way to manage the complexity of the issue is to divide it into three contexts. The first involves decisionmakers who are public officials (e.g., the police), which triggers the federal constitution. The second involves decisionmakers engaged in business (e.g., taxi drivers), which triggers federal, state, and local anti-discrimination laws. Finally, the third involves decisionmakers engaged in wholly private, virtually unregulated activity (e.g., a lone pedestrian).

The First Context: The Police

Most courts have held that police may take race into account as one factor among

several in deciding whom to question or detain. One common reaction to such rulings (in which I sometimes indulge) is unequivocal condemnation, along with the urge to dismiss them as racist. There are, however, strong arguments in their favor. First and foremost, they are based on findings that police have used the race factor not to harass, but solely as a tool for efficient law enforcement. A judge could well say, as does Cornel West, that "race matters," that the law should recognize social realities, and that one of these realities is that blackness is so highly correlated with certain offenses in certain

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circumstances that it is only reasonable to permit the police to take that correlation into account.

Many who scoff at the notion of colorblindness when the discussion is about affirmative action suddenly become colorblind fundamentalists when the discussion is about race-sensitive policing. But a similarly striking inconsistency is noticeable within the ranks of opponents of affirmative action. Some of its most fervent critics declaim incessantly about how the state should never take race into account in allocating burdens and benefits. Yet these same critics either wholly ignore race-sensitive policing, or find some way to view it as legitimate.

Those who support affirmative action on the grounds that government should be able to take race into account so long as race matters significantly in society should also be prepared to accept race-sensitive policing. Similarly, those who attack affirmative action on the grounds that all racial discrimination is wrong and destructive of democratic values should also be willing to attack race-sensitive policing.

My point is not to embrace one conclusion or another. Rather, it is to suggest the need for further hard thinking, and softened voices, on a controversy whose resolution is harder than the rhetoric surrounding it would suggest.

The Second Context: Taxi Drivers

The epitome of the second context is the cab driver who practices what he believes is self-protective discrimination. The contemporary folklore of race relations is full of stories by black men who recount being ignored by such drivers on account of race. Some describe the experience as if it were the 1990s equivalent of being excluded from a lunch counter. One black man confessed to *The Washington Post* that “whenever the moment comes to hail a cab, I’m ridden with anxiety. My stomach knots and my blood boils.” Jake Lamar recounts a particularly poignant story in his book *Bourgeois Blues*. On a rainy night in Manhattan, he twice tried hailing cabs for himself and his date only to be overlooked by cabbies who stopped for whites nearby. Only when Lamar’s date, a white woman, sought alone to hail a cab did one stop.

Significantly, much of the protest against this practice is not aimed at racial discrimination *per se*, but only against what is perceived as *unreasonable* racial discrimination. Thus, journalist Juan Williams does not unreservedly condemn cabbies’ use of race in deciding whom to avoid. What Williams objects to is what he perceives as some cabbies’ laziness in using blackness *alone* as a signal triggering avoidance. “Cab drivers who don’t pick up young black men as a rule are making a poorly informed decision,” he writes. “Racism is a lazy man’s substitute for using good judgment.”

This complaint centers upon cabbies’ alleged inability or unwillingness to distinguish between blacks who are obviously respectable and those who are obviously

thuggish. This complaint produces that special indignation from black men who have been passed over by cabbies despite the fact that they were wearing the accouterments of respectability and affluence—suit, tie, briefcase. As one such man said, “I feel the taxi drivers should be able to distinguish me from the others, especially from those who might take them in a bad neighborhood, who’d jump out of the cab to evade paying, or who’d rob them.”

By conceding the propriety of taking race into account at all, however, the cabbies’ critics give away much of their critique. The fact is, cabby discrimination is more discriminating than often acknowledged. The cabbies who refuse to provide service to young black men after dark are willing, apparently, to provide service to black women at any time, older black men at any time, and young black men during the day. Taking race into account with other factors as well, cabbies engage in a discriminatory process of customer selection that advances their immediate interest, albeit to the detriment of law-abiding blacks who need a cab.

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To say it is reasonable for cabbies to feel apprehensive about dealing with certain young black men is *not* to say, however, that cabbies should be allowed to practice discrimination—even in its “reasonable” form. For one thing, while it is analytically possible to distinguish racial discrimination caused by bigotry from racial discrimination caused by a desire to avoid danger, it is virtually impossible to distinguish between the two in practice. It is hard enough to enforce anti-discrimination laws because of the problems entailed in isolating racial animus from other, permissible bases of action. If the legal system now undertook to complicate matters further by prohibiting only “unreasonable” racial discrimination, the bar against *any* racial discrimination, including the malevolent type, would be hopelessly compromised.

Second, by permitting “reasonable” discrimination, society would stigmatize those young men whose color and other attributes trigger cabbies’ self-protective evasions. It makes a difference that a cabby engages in dis-

crimination out of a desire to protect himself rather than out of racial bigotry. But that difference will likely be indiscernible to observers and to those whose color is in part what brands them as undesirables. Unable to differentiate between the motives that prompt discrimination, many of its victims will assume the worst and respond in ways that society has an interest in avoiding. One response is sheer hurt, the psychological agony of feeling insulted. Another response is to avoid those situations that potentially give rise to such hurts, a strategy that limits the activities of these persons and, by extension, impoverishes society as a whole. Still another response is to satisfy lowered expectations—robbing a cabby in part because doing so is expected. When people feel that they will be treated unfairly no matter what they do, they lose an incentive to conduct themselves properly. As the journalist Ellis Cose aptly observes, “So long as the dominant message sent to impressionable black boys is that they are expected to turn into savage criminals, nothing will stop substantial numbers of them from doing just that.”

Third, contrary to some assertions, anti-discrimination laws do not prevent cabbies from protecting themselves. Such laws merely prevent them from using race to shift the cost of protection onto that fraction of the black community that suffers their discrimination. The issue is not simply protection but the cost of protection and the distribution of that cost. An alternative to using race as a proxy is to obtain other means of self-protection, such as an assistant “riding shotgun,” or conducting business behind bulletproof glass, or declining to work at night, or dispensing with cash transactions and only accepting credit card payments.

The Third Context: The Lone Pedestrian

What about purely private individuals—the lone person walking home at night—who use racial cues to decide when to cross the street to avoid someone, to shift the position of a handbag, or to run for the nearest shelter?

The issue here is not whether to pass laws to regulate such conduct; Americans widely believe certain zones of privacy should be left undisturbed by the state. Rather, the issue is whether society should employ the regulatory force of reputation—the evaluation of a person by one’s peers—to stem such behavior. We must ask ourselves whether it is morally acceptable for a private individual to discriminate on the basis of race for self-protection. The recent writings of young black men contain numerous, angry, castigating references to those who avoid them on the streets. But should we criticize anyone for taking racially discriminatory self-protective action? Should we think less of them because of what they do?

Maybe we should criticize them on the grounds that their actions buttress existing racial reflexes, conflicts, mistrusts, and allocations of burdens. On the other hand,

private individuals’ contributions to these social harms are not as significant as those of the police officer, who is an agent of the state, or those of the cabbies, whom law and custom have encumbered with certain expectations. When a pedestrian engages in self-protective discrimination, his conduct is likely to have less of an audience, to be perceived far less distinctly, and to carry far less

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symbolic significance. Furthermore, the private pedestrian is in a far more precarious situation than the police officer or the cabbies, in that police and cabbies can call upon greater resources for their self-protection. To the extent that the private pedestrian faces danger alone, that person warrants the solicitude due to persons who find themselves, for reasons beyond their control, severely restricted in terms of choice.

For these reasons, we should certainly admire the lone pedestrian who refrains from using racial proxies for self-protection. But for the same reasons, we should sympathize with and qualify our criticisms of those who do resort to racial discrimination as a stratagem of self-defense. They, like all of us, are caught up in a large tragedy that will require more than individual goodwill and bravery to resolve. ♦

Randall L. Kennedy is a professor at Harvard Law School. He is writing a book on race and the American criminal justice system.

WISCONSIN WORKS

All Eyes Are Focused on the State's Plan To Replace Public Assistance

BY ANNA KONDRATAS

A week before the Indianapolis 500 in late May, there was another high-speed race, this one from Washington to Wisconsin. President Clinton and Bob Dole vied to see who would be first to publicly embrace the state's proposed replacement for welfare, known as Wisconsin Works or W-2 for short. Clinton won, praising W-2 in a national radio address just days before Dole was to travel to Wisconsin to do the same. Furious that Clinton had upstaged their presidential candidate, and doubting Clinton's sincerity, Republicans challenged him to sign legislation that would let Wisconsin implement W-2 immediately and without restriction.

If there were any questions about welfare's importance to voters this election year, the race to embrace W-2 settled them. Most states are pursuing tough welfare reform these days. But none has been as innovative as Wisconsin, which has been pioneering such reforms since Tommy Thompson, a Republican, became governor in 1987.

Wisconsin's welfare rolls have shrunk by 27 percent since the Thompson administration began its reforms. They declined dramatically in the late 1980s even as almost every other state experienced increases. While low unemployment undoubtedly played a part, the reforms and their effect on public expectations clearly were instrumental.

Assuming Washington passes a law or issues the appropriate waivers, Wisconsin's next step will be to scrap its Aid to Families with Dependent Children program and replace automatically issued welfare checks with paychecks that will have to be earned. As Thompson said when he proposed W-2 last August, the state "will provide plenty of help but not plenty of free cash" to poor families.

The Self-Sufficiency Ladder

W-2 is more than just the brainchild of a conservative governor; it reflects the state's deep progressive traditions. Indeed, the bill calling for the elimination of AFDC was introduced by State Rep. Antonio Riley, a

Democrat representing inner-city Milwaukee (*see related story on page 28*). Although some liberals expressed concerns about the specifics of W-2, which was Thompson's response to Riley's bill, most applauded its general approach and goals.

W-2 has several underlying assumptions. The first is that there should be no entitlement to welfare for those who can work; its corollary is that almost everyone is capable of some kind of work or contribution to society. W-2 also assumes that mothers *and* fathers are equally responsible for their child, regardless of their relationship to one another. The state believes it should not give up on people who try to help themselves, but that it owes nothing to those who do not. The new program is also designed to erase the artificial barrier that AFDC created between the "welfare poor" and the "working poor." Eligibility for assistance will be based on need, not family type, eliminating the advantage of having children outside marriage to qualify for aid.

When Wisconsin Works is implemented, all parents will have to work to support their children. Significantly, child care and health care will be made available to all parents—whether they have been on welfare or not—who do not earn enough to afford these services, with co-payments that rise as income increases. All told, W-2's cost in its first year will be about 10 percent greater than the current cost of welfare (\$1.1 billion versus \$996 million in this year's budget). The state, however, expects to begin reaping savings relative to this year's costs in only two to three years. Thompson has acknowledged that reform will cost more than the status quo in the beginning, but considers it a sound investment.

In the future, when an applicant walks through the door for help, the first option will be to find that person a private sector job. If an applicant cannot find one or needs training or other preparation, he or she will be referred to a subsidized "trial" job or, as a final alternative, to community service work. People who cannot go to work immediately due to physical, mental health, or substance abuse problems will receive temporary cash

assistance—but only if they seek treatment to help them overcome their problems. Even these people will be expected to work to the best of their ability in sheltered settings to earn their benefits.

No matter where they start on this “self-sufficiency ladder,” all applicants will be expected to move up and eventually out. Each step up is designed to make recipients better off financially, thus creating an incentive to move up as quickly as possible. As a further incentive, there will be a time limit for assistance at each level (individual extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis; system-wide extensions almost certainly will have to be legislated during recessions, much as is done with unemployment compensation).

To reinforce this shift from welfare to work, Wisconsin has moved its welfare bureaucracy from its health and social services department to its labor department. Services will be provided at “one-stop shopping” job centers; 35 already exist, and more are planned.

Local governments will compete with the private sector for contracts to operate the centers. Renewal of those contracts will depend in large part on the achievement of performance goals.

One final feature of W-2 is worth noting: Collecting child support under the AFDC system was hard because payments were used to offset public assistance costs. Under W-2, payments will go entirely to the custodial parent, increasing that family’s income appreciably. The broader safety net also will include both food stamps and state and federal earned income tax credits.

Every reform runs into real-world limitations and budget constraints, and W-2 is no exception. The plan’s community service segment, for example, has not yet been fully worked out and will be hard to implement. Some critics think the pay level in these jobs is too low, although raising them could jeopardize the self-sufficiency ladder’s incentive structure. Others feel the co-payments for child care and health care are too high, but

Antonio Riley on the Democrats’ Role

Wisconsin State Rep. Antonio Riley is a Democrat who represents an inner-city district in Milwaukee. His family was on welfare when he was a child, and he himself received general assistance for a short time as a young man.

Given conventional assumptions about someone with such a background, many Wisconsinites were astonished that it was Riley who sponsored the legislation to abolish Aid to Families With Dependent Children in the state. His success helped clear the way for the creation of the state’s proposed replacement for welfare, Wisconsin Works (a.k.a. W-2).

The New Democrat recently asked Lyn A. Hogan of the Progressive Policy Institute to chat with Riley about his fellow Democrats’ reaction to his bill, the party’s role in W-2’s creation, and his impression of the final product.

Q How did your fellow Democrats respond when you sponsored the bill to eliminate the welfare system?

A Some told me I was crazy. They asked how I could expect them to vote to end the welfare system when they didn’t know what the new system would look like. My question to them was, how can we keep supporting a system that doesn’t work? We keep sinking all of this money into tinkering with the current sys-

tem. Tinkering has produced some results, but it’s just tinkering. Why don’t we start from scratch and design a system that will really work?

Q It’s not clear what role, if any, Democrats played in designing and passing W-2. Was this a bipartisan effort, or not?

A The idea to replace the welfare system was actually a Democratic idea that was initially opposed by Republicans. The “rider” [calling for welfare’s repeal and its replacement by 1995] that I attached to Gov. Thompson’s “Work, Not Welfare” initiative was passed with overwhelming

Democrat support. Republicans in the assembly actually sent a letter to Thompson asking him to veto the rider. However, he eventually signed it, then called on both parties to craft a replacement plan. W-2 was designed by Republicans but with input from John Norquist, the Democratic mayor of Milwaukee, his chief of staff David Riemer, and some Democratic members of the legislature. W-2 then passed the state legislature with support from Democrats and Republicans. So, yes, the process was very bipartisan.

Antonio Riley

reducing them amid other budgetary pressures would be a tough political sales job. And critics such as Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, who just endorsed W-2 as a “good start,” think the program’s services should be expanded beyond custodial parents to all needy adults, including those without children. While such a goal is desirable in principle, and may be the direction of future anti-poverty efforts, it is simply too expensive today.

Finally, some people have raised concerns about what would happen to children under a system that expects so much of parents. If parents refuse to work or are otherwise irresponsible, they ask, wouldn’t the children suffer? But that begs the issue. Children thrive when their parents are responsible and have the means to support them; helping them become so should be the goal of any assistance system. In cases of failure, W-2 will provide a range of other supports short of giving the parent cash. Parenting and life-skills education will be offered to all

Q What are W-2’s strengths and weaknesses?

A First off, let me say that I want President Clinton to approve the federal waiver applications for W-2, but with modifications. W-2 is a great start, but we need to make changes to make it even better.

W-2’s key weakness is that it eliminates some benefits for the working poor in order to offer more services to the non-working poor. For instance, this means that some previously eligible working families will lose their health care subsidies. Unrealistically high child care co-payments and long waiting lists for child care subsidies are also serious weaknesses. Further, there aren’t enough subsidized child care providers to fill current needs, so it is likely that waiting lists will grow. Finally, I felt strongly that W-2 should include everyone, with or without children, with incomes at or below 165 percent of poverty. Such a provision would discourage teen pregnancy while helping all working poor people remain in the work force.

That said, W-2 has many strengths. It makes more people eligible for services. It involves the private sector in all facets of program operation, including contracting with the private sector to offer job placement services. The health care co-payment is very reasonable—\$20 a month for a family. That’s a great deal for the poor and working poor. Many additional people are eligible for child care subsidies. All job placement and support services will be consolidated under one roof, creating a bigger impact for the same amount of money. Finally, the entire process is decentralized. We took control of the system away from the bureaucrats and gave it to the communities. ♦

participants. Further, based on lessons learned from the state’s Work Not Welfare demonstration program, families will be linked to a comprehensive array of private and public community services, including food and clothing centers. In the most extreme cases of abuse or neglect, the state will be able to intervene as it does now.

Helping People Make the Most of Themselves

Clearly, W-2’s success will depend on the attitude and efforts of the front-line workers who run assistance programs as much as the expectations and efforts of applicants. Eight years of reforms and demonstration programs helped lay the groundwork for W-2, promoting a can-do attitude and a sense of excitement and optimism within welfare offices. Partnerships were forged with employers, nonprofit groups, for-profit contractors, and community representatives. Welfare offices were “co-located” with employment services to reinforce the notion that people should “work first, whenever possible.” Indeed, as professor of government and welfare expert Larry Mead has pointed out, Wisconsin’s approach to welfare reform is not so much about less government as about better government. As one Fond du Lac County welfare worker put it, Wisconsin practices “in your face” case management to ensure that applicants do their best to help themselves. But, the worker added, the state also ensures that social supports are in place to help them.

As W-2 demonstrates, meaningful welfare reform is not about short-term budget savings. It is about promoting values and helping people make the most of themselves. Doing these things should save money in the long run. More importantly, they will create a healthier society.

Welfare reform will not solve all our problems. In cities with high concentrations of poverty and crime and high levels of welfare dependency, reform must be accompanied by community development, improved education and transportation, and enhanced policing. Still, welfare as we know it has contributed to social and family disintegration, and it must be repaired or replaced. The W-2 approach is a first step toward making our social institutions consistent with our espoused principles regarding work, family, and responsibility. If Wisconsin is allowed to implement W-2 as designed, public assistance in America will never be the same. ♦

Anna Kondratas is a Washington-based consultant on community development and social welfare issues. She directed a Hudson Institute team that advised the Thompson administration on the development of W-2.

TANNED FOR CHILDREN

The Politics of Evasion on Parade

BY ED KILGORE

On June 1, a brilliant sunny Saturday, an estimated 250,000 people answered the call of Children's Defense Fund president Marian Wright Edelman and gathered on the Mall to "Stand for Children." Actually, there was little standing in evidence. Mostly, the participants lounged for children, dozed for children, milled around for children, and tanned for children.

The event's aimlessness appeared to be by careful design. No elected officials or political candidates were allowed near the microphones. And while whiffs of a political agenda wafted through the program—mostly in vague references to "budget priorities" and "making a national commitment to children"—speakers were careful to balance such intimations of public policy with exhortations to private and individual acts of charity and concern.

The dominant personality at the rally was not Edelman, but God, who was invoked in His or Her many names with encyclopedic thoroughness for the first third of the three-hour program. There were Christian invocations, Buddhist invocations, Muslim invocations, Sikh invocations, and Baha'i invocations; only the witches of Wicca seemed to have been left out. One group of prayers was organized around a ritual singing of that hardy campfire anthem, "Kum Bah Ya."

Soft Focus Hides Hard Edges

The soft focus of Stand for Children was all the more remarkable given the nature of the convener and the convened. Edelman, after all, has firmly established herself as the Horatio of 1990s liberalism, the one public figure offering an unembarrassed defense of the welfare state and the entitlement system—willing, indeed, to insist on the bureaucratic status quo as a moral and religious im-

WASHINGTON

perative. Had she chosen to make the event a loud-and-proud rally for Old Liberalism, the throngs undoubtedly would have responded with lusty approval, drawn largely as they were from public sector unions and the far-flung precincts of the poverty industry.

But instead of a rally for a fighting faith, the event had the look and feel of a vast company picnic for an ideology that cannot articulate a message more sophisticated than, "I love kids."

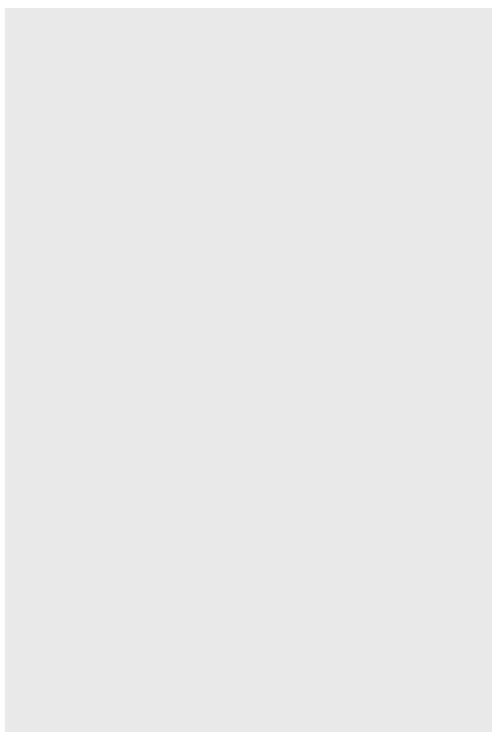
Perhaps watery sentimentality is the only remaining unifying theme for traditional liberals. After all, many of the groups sponsoring Stand for Children were also enthusiastic participants earlier this year in the Stand for Middle-Class Old Folks—the largely successful media campaign to oppose any changes in the Medicare entitlement.

A true stand for children would involve people asking unsettling questions about the role of middle-class entitlements in heaping debt on future generations while squeezing investments in their health, welfare, and education to the margins. People would also have to come to grips with, rather than simply ignore, the compelling evidence that current programs ostensibly aimed at helping children are undermining the family structure essential to their nurturance.

Until liberals confront the real choices facing the country, they will continue to lose ground in the political wars. Stand for Children was a prime example of what Bill Galston and Elaine Kamarck so aptly described a few years ago as "the politics of evasion," a liberalism so deeply involved in the denial of its creeping irrelevance that its progressive energy is entirely sapped.

So come to the Mall. Help build Marian Wright Edelman's mailing list. Pray to the god of your choice. Sing "Kum Bah Ya." Catch some rays. Take a nap. ♦

Ed Kilgore is a senior fellow at the Progressive Policy Institute.



A small group of young marchers cools off in the Lincoln Memorial's Reflecting Pool during last month's Stand for Children.

FUNDAMENTALLY MISGUIDED

Evangelicals in the Political Arena

BY RANDALL BALMER

Election Night 1972 is seared into my memory as though it were yesterday. I was a student at Trinity College, a small evangelical institution in Deerfield, Ill., and I was young, naïve, and idealistic. George McGovern, my candidate for president, was losing badly; by 9 P.M., it was clear Richard Nixon would win by a landslide.

I had made quite a nuisance of myself over the previous weeks. With missionary zeal, I tried to persuade fellow students to consider McGovern's merits, which, in my judgment, included honesty, integrity, and compassion. Surely these were Christian values, I argued, ones that evangelical Christians should look for in a political leader. Most shrugged off my entreaties, saying they weren't interested in politics. A few allowed that if they did bother to vote, they would probably vote Republican because they were pretty sure their parents would.

By 1992, as the Republican National Convention in Houston demonstrated, American evangelicals clearly had shed their political apathy. Speaker after speaker ascended the podium to recite themes that conservative evangelical leaders deemed important. Indeed, one of their own, Pat Robertson, was a prime-time speaker, four years after his own abortive run for the Republican presidential nomination.

As one who defines himself as an evangelical, I would be the last to argue that evangelicals have no place in the political arena. But the agenda of the Religious Right is fundamentally misguided and, paradoxically, contrary to the stated goals of its leaders. The proposals emanating from the Religious Right, moreover, pose a threat to the great American experiment in religious tolerance.

From Apathy to Engagement

What happened to evangelicals between 1972 and 1992 to foment such a radical political conversion from apathy to engagement?

The answer is complicated. Evangelicalism did not descend from the heavens sometime in the 1970s, as some pundits seem to suggest. On the contrary, evangelicalism, with its embrace of biblical literalism and warm-hearted piety, is without question the most important social and religious movement in American history. Moreover, through its leadership in social reform movements and its benevolent societies, evan-

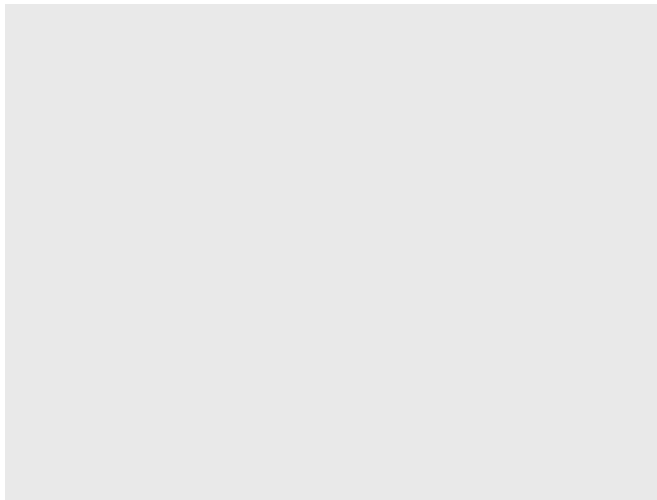
gelicalism helped shape the political agenda during much of the 19th century.

Early this century, however, evangelicals came to believe that American culture had turned against them, that Americans, most notably Protestants, had been seduced by modernism, science, and liberal theology into giving up their Christian convictions. The defining moment was the infamous Scopes "monkey trial" in 1925. Mercilessly ridiculed by H.L. Mencken and other "enlightened" elites for their belief in the biblical account of creation, evangelicals retreated into a subculture of their own making—a vast network of churches, denominations, Bible institutes, summer camps, publishing houses, and mission societies. This hermetically sealed, comprehensive, defensive universe made it possible for evangelicals to exist apart from the broader culture for most of this century.

For the next 50 years, evangelicals were largely apolitical. Aside from Billy Graham's very public friendships with a succession of presidents, they avoided politics, preferring to preach the gospel and prepare for the second coming of Jesus, as predicted in the Book of Revelation. Then, in 1975, the presidential campaign of a Southern Baptist Sunday school teacher, Jimmy Carter, began to change all that. Carter unapologetically referred to himself as a "born again" Christian, and evangelicals responded by helping to elect him president. Although Carter can be credited in part for awakening evangelicals from their apolitical stupor, conservative evangelicals who became disaffected with his administration arguably played a more important role.

According to Paul Weyrich and other architects of the Religious Right, the impetus for evangelical political activity began when Carter's Justice Department sought to enforce anti-discrimination laws at Bob Jones University, an evangelical institution in Greenville, S.C., that prohibited interracial dating and marriage among students. The move was seen as an assault on the evangelical subculture itself. After conservative evangelical leaders cooperated in resisting the attack, they began adding other issues, including abortion, to their agenda.

The rest is history: the formation of Moral Majority by Jerry Falwell in 1979; the 1980 presidential election, in which all three major candidates—Carter, Ronald Reagan, and John B. Anderson—claimed to be evangelical Christians; Reagan's re-election in 1984 with the help of evangelicals; Robertson's campaign in 1988 and his



Members of the Religious Right have every right to express themselves politically. The problem is that most of their agenda does not serve the best interests of faith itself.

founding of the Christian Coalition the following year. Since then, the coalition, under the savvy leadership of Ralph Reed, has exercised formidable influence on American politics and has made itself an indispensable constituent of the Republican Party.

Serving the Best Interests of Faith

The Religious Right's success has frustrated and infuriated many, especially those with more progressive and liberal political views. Much of their criticism is hypocritical. Charging Robertson and others with the transgression of preaching politics from the pulpit, they conveniently forget that preachers of a liberal bent declaimed against the Vietnam War in the 1960s and continue to preach in favor of civil rights and other liberal causes to this day.

Evangelicals make up somewhere between 40 percent and 46 percent of the U.S. population. They have every right to express themselves politically, to allow their religious beliefs to shape their political opinions. The problem is that most of the Religious Right's agenda does not serve the best interests of faith itself. The great experiment of the American form of government was the disestablishment of religion. The First Amendment, which protected "free exercise" of religion and precluded a state church, set up a free market of religion in which religious entrepreneurs compete for popular followings rather than rely on the support and the largess of the state.

After 200 years, it's safe to assess the results of that experiment. By almost any index, we Americans are a religious people. Something like 94 percent of us believe in God or a supreme being, a figure that has remained constant since George Gallup was a boy. More than half of us claim to have attended religious worship services in any given week, whereas in Great Britain, only 3 percent of the population attends the state Church of England.

Religion has flourished in the United States precisely because it has not been coerced. Any attempt to mandate religious expression—through school prayer, for example, or the attempts to declare the United States a "Christian nation"—would be counterproductive. The great experiment of the First Amendment suggests that coercion kills religious vitality.

Other elements of the Religious Right's agenda are troublesome. For evangelicals, who take pride in their fidelity to the Bible, I cannot help but note their overall passivity in the face of congressional attempts to gut environmental laws. What happened to the notion of stewardship of the earth? The school voucher system they advocate would not only be disastrous socially and pedagogically, but it would undermine public education itself, our best hope for comity and accommodation in a pluralistic society.

Most distressing about the Religious Right, however, is its overall tenor, which represents a betrayal of the heritage of 19th century evangelicalism. Evangelical efforts on behalf of abolition, female education, women's suffrage, prison reform, and temperance were, more often than not, motivated by compassion for the less fortunate and an insistence on equality for everyone in society. I find it difficult to detect these same convictions in the rhetoric of today's Religious Right.

What Lies Ahead

I foresee little enervation of the Religious Right's political ardor in the near future. The only factors that may mitigate their political influence are internal divisions within the movement, and the considerable egos of their leaders, all of whom are eager to build their own empires and to promote their own interests. Over the longer term, however, I wouldn't be surprised to see some attenuation of evangelical political activity. History teaches that religious fervor tends to be cyclical, and it is very difficult to pass piety from one generation to the next, especially within traditions that demand high levels of passion and commitment.

Evangelicalism, on the other hand, is America's folk religion. It has been—and it will likely remain—the most important religious movement in our history. In 1925, during the heat of the Scopes trial, Mencken sought to heap ridicule upon evangelicals any way he could. If you tossed an egg out of a Pullman car window anywhere in America, the acerbic journalist remarked, you would hit an evangelical. These many decades later, Mencken has passed from the scene, Pullman cars are obsolete, but evangelicals are still around. ♦

Randall Balmer, the Ann Whitney Olin Professor of Religion at Barnard College, Columbia University, is the author of several books on American religion including Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America (Oxford University Press, 1993).

POLITICAL IDOLATRY

The False Gods of the Politics of Meaning

BY STEVE TIDRICK

I recently attended the Bay Area Regional Summit for the Politics of Meaning, a two-day affair organized by *Tikkun* magazine publisher Michael Lerner, the Clintons' answer to Billy Graham as White House spiritual adviser.

The event was billed in advance as a pivotal moment in the organization of a progressive movement that embraces religious values. Indeed, the handouts I received certainly sounded progressive-minded. "We reject the automatic assumption of some people in the liberal world that politics must depend on large governmental bureaucracies," one of them read. "Government has gotten too big and too distant from ordinary people. We want to see many of the tasks of building a more caring society based not in government but in civil society."

Once the conference began, however, I quickly realized that Lerner's Politics of Meaning and New Democrat-style progressivism are two very different things. Here's what clued me in:

◆ Minutes into his keynote address, Lerner suggested that Americans would be thrilled to pay taxes if only we placed God in the center of public life. "Ancient Israel [was] a poor society," he said, "but [it was a society] in which paying taxes was a cause for celebration: the festival of springtime, and the festival of the harvest, where people brought sacrifices and donated the produce of their land to the priests, which represented progressive income taxes . . . When levies were imposed when God was seen to be at the center, people gave happily and even brought more than was required of them. What would it take to make tax day a celebration in America?"

◆ At the plenary session the next morning, Peter Gabel, *Tikkun*'s associate editor, offered the following contradiction: "Imagine an education policy that required—in a non-authoritarian manner, of course—community service."

Finding no resolution of Gabel's paradox in the subsequent speeches, I heeded the advice of the organizers, who repeatedly implored the audience to read Lerner's recently published book, *The Politics of Meaning*.

I turned to a section entitled "Replacing Big Government with Civil Society." In it, Lerner warns readers that "each idea could be taken out of context and misinterpreted to be calling for a major expansion of government and its intervention in our lives. In fact, my program calls for the opposite. Many of its details would be best implemented by downsizing government and expanding civil society."

Lerner's World of Less Government

You be the judge. Here's a sampling of Lerner's world of less government:

- "A worldwide economic legislature [would be elected] whose sole task is to present a series of alternative economic plans to the world's population . . . We would have interactive technologies that will make it possible for every person on the planet to participate in the discussion of these alternative plans, and then to vote directly."

- "We should develop a set of minimum environmental standards, which would be incorporated into all trade agreements, that would develop worldwide standards for sustainable agriculture, encourage waste reduction (including maximum durability, repairability, reuse, and recycling), and promote the harmonization of environmental regulations."

- "Workers at every workplace would democratically decide whether or not they wanted to institute OSGs [Occupational Stress Groups] or OSHs [Occupational Safety and Health committees]. The government's sole function would be to ensure that management establishes the committees if workers choose to establish them."

- "Workers would be guaranteed employment opportunities in work that served the common good."

Once you understand how these proposals can represent less government, you've also solved the conundrum of how society can demand something in a non-authoritarian manner. The answer is actually rather simple: A fundamental change in human nature is required.

In Lerner's world, civil society would set rules and guidelines, and government would step in only as the enforcer of last resort. This sounds a lot like Marx's vision of communism: There's a transitional period as human nature evolves, and then the state "withers away" because humanity no longer requires an overseer. Lerner himself suggests the comparison to Soviet communism in warn-



ing that so-called “transitional stages” often die hard. “The Communist Party of the Soviet Union saw itself as playing such a transitional role,” he writes.

Whose Side Is God On?

What I heard at the conference was the agenda of the 1960s radical left repackaged as spiritual chic. And that bothered me, because it suggested that this agenda is somehow divinely inspired.

In his keynote address, Lerner compared the work of the Politics of Meaning movement to the writing of the Torah itself (!). The movement’s object, he said, is to identify “the consequences of believing in the principle that every human being is precious, that every human being is created in the image of God. The Torah interpreted the consequences for the time period of its writing. The project of the Politics of Meaning is to interpret the consequences for our time, and to identify what institutions and policies are necessary to affirm that principle.”

At the end of the plenary session the second day, someone got up and declared, “We need more humility in this endeavor.” I agree.

When religious faith is brought to bear in specific ways on specific public policy issues, religion itself is undetermined. As Randall Balmer notes in the preceding article, that is the sin of the Religious Right. Progressives must resist the urge to follow suit. As Alexis de Tocqueville said: “Any alliance with any political power whatsoever is bound to be burdensome for religion. It does not need their support in order to live, and in serving them it may die.”

That’s not to say that there is no place for religion in politics. We certainly should encourage the development of a robust, independent religious community through tax policy, for example. But we should be reticent about legislating morality. The Politics of Meaning movement deserves praise for trying to bridge the gap between religion and progressive politics and for trying to restore morality to public life. It seems to me, however, that the movement has gone too far. ♦

Steve Tidrick, formerly budget policy analyst at the Progressive Policy Institute, is pursuing concurrent degrees in public policy and law at the University of California-Berkeley and Harvard University.

HOW BIG AN UMBRELLA?

Four Views on the Proposed Expansion of NATO

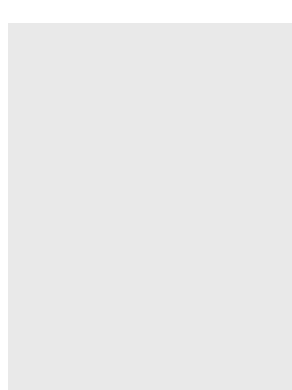
Editor’s note: Growing nationalism in Russia, as evidenced in the campaigning that lead up to its June presidential election, has heightened concerns about European security. The expansion of NATO is one of the most consequential national security issues the United States is likely to consider in the post-Cold War era. However, despite promises already made by the Clinton administration, statements of intent by the Republican Congress, and strong views of experts pro and con, the debate over the future of NATO and, more broadly, the transatlantic relationship, has yet to be fully joined.

To fill this intellectual gap, the Progressive Policy Institute and the Hudson Institute recently brought together several leading national security experts and congressional leaders to discuss the future of American engagement in Europe. The following are edited transcripts from their conversation.

NEWT GINGRICH

Look Before You Leap

We should expand NATO by adding Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. But our NATO expansion policy should be intellectually rigorous. Let me offer two classic examples.



In 1830, the British extended a security guarantee to Belgium, then a new country, that was largely aimed at Holland and France. Eighty-four years later, without a continental army, the British decided to honor their guarantee and became embroiled in a war against Germany. Then, in 1939, the British guaranteed Poland’s frontiers, without any thought to the military consequence.

I am not arguing that either of these guarantees was wrong. However, if we are going to admit Poland into NATO, we need to think through the military and not just the diplomatic implications. In this context, I remind you that the budget announced by this administration does not sustain Ronald Reagan’s investment in the military. This administration persists in sending American troops all over the world, while shrinking the size of the armed forces and refusing to invest in re-equipping them. Over time, that is a disastrous policy. It weakens

the military; it leads to retirements from the military; it leads to a level of credulousness that does not sustain morale. Sometime during the next century, our military equipment will be obsolete, and our young men and women in uniform will run significant risks, because they will confront an enemy with military capabilities that are dangerously close to ours.

A former history professor, House Speaker Newt Gingrich has been a lifelong student of European security concerns.

SAM NUNN

A Two-Track Approach

Iwould propose a two-track approach to NATO expansion. We should expand NATO, and Russia should not have a veto over NATO expansion. But there would be two tracks.

One track would depend on national economic and political developments in Europe. When countries become eligible for European Union membership, they would also become eligible for membership in NATO. These

emerging democracies are not threatened by the Russian military, but by insufficient economic development to sustain their political movement towards democracy.

In this light, NATO would not be thought to threaten Russia, would not be seen as an anti-Russian alliance. I believe that it would be perceived this way in Russia.

The second track would respond to threats. If Russia continues its course toward democracy and market reforms, if it respects the sovereignty of its neighbors, if it keeps its solemn commitments on arms control and other matters, then it will not pose a threat to its neighbors and therefore will not pose a threat to NATO. But if, on the other hand, Russia reverses its course, installs a dictatorial government, threatens its own citizens and the sovereignty of its neighbors, and fails to keep its agreements, then NATO will expand very rapidly. So the second track would be threat-based.

Thus, there would be two ways to get into NATO: as a result of economic evolution, or in response to a Russian threat.

The two-track policy is the best approach to NATO expansion. First, it does not isolate the Baltic states and Ukraine. In fact, it speaks to their security concerns, because it tells Russia that a threat to their independence may cause NATO to expand. Second, it does not increase the difficulties of Russia's democrats by suggesting that

NATO will expand regardless of what Russia does. Third, the approach tells Russian imperialists like [Vladimir] Zhirinovskiy that their behavior could result in NATO expansion. All of Russia's voters would get that message. Fourth, it tells Western Europe that expanding the European free-trade zone to the newly emerging democracies is no more difficult for Western Europe than it is for the United States to provide NATO nations with nuclear guarantees. Right now, we act as though it is easier for us to give a guarantee committing us to pull the nuclear trigger than it is for the Europeans to agree to free trade between Eastern and Western Europe. Finally, the two-track policy would tell American taxpayers and the American military that NATO deserves support because it is an alliance based on America's vital economic and military interests.

Retiring Sen. Sam Nunn of Georgia is the ranking minority member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

JEREMY D. ROSNER

Congress and Public Opinion

NATO enlargement is politically possible for four reasons. First, the Senate vote to ratify the enlargement of NATO would not resemble the votes on Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti, which were votes authorizing specific troop deployments. Instead, the ratification vote would concern a future commitment, responding to a rather distant threat. Thus, the vote would take on a different dynamic; it could not accurately be compared to votes on actual troop deployments. The real issue would be what this commitment actually meant.

Second, critics of NATO enlargement have asserted that its cost would be prohibitively large—in the tens of billions of dollars. They argue that this cost would prevent ratification, given the shortage of funds and the concern with the deficit. The cost probably will be in the tens of billions of dollars. But according to a recent RAND Corp. study, that amount would be paid over 10 years by all NATO members. The cost to the United States alone, RAND calculates, would probably be more in the range of \$500 million to \$2.5 billion a year. And that sum is far less than the increase in the defense budget that Congress approved this very year.

Moreover, treaty ratification and financing often have been treated separately and differently in American history. For example, on the very day that President

Truman signed the ratification of the North Atlantic Treaty, he asked Congress for a \$1.4 billion appropriation to cover costs related to ratification. It is well known that Sen. Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan was instrumental in securing NATO ratification; it is less well known that he became the leading initial opponent of the appropriation request. Conceivably, the Senate could ratify the treaty modifications, even though the appropriation request might then be voted down.

Third, opinion polls are sometimes cited to prove that NATO enlargement could not be approved. Much is made of the fact that, according to Gallup polls conducted for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, only 32 percent of the population would support sending U.S. troops to defend Poland if it were invaded by Russia. But this is a disingenuous, irresponsible use of evidence. The polls also show that a minority of the public would support using U.S. troops if South Korea were invaded by North Korea. Yet we all agree that the United States would respond with troops and that the public would support that decision.

Furthermore, the polling on NATO and NATO enlargement is generally quite favorable, by a margin of 10 to 40 points. In any case, polls do not determine our foreign policy. The substantive issues and the degree of leadership, both in Congress and the administration, are more decisive.

Fourth and finally, some argue that because Americans with ethnic ties to the Visegrad countries [Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary] account for only 6 percent of the U.S. population, ratification could never be approved. But if numbers were all that counted, U.S. aid to Africa would be six times greater than aid to Israel. Questions about U.S. interests will ultimately determine the politics of ratification.

Jeremy D. Rosner is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a former senior staff member of the National Security Council (1993-94).

WILLIAM E. ODOM

Keeping the Peace Among Friends

Managing German power was really the key motive for the creation of NATO—not containing the Soviet military threat, as is commonly believed. In France, the Soviet threat was hardly mentioned in the debate over the creation of NATO; Germany was the issue. In Britain, there was somewhat more concern with Moscow, but not much. And [founding fathers of the European Union] Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet wanted NATO—and the United States presence in Europe—in order to create an international environment in which the transnational economic reconstruction of Europe would be possible.

This point is of utmost importance to grasp today: The European Coal and Steel Community and its successors arose only because there was a NATO umbrella. Today as well, the European Union cannot survive without a NATO umbrella. To put this bluntly, NATO—dominated by the United States—defends France and Britain from Germany, and it also defends Germany from Britain and France. It defends Turkey from Greece and Greece from Turkey, as we recently saw again with regard to a rather small island in the Aegean Sea.

NATO imposes a new kind of interstate relations among its members, and it has created a community of liberal trading democracies and an interdependent set of market economies. This is an unprecedented achievement, but it will not last if NATO relaxes its role in providing security against attacks from within NATO as well as without.

NATO's first mission has not disappeared with the end of the Cold War, but instead has become increasingly more obvious and more important. And it takes on new dimensions. Will NATO now defend Poland and the Czech Republic from Germany and Germany from those states?

That new question moves us to the second issue: the strategic vacuum in Central Europe. If the vacuum is not filled, we can be sure that the patterns of politics and diplomacy of the 1920s and 1930s will return to the region. Britain and France will inevitably seek anti-German ties in Central and Eastern Europe. The competition already has started; the Bosnian crisis pitted German diplomacy against French and British diplomacy. A British foreign office official reportedly said, according to *The New Republic* last year, that having Russia on the Adriatic littoral was preferable to having Germany there. Czech and Hungarian diplomats have told me privately that they have been encouraged by French diplomats to take a cool and uncooperative attitude toward U.S. and German diplomacy. Russian diplomats and politicians have used the opportunity afforded them by intra-European squabbling to pursue a spoiling and trouble-making diplomatic campaign in the former Yugoslavia; their campaign in Central and Eastern Europe against NATO expansion is stormy indeed. Russia needs no westward-facing military forces to pursue a diplomatic strategy of dividing the Europeans and easing the United States out of Europe. The danger posed to NATO by this kind of diplomacy may be even greater than the old military threat.

Retired Lt. Gen. William E. Odom is director of national security studies for Hudson Institute and an adjunct professor at Yale University.

UNsung HEROES

Bureaucrat Bashing Exact's a High Price on Governance

BY SUSAN ARIEL AARONSON

Last night, actress Jean Arthur waltzed across my television screen in *The More the Merrier*, charming my friends just as she charmed millions of Americans in the 1930s and 1940s. In this movie, she played a “government girl.” Like the fabled Rosie the Riveter, these women, too, served their nation during World War II. Coming to Washington by the thousands, they did everything from taking dictation to publicizing the war effort. The movie focuses on Arthur’s inability to find housing in Washington, and, of course, the ever-resourceful, competent, and clumsy Arthur ultimately triumphs over all odds, finding housing and true love while helping to win the war.

Another portrayal of another noble public servant—the wisecracking, cynical, but ultimately idealistic aide-de-camp to James Stewart in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*—afforded Arthur her most famous role. She wasn’t the genre’s only star. At one time or another, Spencer Tracy, Katherine Hepburn, John Wayne, and Gregory Peck all played heroic civil servants.

In the years since, government employees helped our farmers become more productive, put the first satellite into space, and developed the computer. But today, our icons are more likely to be sports stars or business leaders. Rarely are movies made about public servants (the doctors and public health officials in *Outbreak* are a recent exception).

Indeed, since the 1970s, it has become a popular political sport to bash public service, rail against bureaucrats, and argue that government is unwieldy and ineffective. Yet public antipathy to government and public servants is nothing new. As Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY), a noted sociologist, has remarked, “our Constitution from the beginning assumed distrust of government and of each other.”

But such distrust comes at a price for governance. Those “who run against government and say government is your enemy . . . run against the very institution in which they are going to serve,” retiring Sen. William S. Cohen (R-Me.) recently observed.

The trend bears watching by those who advocate retooling government for the new century. The danger is that we make public service an unpalatable career choice just when we need fresh talent and thinking more than ever.

Negativism toward public service seemed to peak this past winter. As various parts of the federal govern-

ment repeatedly opened and shut down, most federal employees were furloughed, demoralized, and fearful for their jobs. Many Americans did not receive expected services (getting visas, for instance). Yet some interpreted the relatively benign effect of the shutdowns and furloughs on the enormous American economy as vindication that government could and should be dramatically reduced. Capitol Hill resounded with the cries of Republicans, libertarians, and conservatives that government was bloated, inept, and unnecessary.

The Effects of Bureaucrat Bashing

In June, I tried to ascertain the effects of the winter furloughs and the years of “bureaucrat bashing” on federal civil servants. I called officials at the Office of Personnel Management; the General Accounting Office (a Congressional agency which monitors government spending); the Merit Systems Protection Board; and the House Civil Service Subcommittee. No one wanted to talk on the record. Nor could they provide reliable statistics (rather than anecdotal evidence) on trends in the number and quality of job applicants or the ability of the federal government to retain good people.

All the officials I spoke with noted that although public perceptions are important, the ability of the federal government to recruit and retain good people reflects the particulars of the job market at issue. Thus, if demand for MBAs or engineers is high, the federal government will have a hard time recruiting MBAs or engineers, given its relatively low salaries, benefits, and prestige. Clearly, the federal government will have to find innovative ways to attract and retain high quality people in many high-tech or specialized fields.

There is plenty of anecdotal evidence that negative attitudes about government are “killing our seed corn,” or our future public servants. For example, one OPM official told me that the main source of recruiting future federal managers, the Presidential Management Intern program, was decimated by budget cuts. The program was drastically reduced and only kept alive by the forceful lobbying of universities who train their graduates for public service. And college students don’t seem interested in public service employment.

In December 1995, I asked 20 students in my economic history class at the University of North Texas how they viewed public sector employment. The results were

Jean Arthur co-starred with Jimmy Stewart in the Frank Capra classic Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. Her portrayal of a noble public servant—the wisecracking, cynical, but ultimately idealistic aide-de-camp to Stewart’s Sen. Jefferson Smith—afforded Arthur her most famous role.

be effective, efficient, and loyal. But we will also need public servants who comprehend that government has changed and will continue to change dramatically. On one hand, government devolution is moving power and control closer to the people. On the other, global forces are pushing trade, technology, capital, and information around the world, dispersing power. These somewhat contradictory trends will leave their marks on governance, calling for public servants with expertise (which often yields rigidity) as well as flexibility—the willingness to

try new and different approaches to problems.

In recognition that effective governance is harmed by continued antipathy towards government, some policymakers, such as Vice President Al Gore, have sought a middle ground. Instead of bashing government, they argue for reinventing it to make it more productive and consumer oriented. But such a strategy does little to reward the morale of America’s public servants or to inspire people to serve.

Moreover, reorganization (a.k.a. reinvention) has a long and relatively unsuccessful track record. In 1970, Harold Seidman, a student of government reorganization, wrote, “reorganization has become almost a religion in Washington.” However, “of the 86 reorganization plans transmitted to the Congress from 1949 through 1969, only three . . . were supported by precise dollar estimates of savings.” Seidman found no evidence that such reorganizations made government more responsive or efficient.

For government to meet ever-changing needs in the 21st century, Americans must change their attitudes towards public service. Clearly, some government officials are inept, some are mediocre, and others are exceptional. Yet these are the same people we rely upon to catch the Unabomber, to test our drugs, to audit the defense budget, and to protect our nation overseas. And we are constantly asking them to do more. We want government to maintain the public order, promote a productive economy, bolster communities, protect the environment, and provide for the common defense. We rely on public servants to find a cure for AIDS, preserve our national parks, and ensure that the beef we eat is not infected

dismaying. My students varied in age, ability, and real world experience. Four students had military experience and were attending college at taxpayer expense. Ten relied on federally funded student loans to finance their education. Yet not one wanted to work for the federal government. They believed government should be reduced because it was too burdensome and intrusive. And their antipathy about government was reinforced by political reality. As they studied to enter the job market, these students saw crime increase and the U.S. standard of living stagnate. They blamed ineffectual public servants as well as policymakers for these problems.

My students are not alone in their antipathy towards government. A December 1995 Princeton Survey Associates poll of 1,514 Americans found some 54 percent were “not at all confident” about the future for their children; 48 percent worried that they might become a victim of violent crime; and 39 percent worried that the nation’s economy was getting worse, not better. Seventy-one percent trusted the government in Washington to do the right thing “only some of the time.”

There is an inherent illogic to bashing public servants. Our policymakers (the strategists and generals) can’t continue to criticize the foot soldiers who work in the trenches and presume the war will be won. The best and brightest who work in government will rebel, sabotage the operation, or leave. Is that the kind of government we want?

Moreover, as America enters the 21st century, technology and public demands will alter what government does and how it does it. As in our nation’s first 224 years, the American people will require that our public servants

with “mad cow” disease. As our expectations of government change and grow, we must ensure that our public servants are equipped with the skills, tools, and legitimacy to achieve these objectives. However, we cannot attract the best and brightest if we don’t reward them both by promoting both the civil service and the importance of government.

This task must start with our leaders. In 1989, several business, civic, and governmental leaders formed the Volcker Commission, which recommended that the president frequently stress “the necessary and honorable role that public servants play in the democratic process.” The commission also suggested that rather than appointing large numbers of political appointees, the president promote talented members from the career civil service, a step that would capture their professionalism and expertise, raise the morale of government employees, and

send a message that government service is valuable preparation for leadership. But citizens also have a responsibility to elevate public service.

Here’s what I’m thinking about doing—writing a movie script about a female FBI agent/public health official in pursuit of a terrorist who plans to put anthrax in the water supply. Although the heroine loses her job and her husband for a time (the stress of the 1995 furlough), in the end she gets her man and the bad guy. It’s a thriller and a love story. I’m going to write it for Meg Ryan—a Jean Arthur for the 21st century. ♦

Susan Ariel Aaronson is assistant professor of history at the University of North Texas and a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution. The author of three books on trade, she writes frequently on public understanding of economic change.

FRENCH TOAST

Can Politicians Anywhere Tangle With Entitlements Without Getting Burned?

BY DICK HOWARD

STONY BROOK, N.Y.

The United States isn’t the only advanced industrial nation that is discovering how hard it is to rein in runaway entitlement spending. In mid-November, French Prime Minister Alain Juppé proposed a series of reforms that would have reduced steadily rising health care costs, cut state workers’ generous retirement benefits, and limited service on the money-losing state railroad system. The result was a month-long wave of strikes that paralyzed the country and forced Juppé to back down on Dec. 21.

This angry reaction, which *The International Herald Tribune* columnist William Pfaff wistfully compared with Americans’ “docility” in the face of similar cutbacks, underlines how deeply woven entitlements have become in the fabric of all modern societies. For Americans, the French case is a useful, if imperfect, mirror in which to see our own problems and temptations.

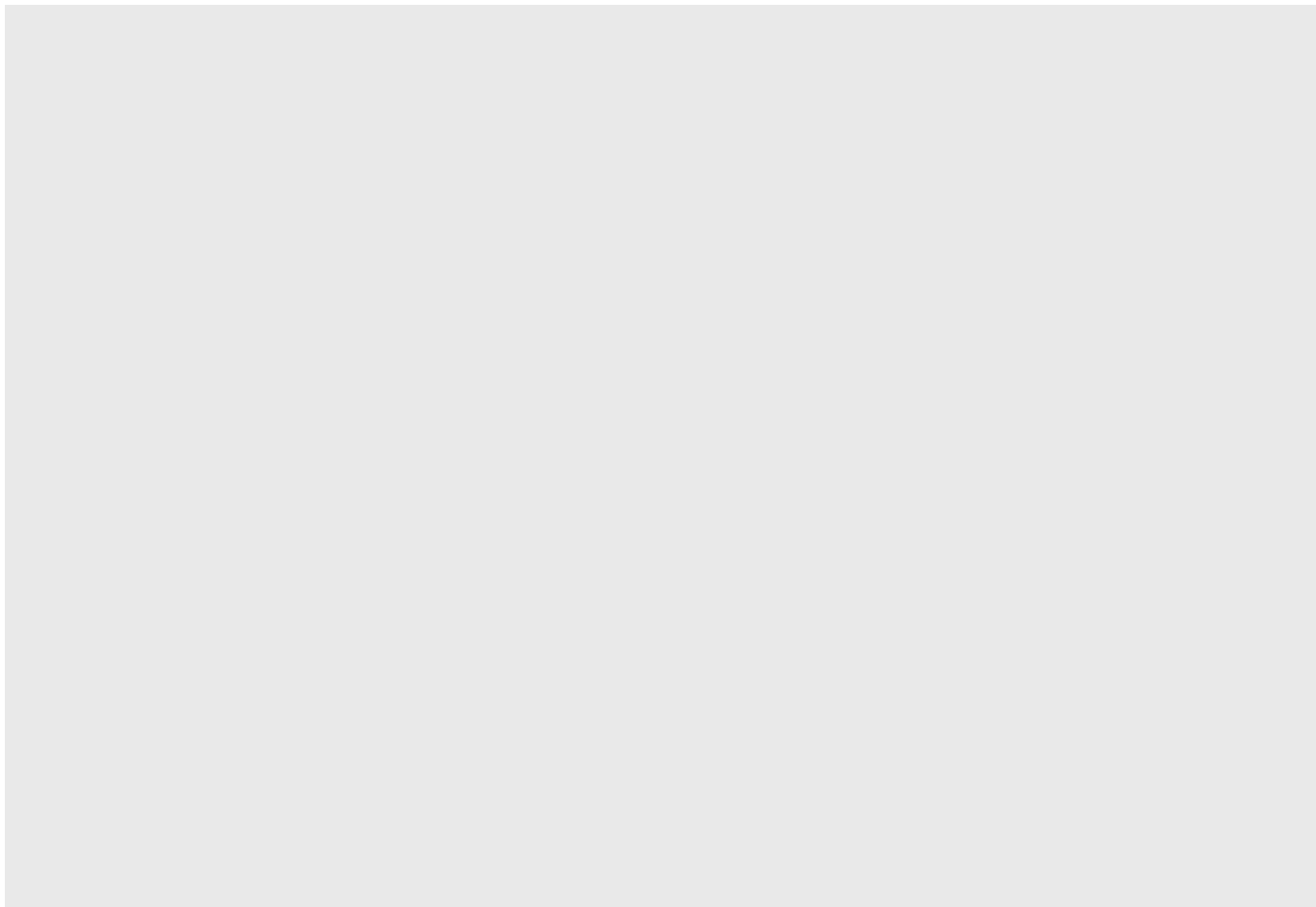
The *État-Providence*, as the French fondly call their universal system of health care, unemployment insurance, and pensions, is overworked and underpaid. It has promised too much to too many, and to pay for those promises, it takes too much from others. The cost of its health insurance program, which has been called a “hypochondriac’s paradise,” has risen from roughly 275 billion francs in 1981, to 478 billion francs in 1987, to 725 billion francs in 1993 (the latter figure approximately equal to \$140 billion). Its retirement system is antiquated

(for example, engineers on the computerized, high-speed TGV trains retire at age 50, just like their predecessors who toiled on the coal-fired locomotives described so vividly in Zola’s *La Bête Humaine*). It is also demographically unsustainable (the retiree in 1968 who, on average, lived for 13 more years now lives on for 22). The public services that are the envy of American tourists simply cost too much. Of the 44 percent of French gross domestic product that passes through government hands, 21 percent goes for social benefits. High unemployment (which has hovered around 11 percent in recent years) increases state costs (the French budget deficit mushroomed from 133 billion francs in 1991 to 345 billion francs in 1993) while decreasing the sources from which revenue can be sought, creating a vicious circle.

The One-Two-Three Punch

French President Jacques Chirac was elected in 1995 on a populist platform that promised painless reform. After proving his Gaullist *bona fides* with a series of nuclear tests in the South Pacific, Chirac felt ready to turn his attention to entitlement reform. The French presidential system permitted him to stay well behind the political firing line; he left it to Prime Minister Juppé, an elite technocrat, to execute the reforms.

It was as if Paul Tsongas and the Concord Coalition had been given free rein over our federal budget, but



Striking French transportation workers and their supporters marching in Paris early last December from the Place de la République to the St. Lazare train station.

crafted its plans with more secrecy and less diplomacy than Hillary Clinton and Ira Magaziner's health-care reform team. Protected by an absolute majority of docile parliamentarians, Juppé proposed his health care reforms on Nov. 15. The first reaction was moderate, even positive. Two days later, Juppé followed up by announcing he would reduce the railroad system's deficit by closing unprofitable lines and insisting on productivity increases. Finally, on Nov. 19, his minister of economy suggested that income tax deductions for wage earners might have to be cut by 20 percent.

This one-two-three punch was too much to take. To many French, it reflected both the "autism" of the technocrats, as one commentator put it, and a distinct bias in favor of the rich. The stock and currency markets' reactions to Juppé's moves during the ensuing crisis only reinforced this latter belief: Whenever Juppé wavered, stocks and the franc declined; whenever he stood firm, they rose.

The strikes were centered in the transportation sector, with some support in the post office and schools. And although they were forced either to walk to work or endure massive traffic jams, the public supported the strikes, with only 27 percent expressing opposition.

Leftist commentators described the walkouts as "strikes by delegation," claiming that striking public sector workers exercised proxies for private sector workers who didn't dare to strike in the climate of economic insecurity and industrial downsizing.

The French and U.S. Political Traditions

What Americans call entitlements are known in France as *droits acquis*, acquired rights won by workers demanding a decent life today and a fair retirement tomorrow. They are the contemporary translation of 1789's *liberté, égalité, and fraternité*, and are seen as the result of class struggle.

That is why the *État-Providence* is administered not by the state, but by the trade unions, an arrangement that would strike many Americans as bizarre. It is also the first reason for the massive strike wave and public sympathy for it. The government appeared to be taking away what the working class had dearly won.

The French political tradition also differs from our own in its understanding of the relationship between the individual and the state. Modern France was created in 1789 when royal power was seized and the state

was used to destroy the privileges of an egoistic aristocracy. Unlike Americans, who drafted a Bill of Rights to protect themselves against state tyranny, the French assume the state will continue to protect them from modern forms of privilege. That is one reason why the *État-Providence* is more inclusive than our welfare state. This paternalistic mindset also helps explain why the Juppé government assumed it could simply impose its reforms, in order to do for individuals what they could not do for themselves.

A third element of French political culture completes the picture. The French reliance on the state for social protection leaves individuals undefended against intrusions from a nitpicking bureaucracy. To avoid this danger, the French developed the idea of the service public. This theory insists that state services must be applied equally and universally to all citizens, and that those aspects of social life which concern all citizens should be carried out by the state. When the Juppé government proposed cuts in railroad service, or when it suggested the need for private health insurance or retirement plans, it struck at the symbolic foundation of French public life. The plan was therefore attacked as a threat to “civilization” itself.

Against this backdrop, it’s easy to see why the plan provoked protests whose slogans recalled the days of class struggle. To shore up the retirement system, Juppé proposed increasing the retirement age of public workers and reducing their payments. (That keeping older workers on the job longer would mean fewer opportunities for younger workers was overlooked; that reducing payments would increase sales of private retirement plans to those who could afford them was not mentioned.) In addition, the proposed railway system cuts threatened one of the few remaining bastions of union strength. State workers saw those cuts as a prelude to the privatization of, or grave reductions in, the post office and other public services.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Juppé proposed a fundamental change in the administration of the *État-Providence*. Today, the universal social insurance fund controlled by the trade unions is financed by dedicated taxes on workers and employees similar to our FICA tax. But high unemployment and changes in the composition of the workforce mean that there are fewer workers and that those who remain are contributing less, which explains the system’s persistent deficits (15 billion francs in 1992, 57 billion francs in 1993, 62 billion francs in 1995). Juppé proposed to begin financing the system with general tax revenues. But in exchange, he also proposed to take administrative control of the system away from the unions and give it to the Parliament. Although this reform would have guaranteed the system’s solvency and the universality of its benefits, it posed a dire threat to the unions’ entrenched power base.

Juppé eventually was forced to withdraw the entire reform plan and to admit that the French are not school-

children who have to be taught truths that the elite already know. But the problems remain. In late April, with the health care system projecting a deficit of \$9.2 billion (instead of the hoped-for \$3.3 billion), Juppé pushed through what *The New York Times* called “a Gallic version of an HMO.” But it was only a Band-Aid.

Politics of Sacrifice Without a Sacrifice of Politics

France is caught in the eddy of a global economy that is making the *État-Providence* untenable. Given that entitlement culture has become institutionalized, creating expectations that are frozen into reflex actions, can anything be done to meet new problems in this increasingly global world?

After a decade of stagnation, it is clear the French government cannot spend its way back to economic well-being (as the French Socialists had to admit as early as 1983, when in order to save the franc they rejected their economic program known as “Keynesianism in one country”). A politics of sacrifice is necessary. Juppé’s failure, however, shows that entitlement reform cannot be achieved at the price of a sacrifice of politics.

The Socialist Party, ideologically exhausted, was absent from the stage. And the trade unions’ failure to formulate any alternatives to the Juppé plan is significant. Theirs was a Pyrrhic victory; the strikes were not a renewal of the good old class struggle with its spirit of solidarity, as some commentators thought, but rather the last flare-up of a dying star. Some saw the strikes as the first blow against the 21st century global economy; in fact, they were most likely the last strikes against the 20th century industrial economy.

What are the lessons for Americans? Even when the old forms of struggle re-emerge and triumph, they hold no solutions for the future. At the same time, Juppé’s failure shows that the future will not be invented by political elites insensitive to popular expectations. The nostalgic French intellectuals who cheered the strikers on were emotionally right, but intellectually wrong. In the same way, Americans are right to criticize the socially regressive politics of the Republican Congress. And we should remember that a return to the past hardly opens the path to the future. ♦

Dick Howard is professor of political philosophy at the State University of New York-Stony Brook and the author most recently of Political Judgments (Roman and Littlefield), a collection of essays. He is published frequently in French journals including Esprit, Les Temps Modernes, and Études.

REGAINING SELF-CONTROL

Citizens Worldwide Are Rediscovering Lost Traditions of Local Governance

BY NAVIN GIRISHANKAR

The Little Platoons

By George Liebmann

Praeger ♦ 184 pp. ♦ \$55.00

While President Clinton and Republicans in Congress seem to agree on the need to end “big government,” the debate over what should replace it rages on. Today, endorsements abound for civil society, the network of civic, religious, educational, and charitable organizations that occupies the territory between government and markets. Yet thoughtful interpretations of another potential successor to big government—our lost heritage of local, democratic self-governance—remain few and far between.

Republican arguments on behalf of civil society typically lack a larger governing philosophy that speaks to the empowerment of the disenfranchised and to the middle and upper classes’ reciprocal responsibilities to society for benefits received. George Liebmann’s *The Little Platoons* is a welcome attempt to fill this void and clarify the terms of the debate.

Liebmann has served both as assistant attorney general of Maryland and as executive assistant to Maryland Gov. Harry Hughes, and has taught at The Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland School of Law. He opens the book by arguing rather convincingly that technological advances in this century made populations highly mobile, a trend that eroded local governing traditions worldwide. The central-

ized welfare state that replaced these traditional arrangements soon monopolized public policy, he continues, and exacerbated many of industrialization’s worst effects, such as the atomization of society.

Only by rediscovering its “little platoons”—its forgotten traditions of neighborhood self-governance—can America repair its civic infrastructure and cure its related pathologies, Liebmann writes. By giving a modern expression to older governing institutions, citizens can once again become the primary interpreters of democracy.

Growing International Movement

According to Liebmann, the notion of local self-governance was deeply embedded in many preindustrial societies, particularly in 19th century America. Contemporary neighborhood-level governments such as the parish in England, the commune in France, and the village association in Japan all have historical antecedents. In fact, throughout the Industrial Age and up to the present day, citizens have sought power to make decisions at the local and “sub-local” levels.

In *The Little Platoons*, Liebmann describes the growing international movement towards decentralization and local self-governance. Among the examples he cites:

♦ Realizing that educational bureaucracies have reached the limits of

their effectiveness, local citizens in England, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States are fighting the enforced consolidation of schools and school districts.

♦ Charter schools in America and “opt out” schools in Britain are freeing local educators from hierarchical management by central school boards.

♦ In an example of mutual aid-giving across generations, citizens in Japan and Russia are establishing neighborhood community care centers in which the elderly systematically care for the very young.

♦ In Germany, local governments have empowered block associations to close off the ends of neighborhood streets, creating safe havens for common residential and recreational activities. In a similar vein, historic preservation movements in England, France, and the United States are attempting to build “informal districts of governance” controlled by local citizens for public recreation.

The Philosophy of Self-Governance

The recurring theme of *The Little Platoons* is that governance, to be democratic and meaningful, should be locally based and free from centralized manipulation. Liebmann fits his examples of little platoons into a long history of political thought, from Jefferson and Rousseau to Neibuhr and Arendt. For him, a contemporary incarnation of Jeffersonian “ward gov-

ernment” is the best way of experiencing direct democracy. Compelled to work with others towards a common purpose, he argues, citizens in ward governments broaden their concerns beyond those of their households. Furthermore, such work fosters the shared morality that animates democracy.

Unlike those conservatives who see civil society as a panacea for all ills in a post-governmental Golden Age, Liebmann recognizes the potential pitfalls of devolving authority to local bodies. In communist China and Russia, he notes, residential committees, comrades’ courts, and block level associations, in fact, advanced totalitarian social control through party indoctrination and informant surveillance. Liebmann cautions that, to be truly democratic, local governing bodies must enjoy wide autonomy from centralized bureaucracies and policy planners.

In making what he calls a “positive case for participatory institutions,” Liebmann takes issue with the established conservative argument for civil society, which he calls “somber and negative.” Many conservatives, he points out, see civil society as little more than replacement for the centralized, paternalistic welfare state. Liebmann, on the other hand, argues for a genuine shift in the nature and locus of governance. Self-governance is unique in that it offers societal and individual benefits that the welfare state cannot provide. First among these is

its ability to arrest the trivialization of culture that is so characteristic of advanced market economies. In the book, Liebmann quotes Arendt to illustrate her contribution to this idea of neighborhood governance:

These revolutionary councils or Jefferson’s “ward republics” were for Arendt “the best instruments . . . for breaking up modern mass society, with its dangerous tendency toward the formation of pseudo-political mass movements, or rather, the best, the most natural way for interspersing it at the grassroots with an ‘elite’ that is chosen by no one but constitutes itself.”

By alluding to the educational and even quasi-spiritual quality of neighborhood governance, Liebmann attempts to expose the inadequacies of prevailing policy work on civil society. While he does not fulfill his potential in this regard, Liebmann does open up a conversation about the shared morality that emerges from the practice of self-governance. More accessible and perhaps more creative thinkers—for example, the late Christopher Lasch, writing in his final book *The Revolt of the Elites*—speak to the profound moral value of being responsible to and for others without monetary incentive or governmental mandate.

Liebmann offers policy suggestions for “stimulating” local self-governing institutions in the book’s

final chapter (e.g., the “empowerment” of block and community associations in suburbs, and the adoption of community controlled traffic abatement policies like those in Germany). While his ideas are intriguing, he leaves several key policy questions unanswered. For instance, which level of government is best able to stimulate the little platoons? Should the private sector or nonprofit sector serve as the catalyst for rejuvenating local democracy? Can these sub-local governments be prevented from becoming bureaucratic and paternalistic?

In addition, Liebmann’s legalistic perspective and writing style may lead readers to conclude that self-governance is simply a matter of legislation. His approach obscures the informal institutions and social relationships that sit just beyond the rule of law and decree in most communities. Finally, his penchant for long quotations prevents the reader from hearing Liebmann’s own voice, his own opinions.

Those limitations aside, Liebmann’s comparative perspective on the little platoons is rich and provocative. While it may not register with a vast popular audience, *The Little Platoons* is an important contribution to the debate over the direction of American governance as we enter the 21st century. ♦

Navin Girishankar is a domestic policy analyst at the Progressive Policy Institute.

POLITICAL MEMO

Continued from page 44

been elected as well.

The Congressional Black Caucus is bigger today due to the creation of majority-black districts—but it has less influence because Republicans control the House. And the “safe” black districts that were supposed to empower blacks are isolated from

the political mainstream, their agenda robbed of the vigor and relevance that comes from the robust competition of interests and ideas.

These are disturbing signs of what the future may hold in store for racial politics in America. But it needn’t be that way.

I, for one, still hold to the hope expressed by the Mississippi Young Democrats—that there will be a day when whites and blacks are truly equal partners in governing. That

day will come when black votes are taken as seriously as white votes—when those votes are earned, not taken for granted—and when *both* parties compete vigorously with a real chance to win them. If that happens, Democrats may very well win fewer black votes, but we’ll all be better off. ♦

Al From is president of the Democratic Leadership Council.

EYES ON THE PRIZE

We'd Be Better Off if Both Parties Competed for the Black Vote

BY AL FROM

A few years ago, there was a rumor circulating in Washington that Republicans would make a serious bid for the black vote in the 1996 election. The election is almost upon us, but the rumor has not been borne out. And at the risk of sounding like a heretic, this life-long Democrat wishes it had. Politics and government in America would work better if both parties competed for the black vote.

The political climate today is more racially polarized than at any time since before the civil rights movement. Many years of cynical efforts by candidates, white and black, to gain short term advantage by playing the race card have left their mark.

Three decades ago, we had hope. As a young soldier in Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, I attended the first integrated political convention in Mississippi's history. Black voters then were only marginal players in American politics. In the South, only a handful had ever voted—the Voting Rights Act had become law only a year earlier and had hardly taken effect. Outside the South, blacks had the franchise, but there were few in positions of real power.

But at that meeting of Mississippi Young Democrats at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Biloxi, there was a sense of excitement and hope. If Mississippi, the bastion of segregation, could have an integrated political gathering, we thought, blacks and whites could become full and equal partners in governing our

country—in short, that the promise of American democracy for all of her citizens could be realized.

Enfranchised, But Marginalized

It hasn't happened yet. Today, blacks everywhere have the franchise and use it. Thousands of black officials have been elected at all levels of government. Nevertheless, blacks' ability to influence the direction of American politics is declining. I see three reasons why:

◆ First, and most important, even though blacks make up about 10 percent of the national electorate, neither party competes for the black vote. Nationally, nine out of 10 blacks vote Democratic. In 1994, when Republicans won a majority of the vote for Congress for the first time in 48 years, 94 percent of these votes came from whites, while only 2 percent came from blacks. With numbers like these, Republicans don't need black votes as long as they can win an overwhelming majority of white votes—and they can ensure that outcome by using wedge issues that exacerbate racial tensions.

Democrats can't win without the black vote, but they don't have to work very hard, or very creatively, to get it. They can always count on Republicans to drive black voters into the Democratic column. Worse, by paying lip service to "black issues" even when they can't deliver, Democrats further marginalize

black influence even as they turn away some white voters.

◆ Second, just as blacks are coming to power in America's cities, the political influence of those cities is declining. The election of black mayors in significant numbers could hardly have been imagined 30 years ago. But over that same period, the overall population of cities, where most blacks are concentrated, took a nosedive. In 1992, just 12 percent of the voters in the presidential election lived in cities with populations above 250,000. That year marked the first time that a majority of the electorate lived in the suburbs.

◆ Third, the Voting Rights Act had unintended consequences. After decades of seeing blacks denied seats in Congress and state legislatures, civil rights leaders have pressed to use the act to maximize the number of majority-black districts—a very understandable decision. Republicans were more than happy to go along, recognizing that if they isolated the Southern black vote in a few majority-black congressional districts, the remaining districts would become even more white and even more prone to vote Republican. That's exactly what happened. Since the 1990 redistricting, 14 new black Democratic members of the House have been elected from the South—but nearly three times as many new white Republican members from the South have

Continued on page 43