

THE
RESPONSIVE
COMMUNITY



RIGHTS *and*
RESPONSIBILITIES

Volume 3, Issue 1 Winter 1992/93

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We apologize to our readers and writers for a computer glitch that turned many of the dashes in the last issue of *The Responsive Community* into ellipses.

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The Responsive Community (ISSN 1053-0754) is published quarterly by the Center for Policy Research, Inc., a non-profit corporation. The journal is listed in the following indexing/abstracting services: PAIS, Sociological Abstracts, and microform copies are available through Microfilms, Inc. The journal is distributed by Bernhard DeBoer, Inc. (201) 667-9300.

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Subscriptions: Subscription rates for individuals are: \$24.00 a year; \$40 for two years; \$15 a year for students. Libraries and institutions: \$60.00 a year. Subscribers outside the U.S. should add \$7.00 per year for additional mailing costs. Send subscriptions and change of address information to: Circulation Manager, The Responsive Community, 2020 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 282, Washington, DC 20006, U.S.A. Tel: 1-800-245-7460.

Editorial Information: Editorial correspondence should be directed to the Editors, The Responsive Community, 714 Gelman Library, The George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052, U.S.A. We regret that we cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. If you would like to write for us, please send a brief manuscript proposal first.

To Stay the Communitarian Course

AMITAI ETZIONI

The communitarian movement has a key role to play in the struggle over the soul of the Clinton Administration. Let there be no illusion: the new administration will be subject to enormous forces each seeking to pull it in their own particular directions. True, Clinton and Gore have shown strong communitarian commitments. Clinton's address to the Democratic Convention, his Georgetown speech, and above all his acceptance speech after winning the election pay tribute to the spirit of community—to the need to shore up personal and social responsibilities. Gore actively participated in our first communitarian teach-in in the U.S. Senate in November 1991. The Clinton/Gore position papers contain numerous planks that are communitarian in nature, including proposals to encourage community development, curb welfare dependency, and limit campaign contributions. (Communitarian strains are also evident in statements by other political leaders, such as Jack Kemp and Ross Perot.) However, *political leaders cannot be expected to persevere without public support*. This is where the communitarian movement can step in; to help stay the course.

The specifics of the battles yet to be joined cannot be foretold. One can, though, discern the basic fronts. The first confrontations we are witnessing revolve around the direction of economic policy, between those who demand that Clinton pump up the economy—provide more jobs, increase government support for minorities, help the homeless, and attend to many other causes—and those who call on the new administration to focus on reducing the deficit.

There is no reason to oppose a return to work, help for inner cities,

and other good causes. However, communitarians speak for the economy as a whole, the boat we all ride in. If programs that aim to stimulate the economy are not coupled with measures to curb the deficit, the economy will capsize under the staggering weight of expanding debt. *Therefore, the savings resulting from expenditure cuts (for example, in defense) and new sources of revenues (for example, from a tax on foreign corporations) should be divided between the back-to-work and deficit-reduction drives.* (For technical reasons, back-to-work programs may have to start earlier and deficit reduction a bit later, provided that there is a clear commitment to reducing the debt. If we are to have our candy before our medicine, we must first make an irrevocable commitment to take the cure.) Anything less—either disregarding the suffering of the unemployed and the disadvantaged, or ignoring the deficit, our economic well-being, and our bequest to our children—would be morally irresponsible.

Second, a communitarian approach to shoring up the common good means limiting the influence of special interests on Congress and on state legislatures. The Clinton/Gore campaign promised to stem the flood of private money into public office through measures such as placing voluntary spending caps on congressional campaigns, limiting PAC contributions, and eliminating tax deductions for special-interest lobbying expenses. Unless these measures (or, better yet, stronger ones) are enacted, Congress will continue to face gridlock and turn deafened ears to the claims of most Americans. Those who have lost sight of how deeply Congress is indebted to narrow special interests need do no more than examine a bill Congress passed in October 1992, which was originally intended to provide assistance to big cities after the Los Angeles riots. Congress members drove up the costs of the bill by \$2.5 billion by tacking on special “assistance” to bingo players, tuxedo renters, users of reloaded gun shells, small insurance companies, students who work as camp counselors, retirees in Nevada, and yacht owners, among others. These extras are often Congress members’ way of saying thank you to the special interests that contributed heavily to their campaign chests. Unless the flood of private money into the coffers of elected officials is curbed, *most new Congress members will soon be as indebted to PACs and lobbyists as many of the old-timers are now.*

Third, communitarians seek to ensure that family values will command a high position on the new agenda. Because this issue was

used (many would say, abused) by arch-conservatives during the 1992 election campaign, the very mention of family values brings to mind intolerant statements by right-wingers. However, as we reiterated long before the election, families need to be strengthened because they are the foundation for the sound upbringing of our young. The Family and Medical Leave Act that Clinton is expected to send back to Congress shortly is a step in the right direction but is far from sufficient. There are many changes in tax laws, child support assurance, and other measures detailed in our platform and family position paper that are vital to our families' well-being. Specifics remain to be worked out, but *communitarians need to be ready to support pro-family acts*. And we need to raise our voice in favor of measures that help the entire family, and against ones that treat their members as atomized individuals.

Finally, concern for public safety played a surprisingly small role in the campaign. The increasing levels of violence are a tinderbox. Many of our fellow citizens live in a high state of fear and agitation. Many thousands are the direct victims of crime. *Unless new, more effective, yet constitutionally sound, measures are introduced to substantially reduce violent crime, American society will be vulnerable to authoritarian demagogues and right-wing reactionaries*. Watch for the ACLU and other libertarians to throw roadblocks in the path of most, if not all, workable measures.

The Communitarian Network will provide specific action alerts as the new administration's agenda develops. For now, let us keep expanding the communitarian movement and increasing our educational and political role. We are not out for tax loopholes, loan subsidies, or any other special favors for our members. We rise to speak out for the American community. Join us and encourage others to come aboard to help the new administration stay the communitarian course.

If you are interested in joining The Communitarian Network, call either (202) 994-7907 or (202) 994-7997; or write The Communitarian Network, 2020 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 282, Washington, DC 20006.

A Communitarian Budget: Deficit Reduction *and* Job Creation

WILLIAM GALSTON

In recent months the American people have become increasingly concerned about annual federal budget deficits and the past decade's massive accumulation of national debt. We believe that there is a distinctively communitarian approach to these issues—a moral vision that helps clarify the practical choices we face.

First, we believe that our political community represents a covenant between ourselves, past generations of Americans, and Americans yet to be born. We have no right to squander our inheritance; we do have a responsibility to pass on to posterity a nation at least as united, prosperous, and filled with opportunity as the one we received. A legacy of declining living standards and shrinking opportunities represents moral, not just economic, failure. To the extent that deficits and debt contribute to this outcome, their reduction is not an option but rather a duty.

Second, communitarians believe in the possibility of public moral dialogue and in the capacity of citizens to respond to it. We reject—as false, cynical, and incalculably damaging—the proposition that democratic citizens are moved only by particular interests and never by shared principles. We endorse Abraham Lincoln's view that the highest responsibility of democratic political leadership is to unite the citizenry by appealing to the better angels of our nature.

Third and last, communitarians believe that our nation's economic policies should promote our shared purposes and reflect our shared values. Economic growth expands opportunity; fairness in distributing

the fruits of growth helps bind us together; but subsidizing narrow special interests increases nothing but public division and doubt. We need a national interest budget, not a special interest budget. We are convinced that the American people will accept such a budget—indeed, that they will demand it once it is properly explained to them.

The details must be argued and negotiated, but the basic outlines are clear. We must begin to reduce the deficit now so that we can afford to initiate the kinds of investments—public and private—needed for long-term economic growth. Revenues must be raised in a fair and broad-based manner that promotes investment over current consumption; special-interest spending must be slashed; our overseas commitments must be adjusted to post-Cold War security threats and economic realities. Every dollar generated or liberated through this plan should be reasonably divided between direct deficit reduction and growth-enhancing investment. Taking into account both the inevitability of business cycles and the historical experience of growth rates, the plan must hold out a realistic prospect of largely eliminating fiscal imbalance by the end of this century.

Short-term stimulus and long-term competitiveness can be combined by putting people back to work building up our infrastructure, but we should not squander scarce resources on make-work subsidies and consumption projects. For the same reason, we cannot afford to pay for unnecessary military bases and production just to keep people employed; these should be converted to productive civilian usage.

The communitarian budget rests squarely on our moral vision—a due regard for the capacities of our fellow-citizens and a responsibility to future generations. We reject the facile and evasive optimism of supply-side views, liberal and conservative. At the same time, we reject the dour spirit of sacrifice characteristic of fiscal traditionalism. Budgetary balance makes sense only in the context of, and as a means to, an expanding economy with opportunity for all.

One thing above all is clear: amidst staggering deficits, soaring debt, and stagnant growth, the time for timid incrementalism is past. The incoming president should level with the American people. He should tell them that the economic mess is far worse than the presidential campaign suggested and that the mandate for change they have con-

ferred upon him requires a bolder agenda than the campaign allowed him to propose. In effect, the president should declare a national economic emergency and call for a national political mobilization to meet it.

Coupled with the massive Congressional turnover, the 1992 presidential election offers the best opportunity in a generation to make a fiscal fresh start. But the window of opportunity is narrow. Actions not taken during the first year of the next administration will, in all probability, never be undertaken. If an enduring structure of economic sanity is not proposed, debated, and enacted during this period, our last best chance of avoiding national decline may vanish.

The stakes could not be higher. The social divisions of recent years can only intensify under the stress of continued economic stagnation. It is far from clear that American democracy itself can indefinitely survive the relentless constriction of opportunity. The next president will hold our shared fate in his hands. The time for him to act is now.

COMMUNITARIAN ACCEPTANCE SPEECHES

...We need a new spirit of community, a sense that we're all in this together. If we have no sense of community, the American dream will continue to wither.

President Bill Clinton's Acceptance
Speech, November 4, 1992

[Clinton] believes in the rights of people, but he believes in the responsibilities of citizens as well The promise of America depends upon a commitment that under freedom we will

A New Covenant for Reforming Entitlements

ROBERT J. SHAPIRO

Of the many challenges facing the next president, none will be more important and more difficult than finding ways to both cut the federal government's budget deficit and release resources for greater public investment.

President-elect Clinton cannot hope to meet this challenge without reforming the major entitlement programs which today account for nearly half of all federal spending. Moreover, these reforms will have to target the retirement and health programs that today claim 90 percent of all entitlement spending.

The difficulty is obvious. The rapid growth of these programs reflects their value to voters, which in turn has seemed to preclude reform. To get beyond this impasse, the new president has to establish a new popular basis for serious changes. To mobilize this support, entitlement reforms must represent more than simply a way of cutting the deficit. In addition, the changes should be based on a new covenant of mutual responsibility governing public transfers.

The outline of this covenant can be stated as follows.

All Americans are entitled to health care and a decent retirement after working for a lifetime. In return, at least one able person in every household is obliged to work to provide a meaningful portion of these services for the family—through job-based health coverage or self-insurance, and by saving for retirement and paying payroll taxes.

Insofar as government provides these services, all Americans should have a right to a share reflecting at least what they contribute to finance the programs. Those who can afford their own health care and retire-

ment should not claim a disproportionate share of the programs: high-income people should not receive a share of these federal benefits that exceeds their share of the population.

WHAT'S FAIR IN ENTITLEMENT REFORM?

The social compact for entitlements raises basic questions of fairness. These programs should be reformed to ensure that wealthy people receive no more than their fair share of these taxpayer-financed benefits.

This approach provides a progressive standard for federal transfer programs financed by taxpayers. This standard is based on a simple, social imperative; a democratic government should not redistribute wealth, in the aggregate, from moderate-income and middle-class people to high-income people. Otherwise, a progressive tax system has much less significance.

This proposition does not justify cutting support for families and retirees of moderate or middle-class means. New research by the Progressive Policy Institute analyzing the distribution of all entitlement spending programs—from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and guaranteed student loans, to Medicare and Social Security—shows that middle-class households collect a smaller portion of this total spending than their share of the population. In contrast, those more and less affluent than the average receive relatively greater shares. The distribution of the benefits from all entitlement spending programs, therefore, roughly resembles a flattened “U” shaped curve.

At the start of this curve, 42 percent of all households living on taxable incomes of under \$20,000 a year receive nearly 46 percent of all entitlement spending, mainly reflecting programs targeted to lower-income people, such as AFDC, food stamps, and Supplementary Security Income for elderly poor people.

At the next income level, the curve declines: the 16 percent of households with taxable incomes of \$20,000 to \$30,000 receive 16 percent of all entitlement spending.

At this point, the curve descends into its trough. Nearly 38 percent of all households have taxable incomes of \$30,000 to \$100,000; they receive less than 34 percent of all entitlement spending benefits.

And at the end of the curve, four percent of U.S. households with taxable incomes of more than \$100,000 receive nearly five percent of all direct entitlement spending.

Small wonder that there is little middle-class support for cutting entitlement benefits across-the-board.

FAIRNESS IN FEDERAL RETIREMENT AND HEALTH PROGRAMS

When we concentrate on the large retirement and health-care programs, the data show that here, too, affluent Americans collect a larger share of all federal pension and health-care spending than their share of the entire population. Moreover, related tax benefits for retirement and health care strongly favor wealthier Americans.

Beginning with the retirement programs, federal pension spending today modestly favors people with incomes above \$100,000, including Social Security and federal civilian and military pensions. In addition, persons with incomes above \$75,000 claim a disproportionate share of all retirement-related tax benefits—including the value of tax deductions for IRA and Keogh contributions, and tax exemptions for half or all of Social Security income and for employer contributions to pension plans.

The data show that the most affluent four percent of the country's households, with taxable incomes of \$100,000 and more, collect more than eight percent of all federal support for retirement, including almost six percent of federal pension spending and nearly 17 percent of the value of all retirement-related tax benefits.

In 1990, this gave these very well-to-do Americans more than \$16 billion in taxpayer-financed pension checks, plus another \$14 billion in retirement-related tax benefits.

At the next income level, the four percent of America's households with incomes of \$75,000 to \$100,000 received four percent of all direct public-pension spending, but seven percent of the value of all retirement-related tax benefits. In 1990, these affluent households collected more than \$12 billion in federal pension checks, plus another \$6 billion in retirement-related tax benefits.

Direct health-care spending, including Medicaid as well as Medi-

care, is distributed more equitably than federal pension checks. At the upper end of the income ladder, only people with taxable incomes of more than \$200,000 a year receive more than their fair share of direct spending benefits. However, households with taxable income of \$50,000 and more collect, on average, strongly disproportionate shares of all health-related tax benefits—principally the tax deductions for employer-provided health insurance and for major health-care expenses.

The richest one percent of American households with taxable incomes of more than \$200,000 collect 1.2 percent of all Medicare and Medicaid spending, plus nearly four percent of the value of all federal health-related tax benefits. In 1990, these very wealthy households consumed \$1.2 billion in Medicare benefits and received \$1.9 billion in health-related tax benefits.

Other higher-income groups also collect more than their proportionate share of federal health-related tax benefits, but less than their share of direct Medicare and Medicaid spending. The 2.8 percent of American households with taxable incomes of less than \$200,000 but more than \$100,000 received only 2.4 percent of all Medicare and Medicaid benefits; but they also claimed 4.3 percent of the value of all federal health-related tax benefits.

In 1990, these affluent Americans charged \$2.5 billion in Medicare costs to taxpayers, and collected another \$2.2 billion in health-related tax benefits.

WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

The actual operations of the major federal entitlement programs point to new restraints on retirement and health-related spending and tax benefits for well-to-do Americans.

In the retirement area, fairness reforms should focus on limiting in some way direct spending benefits for those with taxable incomes of \$100,000 and more, and retirement-related tax benefits for those with taxable incomes of \$75,000 and more. For example, such affluent retirees could be asked to pay income tax on 85 percent of their Social Security benefits, instead of the current 50 percent. In addition, Congress should review proposals to modestly lower the current cap on the deductibility of pension contributions for higher-income people.

In the health area, Medicare benefits for retirees with taxable incomes of \$200,000 or more can be limited in some way, along with health-related tax benefits for households with taxable incomes exceeding \$100,000. Here, Congress should review the impact of requiring such wealthy retirees to pay tax on the insurance value of standard Medicare coverage. In addition, the deductibility of employer-provided health-care insurance could be capped for higher-income people.

These reforms will help reduce the deficit, but deficit-reduction is not the fundamental issue. These reforms can restore a basic measure of fairness to the distribution of federal benefits, in accordance with a progressive covenant of rights and responsibilities covering the nation's central transfer programs.

Communitarians on Presidential Transition Team

Henry Cisneros, former mayor of San Antonio who has endorsed *The Communitarian Platform*, has been appointed a director of Clinton's transition team. William Galston, co-editor of this journal, serves as a policy advisor on the team.

More Signatories of *The Communitarian Platform*

The following individuals have recently endorsed *The Communitarian Platform*:

Joe Duffey, President, The American University

Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, former U.S. Attorney General

Sanford McDonnell, Chairman Emeritus, McDonnell Douglas

Catherine Milton, Executive Director, The Commission on National and Community Service

John Parr, President, the National Civic League

Elliot L. Richardson, former U.S. Attorney General

Inner-City Crime: What the Federal Government Should Do

JOHN J. DIIULIO, JR.

The front-page story in the March 12, 1992, edition of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* was aptly entitled “Living Civilly in an Urban Hell.” Its author, Matthew Purdy, told of the plight of a working inner-city mother named Irma Thomas:

On a block of Susquehanna Avenue in Philadelphia there is Irma Thomas’ stubborn oasis and nothing else. Inside her house, all is order. Three children sit at the kitchen table doing homework. Their tests and report cards are displayed proudly on the wall . . . In their livingroom, Thomas grills her children in their only defense against frequent gunfire on the street: “Drop and Roll.” . . . Thomas, 26, lives in a Philadelphia Housing Authority house, between two other homes that have been vacant for about 10 years, open to drug users, arsonists, and rodents. “We’re forgotten about, down here,” she said.

Over the last decade, there have been hundreds of newspaper, magazine, and television stories of this kind. But the Irma Thomas story struck a deep chord in me. My sister and I grew up minutes from where Ms. Thomas and her children live. But we did not live in fear of being murdered, mugged, and extorted. We were not in public housing, but the modest row home in which we lived still had a government lien on it from the days of the Great Depression when most of the family was on public relief. Financially, we lived from week to week, but my parents were not reluctant to send us to school or let us go out to play for fear that drug dealers and gang members would prey on us. Instead of abandoned buildings, the neighborhood had plenty of small businesses—grocery stores, barber shops, hardware stores, pharmacies. We did not suffer

from any sort of crime-induced depression of our neighborhood economy.

Today, I live in a solidly middle-class suburb of Philadelphia. Children in my neighborhood hear birds chirping at night, not gunfire. I do not have to worry about the crime and disorder that plague Irma Thomas, her family, and her decent, aspiring, law-abiding neighbors. Practically speaking, their plight is not my plight. I can avoid what they cannot escape; I can drive past the inner-city streets where they must walk and cope. I can lump the socio-economically disadvantaged together with the criminally deviant, label them an “underclass,” and forget about them.

For the hard fact is that most of the serious crime in my region is concentrated in the types of inner-city neighborhoods where Irma Thomas lives. Any argument that I should care about inner-city crime out of enlightened self-interest will not hold water. There is no evidence that crime from poor and minority inner-city neighborhoods has spilled over into other places. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) Uniform Crime Report showed that in 1990 Philadelphia’s total crime rate was about twice that of the four surrounding suburban Pennsylvania counties that ring the city, and its violent crime rate was over three times that of those counties. Forty-two percent of all violent crimes in Pennsylvania occurred in Philadelphia, which contained only 14 percent of the state’s population.

The same picture holds true nationally. America’s crime problem has been, and continues to be, an inner-city problem, one that is inextricably linked to the poverty and isolation of the minority citizens who live in these places. In December 1969, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence declared that violent crimes are “chiefly a problem of the cities of the nation, and there violent crimes are committed mainly by the young, poor, male inhabitants of the ghetto slum.” What was true in 1969 is doubly true in 1993. There is, to be sure, a good deal of crime outside the nation’s inner cities. But the incidence of predatory street crime is highest on the streets of what were known as yesteryear’s ghettos—today’s “underclass” neighborhoods.

There are literally thousands of statistics that make this point. For example, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) has reported that rates of

violent crime in cities are about 92 percent higher than those in rural areas, and the rate of household crime (burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft) is about 50 percent higher in the cities than it is in the suburbs. Most city crime is concentrated in poor, minority, inner-city neighborhoods. Of all Americans, inner-city African-American male teenagers and young adults from low-income families are at greatest risk of being victimized by serious crime.

In short, like most Americans, I am no more likely to be a victim of predatory street crime than I am to suffer from the poverty, joblessness, illiteracy, welfare dependency, or drug abuse problems that have come to define inner-city America.

Therein lies the moral dimension of the nation's urban crime dilemma. Unless citizens like me feel a sense of civic obligation to the country's Irma Thomases, unless we hold ourselves morally responsible for caring about their tragic life circumstances, there is no reason why we should demand that our government act to promote security in their communities.

PROMOTING SECURITY IN INNER-CITY COMMUNITIES

I would like to argue that the federal government can and should act to promote security in inner-city communities where crime and disorder are rampant, and to specify a few of the public policies that are most likely to be effective. I understand that, where public policies are concerned, most Americans are less at home with talk of "civic obligation" or "moral responsibility" than they are with talk of constitutional rights. So, without falling into "law reviewese," let me translate the issue into a single, overarching question about inner-city crime, community, and civil rights. The question is this: Are the civil rights of the nation's Irma Thomases being violated; and, if so, what, if any, federal government action can and should be taken to remedy the situation by promoting security in inner-city communities?

Let me be clear about what I mean by "promoting security in inner-city communities." I mean more than lowering crime rates. I mean providing the security to life, liberty, and property that is necessary for these neighborhoods to flourish as neighborhoods—enabling the citizens who live in these places to pursue their individual and collective

lives as they see fit without undue fear of having their lives disrupted or destroyed. I mean securing inner-city communities against criminals who assault, rape, rob, burglarize, extort, deal drugs, and murder. But I also mean securing them against the community-sapping disorders that are commonly associated with serious crime and the fear of serious crime—public drunkenness, aggressive panhandling, gangs loitering in parks, prostitutes soliciting on street corners, abandoned cars, rowdy taverns, unregulated sex and drug-oriented paraphernalia shops, gambling dens, unmaintained or abandoned buildings, and so on.

As studies by Wesley G. Skogan, James Q. Wilson, and other scholars have suggested, such social and physical disorders give rise to serious crime, foster constant fear, and contribute ultimately to neighborhood instability and decay by enervating the capacity of people in these communities to exercise control over neighborhood events and conditions. The question, then, is whether the persistent failure of state and local governments to promote security in disorder-ravaged, crime-torn inner-city neighborhoods is tantamount to a failure to protect and enforce the civil rights of the citizens who live in these places.

It is hard to see how the civil rights of these citizens are not being violated. I am not interested in performing the sort of intellectual gymnastics that might constitute a fully developed argument in favor of this proposition. Instead, I wish only to point to 1954, the year that the United States Supreme Court upheld the civil rights of Linda Brown and all persons similarly situated by declaring in *Brown v. Board of Education* that “segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race” deprives “the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities.”

The little Linda Browns who live in today’s inner-city neighborhoods are being deprived of all manner of individual and collective life opportunities. It is, of course, possible to hold to a conception of civil rights that requires government action against segregated schools but does not require it against violence-ridden ones. It is likewise possible to maintain that there is a civil rights interest in enabling children to attend the local public school of their choice, but none in enabling them to walk to school without having to dodge stray bullets, run from drug dealers, or wear colors that do not offend street gangsters.

But I do not see how either the letter or the spirit of the *Brown* decision,

or of numerous other court decisions and public laws, can be honored unless the federal government assumes a civil rights interest in promoting security in predominantly poor, minority inner-city neighborhoods where security has been absent, and communal existence has been disrupted or destroyed for over a quarter-century. If state and local authorities have proven unable or unwilling to promote security in these disadvantaged communities, then it is the federal government's constitutional duty to do so by whatever constitutionally acceptable means are necessary.

FEDERAL ACTION AGAINST INNER-CITY CRIME

Admittedly, this view of inner-city crime, community, and civil rights is a novel one. I would not, therefore, wish to hang on it the case for federal government action against inner-city crime. There are ample, if less principled, precedents for federal action. As I explained in a recently-published Brookings Institution volume on domestic policy priorities, between 1967 and 1992, the federal government fought two "wars on crime," each of them focused on urban areas. The first war (1967-80) was against poverty; the second one (1980-92) was against criminals. In the first war, the social and economic "root causes" of crime were attacked; in the second war, the likelihood that criminals would be detected, arrested, prosecuted, convicted, and incarcerated was increased. Initially, each war was supported by impressive research and enjoyed widespread public support. Ultimately, each war was judged a failure and generated widespread public disillusionment.

The point, however, is that for the last quarter-century the federal government has assumed some direct responsibility for meeting the problems of crime and disorder, especially within the nation's inner cities. Even so, according to BJS, in 1988, (the last year for which there are complete spending data) direct and indirect federal expenditures on all criminal justice activities amounted to just under \$8 billion, or 13 percent of all governmental expenditures on crime prevention and control. This is a pittance for domestic defense.

There are at least two areas where the federal government can and should act to promote security in inner-city neighborhoods: (1) community policing for inner-city residents, and (2) drug treatment for inner-city offenders.

COMMUNITY POLICING

The unflattering but accurate image of contemporary police work in most big cities is that of cops cruising in patrol cars, physically and psychologically distant from the people of the communities they serve and “never around” when needed. Indeed, in the understaffed Los Angeles Police Department, the image is of cops in helicopters who swoop down on violence-ridden, drug-infested communities, police skypeople whose faces they can hardly see, then vanish, leaving the communities and their troubles untouched.

In Los Angeles, as in other urban areas, policing has evolved into an increasingly high-tech, bureaucratic game of “cops and robbers.” The goal of community policing is to stop the game-playing and instead transform the big-city police into a community-oriented group of “cops and citizens.” The image of policing it promises is of cops on foot patrol, listening to community residents, working with community leaders and groups, coordinating problem-solving activities with other government agencies, and using their authority and resources in ways that the community understands and approves.

There is as yet no definitive social science research on the effects of community policing. But the National Institute of Justice has launched several systematic research efforts, and Mark H. Moore’s book *Beyond 911* and over a dozen other existing studies indicate that good things happen wherever police get out of their cars, onto the streets, and into regular contact with citizens in the community. Street crime decreases. The community’s fear of crime abates. Officer morale strengthens. Police-community relations improve.

But community policing requires a full-scale commitment. In the 1980s, as the inner-city drug-and-crime epidemic worsened, many big-city police departments were reduced. Today, hardly a major police force in the country has as many officers as it arguably needs. Few departments have enough to send battalions of officers on foot patrol in the most hard-hit neighborhoods.

The federal government can and should supply the human and financial resources needed to bring community policing to all inner-city residents. Police crackdowns in troubled neighborhoods rarely reduce crime and disorder because criminals and other troublemakers quickly

move elsewhere. But it is reasonable to suppose that by doubling or tripling the number of officers on regular duty in and around drug-infested, crime-torn neighborhoods, and by deploying them in accordance with the precepts of community policing, the streets and sidewalks of even the most blighted inner city could be made secure enough for children to play and adults to stroll.

The federal government can see to it that all inner-city neighborhoods are well policed. As Police Chief Reuben Greenberg wrote in a recent issue of *Policy Review*, where the community's security is concerned, it is possible to "treat people in public housing as if they lived in a country club or upscale apartment." It is possible, but it cannot be done without significant federal support. To get a rough idea of what it might cost, to sustain a 20 percent increase in the police forces of the 222 local police departments that in 1990 served populations of 100,000 or more would cost about \$1 billion a year.

Were the federal government to provide such aid, it would need to be sure that the money goes to police departments, that it is spent on community policing efforts, and that the new manpower is trained and deployed in the neighborhoods that need it, not used simply to reduce the local contribution to spending on police. In this regard, the intergovernmental history of the first federal war on crime furnishes a cautionary tale. The federal government's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (1968-1982) spent billions, but little of the money ever reached the inner-city neighborhoods that needed it most.

DRUG TREATMENT

Federal corrections officials have long believed, and numerous studies have confirmed, that drug addiction is a "multiplier" of crime. People who become addicts often commit crimes before they become addicted, but the onset of addiction dramatically worsens criminal behavior. Research has shown that successful drug treatment programs for offenders have several features in common. As common sense would suggest, one key to successful drug treatment is keeping addicts in the program. The longer an addict stays in a properly structured drug treatment program, the better the chances of reducing drug abuse and crime. For example, studies show that success is likely in compulsory

prison-based drug treatment programs that provide strict supervision, are available nine months to a year before the participant's release, and offer meaningful, community-based after-care.

In 1990 federal prisons held some 59,000 prisoners, about 47 percent of whom were classified by the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) as having moderate to serious drug abuse problems. Between 1990 and 1992, the BOP began to shape drug treatment around four main programs: drug education, drug abuse counseling, comprehensive and pilot residential drug treatment, and transitional services. By the end of 1992, thousands of federal prisoners had benefitted from these treatment programs.

It is now in order for the federal government to make such drug treatment programs available to prisoners in every state correctional system in the country—and to pay for them with federal dollars. In 1990 only 11 percent of state prisoners were receiving drug or alcohol counseling. A recent BJS survey indicates that many state prison systems have more than enough drug treatment capacity. But no one doubts that the number of untreated or undertreated inmates in state prisons is quite high. It is difficult to know how many state prisoners have serious but unmet drug treatment needs, and even harder to assess the quality of prison-based programs from one jurisdiction to the next. But it is clear that they vary widely in methods and quality, and that correction officials in many states lack the funds to train staff, hire specialists, or administer programs on a routine basis.

When we talk about state prisons, we are talking about places that draw a disproportionate fraction of their residents from the streets of inner-city America. By 1980 one of every 100 residents of some inner-city census tracts was behind prison bars. According to the Correctional Association of New York, in 1990 in New York state and other jurisdictions nearly one-quarter of all teenage and young adult African-American males were under some form of correctional supervision (behind bars or in the community on probation or parole), and over ten percent of them were incarcerated. They were twenty times more likely to be imprisoned than teenage and young adult white males.

There is, to be sure, a strong case to be made that the federal government should provide drug treatment on demand in inner-city neighborhoods. Perhaps if such treatment were more widely available,

fewer inner-city youth would become criminals in the first place. But, whatever the case for other ways of delivering drug treatment to citizens who need it, it is hard to imagine why we would not want to provide it to convicted criminals who, as a result of receiving it, might prove less likely to victimize their neighbors in the future, and more likely to get and keep jobs and lead productive lives.

To get a rough idea of what universal prison-based drug treatment might cost, annual drug treatment expenditures in the federal prison system average about \$300 per prisoner. Thus, to serve 800,000 state prisoners similarly would cost about \$250 million a year. This federal expenditure might be worth the cost in lowering recidivism alone. As a bonus, the program would also help to repair drug-ravaged lives, restore drug-ravaged communities, and make potentially productive taxpayers out of former inner-city criminals.

THE CLINTON-GORE PLAN ON CRIME AND DRUGS

In 1989, I argued in *The Public Interest* that inner-city crime bred urban poverty as much as urban poverty bred inner-city crime. That argument struck many readers, several of my liberal friends among them, as dangerous if not reactionary. During the presidential campaign, however, Clinton and Gore offered a crime and drugs plan that was predicated on that understanding. The plan emphasized both community policing and drug treatment. It also stressed the expansion of boot camp prisons. The details of the Clinton-Gore proposals, however, raised some important questions.

The Clinton-Gore community policing proposal was centered on the creation of a 100,000-person “National Police Corps” that would offer “veterans and active military personnel a chance to become law enforcement officers.” Democrats in Congress have repeatedly pushed a similar idea: namely, a tuition-for-service police corps consisting of recent college graduates. For several reasons, the Clinton-Gore version is better. Good policing does not require officers to have advanced degrees or college diplomas, and there is absolutely no evidence that college graduates make better police officers. To link community policing initiatives with efforts to pin badges on college kids (or “kiddie corps” as some veteran officers have called the proposal) might only

raise the odds against successful implementation by stirring unnecessary resentment in the ranks of local police departments. Moreover, it has been estimated that the tuition-for-service approach could range as high as \$1.7 billion a year. It is unlikely that any approach centered on veterans, active military personnel, or simply walk-in recruits would cost that much.

The Clinton-Gore drug treatment proposals were quite sweeping. The plan called for treatment on demand. We know that some types of prison-based drug treatment programs work. But we have much less knowledge about the effects, if any, of treatment on demand. Even if treatment efforts were focused exclusively on adult and juvenile offenders, we would be talking about extending it to over four million people. The likely administrative quagmire of attempting to offer programs in thousands of local jails, probation, and parole systems should give anyone pause. Whether this could be done with predictable and desirable consequences, and a cost that is not prohibitive, remains in grave doubt.

Democrats in Congress have favored prison-based drug treatment, but linked the proposal to sentence reductions for prisoners who participate. But there is no evidence that such “good time” provisions either improve prisoners’ institutional behavior or make any difference in their post-release behavior (going straight, getting jobs).

Finally, the Clinton-Gore plan favored the development of boot camp prisons in which youthful, nonviolent offenders would live in a paramilitary environment, undergo regular drug testing, be required to work, and receive education and drug treatment. In 1992, boot camps were up and running in over two dozen states, Arkansas among them. As a report of the National Conference of State Legislatures noted, there is “considerable variation in how states have designed and operated boot camp programs.” So far, there is no systematic evidence that boot camps either save money or reduce recidivism, and the anecdotal evidence remains quite mixed.

CONCLUSION: A LIMITED FEDERAL WAR ON CRIME

But if the Clinton-Gore administration honors the spirit, if not each and every letter, of its campaign plan on crime and drugs, the nation’s

inner-city crime problem will almost certainly be assuaged. No federal measures can solve the crime and disorder problem for Irma Thomas and her neighbors. But the Clinton-Gore administration has pledged to place the federal government more squarely in the fight to reclaim inner-city communities for the good people who are trapped in them. A line of the Democratic campaign plan read: "We cannot and we must not permit another generation of Americans to grow up on streets too unsafe to walk." To honor its own campaign rhetoric, not to mention our civic and moral responsibility, the new administration can and should begin to engage in a limited federal war on inner-city crime that we are not bound to lose.

**The Return to Individual and Local
Responsibility**

As citizens empowered to govern ourselves we should also be willing to reassert our role on a community level. And it is high time we did so. In the course of the last fifty years there has not been one new local government incorporated in the United States. The life blood of this system is drying up.

Imprimis, October 1992

Restructuring National Defense Priorities

LAWRENCE KORB

With the end of the Cold War, U.S. defense spending can safely be reduced by 50 percent in real terms over the decade of the 1990s. This will free up over \$500 billion in real dollars between now and the end of the decade (almost \$700 billion in 1992 dollars), and still leave the United States sufficient military force to repeat a Desert Storm-type operation and handle a Korean-style contingency simultaneously. This is hardly an isolationist or “come home America” policy.

For a defense budget of \$150 billion (in 1992 dollars), the U.S. can have a total military force (active and reserve) of two million people with a structure consisting of 18 ground divisions (Army and Marine), 33 tactical air wings (Air Force, Navy, and Marine), and a 9-carrier, 350-ship Navy. This will enable us to keep about 100,000 troops deployed in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia at all times, as well as conduct random naval patrols throughout the globe. Such a continuing presence will demonstrate U.S. power and resolve, and enable us to help influence the future of those regions. Moreover, if we spend our funds correctly, this force will be equipped with the most modern and sophisticated technology, have a research and development policy that keeps us on the cutting edge, and be able to expand quickly should the international situation warrant.

EFFECT OF DEFENSE CUTS ON SOCIETY

Cutting the defense budget in half will mean that fewer people will be employed by the military industrial complex. In 1990 about 6.5 million people, or 4.9 percent of the total work force, were in defense-related employment. By the year 2000 that number will drop to about 3.5

million, or two percent of the total labor force. The active duty military will drop from about two million to 1.3 million people. This will have a marginal impact on those already in the service, but a devastating impact upon those who would like to join. Approximately 50,000 people a year will be forced to leave the service, but the vast majority of these people will have generous retirement or separation bonuses, and excellent training and educational benefits to ease the transition. Moreover, if we allow veterans to earn credit toward their 20-year military retirement by going into public or community service occupations like teaching, the need for forced dismissals will be minimized.

However, about 1 million young men and women who wish to join the armed forces, and whose education and aptitude levels would have enabled them to enlist in the 1980s, will not be admitted in the 1990s. The vast majority of these youths will be from lower socio-economic levels who traditionally have used the military for upward mobility. The Army currently takes no one without a high school diploma, and only admits about five percent of those who score below average on the Armed Forces Qualification Test. The Army now has an acceptance rate of 30 percent, lower than most major universities in this country. The other services have even higher standards. As a result, the percentage of African-Americans in the force has already begun to drop.

Something must be done to provide these young people with opportunities to break the cycle of poverty, just as the military once did. The answer would seem to lie in a voluntary national service plan that provides the same type of training and post-service educational benefits that military service does.

Since 1990 about 350,000 defense workers have lost their jobs. Over the remainder of this decade, defense industry employment will drop by another million. The drop would have been even more precipitous had not the politics of the presidential campaign intruded. To combat the pains of recession (and to attract votes in several states), Democratic candidate Bill Clinton felt it necessary to endorse two weapon systems that the Pentagon tried to cancel as Cold War relics—the Seawolf submarine (\$7 billion) and the V-22 Tilt Rotor aircraft (\$24 billion), and one weapon system whose rising costs and performance problems had moved the Congress to try to kill its funding—the C-17 aircraft (\$36 billion). For the same reasons, President Bush approved (and Governor

Clinton supported) the sale of F-16s to Taiwan and F-15s to Saudi Arabia. Both sales violate existing policy, promise only to increase international instability in the long-term, and undermine the moral authority of the U.S. to prevent nations like China and Russia from spreading their sophisticated fighter aircraft, bombers, missiles, and submarines around the globe.

Making the defense budget a jobs program is not only dangerous, but is at best only a temporary solution to a long-term problem. It merely postpones the orderly reduction and restructuring of the weapons industry. This nation needs an adjustment program that will channel significant parts of the expertise in the defense arena into productive areas. This nation is short of scientific and engineering talent in its schools and business enterprises. Half of America's high schools have no physics teachers. Half of the math and science teachers are not certified in those subjects. America lags way behind Japan and Germany in certain industries like electric cars and high-speed trains. By setting aside about \$1 billion from the defense budget each year and providing tax credits for conversion; individuals, companies, and communities can receive the necessary funds for retraining and relocating military personnel, and diversifying industry. Over the past 20 years the Pentagon has provided such assistance to the communities and individuals affected by base closures. In addition, the federal government can help to make American industry more competitive by transferring technology from the 726 defense laboratories to private industry.

CIVIC ROLES FOR THE MILITARY

The military force that remains will not be insubstantial. However, without the threat of an imminent Soviet-Warsaw Pact attack on Western Europe, it will be freer to devote some of its considerable energies to certain non-defense areas. Several come to mind.

First, since the international drug trade is indeed a threat to national security, and constitutes a \$200 billion yearly drain on the U.S. economy, the Department of Defense (DOD) should continue to expand its efforts in fighting illegal narcotics traffic. In 1992 DOD spent about \$1.2 billion, slightly more than one percent of its total budget, in supporting the National Drug Control Strategy, yet no one would argue that the U.S. is

winning the drug war. This can easily be increased to three percent or \$7 billion and allow DOD to greatly increase both its intelligence and strategic support to those whose job it is to locate and destroy illegal drug production.

Second, the Pentagon can assign operational responsibility for responding to natural disasters to one of its unified commands. As the delay in responding to Hurricane Andrew in the summer of 1992 showed, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has neither the personnel, expertise, nor bureaucratic clout to deal with large national disasters in a timely manner. If the Pentagon had responsibility for responding to disasters, the 20,000 troops eventually sent to Florida would have been there in hours rather than days.

Third, specific forces should be trained and placed permanently on call for international peacekeeping and peacemaking operations. Currently U.S. forces train primarily to deal with large-scale, high-intensity conflicts, like Desert Storm, rather than peacekeeping operations such as those the U.N. is conducting in Cambodia and Bosnia. These specially trained forces would show that this nation is serious about using international organizations for all but the gravest threats to our vital interests.

Finally, the U.S. military should make the medical and logistic capabilities of its active and reserve forces available to communities around this nation. Military doctors, dentists, and corpsmen are among the best in the world. Why not use some of their capabilities to provide health care to medically underserved populations in this nation?

The end of the Cold War marks a great opportunity for this nation. The administration that takes office in 1993 will be the first in nearly 50 years not to have to deal with a military superpower with an expansionist ideology. It must not allow the habits of the past half-century or the power of the military industrial complex to prevent this nation from making the most of that opportunity.

The Twin Problems of the U.S. Economy

BARRY BOSWORTH

The gridlock of the United States' economic policy has been broken. President Clinton will take office with a major opportunity, indeed mandate, to shift the direction of American economic policy. Yet, the problems that he faces are intimidating. Although he and the Democratic Congress have been given the authority to carry out a program of change, they also will be held fully accountable for the performance of their economic policy over the next four years. Most discouraging to a new president, the changes required to address the more fundamental problems of the U.S. economy will require some painful adjustments of American life in the short run, and the benefits will not emerge within four years.

The new president will soon face enormous pressure to develop a response to two immediate economic concerns, which seem to pull the administration in opposite directions. The first is a short-term problem of weak demand and excessive unemployment. The recession is over, but for most Americans the anemic pace of economic recovery makes it hard to tell the difference. The second, and far more difficult, is a long-term structural problem of reduced opportunities for economic growth, related primarily to deficit spending.

The popular remedy for the first problem would be another round of fiscal stimulus by cutting taxes or increasing expenditures to promote an expansion of domestic demand. Yet, the failure of the economy to recover more vigorously can not be traced to a lack of fiscal stimulus. The budget deficit already stands at \$300 billion annually, and it has increased by \$70 billion over the past two years, even after excluding cyclical factors. Another round of fiscal pump-priming would provide

only a temporary panacea, and even that benefit would be smaller than anticipated if financial markets interpret a further rise in the deficit as a signal that the debt-financed spending of the past is here to stay. Fiscal stimulus is also unwise because it would quickly dissipate in a global economic system. Government insistence that stimulus is temporary, or that deficit reduction will commence shortly, is no longer credible at this point. At best, such a program will not yield significant benefits beyond two years or so, and then the government would be faced with the painful costs of reversing its fiscal course.

THE LONGER RUN

Americans will be better served by a president with his eyes on long-term change, focusing on the basic structural problems of economic and budget policy. Even with an economic recovery, American workers will continue to face stagnation of real income, due primarily to the failure to achieve significant improvements in productivity; and disparities in job skills will lead to a further widening of differences in wage rates. The key to resolving these problems is increased investment, broadly defined. *If Americans expect to achieve a higher future standard of living, they must be willing to invest in the future*, and they have not been doing that in significant amounts for many years. The nation was on a consumption binge in the 1980s, and now the bill has arrived.

President-elect Clinton has correctly emphasized that the key to increased living standards is increased spending on physical capital, greater efforts in research and development, and more effective education and job training for the work force. These are all areas in which the returns on increased investment are known to be high. The rate of return on physical capital is generally estimated to be near ten percent, even after adjusting for inflation; that for research and development ranges between 15 and 25 percent; and the returns on post-secondary education are about 12 percent. Those investments must be financed, if Americans are to benefit, by increases in domestic saving. That requires a reduction in the budget deficit. Although the budget deficit is not the nation's only economic problem, reducing the deficit is imperative in order to finance an economic program aimed at raising the nation's investment rate and ensuring our joint future.

CONNECTING THE SHORT AND LONG RUN

Moving the issue of long-run deficit reduction to the top of the agenda actually can help resolve the short-run problem. If the president moves first to stimulate the economy, he runs the risk of perverse reactions that weaken this policy—particularly in financial markets. Alternatively, it is relatively easy to include delays in the schedule of tax increases and expenditure reductions within a deficit reduction program to achieve short-run stimulus. Once a legislated deficit-reduction program is in place, short-run stimuli should be of little concern to financial markets.

An initial focus on the long-term direction of policy also provides guidance to the type of short-run measures that would be most effective. One should avoid actions that would have to be reversed to achieve the long-run objective, and emphasize those actions that shift allocation of the nation's resources toward increased capital formation. For this reason, measures that promote investment and exports should be favored over temporary tax cuts to stimulate consumption.

TOWARD A NEW PLAN

These considerations suggest that Clinton should restructure the economic plan outlined during the campaign because it does not address the fundamental issues of short-run stimulus or long-run deficit reduction. It was useful, however, to illustrate his priorities with respect to an increased emphasis on investing in the future; and it is difficult to discuss the painful details of deficit reduction in the heat of a political campaign. But, his plan is basically an expansion of public-works spending financed with a tax increase on upper-income families and reductions in defense outlays. Public-works spending would provide no net stimulus because it is offset by the tax increase and defense cuts. The plan's claims of a significant reduction of the long-run deficit through the elimination of waste and inefficiency, increased taxation of foreign companies, and returns on public investment are simply not credible.

The present weakness of the economy is a poor excuse for not acting on the budget deficit. The process of developing an effective budget-deficit-reduction program, debating it, and putting it into effect will require considerable time. Tax increases could not be implemented until

early 1994. Significant redesign of expenditure-side programs will require several years. It is not possible, or desirable, to suddenly reverse the direction of the budget deficit. And, a major portion of the short-run costs, in the form of a scaling back of consumption, are unavoidable.

When it comes to the specifics of a deficit-reduction program, Clinton can choose from a wide variety of plans that have been advanced in recent years, including Perot's proposal. The problem is not how to reduce the budget deficit, but rather making the commitment do so: deciding to take the action, and apportioning the costs in a fair and equitable fashion. Although the costs should be born most heavily by those most able to pay, adjustments of the required magnitude will impose costs, either in the form of tax increases or benefit reductions, on everyone. Political reality will probably also require that the deficit reduction be evenly split between cuts in expenditure programs and higher taxes.

On the expenditure side, *health care reform is central to the success of any effort to control the deficit*. Thus, an emphasis on deficit reduction would reinforce the new administration's desire to significantly reform the health care system. Through the 1980s, increases in the share of national income devoted to health care costs and interest payments on the public debt exceeded the growth in the budget deficit. Spending on all other government programs fell sharply as a share of the nation's income, and is projected to continue to decline in the future. If health care costs could be capped at its current share of the national income, by the fifth year, the annual budget deficit would be reduced by \$100 billion. Furthermore, the end of the Cold War has not been reflected in a commensurate scaling back of defense spending.

On the tax side, President-elect Clinton has proposed an added income tax bracket for incomes above \$ 200,000, but significant deficit reduction will also require tax increases on the broad majority of Americans who consider themselves middle-class. The potential tax changes range from gasoline taxes (as proposed by Perot) to consideration of a broad-based value-added tax.

There is public acceptance of the need for some tax increases over the next few years, and reductions in defense spending will free additional resources. The issue is whether those funds will be used to reduce

the deficit or to finance new programs in the public sector. As presently structured, the Clinton plan chooses new public programs. I would argue for a greater emphasis on channelling the funds into increased national saving with the benefits flowing through to private investment and greater net exports.

A QUESTION OF RISK

It is true that an emphasis on a long-run economic program entails considerable risk. If the projected short-term recovery fails to materialize, the president will suffer a loss of political support. Nor will the benefits of a deficit reduction program emerge within a four-year period. Increases in national saving and capital formation will take many years to significantly alter the level of output per worker or to raise real incomes. However, the returns on increased investment are ultimately enormous. The current generation of Americans has a high standard of living because of the cumulative value of the investments of prior generations. It can not justify the failure to show an equal consideration for future generations simply because the rewards are slow to come.

SHOE-INS

Daryl F. Gates, the former Los Angeles police chief, won the Massachusetts Institute for Technology's "Ig Nobel" peace prize "for his uniquely compelling methods of bringing people together." The economics prize went to investors in Lloyd's of London insurance consortium "for their bold attempt to ensure disaster by refusing to pay for their company's losses." In the archaeology category, the winners were Eclaireurs de France, a youth group known for its good deeds. In cleaning up the graffiti in the Mayieres Cave, they also erased paintings that had adorned the walls for 15,000 years.

Social Responsibility and Social Accounting: Time for a New Ledger

NEIL GILBERT

During the recent campaign, President Clinton promised a “New Covenant,” under which government would serve the needs of those who work and play by the rules, at the same time that it would put a two-year limit on welfare dependency, after which recipients are expected to find employment. The “New Covenant” conveys a resolve to adjust the moral balance of social welfare by weighing citizens’ rights to public benefits against obligations to perform as dependable members of the community. This article offers a modest proposal for the reform of social accounting that would help to translate this resolve into practice.

Contemporary discussions about balancing social rights and obligations typically proceed from the assumption that we understand who gains from welfare transfers and need only to figure out what they owe society in return. But who gains, and what social responsibilities they may be expected to fulfill in exchange, are not entirely self-evident. Over the last two decades profound changes have occurred in the methods of financing welfare transfers, which have yet to be acknowledged in the standard accounting of welfare expenditures. These changes enlarge both the prevailing conception of who gains from welfare transfers and the nature of their social responsibilities.

How much has government spending on social welfare changed over the years? To answer this question, policy analysts, researchers, and the media ordinarily turn to the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) annual report. Encompassing a broad range of transfers for health, housing, income maintenance, education, and social services, the SSA report is generally considered the authoritative inventory for welfare

spending in the United States. According to the SSA's ledger, government expenditure for social welfare surged from 10 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) in 1960 to 20 percent by 1976, as new social benefits were instated through an array of social legislation. The 1962 "service" amendments to the Social Security Act, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Model Cities, the Food Stamp Act of 1965, the Older Americans Act of 1965, the Community Mental Health Centers Act of 1963, Medicare and Medicaid, and the Title XX amendments of 1974 were merely some, not all, of the initiatives that formed an expanding package of social provisions financed directly by government.

Up through the early 1970s, both Europe and the United States relied largely, though not exclusively, on the "direct expenditures" approach to welfare transfers. Taxes collected by the state were used to finance cash benefits and social services produced by government. Measured by direct expenditures, the United States is usually judged inferior to its European kin.

But comparisons of this sort have become increasingly misleading. Between 1970 and 1990 our social welfare system has quietly evolved away from the traditional state-centered design of European models toward a market-oriented arrangement that emphasizes private activity and offers an expanding package of social welfare transfers through indirect measures, such as tax expenditures and credit subsidies. These benefits do not show up in the SSA's standard inventory of direct expenditures.

Judging by the SSA's ledger of direct expenditures, public spending for social welfare over the last 50 years appears simply to have advanced from one plateau to another. As a percentage of the GNP, direct public expenditures for social welfare remained on an even keel of nearly 10 percent between 1940 and 1960, climbed to about 20 percent from 1960 to the mid-1970s, dipped slightly to 18 percent, and have since levelled off at that rate. After such a precipitous rise through the 1970s, liberals tend to interpret the steady level of expenditure as a reversal in progress, while conservatives are inclined to see it as progress toward a reversal in welfare spending. Both views are myopic. Narrowly concentrating on direct grants to states and individuals, they overlook the spreading use of other fiscal instruments that are reshaping the modern structure of welfare transfers. As the type of public spending that was most direct

and easily measured slowed down, less visible and more indirect forms of expenditure have accelerated.

ACCOUNTING FOR WELFARE EXPENDITURES

How much does government really spend on social welfare? According to recent figures from the SSA, public spending on social welfare came to about \$886 billion in 1988. Although widely accepted as the standard account of welfare expenditures, SSA's bookkeeping is incomplete. It misjudges the full costs of social welfare transfers by a magnitude of 25 to 40 percent, according to estimates by Gilbert and Gilbert in *The Enabling State*. The discrepancy between SSA's account and the actual level of government expenditure is attributable to a number of hidden transfers that are excluded from the conventional audit of welfare spending. Over the last two decades these ignored expenditures have multiplied to form an almost invisible segment of the welfare state, which aids recipients mainly in the middle and upper classes.

In focusing on direct public expenditures the SSA account represents only one of the ways that government administers social welfare transfers. To equate all welfare spending with these direct subsidies conveys a distorted view of welfare expenditures and beneficiaries. It is a view that concentrates on the most visible form of social transfer, which is intended largely for poor, elderly, and dependent members of society. A more accurate account requires expanding the conventional ledger of direct financing to include the costs of indirect methods of government support for social welfare, especially the provision of social transfers through tax expenditures and credit subsidies.

That special deductions and exemptions in the tax code amount to a form of government transfer is hardly a new idea. It was recognized as early as the 1930s in Pigou's classic text, *Economics of Welfare*, and elaborated upon by Richard Titmuss in the mid-1950s. The movement of this idea from academic discourse to public policy gained momentum in 1967 when the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury proposed that deductions, exemptions, and other tax expenditures be counted officially as federal revenue losses. It is only since 1974, however, that tax expenditure data were introduced as a regular component of the president's annual budget.

The case for a more precise account of welfare spending that

includes certain tax expenditures is underscored by the recent debate concerning preferred forms of public support for child care. Policy makers were divided over whether this support should be delivered through tax credits to individuals or direct grants for services. They compromised with a package of child-care related provisions that was incorporated into the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA). This package of benefits includes additional funding for child care programs, such as Headstart and the Child Care Development Block Grant, and a substantial expansion of \$18.3 billion in tax credits to low-income families with dependent children over the next five years (through the Earned Income Tax Credit, and supplementary credits for young children and health insurance). Although the tax credit subsidy is among the most expensive social welfare measures in recent decades, the figure for most of this benefit will not register on the SSA's conventional account of welfare spending (nor be weighed in typical comparisons of welfare effort on which the United States is continually ranked well below the European nations).

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is one of 33 new tax expenditure items introduced between 1970 and 1982. During this period, the number of these items increased annually at almost three times the rate of that from 1940 to 1970, greatly enlarging the system of government transfers for health, housing, and income maintenance. Although the bulk of federal tax expenditures benefit individual taxpayers, there is no standard classification of items that are related exclusively to social welfare. Examining a few items most clearly related to social welfare, the largest category of federal tax expenditures for individuals encompasses provisions for income maintenance, such as the EITCs and tax exclusions on retirement plans. Growing from \$42.5 billion in 1978 to \$93 billion in 1986, the costs of these benefits rose from 16 to 32 percent of direct federal outlays for income maintenance. The second largest category of federal tax expenditure involves deduction and exclusions for housing, which came to \$37 billion in 1985, an amount considerably in excess of direct federal grants for housing.

Credit subsidies, another indirect method of providing social transfers, are poorly understood and even harder to trace than tax expenditures. These hidden transfers derive from the difference between interest rates charged by government and market rates for similar loans, the costs of loan defaults, reduction of loan fees, and other financial benefits of

public guarantees. The federal credit budget, established in 1980, measures direct loan commitments but does not calculate the costs of public subsidies inherent in all these transactions. However, efforts to take a systematic account of these subsidies are underway. In the area of housing, for example, the Office of Management and Budget estimates that the subsidies provided by federal loan guarantee programs netted borrowers benefits of \$6.1 billion in 1986, a sum amounting to about 50 percent of direct federal expenditures on housing assistance.

This brief comparison of direct expenditures with tax expenditures and credit subsidies suggests that the stream of social welfare transfers from government to individual beneficiaries is considerably larger and more complex than that represented in the SSA's standard accounting of social welfare spending. Some benefits are more visible than others. Some costs are easier to calculate than others. Some recipients have greater public approval than others. The standard report on social welfare expenditures unwittingly conceals the full scope of these costs and benefits.

At the same time it narrows the policy-making window on how to finance social welfare, for to make informed judgments about welfare spending and potential trade-offs we must first get the numbers right. Beyond technical matters of calculation, there are several difficulties in this regard. The middle and upper classes, who have gained substantially from the expansion of indirect government expenditures, are unaccustomed to thinking of these financial advantages as welfare transfers. For example, farmers enjoying low-interest housing loans from federal programs typically fail to recognize that they are being subsidized by government for the costs of shelter just as are residents of public housing who pay below-market rents for their units. Liberals are hesitant to count the costs of indirect measures because it would dramatically increase the size of the welfare system, impugning their customary criticism that too little is being spent. Conservatives are not charmed by the idea that special tax preferences involve anything more than a way of allowing citizens to keep what they have rightly earned. Yet there is something to be said for a full disclosure of who benefits from the diverse forms of government assistance to individuals, and what this really costs. Aside from the need for accuracy to make informed judgments about spending, an accounting that reveals the full range of welfare transfers helps to sharpen the discussion of social rights and

responsibilities.

INDUCING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The growth of indirect welfare expenditures, which provide benefits that go almost unnoticed by the public, has been accompanied by an increasing scrutiny of direct expenditures, which offer highly visible benefits. Programs that deliver the most visible welfare transfers are being confronted with questions about the appropriate criteria of welfare entitlement, reviving earlier distinctions between the “worthy” and “unworthy” poor, an issue of long-standing debate that was muted for a time during the 1960s.

In the mid-1960s the central question of entitlement was framed by the welfare rights movement, which focused not so much on the worthiness of potential welfare recipients, as on the range of benefits they deserved. According to conventional wisdom of that era, the poor were innocent casualties of capitalism and as such entitled to be compensated for the system’s failures. The pressing concern was how far to extend what T. H. Marshall once called the “social rights of citizenship.” Admonitions against “blaming the victim” struck a prominent chord in the *zeitgeist* of the 1960s. With a resurgence of popular support for capitalism in the 1980s, concerns about the nature of welfare entitlement shifted away from elaborating social rights to delineating what Lawrence Mead identifies as the “social obligations” of citizenship. Social rights are marked by a variety of tangible benefits to which citizens are legally entitled. Social obligations are acknowledged less frequently by a set of legal duties than by a normative consensus about how people are expected to behave and what they owe each other. Although this normative attribute makes it difficult to gauge the full scope of social obligations, Mead suggests that several duties constitute the core of expected behavior. At the very least, according to Mead, able-bodied adults are expected to work in available jobs, to contribute to the support of their families, to acquire fluency in English, to learn enough in school to be employable, and to respect the law, as well as the rights of others.

The analysis of social obligations draws attention to the responsibilities that accompany rights to various forms of public aid. By specifying these responsibilities it is thought we might, as James Q. Wilson

puts it, “induce private virtue through public policy.” From this perspective, society is authorized to insist that entitlement to public aid be conditioned on the fulfillment of routine social obligations.

Efforts to balance social obligations and social rights, however, require a precise assessment of what to include on both sides of the ledger. To date, these efforts have concentrated primarily on rights embodied in welfare transfers that are highly visible (such as cash grants and services to AFDC mothers) and on obligations essentially related to work and financial support of one’s family. (There are exceptions to the emphasis on work-related obligations. For example, the Governor of Wisconsin has proposed to lower the AFDC benefits of parents whose children have a record of chronic absences from school.)

The Family Support Act of 1988 is a case in point. Representing what many herald as the “new public consensus” on welfare reform, it requires AFDC recipients with children over three years old to enroll in work training or educational programs, at the completion of which they must seek employment. In addition to this “workfare” proviso, teenage mothers with children under three are expected to obtain their high school degree or an equivalency diploma, which will help to make them employable; and single mothers applying for welfare are obliged to help establish paternity so that their children’s fathers can be held accountable for child-support payments.

These stipulations for “workfare,” high school education, and paternity establishment affirm the parental duty to care for one’s family. In this case, the duty emphasized is that of an economic provider. While financial support is certainly a crucial matter, the social obligation to care has other dimensions that deserve serious consideration. Parents are expected to nurture and to socialize their children, and to tend to their emotional needs. When children are young and most in need of socialization and emotional comfort, the single parent’s obligation to work may be incompatible with other dimensions of caring.

By focusing on obligations related to work and financial support of one’s family and on rights related to direct forms of welfare transfer, the moral calculus of social rights and responsibilities applies almost exclusively to the poor. But just as the full spectrum of benefits derived from social rights extend beyond those related to direct welfare expenditures, the social obligations of community membership go well be-

yond the traditional duty to pay one's own way. In addition to caring for dependent members of one's family, the more general charge to assist the weakest and protect the most vulnerable members of the community is widely considered a basic responsibility of all who are able.

REVISING THE LEDGER

The conventional estimate of welfare expenditure forms a narrow compass for mapping social rights, one which centers on the poor and accentuates their social responsibility to be financially self-supporting. A broader, more balanced, view of rights and responsibilities requires constructing a new ledger for social accounting. Although some gaps remain, a growing body of information on tax expenditures and credit subsidies is available to take the full measure of government spending for social welfare.

In thinking about welfare transfers, there are several ways that the inclusion of benefits from tax expenditures and credit subsidies expands the moral equation of social rights and responsibilities. With regard to social rights, we begin to recognize a wider circle of beneficiaries which encompasses middle-class groups such as homeowners and college students. As Michael Sherraden points out in *Assets and the Poor: a New American Welfare Policy*, most transfers to the poor, such as rent supplements to low-income households and AFDC grants, are for purposes of immediate consumption. In contrast, benefits for the non-poor, such as tax deductions for interest payments on housing mortgages and credit subsidies for college loans, contribute to the accumulation of assets.

If efforts to correct the moral balance of rights and responsibilities weigh public relief for the poor against the recipient's performance of social duties, what about the reciprocal obligations of, for example, non-poor homeowners and college students who are assisted by tax and credit-related subsidies? These groups profit immensely from indirect social transfers that allow them to accumulate assets over a lifetime. One can think of many ways that they might compensate the community for the financial advantages obtained through indirect transfers. Students subsidized by low-interest college loans, for example, could be expected upon graduation to perform some type of national service, such as working in day care centers, nursing homes, or inner-city schools. Those

who benefit from tax deductions for homeowners might be charged a 1 or 2 percent federal transfer tax on profits from the sale of their property, which could go to finance housing vouchers for low-income tenants.

When indirect social transfers are included in assessments of social rights, issues also arise concerning the rationale for subsidizing certain groups when need is not a compelling factor. For example, should government continue to subsidize the mortgage interest payments for people who own second homes? And why should a family with two children in which both parents work earning more than, let us say, \$70,000 a year receive up to a \$960 child care tax credit, when families that earn much less get no benefit because one parent remained home to care for their children?

Compelling questions remain about how best to achieve moral symmetry between welfare entitlements and social obligations. For a fair account of what is at stake, these questions need to be framed by a ledger that incorporates the direct and indirect methods through which government distributes cash and services to improve the welfare of individuals. Going beyond the conventional measure of welfare spending, this approach to social accounting would contribute to a better understanding of who benefits from social transfers and would open fresh avenues of thought about rights and responsibilities.

Drug Abuse Control Policy: Libertarian, Authoritarian, Liberal, and Communitarian Perspectives

MARK KLEIMAN

The three major theoretical perspectives that drive the American political debate—libertarian or small-government conservatism, rights-and-welfare liberalism, and authoritarian conservatism—seem unable to make sense of drug abuse control policy. The phenomenon of drug abuse is not fully consistent with their underlying models of human behavior and society; policy prescriptions that fit libertarian, liberal, and authoritarian preconceptions thus fit the real world only as a 42 long suit fits a man who is actually a 44 regular: that is, imperfectly. It remains to be seen whether a communitarian account of the topic can be made to fit any better.

THE LIBERTARIAN FANTASY

The libertarian approach to the topic was best expressed, perhaps, by a colleague to whom I was once introduced as a student of drug abuse control policy. “But there shouldn’t be any such policy!” he exclaimed.

If individual human beings are in all circumstances the best stewards of their own welfare, and if civil society plus minimal government suffice to facilitate their cooperation and to restrain them from violating one another’s rights, then no intervention in private “lifestyle” choices or in the economic activity of production and promotion that serves and shapes those choices could improve average well-being. This is the libertarianism of Mill.

If each individual has a natural right to shape his or her own life constrained only by the rights of others, then intervention, except to punish transgression, is unjustified, even if it would by some measure improve welfare. Again, it is assumed that the ability of the criminal and civil laws to control “boundary crossing” is unaffected by the extent to which the members of the community in question are inclined to theft, violence, and recklessness, or prone to act on impulse. This is the libertarianism of Nozick.

A Rational Addict?

Drug-taking poses a problem for any theory based on rational self-command. Drug-taking tends, more frequently than most other consumption activities, to exceed rational control. The tendency to excess inherent in drug-taking is reflected in our language; to describe a compulsive overworker as a “workaholic” or to call someone with an insatiable desire to rule a “power junkie” reflects the belief that drug-taking is the archetype of bad habits, the mother of all addictions. The less drug-taking reflects the settled beliefs of drug-takers about what is good for them, the weaker the case on strictly utilitarian grounds against interfering with drug users’ behavior, or that of those who sell and encourage drug use.

For the hard-core libertarian, for whom non-interference is a matter of principle rather than a theorem about welfare maximization, the mere observation that many drug-takers wish they weren’t constitutes no argument for intervention. Only proof of harm to others would suffice. But is that proof hard to furnish? Grant for the purposes of argument that most of the crimes committed by users of illicit drugs are the result of their prohibition. However, the frequency of alcoholic assault and drunken driving stands as testimony to the power of intoxicant use to harm others, and the impotence of the criminal and civil laws to deter those too drunk to reckon the consequences.

An Argument for Government Intervention

The plausibility of minimal government as an adequate check on the tendency of individuals to harm one another depends on a population sufficiently respectful of boundaries and adequately in command of

themselves to be deterred by the threat of lawsuit or prosecution. A regime that permits drug-taking *ad libitum* may therefore find it impossible to be as *laissez-faire* in other domains as it would prefer to be.

But, someone will point out, not all drug-taking is compulsive and not all drugs provoke users to aggression or negligence. Of course not. Neither does every campfire not doused with water become a forest fire. Drug-taking is not inevitably damaging; it is merely risky, to drug-takers and others, to an extent varying from drug to drug, from user to user, and from circumstance to circumstance. But that suggests that some degree of intervention—varying by drug, by user, and by circumstance—will be desirable to protect users and others from bad habits and intoxicated misbehavior: demanding exactly the sort of detailed intervention the libertarian most hopes to avoid.

The disjunction between libertarian theories and the facts of drug abuse is so great that the libertarian, small-government strain that runs through much of American conservative thinking on economic issues has had almost no influence on the stance conservative office-seekers take toward the drug problem. Politicians who oppose governmental intervention in virtually every other sphere find that, in this one instance, they must rise above principle and join with the authoritarians in demanding tougher drug laws.

THE AUTHORITARIAN INCONSISTENCY

A policy area in which individual freedom contradicts itself would seem to be a happy hunting ground for authoritarian conservatives. Drug-taking illustrates the inadequacy of individual pleasure-seeking as a guide to the good life or as a social binding force, and thus, apparently, the need for traditional values, enforced as needed by a benevolent government.

Yet authoritarians, too, find drug abuse a hard problem to embrace. After all, total abstinence from the use of psychoactive drugs is not in fact the traditional practice of most American subcultures. Tobacco-growing—that is, the production of the drug nicotine—was the economic basis of the Jamestown Colony; the Boston Tea Party and the Whisky Rebellion testify to the traditional importance of caffeine and alcohol.

Traditional Favorites

This would not pose a problem if the traditionally accepted drugs were clearly less hazardous to their users and others than more recent, illicit additions to the recreational pharmacopoeia: cannabis, the opiates, cocaine and the amphetamines, and the psychedelics. But, alas, there seems to be no such tendency. Although the damage done by caffeine is still being investigated, nicotine outstrips all of the currently illicit drugs in damaging the health of its users, and alcohol accounts for most of the country's intoxication, and most of its drug-related violence and negligence. Between them, they dwarf cocaine in the damage done to the unborn. Partly the preponderance of harms done by legal drugs reflects the success of prohibition in diminishing consumption of illegal drugs, but on purely pharmacological grounds it seems unlikely that alcohol and nicotine would be singled out for lenient treatment.

Thus authoritarians find it easy to support public measures to suppress drug abuse as long as the drug involved is not alcohol or tobacco. This resembles favoring maritime policies that do not deal with either the Atlantic or the Pacific.

With respect to illicit drugs, authoritarians have a simple message: "Drug-taking is bad. Don't do it. If we catch you doing it, we will punish you with loss of driving privileges, loss of property, loss of job, and loss of liberty; even, or perhaps especially, if your drug-taking does not harm you or anyone else, because successful drug-takers pose a special threat to traditional values." This formula has attracted overwhelming political support; the "war on drugs" is a winning issue for authoritarian conservatives.

Those authoritarian conservatives who like to paint themselves as "strict constructionists" of the Constitution and advocates of its interpretation according to "original intent" ought to have a problem with the extent of federal intervention in what would have appeared to the original framers of the Constitution as a matter for the police power of the states. The powers to regulate interstate commerce and to implement international drug control conventions do not obviously form the basis for federal criminal jurisdiction over someone who grows marijuana or gathers peyote buttons for personal consumption. The sight of a federal official actively campaigning for the passage of a state referendum, as

“drug czar” William Bennett campaigned for the repeal of Alaska’s marijuana decriminalization, ought to raise federalist hackles. That such objections are rarely heard may indicate, as liberals have often argued, that “strict construction,” “original intent,” and “federalism” are mere pretexts obscuring other motives, or simply that the drug issue has the political power to overcome ideological consistency.

A Losing Battle

The main embarrassment to authoritarians in drug policy is practical rather than theoretical. Authoritarian policies, pursued with increasing vigor for more than a decade now, do not seem to be working very well. Despite tens of billions of dollars spent trying to seal the borders, cocaine prices are near their all-time low and cocaine imports near their all-time high. Surveys indicate that the self-reported number of cocaine users has passed its peak, but cocaine-related visits to hospital emergency rooms just set another record. Heroin, too, is making a comeback after almost two decades of quiescence.

It turns out to be substantially easier to announce that one is opposed to drug-taking than to craft public policies to reduce the damage it does. As with most other policies, but perhaps more so than average, drug abuse control policy is subject to the law of unintended consequences. No matter how simple in concept, drug abuse control measures in practice involve substantial feats of “social engineering” of exactly the kind that authoritarian conservatives join their libertarian brethren in deploring.

A policy of announced hostility toward drug-taking and drug-takers will tend to make the remaining drug-takers worse off, and more dangerous to others, than they would otherwise have been. Moreover, it leads citizens and their representatives to shy away from the part of drug abuse control policy that involves providing services to drug-takers to help them quit, moderate their behavior, or better integrate themselves into the broader society (for example, through employment).

Just as authoritarianism is led to make too sharp a distinction between alcohol and the illicit drugs, it is virtually forced to make too little distinction among the “controlled substances.” Speaking and acting as if marijuana and cocaine were comparably threatening leads

to poor resource allocation at best, but careful distinctions are exactly what an appeal to traditional values cannot provide.

Thus authoritarian conservatives are left with no policy at all toward the drugs sold legally by large corporations, because such a policy would involve either taxes or regulations on commerce, both of which authoritarians, like libertarians, deplore. And while they have no problem in principle with policies to restrict the supply of illegal drugs, in practice their approach seems to work badly. This is partly because, in deference to their nativist strain, authoritarians over-concentrate their supply-control efforts on overseas crop eradication and border control.

THE LIBERAL QUANDARY

Just so, say the rights-and-welfare liberals. We could have told you as much. Of course a policy based on establishing a governmental preference for one lifestyle choice over another, backed by coercion and directed primarily at the poor, was certain to fail. Drug abuse is a disease that requires a public health approach. Those suffering from it must be treated, and the social conditions—poverty and deprivation—that breed this disease must be changed, just as the swamps that breed mosquitoes must be drained to prevent yellow fever.

Less married to the sovereign and infallible consumer than the libertarians and less married to traditional practices than authoritarians, liberals have no difficulty in recognizing that some consumption choices, especially those made with the persuasive help of large corporations, may not be in the best interest of the consumer. Tobacco-smoking is the most obvious example, with liberals leading the charge for higher taxes and tighter regulations. It seems likely that liberals also will lead the way toward tightening the current policies toward alcohol, which are insanely lax. Unlike the illicit-drug problem, smoking (and, increasingly, alcohol abuse) are not seen by liberals as mere epiphenomena of poverty and discrimination, but as independent problems that deserve, and can benefit from, attention in their own right.

Just Another Lifestyle Option?

The liberals' problem is, or ought to be, with the illicit drugs. Taxes

and regulations to prevent the distribution of unsafe consumer products obviously fit the liberal ideology with no stretching. But the direct application of coercive pressure on individuals to force them to choose one way of life over another conflicts with the commitment to governmental neutrality with respect to personal choice that liberals share with libertarians. If drug use is harmful only some of the time (rather than always evil, as the authoritarian believes), then a consistent liberal should be against it only some of the time. A liberal should no more delight in denouncing and punishing drug-users as a class than in denouncing and punishing unwed mothers as a class. And yet it seems hard to ignore the authoritarian claim that disapproval and intolerance are powerful modes of shaping behavior, or the evidence that the choice between using cocaine and not using cocaine is not the same as the choice between jogging and not jogging. Thus what to do with drug-users poses a problem for the rights-and-welfare liberal.

Singling Out the Disadvantaged

This is especially true when it comes to those drug-users whose drug-taking is most obviously harmful to others: those who steal or deal to support their habits. A focus on harm reduction would lead a liberal to want to concentrate on these drug-users, and to be willing to use coercion as well as offers of treatment to induce them to end a practice so damaging to their neighbors as well as to themselves. But of course stealing to support a habit is more characteristic of poor drug-takers than of more affluent ones. A policy of singling out drug-using offenders from other drug-users will thus tend to single out socially disadvantaged ethnic groups and the poor for unwanted attention. This smacks of “blaming the victim,” that unforgiven sin against the liberal spirit. Harassing the underclass crack-smoker while ignoring the middle-class cocaine-sniffer is not a policy likely to appeal to the liberal impulse; a court in Minnesota was even persuaded to void a legislative distinction between crack and cocaine powder on the grounds of racially disparate impact.

Even drug dealers are largely persons of marginal social status and limited legitimate opportunity; once they are caught, they become first criminal defendants, and then prisoners. All of these are groups whose rights and interests liberals pride themselves on defending against an

unfeeling social system and the wrath of the majority. The slow judicial repeal of the Fourth Amendment's protection against arbitrary search and seizure leaves all good liberals queasy. The fact that young African-American males are overrepresented among the street cocaine dealers whose work subjects them to the greatest probability of imprisonment makes things even worse for the liberal who wants to support drug law-enforcement. If raising the price of tobacco by taxation is a good way to reduce nicotine addiction, it seems logical that raising the price of heroin by putting heroin dealers in prison should be a good way to reduce heroin addiction; but liberals are reluctant to use prison cells as a primary tool of social policy. The liberal aversion to punishment makes the enforcement side of drug policy hard to swallow, just as the conservative aversion to governmental generosity creates a lack of enthusiasm for treatment.

The Liberal Defectors

Just as many office-seekers who are libertarian in principle make an exception for drug laws, overwhelming numbers of liberal politicians have decided not to be on the "wrong" side of the public fury against drug dealers. Some have simply kept their principled objections to themselves, fought rearguard actions against the excesses of the drug war, and argued against increased enforcement expenditure in the name of a "balance" between enforcement on the one hand and education and treatment on the other. Others have joined the full-throated hullabaloo against the drug lords, competing with authoritarians in inventing new offenses and imposing long and mandatory minimum sentences.

So we have libertarians with a consistent theory that fits the facts of drug abuse so poorly as to be a non-starter as a basis for policy, the authoritarians with a half-baked approach for the smaller half of the problem, and the liberals desperately hoping that the problem can be solved by giving (treatment, advice, and opportunity) and not (much) punishing, especially of poor and minority users and dealers. We also have a set of policies that perform poorly.

What might a communitarian approach to drug policy be?

A COMMUNITARIAN APPROACH

Let us start with its assumptions. It would reject both the authoritarian notion that all use of non-traditional psychoactives is evil per se and the libertarian one that the drug problem is a mere figment of the authoritarian imagination. It would acknowledge that since tastes are socially constructed and to some extent manipulated for economic gain, free consumer choice—allowing people to have what they think they want—is only a provisionally desirable goal.

A communitarian drug policy would acknowledge that maintaining security for individuals and institutions against theft, assault, and disorder is possible without intolerably intrusive levels of enforcement only if the vast majority of the population is inclined to honesty, nonaggression, and self-control; consequently, public action to ensure the character of the people may be justified and even necessary. It would neither glory in nor shrink from the task of imposing costs on those whose behavior is damaging to others. It would recognize that, for those who have lost control over their own behavior or never learned to regulate it, help and coercion are necessarily intermixed.

On a practical level, a drug policy along communitarian lines would pay far more attention to alcohol and tobacco than the current approach does. This would mean using taxation and regulation to reduce the incidence of cigarette smoking, almost all of which is compulsive in nature and harmful to health out of proportion to any benefits it confers. Taxation, negative advertising, and efforts to create new norms and social roles (for instance, the designated driver) would help limit alcohol consumption, but communitarians might be willing to further link rights and responsibilities by making drinking, like driving, a licensed privilege subject to withdrawal for misbehavior (drunken driving, drunken assault, repeated drunken mischief).

With respect to the illicit drugs, communitarians would notice that most of the public health benefits of drug prohibition are provided by the prohibition itself, and that, beyond a symbolic minimum the primary goal of drug law-enforcement should be to minimize the unwanted side effects of prohibition—violence and theft. This implies that exerting effective control over a relatively small number (2-3 million) of frequent hard-drug-users who also are active criminals is essential, both because they commit much of the crime and because their demand supports the illicit markets that generate so much urban violence, both directly and

by financing the purchase of firearms by young men inclined to use them. Since most people who finance heavy hard-drug habits by theft or drug dealing are on probation or parole when not in prison or jail, the best way to reduce their drug-taking is to require abstinence as a condition of probation or parole, with frequent, random drug tests and swift, certain, and progressively serious, but not draconian, jail terms for violations. Contrary to the myth of the addict helpless in the grip of his drug, most can and will comply.

A communitarian policy would thus acknowledge the libertarian goal of personal freedom, the authoritarian concern for character, and the liberal desire to protect rights and promote welfare. Would it work better than existing policies? Or perhaps we should rather ask: could it possibly do worse?

Sexual Harassment, Second Degree

When the editors of *The Responsive Community* sought to publish Honeywell's internal guidelines concerning sexual harassment (Fall 1991), the company's representative was reluctant to grant permission. The guidelines, she pointed out, encompassed making cat calls, kissing sounds, sexual jokes, and calling a woman "babe," "doll," "honey," or "sweetie." Many employees, she said, had called wondering—"Is this

sexual harassment?" She was concerned that Honeywell would be ridiculed for having extended its definition of sexual harassment to such an extreme.

At the University of California at Davis, a member of the student-run marching band was recently accused of sexual harassment for, among other things, wearing a T-shirt that displayed a sexual slogan and for yelling sexually explicit cheers.

Nancy Stumhofer, a professor at Penn State, was offended by the presence of a print of Goya's "Naked Maja" on the wall of her classroom. Professor Stumhofer claimed that the painting was sexually harassing her. The university's affirmative action office found that she had a legal base for her assertion.

Sociologists will be quick to recognize that such stretching of the concept of sexual harassment has an opposite effect from the one intended: it undercuts those who seek to stamp out unwanted sexual advances and pressures. Every society has a limited store of moral indignation; if one squanders it by lumping serious offenses with marginal ones, it will soon be depleted. If you were to call everybody who disagrees with you a fascist, the term loses much of its bite. Indeed, the need to conserve our moral censure lies at the root of our legal system, which distinguishes between armed robbery and mere theft, between murder and manslaughter, and categorizes most other crimes according to severity.

I am not disputing that sexual jokes, pin-up calendars, and wolf whistles may under some circumstances, contribute to an offensive climate. But as Federal Judge Maryanne Trump Barry recently stated, it is time that we draw some lines. "I stand second to none in condemning sexual harassment of women. But what is happening is that every sexy joke of long ago, every flirtation, is being recalled by some women and revised and re-evaluated as sexual harassment. Many of these accusa-

tions are, in anybody's book, frivolous," said the Judge, addressing an audience of 900 Federal law-enforcement officers in Washington.

Pressure to engage in sexual acts ought to be considered outright sexual harassment. If such pressure comes from people who have power over the person who is being harassed—say from a boss, from a professor (over students), a psychiatrist (over patients), or a divorce lawyer (over a distraught client)—it should be deemed an even more serious matter: a case of *aggravated* sexual harassment. Acts that merely contribute to a sexually drenched climate—ogling, for instance—should be ranked lower on our scale of condemnation and punishment. Call them acts of sexual insensitivity or second-degree sexual harassment.

We also need to consider the question of whether allegations of sexual harassment from previous decades are still germane. For example, most of the charges of misconduct against Senator Bob Packwood (R.-OR) date from the 1970s. When considering such cases, we must reflect whether we should adopt the moral equivalent of a statute of limitations.

Finally, while reasonable people may disagree where to draw the line between what is in versus out, it must be drawn somewhere. I am not sure that calling someone "sweetie" shows anything, under most circumstances, except that the speaker has not updated his vocabulary. Above all I find it very difficult to see how a classical painting is capable of *harassing* anyone.

My feminist friends argue that what constitutes harassment is in the eye of the beholder. It is up to the woman involved to determine what gestures or language she finds offensive. But this is a standard that no legal or moral system can endure. One cannot possibly demote workers, expel students, and condemn fellow men on the basis of such inconsistent and unpredictable grounds. Surely, women, who on occasion do harass men, would not agree to be tried on such grounds.

Those of us who are exercised about instances of sexual harassment, as we all ought to be, should work to ensure that most of the rising societal attention to this matter is focused where it counts most: on pressure on unwilling partners to engage in sex. Other charges should be treated more gingerly, and more of us should have the guts to declare that Goya and company are off limits, period.

A. E.

How Does This Grab You?
Should Commercial Speech Be Curbed and How?

As communitarians, we acknowledge that there are bigger problems in the world than the latest offerings from Madison Avenue. Nevertheless, we think that the advertisement pictured adjacent further stretches the already-thin norms of an increasingly vulgarized popular culture. If you agree, drop Calvin Klein a line at the following address and send us a copy.

Calvin Klein
The Calvin Klein
Company
205 West 39th Street

Carter's Atlanta

In 1991, former President Jimmy Carter launched what he calls The Atlanta Project, an ambitious program aimed at linking business, government, and individuals in a battle against the problems of the inner city. The plan has generated lots of support. More than 100,000 volunteers from the Atlanta area have signed up. Contributions of cash, goods and services totalling \$22 million so far, and several other cities have expressed interest in copying the effort. But the project has been stung by charges of arrogance and racial insensitivity.

National Public Radio's David Molpus reports:

Jimmy Carter, noted for good deeds around the world, is now using his prestige to draw attention to problems in his own backyard of Atlanta, and they are legion. Violent crime in the city is up 300 percent in the last five years. Atlanta's homeless population has increased tenfold over the last decade. Only one other city, Newark, New Jersey, has a higher proportion of families living in poverty. Mr. Carter has been spending about half his time in recent months getting a firsthand look at the urban decay that is evident within half a mile of Carter's illustrious Presidential Library. He says he's shocked by the extent of hopelessness and self-destructive behavior.

Jimmy Carter (Former President): I've been in middle schools where their principal tells me the teen-age pregnancy rate is highest among the sixth and seventh graders, which are the smallest girls. When I asked him why, the principal said, 'Well, the drug pushers and pimps, first of all, prefer sex with the little girls. Secondly, they're less able to defend themselves. Third, they're cheaper. And fourth, the little girls are less likely to have AIDS.' This is a very heartrending kind of realization that this is Atlanta, Georgia, and not somewhere in Ethiopia or Bangladesh.

These are our next-door neighbors and they need a better life.

Molpus: Through the Atlanta Project, Mr. Carter seeks to involve the entire metro area in addressing poverty and its associated miseries. His vision is one of rich and poor, black and white, working in close personal contact to break down the dividing walls of race and class, build a new sense of community and overcome despair. Dan Sweat, the project's executive director, says the positive response is unprecedented.

Dan Sweat: This is day one. We have been absolutely overwhelmed by the expressions of goodwill by thousands and thousands of people that want to volunteer for projects. Corporations and foundations and others have come forward to say, 'We want to get in and help.' We think that's going to produce tremendous assets as we go down the road here.

Molpus: More than 100 of Atlanta's most elite corporations are on board with hefty contributions, including Delta Airlines, UPS, Coca Cola. Employees are offering an array of services: tutoring school kids, job training, help renovate houses, clean up parks. The project has targeted 20 of Atlanta's poorest neighborhoods. But it's not in the business of providing direct funding for the poor. The \$26 million being raised is solely to pay for the project's staff over the next five years and supporting operations, such as a high-tech data center to connect project organizers in the 20 neighborhoods by computer.

The plan is for the poor themselves to identify needs in a bottoms-up strategy. Volunteers with appropriate skills would then be mobilized into action. Also, the project will use its clout with foundations and corporations to have them underwrite funding for specific programs. That's just beginning to happen.

Alfreda Capers (Runs home for pregnant women): I cannot afford to be skeptical about it. I have got to hope on it.

Molpus: Alfreda Capers provides a home for pregnant women with a history of drug abuse. It's a kind of safehouse that gives the women a protective environment to stay drug-free and deliver healthy babies. When the Atlanta Project learned that the house was badly in need of repair, it enticed the Marriott Corporation to finance the renovations.

Capers: I'm looking forward to the Carter project to continue to help me to find financial resources. We really need financial resources to keep

this program going because I can't pay the rent here. I can't even negotiate on buying the property because we just don't have the money because I am of no financial substance myself. I draw unemployment.

Molpus: This is the kind of partnership that project administrators hope will become commonplace in the months ahead. But the effort has hit a serious snag. Many of Atlanta's civil rights organizations and black church leaders have declined to get behind the project. They complain that it's infected with white paternalism.

Reverend Timothy McDonald: A number of the volunteers are people who do not live in the community, who are from the north side of town. They're good people. I'm not taking anything away from them, but they're going to have to learn how to put themselves in a learning mode rather than a teaching mode. That is hard for them to do. But you don't have to have a college degree to know what is wrong with this community and how to fix it.

Molpus: Only one black remains on the project's six-member advisory board. The latest to quit is Dr. James Young, who complained in his resignation letter two weeks ago of racial insensitivity within the organization. He offered no details. The main cause of the rift with black leaders, according to Reverend McDonald, is that the poor are being left out of the loop when the most important decisions are being made by project administrators.

McDonald: What we looked at is who's controlling the money. That tells you what kind of system it is: How is the money being distributed for the Atlanta Project?, and it is from the top-down. And that is just not going to work.

Molpus: And it's not just blacks who are complaining.

Jackie Jenkins (Aid for the Homeless): The Atlanta Project has taken on the air of prestige and glitz and glamour.

Molpus: Jackie Jenkins is director of a program providing aid to the homeless that is sponsored by a coalition of mostly white churches. 'What good,' she asks, 'is a bureaucracy that tells us what we already know about the poor and then gives us no money?' In fact, she contends that the Atlanta Project is siphoning off funds that might otherwise go to shoestring operations like hers.

Jenkins: In this office, we all have a lot of admiration for Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, and so it's hard to criticize the project because we so much respect them and what they're doing, but they've got a bunch of jerks working with them. I mean, primarily, we think it is a white, male organization, three-piece suits. It is not a blue-jeans and T-shirt crowd, and those are the ones that are doing the work.

Molpus: Some Atlanta Project staffers dismiss the sniping as the product of a turf war. One says, 'We are reaching beyond traditional institutions, going directly to the poor for ideas with hundreds of community meetings. And that means we're stepping on toes.' Project Director Dan Sweat says he's using sophisticated management techniques to find out which programs work and funnel support to them.

Sweat: On the other hand now, we're going to have to say to those agencies or organizations out there that aren't doing a good job or that are overlapping or saying, 'Wait a minute,' you know, you've all got to come together or you're not doing a job. And we're going to call those shots exactly like we see them, very objectively.

Molpus: Turf war or not, Jimmy Carter is trying to get things back on track. He promised to restructure the advisory board so that it's 50 percent African-American. And he says he'll take additional steps to ensure that the project is 'a sterling example of racial harmony.' Despite the Atlanta Project's slow start in delivering the goods and the recent barrage of criticism, Carter says he's determined to keep trying to make it succeed.

Carter: If this project doesn't work with the amount of momentum that we've built up and the interest and excitement and a former first family of the nation being involved, then nothing will work.

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AUTHORITARIANS, LIBERTARIANS, AND COMMUNITARIANS

Compiled by Sarah Horton

From the Authoritarian Side:

The Right to Know?

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) sparked a controversy this July by suspending the funds for a University of Maryland conference on the genetics of criminal behavior. The conference, “Genetic Factors in Crime: Findings, Uses, and Implications,” already approved by NIH peer review, had come under fire from the Black Entertainment Television cable channel (BET) and callers to the NIH who expressed concern over the possibility of racist overtones.

Peter Breggin, director of the Center for the Study of Psychiatry in Bethesda, Maryland, appeared on BET’s program “Lead Story” to dispute any scientific link between criminal behavior and the human genome. “There isn’t any scientific evidence that violence is genetic,” he said, comparing the conference to “the kind of racist behavior we saw on the part of Nazi Germany.”

Yet, University of Maryland law and public policy researcher David Wasserman, who proposed the conference, argues that the suspension of already-approved funds is illegal. “Actions of this kind put a chilling effect on the conduct of science,” warned Wasserman. Catering to specialized concerns, he said, would send the following message to researchers: “Don’t propose anything that may be controversial or may offend.”

Science, August 7, 1992

Japan’s Defeated Citizenry

For weeks now, Japan has been consumed with yet another scandal, one that sounds eerily like the last three: powerful

politicians are caught taking millions of dollars from businessmen desperate to manipulate the country's political system, the public is outraged and the government offers vague promises to clean up a rampantly corrupt system.

But in critical ways, this scandal has been dramatically different. Rather than resign and sink out of view for a decent interval, the key players have all but brushed it off.

On Thursday, only days after admitting to charges that he received \$4 million in illegal contributions, Japan's most powerful politician, Shin Kanemaru, emerged from his house for the first time in months, declared that the issue was settled, and headed off to work.

And though the public has usually trusted Japan's normally dogged prosecutors to pursue every illegality, it has widely criticized them this time for showing remarkable deference to Mr. Kanemaru and then ending their investigation before reaching the most explosive issue, the ties between Japan's political leaders and the country's mobsters.

Overwhelmingly, Japanese say the message being sent is clear: What makes this scandal different from the others is that this time no one really thinks anything will change once the protests die down. Most conspicuously, Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa has repeatedly refused to acknowledge the scandal publicly. He has grown visibly angry at Japanese reporters, stalking away when they bring it up.

"People have given up," said Minoru Morita, one of the country's leading political commentators. "There is a lot of rage, especially about the revelations that these politicians used gangsters to solve their problems for them." But he went on to say that "everyone knows that there is no real alternative" to the governing party.

The International Herald Tribune, *October 3-4, 1992*

From the Libertarian Side

A Right to be Santa Claus?

One of the surprises Santa had in store for shoppers at Macy's in New York last Christmas was a \$3.25 million lawsuit. Mark Woodley, who had donned the red suit three seasons ago, was not accepted for the

position after his employers learned that he was on medication for depression and the HIV virus. On his application for employment, Woodley listed the two drugs he was taking—AZT, a medication for people who are HIV positive or have AIDS, and Prozac, an antidepressant that some medical reports have linked to suicide attempts and violent behavior.

Macy's officials have argued that Woodley's medical condition made him susceptible to erratic behavior and mood swings, and therefore he was unsuitable for a job involving clamoring small children. Instead, they offered him a better-paying job as Santa's supervisor, and even dangled the sugarplum of a possibility of a job as an architect. But Woodley clung to his "right" to be Santa Claus and is suing for the pain his rejection has caused him.

He wrote to Edward Finkelstein, Macy's chairman and chief executive officer: "I have been stigmatized by this, my self-esteem has been damaged, I have been subjected to unnecessary stress and anxiety, and I am depressed that I have been denied employment that I am ideally suited for. . . . I am furious with Macy's," he continued. "This is not what I wanted, Mr. Finkelstein. I wanted to be Santa Claus."

Associated Press Reports, 1991

Libertarian Economist Awarded Nobel Prize

Gary S. Becker, a pioneer in applying a "rational choice" model of economics to individual and family decisions, was recently awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science. Starting from the assumption that people make rational choices to benefit themselves, and that these decisions are influenced by the economic incentives they face, Becker comes to the following conclusions about some of the nation's most pressing problems:

- Drugs should be legalized. "This might increase drug use. But legalizing drugs would reduce crime and free police for more serious activities."
- Income requirements should be set for Medicare and Social Security. "Concentrate Social Security on the poor, and let other people fend for themselves."

- There should be no government-mandated parental leave policy. “Having a child is a choice and working is a choice. We shouldn’t be subsidizing working mothers. I’d rather make sure the child’s interest is protected.”
- The government should provide vouchers to the poor for use at either public or private schools. “Rich and middle-income people should spend their own resources.”

Business Week, October 26, 1992

A Right to Bare? (Continued)

A Staten Island community’s effort to remove a lewd advertisement for a topless car wash has evolved into a lawsuit—against a community member opposed to the offensive sign.

When a fresco depicting two women with exaggerated lips, breasts, and buttocks appeared on a building in West Brighton to advertise Wet’n Wild Car Wash, about 200 residents organized to petition for its removal. “I really don’t care what consenting adults do in private,” said resident Tony Ruscitti, “but this isn’t private, this is public space, a main thoroughfare of our community. It’s our home.”

Constance Mason, an organizer of the drive, agreed. “This is not a censorship issue,” she said. “It’s an issue of the rights of a community to impose standards of public behavior.”

When community standards were imposed—with a dash of plaster in all the right places—homeowner Linda Eskensas was arrested and charged with defacing private property. As community members rallied to her cause, politicians investigated the site of the proposed car wash and discovered that the city had repossessed the building for tax delinquency. Although the controversial car wash will never open, the offending sign remains as residents and city officials debate who has the right to do anything with it.

Associated Press Reports, 1992

A Yuletide Tale

Milwaukee has been witness to a sight that would make Santa turn pale—last Christmas the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) helped landlords evict welfare mothers from their apartments for the first winter in years.

In the name of Christmas cheer, Milwaukee's local housing authorities have abided by a policy of not evicting tenants for nonpayment of rent over the holidays. No Scrooges they, the landlords allowed the winter's rent to arrive after the New Year's flurry abated. But the tenants caught on. Backed by legal activists, renters began regularly withholding payments in droves during the holiday season. What began as holiday lenience wound up cooking the landlords' goose.

Enter the ACLU. Persuaded by the Apartment Association of Milwaukee, Inc. that the payment reprieve violated the separation between church and state, the ACLU made the case before the Milwaukee County Circuit Court. Following this logic, the ACLU argued that the season's moratorium on rent promotes a nonsecular holiday and does not treat all religions equally. "No similar rules prevent the eviction of Muslim tenants during the month of Ramadan or the eviction of Jewish tenants during Passover," the landlords' letter read.

The county court conceded. Last Christmas was the first in years that Milwaukee tenants who could not foot the winter bills were turned out into the cold. Possibly fearing the ghost of Christmases past, the local chapter of the ACLU then proceeded to announce that Milwaukee needed to provide "alternative housing for poor people."

Fortune, February 10, 1992

War on Drugs is a Chemical Prejudice?

The war on drugs is a civil war between Americans who consider certain substances to be inherently evil and Americans who like to use those substances. It will therefore continue, in one form or another, as long as people have chemical prejudices and the power to impose them on others.

Jacob Sullum, reason, November 1992

From the Communitarian Corner

Democratic Clean-up

In a novel approach to environmentalism, students involved in cleaning up Watts Branch, a tributary to the Chesapeake Bay, first asked the local residents what line of action they would recommend rather than dictating their own.

With a research grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, two university students began the project last summer by examining how the local community lives and trying to involve it in the clean-up.

After learning that the community dumps its refuse in the stream, the students visited the local advisory neighborhood commissions, churches, other neighborhood associations, science teachers, and children's clubs to ask them what they would do to stop the pollution.

The response was enthusiastic. Community members offered to plant trees to prevent soil erosion, improve the fish habitat, pick up trash, and remove garbage from the water.

"I really think it's going to work," said one student. "It's slower and takes more patience. But you have to build up trust in a community. In the end, it's the more permanent solution."

The Washington Times, August 15, 1992

Misguided Community Action

When Marjorie Eichler, a full-time caretaker of disabled children, tried to purchase a stately mansion in a New Haven suburb, she found more a daunting obstacle to overcome than the half-million price tag: the neighbors.

No sooner had she signed the contract than the residents of this upscale Prospect Hill neighborhood assembled to discuss how to bar her from moving in, say Justice Department officials. At issue were Ms. Eichler's ten adopted and foster children—African-American, Hispanic and disabled—a new sight in this predominantly white suburb of an increasingly Hispanic and African-American city.

Residents of Prospect Hill contacted their local neighborhood association and filed a suit requiring Ms. Eichler to apply for a zoning variance, says Joseph Garrison, a lawyer for the prosecution. The neighborhood zoning law stipulates that four or more unrelated people cannot live in the same house.

But when Federal housing authorities called in the Justice Department to investigate, it found evidence of discrimination because neighbors acted out of fear that the Eichler children would cause property values to decline. One couple's suit rested on grounds that "the presence of the Eichler children in the neighborhood would cause imminent harm to the Robinsons by diminishing the attractiveness and value of the Robinsons' property."

John R. Dunne, the Assistant Attorney General who heads the Civil Rights Division, asserted that the neighbors' actions violate the Fair Housing Act. "A neighborhood sought unjustly to keep a mother from providing her family with much-needed housing."

The residents' actions have shocked many in New Haven since they are prominent members of the community—a Superior Court judge, a Yale University art director, a former New Haven mayoral candidate, and a Yale pediatrician.

Ms. Eichler is a full-time caretaker in a non-profit program she founded that allows disabled children who cannot be placed for adoption to live in private homes instead of orphanages.

Associated Press Reports, 1992

Explicit Magazines Face Pentagon Review

The Defense Department's top legal office will decide whether the military should bar sales of *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and other sexually explicit magazines at its bases or whether such a restriction would violate the First Amendment. Playboy Enterprises, Inc., has threatened to sue the Defense Department in response.

The Pentagon's proposed review follows the Navy's announcement of a similar review as a step in its effort to eradicate sexual

harassment, a problem brought to light this year by the revealed abuse of over 30 women at the 1991 Tailhook Association convention.

Associated Press Reports, 1992

Bill Moyers on America

Taken together, these assumptions and developments foreshadow the catastrophe of a social and political paralysis: a society that continues to be governed by the same two parties that are driving it into the pits—a society that doesn't understand the link between two students killed in the hallways of a Brooklyn high school and the plea bargain which assures Michael Milken of being able to scrape by on \$125 million—a society that every day breaks open its children's piggy banks and steals one billion dollars just to pay the daily bills—a society that responds with justified anger at check-kiting in Congress but doesn't even know that the executive branch has lost track of tens of billions of dollars appropriated for the savings and loan bailout—a society where democratic reform is constantly thwarted by unaccountable money—a society where more people know George Bush hates broccoli than know that he ordered the invasion of Panama, and more know Marla Maples than Vaclav Havel, and where, by a margin of two to one, people say the government's ability to censor the news during the Persian Gulf War was more important than the media's ability to report it.

What's astonishing about this civic disease is that it exists in America just as a series of powerful democratic movements have been toppling autocratic regimes elsewhere in the world. While people around the globe are clamoring for self-government, [a] Markle Foundation study reports that millions of Americans feel as if they had been locked out of their homes and are unable to regain their rightful place in the operation of democracy. On the other hand, those same millions want to believe that it is still in their power to change America. The Center for Citizen Politics at the University of Minnesota reports that beneath America's troubled view of politics "is a public that cares very deeply about public life. This concern is a strong foundation for building healthy democratic practices and new traditions of public participation in politics." There is—as any good reporter can testify—a great reservoir of creativity, common sense, and energy at the grassroots of this country.

...People want to know what is happening to them, and what they can do about it. Listening to America, you realize that

millions of people are not apathetic. They will respond to a press that stimulates the community without pandering to it, that inspires people to embrace their responsibilities without lecturing or hectoring them, that engages their better natures without sugarcoating ugly realities or patronizing their foibles.

Bill Moyers, Center for Communication
Annual Award Luncheon, *March 12, 1992*

Drawing by Mike Luckovich; © 1992 The Atlanta Constitution.

ABOUT COMMUNITARIANS

"NOW I REALIZE I'M A COMMUNITARIAN!"

Black and white, women and men, more and more people declare the news: "All that time I was a communitarian!" Here are the words of three newcomers to the movement:

"A friend of mine told me, 'The older you get, the more you sound like a Republican. It's scary.' I agree. It *is* scary. But now I can say, 'I'm not a Republican. I'm a communitarian.'"

Delmarie Cobb is young, black, a fifth-generation resident of the Grand Boulevard neighborhood, and a TV producer. She runs Deleco Communications and the Publicity Works out of a Loop office, and she was involved in Bobby Rush's successful primary campaign for Congress. She knows she's no Republican... now she's a communitarian—someone who believes Americans need to accept more responsibilities and assert fewer rights...

Harold Henderson, "Communitarianism,"
Chicago Reader, July 17, 1992.

...The connection between me and the nascent communitarian movement started a little over a year ago when Deputy Editorial Page Editor Donald Kimelman strolled into my office and flipped a Time Magazine article about the group onto my desk. "I never realized we had an ideology," Kimelman said, "but here it is."

Communitarianism, the article explained, holds that rights are meaningless unless citizens also exercise the responsibilities that go with them, and it sees America paralyzed by a clash of competing rights. Harvard law professor Mary Ann Glendon explained to Time, "We are discontented with the orthodoxies of the right and the left. My hope is that there is a constituency in America for truth-telling, moderation and complexity."

The great hope of communitarianism is that there is within both parties an echelon that has tired of the ideological posturing and wants to *get this country moving again*. Communitarianism

is connected to Democrat Bill Clinton through University of Maryland professor of public policy William Galston, a Clinton advisor and founding communitarian. But communitarian literature also gives a lot of space to Republicans such as HUD secretary Jack Kemp and Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch.

David R. Boldt, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 24, 1992.

OK. I've finally figured out my political orientation. I'm a communitarian—I think.

...There is great pressure to be either a liberal or conservative. Every four years, the two major political parties haggle over platforms that try to define these political extremes. And look at what happens.

The Republicans get Jack Kemp calling for a conservative civil rights agenda. GOP women want the party to discard its anti-abortion stand. The Democrats, on the other hand, swing hopelessly between trying to hang on to their liberal roots while calling themselves the voice of the moderate mainstream.

Meanwhile, a bunch of us kind of hang out in the middle, refusing to fit neatly into a political box. The diehards on both sides call us wimps, but neither side can afford to ignore us. I believe in more federal spending for the nation's cities, even if that means raising taxes. I'm also anti-abortion. I get invitations to Republican Party breakfasts and Black Male Coalition meetings. What a life.

Byron P. White, "Communitarians are middle-of-the-road—and proud of it," *The Cincinnati Post*, May 29, 1992.

COMMUNITARIANS ABROAD

...As things will, the communitarian platform and articles about the movement made their way across the 49th parallel. In early September communitarianism came up with bottles of Scotch and cases of beer to what has become an annual fall ritual for some veterans of the Canadian political scene: the Grindstone weekend, traditionally one last weekend getaway and gabfest before winter for friends of various political stripes. When the tenets of this new approach were spelled out, Grindstoners were intrigued. The subject dominated conversation for the duration of the weekend. Participants were so impressed with

the potential for change communitarian thought can bring to Canadian political debate that they are planning a teach-in of their own in Kingston later this fall.

...Blair Williams teaches political science at Concordia and is also a councillor in the eastern Ontario township of Kenyon. He thinks one solution communitarian thought might point to is for Canadians to strengthen the informal (as opposed to formal) relations between them. As a first step, that might mean getting involved at the easiest level—their own community—and taking more responsibility for problems there. “That might sound kind of right wing in the traditional lexicon of politics, but there’s something to be said for it,” says Williams.

And how. In his own township Williams says residents have been able to hold tax rate increases to zero per cent by taking responsibility for things they’d normally ask local government to do, like waste management and roadside maintenance. As a result of locals keeping the roadside clean and free of brush, the community government was able to avoid buying a \$20,000 machine and paying someone to do it. “We are able to instill a sense of pride in our area, so that people, at a very simple level, are doing it for themselves,” says Williams.

“Communitarianism,” *Politics Monitor*, November, 1992.

Communitarians recognize that communities need not be local ones. There are more encompassing communities, such as ethnic ones. Nations, too, may function as communities. And although the term international community may largely reflect a dream, it is far from meaningless. Most importantly, any community, however narrowly focused, must ask itself how far does its set of moral responsibilities extend? To whom does it hold moral obligations, and to what extent?

A.E.

What Do We Owe the Starving People of Somalia, Et Al.?

C. E. ANDRE AND MANUEL VELASQUEZ

Between now and tomorrow morning, 40,000 children will starve to death. The day after tomorrow, 40,000 more children will die, and so on throughout 1993. In a “world of plenty,” the number of human beings dying or suffering from hunger, malnutrition, and hunger-related diseases is staggering. According to the World Bank, 1.1 billion people—at least one-quarter of the world’s population—live in poverty. Over half of these people live in South Asia; 20 percent live in sub-Saharan Africa, and 15 percent live in East Asia. In Somalia alone, a projected 2 million people risked starvation this winter.

The contrast between these people and the populations of rich nations is a stark one. In the poor nations of South Asia, the mortality rate among children under the age of five is more than 170 deaths per thousand, while in Sweden it is fewer than 10. In sub-Saharan Africa, life expectancy is 50 years, while in Japan it is 80.

These contrasts raise the question of whether people living in rich nations have a moral obligation to aid those in poor nations, a question

that has recently come to national attention in the decision to send US troops to aid the starving Somalians. Currently, about one-third of one percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) of industrialized countries is devoted to aiding poverty-stricken nations. Aid from the U.S. amounted to only one-fifth of one percent of its GNP. For the last 25 years, the World Bank has urged the international community to increase aid to poor countries to 0.7 percent of its GNP. If this goal is reached, poverty can be reduced by as much as 40 percent by the end of this decade. What is the extent of our duty to poor nations?

WE HAVE NO OBLIGATIONS TO AID POOR NATIONS

Some ethicists argue that rich nations have no obligation to aid poor nations. Our moral duty, they claim, is always to act in ways that will maximize human happiness and minimize human suffering. In the long run, aiding poor nations will produce far more suffering than it will alleviate. Nations with the highest incidence of poverty also have the highest birth rates. One report estimates that more than 90 percent of the world's total population growth between now and the year 2025 will occur in developing countries. Providing aid to people in such countries will only allow more of them to survive and reproduce, placing ever more demands on the world's limited food supply. And as the populations of these countries swell, more people will be forced onto marginal and environmentally fragile lands, leading to widespread land degradation and a further reduction in land available for food production. The increase in demands on the limited food supply combined with a decrease in the food production will threaten the survival of future generations of all peoples, rich and poor.

Others claim that, even in the short run, little benefit is derived from aiding poor nations. Aid sent to developing countries rarely reaches the people it was intended to benefit. Instead, it is used by oppressive governments to subsidize their military; spent on projects that benefit local elites; or ends up on the black market. Between 1978 and 1984, more than 80 percent of \$96 million of food aid sent to Somalia went to the military and other public institutions; that same amount is currently being diverted to middlemen and warring factions of the government. In El Salvador, 80 percent of U.S. aid in dry milk ended up on the black market.

Furthermore, giving aid to poor countries undermines any incentive on the part of these countries to become self-sufficient through programs that would benefit the poor, such as those that would increase food production or control population growth. Food aid, for example, depresses local food prices, discouraging local food production and agricultural development. Poor dairy farmers in El Salvador have found themselves competing against free milk from the United States. As a result of aid, many countries, such as Haiti, Sudan, and Zaire, have become aid-dependent.

Some ethicists maintain that the principle of justice also dictates against aiding poor nations. Justice requires that benefits and burdens be distributed fairly among peoples. Nations that have planned for the needs of their citizens by regulating food production to ensure an adequate food supply for the present (as well as a surplus for emergencies), and nations that have implemented programs to limit population growth, should enjoy the benefits of their foresight. Many poor nations have irresponsibly failed to adopt policies that would stimulate food production and development. Instead, resources are spent on lavish projects or military regimes. Consider the \$200 million air-conditioned cathedral recently constructed in the impoverished country of Cote D'Ivoire. Or consider that, in 1986, developing countries spent six times what they received in aid on their armed forces. Such nations that have failed to act responsibly should bear the consequences. It is unjust to ask nations that have acted responsibly to now assume the burdens of those nations that have not.

Finally, it is argued, all persons have a basic right to freedom, which includes the right to use the resources they have legitimately acquired as they freely choose. To oblige people in wealthy nations to give aid to poor nations violates this right. Aiding poor nations may be praiseworthy, but not obligatory.

WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO AID POOR NATIONS

Many maintain that the citizens of rich nations have a moral obligation to aid poor nations. One such argument is that all persons have a moral obligation to prevent harm when doing so will not cause comparable harm to themselves. It is clear that suffering and death from

starvation are harms. It also is clear that minor financial sacrifices on the part of people of rich nations can prevent massive amounts of suffering and death from starvation.

Every week more than a quarter of a million children die from malnutrition and illness. Many of these deaths are preventable. For example, diarrheal disease and respiratory infections that claim the lives of 16,000 children every day could be prevented by ten-cent packages of oral rehydration salts or by a treatment of antibiotics that usually costs less than \$1. The aid needed to prevent the great majority of child illnesses and death due to malnutrition in the next decade is equal to the amount of money spent in the United States to advertise cigarettes. It is well within the capacity of peoples of rich nations, as collectives or as individuals, to prevent these avoidable deaths and to reduce this misery without sacrificing anything of comparable significance.

Personalizing the argument, Peter Singer, a contemporary philosopher, writes:

Just how much we will think ourselves obliged to give up will depend on what we consider to be of comparable moral significance to the poverty we could prevent: color television, stylish clothes, expensive dinners, a sophisticated stereo system, overseas holidays, a (second?) car, larger house, private schools for our children. . . none of these is likely to be of comparable significance to the reduction of absolute poverty.

Giving aid to the poor in other nations may require some inconvenience or some sacrifice of luxury on the part of peoples of rich nations, but to ignore the plight of starving people is as morally reprehensible as failing to save a child drowning in a pool because of the inconvenience of getting one's clothes wet.

In fact, according to Singer, allowing a person to die from hunger when it is easily within one's means to prevent it is no different, morally speaking, from killing another human being. If I purchase a video cassette recorder or spend money I don't need, knowing that I could instead have given my money to a relief agency that could have prevented some deaths from starvation, I am morally responsible for those deaths. The objection that I didn't intend for anyone to die is irrelevant. If I speed through an intersection and, as a result, kill a pedestrian, I am morally responsible for that death whether I intended it or not.

In making a case for aid to poor nations, others appeal to the principle of justice. Justice demands that people be compensated for the harms and injustices suffered at the hands of others. Much of the poverty of developing nations, they argue, is the result of unjust and exploitative policies of governments and corporations in wealthy countries. The protectionist trade policies of rich nations, for example, have driven down the price of exports of poor nations. According to one report, the European Economic Community's tariff on cloth imported from poor nations is four times as high as its tariff on cloth imported from rich ones. Such trade barriers cost developing countries \$50 billion to \$100 billion a year in lost sales and depressed markets.

Moreover, the massive debt burden consuming the resources of poor nations is the result of the tight monetary policies adopted by developed nations, which drove up interest rates on the loans that had been made to these countries. In 1989, Third World countries owed \$1.2 trillion—nearly half of their total GNP—to banks and governments in industrial countries. According to one report, since 1988, \$50 billion a year has been transferred from poor nations to rich nations to service these debts.

Those who claim that wealthy nations have a duty to aid poor nations counter the argument that aiding poor nations will produce more suffering in the long run. First, they argue, there is no evidence to support the charge that aiding poor nations will lead to rapid population growth in these nations, thus straining the world's resource supply. Research shows that as poverty decreases, fertility rates decline. When people are economically secure, they have less need to have large families to ensure that they will be supported in old age. As infant mortality declines, there is less need to have more children to insure against the likelihood that some will die. With more aid, then, there is a fair chance that population growth will be brought under control.

Moreover, contrary to popular belief, it is rich countries, not poor countries, that pose a threat to the world's resource supply. The average American uses up to 30 times more of the world's resources than does the average Asian or African. If our concern is to ensure that there is an adequate resource base for the world's population, policies aimed at decreasing consumption by rich nations should be adopted.

Those who support aid to poor nations also counter the argument that aid to poor nations rarely accomplishes what it was intended to

accomplish. As a result of aid, they point out, many countries have significantly reduced poverty and moved from dependence to self-reliance. Aid has allowed Indonesia, for example, to reduce poverty from 58 percent to 17 percent in less than a generation. There are, unfortunately, instances in which the poor haven't benefited from aid, but such cases only move us to find more effective ways to combat poverty in these countries, be it cancelling debts, lowering trade restrictions, or improving distribution mechanisms for direct aid. Furthermore, poor nations would benefit from aid if more aid was sent to them in the first place. In 1988, 41 percent of all international aid was directed to high-income and middle-income countries, rather than to low-income countries. According to the World Bank, only eight percent of U.S. aid in 1986 could be identified as development assistance devoted to low-income countries. Obviously, poor countries can't benefit from aid if they're not receiving it.

Finally, it is argued, all human beings have dignity, deserve respect, and are entitled to what is necessary to satisfy their basic needs. This right to satisfy basic needs takes precedence over the rights of others to accumulate wealth and property. When people are without the resources needed to survive, those with surplus resources are obligated to come to their aid.

In the coming decade, the gap between rich nations and poor nations will grow and appeals for assistance will multiply. Our response to Somalia may set a precedent for our response to other suffering peoples in the international community. How peoples of rich nations respond to the plight of those in poor nations will depend, in part, on how they come to view their responsibility to poor nations—taking into account justice and fairness, the benefits and harms of aid, and a balance of moral rights, including their right to accumulate surplus and poor nations' rights to resources to meet their basic human needs.

Convert the Military to Reduce the Deficit

The good will and vigor that Bill Clinton and Al Gore have gathered around them are assets that will quickly deteriorate unless they are converted to projects that embody the common good. Of course these men of practical ideals need to reassure the competing camps gathered uneasily under their big tent. But before opposition crystallizes, they need to electrify their base, to junk the detritus of the Cold War, to teach America that a decent majority stands to gain together and that government action wisely conceived is a necessary instrument of democracy.

Specifically, citizens need to know that the common good can be purchased without overloading the national debt. No other method would accomplish this, nothing would restore the good name of government more forcefully, than the intelligent conversion of significant parts of our military. Continued spending of close to \$300 billion per year—more than \$100 billion of it for (to use the cant term) “the defense of Europe,” presumably from the tanks of Lech Walesa and Vaclav Havel—mocks the hope for domestic reconstruction. The cities, schools, unions, and science all need a domestication of national resources that is inconceivable as long as we are hostage to conspicuous military consumption.

Todd Gitlin

Professor of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley

A Modest Patriotic Proposal

In the 1992 campaign, President Bush spared us a replay of the 1988 contest for the most frequent displays of patriotic ritual. The Pledge of Allegiance disappeared from the national agenda. Yet in one of his victory speeches early in the morning on November 4, Governor Clinton

invoked the “new patriotism” as the theme of his coming administration. Amid the practical questions of health care and trimming the defense budget, there is room to think about how Clinton should revitalize our commitment to the United States as our common home.

It is no easy task to cast Americans from immigrant children and the descendants of slaves. Today, with the growing sense of defensiveness and hostility expressed by many American ethnic groups, the forging of a common cultural loyalty is becoming ever more difficult. Patriotic rituals are necessary to nurture and maintain a common national identity and a sense of responsibility for the welfare of the nation as a whole.

My modest suggestion is that by executive decree, Clinton should revamp the Pledge of Allegiance and encourage its use in our schools. To meet the objections of those who have protested against the Pledge, the revised version should read:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, united in our diversity, committed to liberty and justice for all.

Eisenhower’s addition “under God” should be deleted in order to maintain the Pledge as a ritual that unites all children, regardless of their religious background. The phrase “united in our diversity” harks back to “E Pluribus Unum,” an original American motto, now adapted to capture ethnic, racial, and religious diversity as the bedrock of American culture. The change in the final clause brings home the point that “liberty and justice for all” remains an aspiration rather than a documented fact.

George P. Fletcher
Beekman Professor of Law, Columbia University School of Law

Americanizing Immigrants

Maybe in the second or third 100 days, the new president can consider, as part of what we owe each other, the topic of citizenship. I mean that both formally and informally. The formal aspect is particularly germane to areas such as Los Angeles County—the nation’s largest—where more than 25% of the people are non-citizens or their

U.S.-born dependents. Currently, this is leading to a breakdown of norms in many communities and raising what is already a high anxiety level in the area.

I'd favor an aggressive, positive program to incorporate the millions of immigrants into the civic culture that once reigned in most settled parts of our land. This would include an understanding of the rights and responsibilities, language, traditions, and nongovernmental organizations that anchor that culture. (Those last-mentioned groups, in turn, could play a major role in this undertaking.)

The intent of such an effort would be to welcome as many new Americans as wish to participate in our national federation of communities. However, it could and should be accompanied by a scaling back of public services and benefit programs for noncitizens, such as courts may allow. In the meantime, avoidance of the dole might be considered a qualification for citizenship.

“Americanization” programs were widely tried—and widely criticized—in the later stages of an influx of immigrants earlier this century, but the failings of that era’s approach shouldn’t preclude attempting a more effective campaign in the 1990s. And, while we’re at it, maybe we could inculcate a few of these notions in the native population.

Tim W. Ferguson
The Wall Street Journal

Age of Consent for Sex is Not a Simple Matter

In their article about the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) library meeting controversy in San Francisco [“A Very Dubious Right: Pederasty in the Public Library,” Spring 1992], Roger L. Conner and Robert Teir have unfairly characterized the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund by implying that Lambda endorses NAMBLA’s position, or that Lambda would automatically fight to exclude an anti-gay group from meeting in a public space. In more than ten years of association with Lambda, I cannot recall Lambda ever having involved itself in a legal controversy involving NAMBLA.

There is a distinction between gay-rights and age of consent issues. Lambda has always identified its mission in terms of gay rights (and, recently, AIDS-related legal issues as they affect the gay community). Conner and Teir's statement, lumping Lambda with the ACLU on this issue, is inaccurate. The ACLU's mission is defined by an expansive view of civil liberties. Lambda and the ACLU occasionally find themselves with different perspectives on an issue.

NAMBLA is very controversial among gay leaders. The Lesbian and Gay Community Center in New York City refused on several occasions NAMBLA's request to hold meetings there, on the ground that NAMBLA is not a "gay organization" as such, and that other organizations meeting at the center (including lesbian and gay youth groups) may not want to associate with NAMBLA. The annual Gay Pride March in New York, on the other hand, allows NAMBLA to participate because the march does not exclude any organization seeking to celebrate gay liberation by marching. NAMBLA is one of many participating groups not primarily identified as a gay organization; the Women's Action Coalition and the National Lawyers Guild have participated in the march.

NAMBLA's call for repeal of sexual age of consent laws is quite controversial among gay people, and is opposed by gay organizations concerned with the welfare of lesbian and gay youth. On the other hand, some nonmembers of NAMBLA agree that current age of consent laws are unrealistically high; they diverge from state to state without apparent justification. Thus, the age of consent is 14 in Hawaii (and Canada), 17 in New York, 18 in Connecticut and New Jersey (with New Jersey specifying circumstances in which it may be unlawful for an adult to have sex with a person between the ages of 16 and 18).

If such laws are meant to protect those deemed incapable of giving true consent and thus subject to sexual exploitation, one wonders whether the relatively high age in New York meets that justification, when neighboring states, whose teens are not necessarily more mature or capable of dealing with adults, may participate in consensual sexual activities with adults at a younger age. (These laws generally treat less harshly, and in some cases do not forbid, sexual activities between teens roughly the same age.) One also wonders whether it is appropriate for

the state to presume that all those below a certain age lack the maturity and capability to make an independent decision whether to engage in sexual activity with an adult, when the age is set so high.

I would be interested in seeing a fully developed discussion on the appropriate role of penal law in dealing with consensual sexual activity, including sexual activity by teens. Does a communitarian approach to societal regulation of human sexuality necessarily embrace the existing approach to age of consent laws?

Arthur S. Leonard
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Teledemocracy or Tell-A-Democracy?

The trouble with David Kirp's praise for Perot ["Two Cheers for the Electronic Town Hall: Or, Ross Perot, Meet Alexis de Tocqueville," Fall 1992] is that Ross Perot never did meet Alexis de Tocqueville, or any other democratic theorist.

I grant the virtues David Kirp points to in the Ruckelshaus and AIDS-in-schools cases. Sometimes increasing consultation and widening participation improve the quality of decisions that are made. Even when they don't, extending the reach of public involvement is still the right thing to do. Democracy takes practice.

But that's all the more reason to criticize the counterfeit version of democratic process Ross Perot has proposed. "We go to the American people on television," he said, "explain it in great detail, and say, 'Here are the alternatives that we face. Which of these alternatives, as owners of the country, do you feel is best for the country?'" The American people react, by congressional district, and we know what the people want."

Who is this "we" defining the alternatives? Presumably, it is the president. Where are the parties or other bodies that sometimes define alternatives differently? Probably nowhere in sight for a man who scoffs at parties and believes governing is just a matter of getting down to

business—no irreconcilable interests, no conflicting values, just management.

Electronic town meetings will not “tell us what the people want.” At best, they say how an attentive minority answers questions framed by a leader with enormous power to set the agenda. In the name of a new teledemocracy, Mr. Perot so far offers tell-a-democracy.

Recall Mr. Perot’s gimmick for reentering the presidential race in October. He said he would reenter if the people wanted him. So he set up an 800 telephone number where only “run, Ross, run” votes were counted. There was no way to register a vote against him. “I’m a businessman,” he told CBS News. “I’m not going to pay for the phone call of some fellow who says, ‘Don’t do it.’” One hopes the charade of the people drafting Perot is not a model for Perotian democracy, but it gives credence to the dire admonitions of the op-ed writers.

I like the new uses of the electronic media in the 1992 campaign for airing views. The “town meeting” format presidential debate was clearly the best of the lot. But we can distinguish between the valuable innovations Professor Kirp points to, both electronic and face-to-face, and the simplistic notion of popular democracy Mr. Perot has urged. The latter sounds nearer to Bonaparte than to a New England town meeting.

Michael Schudson
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What is Communitarianism Anyway?

Robert Booth Fowler: *The Dance with Community: The Contemporary Debate in American Political Thought*

Kansas City: University of Kansas Press, 1991. 161 pp.

Reviewed by Benjamin Barber

Who are the communitarians? *The Responsive Community* was founded by a group of social commentators sympathetic to community and critical of radical individualist and atomistic rights thinking, but as readers of this journal will know, even among its members there is no consensus about the term. Almost all political and social theory responds to the tensions of individuals living in groups. But liberals and libertarians tend to focus on the individual side of the equation and on such individual attributes as autonomy and choice (the capacity for bargaining and exchange—market relations) while egalitarians and democrats focus on the group or community and collective values like equality or fraternity or social justice. Amitai Etzioni would like to treat communitarianism as a bridge term linking individuals and the associations to which they belong and thus use the word to gain some purchase on the dialectical middle, while others (your reviewer included) are persuaded that the term has been captured by proponents of the collectivist side of the debate and therefore cannot easily be used to bridge and reconcile the two sides.

In fact, neither our efforts at *The Responsive Community* nor any other single framing of the issue can do justice to a construct as encompassing as communitarianism. There are conservative communitarians who emphasize the traditional bonds of groups and who see hierarchy as community's natural structure (Robert Nisbet), and there are democratic communitarians for whom communities are the condition for social equality. There are nostalgic communitarians like Alasdair MacIntyre

who believe the era of community has been destroyed by modernity, and there are utopian communitarians who think the age of community, like the age of Aquarius, has yet to come. Small “r” republican communitarians such as Hannah Arendt look to the ancient *polis* as a model of the ideal political community. Anarchist communitarians such as Proudhon see politics as the enemy of community. It is, in short, not an easy term to make much sense of, even when the polemics that usually surround it are stripped away.

This review of definitions suggests both the need for a book like Fowler’s, and the substantial challenges such an undertaking confronts. Fowler adopts the role of “intellectual historian” and sets out to provide a workmanlike framework into which to dump and then classify his copious collection of communitarians; he gives us as thorough and careful a survey of the academic literature as one could want. Fowler does not try to offer or develop his own theory of community, however, and those looking for more affirmative guidance may be disappointed on this score.

What is most striking and paradoxical about the book, in light of its general stance of cool-headed categorization, is Fowler’s apparent simultaneous distrust (distaste?) for the “enthusiasm” and “optimism” that attend secular versions of communitarianism and his own zesty enthusiasm for religious community. He cites approvingly Herbert Gans’ doubts about whether people “really want” all the community that Bellah and others go on about, and he worries that utopianism (and panglossianism) are vices endemic to communitarian zealotry. Yet at the same time he is enamored of tragic and religious models of community, not least perhaps because they are drenched in blood. Fowler offers unfavorable comparisons between the “bloodless” secularism of republican or other political forms of communitarianism on the one hand and, on the other, religious versions that are sanguinely whole-souled. He seems persuaded that, unlike its secular counterpart, religious enthusiasm is laced with humility, but as history amply demonstrates, it has often been far more bloody than strictly political forms of communitarianism. After all, the Crusades, the Inquisition, and Puritan intolerance (like Islamic fundamentalism today) were all features of religious communities of true belief.

Fowler’s concern with enthusiasm among secular communitarians seems to reflect a downright aversion to politics. Yet democratic commu-

nitarianism is precisely an attempt to give bloodless liberalism a transfusion: otherness, even if it is not transcendental, suggests a way out of self and ego that is sustaining to identity as well as to equality and justice. At the same time, artificial community provides a degree of fraternity without provoking fratricide.

Still, there is much to be said for Fowler's modest leanings toward ideas of religious community, some of which is evident in his discussion of Martin Buber and Glenn Tinder. Glenn Tinder's work on community as a reflection of the religious bond between human beings and a transcendental being which, when stripped of its religious setting, may lose its meaning, represents a perspective from which secular communitarians have much to learn. Years ago, I reviewed one of Tinder's works for *The New Republic*; I might as well have been trying to resurrect Lazarus. Religion today is a topic for sociologists, or at best, metaphysicians and theologians, not for believers. But as Tinder's writings demonstrate with moving power, and as Fowler makes clear in the gravity with which he treats the issue, there can be no coming to terms with community without coming to terms with religion (or its absence). The bonds that hold communities together always point beyond the individuals by whom they are constituted.

I cannot begin to accept Tinder's claim, perhaps embraced by Fowler, that "community cannot be a political creation." Indeed, the forging of secular communities of cooperation around common material goals has been one of the most useful creations of modern politics. In a secularized, disenchanting world, it is perhaps the only healthy understanding of community we can have. Yet Tinder and Fowler surely are correct in believing that to imagine the otherness of human beings, upon which their capacity (never complete) for community depends, entails some comprehension of transcendental otherness and of its consequences for human limits. And that humility is a powerful virtue of successful communities. In this sense, some notion of "existential community" must underlie every flourishing human community.

Politically, this may of course have conservative implications. An overwhelming sense of limits, of the tragedy that is human existence, may paralyze political action. Without hope, there is no possibility of communities of will that change the world. By the same token, the tragic perspective is perhaps a little too convenient for those whose circum-

stances hope and radical change may discomfit. Yet religion also contains hope. At times, Tinder seems a little too dour just as Fowler seems too intolerant of enthusiasm. Surely they cannot forget that redemption and deliverance also are powerfully religious notions. That faith and ecstasy may go hand in hand. And that the politics of hope that is democracy need not be at war with the existential truths of religion. Neither the lessons of Moses nor the parables of Jesus call for abject resignation.

Ultimately, the missing term in Fowler's discussion of the communitarians and religion is freedom. What religious community looks like in the total absence of liberty can be seen by reading Joseph DeMaistre, that 19th century apostle of reactionary monarchism and blood-drenched Christianity. This may not be the religion Buber or Tinder or Fowler have in mind, but it is religion nonetheless—some might even say it is religion as manifested in our actual history. Can religious communities that exclude freedom ever generate a politics of change? Can secular communities that embrace the freedom of individuals ever accept preelective or other similarly deterministic forms of religion? Is humility religion's only message (I think of the death sentence passed on Salman Rushdie)? I do not mean to say that such questions have only one answer, but they are questions communitarians and their critics inside and outside of religion need to be asking.

One wishes that Fowler himself had taken up these issues beyond simply letting us know that his "own sympathies lie with the existentialists." What Fowler does offer us is a way into this extraordinary literature, and for that we can only feel grateful.

ESPECIALLY NOTED

Harry C. Boyte, *Common Wealth: A Return to Citizen Politics*. (New York: The Free Press, 1989). 221 pp.

Examining contemporary citizen activism against the historical backdrop of such action, Boyte outlines the increasing relevance of citizen politics in a time of concern that the fundamental tasks of our democracy are not being accomplished. The commonwealth ideal has all but disappeared, as faith in active citizen politics has been overshadowed by trust in powerful institutions and a supposedly detached and omniscient technocracy. Yet Boyte points to

several grassroots initiatives as proof of the reemergence of citizen politics.

Nat Hentoff, *Free Speech for Me—But Not for Thee: How the American Left and Right Relentlessly Censor Each Other*. (New York: HarperCollins, 1992). 392 pp.

In this case-by-case account, Nat Hentoff analyzes the continuous skirmishes over free speech by would-be censors of the left and right. One of the foremost authorities on civil liberties, Hentoff concludes, “Debate and exchange of ideas will enlighten minds, censorship won’t.” Examining issues ranging from university speech codes to the attempt to censor pornography, Hentoff concludes with optimistic suggestions on how to preserve a freedom that is coming under increasing fire.

Marcel C. LaFollette, *Stealing into Print*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992). 211 pp.

LaFollette details how misconduct in scientific publishing explodes the myth of scientists as selfless seekers of truth and undermines the credibility of scientific research. In this authoritative account, she warns that academia’s attempts to deny such fraud cannot withstand increasing demands from the public, the press, and politicians for greater scientific accountability.

Alice Shabecoff, *Rebuilding Our Communities*. (Monrovia, CA: World Vision, Inc., 1992). 280 pp.

Churches can assist their communities in diminishing the number of the homeless and providing quality housing for low-income families. This manual details the options available, the steps to be taken, and the examples of success that serve as beacons for other communities.

Edward A. Wynne and Kevin Ryan, *Reclaiming Our Schools*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1993). 256 pp.

In this aide to teachers, Wynne and Ryan propose that certain traditional values that transcend culture and history be restored to our nation’s schools. By focusing on the method and substance of instruction and on the school as a moral community, they draft

a blueprint for the propagation of the core values of character, academics, and discipline.

ARTICLES OF NOTE

Wendell Berry, "Sex, Economy, and Community," lecture given at University of Louisville School of Business, April 8, 1992.

Amitai Etzioni, "The Evils of Self-Determination," *Foreign Policy* 89, Winter 1992-1993.

Laura L. Nash, "A Survey of Three Stages in the Evolution of Corporate Ethics Programs," *Ethikos* 5, May /June 1992.

Daniel Yankelovich, "How Public Opinion Really Works," *Fortune*, October 5, 1992.

COMMUNITARIANS ABROAD

Christel Zahlmann, *Kommunitarismus in der Diskussion*. (Germany: Rotbuch Verlag, 1992). 151 pp.

A collection of essays on communitarianism, mainly by German philosophers. (In German)

Nikolaus Piper and Fritz Vorholz, "Wir haben die Konkurrenz ubertrieben," *Die Zeit* 39, September 18, 1992.

A discussion of communitarian ideas and their application to Germany in a leading German newspaper. (In German)

Community Bulletin

Economics and Society

Communitarians will meet next in New York City for the Fifth Annual International Conference of *The Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE)*, March 26-28, 1993. The conference theme is *Incentives & Values as Foundations of Social Order*. Featured speakers will include J. Kenneth Galbraith, Richard J. Herrnstein, and Robert Heilbroner. In addition, there will be a libertarian/communitarian debate, including Charles Murray, David Boaz, and Amitai Etzioni.

For information, contact SASE at: 714H Gelman Library, The George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052. Tel: (202)-994-8167. Fax: (202) 994-1639.

The Communitarian Network

If you share some of the ideas expressed in this journal and are interested in joining a movement of like-minded people and organizations who have come together to shore up our moral, social, and political environment, contact: *The Communitarian Network*, 2130 H Street, NW, Suite 714, Washington, DC 20052. Tel:

The Responsive Community Bulletin provides community groups, organizations, and individuals with an opportunity to reach others in the community with news of events, publications, and information on issues of general interest. To use the RC Bulletin write: *The Responsive Community*, 714 Gelman Street, NW, Washington, DC 20052. Tel: (202) 994-7997. Fax: (202) 994-1639.

Communitarian Position Papers

Communitarian position papers are available on topics: the Family, Domestic Disarmament, and Organ Donation. Forthcoming position papers include: Competition, Inequality, Received and Unreceived, Divisiveness, and A Communitarian Approach to Public Safety. To order, send \$10.00 for each paper to: *The Communitarian Project*, 2130 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20052.

Does it Take an Einstein?

A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life are based on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving.

Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*

Clinton • Gore Position Papers (Select Items)

Revitalize America Through Community Development

- **Put neighborhoods at the center of our efforts to revitalize America** by coordinating existing housing, education, employment training, health care, drug treatment and crime prevention programs. Target resources—community by community—to make the most of scarce federal housing funds.
- **Create a nationwide network of community development banks** to provide small loans to low-income businesses and entrepreneurs in the inner cities. These banks will also invest in affordable housing, and help mobilize private lenders.
- **Create urban enterprise zones** in stagnant inner cities, but only for companies willing to take responsibility. Business taxes and federal regulations will be minimized to provide incentives to set up shop. In return, companies will have to make jobs for local residents a top priority.
- **Ease the credit crunch** in our inner cities by passing a more progressive Community Reinvestment Act to prevent “redlining”; require financial institutions to invest in homes in their communities.
- **Create a City Assistance Flexibility** program to allow cities to direct the use of 15 percent of the federal assistance they receive to meet their own community priorities and fund their local revitalization strategies.

Turning Around Our Cities: Three Principles

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

- **Opportunity:** We can't rebuild our urban communities with hand-outs alone—We need a massive expansion of opportunity. The federal government should create conditions conducive to economic recovery through a national economic strategy, targeted incentives and grants designed to revitalize the urban economy, and measures that empower city residents to take advantage of newly created opportunities for expanded education, job training and child care services. In return for federal assistance, the cities will adopt comprehensive strategies leading to revitalized urban centers; take advantage of opportunities created by the federal/municipal partnership to attract business and expand the urban economic base; and play a key role in the empowerment of urban residents as the primary provider of education, housing, and crime prevention.
- **Community:** Community groups and local citizen organizations will be the backbone of our urban improvement efforts. To restore our cities, we must create a new partnership committed to excellence and community service. The federal government must get involved again, working together with state and local authorities in this endeavor. Non-profit organizations also have a role to play.
- **Responsibility:** We must recognize that no matter how hard we work to make the federal/municipal partnership a success, we will make no progress unless individuals take responsibility for their own lives, working tirelessly to overcome challenges and solve problems in their families and communities.

Support Pro-Family and Pro-Children Policies

- Lower the tax burden on middle-class Americans by asking the very wealthy to pay their fair share; give middle-class taxpayers **a choice between a children's tax credit or a significant reduction in their income tax rate.** Virtually every industrialized nation recognizes the importance of strong families in its tax code; we should, too.
- Promote **tough child support legislation** and develop stricter, more effective methods to enforce it: crack down on deadbeat parents by reporting them to credit agencies, so they can't borrow money for themselves when they're not taking care of their children; use the Internal Revenue Service to collect child support; start a national deadbeat databank; and make it a felony to cross state lines to avoid paying support.

End Welfare as We Know It

...It is time to honor and reward people who work hard and play by the

rules. That means ending welfare as we know it—not by punishing the poor or preaching to them, but by empowering Americans to take care of their children and improve their lives. No one who works full-time and has children at home should be poor any more. No one who can work should be able to stay on welfare forever.

We can provide opportunity, demand responsibility, and end welfare as we know it. We can give every American hope for the future.

- **Empower people** with the education, training and child care they need for up to two years so they can break the cycle of dependency: expand programs to help people learn to read, get their high school diplomas or equivalency degrees, and acquire specific job skills; and ensure that their children are cared for while they learn.
- After two years, **require those who can work to go to work**, either in the private sector or in community service: provide placement assistance to help everyone find a job, and give the people who can't find one a dignified and meaningful community service job.

Make Neighborhoods Safe Again

- Give young offenders a second opportunity to become decent citizens by supporting the creation of “**boot camps**” for nonviolent first-time offenders. These shock incarceration programs require rigorous exercise and arduous work to instill discipline, boost self-esteem, and teach decency and respect for the law...
- **Community-based policing:** In communities across America, local law-enforcement officials are stopping crimes before they happen by moving from emergency response to community-based law enforcement. By taking officers out of patrol cars and putting increasing numbers back on the beat, cities are winning the war on crime.

Campaign Reform

- Place **voluntary spending caps** on House and Senate races, depending on a state's population. These caps will level the playing field and encourage challengers to enter the race.
- **Limit political action committee (PAC) contributions** to the \$1000 legal limit for individuals.
- **Reduce the cost of television air time** to promote real discussion and turn TV into an instrument of education, not a weapon of political assassination.
- **Eliminate tax deductions for special interest lobbying expenses** and the “lawyers' loophole,” which allows lawyer-lobbyists to

disguise lobbying activities on behalf of foreign governments and powerful corporations.

- **Require lobbyists** who appear before Congressional committees to **disclose the campaign contributions** they've made to members of those committees. The public has a right to know when moneyed interests are trying to influence elected officials in Washington.
- **End the unlimited "soft" money** contributions that are funneled through national, state, and local parties to presidential candidates.

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

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