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THE PRESENT AGE AND THE STATE OF COMMUNITY

by
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What follows is about half history and half jeremiad. I will be concerned with one major event, World War I, one renaissance, that of the 1920s in America, and one idea, the idea of the national community. I hope to establish the historical connectedness of the three topics, but if I don't there should be a little nostalgia in the first two.

The present age began with the First World War, the Great War as it is still called; and for excellent reason. Its consequences pursue us yet. First, the Seventy-Four Years War and still counting, of which the Second World War was an episode, albeit a large one, and possibly destined to become the West's second Hundred Years War; second, totalitarianism which we were so long in comprehending and which has served as the dynamo of the aforementioned war; third, permanent error, systematically applied by the state to both citizens and aliens; fourth, the Third World or those considerable parts which are the disjecta membra of the old European empires; fifth, the continuing fiscal crisis in the West; and finally, the transformation of the American commonwealth.

There were really two First World Wars: Europe's and America's. For Europe it was a civil war, poisoned by racial and ethnic hatreds. It was, strictly speaking, the last European war; for the Second World War would be more a struggle of universal ideologies, democracy, communism, and fascism, than it was of nation states fighting over dynastic successions, boundaries, and economic rivalries, though I wouldn't take those entirely away from the Second War. The First World War was a bloody one for Europeans: 12 million killed in action, 25 million wounded, and incalculable destruction of architecture and landscape. Sometime in 1919, according to Martin Gilbert, Churchill jotted down some impressions of the sheer savagery of the war, concluding with the words: "When it was all over, Torture and Cannibalism were the only two expedients that the civilized, scientific, Christian states had been able to deny themselves, and they were of doubtful utility."

A German named Oswald Spengler spent the war writing a book that would receive the title, Decline of the West. It was published just

in time to festoon German book store windows for the edification of German soldiers straggling home after the Armistice. Other epitaphs of the European war were Goodbye to All That, The Magic Mountain, The Desert of Love, The Future of an Illusion, and The Case of Sergeant Grischa. W. R. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, gave the Romanes Lecture in 1920 on the idea of progress. Afterward he said to a friend: "There, I believe I have spat sufficiently on the superstition."

2.

It was a very different Great War for Americans, the most popular, once we were in it, of all America's wars. We were in it for only a year and a half. Our losses were light, relatively, 48 thousand killed and 240 thousand wounded. Not a shell or bomb landed on American soil. Despite those benefices, the war had a virtually traumatic effect on American society and consciousness.

Prior to 1914 American was probably the most decentralized, deployed and dispersed, and also regional and local government among all the Western nations. Many European scholars and statesmen, including Lord Bryce who loved America, professed to be unable to find either a genuine sovereign in the American Constitution or a state, in the European sense. "There is no Theory of the State," Bryce wrote. In truth the average citizen's only contact with the national state prior to the Great War was through the postman.

All this began to be changed on a massive scale once we declared war on Germany in early April, 1917. In an extraordinary and unprecedented series of laws, Congress turned over government, economy, social organization, and individual consciousness to the President, Woodrow Wilson. Railroads, the telegraph and telephone, the shipping liens, munition factories, and mines were nationalized. A War Industries Board was given total power over all aspects of production. A War Labor Policies Board ruled labor and set wages. A Food Administration governed production and consumption of food, in all cases bypassing state and local governments in their operations.

That was only the beginning. Believing that the hearts and minds of the people were vital to the kind of war, that is, moral crusade he intended to wage, Wilson set up a national corps of so called Four Minute Men, 75,000 strong before the war ended. Each Four Minute Man was entitled to invade any public meeting, religious or lay, and speak for not less than four minutes on the holiness of the war. Beyond this innovation in thought-management, there was the considerably larger group of picked Americans which for want of "a better label was known as "neighborhood watchers." Their instructions were to listen for and report any conceivably disloyal remarks made in their own respective neighborhoods. As Samuel Morison has written, "It was a wonderful opportunity to bring patriotism to the aid of neighborhood feuds and personal grudges."

In 1917, at Wilson's request, Congress passed the Espionage Act under which individuals found guilty of impeding war conscription or challenging national patriotism could be sent to Federal prison.

When that seemed not to suffice, Congress passed, again at the President's behest, the Sedition Act. This struck at publicly expressed sentiments on the propriety of American engagement. Victor Berger, first socialist ever elected to Congress, and the notable labor leader, Eugene Debs were among those sent for long sentences to Federal prison for publicly questioning American entry into the war in Europe. The Justice Department under A. Mitchell Palmer began raids without judicial warrant early in the war, ostensibly to catch German spies, though none was ever actually identified. The raids continued into 1920, given justification then by fear of socialists who had perhaps entered the United States among other Eastern European immigrants. Prior censorship of the press was considered but dismissed in favor of powers given the Postmaster General to open all second and third class mail and to instigate charges against publishers and writers deemed disloyal. All over America in school districts, textbooks through high school were examined for German content, and all such, no matter what its age and innocence of war, was cut from the books.

To this day it is not altogether clear why Wilson conducted so thorough, so saturating, a crusade within American society--which had taken to the war almost immediately and reached perhaps the high point of voluble patriotism in our history. Wilson himself said: "It is not an army we must shape, it is a nation." But why? There was a considerable fear of German spies, and the sizable contingent of German Americans suffered a good deal of persecution. But even so, why, in Wilson's words, "shape a nation"? It is hard not to conclude that Wilson was engaged by intent in two wars: the first, the war against Germany, the second, a war against what his passionately patriotic soul regarded as hateful impurities in America the Beautiful: impurities of language, of psychological and cultural loyalties, even genetic impurities, all resulting from the mass immigration of the turn of the century. He shared Theodore Roosevelt's hatred of what T.R. had called "hyphenated Americans." The first quarter of the twentieth century was one of unprecedented interest by middle class Americans in eugenics and strict regimens of Americanization classes along with state laws barring miscegenation. Wilson, like T.R., wanted the melting pot to be kept bubbling at highest temperature.

Second there was Wilson's well recorded love of the state, on which he had written an influential book. His The New Freedom echoed this love of the national state and what Wilson saw as its liberating power. It was in the interest of the "new freedom" that Wilson, like other progressives, argued the cause of a national state that would enter ever more deeply into lives and minds of Americans.

The Wilson war state ended almost as abruptly as it began. Congress called back its powers. Dismantling began immediately. Suddenly the Four Minute Men were gone; so were the neighborhood watchers and the cutting up of textbooks. Gone too, thank heaven, were meatless Tuesdays, sugarless Wednesdays, butterless Fridays, and also those ridiculous glass bowls in every respectable parlor in which, for no reason anybody every seemed to know, the tin foil

from cigarette and chewing gum packages was patriotically saved and flaunted. Yes, it was good to see Our Boys beginning to come back when it was Over, Over There. It was good to think of the status quo ante bellum returning; that is, normalcy. Fortunately or unfortunately, that status quo never returned to the United States, all pretences and presidential speeches to the contrary. America had become a nation beyond anything that had existed before--a nation in government, economy, and moral consciousness.

There was the 18th Amendment as if to signalize the new role of the national state in its prohibition of liquor. That was in 1919. In the following year came the 19th Amendment signaling the loss of states rights in setting the criteria of voting eligibility. Quietly but substantially the postwar Congress and Executive gave much more of themselves to activities such as education, social welfare, even crime enforcement, and in use of the Federal Reserve and the Federal Trade Commission, each of which had been created under Wilson just before the war broke out. In summary, the American people merged with the American national state for the first time in history. No longer did Bryce insist in his American Commonwealth that America had no theory of the state.

Moreover a considerable nostalgia for the war was in evidence by 1921-22. There had been, as one thought about it, some very good things about the war. The economy had yielded high profits, high wages, better working conditions, and virtually full employment. A new kind of individualism had come into being, one directed, not at the central government, but at such old authorities as family, church, local community, venerable codes of morality. A new informality of dress, manners, and conversation had entered American life. Dress, especially for women became more experimental. So did the female life style which could now include cigarettes and cocktails and shorter dresses. Millions of Americans learned during the war what kings and generals had known for countless centuries: that the very military discipline of war induces a kind of slackness and indifference in the nonmilitary authorities of public opinion and popular manners.

The war had also had a special flavor of community that was collectively fulfilling. Old moral values grown stale had been reaffirmed and in the process rejuvenated. No wonder the war had been--as the next world war would definitely not be--a singing war, on the home front and Over There alike. It had been a war of parades, rallies, and innumerable picnics. One's favorite Hollywood and Broadway stars sang, danced, and pleaded for bond sales. The First World War had been for many Americans a most welcome surcease from monotony, boredom, from the long littlenesses of ordinary life. The thrills and satisfactions of a good war well fought, which William James had recognized and sought to harness in his famous essay, "The Moral Equivalent of War," were being sorely missed by more than a few Americans by 1921. More and more editorial writers and contributors to popular magazines were waxing thoughtful about the good things that had gone with the nation at war, such things as discipline, fraternity, equality, and compassion.

The truth was, Americans were feeling in some measure a kind of spiritual vacuum. Nobody relished the killing, the carnage, and the devastation of war, but it had to be admitted that the late war had provided a novel sense of national unity, of liberation from extreme factionalism, and above all of national purpose. It might even be, certain of the educated bethought themselves, that the war, most especially the forced stay of two or three million Americans in Europe, would have a civilizing effect upon America, notoriously mired in the mentality of villages and farms. Matthew Arnold had lamented the lack in England of a standing army like those on the continent simply on the basis of what he called the civilizing effects of a national army. Not least there had been a suspension during the war of the class conflicts in the economy and the factionalism that went with political democracy. Another Englishman, the philosopher L. P. Jacks had once written of the "spiritual peace that war brings." It had been good to be rid of the bitter conflict between interventionists and isolationists.

How fascinating too to have discovered the uses, under the spur of war, of economic and social rationalization of human relationships. In place of the jungle-like free market, there had been planning during the war--industrial, labor, all aspects of social living. Thus it was that early in the Twenties there rose the slogan: "We Planned in War, Why not in Peace?" The slogan lasted all through the Thirties, serving as title to many an article and editorial. There were even corporation executives who spoke well of the idea.

The sense of unity was accompanied by a sense of progress in the whole body of American culture. This was not a strictly new sense. Bryce had referred to the "fatalism of the multitude" in America, the ingrained sense that America was exceptional in the world of nations, the consequence being a conviction that no matter what we may do for good or ill, somehow God will direct America to its rendezvous with the future. Mark Twain delighted and also flattered millions of Americans with his Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court and Innocents Abroad in which the stock rustic American, hayseed basically, was put in the grand, feudal circumstances of traditional Europe in order to confound, baffle, and defeat them with his native homespun Know How.

This psychology fattened enormously as the result of the Great War. Americans decided instantly that they had won it for the Allies, and for them it was one more piece of evidence of the fact that Americans, real Americans, that is, are born with Know How, Can Do, and No Fault--as no other people in the world was. Many an editorial or article in the Twenties, and, as I can attest, many a conversation began with the words: "The reason Our Boys were such good soldiers and able to vanquish the Germans so quickly is...." There would follow explanations ranging from 20-20 morality to the alleged fact that they all came off farms where there had been plenty of fresh milk and butter and squirrel rifles to make them experts at 10 and capacity to repair anything mechanical with a hairpin. Magazines like The Literary Digest, The Saturday Evening Post, Colliers, Everybody's, McClure's American, and the Review of

Reviews, all widely read and influential in the Twenties, carried frequent articles illustrating the progressive character of the American nation and the sterling qualities innate in each and every American; qualities making for almost effortless superiority when it came to the fuddy-duddies of Europe and the benighted heathen of the Orient.

All of this would be, would have been at the time, no more than a harmless, naive national conceit but for one overpowering fact. Americans at all levels took it seriously. Thus from the conceit and utter untruth that the American soldier, with but a few weeks of hastily organized, precarious field training behind him, outfought the European soldier and single-handedly won the war for the Allies, came a military indolence that found us badly prepared in 1941, two full years after World War II had begun in Europe. But the idiocy of belief in native American Know How and Can Do, together with No Fault, is far from limited to our military consciousness. We see it in our system of public education which until a couple of decades ago was automatically deemed the finest in the world; in our manufacturing of automobiles, semiconductors, and weapons, and in the whole cult of the amateur, not least in national government and politics, where the alleged interest in the presidency of a small town newspaper publisher, a manufacturer of automobiles in Detroit, or a utilities executive could seem to many Americans the basis of the re-creation of the American city upon a hill.

The conjunction of the idea of national community and national progress was rich in symbolism to both the intellectual and the ordinary American. On many an office and living room wall hung the familiar "Don't Knock Progress." In newspaper editorials, "You Can't Stop Progress" was like something from the Ten Commandments. People were permitted a few tears when the bulldozer crumbled some architectural gem or ravaged a bosky hillside, but not too many tears. Progress must go on!

The French, doubtless to pay off some of their war debts, exported a lay religion known as Coueism to the United States in the early Twenties. The core liturgy was the repetition dozens of times a day to one's self, "Day by Day, In Every Way, I am Getting Better and Better." But how can you get better if you are born with Know How and Can Do? No one waited for an answer.

As if to confirm intoxication with progress came, in the Twenties, an authentic cultural renaissance. The union between war and renaissances is neither common nor uncommon in history. Before the greatness that was Greece came the Persian Wars, the grandeur that was Rome the Punic Wars. In the Italian renaissance the true Renaissance Man was adept in war and art. There is nothing inevitable or even probable about these conjunctions and sequences. The Hundred Years War, the Religious Wars in Europe, the Civil War in this country, and Viet Nam brought little if any cultural upthrust. The Hundred Years War plunged Europe into a cultural barbarism it hadn't known since the Dark Ages. Viet Nam was accompanied by the manias of revolt that demeaned everything, from ordinary cleanliness to language and civility.

But, to repeat, as both A.J Toynbee and Alfred Kroeber make clear in their separate studies of the eruptions of high and creative culture, wars can be tonic to the creative impulse. This was certainly the case in the Great War. It is sad that we affix to the 1920s such labels as "the Roaring Twenties" and the "Age of the Flapper." In literature alone in the decade it compares favorably with that period in the 19th century that has won the label, Renaissance. I mean the Age of Melville and Emerson. In a single five-year period opening up the 1850s, Emerson published Representative Men, Melville Moby Dick and Pierre, Hawthorne The Scarlet Letter and also the House of Seven Gables, Thoreau Walden, and Whitman Leaves of Grass. And let us not forget another book in those five years: Uncle Tom's Cabin. That Renaissance, it will have been noted, occurred on the eve of a great war, but Clio is rarely tidy. Perhaps a prewar made electric by something like abolitionism produces the same rhythms and depths of thought that wars occasionally can. And Mrs. Stowe's book did help start a major war.

The renaissance of the Twenties may not have the sheer genius in it that the Age of Melville and Emerson did; but it deserves more attention--as a culture-phenomenon, not simply strings of biographies of individual intellectuals and artists--than it seems to be getting. There were novelists of the stature of William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Theodore Dreiser, John Dos Passos, Sinclair Lewis, Thomas Wolfe, James Gould Cozzens, Willa Cather, Edith Wharton, and Ellen Glasgow. Poets of the decade included T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, Robert Frost, E.A. Robinson, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Carl Sandburg, Marianne Moore, Langston Hughes, and Countee Cullen. Critical essayists included H.L. Mencken, Edmund Wilson, James Huneker, Paul Elmer More, Van Wyck Brooks, A.J. Nock, Robert Penn Warren, John Crowe Ransom. In drama there was Eugene O'Neill.

But it was not literature alone. The Twenties renaissance soared in two art forms: film and music, meaning jazz, the blues, and other forms of syncopation. These swept the world within the decade, and the names of D.W. Griffith, Charlie Chaplin, Gloria Swanson, Mary Pickford, and the Barrymores are still icons, as are the names of George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Jack Teagarden, and Sidney Bechet.

The Twenties was the decade too of the inauguration of America's civil religion: i.e., spectator sports. Its heroes, Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, Red Grange, Bill Tilden, Bobby Jones, Helen Wills, and Gertrude Ederle still evoke a certain reverence. Perhaps the greatest of all athletes, male or female, Babe Didrikson was in high school in the Twenties.

Every bona fide renaissance in history has representation from foreign vintages among its intellectual wines. The Twenties was the period of the reception in full body of Albert Einstein, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud. In no time at all, conversations among

intellectuals were studded with "relativity," "Oedipus complex," and "class struggle." Without doubt the American idiom was affected by these intellectual imports. It remains an interesting question though whether they did more to the American idiom than it did to them. Think of Marx cowering today among deconstructionists at Duke or Yale; Freudian tragedy reduced to the farce of therapeutic social activism and/or permanent orgasm. And Einstein appears to have registered more influence on our morals--which would distress no end that deeply moral genius--than upon our theoretical physics.

3.

I shall come back in a moment to the thematic nature of the Second American Renaissance. First let me point to one other, and here last, participant in the great flowering. I mean the political intellectual and, more to the point, the political clerisy. A clerisy is a body of intellectuals--which may include philosophers, journalists, hierarchs, gnostics, mandarins, and so on--that surrounds some one major institution: patriarchal family as in the Orient, the church as in the Middle Ages, the political state as in modern Western history. The mark of the clerisy is not any unanimity of mind on creedal and doctrinal matters; it is rather the gigantic conviction that apart from the monolith it guards, civilized life of any kind is ipso facto impossible. Hence the scrupulous and minute custodianship of the individual. In the Middle Ages the communicant's life was under the inspection of the church from cradle to grave. In the modern West it is the state, not the church, that contemplates each individual from conception to grave.

Most renaissances are characterized by the appearance of political intellectuals and clerisies, usually late, in the twilight of the renaissance. When the Age of Aeschylus is over, Plato and Aristotle appear. When the Age of Michelangelo was coming to an end, there stood Machiavelli. The end of the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, and Bacon was signalized by Hobbes astride Leviathan.

Prior to the First World War, America had few political intellectuals in the European sense. A true political clerisy was not to be found in Washington or New York. It was not a significant feature of American political culture. We had had great statesmen by any standard among the Founders, and at least a sprinkling of the great through succeeding decades. But a clerisy, in the sense of the class of intellectuals devoted to the American national state and its enhancement, hardly preceded the turn of the century Progressives. And their real interest was Efficiency.

Wilson was a one man clerisy both before and during the war. His book, The State and especially his The New Freedom, written one year before the war broke out in Europe, establish him securely as a political intellectual in the European sense. He was passionately in love with the American nation, and equally passionate about the prospect of American reforming the world, of giving the underprivileged nations an American illumination. He was a proud neutralist as long as he could believe that neutrality would give America the best opportunity for world leadership afterward. When

in 1916 he began to believe himself wrong in that strategy, he became an overnight interventionist, distrusting England and France almost as much as Germany.

He invited, nay conscripted, intellectuals and artists to serve in role in Washington. There were among others Isaiah Bowman, Walter Lippman, Charles Merriam, Carl Becker, Guy Stanton Ford, and the novelists, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Booth Tarkington, and Samuel Hopkins Adams. Artists included Joseph Pennell and Charles Dana Gibson. They fought with pens and brushes.

Thus, in war, in the war state, was born the American political clerisy. There were those, including Randolph Bourne, who predicted that while the war would end, the war clerisy would not; and he was right. Joining the political division of the Second Renaissance were such as John Dewey, Walter Lippman, Charles Merriam, Charles Beard, Stuart Chase, Herbert Croly, indeed all the editors of The New Republic under Croly's patriarchal rule, Lewis Mumford, Van Wyck Brooks, to name but a few. Many did not even know one another; certainly there were no meetings, no pledges. They were simply a group created by the inspiration of the Great War that had seen in the strong, positive, and supreme national government of the War a prototype, once stripped of war and the military, of the American nation as a community. Moreover, as we see so plainly today, not only the political intellectual but the literary artist of the renaissance also played a vital role in the furtherance of a national community.

Quite simply, the themes of this particular renaissance were: first, the Lost Generation and with it the Lost Individual; second, and connectedly, the eroding, fast disappearing American allegiance to the village, the church, and the extended family, thus creating a nation of lost individuals; third, the insufficiency of the City in America so far as restoration of community was concerned; the City: cold, cheerless, impersonal, and anonymous; and fourth, the historical, evolutionary necessity of the nation itself, and nothing less, becoming modern man's community, his refuge and his hope.

No single person embodied these themes more than did John Dewey, the last American philosopher to be a household name. Dewey was obsessed by community through his life, the result probably less of his birth and early nurture in a small Vermont town than the fact that he was for some years at the beginning of his career a devout Hegelian in his philosophy. Once a Hegelian, always a Hegelian seems to be a reasonable lesson of intellectual history, and although Dewey did indeed become America's supreme pragmatist, the Hegelian canon of community never left him. It was he, not Charles H. Cooley, who founded the theme of community at the University of Michigan; Dewey preceded Cooley by ten years at Ann Arbor.

When he went to the University of Chicago and devoted himself for years to educational theory and experiment, his novel and lasting message to the teachers of the classical curriculum was: a school is a miniature community; nothing less, nothing more. In the 1920s Dewey, by then at Columbia, soared. One book featured what he

called the Lost Individual in America. In another it was the public that was lost. The old unities are dying fast, he wrote, albeit without proof or documentation. Family, local community, church, mutual aid group, all dead or dying. They have been made moribund by the Great Society, the impersonal, soulless, icy Great Society brought in on the wings of technology and industrialism. "The Great Society created by steam and electricity may be a society but it is no community...the machine age in developing the Great Society has invaded and partially disintegrated the small communities of former times without generating a Great Community...What are the conditions for the Great Society to approach more closely and vitally the status of the Great Community?"

The literary great participated fully in the mission as described by Dewey, Lippman, Croly, and others. It is as though a great oratorio had been composed for the Twenties. One titled perhaps Community Lost and Community Regained, one presided over by an invisible conductor. The first movement, a dirge, is titled the Lost Individual and Lost Generation. Solos are presented by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Walter Lippman. The second movement is called the Deserted Village, and here Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson join Lippman and Edgar Lee Masters in the quartet in which the tyrannies, decadences, and stultifications of Spoon River, Winesburg, Ohio, and Gopher Prairie are recited with a celebratory hymn to Carol Kennicott. Then comes the drear and chilling movement, the City of Dreadful Night, with its cruel exploitation and icy impersonality and perpetual death of soul. Theodore Dreiser is the soloist, aided by a special chorus of the University of Chicago Department of Sociology. Finally comes the grand concluding movement, joined in by all, the Ascension, the Annunciation, the soaring, thrilling, finale to the Great Community, the national state.

It makes a great oratorio, all right, but since when have oratorios been the serious social philosophy, social science, and public planning that a commonwealth must in the long run depend upon? Was there in fact even the slightest empirical basis for the philosophical, literary, artistic, and journalistic themes of the renaissance of the Twenties? Not much. But the power of an ideal type or stereotype is enormous. A stereotype is a half-truth, but like a half brick, it can be thrown farther. And we should never forget the power wielded by the writing classes over the reading classes.

4.

Came the Depression in 1930. But the themes of the Renaissance persisted, as renaissance themes usually do in history. The idea of the Great Community had been born of war, nurtured in prosperity, and would now receive its toga virilis in another great war; this one Roosevelt's war against the Depression. There was no theory in the New Deal, which makes idle efforts to connect it with Keynesianism, Fabianism, or any other imported ism.

In practical, operational terms, FDR's New Deal structure was largely based on the exhumation of World War I structures, with

adaptations thereafter in unending procession. The spirit of the New Deal's NIRA, shortly to be ruled unconstitutional, was a resurrection of Wilson's War Industries Board. Wilson's National Labor Policies Board became FDR's National Labor Relations Board. The World War I Food Administration which had ruled over both agricultural and food processing matters came to life in FDR's AAA. Even some of the actors were the same. Hugh Johnson who had run the draft under Wilson ran NRA under Roosevelt. Bernard Baruch and Herbert Bayard Swope were among the considerable number who directly served the Great War and the New Deal.

The political fall-out of the Great War and also the Renaissance was to be seen from the beginning in Roosevelt's administration. I am indebted to William Schambra, AEI scholar, for pointing out the skill and sensitivity with which FDR rang changes on both war and community. In his First Inaugural he likened himself to a commander in chief leading, he said, "a trained and loyal army," that is, the American people. I assume, he said "unhesitatingly the leadership of this great army of our people dedicated to a disciplined attack upon our common problems."

Not only was the symbolism of war invoked but also that of the traditional neighborhood and village. As Schambra points out, Roosevelt was careful to explain that the New Deal represented no more, basically, than an "extending to our national life the old principle of the local community." Americans, the President went on, must think of themselves nationally as neighbors. "In a national sense, the many, the neighbors, are the people of the United States as a whole." The New Deal, as a matter of record, did not end the Depression, and its performance has been shown to be inferior in that respect to England's and Germany's. But it made a wonderful light for liberals and progressives across the land, some of whom were clearly less interested in defeating the Depression than in reconstructing American federalism.

To FDR's eternal credit there were no moves made toward the use of Four-Minute Men and Neighborhood Watchers, but there were the Blue Eagle posters and celebrations, the evening marches through the neighborhoods for dimes, and above all the President's fireside chats and his matchless oratory. Nor, after the Second World War engaged the United States, were there Espionage and Sedition Acts; only the segregation of the Japanese-Americans. Only!

World War II did not militate in the slightest against the New Deal. Once shortly after Pearl Harbor, FDR said half jokingly that it was time now for Dr. New Deal to be replaced by Dr. Win the War. But in truth the two doctors worked very well together. Clausewitz stressed the importance of something akin to a Roosevelt New Deal in his classic on war. He said that war is a continuation of politics; he might have added that politics in war is a continuation of the quest for social justice. When the Second World War became appended to the New Deal, a renewed search for the old paraphernalia of World War I went on. New and ever-changing variations on the old War Production Board of 1917 were instituted overnight. The war emergency of course made possible extensions of centralization and nationalization beyond the reach of the New Deal in peace time.

Once again, though I think in less intensity, the spirit of national war community came to Americans. It may not have been a singing war as the First had been and instead of neighborhood watchers we had air raid wardens gently persuading neighbors to keep a bucket filled with sand on the front porch. But a fresh infusion of the psychology of national community was apparent all the same. The substantive reality of a welfare state widened appreciatively in the Forties and Fifties, prosperity notwithstanding. So did the vision of national community enlarge in a spate of books.

One more war crisis came in the Sixties: war in Viet Nam, probably the most unpopular war in American history, and also the by no means inconsiderable campus wars. It was in response to both wars that President Johnson created his celebrated Great Society in the 1960s. Why didn't he choose to call it Great Community? Perhaps because an old school teacher just couldn't bear the thought of torturing the word "community" any longer.

It will not have been missed that the history of the idea of national community has been governed in large measure by crisis--three wars and a major depression--and therefore by crisis-mindedness. So far as human thought is concerned, crisis has its value. It takes a crisis to start most of us thinking, in contrast to musing or daydreaming. But the spirit of crisis is not the ideal nursery for long term public policy. Projects planned in times of war crisis tend to take on the centralization and nationalization of war. Tocqueville said that men who have a genius for centralization like war; and those with a genius for war like centralization. Had a body comparable to the Constitutional Convention in 1787 ever been convened to consider the welfare state for the long term it is possible that we would have done better than we have under the lash of war and other crises.

The appeal of national community is becoming stronger. It has inherited and gone beyond the luster that once attended the phrases "planned economy" and "welfare state." Community has strong resonances. In his now famous speech in San Francisco in 1984, Governor Cuomo called for not simply a national community but a national family. He said: "We believe in a single fundamental idea that describes better than most textbooks and any speech what a proper government should be. The idea of the family. Mutuality. The sharing of benefits and burdens for the good of all. Feeling one another's pain. Sharing one another's blessings." The governor of New York literally electrified his party and became instantly a candidate for president, even though an undeclared and perhaps unwilling one.

Of all evocations of community, family leads the way. Whether it is a steel mill, gang of mobsters, or a legislative body, the reference to family tends to soften our vision. Family is indeed a noble institution; but only up to a point. It would be just as tyrannizing to cast a national state in the mould of a family as it would be to cast a household in the mould of the national state. There is some unintended humor in the legerdemain of family and

state. When the institution of the state first arose a few thousand years ago, it was in the context of war and on the ruins of the family, i.e., the kinship system. A great deal of Western political philosophy is built around the confrontation of family and state. In Plato, in the Roman Lawyers, in Bodin, Hobbes, Rousseau and others, the struggle between family and state is luminous. To call the national state a family may be, in addition to being dangerous nonsense, the supreme humiliation of the family by the state. The very word community, communitas in the Latin, was regarded as a quality noun by the ancient Romans. The conscript fathers of the Roman Republic never confused the familia with the respublica, but the Caesars, starting with Augustus, made it a ritual, highlighted by the Emperor's command that an image of himself be placed on every Roman hearth alongside the Lares and Penates.

Community is one of those siren-like, transfiguring, lulling, and disarming words of the English language. Community generates thoughts and feelings of intimacy, trust, love, devotion, and the removal of all the carapaces of the human personality. The greatest philosophers of absolute power have known this. Rousseau wrote admiringly: "The most absolute authority is that which penetrates into a man's inmost being and concerns itself no less with his will than with his actions." George Will has given this utilization of absolute power of the state for the entry into the deepest levels of the human mind the highly apposite label of Soulcraft. If the national state is to become our family, what then befalls the traditional household in which the majority of us now live? When we become low in spirit, fearful of the odds, whom do we call, our Congressman?

Spokesmen for the national community have had the wit to put it in a kind of progressive-time series. We need not ask where the idea of progress has gone. It is alive and well in social science departments under the name usually of social evolution. The communitarians take a leaf from Karl Marx's book. Marx knew it was better to present socialism as inevitable than as merely desirable. The national community is so dealt it. It is described as the modern emergent of a series that began with the local community, the church, and the family in colonial times; gradually American democracy progressed through the republican stage, the populist, social democratic, planned economy, and the welfare state. Today this progressive trajectory has reached, has culminated in the national community. The succession has been not only historical but logical, inevitable.

The utility of the purported development of progressive series through time is that certain unmistakable elements of the social present such as local community, church, and extended family may be labelled mere survivals, wraiths or ghosts of a departed past. The worst crime the intellectual can be found guilty of in our age is that of consorting with anything stamped with the past; that is, the traditional. Past equals bad, present good, and future best; ergo, he who finds possible inspiration or even utility in the past is "trying to set the clock back." The clock of inevitable progress!

The quest for political community on a national basis will almost certainly add heat to the present controversy over the location of the true nidus of American democracy. Is it Congress or is it the Presidency? From which will most likely come the greatest change, reform, reconstruction as we advance into the future? But as Robert Bork has been pointing out for some years now, a third contender has entered the lists of those most concerned with legislation: the Federal Judge, the activist Federal Judge. The ostensibly interpretative becomes so easily the legislative, as Bork has been pointing out.

Unlike the legislator or executive, the Federal Judge is able to rise above the necessities and comprises inherent in the political process. He does not run; neither does he serve a visible constituency. He is endowed with life tenure from the very beginning. He is not burdened with political responsibility. His powers are great. We need think only of the legalization of abortion, the desegregation of public places, the abolition of school prayers, and reapportionment. These are inherently, it would seem, essentially legislative concerns irrespective of whether we find them good or bad. But what would have required many years had they been left to the legislative branch or to the executive either for that matter, it was the work of mere hours by comparison in the hands of the Supreme Court, capable, obviously, of converting the interpretative into the legislative and vice versa.

Law schools plainly are not blind. Critical legal studies in some of our oldest and greatest law schools seem to thrive. If the Federal Judge is potentially a very Hercules in the strength, skill, and dispatch with which he cleans the stables of American law and sets in motion novel forces of social change and progress, then how better can a law school do the Lord's work than by preparing the minds of these budding Hercules?

The creation of the national community--at least in the image of Governor Cuomo's familism, mutuality, reciprocity, sharing, and bleeding--stands a far better chance, some people believe, of actualization through the Federal Judge than through any imaginable Congress. We may expect, then, in the years ahead, as the idea of the state as community catches fire, a more and more charismatic Federal judiciary. Jeremy Bentham will love it. Sitting cadaverously but dressed in his University of London office, he will shake in toothless laughter and slap his osseous thighs, crying "Vengeance is mine."

5.

Despite the charms inherent in a national community or communitarian state, the idea does face at the present time serious challenges or obstacles. We have grown accustomed to the welfare state in one form or other; and there is no real alternative to it in any event. The idea of the state as family, as community, as some form of togetherness is, however, a different kettle of fish. The word community is high in level of usage but low in level of meaning. As I have noted, it creates a sense of promise, a kind of habitual expectation, that nothing short of the divine could fulfill.

Moreover serious belief in Professor Dewey's and Governor Cuomo's Great Community requires a considerable degree of cognitive dissonance. We are forced to take seriously and literally such premises as the bankruptcy of the family, the moribundity of the church, and the decay of the village. We are all cognitively dissonant some of the time but only a few all the time. The blunt fact, the "emperor has no clothes on" fact, is that by any simple process of verification, or recourse to observation, the church is stronger than it has ever been, certainly stronger and broader in appeal than it was in the day of the Founding Fathers. There are indeed sectors of our society in which the family tie is absent or close to it. But no sensible people legislates for its total population on the basis of assumptions which are correct for relatively small minorities. Despite the wraiths and ghostly presences which the Robert Reichs and the Robert Bellahs write about when they consider religion and kinship in current society, these two institutions are very strong, and we neglect them in our planning at our own peril. And so far as the village or town is concerned, if it too is a corpse awaiting burial, what were three thousand journalists doing last winter tramping through the snows of Iowa and New Hampshire--and then the sunny South?

That's the first point to make. Very few people are constituted to live in cognitive dissonance all of the time. The same holds with respect to the 50 states and the cities and towns within them. Back in the Twenties and Thirties intellectuals were prone to ape their French philosophe forebears and draw pictures of governors and mayors with donkey heads. Public administration, as a career or as a curriculum in graduate school, was scaled pejoratively to these areas. Those who could, went into Federal administration; those who couldn't, state or local. The New Deal mentality scorned the intermediate, long existent structures of states, counties, and cities, preferring to create overnight alphabetical agencies specially designed to cut through or ignore intermediate bodies of authority and function. There was also--yet another instance of dissonance--the superstition that national administration is somehow cleaner, less prone to corruption, nobler, more rational and scientific, than administration in states and towns. Well, there couldn't be many Americans, I mean apart from the communitarians, who believe that nonsense anymore.

A recent Brookings Institution study of fourteen selected states over a period of years has found a health and buoyancy in their governments greater, not less, as the result of federal revenue sharing and other forms of federal deployment. Far from hoarding the revenue to meet demands of balanced budget each year, the money has gone, Brookings observed, to services, services on a generally high level of efficiency and imagination, social, cultural, educational, and recreational. There certainly needs to be national planning, national participation in social problems, but there is a vast difference between the planning that proceeds on the basis that the intermediate groups are moribund and the planning that sees them continuing, viable realities, still close to the hearts and minds of their members.

Another difficulty the idyll of national community faces is the specter of bureaucracy. It is disingenuous for the Cuomos to talk of America as a family, based on mutuality, sharing, compassion, and the like without a word or two on the absolute, unavoidable, and ever expanding Federal bureaucracy. It is easy to imagine disillusioned citizens saying: You promise community but give us bureaucracy. As a people we Americans are habitually Janus-faced about bureaucracy; we like what it can bring, but loathe bureaucracy itself. Damned bureaucracy is one word. We are like an inverted cargo cult; we are glad to receive the cargo, but instead of praying to the distant cargo ships, we revile, curse them. Max Weber called the creeping bureaucracy of his day an iron cage filled with robots. Marx declared it an appalling parasitic growth. Tocqueville the despotism democracies have most to fear. But for the apostles of national community, all this like all the dissonant understanding of intermediate groups dissolves in the lovely haze of rose-tinted glasses. The evil and the danger of thick, heavy, congealing national bureaucracy is not that it threatens to become totalitarian in the Soviet or Nazi sense; it never does. The evil and the danger are inseparable from the strangling, suffocating, enervating effects it has upon even the strongest and most vigorous minds. The alleged virtues of the family, village, and church become, when catapulted into the burgeoning bureaucracy, hollow, sterile mockeries of themselves. And it is fair to suggest once more that efforts to make the national state, or any state, in the image of the family or village are as destined to bathos as would be efforts to make the family in the image of Pentagon.

Finally, a marked change has come over American political and social thought during the last fifteen or twenty years. From an essentially one-ideology polity--to wit, the ideology of New Deal liberalism--we have become unmistakably poly-ideological. Currents of conservatism, neoconservatism, libertarianism, free market thinking, and the whole religio-moral orientation toward family, local community, and churchly values make the intellectual temper of the country decidedly different from what it was down through the Fifties and Sixties. I don't think these currents will diminish or lessen. Add the rapidly growing phenomenon of the new ethnicity, the waves Hispanics and Orientals, and the native pluralism of America is immensely enhanced. In a good pluralism there is the same kind of unity that exists in true harmony in music; and harmony is a distinctly nobler form than mere unison.

In conclusion, let us not forget the cyclical character of all political governments. It was that greatest of historian-philosophers Polybius in the 2nd century B.C. who demonstrated in studies filling forty books--only six of which have survived--the universal and unavoidable operation of cycles in overnments and administrations: cycles of power, types of power, centralization vs. decentralization, monocratic to democratic, and so on. Cycles, Polybius wrote "are as instinct in governments, no matter what brakes are attempted to stay their action, as growth is in an organism." But, he said, looking at his cherished Roman Republic, then incomparably the model for the Mediterranean world, a

truly mixed government can postpone eventual decay and decline. Postpone, not eradicate. Polybius saw a long future ahead for the Republic as it existed two centuries before Christ. In fact, the Republic survived a little more than one century before being swallowed up in the empire of the Caesars. Perhaps we shall do at least as well by faithfully applying Polybius's counsel on recognition of cycles and the advantages of mixed government. Perhaps. But it wouldn't hurt to look up a poem written by one of the lesser poets of the Twenties renaissance, lesser but still coruscating, a poem in the form of a prayer to the God that looks out for children, fools, drunks, and the United States of America.

To Arthur Guiterman, a hearty amen!

