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RIGHT-WING POPULISM AND THE REVOLT AGAINST LIBERALISM

The "White Backlash"

It is no secret that liberalism has fallen on hard times. The usual explanation of this development—the explanation offered by liberals themselves—attributes it to a violent "backlash" against the civil rights movement, the student radicalism of the sixties, and the policies of the New Frontier and the Great Society. This explanation simply updates the critique of "working-class authoritarianism" advanced by liberals in the fifties and sixties. White ethnics have allegedly deserted the Democrats, their former benefactors, because they are now prosperous enough to resent high taxes and welfare programs but still insecure in their middle-class status. Status anxiety reinforces their racism and makes them irrationally jealous of the racial minorities currently favored by liberal policy. In 1980, the *New York Times* explained that

liberalism once meant "helping the Irish and Italian families who were still mired in the lower working class," but that it now meant "helping poor blacks and other racial minorities"—something the "more prosperous" beneficiaries of an earlier liberalism could not seem to understand. The "deepest issue" in the controversies over busing and affirmative action, which had split the liberal coalition, was "racial." White ethnics simply could not see that dark-skinned people needed the same kind of help they themselves had received from the New Deal.

"White backlash" was already a lively topic in the late sixties. In a study of the student movement, *The Radical Probe* (1971), Michael Miles argued that the student revolt had generated a "counter-revolt," the object of which was "to suppress a radical movement which by its nature poses a threat to the *status quo*." Ethnic minorities loathed the new youth culture because it offended "their petit-bourgeois sensibilities." Blue-collar workers recently promoted to middle-class status, resentful of the advantages enjoyed as their birthright by upper-middle-class students—advantages for which they themselves had to struggle and save—took out their frustration in an ill-tempered "politics of morality." They had "learned property values from the suburban life," but even though "their social integration [was] ensured for the immediate future by economic growth and general prosperity," they remained culturally "insecure" and therefore full of envy and racial hatred.

These explanations of the revolt against liberalism exaggerate the economic security enjoyed by the working class and lower middle class. These classes have always had to "struggle to keep even," in the words of an antibusing activist, and they have begun to lose ground in recent years. Much of their discontent with liberalism has nothing to do with racial issues. Some of it represents a reaction against the kind of unthinking paternalism that makes liberals see themselves as "helpers" of the needy. Some of it grows out of a determination to defend "family values," which many liberals treat with contempt. Some of it rests on the perception that although liberals often flaunt their cultural superiority, they have not shown that it leads to moral understanding or political insight. To people who have become the objects of liberal contempt, these cultural pretensions look more like social snobbery.

Racial issues themselves, finally, are far more complex than the formula of "white racism" would suggest. They look simple only to those who

view them from a distance—to people in the suburbs, for example, who do not have to worry about the safety of their streets or the impact of desegregation on their schools. In city neighborhoods where anxiety about these things has become a way of life, the attempt to achieve racial justice through busing and affirmative action presents itself as a contest between "rich people in the suburbs," as Louise Day Hicks put it at the height of the Boston school wars, and the plain people of the city—"the workingman and woman, the rent payer, the home owner, the law-abiding, tax-paying, decent-living, hard-working, forgotten American." Antibusing activists point out, with good reason, that "limousine liberals" in the suburbs expect the cities to carry the whole burden of desegregation. "The burden is being put unfairly on the poor blacks and the working-class whites." The fact that many black people themselves reject busing and affirmative action further weakens "white racism" as an explanation for the racial crisis and the decline of liberalism.*

These things ought to be obvious to people who keep their eyes open, but political commentary seldom takes any account of them. Nor is it liberal commentary alone that ignores them. The right has made itself the voice of "middle America," but it too perpetuates the commonplace of the "affluent worker"—the source of so much misunderstanding about the decline of liberalism. In order to clear up this misunderstanding, we need to review each of the three objections to the "backlash" theory in some detail: the declining position of the middle class, so called; the cultural conflict between the educated classes and "middle America"; and the complexity of racial politics.

liberalism's def. has changed - working class more precarious than generally acknowledged

*A Gallup poll conducted in 1977 revealed that a bare majority of blacks as well as whites opposed the principle of "preferential treatment in getting jobs and places in college." A survey of New York City residents, carried out in the same year by Louis Henri Bolce III and Susan H. Gray, found that 53 percent of blacks and 85 percent of whites opposed preferential treatment. Opinion about busing was divided in the same proportions. A Harris poll (1976) reported the same alignment on busing: 51 percent of blacks and 81 percent of whites opposed it.

A Growing Middle Class?

Liberals and conservatives alike have assumed that the middle class is growing and that its standard of living is steadily rising. In fact it is shrinking, and its standard of living is deteriorating. The impression that the United States has become an overwhelmingly middle-class society rests largely on the expansion of the service sector of the economy and on the growth of white-collar jobs in relation to blue-collar jobs. Over the course of the twentieth century, however, the expansion of the white-collar work force has derived for the most part from increases in the number of clerical, sales, and service workers, who usually receive even lower pay than most blue-collar workers. The clerical category consists largely of working-class women, and "the existence of two giant categories of labor—operatives and clerical workers—as the two largest major occupational classifications and the composition by sex of each of these categories leads to the supposition," as Harry Braverman noted in 1974, "that the most common occupational combination within the family is one in which the husband is an operative and the wife a clerk." This supposition in turn suggests not only that blue-collar and white-collar jobs have become for many purposes indistinguishable but also that working-class families, like the rest of the population, find it more and more difficult to get along on one income alone. "More than anything else, it is working wives," writes Andrew Levison, "who have made possible even the modest standard of living workers enjoy."

Levison points out that the Census Bureau omits clerical, sales, and service workers from the category of blue-collar occupations. Most of the jobs thus excluded are repetitive and poorly paid. The service category, for example, includes janitors, watchmen, policemen, firemen, waiters, waitresses, cooks, busboys, dishwashers, maids, and porters. If these three categories—clerical, sales, and service—are reclassified as manual labor, the percentage of workers in the population rises dramatically. It has risen over time as well, from 50 percent in 1900 to 70 percent in 1970. This evidence indicates that workers can be considered a middle class only in the sense that they occupy an intermediate position between the professional and business classes on the one hand and the "underclass,"

largely black and Hispanic in composition, on the other.

Those who insist that America has become a middle-class society point not only to the proportional decline of the old work force employed in manufacturing but to the rise of a new middle class of salaried employees, which has allegedly absorbed the old middle class of small property holders and will eventually absorb the working class as well. According to these optimists, "every vocation has grown more complicated" in our postindustrial society, and the growing need for technical expertise, at every level of employment, can be expected to reduce the distance between social classes, to equalize educational opportunity, and eventually to make access to steady salaried employment—with all its attendant advantages in the form of job security, benefits, and retirement annuities—almost universal. But this comforting picture of a classless, prosperous society bears little resemblance to the emerging reality. The idea that an "information society" demands a highly skilled work force is untenable. It may still be true, in the words of a recent report on education, that "the demand for highly skilled workers in new fields is accelerating rapidly," but it is also true—as this report characteristically fails to point out—that the demand for unskilled workers is accelerating even faster.

In the mid-eighties, the Bureau of Labor Statistics issued a set of employment projections for the next ten years. Of the twenty-five occupations expected to rank as the most heavily populated in 1995, not one derived in any direct way from the "information explosion."* The first

*In order of their projected numbers, on a conservative estimate, these occupations were listed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as building custodians, sales clerks, secretaries, general office clerks, cashiers, elementary and preschool teachers, waiters and waitresses, truck drivers, nurses, engineers of all kinds, metalworking operatives, sales representatives (technical), cooks and chefs, supervisors of blue-collar workers, nurses' aides and orderlies, farm owners and tenants, store managers, accountants, kitchen helpers, typists, auto mechanics, second teachers, stock handlers, carpenters, and "food preparation and service workers, fast food restaurants." On the other hand, the five fastest-growing lines of work, as distinguished from those expected to be most numerous, owed their existence, at least indirectly, to the high-tech economy: legal assistants, computer service technicians, systems analysts, computer programmers, and computer operators. It is by no means clear, however, that all of these should be considered highly skilled occupations.

five occupations on this list—janitors, sales clerks, secretaries, general office clerks, and cashiers—were expected to account for more than 10 percent of total employment in 1995 and almost 14 percent of all new employment. Only six of the twenty-five occupations in question required education beyond the secondary level, and only three—teaching, engineering, and nursing—required a college degree. Jobs for computer systems analysts would increase by 90 percent (already a drop from the 100 percent increase estimated in the mid-seventies for the years between 1978 and 1990), but only 225,000 new jobs, at most, would result. On the other hand, there might be as many as 850,000 new jobs for janitors—considerably more than the total number of new jobs (660,000) opened up by the five occupations with the highest rate of relative growth. There might be as many as 750,000 new jobs for sales clerks; 580,000 for waiters and waitresses; 470,000 for nurses' aides and orderlies; 460,000 for truck drivers: and 350,000 for auto mechanics. It was expected that 165,000 new positions for computer programmers would open up during the late eighties and early nineties, whereas the demand for fast-food workers and kitchen helpers would produce 525,000 new positions.

A recent study by Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison strengthens the impression of persisting unemployment, declining wages and salaries, and a rapid growth of low-wage employment. Forty-four percent of the new jobs created between 1979 and 1985, according to these authors, paid poverty-level wages, while the creation of high-wage professional, technical, and managerial jobs slowed to a mere 10 percent, a third of the pace maintained in the years from 1963 to 1979.* Part-time jobs, moreover, grew twice as fast as full-time jobs, accounting for 30 percent of new positions. The increase in poorly paid employment was not confined to minorities, women, or the young. Indeed the partial elimination of the disparity in wages paid to men and to women—at first glance the only bright spot in an otherwise darkening picture—is accounted for by a

*Taking the high wages of 1973 as their standard, Bluestone and Harrison defined high-wage jobs as those paying more than the 1973 average. "Stated in terms of 1986 purchasing power, a low-wage job pays $7,400 or less. A high-wage job pays in excess of $29,000."

decline in the level of wages earned by white males.

According to a University of Michigan study, 39 percent of the population, in the years from 1968 to 1972, earned incomes that fell behind inflation. During the next four-year period, the proportion rose to 43 percent; in the period 1978–1982, it rose all the way to 56 percent. A study by Eli Ginzberg reports that the middle-income share of new jobs fell by nearly 20 percent between 1979 and 1984, while the low-income share (jobs paying less than $7,000 a year, according to Ginzberg's definition) rose to more than 50 percent.

All this evidence undermines the claim that the middle class is growing, if the term refers to a class of nonmanual workers whose jobs require a good deal of education and assure a comfortable income. "As some of its members fall into poverty and others acquire wealth, it has been shrinking," according to a recent report in *Time*. Median family income, adjusted for inflation, remains where it was in the early seventies. But the percentage of middle-income households (those earning between $20,000 and $60,000 a year, in 1985 dollars) declined from 53 percent in 1973 to 49 percent in 1985. These figures may even "overstate the fortunes of the middle class," *Time* admits, since its standard of living has declined along with its numbers. Middle-class incomes have fallen far behind the steep inflation of housing prices and college tuitions, thereby endangering two of the cherished indications of middle-class status. Only by going into debt and by sending their wives into the work force can middle-income groups keep up even a semblance of that status. More than half of American households now owe more than they are worth. In 1985, household debt relative to disposable income rose to almost 90 percent, a postwar high.

Even in the early seventies, at the height of postwar prosperity, an "intermediate" income, as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, hardly conferred a lavish or even a comfortable standard of living. A study conducted by the United Auto Workers found that an "intermediate" income would allow a family to buy a two-year-old car and keep it for four years, to buy a vacuum cleaner that would have to last for fourteen years and a toaster good for thirty-three, to go to the movies once every three months, and to save nothing at all. In 1970, some 35 percent of American families and 60 percent of working-class families lived on less than $10,000 a year—that is, below the "intermediate" level. The average family earned only $9,500 in 1973, the year in which family income reached its postwar peak.

Working-Class and Lower-Middle-Class Convergence

The decline of its standard of living makes it harder than ever to figure out just what Americans mean when they speak of a middle class. In Europe, where the bourgeoisie stood between the remnants of the feudal nobility and a class-conscious proletariat, the term had a sociological precision it never achieved in the United States. American workers never came to see themselves unambiguously as a proletariat. The American dream of equal opportunity encouraged them to hope that their children would move up the social scale. Very few of those children climbed into the salaried class, as it turned out, but they achieved a precarious level of security, in the years of the great postwar expansion, that made it seem reasonable enough for them to think of themselves as a middle class, if only because they were doing better than their parents and better, certainly, than blacks and Hispanics who lived in the "culture of poverty."

The boundary between the middle class and the working class was further blurred by a long-term decline in the position of the old proprietary class of shopkeepers, small businessmen, and independent professionals. In 1900, the middle class could not possibly have been confused with the working class. It was self-employed and not a little self-satisfied. It employed wage labor and domestic servants. Wives did not work—a point of considerable pride. Middle-class professional men were engaged for the most part in private practice, and even when they worked for salaries it was usually in organizations—colleges, hospitals, small firms of various kinds—over which they retained a good deal of responsibility. By the sixties and seventies, however, it was impossible to find a large category of people who shared all these characteristics. Small businessmen had lost out to the big corporations, tradesmen to the retail chains. Salaried professionals now worked mostly in gigantic bureaucracies, in which some of them earned princely incomes and wielded considerable

influence while others earned very little money and wielded no influence at all.

The enormous range of wealth and power among professionals makes it difficult to use the concept of a professional-managerial class with precision, but that designation describes the upper levels of the salaried class much better than the usual designation of them as a middle class. Except as a rough description of relative income levels, the middle class, for all practical purposes, has ceased to exist. At the upper levels, it has dissolved into a "new class" with interests and an outlook on life that cannot be called "middle-class" in any conventional sense of the term. At the lower levels, the middle class has become increasingly indistinguishable from a working class whose climb out of poverty stopped well short of affluence.

Time's report on the declining middle class, published at the height of the presidential campaign of 1988, includes a revealing vignette that illustrates the difficulty of distinguishing between the lower reaches of the middle class and the working class, especially in a period when both are faced with straitened circumstances. Bob Forrester, now sixty years old, settled on the west coast in 1953, having grown up in a blue-collar family in East St. Louis. His wife, Carol, was the daughter of a longshoreman on Staten Island. Neither went to college. In 1957, Forrester took a unionized job as a tankerman in Los Angeles harbor, at an annual wage of $5,512, while his wife stayed home to raise their three children. Today he makes $40,000 a year and owns three houses worth a total of $600,000. *Time* refers to him as a member of the middle class, and most Americans—including Forrester himself, perhaps—would probably agree with this classification, even though he clearly owes his material security to the labor movement and continues to serve it as a union official. But *Time* itself acknowledges the ambiguity of middle-class status when it describes Forrester's story as part of a "fundamental shift in the social and economic structure of old working-class neighborhoods."

"I'm definitely better off than my father was," Forrester says. None of his children, however, can make the same claim. The eldest, Billy, went to work on the boats when he graduated from high school. He was making $27,000 a year by the mid-eighties, when the company he worked for began to lay off unionized workers and to replace them with scabs. Having lost his job, Billy moved up the coast to Washington and went into business for himself as a gardener. His income fluctuated between $10,000

and $20,000. In 1987 he bought a house for $43,000, thanks to his father's ability to make the down payment of $11,000. His income barely supports his four children, but he has been unable to find a harbor job in Washington. "You've got to stand in line three days just to get your name on a list," he says. "It's a rat race."

Forrester's youngest child, Bob, is also looking for work in the harbor, but the Longshoremen's Union in Los Angeles has kept his application for three years without offering him a position. "They pass out 50,000 or 60,000 applications," he says, ". . . for about three hundred jobs." Meanwhile he drives a delivery truck at $8.25 an hour. Until 1987, he lived with his parents, as did his sister, Peggy. Now he and his wife live in a one-bedroom apartment. "What I'm afraid of," his wife says, "is to be living like this forever." As for Peggy herself, she earns $25,000 as the manager of a retail clothing store but pays out two-thirds of her income in rent, household expenses, and car payments. Saving is out of the question, and she has no hope of owning a house—the last vestige of proprietary status.* Her car, a Ford Tempo purchased for $8,500, cost her almost as much as the house her father bought in 1957. The down payment came to 6 percent of her salary, whereas her father paid only 14 percent of his annual income as a down payment on his first house, which he sold in 1973 for nearly five times what he paid for it. Peggy's car, on the other hand, is now worth less than half its original price.†

The convergence of the working class and the lower middle class, in an era of downward mobility, reveals itself not only in their standard of living but in a common outlook. If the middle class is a state of mind, as so

*Home ownership is a poor substitute for the kind of property that formerly supported a family and relieved people of the need to work for wages. It is not a source of material sustenance, let alone a source of the "virtue" formerly associated with property ownership. It remains an important symbol of independence and responsibility, however, and the decline of home ownership, more vividly than any other development, dramatizes for many people the collapse of the American dream.

†While Bob Forrester and his wife, still loyal to the party that had done so much for the labor movement, planned to vote for Dukakis in 1988, all of his children planned to vote for Bush—a choice that obviously cannot be attributed to upward mobility or "embourgeoisement."

many observers insist, it is a petty-bourgeois state of mind that holds it together. The petty bourgeoisie has no socioeconomic importance now that artisans, farmers, and other small proprietors no longer make up a large part of the population; but its time-honored habits and its characteristic code of ethics linger on, nowhere more vigorously than in the heart of the American worker. The worker's culture and political outlook bear little resemblance to those of his European counterparts. In many ways, however, they bear a close resemblance to the outlook of the old European peasantry and petty bourgeoisie—from which the American working class was recruited in the first place.

It is not just that American workers, unlike European workers, fail to support socialist or communist parties (Seymour Martin Lipset to the contrary notwithstanding) or that they have never shown much interest in remodeling the Democratic party along the lines of the British Labour party. The differences go deeper. American workers are more religious than workers in Europe: they declare an affiliation with some church, profess a belief in God, and even attend services occasionally. They have a stronger sense of ethnic and racial identity. They have a heavier investment in the ethic of personal accountability and neighborly self-help, which tempers their enthusiasm for the welfare state. They carry the code of manly independence to extremes—as in the assertion of their sacred right to bear arms—that would be considered ridiculous in Europe. Above all, they define themselves as a "middle class." They also define themselves as "workers," of course, but the meaning of that term, in America, is still closer to "producers" than to "proletarians." In his study of Canarsie, a beleaguered ethnic community in Brooklyn, Jonathan Rieder notes that the residents "showed their hostility to people on welfare"—and also to corporate wealth—"by contrasting parasites and producers." A spokesman for one civic group wrote in its newspaper, "For years, we have witnessed the appeasement of nonproductive and counter-productive 'leeches' at the expense of New York's middle-class work force." This populist language, together with the reference to a "middle-class work force," captures the ambiguity of working-class identity in America.

The Lower-Middle-Class Ethic of Limits and the Abortion Debate

Lower-middle-class culture, now as in the past, is organized around the family, church, and neighborhood. It values the community's continuity more highly than individual advancement, solidarity more highly than social mobility. Conventional ideals of success play a less important part in lower-middle-class life than the maintenance of existing ways. Parents want their children to get ahead, but they also want them to respect their elders, resist the temptation to lie and cheat, willingly shoulder the responsibilities that fall to them, and bear adversity with fortitude. More concerned with honor than with worldly ambition, they have less interest in the future than do upper-middle-class parents, who try to equip their children with the qualities required for competitive achievement. They do not subscribe to the notion that parents ought to provide children with every possible advantage. The desire "to preserve their way of life," as E. E. LeMasters writes in a study of construction workers, takes precedence over the desire to climb the social ladder. "If my boy wants to wear a goddamn necktie all his life and bow and scrape to some boss, that's his right, but by God he should also have the right to earn an honest living with his hands if that is what he likes."

In his historical studies of nineteenth-century Massachusetts, Stephan Thernstrom found that neither the Irish nor the Italians thought of schooling primarily as a means for their children to climb into a higher social class and to leave their old neighborhoods behind. In Newburyport, Irish parents sometimes sacrificed their children to their passion for home ownership, forcing them into the workplace instead of sending them to school. Irrational by upper-middle-class standards, this choice made sense to people bent on holding their communities together and on assuring the continuation of their own way of life in the next generation. Social workers and educators, however, condemned child labor and sought to create a system of universal education, which would make it possible for children to surpass their parents, break the old ties, and make their own way in the larger world beyond the ethnic ghetto. In the same way, civil service reformers tried to replace the tribal politics of

the Irish-American machine with a system more consistent with the principles of meritocracy and administrative efficiency.

Sociologists observed, usually with a suggestion of disapproval, that working people seemed to have no ambition. According to Lloyd Warner, who studied Newburyport in the 1930s, working-class housewives set the dominant tone of cultural conservatism. They adhered to a "rigid" and "conventional" code of morality and seldom dared to "attempt anything new." They took no interest in long-range goals. "Their hopes are basically centered around carrying on [and] take the form of not wanting their present routine disturbed—they want to continue as they are, but, while doing so, better their circumstances and gain more freedom." Anthony Lukas, a journalist, made the same point in his account of the Boston school conflicts of the mid-seventies. Lukas contrasted the "Charlestown ethic of getting by" with the "American imperative to get ahead." The people of Charlestown, deserted by the migration of more ambitious neighbors to the suburbs, had renounced "opportunity, advancement, adventure" for the "reassurance of community, solidarity, and camaraderie."*

Conflicting attitudes about the future, much more than abstract speculation about the immortality of the embryonic soul, underlay the controversy about abortion touched off by the Supreme Court's 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade.* No other issue more clearly revealed the chasm between "middle-class" values and those of the educated elite. "I think people are foolish to worry about things in the future," an anti-abortion activist declared. "The future takes care of itself." Another woman active in the pro-life movement said, "You can't plan everything in life." For the pro-choice forces, however, the "quality of life" depended on family planning and other forms of rational planning for the future. From their point of view, it was irresponsible to bring children into the world when

*They regarded Boston's "urban renaissance" across the river without enthusiasm, just as the working-class residents of Oakland, as Lillian Rubin portrayed them in her 1976 study of family patterns, resented the highly publicized development of new "life styles" in Berkeley and San Francisco. As far as Oakland workers were concerned, Berkeley and San Francisco "might just as well be on another planet," according to Rubin.

they could not be provided with the full range of material and cultural assets essential to successful competition. It was unfair to saddle children with handicaps in the race for success: congenital defects, poverty, or a deficiency of parental love. A pro-choice activist argued that "raising a child is a contract of twenty years at least, . . . so if you're not in a life situation where you can [make] the commitment to raising a child, you should have the option of not doing so at that time." Teenage pregnancy was objectionable to advocates of legalized abortion not because they objected to premarital sex but because adolescents, in their view, had no means of giving their offspring the advantages they deserved.

For opponents of abortion, however, this solicitude for the "quality of life" looked like a decision to subordinate ethical and emotional interests to economic interests. They believed that children needed ethical guidance more than they needed economic advantages. Motherhood was a "huge job," in their eyes, not because it implied long-range financial planning but because "you're responsible, as far as you possibly can be, for educating and teaching them . . . what you believe is right—moral values and responsibilities and rights." Women opposed to abortion believed that their adversaries regarded financial security as an indispensable precondition of motherhood. One such woman dismissed "these figures that it takes $65,000 from birth" to raise a child as "ridiculous." "That's a new bike every year. That's private colleges. That's a complete new outfit when school opens. . . . Those figures are inflated to give those children everything, and I think that's not good for them."

The debate about abortion illustrates the difference between the enlightened ethic of competitive achievement and the petty-bourgeois or working-class ethic of limits. "The values and beliefs of pro-choice [people] diametrically oppose those of pro-life people," Kristin Luker writes in her study of the politics of abortion in California. Pro-life activists resented feminist disparagement of housework and motherhood. They agreed that women ought to get equal pay for equal work in the marketplace, but they did not agree that unpaid work in the home was degrading and oppressive. What they found "disturbing [in] the whole abortion mentality," as one of them put it, "is the idea that family duties—rearing children, managing a home, loving and caring for a husband—are somehow degrading to women." They found the pretense that "there are no important differences between men and women" unconvincing. They

believed that men and women "were created differently and . . . meant to complement each other." Upper-middle-class feminists, on the other hand, saw the belief in biologically determined gender differences as the ideological basis of women's oppression.

Their opposition to a biological view of human nature went beyond the contention that it served to deprive women of their rights. Their insistence that women ought to assume "control over their bodies" evinced an impatience with biological constraints of any kind, together with a belief that modern technology had liberated humanity from those constraints and made it possible for the first time to engineer a better life for the human race as a whole. Pro-choice people welcomed the medical technologies that made it possible to detect birth defects in the womb, and they could not understand why anyone would knowingly wish to bring a "damaged" child, or for that matter an "unwanted" child, into the world. In their eyes, an unwillingness to grant such children's "right not to be born" might itself be considered evidence of unfitness for parenthood. "I think if I had my druthers," one of them told Luker, "I'd probably advocate the need for licensing pregnancies."

For people in the right-to-life movement, this kind of thinking led logically to full-scale genetic engineering, to an arrogant assumption of the power to make summary judgments about the "quality of life," and to a willingness to consign not only a "defective" fetus but whole categories of defective or superfluous individuals to the status of nonpersons.* A

*These fears are by no means fanciful or exaggerated. A 1970 article in the journal of the California Medical Association welcomed the growing acceptance of abortion as a "prototype of what is to occur," the harbinger of a "new ethic" that would substitute the quality of life, in effect, for the sanctity of life. The article predicted that "problems of birth control and birth selection [would be] extended inevitably to death selection and death control" and would lead to an acceptance of the need for "public and professional determination of when and when not to use scarce resources." The courts have tended to transform the right to prevent birth defects by means of abortion into a duty to prevent birth defects and then to apply this kind of thinking to all those whose lives have "no meaning," in the words of a recent decision authorizing a "life-shortening course of action" in the case of an elderly patient—to all those unfortunate human beings, in other words, who can be said "for all practical purposes" to be "merely existing."

pro-life activist whose infant daughter died of a lung disease objected to the idea that her "baby's life, in a lot of people's eyes, wouldn't have been very meaningful. . . . She only lived twenty-seven days, and that's not a very long time, but whether we live ninety-nine years or two hours or twenty-seven days, being human is being human, and what it involves, we really don't understand."

Perhaps it was the suggestion that "we really don't understand" what it means to be human that most deeply divided the two parties to the abortion debate. For liberals, such an admission amounted to a betrayal not only of the rights of women but of the whole modern project: the conquest of necessity and the substitution of human choice for the blind workings of nature. An unquestioning faith in the capacity of the rational intelligence to solve the mysteries of human existence, ultimately the secret of creation itself, linked the seemingly contradictory positions held by liberals—that abortion is an "ethical private decision" and sex a transaction between "consenting adults" but that the state might well reserve the right to license pregnancy or even to embark on far-reaching programs of eugenic engineering. The uneasy coexistence of ethical individualism and medical collectivism grew out of the separation of sex from procreation, which made sex a matter of private choice while leaving open the possibility that procreation and child rearing might be subjected to stringent public controls. The objection that sex and procreation cannot be severed without losing sight of the mystery surrounding both struck liberals as the worst kind of theological obscurantism. For opponents of abortion, on the other hand, "God is the creator of life, and . . . sexual activity should be open to that. . . . The contraceptive mentality denies his will, 'It's my will, not your will.' "

If the abortion debate confined itself to the question of just when an embryo becomes a person, it would be hard to understand why it elicits such passionate emotions or why it has become the object of political attention seemingly disproportionate to its intrinsic importance. But abortion is not just a medical issue or even a woman's issue that has become the focus of a larger controversy about feminism. It is first and foremost a class issue. Kristin Luker's study of activists on both sides of the question leaves no doubt about that. The pro-choice women in her survey were better educated and made more money than their counterparts in the anti-abortion movement. They worked in the professional,

managerial, and entrepreneurial sector of the economy. Many were unmarried, many were divorced, and the married women among them had small families. More than 60 percent of Luker's sample of pro-choice women said they had no religion, while most of the rest described themselves as vaguely Protestant. Anti-abortion activists, on the other hand, were housewives with large families. Eighty percent of them were Catholics. These differences defined the difference between two social classes, each with its own view of the world—the one eager to press its recent gains and to complete the modern revolution of rising expectations, the other devoted to a last-ditch defense of the "forgotten American."

The Cultural Class War

"Two hundred years after the inception of our 'Great American Dream,'" wrote Alan Erlichman, a spokesman for the antibusing forces in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn, in the mid-seventies, "the middle class now finds itself in the midst of a 'Great American Nightmare.'" It was not merely a threat to its standard of living that defined this middle-class nightmare but a threat to its way of life—its beliefs and ideals, its sense of propriety, its distinctive conceptions of justice. Communities like Canarsie were painfully aware that they had become objects of educated contempt. The student radicals of the sixties mocked their patriotism. "Here were these kids, rich kids who could go to college, who didn't have to fight, . . . telling you your son died in vain. It makes you feel your whole life is shit, just nothing." Liberals dismissed their demand for law and order as "proto-fascism," their opposition to busing as "white racism." Feminists told women who wanted to stay at home with their children that full-time motherhood turned a housewife into a domestic drudge, the lowest order of humanity. When social planners tried to determine the racial composition of schools, they assigned blacks and Hispanics to separate statistical categories but lumped whites indiscriminately together as "others," ignoring the way in which white workers, according to Rieder, "viewed themselves not as abstract whites but as members of specific ethnic groups."

Television programs depicted middle-class blacks, career women, and

the very rich but paid no attention to working people, except to make Archie Bunker a symbol of lower-middle-class ignorance and bigotry. It is no wonder that working people became increasingly "angry," as Lillian Rubin noted in her study of Oakland, "at the university students and their supporters—a privileged minority who cavalierly dismiss and devalue a way of life these working-class people have struggled so hard to achieve." Nor should it have been surprising that the construction workers interviewed by LeMasters felt "isolated and forgotten." It was a measure of the distance between social classes, papered over by the myth of working-class affluence and "embourgeoisement," that LeMasters found himself "surprised at the depth and extent of the suspicion and distrust the blue-collar workers have of the white-collar middle and upper classes." Ignored by the mass media, condescended to by opinion makers and social critics, deserted by the politicians who once represented their interests, these men believed that the "people who got the money" ran things and that they themselves had nothing to say about the course of public events.

From the wrong side of the tracks, the dominant culture looked quite different from the way it looked from the inside. Its concern for creativity and self-expression looked self-indulgent. Its concern for the quality of human life seemed to imply a belief that life has to be carefully hoarded and preserved, protected from danger and risk, prolonged as long as possible. Its permissive style of child rearing and marital negotiation conveyed weakness more than sympathetic understanding, a desire to avoid confrontations that might release angry emotions. Its eagerness to criticize everything seemed to bespeak a refusal to accept any constraints on human freedom, an attitude doubly objectionable in those who enjoyed so much freedom to begin with. The habit of criticism, from a lower-middle-class point of view, appeared to invite people to be endlessly demanding of life, to expect more of life than anyone had a right to expect.

A white Catholic housekeeper from Somerville, Massachusetts, interviewed by Robert Coles in the mid-seventies, took an unflattering but highly revealing view of Cambridge, where she cleaned for a professional family. The woman she worked for was "crazy," she thought, to enter the job market when she had no visible need of extra income. She reported that her employers spent much of the day weighing themselves, worrying about being "depressed," trying on new clothes, and "looking in one

mirror and then another mirror." When the wife had arguments with her husband, she cried or withheld her sexual favors. "I'd never do that!" the maid said indignantly. "I'd rather scream and shout and throw dishes than hold out on my husband that way."

> The house is full of talk [she went on] even early in the morning. He's read something that's bothered him, and she's read something that's bothered her. They're both ready to phone their friends. The kids hear all that and they start complaining about what's bothering *them*—about school, usually. They're all so *critical.* I tell my kids to obey the teacher and listen to the priest; and their father gives them a whack if they cross him. But it's different when I come to fancy Cambridge. In that house, the kids speak back to their parents, act as fresh and snotty as can be. I want to scream sometimes when I hear those brats talking as if they know everything.

It is not hard to see why so much of this kind of indignation came to be vented on the figure of Benjamin Spock, a symbol of everything "middle Americans" distrusted. As the author of *Baby and Child Care*, Spock was identified in the popular mind not only with permissive child rearing but with intrusive medical and psychiatric expertise, so often invoked by those who condemned "working-class authoritarianism." As a leader in the antiwar movement, he symbolized the danger that a remissive morality would undermine civic order and patriotism. Workers had little enthusiasm for the war, but they resented the anti-Americanism so often expressed by the student movement. Their "reverence for the flag," according to Rieder, "embodied a style of patriotism sustained less by abstract ideals than by primordial sentiments of belonging to a particular place." The antiwar movement, on the other hand, denounced "Amerika" as a totalitarian society. "Suddenly, America was the enemy," Julius Lester has written in retrospect. ". . . Common sense should have told us that it is impossible to transform a nation if you hate it." But common sense played little part in the radical wing of the antiwar movement, which hoped to whip up opposition to the war by desecrating the flag, exposing national heroes like Jefferson and Lincoln as racists, imperialists, and male chauvinist pigs, and proclaiming its solidarity with

the oppressed millions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The result was to strengthen support for the government's policy among people who might otherwise have condemned it. These tactics also heightened popular resentment of men like Dr. Spock—the "strutting pseudo-intellectuals" denounced by Spiro Agnew and George Wallace.

The experts who set themselves up as guardians of children's rights appeared to workers to encourage a spirit of insubordination and to weaken parental confidence. "These days you're afraid to punish the kid or you'll 'alienate' him. . . . Complexes! Complexes!" The jargon of therapeutic understanding and "compassion" seemed to absolve young people, lawbreakers, and other "victims" of an allegedly repressive society from any responsibility for their actions. Violations of social conventions went unpunished, while those who demanded their enforcement were criticized for "blaming the victim." The growing tolerance of profanity, sexual display, pornography, drugs, and homosexuality seemed to indicate a general collapse of common decency. American workers did not regard themselves as models of rectitude, nor did they adhere to a rigid morality that condemned every form of sexual self-expression. What they condemned was the public display of sex and pornography, especially in their deviant forms—the repeal of reticence. "If [people] want to live together and not be married, that's fine. If they want to read pornographic books and see pornographic movies, that's okay, . . . as long as they don't broadcast it . . . on television or in the newspapers." Right-wing criticism of the media struck a sympathetic chord in workers troubled by the publicity accorded to socially disruptive conduct. Their attack on "permissiveness," however, grew out of a sense of decorum, not out of an inflexible moral standard that left no room for tolerance or free speech. Organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union came under fire because they appeared to invoke the constitutional doctrine of free speech for purposes it was never intended to cover.

In an atmosphere inflamed by demands for an apparently unlimited right of personal freedom, on the one hand, and for the restoration of public order, on the other, even graffiti could become a political issue. Liberals saw the graffiti scrawled on subway cars as a vibrant new form of folk art, while ethnic workers saw them as part of the crisis of civility. In their eyes, the city's public facilities no longer belonged to decent, law-abiding citizens. The streets, parks, and subways had been taken over by

drug pushers, pornographers, prostitutes, and gangs of noisy black youths, who strutted their contempt for middle-class respectability. "These maniacs, the way they walk the streets and the language they use, forget it!" An air of menace hung over the city. "I don't really hate the blacks," said a Jewish woman in Canarsie. "I hate that they make me look over my shoulder." "When the blacks robbed me," said another Canarsie resident, "I left all that black-and-white together stuff." Instead of writing off "law and order" as a code word for racism, liberals would have been well advised to address themselves to the breakdown of public order. Even if their culture of self-expression and self-advancement made it impossible for them to see any value in lower-middle-class culture, they might at least have acknowledged the problem of public safety. Liberalism itself, after all, was historically dependent on the rise of the modern state, which put an end to feudal and religious warfare, monopolized the means of violence, and took away the right of private vengeance. The erosion of the state's capacity to assure public order forced city residents to improvise solutions of their own, ranging from neighborhood patrols and block associations to gang warfare. Liberals wanted to restrict the sale of handguns, with good reason, but they refused to understand the fears that led people to arm themselves as a last resort against the rising tide of violence and crime. They deplored the campaign for more vigorous law enforcement as a threat to liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, but they did not explain how the Bill of Rights would assure the safety of the streets.

The Politics of Race: Antibusing Agitation in Boston

From the point of view of those who lived in deteriorating urban neighborhoods, liberals were not only indifferent to their needs but actively hostile, bent on destroying those neighborhoods if they stood in the way of racial integration. The principle of preferential treatment for disadvantaged minorities offended ethnic groups that had never enjoyed any such favoritism, as far as they could see, in their own struggles against

poverty and ethnic prejudice. "These bilingual signs drive me crazy," said a resident of Canarsie. "The old Jews and Italians didn't have their language on signs." Even those who supported the civil rights movement rejected the double standard of racial justice summed up by McGeorge Bundy, head of the Ford Foundation, in 1977: "To get past racism, we must . . . take account of race." Nor were they impressed with Justice Thurgood Marshall's argument in the Bakke case, two years later, to the effect that American racism had been "so pervasive" that nobody, "regardless of wealth or position," had escaped its impact. This statement implied that everyone would have to share the burden of its eradication, but the burden fell in fact on those who could least afford to bear it. The case for "race-conscious programs," as Justice William Brennan approvingly called them, might have carried moral weight if the chief proponents of compensatory programs had not so easily escaped their consequences. If the effects of racial discrimination pervaded American society, the effects of reverse discrimination turned out to be highly selective.

Liberals' claim to stand on high moral ground, in the bitter controversies over busing and affirmative action that exploded in the late sixties and early seventies, was suspect from the start. It was not just a question of principle, however, that divided liberals from their former supporters. Workers experienced liberal policies as an invasion of their neighborhoods. In Brooklyn, Jews had retreated from Brownsville, East New York, and Flatbush in the face of successive waves of black migration, only to find themselves confronted in 1972 with a court order designed to achieve racial balance in the Canarsie schools. High mortgage costs and loyalty to Canarsie precluded a further retreat to the suburbs. "The white middle class in Canarsie is up against the . . . wall," one man said: "there's no place to retreat." "They've ruined Brownsville," said another, "but I won't let them ruin Canarsie. . . . The liberals and the press look down on hardhats like me, but we've invested everything we have in this house and neighborhood." The president of the Jewish Community Council, defending a boycott of schools integrated under court order, cried, "We have built the swamps of Canarsie into a beautiful community, and no one is going to take it away from us."

In Charlestown, Massachusetts, the conflict over busing was preceded by protracted conflicts over urban renewal. Here the immediate threat

came not from black people pressing into the neighborhood but from advocates of redevelopment, who dreamed of Boston as a model of the "information economy" destined to grow up on the ruins of heavy industry. With a sense of self-importance reminiscent of the city's seventeenth-century founders, but with little of their moral vision, promoters of redevelopment envisioned the "new Boston" as a city on a hill, a showplace of advanced technology, cosmopolitan sophistication, high finance, and architectural splendor. They had big ambitions for Charlestown, a run-down neighborhood long since forsaken by Protestants, more recently by the more prosperous members of its predominantly Irish population, and finally by the Charlestown navy yard, once the basis of the local economy. Planners saw renewal as a matter of "getting a better grade of person" to live in Charlestown. "Charlestown has a dream," exclaimed a columnist in the *Boston Globe*, "a developing dream—to be to Boston what carefully restored, stylish Georgetown has been to Washington." This was not Charlestown's own dream, of course, which was typically small-minded in the eyes of the outside world. "We wanted to help people rehabilitate their houses," said one resident. "We tried to show we could do without the federal government." For old inhabitants, renewal meant the restoration of the community as it had been in its better days, when "Townies" were self-supporting and respectable and the neighborhood known as one of the safest in the whole city, even after dark.

A tumultuous session of the Charlestown city council in 1965 approved a plan calling for demolition of 10 percent of private housing, replacement of the state prison with the Bunker Hill Community College, and other dubious improvements. Subsequent plans called for the construction of luxury housing on the site of the old navy yard, complete with swimming pool, tennis courts, and two marinas. "I am concerned with the destruction of families," said an opponent of gentrification. "We want people back, not a professional man, his secretary, and a dog." Professional planners, however, cared more about real estate values and a "better sort of person." The *Charlestown Patriot* accurately assessed the effect of their efforts when it warned that "Townies" would soon lose the "Charlestown they now know," if indeed they found themselves "able to live here at all," in the "backyard of all this luxury."

The same coalition that designed and built the "New Boston"—banking and real estate interests, university presidents, foundation heads, and civic leaders, including representatives of the small black elite—welcomed the Racial Imbalance Act passed by the state legislature in 1965 as an opportunity to modernize the city's school system. Businessmen and their allies dominated the Citywide Coordinating Council, appointed by Judge Arthur Garrity in 1975 as the "eyes and ears of the court," when his ambitious plan for desegregation began to run into fierce popular opposition.* The *Globe* described the Coordinating Council as a "mixture of community people, clergy, educators and businessmen," which promised to provide the kind of "positive, representative, credible" leadership the city had lacked in the recent past. A prominent member of the Coordinating Council, President Kenneth Ryder of Northeastern University, said that it stood for "intelligence, professionalism, absence of political considerations."

From the beginning, the civic elite took the position that good schools would bring professionals back into the city, generate tax revenues, and train the skilled work force required by the new high-tech economy. According to a report issued by the Ford Foundation in 1965, improvement of public education was a "prerequisite for holding the middle class in the city." James M. Howell, a senior vice-president of the First National Bank, spelled out the familiar rationale for school reform: a new emphasis on "marketable skills"; "innovative pilot projects" designed to link "education to job markets"; increased attention to "skills that reflect the technical orientation of area business firms." Robert Wood, president of the University of Massachusetts and chairman of the Coordinating Council, endorsed the goal of "programs that fit the market place." When he became superintendent of schools in 1978, he made "career-occupation education" his "first priority." In practice, this boiled down to the introduction of programs in "computer literacy" and the purchase of expensive equipment from the electronics industry.

*The members of the council included Arthur Gartland of Scituate, an insurance and real estate man and vice-president of the chamber of commerce; Vernon Alden of Brookline, a high-ranking officer of the Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company; Ted Phillips of Weston, president of the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company; Thomas A. Sampson of Needham, president of the chamber of commerce; John Silber of Brookline, president of Boston University; and Robert Wood of Lincoln, president of the University of Massachusetts. Note that every one of these men lived in the suburbs.

For the business and professional classes, self-interest appeared to coincide with moral idealism—a happy conjunction. Racially integrated and otherwise "innovative" schools would break the hereditary cycle of poverty and make it possible (when accompanied by aggressive programs of affirmative action) for qualified members of the "underclass" to achieve professional status. The only thing that stood in the way of racial justice and civic renewal was the obstinate resistance of "self-enclosed" ethnic "enclaves," as they were invariably referred to by reformers, which clung to their "small-world insularity and intransigence." Neighborhoods like Charlestown and South Boston—"peninsulas ethnically rigid and ingrown," inhabited by "hooligans," "bigots," and "hysterical racist mobs"—automatically opposed any kind of innovation, especially if it promised to benefit black people.

The party of civic improvement could see nothing but racism in their opposition to busing. Mrs. Hicks might denounce Garrity's order as a solution foisted on the city by "rich people in the suburbs," the "outside power structure," the "forces who attempt to invade us"; but "racism" was the "real issue," in the words of Elaine Noble, a liberal in the state legislature. Jon Hillson, a black liberal, attributed opposition to busing to the "extreme insularity" and "backwardness" of the Irish, "fostered and preyed upon by racist politicians" who knew how to exploit "rude, primitive fear." Hillson dismissed the claim that "gains won by the civil rights . . . struggle come out of the pockets of white workers" as an outright "lie" propagated by the "racist alliance that runs America." Jonathan Kozol, well known for his book *Death at an Early Age,* an account of his experiences as a teacher in Boston, traced the antibusing movement to "mob terror and decades of miseducation, stirred by demagogues, preplanned by those who feed on hate." All the violence surrounding the busing controversy, Kozol insisted, derived in the last analysis from the violent resistance initiated by whites. When Michael Faith, a senior at South Boston High School, was stabbed by a black classmate from Roxbury, Kozol managed to convince himself that "it was . . . Louise Day Hicks . . . who put the knife in Michael Faith."

In fact, Mrs. Hicks had lost most of her supporters in South Boston by this time, precisely because of her condemnation of violence. The stabbing incident directly contributed to the decline of her influence. As word of the assault spread through South Boston, a mob gathered outside the high school and refused to let the black students, trapped inside the

building, return to Roxbury. Mrs. Hicks pleaded with the crowd to disperse. Paying no attention to her, the crowd took up one of the least attractive chants of the sixties: "Hell, no, we won't go!" "She looked scared," according to a teacher who watched the scene from a window. In the end, the black students were led from the building by a side door while the state police restrained the mob in front.

The wrongs suffered by black people in America were so glaring and their demand for reparation seemingly so compelling that advocates of busing found it impossible to admit that white workers had important grievances of their own, especially when those grievances were couched in the idiom of racial abuse and championed by leaders who exercised no control over their own followers. Liberals were predisposed to see nothing but racial prejudice in the antibusing movement, but the movement itself did very little to correct this misunderstanding. Antibusing agitators sometimes appealed to the example of the civil rights movement, but they had no understanding of its moral self-discipline. They deplored violence but subtly encouraged it by dwelling on the duty to repel the outside "invasion" of their communities. They protested that "although we're opposed to forced busing, we're not racists," in the words of Dennis Kearney, a South Boston politician; but antibusing mobs undermined such claims with their favorite slogan, "Bus the niggers back to Africa!" "We *are* racists," said a white senior at South Boston High School. "Let's face it. That's how we feel about it." Ione Malloy, the English teacher who recorded this defiance in her diary of the busing conflict, tried to persuade her students that South Boston's position was more complicated than that. When students complained that "blacks get everything," she challenged them to change places. When they threatened to "start trouble so the plan won't work," she predicted, quite accurately, that the authorities would close the school. She urged them to avoid violence and provocation, to no avail. As the situation deteriorated, she confessed to a feeling of "futility." "We seem to be going to a dead end."

The best argument against busing was that an "ethnically or racially homogeneous neighborhood respected another community's integrity more easily than a weak, threatened neighborhood did." According to this way of thinking, "strong neighborhoods were the solid building blocks of a healthily diverse city." The "preservation of community," accordingly, should have been recognized as a "value competitive with—yet ironically essential to—equality." But these were the words of a sym-

pathetic observer from outside, Anthony Lukas, not an indigenous analysis of the issue. Leaders of the antibusing movement never resorted to this argument. They seldom rose above the level of resentment, self-righteousness, and self-pity. "We are poor people locked into an economically miserable situation," said Pixie Palladino of ROAR (Restore Our Alienated Rights). "All we want is to be mothers to the children God gave us. We are not opposed to anyone's skin. We are opposed to forced busing."

In default of indigenous leadership, it was left to an occasional outsider or to an ambivalent insider like Ione Malloy to grapple with the difficult question of how to reconcile ethnic solidarity with racial equality. Like other moderates in South Boston—the few who remained by the mid-seventies—Malloy supported integration but shared the local resentment of Garrity's judge-made law. "A great injustice has been done to the people of South Boston by forcing on them a desegregation plan that didn't consider the needs of the students or the working-class background of the community." She admired the community pride she discovered when she attended a meeting of ROAR, but she regretted the community's effort to make the high school a political battleground. She agreed with a statement passed by the faculty senate that if the black and white communities stayed out, refraining from "agitation in the communities with the students," the atmosphere in the school would improve.

An Irish Catholic who grew up in Boston and longed for an "Irish cultural renaissance in South Boston," Malloy nevertheless understood that the Southie's creed, "We take care of our own," represented an "inadequate ideal." She hoped to "change the self-image of the South Boston youth by giving him a sense of his cultural roots so he could stand strong." She did not expect to accomplish this, however, by concealing Irish shortcomings or failures, still less by appealing to a precarious sense of racial superiority. Nor did she propose to strengthen Irish solidarity by sealing off South Boston from the outside world. "I would hear, over and over, 'We just want to be left alone.' " She rejected this simpleminded solution, just as she rejected simpleminded solutions proposed by the other side.* As a teacher, she could not accept either of the competing

*She listened with some amusement to a wistful appeal broadcast over WGBH—"not exactly the workingman's station"—in which Elma Lewis, founder of the School of Fine Arts in Roxbury, said that "all we want is a chance for black students to sit with white students . . . and learn." "It sounds so simple," Malloy noted without conviction.

conceptions of education implicit in the battle over busing and more explicit in controversies over school prayers, in broader discussions about the place of religious instruction in the public schools, and in the general conflict between the demand for schools responsive chiefly to parental pressure and the demand for schools governed by an abstract ideal of "excellence." Malloy took the position, in effect, that the first of these conceptions would simply enforce uncritical adherence to local dogma, while the second would allow a few gifted individuals to escape from their culture into the business and professional class, leaving the rest behind.

Advocates of busing argued that racially integrated schools would destroy racial stereotypes and promote tolerance. Their more ambiguous effect is illustrated by the case of Vinnie, the only student in Charlestown willing to submit to busing into Roxbury during the first year of the desegregation program. Held up as a model of racial enlightenment in an account of the busing crisis by Pamela Bullard and Judith Stoia, Boston television reporters, Vinnie might better have been seen as a model of social mobility and cultural expatriation. As Martha Bayles noted in a perceptive review, Vinnie was a hero for Bullard and Stoia because he was "just like us."

> Unlike his backward and ignorant neighbors, he wants to go to Harvard. Unlike his insular neighbors, he intends to leave Charlestown and never come back. . . . Unlike his sexually repressed neighbors, he sees no harm in unmarried girls having babies. . . . The point is that Bullard and Stoia, in their zeal to show how busing has cured Vinnie of racial prejudice, show also how it has cured him of numerous other beliefs and values. Instead of describing a Charlestown boy who has overcome racism, they describe a Charlestown boy who has overcome Charlestown.

Unfortunately for Judge Garrity's experiment in racial balance, most of Vinnie's neighbors did not share his ambition to "overcome Charles-

busing = conflict over Progress

town," let alone the means to carry it out; but even if they had, they would not necessarily have been the better for it. If racial enlightenment could be achieved only at the price of exile, perhaps it was time to reconsider the whole project of enlightenment.*

"Populism" and the New Right

The battle over busing, whatever its effect on young people caught up in it, clearly had a devastating effect on the old liberal coalition. Of all the "social issues," as they came to be called, that divided the New Deal coalition down the middle—abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment, the death penalty, gun control, gay rights, school prayers, the pledge of allegiance, judicial lawmaking—busing was the most fiercely contested and the most dramatic in its exposure of the growing distance between

*Daniel Monti's study of school reform in St. Louis contains a similarly ambiguous example of successful integration. Monti reports a conversation with a white student in his sociology class at the University of Missouri. The desegregation plan in St. Louis, unlike the one in Boston, required suburban schools to accept black pupils from the city. Monti's student drove a school bus: "I take white county kids into the city and black kids back out to the county schools." Having explained the nature of his job, the bus driver proceeded to describe his black passengers.

> "God, you oughta hear the way those black kids talk! They're unbelievable."
> "That bad, huh?" But I did not really want to know.
> "No, no!" he snapped back. "They're that good."
> "What do you mean 'that good'?" I asked.
> "Just that. I mean they sit there talkin' algebra and poetry for the whole bus ride. It's wild." He paused, then added, "I don't know where they get those kids, but it ain't from no ghetto family."

The bus driver, Monti adds, "knew from his daily experience what many observers of the desegregation order had been complaining about. The black youngsters who 'volunteered' for long bus rides to county schools were not like their peers left back in the city." On the contrary, they were carefully selected as likely prospects for social mobility, gifted with the ambition to overcome the ghetto in the same way that Vinnie overcame Charlestown.

wealthy liberals and workers, formerly united in support of Franklin Roosevelt and his heirs in the liberal succession. When Edward Kennedy tried to address an antibusing rally in 1974, an angry Irish crowd shouted him down and pursued him with eggs and tomatoes when he retreated to the Federal Building, named for his brother. So much for Camelot.

In his study of the Boston school wars, Anthony Lukas describes a confrontation in 1975—International Women's Year in Massachusetts, by gubernatorial proclamation—between the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women and a delegation of women from the antibusing movement. The antibusing agitators claimed that their responsibility for their children's education had been expropriated by the state. "You are supposed to defend women's rights. Why don't you defend ours?" The commission ruled that busing had "nothing to do" with the rights of women. Suburban feminists, "dressed in their Town and Country tweeds, Pierre Cardin silk scarves, and eighty-five-dollar alligator shoes," had nothing to say to a group of dowdy women in tam-o'-shanters, windbreakers, and "Stop Forced Busing" T-shirts.

As "social issues" came to define the difference between the right and the left, a new breed of "populists" began to build a political coalition around lower-middle-class resentment. Like the populists of old, they saw themselves as the enemies of wealth and privilege, champions of the "average man on the street," in the words of George Wallace: the "man in the textile mill," the "man in the steel mill," the "barber" and "beautician," the "policeman on the beat," the "little businessman." The architects of the new right were by no means unanimously committed to free-market economics. Some of them remained New Dealers on economic issues. In 1968, Wallace's American Independent party called for Social Security increases, promised better health care, and reaffirmed the right of collective bargaining. The *National Review* denounced Wallace's "Country and Western Marxism," and his conservative opponents in Alabama judged him "downright pink." Paul Weyrich, a leading ideologist of the new right, was a man of the people, like Wallace—the product of a blue-collar, German Catholic background in Racine, Wisconsin. He felt "closer to William Jennings Bryan," he said, "than to the Tories." The "essence of the new right," as he saw it, was a "morally based conservatism," not free-market economics. "Big corporations are as bad as big government," said Weyrich. "They're in bed together." Insisting that

"laissez-faire is not enough," he stressed the need for "some higher value" than the pursuit of wealth. In taking the position that "there can be no such thing as an entirely free market," he acknowledged agreement "with some liberals." What he resented, he said, was liberal "compassion," which was "condescending" and "patronizing."

The new right's constituency included many people who believed that "oil, steel, insurance, and the banks run this country," in the words of a member of the Italian-American Civil Rights League in Brooklyn. "I'd go for public ownership of the oil companies," this man said, "if I didn't think the national politicians were a bunch of thieves." A self-designated conservative Democrat told Jonathan Rieder, "It's not only welfare but the multinational corporations who are ripping us off, taking our jobs away and sending employment to the South and West. The middle classes are the lost people." Kevin Phillips reported in 1982 that the middle-class tax revolt, an important element in the crystallization of the new right, was directed against regressive property taxes, not against the federal income tax. It was "more populist than conservative," according to Phillips. Rising property taxes fell most heavily on blue-collar workers and on members of the lower middle class, and it was they, not the rich, who voted in 1978 for California's famous Proposition 13, which failed to carry a number of upper-income precincts that later went for Reagan in 1980. Both in California and in Oklahoma, voters who favored a reduction of property taxes rejected income tax reduction. The tax revolt, according to Phillips, should not be seen as a mandate for supply-side economics. Few of those who favored cuts in the welfare budget had massive reductions in mind. Phillips found considerable public support, in fact, for a general redistribution of income.

Public opinion polls conducted by Patrick Caddell in the mid-seventies found that a growing number of people simultaneously favored a redistribution of income and tough positions on "social issues." Donald Warren, a Michigan sociologist, reported similar findings in 1973. Thirty percent of his sample said that blacks had too much political power and received more than their share of federal aid, but 60 percent said the same thing about the rich. Eighteen percent said that blacks had a better chance than whites to get fair treatment in the courts, but 42 percent said that rich people had an even better chance. According to recent polls conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, well over half the respondents

believed that government is run by the "big interests" and favored federal action designed to reduce the gap between rich and poor, preferably by "raising the taxes of wealthy families." The same people, however, rejected the values liberalism had come to stand for and voted for right-wing candidates who denounced the liberal media, liberal bureaucrats and social planners, liberal do-gooders, and liberal exponents of cultural relativism and sexual permissiveness.

The rise of "neoliberalism" in the mid-seventies made it easier than ever for the right to appropriate the rhetoric and symbolism of populism. In 1974, two years after George McGovern's disastrous campaign for the presidency, the Democrats rebounded from defeat by gaining four governorships, four new seats in the Senate, and forty-nine congressional seats. Most of those elected in this Democratic resurgence at the state and congressional level—politicians like Gary Hart, John Culver, Dale Bumpers, Jerry Brown, Ella Grasso, Richard Lamm, Tom Downey, Christopher Dodd, Toby Moffett, Paul Simon, Paul Tsongas, Les AuCoin, James Blanchard, and Tim Wirth—came out of the "new politics" of the sixties and early seventies. They were graduates of the Peace Corps, the War on Poverty, the antiwar movement, and the McGovern campaign. Their opposition to the war in Vietnam, their commitment to feminism and civil rights, their impatience with the "special interests" that allegedly controlled the party (including labor), their enthusiasm for advanced technology, and their emphasis on professional competence as opposed to ideology distinguished them from older liberals like Edward Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey. Toby Moffett of Connecticut characterized the congressional class of '74, without irony or disapproval, as "very suburban." Economic growth and education impressed neoliberals as the nation's prime concerns. "If the U.S. economy does well," Tsongas explained, "a rising tide lifts all boats." On the other hand, the "class-warfare context" of old-fashioned party politics, in the words of Les AuCoin of Oregon, divided the nation and diverted attention from the technical problems that had to be solved if the United States was to regain its economic leadership of the world. Attacks on business were counterproductive. "The American people do not buy . . . a class warfare political argument," AuCoin declared. "The American people, at this point of our history, are looking for leadership that argues for economic growth strategies."

Tsongas, who described himself as a "liberal on social issues," found a "lot of liberal doctrine on economics" offensive to his "pro-business" sensibilities. If any given policy "generates wealth and helps the economy and makes us more competitive, we're for it." When Michael Dukakis announced in 1988, "This election is not about ideology, it's about competence," he expressed the essence of neoliberalism. It was typical of this group that they wanted to make the federal deficit the overriding issue of the eighties, ignoring issues that "middle Americans" considered more important (the distribution of wealth and privilege, the declining prospects of the middle class, the loss of moral purpose), and that they proposed to reduce the deficit not only by cuts in the defense budget but by heavy taxes on tobacco, beer, and hard liquor—the traditional consolations of the working class.

At a time when liberal support for abortion, affirmative action, and busing had already driven masses of Democrats out of the party, nothing could have been less likely to win them back than this managerial, technocratic, "suburban" school of liberalism. Neoliberals like Hart called for "new ideas," but their economic ideas, on which they placed most of their emphasis, seemed indistinguishable except in detail from those of the right. "The important thing," said Jerry Brown, "was to avoid taxes and not spend too much money." The emergence of a bipartisan consensus concerning the importance of low taxes and governmental thrift, together with an unspoken agreement not to raise questions about the distribution of wealth, meant that "social issues" would dominate national campaigns. More precisely, it meant that symbols vaguely evoked by those issues—"family values," the flag, the pledge of allegiance, the "American dream"—would dominate national campaigns and that the Republicans, having solidified their claim to the populist tradition, would continue to win presidential elections with monotonous regularity.

The Theory of the New Class and Its Historical Antecedents

The ideological appeal of the new right depended on its ability not only to emphasize social issues at the expense of economic issues but to deflect "middle-class" resentment from the rich to a parasitic "new class" of professional problem solvers and moral relativists. In 1975, William Rusher of the *National Review* referred to the emergence of a " 'verbalist' elite," "neither businessmen nor manufacturers, blue-collar workers or farmers," as the "great central fact" of recent American history. "The producers of America," Rusher said, ". . . have a common economic interest in limiting the growth of this rapacious new non-producing class." The idea of a new class enabled the right to invoke social classifications steeped in populist tradition—producers and parasites—and to press them into the service of social and political programs directly opposed to everything populism had ever stood for.

Speculation about a "new class" had a long history. Three distinct traditions contributed to right-wing theorizing, and it was the right's inability to disentangle them, in part, that explained why its version of the new class turned out to be such a "muddled concept," in the words of Daniel Bell. A progressive tradition, which could be traced all the way back to Saint-Simon, considered the technical intelligentsia a class destined to play an increasingly important role in modern society by virtue of its indispensability. In the United States, Thorstein Veblen was probably the most influential exponent of this view. Veblen distinguished between the "pecuniary" culture of the leisure class and the scientific, critical, and "iconoclastic" culture of the engineers. He ridiculed the idea that the workers, reduced to automata by the modern division of labor, knew enough to expropriate and operate the industrial plant, but he had more faith in professional and managerial personnel, who valued efficiency for its own sake and cared more about industrial growth and productivity than about profits. The engineers already exercised de facto control of the corporation, according to Veblen, but they were hobbled by the constraints imposed by a wasteful system of capitalist production. Once they came to understand their real interests, they would throw out the capital-

ists and operate the industrial system for the benefit of society as a whole.

In one form or another, this encouraging view of the "knowledge class" influenced the progressive movement, the New Deal, and the New Frontier. The early Walter Lippmann, New Dealers like Stuart Chase and Thurman Arnold, and Keynesian liberals like John Kenneth Galbraith argued that capitalism could be transformed from within by a corporate "technostructure," as Galbraith called it, whose interest in economic growth collided with the profit motive. The well-known study by Adolph Berle and Gardiner Means, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* (1932), seemed to provide empirical underpinning for the idea of an autonomous category of industrial managers and experts by calling attention to the growing divergence between ownership of the corporation, now dispersed among a multitude of stockholders, and those who actually controlled and operated it. After World War II, the rise of the "multiversity," as Clark Kerr called it, dramatized industry's dependence on scientific and technical knowledge and thus gave further encouragement to speculation about the "knowledge industry."

Socialists as well as liberals often found these ideas attractive. The new left, casting about for a revolutionary "agent" to replace the proletariat, saw the producers of knowledge as a "new working class," in the words of Greg Calvert. When these brain workers came to understand that capitalism prevented them from exercising the full range of their skills, they would side with other dispossessed groups in overthrowing it.

A second, less flattering picture of the new class took shape in the forties and fifties, in the context of angry debates about the failure of socialism in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. In opposition to Trotsky's characterization of the Stalinist regime as a "degenerated workers' state," Max Schachtman and his followers argued that the Soviet Union was not a workers' state at all but a form of "bureaucratic collectivism" dominated by party hacks. In *The Managerial Revolution* (1941), James Burnham took the position that although capitalism was declining, socialism was not taking its place. State ownership of the means of production transferred power from the capitalists not to the workers but to a new ruling class of professional managers, who proceeded to abolish collective bargaining, to replace the market with central planning, and to suppress every trace of political freedom. Dissident intellectuals in eastern Europe elaborated this thesis in their impassioned critique of Stalin-

ism. Books like *The New Class*, by Milovan Djilas (1957), and *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*, by George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi (1979), appealed to ex-Marxists, in the United States as in Europe, who had turned against Stalinism but retained the intellectual habits of Marxism and therefore took it for granted that a new form of society implied the existence of a new ruling class. Occasionally someone pointed out that the rise of the monolithic Soviet state called for a reconsideration of the whole concept of a ruling class, not for attempts to stretch it to fit a new situation. Those who had been raised on the Marxian theory of history, however—and this category included a number of intellectuals who later became neoconservatives—did not pay much attention to such objections. They needed a ruling class, if only to sustain their own self-image as a lonely band of truth tellers who dared to question the reigning orthodoxy, and they found it in the makers of the "managerial revolution."

The third source of new-class theory had the longest lineage of all, originating in Burke's attack on the French revolution. As early as 1856, Tocqueville provided a definitive statement of the case against the revolutionary intelligentsia, which informed all subsequent criticism of the revolutionary tradition. In *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, Tocqueville depicted the revolutionary intellectuals as irresponsible dreamers and fanatics, "quite out of touch with practical politics" and therefore lacking the "experience which might have tempered their enthusiasms." Their "fondness for broad generalizations" and for "cut-and-dried legislative systems," their "contempt for hard facts," their "taste for reshaping institutions on novel, ingenious, original lines," and their "desire to reconstruct the entire constitution according to the rules of logic and a preconceived system" were the product of rootless alienation, in Tocqueville's view. Later commentators added to this indictment the accusation that intellectuals were consumed by envy of the rich and powerful and by a desire for revenge; we have seen how Georges Sorel developed this theme in his attack on the Dreyfusard, socialistic intelligentsia of the Third Republic. Julien Benda turned the same kind of argument against Sorel himself in his *Trahison des clercs* (1927), and Raymond Aron turned it against Marxism in *The Opium of the Intellectuals* (1955). French history is full of complaints against visionary, power-mad intellectuals, no doubt because the legacy of the revolution has proved so divisive; but the same tradition informed the work of George Orwell and other English writers

and passed into American political discourse in the sixties and seventies, when Lionel Trilling, Daniel Bell, Lewis Feuer, and Norman Podhoretz, among others, began to attack the new left as the latest expression of the "adversary culture" of intellectuals.

Neoconservatives on the New Class

Neoconservative intellectuals' restatement of these well-established traditions of speculation—in which the new class was described variously as practical and efficient, domineering and repressive, alienated and adversarial—represented these intellectuals' most important contribution to the rise of the new right. New-class theory enabled the right to attack "elites" without attacking big business. Businessmen, it appeared, were responsible and public-spirited: they were accountable to the consumers to whom they sold their products, just as practical politicians were accountable to the voters; and the market thus limited any power they could hope to exercise. The new class, on the other hand, was accountable to no one, and its control of higher education and the mass media gave it almost unlimited power over the public mind. Yet the members of this class still felt marginal and isolated: the more power they achieved, the more they resented their lack of power.

Some descriptions of the new class simply transferred the old "authoritarian syndrome" from the workers, now welcomed as allies in the struggle against the adversary culture, to the intellectuals. Feuer spoke of the "intellectuals' acute authoritarianism, arising from frustrated desire for power." *Commentary* caricatured the "radicalized professor" as a "man who has wandered through life, never testing himself outside the university," "envious, resentful," unable to bear his exclusion from the "magic circle where power, glory, and virtue reside." Like the "working-class authoritarians" and the populist "pseudo-conservatives" of the fifties, the new-class intellectuals of the sixties and seventies displayed all the classic symptoms of status anxiety. Analysis of the authoritarian personality, it turned out, could be applied indiscriminately to any group that came under political suspicion—one more indication of its intellectual bankruptcy.

It was never altogether clear, for that matter, just what social grouping the notion of a new class was supposed to refer to. Sometimes it was played off not against business but against the technical intelligentsia, itself a candidate for new-class status in the first of the three traditions on which neoconservatives drew more or less at random. In *The End of Ideology* (1960), Daniel Bell contrasted the "intellectual" with the "scholar," evidently to the advantage of the latter. The scholar had to assume responsibility for a "bounded field of knowledge," but the free-floating intellectual acknowledged no responsibility except to himself. The scholar was "less involved with his 'self,' " whereas the intellectual seldom transcended "*his* experience, *his* individual perceptions." In *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976), Bell argued that the nihilistic hedonism celebrated by adversarial intellectuals undermined the work discipline required by capitalism (though he also argued, well beyond the limits of the neoconservative consensus, that capitalism itself encouraged hedonism and was thus at war with itself). In *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973), however, "new men" referred to the "technical and professional intelligentsia," whose skills had become essential to the maintenance of an "information society."* In general, neoconservatives took a kindlier view of the new class when they identified it with scientific and technical expertise than when they identified it with cultural radicalism. In *Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era,* Zbigniew Brze-

*"While these technologists are not bound by a sufficient common interest to make them a political class, they do have common characteristics. . . . The norms of the new intelligentsia—the norms of professionalism—are a departure from the hitherto prevailing norms of economic self-interest which have guided a business civilization. In the upper reaches of this new elite—that is, in the scientific community—men hold significantly different values [from] those authorizing economic self-aggrandizement, which could become the foundation of the new ethos for such a class." Unfortunately the ethic of professionalism had to compete for the allegiance of the "knowledge class" with the "apocalyptic, hedonistic, and nihilistic" ethic promoted by literary modernism and popularized by the counterculture. In the closing pages of *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society,* Bell argued that "these anti-bourgeois values . . . go hand in hand with the expansion of a new intellectual class huge enough to sustain itself economically as a class. . . . This new class, which dominates the media and the culture, thinks of itself less as radical than 'liberal,' yet its values, centered on 'personal freedom,' are anti-bourgeois."

zinski, later Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, praised the technical elite while condemning literary intellectuals and political militants in the usual terms. Since the latter came "from those branches of learning which are most sensitive to the threat of social irrelevance," their "political activism" could be explained as a "reaction to the . . . fear . . . that a new world is emerging without either their assistance or their leadership." Peter Berger made a similar distinction between responsible specialists and discontented intellectuals, who suffered from a nagging fear of impotence, among other ailments. "Intellectuals," Berger wrote, "have always had the propensity to endow their libidinal emotions with philosophical significance. . . . One suspects that the need for philosophy arises from an unfortunate combination of strong ambitions and weakened capabilities."

Although the "new class" often seemed to refer only to literary intellectuals and their "adversary culture," it could easily expand, when the need arose, to embrace bureaucrats, professional reformers, social workers, and social engineers as well as literary types. In this version, which derived from the theory of the managerial revolution, the "new class" seemed to refer to anyone working in the public sector. According to Irving Kristol, it consisted of "scientists, teachers, and educational administrators, journalists and others in the communications industries, psychologists, social workers, those lawyers and doctors who make their careers in the expanding public sector, city planners, the staffs of the larger foundations, the upper levels of government bureaucracy, and so on." Charles Murray's description was even more expansive: "the upper echelons of . . . academia, journalism, publishing, and the vast network of foundations, institutes, and research centers that has been woven into partnership with government during the last thirty years." Murray included even politicians, judges, bankers, businessmen, lawyers, and doctors—at least those who were liberals. From this point of view, the new class could be recognized not so much by its culture of hedonism as by its relentless pressure for an "activist federal government committed to 'change,'" as Michael Novak put it. Professionals in the public sector wanted massive federal programs, according to Novak, because such programs created "hundreds of thousands of jobs and opportunities" for "those whose hearts itch to do good and who long for a 'meaningful' use of their talents, skills, and years." As Novak, Murray, and Kristol saw it,

the culture of the new class was not just antibourgeois but antibusiness. It aimed to replace private enterprise with a vast bureaucracy that would undermine initiative, destroy the free market, and subject everything to central control.

These wildly divergent descriptions of the new class made it clear that the term referred to a set of politically objectionable attitudes, not to an identifiable social grouping, much less a class. Why, then, was it necessary to speak of a new class at all, when it served simply as a vague synonym for "liberalism"? No doubt the term made it possible to introduce attacks on the liberal "intelligentsia" with the disclaimer that it carried "no pejorative connotations," in Murray's words. But the real beauty of the concept lay in the way it obscured the difference between opposition to "middle-class values" and opposition to business. "Liberalism," as a description of what ailed America, did not have the advantage of this ambiguity. The political alignments of the seventies and eighties indicated that a defense of values loosely identified with the counterculture was quite compatible with a defense of business and the free market. Neoliberals declared themselves probusiness at the same time that they endorsed the sexual revolution, championed gay rights and women's rights, opposed the death penalty, and applauded the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*. The free-market element in the Reagan coalition displayed much the same pattern of economic conservatism and cultural liberalism. Quite apart from the libertarian movement—the clearest example of this configuration—public opinion polls consistently showed that a great many of the people attracted to Reagan's economic program either had no particular interest in the "social issues" or held views commonly described as liberal. Even in the heart of the Reagan administration, the White House itself, the right-wing position on social issues elicited little enthusiasm. Nancy Reagan deleted a discussion of abortion from the State of the Union Message in 1987, saying, "I don't give a damn about the right-to-lifers." Reagan made himself the champion of "traditional values," but there is no evidence that he regarded their restoration as a high priority. What he really cared about was the revival of the unregulated capitalism of the twenties: the repeal of the New Deal. As governor of California, he condemned the "wave of hedonism" that had rolled over America and pleaded for a "spiritual rebirth, a rededication to the moral precepts which guided us for so much of our past." In the

campaign of 1980, however, he ridiculed Carter for saying very much the same thing. The theme of "spiritual rebirth" gave way to a strategy of evasion and denial. There was nothing wrong with America after all. "Don't let anyone tell you that America's best days are behind her, that the American spirit has been vanquished." Moral regeneration, it appeared, could be achieved painlessly through the power of positive thinking.

Reagan's rhetorical defense of "family and neighborhood" could not be reconciled with his championship of unregulated business enterprise, which has replaced neighborhoods with shopping malls and superhighways. A society dominated by the free market, in which the American dream degenerated into pure acquisitiveness and self-seeking, had no place for "family values."* This was the fundamental contradiction not merely of the Reagan administration but of the new right in general. If the right was to attract support from workers troubled by moral decay, alienated from neoliberalism, but indifferent or hostile to free-market economics, it needed to stir up resentment of elites without stirring up the old populist resentment of capitalists. The notion of a "new class," though not designed with this purpose in mind, enabled people on the right to depict "permissive" social morality, which might otherwise have been seen as the cultural expression of consumer capitalism itself, as part of a "concerted attack on business," in the words of the *Wall Street Journal*'s Robert Bartley. Thus Rita Kramer, in her contribution to the heated debate about the family, *In Defense of the Family* (1983), blamed the plight of the family on the social service professions, on liberal intellectuals proclaiming their permissive morality as scientific truth, on the mass media, and on the bureaucratic welfare state. Capitalism, she argued—"which gets a bum rap on this issue"—had nothing to do with the growing instability of the family.

*The ties of kinship and marriage create obligations that override considerations of personal advantage and cannot be discharged simply by a prearranged schedule of payments. By contrast, the market—no respecter of persons—reduces individuals to abstractions, anonymous buyers and sellers whose claims on each other are determined solely by their capacity to pay. The family depends on an active community life, whereas the market disrupts communities by draining off their best talent. Under Reagan, the inner logic of the market became fully explicit: idealization of the man on the make; a pursuit of quick profits; feverish competition leading (as a means of stabilizing it) to the creation of far-flung economic empires impervious to local, state, and finally even national control; a widening chasm between rich and poor; hostility to labor unions; urban redevelopment designed to raise real estate values and to force lower- and middle-income families out of the city; impoverishment of public facilities, public transportation in particular—all in the name of "family, work, neighborhood, peace, and freedom."

In *The War over the Family* (1983), Brigitte Berger and Peter Berger presented a more elaborate version of this analysis. The family debate, the Bergers argued, grew out of the "class struggle" between the business class and the knowledge class, the "new class" of bureaucrats, administrators, and professional experts. The new class attempted to extend its control over marriage, sex, and child rearing in the same way that it had extended its control over private enterprise. In its struggle against the bourgeoisie (a class that now included the workers as well), it spoke a new language of its own, characterized by the "obscurantist use of allegedly scientific terms." By setting up a barrier between professionals and laymen, this impenetrable jargon of expertise reinforced the "claims of the professional to superior wisdom and therefore to status, high income, and possibly even political power." The Bergers advocated a state that would respect "private preferences" instead of attempting to remodel the family according to preconceived theories of child psychology and moral development. The state's responsibility for children ended with adequate nutrition, health care, and education; and even these were more likely to be assured by the market than by an elaborate welfare state. A system of educational vouchers, for example, would provide families with a range of institutional alternatives and thereby introduce market forces into the "monopolistic situation" created by a uniform system of public schools. The best way to assure moral order and economic progress, in short, was to curb the power of the new class.