Collection: Deaver, Michael
Folder Title: Family Issue

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 18, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR MICHAEL DEAVER

FROM: Mike Baroody

SUBJECT: "Family, neighborhood, work place" etc.

The paragraph reproduced below is from page 33 of the inaugural issue of Commonsense, the RNC journal of thought and opinion which was begun in the summer of 1978.

Dick Wirthlin told me it led to development of Governor Reagan's famous five words, first used in speeches in the Fall campaign that year.

I've attached a copy of that magazine. In addition to the article by Novak which ends with the graph below, the lead article by Peter Berger makes the same points.

> My advice, then, is that Republican thinkers begin to concentrate their creative energies upon *mediating institutions* as the natural organisms of daily life, and in particular on the *family*, the *neighborhood* and the *work place*. Here is where most of life is lived. Here is where people wish to feel free, effective, equal, just, and brave. Here is where they are, for most of their waking hours, social and political animals. These are the cells of the social organism in which most of us work out our destiny. These are the locations at which the key political battles of the future will be fought. If Democrats and Republicans battle over who can best recreate the vitalities of these mediating institutions in our society, the "other ninety percent" will be the lucky beneficiaries.

A Republican Journal Of Thought And Opinion

Commonsense

Volume 1 Summer 1978 Number 1

A letter from the Publisher

Introduction To A Republican Journal Of Thought And Opinion

It is said of political parties that they exist to contest elections. That is, in fact, what we *do*. But that is not all that can be said about the Republican Party. To complete the description, it is necessary to know what we *are*, and how we are perceived by ourselves and by others. The distance now separating what we think of ourselves and what we are thought to be by the public at large poses a problem of significant dimension.

Rather than essential links between individuals and their government, political parties today are viewed widely as the instruments of special interest. *Party politics* is often regretted, as if in America some other kind of politics were desirable. Parties have been, but are perceived to be less so now, the credible communicators of political information and the sponsors of candidates and programs which represent a coherent set of ideas. These candidates and programs and ideas were to do the battle of politics, engaging in the contests for votes. But much of what we were or should be has been taken from us or yielded by us to other institutions—government not the least among them.

. . . the contest for votes must also be a contest of ideas.

In the current context then, it may be that this Republican Journal of Thought and Opinion, COMMONSENSE, goes against the "common wisdom," and that the publication of such a Journal will be unexpected and in some quarters, suspect.

However, it is the first principle of politics, wrote the Englishman G. K. Chesterton in *Orthodoxy*, that "the essential things in men are the things they hold in common, not the things they hold separately." Political parties

in America do not propose "orthodoxies," but they have served as structures for conducting that search for the things we hold in common. They should be vehicles for discovering the *common sense* of Americans about themselves and their institutions.

If they are not, then the American public faces the alternative of being exposed to a continuing parade of untested ideas. And these ideas can be imposed on a public unconvinced of their merits, but without the mechanisms to refine or resist them. This alternative, COMMONSENSE rejects. Rather, for the Republican Party, this Journal is intended to be one of those mechanisms.

We must not forget that the last great partisan coalition of American politics was built on ideas. These were no less forceful and appealing, if also debatable, for all their identification with a political party. The notion of an activist federal government, with an *obligation* to use its centralized power "to meet new social problems with new social controls," was a new idea in the 1930s. But it took hold, built a durable coalition, became the foundation for decades of programmatic public policy, and tended to capture the terms of the political debate.

As an idea, it had consequences. Only lately have these come to be generally understood as having mixed implications for the nation and for individuals in it. Accordingly, the Republican Party finds itself in opposition, at this writing, not only to a majority party that controls the machineries of government, but to the force of certain such ideas. It is our continuing obligation, therefore, in COMMONSENSE and elsewhere, to articulate our own.

For the contest for votes must also be a contest of ideas. In that broader sense of the term then, COMMONSENSE: A Republican Journal of Thought and Opinion is and will remain a partisan publication. It need be no less thoughtful or, we hope, challenging and provocative, for its connection to and sponsorship by a political party. Rather, we expect, the connection will enhance it. For the ideas it will attract will be from those, not exclusively Republicans, who value the concept of political parties as instruments for the introduction of ideas into the policy debate; for testing and refining those ideas; and for accommodating them to the diverse desires of a pluralistic people who despite what they hold separately can say in common, "we hold these truths. . ."

Bill Brock
Publisher

Mediating Structures: The Missing Link Of Politics

by Peter L. Berger

In a democratic society, scholarly research on social problems should be as free as possible from partisan interests. Thus research by Richard Neuhaus and myself into mediating structures has been wide-open. We have talked with anyone who wanted to talk with us, and the ideas coming out of the project will be in the public forum—and, by that very fact, available to anyone who wants to pick them up for political purposes. This availability, though, is an interesting problem in itself, and that is the topic of the present observations. One further point should be stressed in this connection: In what follows, most of what I shall say has no partisan intent—that is, I shall wear my sociologist hat and say things that I would say to anyone, Democrat or Republican (or for that matter, "democratic socialist"—the non-democratic socialists I prefer not to speak to); toward the end, however, I shall take the liberty of making some remarks as a Republican (in fidelity to what I consider to be the rules of the intellectual game, I shall signal clearly the point where I switch hats).[1]

Five institutions in American society are subsumed under that ominous term, mediating structures.[2] They are the family, organized

---

Peter L. Berger is the co-director, with Richard Neuhaus, of an American Enterprise Institute research project entitled "Mediating Structures and Public Policy," begun in the fall, 1976. A professor of sociology at Rutgers University, Berger is the author of several books including, most recently, "Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Changes" (1975) and "Facing up to Modernity: Excursions in Sociology, Politics and Religion" (1977).

---

[1] It is a point deserving of emphasis that the project, while dealing with public policy issues, is strictly non-political in a partisan sense: Neuhaus has been active in Democratic politics, while I am a registered Republican and individuals in the project range from one often referred to as "neo-conservative" to another who describes himself as a "democratic socialist." This non-political character of the project is, I think, very important.

[2] I'm still uncertain whether the fact that this title is incomprehensible has been an advantage or not. It may be a disadvantage in New York, that city of intellectuals who live on defining

religion, voluntary association, neighborhood, and ethnic and racial subculture. The question before us is how might public policy relate more creatively to these institutions. To find the answer, we have organized our research project in five panels, and it is expected to run for three years.[3]

It is not possible here to give a detailed exposition of the mediating structure concept; let me simply refer to the statement of the concept made by Neuhaus and myself in a small book, *To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy*, published by the American Enterprise Institute, 1977. But it is essential that I explain why we chose to use the word "mediating" for the above-enumerated institutions. One of the most basic features of a modern society is the split between what sociologists have called the public and private spheres. The typical modern individual derives personal meaning and identity mostly from his private involvements—with family, friends, and a great variety of voluntary associates. This private life is typically segregated, both physically and socially, from the vast institutions (we call them "mega-structures") of the public sphere—the state in all of its many institutional forms, the immense complexes that dominate the economy, and networks of bureaucracy (many of them misleadingly labelled "private") that *administer* other sectors of society. There is nothing wrong about this split in itself, and many people in modern society manage to live quite satisfying lives despite it. But it has two potentially troublesome consequences: Private life deprived of institutional supports threatens to become insecure and chaotic; public life removed from personal meaning and identity threatens to become unreal and to be experienced as oppressive. To repeat: Many people cope with these threats quite efficiently. But many don't—and herein lies a political problem.

Take the family, which is the first (and the most important) on our list of mediating institutions. The problem arises precisely at the point where the family *ceases* to mediate. This occurs when people feel that the force of the mega-structures is antagonistic to the meanings and values that family life embodies. This is bad enough when the

---

things, where the project is located and where our secretary has had to explain to friends that she is *not* working for a firm of architects. In Washington, I sometimes suspect, being ominously incomprehensible may be an important condition of political survival.

[3] Each panel deals with one area of public policy—welfare and social services, education, health, housing and law enforcement—and will produce a book dealing with the implications of the mediating structures concept for its particular area. In addition to the production of five books, the project is having a spin-off effect in terms of colloquia, speeches by the co-directors and others connected with the undertaking, and the like.

mega-structures are non-governmental (say, when powerful real-estate and development firms run rough-shod over a neighborhood). In a democracy it is much worse when public policy itself comes to be perceived as a hostile mega-structure. What follows then is a sense of powerlessness and anger which, as has often been noted of late, is at the heart of the negative feelings that many Americans have about government today. For example, this happens when welfare policies have the effect of disrupting the family rather than helping to hold it together; or when the educational system imposes a worldview on children that is inimical to the values of the families from which they came; or when the health delivery system deprives the parents of handicapped children of decision and choice. To empower people within their family situation is to restore the mediating function to the family—that is, the function of mediating between private life and the mega-structures, giving institutional support to the former and personally relevant meaning to the latter.

An institution that truly mediates has, as it were, two faces. It has a private face, which gives meanings and values by which individuals can organize their personal lives. Put differently: A mediating structure provides a place where the individual knows who he is and where he can feel at home in the world. But there is also a public face, turned toward the larger society, which infuses that larger society with the meanings and values that people live by. Put differently: A mediating structure provides meanings and values by which the larger society can be something more than a practical arrangement. The private face is important anywhere; the public face is of particular importance in a democracy. For if in a modern society the institutions of the public order are deprived of a meaningful relationship with the many intimate communities of value in which real people live, then one of two things may happen. *Either* the public order arrogates to itself whatever value there is to be in the society; that is the totalitarian solution. *Or* the public order becomes, literally, value-less—a state of affairs that is often the prelude to totalitarianism. For these reasons the empowerment of people within mediating structures is not just something to be done for the sake of family, church, voluntarism, neighborhood or subculture (though that in itself is a good purpose). It is also to be done for the sake of the democratic vitality of American society.

One aspect of this matter should be very clear: There are important class differences in the capacity of people to resist the pressure of the mega-structures on their private communities of value. The upper-income individual does not have to worry about anti-family welfare policies. He can send his children to private schools, and he has the

ability to pick and choose when it comes to taking care of the health needs of his family. It is lower-income people who are much less capable of defending themselves and their families against mega-structural pressure. It cannot be emphasized strongly enough, therefore, that public policies in favor of mediating structures should be of special importance for lower-income people in the society. This class aspect of the matter is commonly obfuscated by an outdated political rhetoric, which is still rooted in the realities of class in an earlier period of American history. To make this clearer it helps to see mediating structures in the context of class as it exists in America today.

There are variations in this, but most analysts of the society (including most social scientists) continue to think of the class system in terms of a fairly cohesive scheme: There is a somewhat nebulous upper class; below that the vast expanse of the middle class (usually subdivided into upper-middle and lower-middle strata); and below that the nether reaches of the working class and perhaps other more proletarian lower strata. This may or may not have been a useful way of looking at class in, say, the 1930s. It is *not* a useful way of looking at it today. For the most important thing that has happened to class in America since then (apart from the fact that almost everyone in the society is much better off economically—but that is another story) is that there has been a division in the middle class. There continues to be the old middle class, which derives its living from business and some of the professions. There is also a new middle class, with its occupational base in what, broadly speaking, has been called the "knowledge industry." This new stratum is an altogether new phenomenon, brought about by a social transformation that has been given different names: Daniel Bell has called it the coming of post-industrial society. The new stratum itself has been given different names, too; the one used by Irving Kirstol, "New Class," seems to stick. Since that is not a terribly happy term (what is new today will be old tomorrow, and this class is likely to be around for a long time), I'd prefer to use the term "knowledge class." I quite agree with Kristol, however, that this new class is engaged in a power struggle with the old elite which it is trying to replace, that being the business class.

Again, this is not the place to spin out the many fascinating implications of understanding American society as the scene of a class struggle between knowledge and business class. Let me only suggest that many social, cultural, and (last not least) political developments of the recent past make much better sense when understood in this way. But what does this have to do with mediating structures? A lot! For the new knowledge class is that group in the society which is *least* rooted in

mediating structures and (just as important) which has the strongest vested interest in public policies that are indifferent if not inimical to them. The first point is easy to see: People in this new class have the highest degree of emancipation from traditional family ties (and are therefore most open to "life styles" alternative to the traditional family); they are highly secularized, highly mobile both physically and socially (and thus emancipated from neighborhood ties); and they are unlikely to be strongly ethnic. Indeed, the one mediating structure in which this class is probably more involved than other classes is voluntary association (I cannot pursue this exception here. Suffice it to say that in their voluntary associations, they often reinforce their indifference to the other mediating structures). But the second point is exceedingly important for the present considerations: *This new class has a strong vested interest in precisely those welfare-state machineries that prevent the empowerment of people in their own mediating structures.*

Indeed, the development of the modern welfare state has been one of the principal causes (not the only one) of the rise of this class. A large proportion of the knowledge class derives its income from jobs directly or indirectly linked with the services provided by the welfare state. Helmut Schelsky, a contemporary German sociologist, has described the vested interest in question in a catchy phrase (at least it's catchy in German): *Belehrung, Betreuung, Beplanung.* Translated into terrible English, this would be: Be-teaching, be-caring, be-planning. Put in somewhat better English: These people have a vested interest in belaboring the rest of the population (and especially, of course, the poor) by indoctrinating them, by organizing their lives for them, and by making plans for them. And, needless to say, this vested interest is disguised by appeals to the general welfare of the society, and especially the welfare of the poor. Thus it is probable that the poor have benefited to some extent from the various campaigns against poverty waged in America since the mid-1960s; it is certain that the knowledge class has benefited enormously from the same activities. Simple question: How much of the "poverty money" has gone to the poor—and how much to the people who might best be described as the "poverty managers"? Of current social critics in this country, I think, Jesse Jackson has understood this fact more clearly than anyone else: There is a vested interest in creating and maintaining a permanently dependent underclass—and this vested interest is *not* that of the business elite. (I may add that Jackson's ideas have been influential in shaping our thinking in the mediating structures project.)

In consequence of all this, the policy implications of the mediating structures concept stand, at the least, in a certain tension with the

vested interests of a powerful new class in America. Take once more the area of education: From early on in the project we have had an attraction to the idea of educational vouchers.[4] We are not at all doctrinaire about this. We are fully aware of the difficulties and possible pitfalls of this idea, and indeed we are open to the suggestion that, politically speaking, the idea is impractical. If that suggestion is valid, though, then it seems to us that some sort of functional equivalent to the voucher idea should be sought. The reason for our being attracted to the notion of vouchers should be clear by now: In any of its various versions, the voucher idea seeks to realize our own central policy aim—the empowerment of people within the institutions that have personal meaning to them. Changing the fiscal modality of publicly funded education from the present monopolistic school system to vouchers under the control of parents would go a long way toward restoring the centrality of the family in the lives of children. It would increase choices, especially among lower-income people, and it would strengthen the diversity of American culture in terms of religion, ethnicity, and voluntary association. Put simply: The idea of educational vouchers is to extend to the poorer groups of the population the same, or at least a comparable, freedom of decision and choice that is now reserved to upper-income people—and to do this in one of the most meaningful human concerns, namely the concern for the future of one's children.

In our understanding of this matter, the one really serious objection to this idea is that it could be a means to subvert racial integration in education. It seems to us that this objection could be met easily by the way in which a voucher system would be formulated in law (and we are second to none in believing that racial discrimination in any shape or form should be eradicated from American life). But the major opposition to vouchers has not come from Blacks or from others with a paramount concern for racial justice. Rather, it has come from those who have a vested interest in the perpetuation of the *status quo* of a monopolistic public school system—the complex of teachers' organizations (both in professional associations and labor unions) and of bureaucracies administering the public schools. This should hardly surprise anyone who has grasped the foregoing analysis of American class realities today. Nor should it surprise anyone who is familiar with the history of anti-trust legislation: Try to break up a monopoly, and the monopolists will fight you—and, needless to say, their self-legitima-

---

[4] Simply stated, educational vouchers would provide direct aid to parents who could use the aid (in forms negotiable only at educational institutions) at the school of their choice.

tions will be couched in terms of the general welfare. In this instance, the class interests of those who want to "be-teach" the population are touched—in one of the few situations where a segment of the knowledge class has truly achieved a monopoly! The reason why the voucher idea may be a political non-starter is, quite simply, the vast power which this particular professional-bureaucratic complex has accumulated. It is indicative of the arrogance of this power that the same complex, not satisfied with its monopoly over publicly funded education from kindergarten through high school, now seeks actively to extend the monopoly to publicly funded programs for children of pre-school age.

Let me repeat: The mediating structures project is not linked to any specific position in terms of partisan politics. Yet, by the nature of its subject matter, it has far-reaching political implications. What is very interesting is that these implications cannot readily be put in the language of "right" or "left," "conservative" or "liberal" (let alone Republican or Democrat). The response to the project thus far bears this out. Most of it has been very favorable—from people right across the political and ideological spectrum. What is also interesting, however, is how the project and its mediating structures concept have been understood, and misunderstood, by individuals at different locations on that spectrum.

Individuals from the "right" hear us as saying that government should withdraw from various areas of welfare-state concerns, leaving them to market forces and to private sector initiatives. While some of us (I, for one) might be sympathetic to such a notion of phased withdrawal, this is *not* what we have been saying in the project. We have not been talking about dismantling the welfare state, or even of shrinking its scope, but of changing the institutional mechanism by which it operates. Individuals from the "left," on the other hand, have heard us as using their language of "power to the people," decentralization and community control, and generally mobilizing the masses to fight the big bad system. We have *not* been saying that either. Thus we have been careful to leave out the little word "the" in our title of **To Empower People.** The notion of "*the* people" is a dangerous abstraction. We are concerned with real people, in their concrete lives. The concept of mediating structures is not the equivalent of either decentralization (mega-structures can be decentralized without becoming any more meaningful) or community control (*that* has often been a guise for new mega-structural controls). The very notion of mobilizing people is repugnant to us: It is precisely the sort of elitist notion by which the knowledge class habitually camouflages its power grabs.

The misunderstanding of the mediating structures concept both from the "right" and the "left" is interesting, I think, far beyond our own project. It reveals a deeper inadequacy in the political language of our time. The dissatisfactions with government, and especially with the welfare state and all its works, are very inadequately captured in the rhetoric of either conservatives or liberals. The realities of the new class system are reflected in neither rhetoric. The "right" I believe, sees at least some of these realities more clearly, but it cripples itself by a negativism toward just about all public efforts to cope with the ills of the society and by a quasi-religious faith in the beneficence of market forces that will not stand up under scrutiny. As to the "left," it is overwhelmingly captive to knowledge-class interests and its much-vaunted "populism" is, most of the time, no more than a rhetorical smokescreen for these interests. The political implication of this analysis is just this: There is a promising future ahead in American politics for anyone who succeeds in plausibly embodying the interests of all those who do not want to be dominated by the mega-structures in their penetration of those institutions (that is, the mediating structures) from which people derive meaning and identity. Put differently: Here is a powerful political issue waiting to be picked up; in principle, it could be picked up by either party (though Democrats would be likely to color it a little differently from Republicans).

Here now is the signal I promised: What I have said thus far has been said from under my sociologist hat; I now take off this hat, in order to say a few things as a Republican. And it might be useful, to avoid misunderstandings, to say very briefly why I have this political affiliation. It is certainly not the result of my personal background, and, since sociologically I'm without question a member of the knowledge class, it puts me at odds with the great majority in my own social milieu. Nor am I an adherent of some sort of Republican ideology (whatever that may be these days) and indeed I believe that it is a good thing for American democracy that the ideological lines between the two parties are quite fuzzy. My only reason for being a Republican is that, on balance, the Republican Party more than the other one advocates policies that would strengthen the free-enterprise economy—and I'm very much convinced that there is an intrinsic, inextricable linkage between the latter and freedom as such. On other issues, including that of mediating structures, let me confess a remarkable lack of party loyalty.

Yet, with regard to the issue at hand, there is an interesting difference between the two parties. Both, of course, are amalgams of quite different groups in terms of class and ideology. As I tried to

indicate earlier, both would be quite capable of picking up the mediating structures concept as a political issue. But the Republican Party has one slight edge: *It is less penetrated by knowledge-class forces.* This need not be a permanent condition, but as of now, I think, it gives the Republican Party more flexibility in defending mediating structures against the multiform takeover bids by knowledge-class complexes. It seems to me that there is a political opportunity in this.

In the current class struggle, the Republican Party is closer to the business class, the Democratic Party to the knowledge class. If I understand the class dynamics of this society correctly, this puts the Democrats on the winning side. But this class struggle does not exhaust the social realities of the American scene: *There are other groupings, and other classes, in the society.* What is more, there are many people in the knowledge class who, despite their own class interests, have *other* interests too. For example, public school teachers may be precluded, by their class interests, from accepting policies that would break their "be-teaching" monopoly. But some of the same individuals may also be parents and church members, and they may have strong ties to neighborhood and ethnic or racial identifications. In all of these capacities their individual interests may be at odds with knowledge-class interests. Thus, it seems to me, there are many opportunities for diverse coalitions on a number of the issues relevant to mediating structures. I have the strong hunch that the future of the Republican Party will hinge on its ability to forge such coalitions.

Prescription For Republicans

by Michael Novak

For the advice that follows, I have asked the editors to pay me thirty pieces of silver. I am a Democrat,* and the goals I set forth below I hope the Republicans don't achieve, while the Democrats do. Still, it is better for the country if both parties compete to meet the nation's basic needs. It will be good for America if the Republicans make it tough for Democrats, by hitting basic issues on the head.

Right now, there is reason to be dissatisfied with both parties. Both parties are far weaker than parties used to be (or should be). More important, the intellectual base of both parties is no longer in touch with reality. Both parties need some fundamental rethinking.

In Anglo-American political traditions, great emphasis has been given to two extremes of thought: the individual and the state. By and large, Republicans have arranged themselves around one of these poles and the Democrats around the other. Both have neglected the important institutions that stand *between* the individual and the state. The reason for this neglect is that such institutions used to be so healthy that they took care of themselves, and most thinkers simply took them for granted. They cannot be taken for granted any longer. They are in trouble, those institutions that nourish strong individuals and protect them from the state: the family, the neighborhood, small businesses, unions, parent and teacher associations, parishes, fraternal societies, universities, and voluntary associations of every sort—the thick middle

---

Michael Novak is the Ledden-Watson Distinguished Professor of Religion at Syracuse University. His writings include "The Rise of The Unmeltable Ethnics" (1972) and "Choosing Our King" (1974). He writes a twice weekly column syndicated by the **Washington Star** *and is a resident scholar of the American Enterprise Institute.*

---

*(Ed. note) Mr. Novak was asked to contribute his thoughts as a Democrat on the nature of the Republican opportunity and we intend to extend the invitation to various of his Democrat colleagues for future issues. We are grateful to Mr. Novak for his contribution because it has established not only a precedent of high quality and provocative thinking, but also a prevailing wage rate.

area of human life, the "mediating institutions" in which all of us live, move, and spend the better part of all our hours.

These "mediating institutions," I submit, will provide the main political battleground of the future. Which political party will serve them better?

I don't understand those (they are usually, but not always, in my own party) who say that citizens need to "trust" their government. On nickels and dimes, a better policy is plainly embossed: "In God we trust"—meaning *nobody else.* And certainly not any branch of government. The central motif of the U.S. Constitution is a thorough mistrust, mistrust not only of kings and distant parliaments, but of every branch and form of government. Because of such radical mistrust, checks and balances are supplied at every point. Periodically, these need adjustment. They certainly need it now.

In 1935 the philosopher John Dewey wrote the basic manifesto which was to form the rationale for liberal democrats for the next forty years.[1] He described the many changes that had been made by liberalism since its earliest beginnings, and declared that a new age was about to begin. Liberals have always feared central government, he wrote. But it is not necessary always to regard government as a hostile force, nor even as a neutral force. Government might begin to be imagined, Dewey argued, as a *moral* force, an *instrument of good.* He encouraged liberals to cease resisting government and to begin thinking of it *instrumentally.*

In Europe, socialist parties were making similar but not identical claims. In Europe, capitalism was far more clearly the descendant of a feudal and even aristocratic order. In Europe, there were comparatively few Horatio Alger stories, and there was lacking that populist sense of ownership, initiative, enterprise, and possibility that made countless Americans, born in poverty, able to imagine that they might create their own proprietorships, their own businesses, their own destinies. Even the poorest immigrants disgorged upon these shores—immigrants who would have been mere proletarians if they had settled in European cities—glimpsed new possibilities here. So there was not much sense in Dewey trying to sell American liberals socialism. He sold them a kind of pragmatism, instead. He did not hold up the central state as the proprietor and manager of everything, the ideal form of total central control. Few would buy that. Rather, he looked upon the central state as an instrument of liberal purposes, a technique, a means, a pragmatic engine.

---

[1] John Dewey, *Liberalism And Social Action*, Capricorn Books, 1963.

Dewey's was, of course, a dangerous move. Those who think to tame the lion may be devoured by it. But, by and large, the immigrant populations from Eastern and Southern Europe, Christian and Jewish, had a stronger social sense than did the earlier Americans from Great Britain. The individualism of the Anglo-American tradition seemed to them exaggerated. They had strong family ties. The local vitalities of parishes and synagogues, their fraternal associations, and their labor unions seemed to them crucial components of "the good life." No man is an island. No individual lives or grows totally alone. The inherited social wisdom of the immigrants made many of them happy to make the new liberal ideology, pragmatic and non-socialist as it was, the main vehicle of their own developing life. It gave them a way of opposing "rugged individualism," an ideal foreign to them, without being socialists. In the northern states, at least, the Democratic Party became their party. The British-American Protestants in those states were, to put it roughly, Republicans; most of the Catholics and Jews were Democrats. (Even the Blacks, in those days, were Republicans.)

The social vision added to American politics by the immigrant voters was a healthy corrective to the rugged individualism that dominated the nation before their arrival. But since at least World War II, the entire social scene has been characterized by such huge corporate growth of every kind that the dangers threatening all of us are almost the reverse of those Dewey wrote about. Government, in particular, has grown to proportions so vast that it has become a mockery to think of government merely as an "instrument." But the face of the business world has been altered, too. Few are the families that own and operate their own corporations; vast corporate bureaucracies, run by hired managers and owned by the public (not least the pension plans of millions), have become dominant. Even the universities are huge, sprawling bureaucracies. The very citadel of entrepreneurship—the free-lance writer—is an endangered species. All but a few hundred writers in America work for someone else. From a nation of independent individuals, we have become a nation of corporate bureaucracies.

The new situation presents a dilemma both to Republicans and to Democrats. To the latter, the dilemma is that a huge, entrenched, coercive bureaucracy is the opposite of everything suggested by the word "liberal." Those on the left the name of whose desire is socialism, of course, are less dismayed by the growth of central government. But the Democratic Party is rapidly splitting into two factions, one socialist and the other liberal (sometimes called "neo-conservative," a misnomer). The Republican Party faces a different dilemma. The huge corporations

which presently represent the world of business are far from being bastions of libertarianism, rugged individualism, or other qualities for which Republicans have classically stood. To rail against bureaucracy in government is to rail, as well, against bureaucracy in great corporations. Moreover, a Republican philosophy can be based upon a vision of a society under-girded by minimum decencies of income, housing, education, and security. It is not necessary to imagine the most destitute starving and in despair, in order to defend the rights and benefits of a strong private economy. The necessary task for a Republican intellectual theory in touch with reality is to invent strategies for the building of a good society that draw as much as possible upon non-governmental initiatives.

For both parties, in a word, attention will inexorably be drawn to the role of "mediating institutions." Republicans will be looking for imaginative social strategies to meet social needs better than welfare democracy does. Democrats will be looking for strategies that help them to avoid the disasters that even they can see are inherent in the clumsiness and inefficiency of government. Both liberals and conservatives will be looking for ways to "empower people"—to make local organizations and networks strong, to resist the state, to invigorate the middle sections of the social organism: those associations that stand between the individual and the state.

In too many writings, on the left as on the right, too easy a confusion goes unchallenged. "Society" is not equivalent to "state." There are many institutions larger than the individual, which nourish, protect, and challenge the individual, which are independent of the state. Each of us is a social animal, a political animal, with an active social and political life quite outside the sphere of government. Again, "the private sector" is not necessarily non-bureaucratic, in small and human scale, and friendly to the free individual. Some "private" corporations are monolithic bureaucracies, suffocating in committee work and red tape, as though encased in eight feet of peanut butter. On the other hand, "the public sector" is not necessarily unselfish, public-spirited, compassionate, and caring. Bureaucrats in "public" institutions can be petty tyrants. Thus, words such as "public" and "private," "society" and "state," must be used with intellectual caution. The old arguments have been bypassed by real life.

What does "Power to the people" mean? Those on the romantic left thought—or pretended to think—that an awakened populace would vote a socialist elite into power. Hardly. Environmentalists are discovering that activists who protect jobs and economic growth can be effective lobbyists too. "Public interest" activists are discovering that other

citizens perceive *them* as representing "special interests," and are quite capable of mobilizing against them in the name of public values different from theirs. In airports, one is as liable to be met by petitioners who want to build nuclear energy plants as by the anti-war petitioners of yesteryear. In addition, corporations have been learning to mobilize their workers, managers, shareholders, customers, and neighbors in effective grassroots lobbying. A more politically alert and effective citizenry is a good not be sneezed at.

Still, most lobbying of this sort falls to "the new class" in both its liberal and conservative wings. The new class is composed of those college-educated adults, with family incomes of, say, $25,000 per year, and managerial or professional status—a class that has by now grown to include approximately ten percent of the adult population or 15 million persons. What about the other adults? The other ninety percent?

Here is where I imagine the struggle of the future taking place. Traditionally, the Republicans have represented the old wealthy families and the corporate elite, while working men and women especially in urban areas tended to support the Democrats. But now the Democrats, too, have grown their own financial, educational, and high status elite: the swollen ranks of "limousine liberals." The old line-up used to consist of an upper class elite (Republicans) against "working people" (the Democrats). Now there are *two* upper class elites, one Republican and the other Democratic. The ordinary voter may support one elite on some grounds, and the other on other grounds. Both elites, dividing the top ten percent of the population between them, are now competing for the support of the lower ninety percent.

Stylistically, the Democrats used to have the chief advantage in this competition. Republican candidates used to sound too moral, righteous, prim, and superior, while Democratic candidates spoke the grittier language of the mills and factories. Indeed, the issue went beyond matters of style. By and large, the Democrats better represented the economic, social, and cultural interests of multicultural working folks, while Republicans seemed to represent the interests of the traditional local, regional, and national establishments. (This is a simplification, of course; in particular localities, roles were sometimes reversed.) But, nowadays, the Democratic leadership has also lost the common touch. Worse, it has also lost its grip on the real economic, social, and cultural interests of large portions of its most faithful traditional constituencies. It is not likely that the Republicans will learn fast enough how to seize this temporary opening. They could do so, if they could learn how.

As I see it, the categories of thought practiced by Republican leaders tend to be too narrow in economic, social, and cultural matters. Too

many trappings of the old elitist imagery still prevent them from grasping the new realities. Republicans seem to cling to an inherited vision—a single ethnic vision, really—rather than to be thinkers, originators, and innovators. Whatever their multiple faults, the cantankerous Democrats until recently have seemed to be the thinkers and the experimenters, while the Republicans are turned to only in moments of respite and stability, when the Democrats have gone too fast or screwed things up enough to invite rebuke. The Republicans then solidify Democratic gains until the Democrats get a second wind and start things moving again.

It does not have to be this way.

The times demand a fresh start in a new direction. The Republicans need to abandon narrow and merely inherited words. They need to think. What is their picture of the good society? How would they direct us toward that goal, and manage its achievement?

The "other ninety percent" of Americans are not really interested in the problems of the media-centered and "well-informed" elites. Most Americans are not, despite their reputation, terribly upward-mobile or terribly competitive. Most have rather modest and realistic goals. Many are moved by impulses and aspirations carried along in their cultures of birth by a thousand-year history. To keep a family together these days is a struggle. To bring children up to be decent, honorable, and productive is no easy task. Many men and women in the other ninety percent are each working fifty or sixty-hour weeks, millions of them holding down second jobs, in order to stay even with inflation. (According to law, workers are supposed to be protected by a forty-hour week; few can afford such protection.) Now that, for reasons of inflation even more than for reasons of "women's liberation" (which, actually, is not so much "liberation" as willing bondage to new responsibilities), women are more and more obliged to seek work, jobs are in acutely short supply. A new corporate economic order—constructed around new types of job schedules—is very much in demand. Both Republicans and Democrats will be hard-pressed to imagine a new vision of social organization that meets all these new demands with some measure of decency and satisfaction.

It seems clear that the "lived world" of most citizens is not quite that of the evening news. The world of most citizens is that of their own families and neighborhoods. This is the world in which they feel effective. This is the world that shapes their sense of achievement and happiness. Public speech in the United States has more and more lost touch with these smaller lived worlds. The social planners think on vaster, more abstract levels. The corporate executives worry about

larger, more homogeneous dimensions of life. The political party that first figures out how to "touch ground," how to enter into and actualize the powers of ordinary people in their daily environments, will be the successful political party of the future.

"Change" is a much overrated value in contemporary discourse. The basic decencies of human life do not change much from culture to culture, generation to generation. Thus, Republicans (and intelligent Democrats) will do well to eschew the messianic rhetoric of the last decade or so. It is necessary to learn how to touch *humus* (earth), to be *humbler* in vision, to think about the actual structures of daily life and how they can be enlivened by a wise and humane politics. Key concepts in this revitalization are not the all-time Republican favorites: the individual, free enterprise, the private sector. All these can be as alienating as the all-time Democratic favorites: the state, government programs, the public sector.

Rather, the key concepts are likely to concern humbler realities: families, neighborhoods, voluntary citizen effectiveness. Government should be the nourisher of these institutions. Government should not overpower them or take away their functions. According to the ancient principle of subsidiarity, each social institution is the best judge of concrete reality within its own area of responsibility; such responsibilities should accrue to the next higher level of organization only when they are utterly incapable of being met closer to home. The principle of subsidiarity is as important to Democrats as to Republicans, and open to both, for it is a principle of historical realism, fully respecting the contingencies and peculiarities of the concrete complexity of daily life.

My advice, then, is that Republican thinkers begin to concentrate their creative energies upon *mediating institutions* as the natural organisms of daily life, and in particular on the *family*, the *neighborhood* and the *work place*. Here is where most of life is lived. Here is where people wish to feel free, effective, equal, just, and brave. Here is where they are, for most of their waking hours, social and political animals. These are the cells of the social organism in which most of us work out our destiny. These are the locations at which the key political battles of the future will be fought. If Democrats and Republicans battle over who can best recreate the vitalities of these mediating institutions in our society, the "other ninety percent" will be the lucky beneficiaries.