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A New Democratic Politics

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A New Democratic Politics

Our nation, and in particular our urban areas, needs a new politics, one that recognizes that meaningful political participation on behalf of individuals, families, and communities requires a politics that is both accessible and associational. That is, there can be no meaningful political participation, no just and accountable public policy, without a politics that is accessible to those who are at the bottom of society, those who are currently left out of the political process. And there can be no meaningful political participation for any of us without a politics that is associational, that is deliberative, that enables us to come together to talk about our families, our property, our education, and other issues important to us.

This new politics is very different from the democratic politics practiced today. It represents a unique—or, for some, authentic—kind of democratic politics. This new politics is absolutely essential for an effective and accountable public sector. It is absolutely essential for a just society.

A New Democratic Politics: From Aristotle to the Industrial Areas Foundation

There is a dimension of politics and public life that is requisite to the human condition. Aristotle said it best, when he said that we are social beings. We are beings whose personhood emerges to the extent that we are involved in deliberations about those matters that affect the commons, the community: education, the raising of children, the pressures on families, how families grow and thrive, and what happens to property. For Aristotle, these deliberations, which took place around the agora or the public square, were politics. They defined politics.¹

This basic vision of politics is shared by the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). For more than 50 years, its primary mission has been to make this kind of deliberative politics a reality in communities throughout the United States. In short, the IAF teaches ordinary people how to do democratic politics, recognizing that this kind of politics requires a special craft, a special perspective, a special attitude. It involves deliberative skills: the capacity to engage in the kind of conversation that is politics.

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However, despite reflecting Aristotle's basic vision, the politics of the IAF also are very unique. That is, IAF politics are not only associational, they are accessible. In contrast, Aristotle's politics were not accessible. In fact, Aristotle thought politics were for those who had the time and energy and capacity to see beyond themselves, as he put it. He thought that politics were for men who had leisure time, such as the members of the Hoplite Army. From Aristotle's perspective, the most important people who existed in Ancient Greece were the Hoplites. These were the characters who could afford their own armor, because they came from families who had the resources to provide them. These were the characters who could see beyond their private need and thus should participate in the deliberation that was politics. Accordingly, Aristotle thought that everyone else, women, immigrants, slaves, people who worked with their hands, and everybody else, were into their needs and necessities, and therefore were "idiots," because that is what an idiot meant—one who was totally into one's own private life. Aristotle thought that those people who were idiots should not participate in public life.

Recognizing this limitation of Aristotle's politics, the IAF's politics are inclusive. The IAF shares the perspective that politics is the birthright of everyone, a point to which this article will return. In this way, the IAF takes what is best about Aristotle's politics and enriches it, creating a politics that is accessible as well as associational.

Politics Today . . . or Electioneering

Creating a new politics in America is a great challenge. That challenge is underscored by the contrast between the kind of politics practiced today and the new democratic politics described above.

The conversation that defines democratic politics unfortunately is becoming a lost art in today's society. Instead of engaging in conversation, most of us engage in "station identification," where we basically identify ourselves and then listen appropriately while we are thinking about what we are going to say next. Or we avoid conversation completely, especially if we know it has the potential to expose tension and conflict, which political discussions often do. As a result, the real conversations of engagement—of listening, and particularly of listening to the other person as another, as someone who has a

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different perspective, a different point of view, a different story or history—do not exist anymore.

Our culture has developed a disdain for politics, because our politics no longer has any meaning; it is disconnected from real conversations about relevant issues. And what people normally mean when they talk about their disdain for or alienation from politics is, frankly, not politics at all, but electioneering or electoral activity.

Instead of politics, every four years we have a “quadrennial electronic plebiscite,” which has nothing at all to do with politics and everything to do with marketing. What we engage in is the devotion of massive amounts of time and energy to marketing campaigns—campaigns designed to persuade people (who are viewed, in a fairly limited and narrow way, as consumers or as customers of political goods and services) that brand X is better than brand Y, or, to wit: Bill Clinton will provide better services than Bob Dole. That’s what politics is all about today; it’s about persuading us that something or someone is better than something or someone else. It is not about deliberation. It is not about developing those deliberative skills that Aristotle talked about. It is not about discussion of issues. As a result, electoral activity no longer connects to peoples’ interests; thus, people feel disconnected.

The impact of this disconnection is reflected in the decline in political parties. Traditionally, parties have served as a vehicle for an agenda, one developed by, and thus connected to, ordinary peoples’ interests. But parties no longer function this way. Instead of parties, what we have today is a kind of consensus arrangement, reflected in the constant drive for bipartisanship, that basically means there is only one party: the party for those with lots of money. Even though my perspective is limited, the Democratic party represents people who make over \$150,000 a year; the Republican party represents people who make over \$300,000 a year.

The rest of the people have no party, notwithstanding Pat Buchanan, Jesse Ventura, Donald Trump, and Ross Perot. They are the party of the nonparticipants, the unattached, the disconnected, the “great unwashed.” But the great unwashed—those who have no party, no connections, no relationships, no money—do have the potential to develop the capacity to do politics, if only they could be taught how—

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if only they could be connected to institutions, such as families, schools, congregations, unions, and other voluntary associations, that can mentor, guide, and teach them how to be relational and practice politics. But unfortunately these kinds of intermediate institutions have been imploded or blown apart.

**A Relational Culture and its Institutions:
The Foundation of a New Democratic Politics**

The deterioration of the institutions that cultivate our capacity to practice democratic politics has been documented. Authors from Robert Putnam, to Benjamin Barber, to Robert Bellah, have written about and decried the loss of civic capacity and our capacity to engage in those kind of negotiations which are important to and at the center of public life.

But not so long ago these institutions existed. When I grew up in San Antonio back in the '50s, there were 250 adults organized against each child. There were 250 adults who felt they had a responsibility and ownership of my life. However, when I began organizing in east Los Angeles in 1976, instead of 250 adults organized against one kid, it was 50-60 kids organized against one adult, and the adults were living under house arrest, afraid to go out at night.

Today in Los Angeles, that situation is even more true. It seems that more and more the ideal and most important right of every member of the Los Angeles community is the right to be left alone, the right to be disconnected, the right to be apart. Nirvana for people in Los Angeles is living in their gated community.

Modern Los Angeles exemplifies this idea that part and parcel of our inability to do politics has to do with the fact that those institutions that undergird our political activity—families, communities, labor unions, political associations—have been imploded. We really can't do politics unless we are, as Aristotle and Crick define it, connected to, and are part of, a relational culture.² And we can't develop a relational culture by ourselves. Relational cultures emerge from institutions that connect us, that give us a larger vision of what society is all about, that challenge us to think beyond that which is immediate.

Tocqueville and America's Intermediate Institutions

Interestingly, Alexis de Tocqueville, the first observer of American political life, was the first to understand the important role of intermediate institutions in American politics.³ He was the first to link them to the kind of culture requisite for the functioning and survival of American democracy.

In studying American politics, Tocqueville developed a concern for what he called the Augustinian soul in American life. Part of what he meant was our inclination to retreat and become self-absorbed and narcissistic. But Tocqueville also saw a natural antidote for this narcissism and self-absorption: the face-to-face contact and engagement and conflict and negotiation that went on in local politics.

Tocqueville was impressed that, while people took a strong interest in national political elections, the politics that really mattered was not those of the state and the nation, but the politics of the township and the school board. What he saw in these local politics was the capacity to engage in direct deliberations around schools, around townships, and around all the issues important to the community. A capacity emerging out of people's natural tendency to associate, to form all kinds of associations, made these politics so important. Tocqueville even coined the term "associational democracy" in deference to the widespread practice of experiments in association. Through these various associations, people with differences would come together to bargain, negotiate, and even engage in reciprocal activities such as raising barns and homes and building schools and roads. This face-to-face political engagement, according to Tocqueville, was the antidote to our tendency for self-absorption.

The other part of the Augustinian Soul that concerned Tocqueville was its capacity to overreach, to make larger claims on life than were appropriate. Tocqueville thought that our enterprising culture, though valuable and important in terms of providing opportunity, had the potential for greed and thus to produce large amounts of inequality. This inequality, in turn, would create concentrations of wealth and power that undermine the political process. But again, Tocqueville thought that there was an antidote for this. He believed America's intermediate institutions provided a check on, or curbed, this inclination. The institutions of family, community, and even religion,

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because they connect us and help us understand the social nature of our existence and development, enlarge our vision of self-interest, our vision of life, challenging us to think beyond that which is immediate and narrowly individual.

So, Tocqueville thought that America's intermediate institutions—congregations, family, networks of political associations and voluntary associations—were foundational to the creation of the kind of political community requisite for a democratic life and republican virtue. He believed they were the glue of a relational culture that enabled and sustained our capacity to practice democratic politics.

In retrospect, this understanding of the role of intermediate institutions was a very fundamental and ingenious insight. Because what we are seeing, as we witness the disdain and alienation from politics, is part and parcel of our buying into a dominant culture that preaches excessive individualism and narcissism. This culture tells us that we are individual consumers, not citizens; that we are individual customers and clients rather than neighbors and members of associations. And, just as Tocqueville would have predicted, our capacity to engage in associational democracy is undermined by that.

This suggests that there is a cost associated with the prosperous new world in which we live. That is, as our society increasingly embraces a dominant market culture, it is doing so at the expense of the institutions and culture that support democracy. As we embrace the change that is generating enormous opportunity and prosperity—i.e., globalization, technological change, hyperconsumerism, and the other attributes of unfettered market capitalism—part of what we are embracing is a culture of individualism, disconnection, and self-absorption. This culture, in turn, is making us less capable of maintaining our intermediate institutions and the kind of culture (i.e., relational) that is requisite for democratic politics. What this amounts to, in the end, is a trade-off between the potential for economic bounty (i.e., goods and services) and the ability and opportunity to participate in self-government.

Re-creating a Relational Culture and Reclaiming Our Birthright

As described above, Aristotle had a distinct view of politics (i.e., conversation about important common issues). But again, Aristotle's

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vision was limited. He thought that only certain people were capable of developing the deliberative skills and participating in the culture of conversation, argument, and judgement requisite for real political activity. Simply put, Aristotle was a white, European male who felt that only certain elites could be political.

In an essay titled “Contract and Birthright,” Princeton Political Science Professor Sheldon Wolin offers a very different view. In that article, he introduces the idea of a birthright, which he asserts is the inheritance of every American. That birthright is our “politicalness;” it is “our capacity for developing into beings who know and value what it means to participate in and be responsible for the care and improvement of our common and collective life.”⁴ Wolin argues that this heritage, our birthright, is about the struggle of those people that Aristotle thought were “idiots,” those people that Aristotle thought had no right to participate in the deliberations of the public square. Our birthright is the inheritance that came from the struggle of those people—to wit: women, slaves, immigrants—to gain their rightful place at the public square. Our birthright is that which was inherited from the abolitionist movement, the anti-slave movement, the struggle over women’s rights, working people’s rights, immigrants’ rights, etc., etc.

In spite of this political tradition, however, Wolin argues we have become an apolitical people. We are no longer concerned or identify with this tradition because we are isolated and disconnected, and because those institutions that have nurtured our capacity to tell the story, to connect to and reinterpret the story of our traditions, the stories of our grandfathers and grandmothers, have imploded due to our lack of investment in them. As a result, we now define ourselves as consumers, customers, and clients and no longer see ourselves as people who have responsibilities and obligations of citizenship. We no longer see ourselves as situated selves, as selves who are constructed in narratives and stories, as selves who are immersed in the deliberative struggle of politics. In effect, what this means is that we have contracted away our birthright, our “politicalness,” the capacity to participate in our common life and concerns and to make decisions.

In this respect, Wolin argues, we are like Esau in the book of Genesis. Esau, too, had a birthright. It, also, was inherited, concerned

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a collective identity, and involved rights and obligations. And, although it was an entitlement, it was something that had to be claimed, taken care of, improved, and passed on, just like our birthright. Wolin uses the story of Esau and Jacob to help us understand the importance of our political birthright and to help us think about why we are failing to claim it.

Esau and Jacob

The story of Esau and Jacob is from the book of Genesis. Esau was a hunter, a powerful man, kind of crude and primitive. He liked to be alone. Jacob was soft of speech, kind of demure. Jacob was domestic, a good cook.

One day Esau was out hunting, and he had been unsuccessful. When he returned home, he was starving to death, and he came across his brother boiling pottage. Esau says to Jacob, “my brother, feed me, or I’ll die. I’ve been unsuccessful in my hunt.” Jacob replies, “brother Esau, you know you can count on me. Of course, I’ll feed you. But what do I get for it?” “Well, what do you want?” says Esau. “Brother Esau,” says Jacob, “sell me your birthright.” Esau, pausing for a moment, responds, “what good is my birthright? It’s not going to feed me; it’s not going to keep me warm at night. What is my birthright? I’ll tell you what is my birthright. It’s my identity; it’s my father’s obligations; it’s all those quarrels, all those deaths, all the responsibility, the land, the people. Of course, I’ll sell you my birthright.” According to the book of Genesis, from that day forward, Esau despised his birthright.

You, me—all of us—we are Esau, because we have contracted away that which we cannot contract away. We have reduced our birthright, our “politicalness,” our heritage, our traditions, our history, to something that can be negotiated and commodified. And we have sold our birthright for material goods and services. We have decided, like Esau, that the responsibilities, risks, and sacrifices of our birthright are a worthless burden compared to the bounties of a mass consumption society.

In many ways we are like the Czech intellectuals and middle class in 1968, who—when Russian tanks and planes came into Prague, Czechoslovakia, and pointed guns at their heads—accepted an offer

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they could not refuse. The offer was that we, the *nomenclatura*, will make all the decisions of public life, in exchange for which you, the Czech intellectuals and middle class, will have all the goods and services of a mass consumption society. You will have the restaurants, the summer homes, the cars—everything you want. Just don't associate with one another or deliberate with one another. That is our job. Havel then argues that the Czech intellectuals and middle class underwent an internal migration. They withdrew into themselves and became absorbed with their private concerns. They became like Aristotle's idiots.

Hannah Arendt in her book, *Men in Dark Times*, says the same phenomenon happened in Germany when the German intellectuals and middle class, disdainful of the Weimar democracy, disdainful of parliamentarianism, disdainful of all the squabbling, underwent an internal migration.⁵ They, too, became self-absorbed and withdrew into themselves, leaving the public square naked for the thugs and hooligans of nazism. And, of course, we know what happened then.

We—that is, Americans today—are making the same kind of decisions. But we don't have the excuse that the Czech intellectuals and middle class had; we don't have any guns pointing at our heads. We are doing it slowly and willingly. We are being seduced, withdrawing into our narcissism, into our needs and necessities, into our disconnectedness and isolation. We are becoming a community of people who celebrate our ability to live, work, and be entertained outside of our community. In some places in the United States, Los Angeles, for example, this isolation represents nirvana. Yet in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, to be outside the community, to be denied full participation in the life of the community, is to be cast out into the darkness, "where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth."

In summary, what this suggests is that in order to develop the new kind of democratic politics our nation so desperately needs, we must first restore the fundamental characteristics of our civic culture. In other words, we must re-create a relational culture, a social fabric of relationships that enables us to reclaim our political birthright. This means we are going to have to struggle to form those relationships that connect us to one another and learn to be deliberative.

Once the fundamental characteristics of our civic culture have been restored, then, and only then, will we be able to realize a new

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democratic politics—a politics that recognizes that there can be no meaningful participation, there can be no just or accountable politics, without its being accessible to those who are “the least,” those who are left out, those who are at the margin of our social and political life. But, at the same time, one that recognizes that there can be no politics that is meaningful to any of us, unless it is a politics of association, the politics of deliberation, the politics where we are able to come together to talk about our families, our property, our education, and the host of other issues important to our common lives.

The IAF, Relational Power, and Leadership

Again, the IAF’s main mission is to create a politics of association and accessibility. The IAF has local organizations all over the United States and even several in the United Kingdom. In Dallas, Texas, the local organization is Dallas Area Interfaith (DAI). Each organization has its own name and identity, but they all work toward the same goal: the realization of a new democratic politics in our communities, cities, and, ultimately, our nation.

More specifically, these organizations teach ordinary people an understanding of democratic politics, beginning with the key idea that politics is connected to power. These organizations recognize that you cannot suggest or teach participation without connecting it to power. That is, there can be no meaningful politics, there can be no meaningful democracy, without power—power that exists not for its own sake, but to create the kind of collaborative communities that enable democratic politics. The word “democracy” literally means the people having power.

IAF organizations teach that there are two very different kinds of power. There is the power that Lord Acton warned us about, which is unilateral, unaccountable, inaccessible: the power of popes and kings. This is the kind of power that led to his maxim that “power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”⁶ People that exercise this kind of power tend to shroud themselves and their power in magic and mystery.

The other kind of power is relational power. This is the kind of power that the IAF teaches and practices. Relational power is collaborative and reciprocal; it means not only acting on, but being acted on.

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It requires calculated vulnerability. It is the power that emerges from collaboration, from conviviality.

Relational power ultimately means treating people decently and not humiliating them. It means not treating adults like children or second class citizens, which too often civilized societies do, as pointed out by a Jewish philosopher by the name of Avishai Margalit. In a book titled *The Decent Society*, Margalit argues that there is a difference between a civilized society and a decent society.⁷ A civilized society is a society in which people treat each other decently, they do not humiliate one another. A decent society, on the other hand, is a society in which the people *and* the institutions of that society do not humiliate.

The humiliation often inherent in the institutions of a civilized society is exemplified by the story of the Grand Inquisitor. The Grand Inquisitor is a chapter in the book called *The Brothers Karamazov* written by the great Russian author, Fyodor Dostoevsky.⁸

The Grand Inquisitor

The Grand Inquisitor is the story of a conversation between two of the Karamozov brothers, Ivan and Alyosha. In the story, Ivan has a reoccurring nightmare, in which Christ comes back to earth in the middle of the Spanish Inquisition. He comes back the day after a big *auto-da-fé*, where they condemn heretics and ask them to recant. Christ returns and is immediately recognized by all the people, who make a big to-do about him. Miracles are performed. But Christ is also recognized by the Grand Inquisitor, a cranky, cynical old man who has him arrested and thrown in jail. Later the Grand Inquisitor comes to see Christ in the dead of night, and he says, “Why did you come back? For fourteen-hundred years we tried it your way, and we failed miserably. You have said everything you had to say. There’s not one word you can change; it is all written down. So why do you come to us now? For fourteen-hundred years we failed miserably, and finally we got enough sense to go over to the other guy. We accepted the temptations that you rejected. And now in your name we serve him. And we are able to give men what they want. They want magic; they want mystery; they want authority in their lives. They cannot be trusted with the anxiety of any responsibility. When they tried to feed

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themselves, their bread turns to stone. It is only when they give it to us, can we give it back to them as food. So be gone, lest we have to crucify you again.” And the story ends. Christ kisses the Grand Inquisitor and goes out into the night.

The Grand Inquisitor represents a style of leadership where adults cannot be trusted, where they cannot accept the responsibilities and anxieties of freedom. They have to be taken care of. They have to be told what to do. We teach them to be dependent. We teach them learned helplessness. It is the kind of leadership based on unilateral power.

Unfortunately, the Grand Inquisitor is alive and well in all too many of our institutions. The Grand Inquisitor is alive and well in our workplace, in our churches, and in our schools, where the definition of a lecture course is where the lecture goes from the lecturer’s notebook to the notebook of the students without going through the heads of either one of them. Neil Postman said our kids enter school as question marks—with energy, vibrance, and vitality—and leave as periods.⁹ The Grand Inquisitor, unfortunately, is also alive and well in municipal and state governments, where, again, citizens are customers, clients, or consumers and not citizens who have the right to participate fully.

The antidote for the Grand Inquisitor’s model of leadership and power is what we call in the IAF the “Iron Rule.” The Iron Rule says: Never, ever, do for anybody what he or she can do for themselves. The Iron Rule ensures that people are not humiliated.

One of the first great historical leaders to learn the Iron Rule was Moses. Only when he understood the Iron Rule was he able to agitate the Hebrews into freedom and peoplehood.

The Story of Moses

Moses was raised a prince in Pharaoh’s house by the daughter of Pharaoh. But he also was raised by a Hebrew woman. The word Hebrew is an interesting word. It does not refer to ethnicity, at least according to many scriptural scholars. It does not mean Jewish. It means someone who is landless, outcast, alienated, at the margin of life. Someone who is desperate. Someone who is “other.” Moses identified with those who are other, that is, those who are Hebrew.

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We read in the scripture that one day Moses comes across an Egyptian overseer oppressing a Hebrew. Upon seeing no one who had come to the aid of this Hebrew, no one who would stand up to injustice, Moses strikes and kills the Egyptian. The next day Moses comes across two Hebrews fighting, and he says to them, “You should be brothers, you should be organizing; you should be getting together.” “Moses,” they reply, “who made you our leader? Who gave you authority to tell us what to do? And, besides, what are you going to do if we don’t do what you say? Are you going to kill us like you killed the Egyptian?”

At that moment Moses realizes his deed is known, and he wonders who told. The guy he killed is dead, buried. He didn’t tell. There was no one else around. Moses realizes that his own people turned him in. Moses says to himself, “I don’t need this.” And he leaves town and goes to the suburbs. He gets a good job and marries the boss’s daughter. He gets a big home, and all the fine accoutrements of suburban life—the furniture, the TV, the big pool, the big car, etc.

But Moses has got a problem: his memory. His memory was shaped by these stories told to him as a child. This memory now formed his identity. This memory that, when his passions have cooled, when he’s matured, confronts him in the burning bush, because his anger has got to become mature and cold, it’s got to be that fire that does not consume, that anger that is rooted in loss and grief, that anger that is relational, that anger that comes from the Greek word for meekness, “*praus*,” as Aristotle taught us. Moses begins to identify with his memory, because he hears the voice of Yahweh saying, “Do you hear my people crying out against their oppression?” The Hebrews are like a lot of us, they lament and they cry out. And the din is so strong that Yahweh feels like he’s got to act.

So Moses finally figures out what he’s got to do. He confronts God and says, “Look, the people have rejected my leadership. If I go to Egypt, who will I say sent me?” “Don’t worry about that Moses,” God replies. “I’ll put together a sponsoring committee for you. You tell them that the God of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Rebecca and Jacob . . . , that God sent you.” Moses says, “Wait a minute, I’ve been away for a long time. I no longer know the language of the streets. My Spanish is rusty. I’m not a good spokesperson.” “Moses,” God says, “they don’t need a spokesperson. They don’t need a charismatic

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leader. They have lots of charismatic leaders. They need an organizer, someone who is going to mentor, guide and teach them. Someone who is going to teach them the relational culture, about individual meetings and house meetings and all the stuff of organizing.”

So, finally, Moses goes to Egypt and frees the people from Pharaoh’s army. He provides them a mountain from heaven. But the Hebrews are like a lot of us. They ask Moses, “what have you done for us lately. Back in Egypt we had it good; we had garlic leaves, cucumbers and fish everyday for free. Now all we got is this crummy manna and it tastes terrible.” So 500,000 people begin screaming at Moses’ tent, “We want meat!” Crying out to God and to Moses, “We want meat.”

Confused, Moses goes back to God and says, “why do you treat me so badly? If this is the way you are going to treat me, why don’t you kill me right now? Obviously, I have found disfavor to inherit 500,000 hungry people like a wet nurse with them at my breast. Where am I going to get meat for all these people?”

God says, “Moses, you’re a real jerk. Your father-in-law, Jethro, explained it to you. Gather your 70 best leaders. Bring them to the tent of the meeting and there I’ll put the burden that’s on you on them. Bring people you’ve done one-on-one meetings with. People you’ve done house meetings with, small actions with. People you can trust. People who have done the kind of deliberative engagement we mean by politics. Bring those people to the tent meeting and I’ll put the burden that’s on you on them. And they’ll have meat to eat. Not for one or two, or even ten days, but for a whole month, until it becomes loathsome and they vomit it out their noses.”

So Moses does what he’s told. He brings his best leaders to the tent of the meeting. He says, “You want meat; there’s quail out there. Go out and organize. I’m not going to do it for you. I’ll teach you. I’ll guide you. But I’m not going to violate the Iron Rule: Never do for someone what she or he can do for themselves.” That’s the way of organizing. That’s the way of developing broad-based organizations and a relational culture through mediating institutions. It does not rationalize social Darwinism; it doesn’t mean you don’t help people who need to be helped. It does mean, however, that you try to challenge our institutions to try to make sure they do not humiliate people.

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Endnotes

- 1 Aristotle, *Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).
- 2 Bernard Crick, *In Defense of Politics* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993).
- 3 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).
- 4 Sheldon Wolin, *The Presence of the Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 139.
- 5 Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983).
- 6 David Nyberg, *Power Over Power* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 37.
- 7 Avishai Margalit, *The Decent Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).
- 8 Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970).
- 9 Neil Postman, *The End of Education* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).

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An earlier version of "A New Democratic Politics" was originally presented February 17, 1999, at the "Ethics in Government: Cooperation and Conflict in Urban Politics" conference organized by the Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility. Other speakers and topics included:

"The Urban Political Scene: Difficulties and Opportunities"

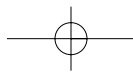
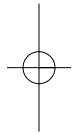
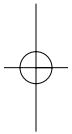
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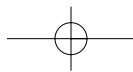
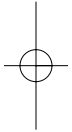
"Urban Politics and Policy in Houston in the 1980s"

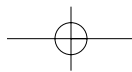
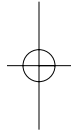
Kathy Whitmire

"A Realistic Vision of Just and Effective Urban Politics"

Ruth Morgan







THE CARY M. MAGUIRE CENTER FOR ETHICS AND PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY

The leaders of Southern Methodist University believe that a university does not fully discharge its responsibility to its students and to the community at large if it hands out knowledge (and the power which that knowledge eventually yields) without posing questions about its responsible uses. Through the Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility, SMU strives to foster the moral education and public responsibilities of those whom it empowers by:

- Supporting faculty research, teaching, and writing in ethics that cross disciplinary, professional, racial/cultural, and gender lines;
- Strengthening the ethics component in SMU's undergraduate and professional curriculum;
- Awarding grants to SMU students who wish to study issues in ethics or engage in community service.

SMU also believes that a university and the professions cannot ignore the urban habitat they helped to create and on which they depend. Thus, while not an advocacy group, the Maguire Center seeks to be integrally a part of the Metroplex, attending to the moral quandaries and controversies that beset our common life. To that end, the Center:

- Has created an Ethics Advisory Board of professional and community leaders;
- Organizes local seminars, colloquia, and workshops featuring SMU and visiting scholars;
- Publishes occasional papers and books based on the Center's endeavors that will be of interest to both academics and the general public.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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