Religious Socialism

THE JOURNAL FOR PEOPLE OF FAITH AND SOCIALISM

Motivated by our different religious traditions, we believe that attitudes, priorities, and institutions can be changed to reflect a just and democratic use of the universe's bounty; we believe in the value of work that contributes to the common good; and in the healing influence of respect for the differences as well as the commonness of human experience.

SUMMER 2004

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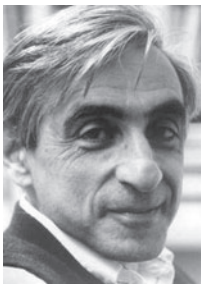
Inside. . .

What Is a "Good" Life?

MICHAEL WALZER



The subject of the good life is one that makes me nervous, because it invites two different kinds of discourse, that of a philosopher and that of a preacher. And it is very easy to slip from the first to the second, that is, to slip from analyzing the meaning of life to suggesting what that meaning is and telling people how they ought to live. I will try to provide a perspective on what the good life might be or what it might be like, but I will also try to avoid preaching at least in this sense, that my argument will be pluralist in character: there are many different good lives, and I will not advocate or prescribe any one of them.

More like a preacher than a philosopher, I will interpret a text, a very short text, an old Jewish maxim that comes from a book called *Sayings of the Fathers (Pirke Avot)*, written or compiled in the second century of the Common Era. *Pirke Avot* might be thought of as a post-biblical version of the Book of Proverbs: it is a late example of what is called "wisdom literature," a collection of aphorisms and maxims attributed to the intellectual leaders of the Jewish community in Palestine up to, roughly, the year 200.

This is my text: "You are not required to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to neglect it." The maxim is meant to tell us something about how to live well. But what does it mean? My interpretation is in three parts: first, I will take up the general view of the right and the good that is implicit here; then, I will discuss the "work" that we are supposed to do; and finally, I will consider the implications of saying that we don't have to finish it.

1. We Live "Under Commandment"

The maxim reflects a belief that we live "under commandment"—under divine commandment, the rabbis would have said, invoking the moment at Sinai when the commandments were delivered to the children of Israel, but I am going to leave it without the adjective: under commandment. You are "not required"—but you might be. Most basically, you are "not at liberty." The moral world, on this view, is a world of requirements and rules, to which all men and women are subject.

Now, Americans generally are opposed to subjection. We set a high value on individual autonomy, and rightly so: the choices we make shape our lives to a very large

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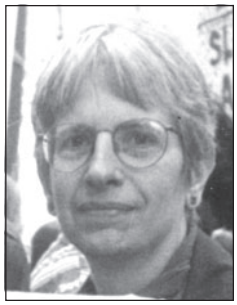
co-editor's notes



Maxine Phillips

We're heading into one of the most contentious and momentous elections in most of our lifetimes, yet this issue of *Religious Socialism* carries little about the current political contest. Instead, we step back, with Michael Walzer's essay, to take the long view. Walzer asks what is required to live a good life and finds that it is in working to build community.

We look at what people of faith are doing around the country to build coalitions, come together in common purpose, and do the work of social justice. John Cort reviews two seemingly dissimilar books and finds them applicable to the Democrats' inability to seize the moral high ground from the Republicans.

And still, there is the election. No matter who wins, we as socialists and people of faith will have "steady work." As we were preparing this issue for press, we visited the Web site of Progressive Christians Uniting, one of the groups whose work is described in our pages, and found a useful checklist for progressive people of faith to keep in mind between now and Election Day. We thank Peter Laarman for writing it, and present it here in edited form, as the original was geared specifically to people in California. Tape it to your refrigerator. Make copies for your friends. Breathe deeply, then roll up your sleeves.

Five Things to Do Between Now and November 2

WATCH AND PRAY! It's a very good spiritual discipline to pray seriously for peace and justice in the context of a hugely important national time of decision

STAY INFORMED! Keep up to date on ballot issues in your own state.

BE VISIBLE! Join a demonstration, a teach-in, a rally, and participate in opportunities to be part of get out the vote activities from the local church level to nationwide. (See ProgressiveChristiansUniting.org for more details.)

VOLUNTEER! Even if you don't live in a "swing" state, there are many opportunities to do phone banking and spend time doing voter education in swing states. Taking the long view, voter education in your own state (or voter registration if there is still time) is worth doing because it helps build a base for social justice issues in future elections.

TAKE THE LONG VIEW! Regardless of the Nov. 2 outcome we know we will have our work cut out for us in combating our nation's imperial tendencies and in winning the long-term struggle for social and economic justice at home. Recommit yourself to local organizing around issues in your community and to issue organizing in behalf of low-wage workers, immigrants' rights, and a cleaner environment. Join with the interfaith community's cry for peace—in Iraq, in the Middle East, in Darfur, and in the heart of our great cities. Whatever you do, don't let yourself be isolated or despairing on November 3.

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UNION MADE
PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

What Is a "Good" Life?/*continued from page 1*

extent, and there are many things that we have to choose. In our politics, the idea of consent is central, and consent is a choice: we choose the people who govern us and we help to choose the policies of our government. And in the same way, in everyday life, we choose spouses, friends, projects, careers, professions, and all the organizations and associations that we join (or leave) in the course of our lives. Most Americans would say that choice is crucial to the good life; some would say that we literally determine the meaning of our lives by the choices we make.

But there are also things that we don't choose: most important, we don't choose our morality. When we live a moral life, we are living according to values and principles that are commonly expressed as injunctions—as in the biblical version: Thou shalt not... We can view these injunctions as God-given or humanly constructed; they are in any case inherited. If there is a construction process, it takes place over a very long period of time; we don't make up the moral rules for ourselves or by ourselves. We can join in the ongoing process of interpreting and revising the rules, but we don't make up the rules as we go along.

The moral world is not subject to our will; we are its subjects. We incur obligations by making promises, but here is something we never promised. We never promised not to murder, or lie, or rob—but we are bound not to do those things, and other things too. The maxim about "work" suggests that we are not only bound negatively but also positively. Just as there are things we shouldn't do, so there are things, or there is something, that we should do.

I will ask in a moment what that something is. Now I only want to convey this sense of the moral world as a fact; it is really there. Morality is a given, and we have literally been given it, in our earliest childhood and again and again since then, in parental instruction, in schooling, in religious teaching, and in the socialization process generally.

"Some would say that we literally determine the meaning of our lives by the choices we make. But there are also things that we don't choose: most important, we don't choose our morality."

I don't think that this sense of an overhanging morality is peculiarly Jewish. Consider the contemporary arguments about human rights: the idea that all of us have rights simply by virtue of being human, rights not to be killed, or enslaved, or tortured, and so on, implies that all of us also have obligations, not to kill or enslave or torture—and it doesn't matter that we never voluntarily accepted these obligations; we know that we are obligated. And that means that we all experience the moral world, whatever role we play in interpretation and revision, as an imposed reality: we all live "under commandment."

Right and wrong, just and unjust, good and bad: these are substantive designations. We can and do disagree about their precise references and applications, and the disagreements are very important.

But we know that these moral terms refer to something real, and we know that they apply to us, to our everyday activities. We can't do whatever we want. We can't refuse to do whatever we don't want. So it isn't an odd idea that there is some kind of "work" that we have to do, in which we must engage, even if we don't finish it. But note that this is a moral "must." In fact, of course, we can escape the "work," or we can disengage from it, whatever it is; neglect is easy. That is why we have to be told that we are "not at liberty."

2. What Is the Work?

Well, then, what is the "work"? I will begin to answer this question by considering some of the things it isn't. Presumably it isn't something like painting a picture or writing a novel; it isn't artistic work, because that kind of work has to be finished. It requires some sort of completion before we can contemplate it as a work of art. A novel left unfinished at the death of a great novelist might be studied by students trying to understand the creative process; or it might be finished by another writer, as one of Jane Austin's novels has been.

But we wouldn't tell novelists, you don't have to finish. In fact they do have to finish, and not only because it says so in the contracts they signed with their publishers, but also because we can't appreciate the work or grasp its full meaning until it is finished. On the other hand, you could say to the architects and builders of a medieval cathedral: you don't have to finish (it often took centuries to finish), but you can't walk away from the work... That example points us, perhaps, toward the kind of "work" that might be intended by the maxim (if we translate it across religious boundaries). What about other great works—the Great Wall of China, the ancient Egyptian irrigation system, the Taj Mahal?

The "work" might be more prosaic than these examples suggest. Still, it won't be anything like washing the dishes, cleaning out the basement, buying groceries, mowing the lawn, painting the kitchen, fixing the leaking faucet. For this is work that we do and then, inevitably, down the road, we do it again. These are recurrent activities; they play a central part in every human life, and I suspect that they play a part in every good human life.

It makes sense to say that you "must" engage in some of them,

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Progressive Christians Speak Out

ED. NOTE: *The "Lift Every Voice" initiative aims to involve progressive Christians in articulating a vision of what mainstream, liberal Christianity stands for as opposed to fundamentalist, right-wing Christianity. Using recently developed software, the conveners invited a thousand Christians to participate during a two-day period in September in writing a statement to which other progressive Christians could subscribe and publicize. The conveners hope that this statement will be a springboard to action for progressive Christians around the country. We print below an excerpt from a background statement on the project Web site and the full statement. To sign on as an endorser or to read more about "Lift Every Voice," go to www.everyvoice.org*

Progressive Christians have historically been a major force in American political life, from the abolitionists and suffragists of the nineteenth century to the feminists and civil rights activists of the twentieth. The renewal of mainstream, progressive Christianity is essential to the liberal political tradition and to vigorous debate within the American public sphere.

Mainstream, progressive Christians will reclaim the power of religious language, on our own terms, based in our commitments to the biblical vision of justice, to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ, and to the work of the Holy Spirit in the world. The Lift Every Voice! Declaration, supported by broad consensus, will provide those engaged in public life the rich resource they need to effectively inject progressive religious language into public discourse.

LIFT EVERY VOICE

(Written September 13-14, 2004)

As Christian clergy and laypeople from around the country, we come together to stand and to speak. We speak now, because there is no more important time. We speak together, because there is no more important way. We speak as people of faith, because faith is central to our vision of what America can still represent. Today we are impelled by our faith to declare that our country can and must do better

Christian faith calls every believer to love God, love neighbor, and seek to heal a broken world. In honoring that call, we honor the inviolable dignity of every human being and we treasure the natural environment as God's good creation. As Christ bears witness to God's love for the world, faithful Christians bear witness to the love that lies at the heart of all that is. We believe that reconciliation and forgiveness are always possible and always necessary. We know that God still speaks, yet we acknowledge that it is through a multiplicity of diverse voices that God's voice for justice can, will, and must emerge. These manifold voices for justice require that we heal the sick, release the prisoner, bind up the wounded, and care for the orphan. "As you do unto the least of these, you do unto me."

Christian faith requires that those who have received God's abundance provide for those in need, and so we must insist that God's abundance be shared. We must demand justice for those of our society who live on the margins, those whose very survival is a daily challenge, those whose labors are neither recognized nor dignified, those who cannot demand justice for themselves. As Christ came to bring good news to the poor and oppressed, so must we.

As young children, we are taught that America is a country where a diversity of cultures and multiplicity of religions is esteemed and cherished. We learn that being an American means valuing the separation of church and state, so that no one particular religious voice is given priority in civil discourse and all voices are protected. We are taught to value and respect dissenting views, and to support vehemently the right and responsibility of those with whom we disagree to voice their views. As Americans, we cherish a rich and thoughtful debate and understand the necessity of that debate in our decision-making process.

"In our churches and throughout our communities, by means of intentional educational efforts at the grassroots level, we must re-articulate the fundamental American values of justice, equality and the common good."

As Americans, we aspire toward the common good, work for the creation of a just society, and seek prosperity for all rather than wealth for a few. We treasure the beauty and richness of our natural environments, from mountain to sea, from desert to plain, and we resolve to protect these treasures for generations to come. Finally, as Americans, we value a criminal justice system that promises liberty and justice for all: a day in court for all who stand accused, basic human rights and dignity for the incarcerated, the right to a speedy trial and the assurance that every person be deemed innocent until proven guilty. We believe that unless all are free, none are free; that unless all citizens have the opportunity to flourish, we are all diminished.

Today these historic American values stand at risk. Openly contemptuous of religious diversity and freedom of expression, the rigid religious values of conservative Christians exercise undue sway over public and social policies. A growing lack of tolerance for religious and cultural diversity jeopardizes the basic prerequisite for a functioning democracy—the social space for free and civil debate. We have become intolerant and inhospitable to one another. Civil debate no longer has a place in our political process, and we have become fearful of those with whom we do not agree.

In economic life, "market fundamentalism"—an idolatrous deference to the prerogatives of wealth and the unfettered pursuit of profits—threatens to eclipse ancient and priceless concepts of the common good and mutual accountability. In government, racism, bigotry and fear lead to punitive legislation that prevents us from ensuring justice for the prisoner and that strikes at the very heart of the liberties promised by our justice system. In jurisprudence, we can no longer even assume that our courts are free from bias or that religious ideology will have no place there. In politics, we drift toward becoming a nation where only the very wealthy can campaign for the highest office in the land; as a result, the voices of the wealthy and powerful few threaten to silence the voices of the many who are poor.

To address the challenges we face today we must return to the values upon which this country was founded, including the progressive vision of human thriving enshrined in the best of Christian faith and practice. In our churches and throughout our communities, by means of intentional educational efforts at the grassroots level, we must re-articulate the fundamental American values of justice, equality and the common good. It must become our common mission to elect local and national leaders who demonstrate an unwavering commitment to social and economic justice and who will create the means to achieve that justice.

Social policies must reflect the fundamental value of the common good: fair compensation for labor; access to health care for all; well-funded public education; regulation of industry to protect natural resources and the environment; and oversight of the criminal justice system with ongoing emphasis upon its rehabilitative rather than just its punitive effects. In order to assure that mass communication are indeed fair and balanced, we call for the return to the Fairness Doctrine in all media controlled or licensed by our government. We also call for wider access to the Internet, and we invite our growing networks and our communities of faith to discuss the issues we face at a local level and to nurture democratic groupings centered on creating in a shared future.

We recommit ourselves to the care of the most vulnerable among us, to hospitality toward immigrants and other strangers, to multilateral international institutions that promote peaceful resolutions of conflicts, and to responsible stewardship of the earth's resources. We will hold onto hope, stay strong in our faith, and trust in a common vision for the future based upon the best in our past. We will remember what we struggle against, and for whom we struggle – for the poor, the hungry, the imprisoned, and the marginalized, but not only for them.

We stand and we speak because we are fighting for our future, for the future of our children, and for the soul of a great country, which we will continue to hold in our prayers and whose spirit we will honor through unyielding struggle for liberty and justice for all.

Project Leaders: Rita Nakashima Brock, Ph.D., Project Director, Visiting Scholar, Starr King School for the Ministry, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California; Peter Laarman, Director of Progressive Christians Uniting; and Brian Sarrazin, founder of Synanim, a collaborative online process.

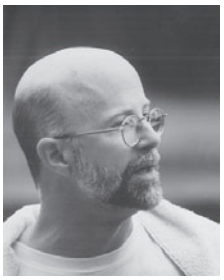
THREE RIDERS OF A SILENT APOCALYPSE:

Corruption of Language

Decay of Thought

Death of Democracy

PETER LAARMAN



One of my central passions these days—a long-held concern that is now morphing into an obsession—has to do with dumbing down in private life and demobilization in public life and with the numbing effects of our corporatized media working in league with mendacious political leaders. But it also has to do with our own astonishing passivity in the face of this. To put it in (not strictly rhetorical) question form, Why is it that Americans—not just us but people in the millions—why is it that we simply do not laugh out loud when we see the president mouthing phrases like "full sovereignty" and "transfer of power"? Why is it that we don't stamp our feet and howl our outrage when he gives a speech like the one he gave at the Air Force Academy in early June comparing his crusade in Iraq to World War II?

Some of this has to do with Big Media complicity. Every newspaper and every TV newscast in the country ran that story straight. The *Los Angeles Times*, trying hard to be a respectable paper, included one short paragraph at the very end of its report quoting a Duke University historian who said, "Well, actually, the Iraq war isn't much like World War II." But no editorial page, and no TV pundit, had the clarity or the courage to say of that speech, No! Wait a minute! We will not allow you to befoul language and distort reality that way! Here are ten clear differences between your imperial war and the Second World War. That didn't happen. The president made his speech. It was barely contested. And before long people will start conflating memories and images of the "greatest generation" with the policies and practices of this gang of thugs and parasites.

Lots of folks applauded the *New York Times* for apologizing to its readers this past spring. The *Times* said it regretted being taken in on the weapons of mass destruction claims. The tone was wounded: we were lied to, the editors said, just like the government was lied to. What the editors should have said is that their newspaper of record printed the state-sponsored lies that were fed to them by Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz—printed those lies right on the front page under the bylines of Judith Miller and Michael Gordon—so that Cheney and his war party could then point to the *Times* stories and say, "See! Saddam has the weapons! We've got to take him down!"

One day this spring I was so distressed by what was happening on "Fresh Air," the National Public Radio show with Terri Gross, that I had to pull over on the freeway. Gross's guest was Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times*—the #1 shill for corporate-led globalization and free trade—and this time Friedman was going on about how great outsourcing of U.S. jobs to India has been: terrific news for the Indians but also for Americans. Why? Because, said Friedman, it means that Americans are being forced to retrain for higher-skill jobs—so everybody benefits. I love Terri Gross,

"One hundred thirty million people need to work in this country: How many secure, high-end jobs are there, really?"

so it was heartbreaking that she didn't stop Friedman right there and say, "Hold it, Tom! Let's really look at this outsourcing thing. It's been going on for 40 years. In the sixties and seventies it was electronics and apparel; in the eighties it was steel and automobiles and textiles; in the nineties it was back-office jobs—call centers and credit card processing—but in recent years it's also been high-skilled work: advanced accounting, computer programming, etc. Almost half of the people in this country now losing jobs as their work goes to India have college degrees. Explain to our listeners, Tom, how everybody is going to be retrained to be an entrepreneur or a senior engineer or an architect or a high-paid journalist like yourself. One hundred thirty million people need to work in this country: How many secure, high-end jobs are there, really? And if you can't answer that, then please admit that your retraining notion is a fantasy, a fiction, a convenient lie that you and your corporate paymasters feed us each and every day while the American dream is dying. Admit that what outsourcing has really

done is to enable the people who decide to outsource—corporate executives and big-time investors—it has enabled these people to become incredibly rich while it has left millions of others without hope and/or downwardly mobile in a drastic way."

Sadly, Gross didn't do that. She didn't call Friedman on his Big Lie (outsourcing is good for everybody) because she and her producers didn't have the information, even though it is easy enough to get. She didn't know that America's current-account trade deficit now runs at $40 billion per month, so that Friedman's crowing about how India—a nation of one billion people—is doing its bit by purchasing $4 billion in U.S.-branded goods per year is in fact itself another form of lying, of obscuring an unpleasant and frightening reality.

And so it goes: corruption of language, decay of thought, and the looming death of a once-proud democracy. Three riders of a silent apocalypse.

Peter Laarman is executive director of Progressive Christians Uniting. This essay is adapted from a longer version originally presented as a reflection at a weekly meeting of Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace in Los Angeles. The longer version appears on the PCU Web site at ProgressiveChristiansUniting.org.

ERRATUM: Andrew Hammer's role in the International League of Religious Socialists was given incorrectly in our last issue. He is the secretary general, not general secretary.

New Jersey Faith Communities Bring Globalization Home

"Think globally, act locally" may have become a cliché, but it's still good advice. And a briefing this past spring in New Jersey on "Preserving Local Communities Amid the Storms of Globalization" illustrates the case. The briefing for 65 religious leaders of many faiths focused on the negative impact of globalization on the economy of New Jersey as well as in the developing world. In the past three years, more than 63,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in New Jersey and more than 77,000 in New York State. Eileen Appelbaum, a labor economist and director of the Center for Women and Work at Rutgers University, said that high-tech jobs would be next, noting that nationally, 300,000 such jobs have been outsourced: "[I]t is not a stretch to count the other 14 million U.S. high-tech jobs in grave jeopardy." The conference was made possible by funding from Church World Service and was sponsored by the United Nations Association (UNA) New Jersey Division and the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey,

DSA member David Bensman, of Rutgers University, co-chairs the UNA-NJ Special Committee on Globalization and helped bring together a research team to speak to attendees. The speeches were full of passion, statistics, and probing questions. "Today the search for a shared moral language is vital in the churches' confrontation with the negative impacts of economic globalization. The very grass beneath our feet has caught fire in these days for the lack of it," charged the Rev. Charles W. Rawlings, former executive of the National Council of Churches and current president of the UNA-NJ Division. "What happened to our fervor?" asked Monsignor John Gilchrist, co-chair with Bensman of the globalization committee and chair of the Newark Archdiocesan Commission for Inter-Religious Affairs. "If this were the 1970s, the room would be overflowing with religious people taking the lead in transformational social justice. Can it be that we are only focused on ourselves?"

Speakers urged communities of faith to become part of a larger ecumenical just-trade movement in the United States, but they were frank about some of the obstacles. The Rev. Jean R. Smith, executive director of the Seamen's Church Institute, an Episcopal organization, noted that the "various factions surrounding globalization are asking us to stand staunchly by their political agenda. Are we for American jobs to the exclusion of workers from developing nations? Do we stand by silently as we see seafarers paid exceedingly different pay scales for the same work? An easy answer to such complex questions means that nobody wins. Keeping the Institute's doors open to all sides means that at least there will be a place for debate"

In addition to raising the "free trade" vs. "protectionist" points of view, others asked whether churches benefited financially from globalization and were therefore unlikely to fight for workers in their midst. Following the money, the Rev. Thomas A. Kerr, Jr., canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of New Jersey, expressed the hope that briefings like this would lead to discussions within parishes about the ties between endowment income and pension plans whose income is connected to a stock market in thrall to global corporations. "Individuals who have decision-making capabilities depend on investments. That individual's economic status affects how money is viewed. It may be hard to get a conversation going about ethics," said Kerr.

Another barrier to church discussion and debate on these matters, said Marge Christie of Christ Episcopal Church in Ridgewood, New Jersey, has to do with "apathy." "Apathy is directly related to this issue's complexity," she explained. "We can certainly mobilize around the issue of sexuality; why not find a way to connect to progressive religious ethics?"

"We can certainly mobilize around the issue of sexuality; why not find a way to connect to progressive religious ethics?"

Six months later, reports Peter Heltzel, who organized the briefing, many of the participants have been active in both educational events and activist campaigns. DSAer Mark Levinson, chief economist for Unite/HERE, spoke at a public hearing in Trenton on how transnational investment in China was undermining efforts to raise labor standards in other developing countries, and Martha Ojeda, of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, described how the North American Free Trade Agreement has failed to improve conditions for working people in Mexico. From the briefing and the public forum came a Globalization Task Force that is working with clergy in immigrant neighborhoods in several New Jersey cities on issues of public policy, immigration reform, access to housing and employment, and detention of refugees. In the Trenton area, many have become involved in the LETSSTOPWALMART coalition. WalMart is notorious for its role in the race to the bottom in labor standards in the United States and around the world.

There are many groups throughout the country dedicated to worker justice issues, but the fervor that communities of faith brought to the civil rights movements and that many now bring to the antiwar movement has been lacking. Networking and coordination to bring existing groups together locally, nationally, and trans-nationally, will be key to galvanizing the movement. Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss, rector of All Saints' Church in

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Radicalized by War
A Political Memoir

PERRY CARTWRIGHT

As our soldiers come back from the current war, either in body bags or wounded both psychologically physically, one democratic socialist remembers his radicalization during World War II. Perry Cartwright, 81, has long been active in Chicago DSA, and, stretching farther back, in struggles for racial and economic justice. The excerpt below is taken from a longer memoir published in Common Ground*, newsletter of the Chicago DSA, in which Cartwright, who grew up in York, South Carolina, traces the influences on his life that led to his radicalization. (The full text is available at www.chicagodsa.org—EDS.)*

We all listened to FDR's "We have nothing to fear but fear itself" speech. All four cotton mills in York shut down for two years. Malnutrition was prevalent. Workers went out into the nearby woods to pick green plants in the hope of warding off pellagra. Brother Tom and I helped mother distribute Christmas baskets to the same families two years in a row. She pointed out to us how lucky we were. Class differences were pretty obvious. . .

. . . I saw a beneficent government action, unrelated to private enterprise, which really helped farmers in both South Dakota and South Carolina. Also watched the Civilian Conservation Corps use unemployed young men to contour-grade eroding farms. Also saw the WPA build a new football field and pave some roads. The economy began to pick-up; Keynesian economics they call it now. . .

. . .I hitchhiked out west. Rode the rails and met unemployed white men looking for work. I spent the fall working on a potato farm in Idaho. Hard work and poverty, American style.The next summer I hitchhiked up to Canada with an old friend, Erskine Smith [and] joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. In June 1942, His Majesty George V. . . bestowed upon a country boy from South Carolina a set of wings along with a commission as Pilot Officer. . .

In March 1943, I was sent to Britain [ED. NOTE: *Cartwright held U.S., Canadian, and British citizenship*] . . . .We patrolled the North Atlantic looking for German subs. Later I was sent to Turnberry, Scotland, then Thornaby, Yorkshire, then to King's Lynn, Norfolk. From there to a real atrocity, the destruction of Hamburg. For three days the U.S. Army Air Force bombed the city with incendiary bombs. For three nights the RAF followed up with high explosives. The first manmade firestorm in history developed. About 100,000 people died, 1,000,000 were left homeless. The Chief Marshall of the RAF told us, "Gentlemen, try to find your assigned target. But if you can't find it, then drop your bombs on any town. Our primary objective is to bomb the German working class out of its homes.". .

. . .Well, finally, I transferred to the U.S. Army Air Force. . . .I ended up flying hospital planes loaded with the wounded. Up until that time I had experienced a somewhat "glamorous" war, but a year of flying those blind and burned and paralyzed men took all the glamour out of it. I've been an unashamed peacenik ever since.

On July 16, 1945, we took a load of wounded into the E1 Paso, Texas airport. The control officer asked me if New Mexico was still there when we flew over it, "because it looked like the whole state blew up last night, up in the direction of Alamogordo." It was the site of the first nuclear test. On July 28, my brother Tom was shot down over Hiroshima, Japan. He and his crew were captured and put into the city jail. Tom, because he was the pilot, was taken on to Tokyo for questioning. That saved his life. His whole crew was in the city jail when the bomb went off. Months later, the occupation forces recovered bits of their remains. Forty years later the U.S. government finally permitted a documentary to be made about American prisoners who perished in Hiroshima. . .

. . .This traumatic event climaxed four years of on-the-job training for a drastic break with the status quo. After the war I enrolled at New York University. Since then I've put in fifty plus years of activity in the peace, civil rights, and labor movements.

New Jersey/*continued from page 8*

Hoboken and a member of the Jubilee Interfaith Organizing Committee in New Jersey, sounded the call: "People of faith need to build another constituency for social change that builds community and does not reward greed."

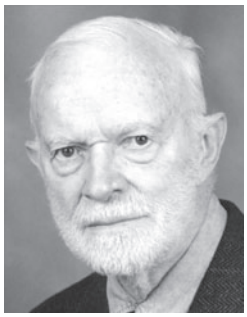
This article was compiled from reports from the Ecumenical News Service, Church World Service, and private communications. For more information, e-mail Peter Heltzel: pheltzel@seamenschurch.org

TWO CURES FOR THE DEMOCRATS—OR IS IT THREE?

Rebels, Reformers, and Racketeers
How Insurgents Transformed the Labor Movement
By Herman Benson
Association for Union Democracy, 104 Montgomery St., Brooklyn, NY 11225, aud@igc.org, 265 pp., $22.50

What's the Matter with Kansas?
How Conservatives Won the Heart of America
By Thomas Frank
Henry Holt, $24, 306 pp.

JOHN CORT



My first impulse on reading Herman Benson's book was to write, "This is the most important book published in America in the last fifty years." My second impulse was to write, "This is one of the most important books published, etc."

On reading Thomas Frank's book shortly thereafter, my first impulse was to write, "This is the most important book published in America in the last fifty years," followed by something less impulsive but still wildly enthusiastic.

From this it follows that this reviewer is a highly emotional fellow whose opinions must be carefully weighed. So let's weigh them. First, why are two books with such highly different subjects lumped together? They are so lumped because they both deliver explanations as to why the Democratic Party has fallen upon evil days, lost the influence it once enjoyed, and doesn't figure to regain it any time soon. That statement stands even if John Kerry wins in November, because that win will have been made possible only because George W. Bush made a very stupid mistake in starting a disastrous war in Iraq and is in other ways an all-around disastrous president.

Second, how do we define an important book? These books are important because they both propose essential solutions to the Democratic dilemma and reveal keys to the transformation of the USA into something more closely resembling a decent, just society, with emphasis on the elimination of poverty, disease, ignorance, and arrogant, aggressive nationalism.

Herman Benson, a DSA member and *RS* subscriber, does not actually go as far as I do in claiming importance for his book. At least he puts it in a more general term. He writes, "The future of democracy in society, I was convinced, depends upon the working class." What his book does is demonstrate that without a working class organized in honest, democratic trade unions, a really democratic America is not possible.

A member of the Yipsels (Young Peoples Socialist League) at age 15, a bright, idealistic New Yorker inspired by Marxism, but turned off by Stalinism, he purposely joined the industrial working class and was active in some of the first CIO unions. From there, he got into labor journalism, and from there he founded the Association for Union Democracy in 1969.

What Benson has done since he became a Yipsel in 1930 (he is now 88 and still active) is to devote himself in a positively heroic way to the realization of U.S. democracy through reform of the labor movement. Or, to be more precise, a continuing reform of the labor movement, because he acknowledges and applauds the election of John Sweeney to the presidency of the AFL-CIO in 1996, a hotly contested replacement of the Meany-Kirkland faction.


Herman Benson

What made that win possible was the victory of the reformers in the corrupt Teamsters Union, which switched 1,300,000 votes from the right to the left and elected Sweeney. So insurgents did "transform" the labor movement, as Benson's subtitle has it, but as he also reveals at some length in the book, that transformation is incomplete because even among the more honest union leaders there is resistance to democratic reforms that might endanger their own leadership. Also, the Teamster victory was temporary, and James Hoffa, Jr., has succeeded to his murdered father's corrupt leadership.

How and why, as Benson maintains, does a really democratic, just America depend on a really democratic labor movement? Recognition of this fact depends on an analysis of American

politics, an analysis that Benson more or less assumes without spelling it out. That analysis will also throw light on Frank's subtitle, "How Conservatives Won the Heart of America" It involves the following observations:

1. A just America depends on the reformation of American politics.

2. For a variety of reasons, largely determined by our electoral system, we are stuck with the two-party tradition. Example: in 1912 Socialist Party candidate Eugene Debs won almost 6 percent of the popular vote, but no seats in Congress. In 1910 the British Labour Party won 42 seats in Parliament with the same percentage of the popular vote. (See also Andrew Hammer's piece in Spring 2004, *RS*.)

3. The Republican Party is controlled by the less idealistic members of the rich and powerful class, who have had remarkable success in mobilizing support among religious members of the less rich and powerful class.

4. The Democratic Party, though to a large extent influenced and compromised by the more idealistic, or opportunistic, members of the rich and powerful class, as represented by Bill Clinton and the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), has nonetheless retained the loyalty of a majority of the following constituent, over-lapping groups:

a. The working class as represented by the AFL-CIO and other independent unions, now down from 35 percent of American workers to about 12 percent, which is still 16,000,000 members, with another 30,000,000 in their families who should vote with them.
b. Academics, intellectuals, and professionals, which would include those who favor a more enlightened foreign policy.
c. Blacks, Hispanics, more recent immigrants, and other members of the least rich and powerful class who suffer from extreme poverty. Most of these have no faith in politics and do not bother to vote.
d. Secular feminists who have made support for abortion-on-demand a virtual requirement for political office,
e. Environmentalists.
f. Religious leftists.

5. Looking over that list, one would have to conclude that the only group that has the organization and the human and financial resources to dominate the Democratic Party and make it a more vital, progressive, and successful party is the labor movement.

But it doesn't deliver on that potential. Why? Benson points out that the percentage of union members who vote Democratic is about 60 percent, a solid majority, but that is because black union members vote 90 percent Democratic. White union members favored Al Gore by 50.7 percent, a bare majority. This doesn't make sense. Something is wrong, something is missing in the labor movement that could, and should, make it a dominant force in the Democratic Party.

That missing ingredient, according to Benson, is a really dynamic, much more universal spirit and practice of union democracy. Because those relatively honest union leaders are too often tempted to deny the rights of free speech, press, and assembly to the rank-and-file opposition, Benson proposes the creation of a special federal agency to enforce the provisions of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) of 1959, which for the first time put the weight of federal power behind the full protection of rank-and-file rights.

He points out that neither the National Labor Relations Board, the Department of Labor, nor the Department of Justice have shown themselves willing, or able, to provide that enforcement. This is the most important proposal in this most important book.

A Frank Analysis

So what about Thomas Frank's contribution in *What's the Matter with Kansas? How conservatives Won the Heart of America*? Frank is also the author of *One Market Under God*, a brilliant dismemberment of the capitalist system that was enthusiastically reviewed in *RS* (Autumn 2001).

Thomas Frank

Frank grew up in Kansas and knows it inside-out-and-left-to-right. He reveals how it has moved from being a largely populist state that elected many Democrats and had some strong unions to an almost completely conservative, Republican, anti-union stronghold. This started in the seventies, when the religious right, what he calls the Cons, or conservatives, furious over *Roe v. Wade*, wrested control of the state GOP from what he calls the Mods, or Moderates, the rich, more sophisticated Kansans, most of whom couldn't give a damn about abortion.

Being a pro-choice Democrat himself, Frank is all the more persuasive in making the point that it was the zeal of these poorer, pro-life, mainly working-class folks that took over Kansas, won the heartland of America, and produced the current Bush presidency.

Frank's solution is to persuade the Democratic Party to throw off the baleful influence of Bill Clinton and the Democratic Leadership Council; get the party back to its pro-labor roots; emphasize jobs, wages, health, etc.; and "they will come." Or in the immortal words of another popular cliché, "It's the economy, stupid." Social values like abortion, Frank says aren't really that important if the material values are in good supply.

There are elements here that match the message of Herman Benson. Both believe the working class, which means the vast majority, is the key. Benson wants to mobilize and energize it by making it more democratic and therefore more vibrant, bigger, and more dominant in the Democratic Party. Frank puts the emphasis on the party and preaches that if the party is more pro-labor, pro-working class, pro-poor, it will become more

What Is a "Good" Life?/*continued from page 2*

at least, but it wouldn't make sense to say that you don't have to finish them: at any given moment you do have to finish them. But what about caring for sick friends and relatives or tutoring a student who has problems with math? These are also recurrent activities, but they have a different feel to them: Why? What's the difference?

I don't think that making money, or seeking political power, or pursuing fame and glory qualify as the "work." For one thing, the imperative hardly applies; we don't have to be commanded in any of these cases. We all need money, and it is useful to have some degree of political power, and I suppose that most of us want our 15 minutes of fame. The making, seeking, and pursuing can be endless, but it is also possible for me to get as much as I want in one or more of these areas and then, as the saying goes, "rest on my laurels." It's also possible to drop out or retire; these are personal projects, and we can cut them short or give them up without making excuses. They aren't projects that need to be finished, even if we can't finish them ourselves. Getting and spending are not inconsequential human activities, but they don't constitute a good life.

Nor will any kind of athletic activity serve as the "work" we have to do. It makes good sense to say to someone running a marathon, that she doesn't have to finish, but we wouldn't tell her that she's not allowed to give up running entirely; she can decide whenever she wants never to run again. Nor would we say that it's not permitted to give up playing football or even baseball. And the reason we wouldn't say that is that play is something radically different from "work" (though professional ballplayers make their play into work, even very hard work, they can't make it into "work" in the moral sense). The "work" that we have to do might well have its playful moments; it may sometimes be fun to do it. But it won't be the first choice of people who are fun-loving above all else.

So, again, what is the "work"? In Pirke Avot, it seems to be the study of God's law. What would it mean to finish studying the law? Well, there are a finite set of texts—the 39 books of the Hebrew Bible and the 41 tractates of the Talmud—and in theory you could just begin at the beginning and work your way through to the end. But the work is slow and hard; it requires painstaking effort; and since you may not get very far, it is a good thing to know that you are not obligated to finish. Just get as far as you can; do what you are able to do. There will be other people studying too, and some of them will get farther along. And there will be people coming after, and still others after them…

"It is a great mistake to think that there is a single road to the realization of any of these ideas, and that we have the road map. . .because then anybody with another idea about how the "work" should be done is going to seem like an enemy."

In fact, finishing isn't even a theoretical possibility. Studying the law also means interpreting and revising the law, since every legal system, even one that has been divinely revealed, has to be adapted to human circumstances and changed when the circumstances change. This is an ongoing process that you really can't ever finish, even if you get through all the books and tractates. I am sure that interpreting and revising is the real

Book Reviews/*continued from page 11*

vibrant, attract more voters, and regain control of the country.

I believe that both are correct, but their solutions alone will probably not do the trick. Why? Because "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God" (Mt. 4: 4). And the key words here are, "Thou shalt not kill." Both Benson and Frank either disregard, as in Benson's case, or disparage, as in Frank's case, that most flaming, explosive and, to date, damaging-to-Democrats of social issues— abortion. In other words, a third solution is necessary; namely, some reasonable compromise on this issue.

On August 27, 2004, the *New York Times* reported that federal judge Richard C. Casey of New York hadruled that the federal ban on late-term abortions is unconstitutional, even though, in his opinion, the abortion procedure is "gruesome, brutal, barbaric, and uncivilized."

Now there's a really shocking statement. Our Constitution, as presently interpreted, forbids the outlawing of an action that is "gruesome, brutal, barbaric, and uncivilized."

How can this be?

Answering that question will take the research and space that must be deferred to the next issue. We will have to read *Roe v. Wade* very carefully. We will also try to get differing views. Meanwhile, you should read both Benson and Frank. Remember, their books are among the most important published in the last fifty years.

John Cort, a co-editor of Religious Socialism*, is the author, most recently, of* Dreadful Conversions: The Making of a Catholic Socialist.

"work" and not just studying. In fact, just studying, rote learning, would be more like make-work, and the "work" can never be make-work.

Study ranks very high on the Jewish list of valuable and virtuous activities, and it gives us further clues as to what qualities the "work" has to have: for study of God's law is supposed to produce observance, the acting out of the law in the form of good deeds and loving kindness, and these two, so we have been told, bring the messianic age closer. But study isn't alone on the Jewish list—or on any other list.

In the maxims of *Pirke Avot*, other possibilities are suggested that fit the formula, "not obliged to finish, not at liberty to neglect." These include helping other people; service to the community—I mean, the community as it is; and then, by extension, working to create a better community (which may be what interpreting and revising the law is all about). You won't be able to provide all the help that other people need or all the services that our common life requires, and the project of creating a better community is sure to be unfinished, however hard you work at it, since it is always possible to do better than better (I will come back later on to the idea of "best, " which does indeed invite completion). So it makes sense to say in all these cases that you don't have to finish, but you can't walk away. Why not? Because this "work," or "work" of these kinds, is morally important, and we have been commanded to do it.

But I have now begun my central project: to pluralize the idea of "work." You are not at liberty to neglect it, but you are at liberty to think about it, to find and defend alternative meanings, and so to choose the good work or the good works that you do. If we multiply the meanings of "work," then it will turn out that there are different ways, perhaps many different ways, of living a moral life; there are many good lives. What makes a good life is a project of a certain kind—an expansive kind, so that many activities fit. The fact that this project doesn't have to be finished, or can't be finished, means that it isn't purely private or egocentric. It isn't the same as a hobby or even as a career—though some hobbies and some careers might involve work of the right sort.

It is interpersonally valuable work, which is why we can be sure that other people will carry it on with us, and after us. So, to go back to an earlier example, if the building of the Great Wall of China protected individual lives, and families and villages, from violent attack (the people on the other side may have had a different view of the Wall, but let's stick with this one), then it was work of the kind that fits the maxim, and we can say of the builders that they were not free to neglect the "work."

The "work" has to be generally valuable, valuable to others as well as to ourselves, otherwise it wouldn't be morally required. Think of the work of medical researchers looking for a cure for a particular disease. Before they begin their research, they could certainly choose a different project. It wouldn't make sense to say that this particular work is the "work" that no one is at liberty to neglect.

The author of the maxim may have thought that studying God's law was "work" like that: everybody should do it, but he also knew that "everybody" had to do other things too, else we could not sustain our common life. And some of those other things must also be valuable in the special sense that makes them obligatory.

Once you have chosen "work" of that sort, in addition to study or even as a replacement for study, you are not at liberty to neglect it. The medical researchers don't have to find the cure, but they can't stop looking. But what if they do find it? Can they stop then? Not if they are still young enough to continue. The cure will have unexpected, maybe dangerous, side effects, or the disease will reappear in new forms; in any case, there are other diseases. The "work" won't be finished, but it is the sort of "work" that other people will carry on.

Some of my colleagues in political theory think that politics is the "work" that everybody has to do. As democratic citizens, we must be active in shaping and directing the common life, even if, or precisely because, the common life is never finished. Some of them even think that political activity is the highest human calling: when the citizens of Athens met on the agora, argued with one another, and together made decisions that determined the future of their city, they were living on the heights.

Well, politics is certainly one way, perhaps the most obvious way, to make the community we live in a better place; it is, at its best, "work" of the sort the maxim enjoins. But it isn't the only way of improving our community, and some people are much more readily drawn to it than others. Even if we all participate in part-time fashion, by reading the newspapers and voting in elections, politics will never be everyone's "work."

So I can continue to defend a pluralist position: even though politics is my own "work"—I write about it, help to edit a political magazine, and try to advance a particular political position—my view of political activity is similar to my view of legal study. It is important that some people be engaged in it; it is a good thing if many people are engaged; but there are other possible and valuable engagements.

3. Why You Don't Have to Finish the Work

Now I want to consider more carefully what it means to say, "you don't have to finish the work." This can be read as an argument against personal perfectionism. We don't have to beat ourselves up for not finishing; we don't have to work 16 hours a day; we don't have to neglect our obligations to other people; we don't even have to sacrifice our creature comforts. Here are the words of a thirteenth-century commentator on the maxim "Do not say: 'I shall drive myself'... the way workers do who have to finish a fixed task. For if you act this way you will in the end grow weak and sluggish and cease from the work altogether. He who tries to do more than he is able, will in the end do less, because he wears out his body, dulls the sharpness of his mind, [and] slackens his enthusiasm..."

We have to do only what we can do, within reasonable limits, and then we can pass the work on to someone else, to the next generation. There is a deep idea here: the goodness of a single life is not complete in itself. Think of it as part of an ongoing goodness project: the "work" only works if other people work at it together with us, and after us. In fact, we need many workers if the "work" is to proceed, and there is something mad or obsessive or vainglorious in trying to finish it all alone. So the maxim encourages a certain kind of humility, which leads people doing the "work" to look for helpers and co-workers.

But I think that the maxim can also be read in another way. It isn't only an argument against personal but also against collective perfectionism. This is an anti-revolutionary, anti-messianic, and anti-redemptive text. The central idea of revolution or of messianic redemption is that all-of-a-sudden, in an actual historical moment, human life and human society will be transformed and perfected. The "work," whatever it is, will then be over and done. Communism will be the end of human history. The messiah will usher in the kingdom of God. Human life will no doubt continue, but it is hard to see how "work" in the sense I have given it will still be necessary; presumably it won't be necessary.

The Jewish philosopher Maimonides says that even after the messiah comes, we will still study God's law; in fact, given the conventional view of the messianic age, we will be delivered from the hard necessities of everyday life, so we will have more time for study; we will be more free to study than we ever were before. But wouldn't this then be, so to speak, a leisure time activity, not really "work"? And since God's law would already be operative, fully in force, wouldn't its study be superfluous or superogatory or even beside the point? Surely the ambition of revolutionaries and messianists has always been to achieve a definitive completion, and what comes after that is radically unclear.

This text says no to all this. Its argument is very much in the spirit of an old Jewish joke about a man who takes a job with the city: he sits at the city gate and watches for the messiah, so that the people inside will have some warning before he (or she) appears. A friend asks him how he likes his job. Well, he says, it doesn't pay very well, but it is steady work.

The "work" that I have been referring to is also steady; it is never done; whatever it is, it is endless. You don't have to finish because the "work" in principle is unfinishable; there may be temporary endings, victories of one sort or another, but nothing like completion. Every human being has been and will be confronted by the same task or set of tasks.

Someone might think that this is a Jewish version of the Greek myth of Sisyphus. A rebel against the gods, Sisyphus is condemned to push a rock up a steep hill, forever; he never gets to the top. Is that the human story? But pushing a rock up a hill doesn't seem to be "work" of the sort I am considering; in fact, it is a punishment. It has no goodness, no interpersonal value, whereas the reason we can't disengage from the "work" enjoined by the maxim is precisely because it is a good thing to do; doing it makes the world better.

But better and better somehow don't add up to best. In fact, doing better is better than doing best, because "best" implies a hubristic completion. It is like someone who claims to have produced the definitive account of God's law; this is it, he says; no one has to study it anymore; now we can just obey it.

The personal version of this is overweening and arrogant; the collective version is likely to be tyrannical. For the law is always there to be studied, and adapted, and revised; other people always need help; the world always needs to be improved. And to deny this, to say that the "work" is forever done or to try to organize all the people doing it, however they conceive it, and march them to a single conclusion—this is bound to be, and has always turned out to be, a nasty business.

We Want to Win

But isn't that "always" depressing, and isn't that the reason people continually try to finish the "work"? Remember the biblical line about the poor always being with us. We resist the "always" and seek to create a society and an economic system in which poverty would be abolished. We declare a "war against poverty," as Lyndon Johnson did, and we want to win the war. And it is right to try to win; that is one version of the "work" I am talking about. When we think about the "work," we think about finishing it as well as about not finishing it. Like Martin Luther King, Jr.,we have a dream. We have a utopian idea of a society where well-being is universal. We have an idea of a society where every individual life, every family and village, is secure against violence. We have an idea of humankind freed from catastrophic disease, where death comes only at the end of a "natural" lifespan. We have an idea of a legal system whose laws are so well understood that they are obeyed without coercion.

But it is a great mistake to think that there is a single road to the realization of any of these ideas, and that we have the road map, and that we are marching forward with absolute confidence—because then anybody with another idea about how the "work" should be done is going to seem like an enemy. And yet we need other ideas, because there isn't a single road; there isn't an absolutely correct road map, and this is a very long march.

So we should take the maxim to be comforting: don't worry if you don't finish—as long as you don't give up. But the maxim is also a caution, a restraint: don't be impatient, don't think that you know exactly what needs to be done, don't try to do it all, don't force the end.

Michael Walzer, a political philosopher, is a co-editor of Dissent *and, most recently, author of* Arguing About War *and co-editor of Volume 2 of* Jewish Political Thought. *This essay is adapted from a speech given at the University of Tulsa this past spring.*

LETTERS

HIGH PRAISE FOR *RS*

To the Editors:

Recent issues of *Religious Socialism* have been outstanding and inspire me to comment. Maxine Phillips's "Capturing the Flag" in Vol. 27 No. 2 (Summer 2003) was right on. She diagnosed the typical difficulty we lefties have with the concept of patriotism. Most of us only seem to be able to quote Samuel Johnson's "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel."

True enough, but let us not read this to mean that being patriotic means you are a scoundrel. From a political point of view—and our politics is what gives us much of our meaning—Maxine gets to the heart of the matter when she writes

> ...Until we can communicate with others who love this country as deeply as we do, we can't hope to present a solution that will counter the politics of fear coming from Washington.

It took a total lack of sectarianism to be able to write that sentence.

Next, the Fall 2003 issue was a blockbuster. Joe Hough's article calling for a new Reformation was sensational Making religious belief ecumenical is, in my opinion, one of the greatest political moves that can be taken in the struggle for a better world. Hough's article is a major contribution to that struggle and *RS* can be proud to have carried it.

The Spring 2004 issue featuring the lead article by Andrew Hammer, "No Time for Parties," offered the best presentation I've seen of the case for those of us who identify ourselves as part of the liberal /labor/left that is working within the Democratic Party rather than in third parties.

The DP is where our constituency is, and that's where we have to be. . . . Hammer's article made the "lesser evil" debate simply irrelevant.

In short, the *RS* issues over this recent period cry out for publicity that does far beyond our *RS* readership. The articles I've mentioned ought to be in the popular publications of the liberal/left, such as the *Nation*, *American Prospect*, etc., perhaps as a reprint, as the Hough article was.

Anyway, that's how I feel about *RS*. Enclosed is my renewal, commission dues, and a donation.

Irving Weinstein
Far Rockaway, N. Y.

To the Editors:

In cultural exchange work we used to advise one another that while it seemed that we couldn't teach anybody a damn thing, we should strive to create learning experiences. It seems to me that *Religious Socialism*, by being usefully provocative, continues to do that. . .

. . . Andrew Hammer's lead article in the Spring 2004 issue is a particularly good example of being usefully provocative. His essay makes some readers review assumptions; makes us think. As I went back over it, I did a lot of underlining, e.g. "there is no room in serious politics for dilettantes who seek to serve only their own utopian visions without regard for what helps people here and now."

May you be enabled to keep up the good work.

In solidarity,
Gordon A. Chapman
Yellow Springs, Ohio

To the Editor:

I agree with John Cort's argument in the Spring 2004 issue that the Bible contains the meaning of Marx's statement in *The Critique of the Gotha Program* that the goal of justice is to bring society to the point where "the narrow horizon of bourgeois right [can] be crossed in its entirety and society [can] inscribe on its banners: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!'"

I would like to add that even more, the statement comes word for word from the New Testament. As I note in my chapter on "Marxist Socialism," (p. 183 in *A Christian Perspective on Political Thought* [Oxford University Press, 1993]):

> "They determined to send support to the brothers and sisters living in Judea each according to each one's ability" (Acts 11:29).
>
> They gave the proceeds of selling their lands and houses "to each as any had need" (Acts 4:35).

As Branko Horvat points out, the formula had been used by other socialists before Marx (*The Political Economy of Socialism: A Marxist Social Theory* [Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1982], p. 115).

Stephen C. Mott
West Bridgewater, Mass.

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