

The Myth of Citizenship

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In its noble meaning, the word myth refers to some ancient story which, in allegorical form, tells us a truth about the universe and how we are in it. Since ancient times, for example, the myth of Oedipus has told human beings disturbing truths about the hidden nature of our desires for our mothers and fathers. In this sense of the word, myth is a bearer of truth in disguised form. But the word myth is also shadowed by a more ironical meaning. In modern times we use the word as a synonym for everything that is fanciful, dubious, inflated, and untrue. In this sense we think of myths as an inheritance from the past that deserves a dip in the acid bath of our scepticism.

Citizenship is a myth in both the noble and the ironical sense. On the one hand the Western political imagination remains haunted by the ideal of citizenship enunciated in Aristotle's *Politics*. What is haunting, specifically, is the ideal of a public realm in which through participation the citizen transcends the limits of his private interest and becomes, in his deliberation with others, what Aristotle said man¹ truly was—a political animal. The myth of citizenship holds that political life is the means by which men realize the human good. On the other hand, to the modern Western political tradition, inaugurated by Hobbes and Locke, citizenship has seemed a fanciful conception of man and his political nature. Man in such a conception is a bundle of passions and interests which he satisfies chiefly in market relations and private sociability: the political or public realm is a necessary evil—the institutional arrangements necessary to protect and enhance private freedom. It is these two conflicting images: citizenship as noble myth, citizenship as fanciful lie and two political paradigms—the republican and the liberal—that I want to examine here.

I am not concerned here to trace the history of citizenship since ancient times. Thanks to the work of some great historians—John Pocock, Quentin Skinner to name just two—the way stations of this history have become ever clearer in the past twenty years: Aristotle's *Politics*, the constitution of Athens; the Roman republics; the early Italian city states of the thirteenth century; Calvin's Geneva; the Commonwealth ideology of the English civil war; and the republicanism of the Enlightenment, culminating in the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of the Rights of Man; finally, the republican despotism of the Committee of Public Safety. In each of these moments, what it is to be a citizen is at the center of political discussion.

My own work as a historian concerned the period in late eighteenth-century England and Scotland when a republican discourse on virtue and citizenship encountered the nascent discourse of political economy: economic man confronts the citizen. I have argued that one of the intentions governing Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was a root and branch critique of the economic and social assumptions underlying the Rousseauian ideal of the self-sufficient, virtuous city state republic.² What this work brought home to me was the tension between the republican discourse on citizenship and liberal political theory of market man. The one defends a political, the other an economic definition of man, the one an active—participatory—conception of freedom, the other a passive—acquisitive—definition of freedom; the one speaks of society as a *polis*; the other of society as a market-based association of competitive individuals. This tension between man the citizen and economic man divides our spirits and loyalties to this day: we live as market men, we wish we lived as citizens.

I do not want to recapitulate my own work here or to use the work of others to retrace the history of citizenship in detail. Instead I want to do what no historian with any sense of professional prudence should attempt: I want to develop what Max Weber would have called an "ideal type" of citizenship and to use that ideal type to cast some light on the practice of citizenship today. The point of the exercise is to work both ways at once: to criticize the reality of contemporary citizenship from the standpoint of myth and to criticize the myth from the standpoint of reality. From this exercise,

I hope we will end up understanding a little more precisely what kind of citizenship is possible in a modern world, or to put it another way, what elements of the ancient myth we should hold on to and what elements were either dubious in the original or are simply inapplicable in modern conditions. When I speak of modern conditions, I mean the tiny portion of the globe in which advanced liberal democracy exists, in which human beings have the valuable and often taken for granted privilege of being free to determine what kind of citizen they would like to be.

What is the point of such an exercise? Briefly this. These essential tensions between conceptions of men as civic actors or as economic ones reerupt again and again within our tradition. We are living through such a period today. In the past twenty years there has been a sustained attack on the civic contract of postwar liberal democratic society. I refer to the neoconservative revolution in political thinking, a revolution in thought which, among other things, has helped bring Mr. Reagan and Mrs. Thatcher to power, and has rearranged most of our mental furniture about the proper balance between state and market. I want to argue that this revolution has been above all an attack on citizenship as a coercive bargain: citizenship is seen as a commitment to others which does not give "value for money"; in place of civic relations between strangers, it is proposed to substitute market relations because these enable a person not only to choose the extent and degree of his commitment to others but also to put a price on this commitment relative to other expenditures of time and money.

When seen as a critique of citizenship, the neoconservative revolution can be understood in larger terms than as a class-interested or selfish assault on the postwar welfare state. Its roots go deeper: its challenge cannot be met unless we see it as an expression of the deep-seated contradictions between citizenship and economic life as we live it in a market society. It is this contradiction, both analytically and historically, that I want to explore.

Let me begin by putting together an ideal type of the citizen as it comes to us, first of all, from Aristotle. A citizen, said Aristotle, is one who is fit to both govern and obey, fit both to make the laws and to observe them. Citizenship thus implies both an active and a passive mode: participation through office holding and election

in the governance of the state; and obedience to the laws made by other citizens. Civic virtue, the cultural disposition apposite to citizenship was thus two-fold: a willingness to step forward and assume the burdens of public office; and second, a willingness to subordinate private interest to the requirement of public obedience. What Aristotle called the "right temper" of a citizen was thus a disposition to put public good ahead of private interest. Crucial to this vision is a conception of the public being a higher truer arena than the private. Aristotle did not deny that there were many worthy private avocations, especially contemplation, but he did insist specifically that the realm of the *oekonomia*—the household realm in which the material necessities of daily life were reproduced—was a lesser realm than the public. For it was in the public that man exercised his highest capacities as a social animal.

Who then was fit to be a citizen? Since Aristotle assumed that political discussion was an exercise in rational choice of the public good, he also assumed that the only persons fit for such an exercise were those capable of rational choice. And the only ones capable of rational choice were those who were free. Dependent creatures could not be citizens: slaves, those who worked for wages, women and children who were both subject to the authority of the domestic *oekonomia* were excluded from citizenship. Adult male property owners were the only persons vested with civic personality.

From its inception, therefore, citizenship was an exclusionary category, justifying the coercive rule of the included over the excluded. As Michael Walzer has pointed out, the rule of citizens over noncitizens, of members over strangers, is probably the most common form of tyranny in human history. Among citizens, however, a rough equality of fortunes was always considered necessary since inequality of property among citizens would give the rich the means to suborn the interests of the less wealthy and corrupt the state. But how was such rough equality to be maintained? By sumptuary legislation against luxury? By confiscatory taxation? At what point would such enforced equality abolish the freedom the *polis* was intended to defend? Throughout its life, civic discourse struggles with the contradiction between economic processes ceaselessly generating inequality, and political processes requiring equality among citizens.

From its inception, the myth of citizenship implied the following crucial chain of associations: political choice requires independence of mind; independence of mind presupposes material and social independence; citizenship therefore inheres only in those capable of material, social, and intellectual independence. By a paradox which underlay refusal of citizenship rights to working people and women from ancient Athens to the dawn of the twentieth century, property holding, far from being a proof of interest, was taken to be the material precondition for disinterestedness. The civic monopoly of adult male property holders was justified on the grounds that their independence acted as a guarantee of the rights of those under their tutelage and in their employ. Citizenship in the republican tradition thus is undergirded throughout its ancient and modern history by patriarchalism. As such, a civic paradigm was bound to come into eventual conflict with a rights-based paradigm of political community. There is a clear contradiction between the restrictive property-based citizenship implied in the classical republican model and the universal adult citizenship that follows necessarily from any conception of human beings as equal rights-based creatures. Yet in the thought of founding figures of the liberal tradition like Locke, rights-based conceptions of political inclusion ceded place to property-based conceptions of inclusion, and the exclusive definition of citizenship prevailed until clamor from out-of-doors—popular campaigns, first for working men's suffrage, then for female suffrage—made the contradiction within liberal theory between universal rights and restricted citizenship impossible to sustain.

To our eyes, and rightly so, republican citizenship is disgraced by its patriarchalist underpinnings, yet these underpinnings were something more than the defense of aristocratic privilege. They proceeded from a particular view of the intellectual, social, and economic preconditions for disinterested, that is, good judgment in politics. Property owners had leisure and education; they were free from a narrow inscription within the division of labor—they did not have their noses to any particular grindstone—and could thus raise their eyes up to the higher questions of political art. Moreover, since the property that classical citizenship implied was property in land, rather than in moveable goods or stock, property

holding automatically vested its owner with an interest in the territory of the nation state. By virtue of landed property, therefore, a citizen was automatically a patriot.

There are two additional features of the myth of citizenship which need to be pointed out: to use modern and therefore anachronistic parlance, its antibureaucratic and its antiimperial features. The civic paradigm assumed a constant rotation of office and looked askance at the consolidation of any form of permanent administrative cadre set apart from the citizenry. The civic paradigm also stood against the creation of a standing army of paid professionals. Such an army of paid hirelings would prove a weapon in the hands of any tribune of the people bent on suppressing republican liberty. Moreover, once a citizen devolved his obligation to defend the republic onto a paid professional, his own patriotic virtue would wither away. The civic model opposed the creation of a separate army and a separate bureaucratic cadre on the grounds that specialization bred interests at variance with the general interest of citizens. In the folklore of Roman republicanism, the civic hero was Cincinnatus, the farmer who left his plough to lead the republic out of danger and then returned to the humble soil as soon as the job was done. The civic myth opposed not only the creation of a permanent political class, but the social division of labor which sets the state above and against civil society. In its ideal, self-rule means just that: citizens, known to each other, rule over each other in turn. Yet, from its very inception, such a myth of self-rule was a fiction at variance with the facts. Aristotle himself remarks that there are few democracies in which true rotation of office occurs: "moved by the profits of office and the handling of public property men want to hold office continuously" (*Politics*, Book 3). Into the discourse on citizenship there had to be inserted a discourse on corruption, on how self-governing citizens could be led astray by the profits of office and the lure of power into setting themselves up as permanent office holders, and on some occasions, despots. The civic myth is thus a myth of the fall in politics: how virtuous self-rule is corrupted and transformed into despotism by human cupidity. Citizenship implied a tragic and often nostalgic sense of lost human possibility. Civic life was a ceaseless struggle to preserve the human

good—the *polis*—from the forces within human nature bent on its deformation into tyranny.

This tradition of principled opposition to a demarcation between ruler and ruled, leader and led helps to explain why the civic tradition was antiritualistic, that is, hostile to the pomp of power, to the self-inflating rituals used by leaders to raise themselves above the common herd. The civic model came to admit the necessity of executive power within republics but it took pains to insist that a leader should always remain only a *primus inter pares*. Republicanism's fusion with Protestantism in the Genevan city state and in the American colonies only heightened this suspicion of ritual display in the exercise of power, a ritual associated with corrupt monarchies and bloated churches. Washington and Jefferson were republican ideals because they adopted the plain, simple, and unadorned style becoming a republican leader.

One essential path to civic ruin, as far as the civic paradigm was concerned, was the temptation to empire. Civic discourse was always antiimperial. Civic discourse believed the optimum size of polity should be small: the city state, where political relations could remain face-to-face relations. Imperial expansion violated these conditions and required bureaucratic administration and executive despotism. Moreover, citizens could not consistently rule barbarians: citizenship properly applied only to adult male property holders who shared the language and values of the state—it could not be extended to those who did not share the premises of the *polis*. Hence, barbarians could only be ruled by force rather than consent, and the use of force abroad was not compatible with the maintenance of democracy at home. In very different historical circumstances: from the late republican discourse of Cicero, to the civic discourse of the early eighteenth-century British Commonwealthman, the incompatibility of citizenship and imperialism was always stressed.

Let me pause here and summarize the paradigm of citizenship as I have described it so far: an antibureaucratic or antiimperial ideal of self-rule by adult male property owners, equal among themselves, sustained by an economy of noncitizens. In Rousseau's *Social Contract*, this vision of polity receives its fullest eighteenth-century expression. It is at just such a moment, as political theory enters

the modern age, that citizenship is then exposed as a fanciful myth, out of touch with the realities of market society.

In the eighteenth century there was a vital debate about the material conditions of political disinterestedness or virtue in the British polity. The debate centered on the question of whether holders of mercantile or moveable property could be true, disinterested citizens. The rural squirearchy of early eighteenth-century England, in whom this neo-republican ideology of citizenship was particularly vested, looked askance at the emergence of a new type of economic man, the stock-jobber, financier, international merchant and nabob, all of the new men created by Britain's expansion as an imperial economic power. Could such men be loyal citizens if their interests were international, if their property were not tied to the land? Given that most of their fortunes were built in alliance with the state as empire builder, could they be expected to be disinterested in deliberation over public affairs? These debates, vividly recreated for us by John Pocock, show an ancient ideal of citizenship struggling to come to terms with a new type of economic man.

In the discourse—political economy—which challenged the civic paradigm, the classical civic condescension towards the economic and private was subjected to withering scorn. As Adam Smith and David Hume insisted, far from being the lesser realm of rude mechanics, slaves, and artisans, the *oeconomia*—the private realm of providing food and shelter, necessities and luxuries for people—was the essential realm of life; even more so, a society was just to the degree that its poorest members had an adequate standard of living. By such a standard, they argued, modern commercial, or as we would say capitalist society had nothing to reproach itself in any comparison with the virtuous but materially backward republics of the past. It was the modern division of labor which made such a standard of living possible, not only the subdivision of tasks within industry, which enabled dramatic improvements in the productivity of labor, but also the social division of labor between the state and civil society. The very aspects of modernity, which classic republicans regarded as a dangerous departure from the ideal of an unspecialized civic democracy: a strong executive, backed up by a bureaucracy and a standing army, Smith praised as essential

to the achievement of society's essential goal: an adequate standard of living for the very poor. A democracy of property-owning citizens who shared office in rotation might be free, Smith conceded, but it was bound to be unequal and poor. A society that allowed government and the holding of public office to become a specialized function, that, in other words, encouraged the demarcation between state and civic society, was bound to be both more productive and more capable of satisfying the needs of its people.

For Smith and Hume, the state is essentially an instrumental creation, crucial to the adjudication and containment of self-interest in the private and market sphere. The public sphere is not the arena in which citizens realize their natures by transcending their self-interest. Indeed, it makes no sense to speak of human beings as having an essential nature or ultimate purpose which can be attributed to their various activities. Human beings are creatures of the passions, desires, and interests that they have: the task of politics is to find the political form that enables them to satisfy these passions and interests at the least cost in liberty and regulation. Democracy is not a value in itself in such a theory, although liberty is. The liberty which is the *sine qua non* of market society is passive liberty; the right to enjoy and accumulate property, to be safe from arbitrary arrest, to be free to express one's opinions and to worship as, or if, one pleases. The active liberty valued in the civic paradigm—the freedom to make the laws one lives by, to participate in the making and ordering of the polity—was regarded as valuable but secondary. Hume said that if he had to choose between living in a despotism under the rule of law—one which allowed him freedom to advance his affairs in private—and a democracy which gave him rights of citizenship but could not guarantee the security of his property or the freedom of his private life, he would choose to live in a despotism. This is to make the analytical point that market society requires the rule of law to guarantee security of contract, but it does not require democracy. Economic man *may* be a citizen but he need not be. Indeed, the possibility emerges that as long as a state leaves a private individual in the possession of his property and his legal rights, that individual need have no business in politics whatever.

The relation between private freedom and democracy may be contingent and many people in modern society live the contingency of that relationship. That is to say, they conceive of participation in the elective process as a vestigial duty, rather like going to church. It really has nothing to do with them, and as long as they are left alone, they are happy to leave politics to others. Apathy or disinterest of this sort is one of the great privileges of the tiny fraction of the world which calls itself "democratic." In most of the world, people are not free to pick or choose their relation to the political. In societies like Argentina in the late 1970s, citizenship was abolished altogether; in others, like Mao's China under the Red Guards, citizenship was enforced to the exclusion of all private rights.

Hume could envisage—and the Committee of Public Safety of the French Revolution certainly validated his prediction—a radical deformation of the civic tradition in which the communitarian bias of the civic discourse, its subordination of the private realm to public duty, would legitimize real tyranny. Majoritarian tyranny in all its modern forms—from Jacobin democracy through modern totalitarianism—has always exploited the public spiritedness associated with the word citizen: in such regimes, the "good citizen" is the one who denounces and informs on his neighbors, the one who sets aside *bourgeois* moral scruple and submits his will to what the authorities deem to be the public good. Germans who stood by while their Jewish neighbors were deported were "good citizens." Aristotle had not envisaged a situation in which a good citizen was not also a good man.

We can read these eighteenth-century debates now as matters of archival curiosity or we can try to formulate them in modern form. This classical discourse on citizenship, however dated, however disgraced its premises may now seem, still retains the power to enable us to pose still valid questions of modern citizenship: what are the conditions of political disinterestedness? what exactly ties our material interests to the interests of our country? do the harried conditions of modern life—our inscription in a narrow division of labor and our restricted leisure—disable our political judgment? If, as we rightly think, we cannot let our politics become the sport of a monied aristocracy, who would fit the criterion of ancient civic-mindedness, how will we, ordinary harried citizens that we are,

approximate to these ancient virtues? Or is the ancient paradigm asking too much of us?

If we put our faith in a majoritarian democracy based on universal citizenship in preference to an aristocratic democracy based on a minority franchise, it is because we have ceased to believe in the natural disinterestedness of aristocracies and because we believe that in the exercise of mass suffrage, the prejudices and interests of minorities cancel out each other in the will of a majority. The trouble is, of course, that majorities make mistakes: democracies safeguard themselves against these mistakes by the requirement of regular elections and by the entrenchment of rights of minorities which protect individuals from the zealous tyranny of majority rule. In other words, entrenched rights and democratic constitutions are held to compensate for the potential lack of disinterested virtue in electoral majorities.

In the republican civic paradigm, the virtue of citizens is held to be the ultimate guarantee of good government. In the literal politics that sought to make its peace with economic man and with the realities of market society, good constitutions, checks and balances are held to matter more than virtue. The idea that virtuous institutions are an instance of history's cunning in redeeming unvirtuous men is an essential part of the thinking that went into the framing of the American Constitution. This Constitution is the most successful fusion of republican and liberal traditions and attempts to make peace between them. Many traditional republican features are in evidence: the suspicion of standing armies, the entrenchment of the right to bear arms; yet the ascription of sovereignty to "we the people" is qualified both by entrenchment in a written constitution of rights that "we the people" are not allowed to abuse; and by the creation of checks and balances between executive, legislative and judicial branches.

The question of whether civic virtue in the citizens or a firm structure of countervailing powers is the more effective guarantee of democratic freedoms is recurrently put to the test. For example, one is entitled to wonder whether, if the conduct of two recent American Presidents—Nixon and Reagan—had been put to the test of a plebiscite, they would not have been vindicated or forgiven by the American people. Were their behavior in Watergate or Irangate

to have been put to a plebiscite, it would have been judged a matter of personal honesty or the lack of it, matters a judging public might leave to easy forgiveness or general indifference. Fortunately, their conduct involved infringements of the powers of Congress, and for this reason their censure could be achieved by institutional rather than popular means. The great nineteenth-century commentator on these eighteenth-century debates was of course the young Marx. Much of his early writing in 1843 and 1844, particularly on the Jewish Question, can be read as his reckoning with the civic discourse on citizenship and the discourse of political economy. For him political economy's anatomy of real life in civil society—economic man in competition with others in a war of interests—had shown up the mythic quality of the civic ideal. Modern man was divided between his identity as *bourgeois* and as *citoyen*; the former was his real identity, the latter a false, mythic identity. In the market, he lived as an unequal competitor; in the *polis* he was supposed to be a rights-bearing equal. His identity as a citizen was entirely legal and therefore imaginary (and thus ineffective) as a motive.

While subjecting the myth of citizenship to devastating scrutiny Marx remained the tradition's greatest nineteenth-century exponent. He held true to an Aristotelian ideal of man, freed from material necessity, and therefore equipped with the leisure and judgment to realize his own nature—his *species being*—in concert with others. Socialist man was supposed to reconcile the contradiction between *bourgeois* and *citoyen*. Socialist production would create the equal and universal conditions of affluence and leisure which would allow men to realize the Aristotelian ideal and overcome the split between private and public. Aristotle saw this as the true mark of the citizen. In this sense, Marxism is the culmination of the civic ideal and socialism is the greatest attempt to render the ideal of citizenship applicable in modern economic conditions.

If this is the case, why, in almost all communist societies which hold themselves heirs of Marxist ideals, has socialist citizenship proved incompatible either with democracy or with private rights? Isaiah Berlin's famous answer in "Two Concepts of Liberty" is that, of the two available conceptions of liberty—"freedom from" versus "freedom to"—Marxism showed a disastrous preference for the latter over the former. What Marx disdainfully called "bourgeois civil

rights"—"freedom from"—were held to be subservient to the higher task of creating socialist man, *freeing* him to realize his inner nature as a communal being. If this is the case, the fault lies not only in Marxism, but in the original civic ideal which—unless balanced by the cautious constitutionalism of institutional checks and balances and natural rights as in the American Constitution—favors civic community at the expense of private right. If citizenship is a myth, therefore, it has proven a dangerous one whenever civic duty is not balanced by a strong dose of private rights.

If Marxian socialism is one *terminus ad quem* of the civil ideal which shows up some of its promise and some of its danger, it is not the only one. What about the fate of strictly bourgeois republicanism, the attempt to marry ancient concepts of citizenship to a market economy?

We have already seen that the patriarchal elements of the ancient discourse contradicted the liberal ideal of equal human rights: accordingly, the political history of the nineteenth century can be interpreted as the attempt by working people and women to force this contradiction into the open and resolve it in favor of an essentially new doctrine, in which citizenship was held to be a right of all adult individuals irrespective of their property. That achieved, however, the empty formality of citizenship in an unequal market society became more and more evident. If that eminent nineteenth-century bourgeois Anatole France could admit that bourgeois equality amounted to nothing more than the equal right of rich and poor to sleep under a bridge, then the contradiction between formal and real equality in his society was apparent even to the bourgeoisie. Marx's indictment of bourgeois citizenship—that it confers formal legal equality upon citizens without conferring upon them the social and economic equality necessary for the exercise of the right—is surely correct; and, once again, much of the history of citizenship since the nineteenth century can be understood as the attempt to reduce the contradiction between real inequality and formal equality in the civic contract of modern society. This is a struggle, it must be said again, led from below—from the working class and feminist organizations—and from above—by liberal philanthropic circles who were repelled, for reasons of Christian principle, by the contradiction between the formal and the real. It was in struggling against this

contradiction that an essentially individualistic market society generated what A. V. Dicey called the "collectivist solution." Despite the libertarian and anti-statist principles of much nineteenth-century statecraft, bourgeois society created the modern interventionist state essentially to reduce an intolerable moral contradiction between the promise of citizenship and the reality of a market economy.

Out of this struggle emerged the modern welfare state. Following T. H. Marshall and others, I would interpret the history of the welfare state as a struggle to undergird formal legal rights with entitlements to social and economic security so that citizenship could become a real as opposed to a purely formal experience. Given the inertial tendency of market processes to generate unequal outcomes, the state is called upon by its own populace to extend entitlements to keep the contradiction between real inequality and formal inequality from growing too large.

As such, modern politics made a crucial marriage between the liberal and civic ideals, thus hoping to have the best of both worlds. From liberalism came the idea that the state exists to enable individuals to be "free from"; from the civic tradition came the ideal of "free to." By using common resources to create common entitlements, the formal freedom promised by liberalism was to be undergirded by the real freedom. Thus we have a polity formally neutral on what constitutes the good life, yet committed to providing the collective necessities requisite for the attainment of that good life, however individuals conceive of it.

To view the history in this way is to insist that the size and weight of the modern state bureaucracy is not some ghastly collectivist mistake foisted upon us by bureaucrats bent on the expansion of their prerogatives or by liberal politicians bent on making other people pay for their expensive experiments in social betterment. That is how the history of the welfare state is seen by its contemporary right-wing critics, but that, I would argue, is not how it was. What happened, surely, was an attempt to use state power to make sure that the market economy's natural tendencies would not be allowed to vitiate the ideal of a community of equal citizens. That attempt was sustained by important social forces: the trades unions and the liberal professions together with those elements of the business class who understood that a just civic

bargain was the essential precondition of economic efficiency. Keynesianism sought to marry equity and efficiency by using public expenditure to reduce the severity of the natural business cycle.

The names of William Beveridge and John Maynard Keynes are not usually associated with the history of citizenship but they have a crucial place in defining the terms of the civic bargain that prevailed from 1945 to the 1970s. In this new conception of citizenship, the citizen could count, as a matter of right, to be protected against illness, old age, and unemployment out of a common fund to which he has himself contributed. Welfare benefits were universal; the new civic bargain was not between "haves" and "have nots" on the basis of need. Taxation was thus explicitly conceived as the instrument for building civic solidarity among strangers. Civic solidarity was built upon the presumption that the more a citizen received from the state the more easily he would connect his private interest to the public.

The Keynesian ascendancy, from 1945 to 1973, masked the long-term contradiction between the market and citizenship. As soon as western economies entered their storm of troubles in the 1970s, this contradiction began to reassert itself. What at first seemed a crisis of inflation, of adjusting everywhere to higher raw material costs and of restraining excess demand soon revealed itself as a crisis of transition from an industrial to a postindustrial economy. Keynesianism and welfarism depended upon a heavily centralized and often nationalized industrial economy built around huge extractive and manufacturing industries—steel, coal, petrochemicals, automobiles—which benefited from state-capitalist partnership. Now these foundations were crumbling: the social welfare costs of adjusting to permanently high levels of unemployment eroded private profitability and put all of the apparatus of the postwar welfare state under permanent strain; the whole apparatus of employment security put into place in the Keynesian partnership between unions, management and the state began to prove an obstacle to the restructuring of the labor market in the late 1970s. The political constituencies tied to the nationalized industries and public sector employment—the unions, local communities, and their political elites—spent most of the decade resisting economic restructuring: denationalization, the watchword of politics in the early 1980s, is

an attempt to break the power of these obstructive collectivities and to force through modernization on lines that follow a purely economic rather than civic or public logic. Security had been the watchword of the Keynesian/Beveridgian pact: security in employment, housing, illness, and old age. Now mobility is the watchword of a postindustrial economy rather than security: jobs emerge and disappear, move from one process to another, from one region to another—skill not seniority counts. The logic of postindustrial growth seems to work against both nationalization and traditional welfarist conceptions of employment security. The emerging pattern is towards smaller units of production adapted to rapid fluctuations in level and patterns of demand. These units may be owned by multinationals but their management and recruitment are left to local employers. Nationalizations work in industries with a stable demand tied to the delivery of some essential and essentially stable public utility. They will not work with small companies in a life and death relation to the international market.

Alongside economic crisis, there was the experience of learning from the welfare state's successes and failures. First of all, extending citizenship rights to welfare did not increase social solidarity: it did not engender a stronger general commitment to the public interest. Instead, once the state was defined as the provider of last resort, the new civic culture unleashed expectations which both exposed a vast amount of unmet demand for social services and created new and unlimited demands once these initial demands were met. For example, instead of taking pride in public hospitals as a common civic asset, most people only noted how inadequate many public hospitals were in comparison to private provision. Small but significant numbers of dependents exploited the welfare system and this attracted disproportionate outrage because exploitation of the welfare system was seen as a violation of the tacit civic contract. It was seen as bad citizenship—a more serious matter than mere fraud. Likewise, the rising real rates of criminality since 1945 seemed to contradict the expectation that if everyone were given a real stake in society through the welfare system, they would behave towards others as mature citizens. This simply did not happen. Right-wing critics of the welfare society could point to both crime and welfare

fraud as instances to show that the supposed civic bargain was nothing more than a rip-off.

The impact of the welfare state on social solidarity is paradoxical. When, for example, social workers take over the caring functions formerly discharged by family members, there is both a gain and a loss: the dependent individuals may be better cared for in some instances and family members, particularly women, will be freer to enter the labour market; but a sense of family obligation may be weakened and community solidarity may suffer. The welfare state did increase collective solidarity in certain ways: in societies with a public health service, we all accept an obligation to contribute to each other's health care costs—indeed this is very much the core of the social democratic civic ideal. At the same time the welfare state allowed the emergence of new styles of dependency and new lines of moral exculpation. "It's the state's job, not mine" becomes everybody's first line of excuse when confronted with vandalism, neglect of civic property or, more seriously, abuse of children next door. In public housing especially, the maxim, "everybody's property is nobody's property" goes some way to explaining the all too frequent downward spiral of neglect.

If the idea of citizenship is in crisis today, it is precisely because experience has not validated the postwar civic ideal that public goods would extend civic solidarity. It becomes less surprising (when the history is read in this way) to understand why of the two elements that went into the making of the postwar consensus—the liberal insistence on freedom and the civic insistence on public goods—it should be the liberal which is now seeking to detach itself from its civic integument. The two were always in potential conflict and have been so since the dawn of the market era: any emphasis on freedom as the primary goal of a market society must be in eventual contradiction with a view which envisages society as a polity of risk-sharing citizens. As long as the market is functioning adequately, these contradictions can be contained. When economic crisis forces restructuring, the costs of citizenship and of public provision begin to seem too high and citizenship itself comes to be seen as a coercive bargain.

The focal point of this crisis of citizenship is of course taxation. People begin to ask why they are paying more for declining levels

of public service; or they ask why they are paying publicly for a service they would prefer to contract for privately. Where competing private services exist in education and health care, individuals with wealth begin to clamor for the right to "opt out" of public provision: to send their children to private schools, to have their operations in private hospitals. The logic of a politics which aims at reducing taxation in order to give private individuals more disposable income to spend as they please on a range of private rather than public services becomes irresistible. Yet it is clear that citizenship, not to mention equality, suffers.

Citizenship reposes in not too strict an accounting of what the bargain is worth. Childless couples pay through their taxes for the education of other people's children; young working people help to pay for the retirement and sickness costs of the aged; those who work help support those out of work; those who take good care of their children often end up paying for the mistakes made by those who don't take good care of theirs. This impersonal civic altruism is further undergirded by the insurance principle: we pay into a common fund in order to draw on it ourselves and as long as we get adequate public services when we need them, we don't mind paying for free riders.

Universality of benefits provides the essential legitimacy of the civic pact: it is not a pact, between "haves" and "have nots," but among equal partners in a civic enterprise, each of whom can count on the baby bonus, unemployment insurance and the old age pension as a matter of right. But the civic bargain is bound to come under strain if the growth machine of the modern economy slows down and thus reduces the disposable income available for the civic sphere, and if the quality of goods delivered begins to decline. We all then begin to live through that characteristic double consciousness of the urban middle class: not wanting to opt out of public education or public health but feeling that the longer we stay in for the sake of civic principle the more our private interests suffer. Ultimately any of us will take our children out of a crumbling inner-city school rather than persevere with civic mindedness simply for the sake of principle.

If I have spoken of modern citizenship in terms of passive entitlements to welfare, this is because the active elements of

citizenship—running for public office, voting, political organizing—were underemphasized in the Beveridgean welfare state. A welfare state generated an enormous bureaucracy only partially accountable to elected officials. Instead of confirming a citizen's membership in a common enterprise, the experience of any form of public assistance was all too often a lesson in bureaucratic arbitrariness or ineptitude. Citizenship was thus a bureaucratic rather than a democratic reality; and as such was weakly implanted in the political culture, vulnerable to the first plausible attack from the right on social democratic red tape. It was never obvious in fact how exactly to make the welfare bureaucracy more accountable without reproducing more committees and review bodies. One of the important ironies about citizenship is that no one wants to be a citizen all the time. Socialism, as Oscar Wilde said, is all right, but it takes too many evenings. Participatory democracy—the slogan of citizenship in the 1960s—foundered on its inability to propose any solution to the problem of democratic control over the state bureaucracy other than more meetings. This laid the welfare state open to the argument that its problem is the state's monopoly over the services it delivers. Remove this monopoly, charge market prices for welfare and social services of all kinds and the state will then have to become accountable and responsive to consumer demand. The enormous moral prestige of markets derives chiefly from the failure of the civic bargain behind welfare to live up to its democratic promise. Markets have to respond to customer demand; bureaucracies seemingly do not. It is a symptom of the crisis of citizenship in the 1980s that most political rhetoric, whether of left or right, addresses the electorate not as citizens but as taxpayers or as consumers. It is as if the market were determining the very language of political community.

The reassertion of the market model can be understood as the outcome of a class struggle between labor and capital over the percentage of economic surplus that should go to wages, public expenditure and capital or profit. Certainly a class analysis will take us part of the way: reasserting the rights of capital, increasing the profitability of companies and breaking the hold of public sector unions were undoubtedly central to the conservative parties which came to power in so many Western democracies in the 1980s. But as usual, class analyses will take one only so far. Equally important

is what might be called an "epistemological" factor: markets have proved better predictors of the future than government planning. The inability of government to anticipate let alone plan for post-industrial conversion brought back to the fore the market model's oldest claim to plausibility: as a signalling device of emergent trends. Market signals are more accurate and more responsive predictors than government-backed planning based on social science indicators.

Yet there was a further specifically political attraction in the market model besides its predictive plausibility. One of the crucial functions of the market solution—denationalization, privatization—has been to take distributional conflicts out of the political arena. When a company is privatized, its decisions about plant location, investment and levels of employment, are supposed to be guided by market rather than political considerations. Ridding companies of "political interference" means, in effect, reducing the influence of unions and electoral considerations on company behavior. If service in a newly privatized company remains bad, the government is off the hook, while the heat is on the company. The market solution is thus an attempt to take economic decisions out of the political arena. This is fully intended, of course. "Overpoliticization" is a key term of neoconservative argument. It implies that in many areas—from the economy to the private sphere of family life—a host of issues were being made subject to legislative interference in ways that were inimical to liberty or efficiency or both. Given the intensity of union-management conflict over the share between capital and labor in the public sector during the 1970s, the political attractions of privatization appear obvious: the government simply ceases to be the court of last resort in such battles. Likewise in the field of welfare. Neoconservatives argue that since the public debate about how much income should be spent on welfare is interminable and endless, it would be more efficient and less constrictive of the choices of individuals if they were left free to contract privately for such health care services and educational services as they chose. Democratic allocation of these services, they argue, is bound to infringe the rights of minorities who want to spend either more or less than the democratically agreed mean.

It should be clear that the market solution is an attack on citizenship and democracy. The consequence may be a diminution of that area of collective life—the economy—which ought to be subject to the collective will of citizens.

It is here in its definition of politics that neoconservatism becomes incoherent. Neoconservatives limit the state's powers and, therefore, the domain of collective political discussion to the provision of external defense and internal law and order. Every other feature of the welfare state tends to be regarded as a regrettable pragmatic concession of principle to the debauched tastes of the electorate: welfare benefits may not be justifiable in principle but abolition of welfare is impossible in practice, both for political reasons and for fear of the law and order consequences. But this stance in effect contests the revealed preferences of the electorate for effective social security protection. Yet these preferences are not to be taken as a sign of an electorate debauched by state handouts but rather as evidence of the degree to which in an interdependent mass-society, private welfare is intimately linked to public provision and cannot be otherwise. The modern welfare state is not sustained by a culture of altruism but by public awareness of the acute interdependence of public and private utilities. Because they fail to grasp this interdependence, neoconservative governments are increasingly confronted by the contradiction between their rhetoric and their performance, between telling their supporters they will get government off the backs of the people and the plain fact that government expenditure is either stable or rising as a percentage of gross national product. Indeed, in Britain, the privatization of public assets, far from reducing the level of state expenditure within the economy, has simply enabled the state to maintain or increase welfare services while slightly lowering general taxation.

There is also an interesting tension between conservative enthusiasm for the market and their distaste for the culture of the market place: its pandering to the taste of the lowest common denominator, the vulgarity, violence, and sexuality that seem to be what sells in a market culture. Out of this tension is born a contradictory cultural policy: the privatization of public broadcasting networks or the relaxation of broadcasting licensing requirements in order to improve the efficiency of the media market, coupled with

the moral browbeating of broadcasters on the issue of violence in the media and strongly moralistic stances on the content of both the criminal law and the school curriculum. Conservatives are unhappy with a culture that appears to relativize value or that appears to stand for nothing beyond the general permission to be free. But to say this is a tension in their thought is merely to say that their thought stands astride an enduring tension between the market and the polity on both the economic and cultural plane. Those who want a culture to stand for something beyond generalized permissiveness know in the end that that "something" cannot be left to the market or to private morality. It must receive legitimation by the polity, by citizens collectively deciding this is what we stand for.

What this amounts to is that the necessity for citizenship is inextinguishable. One can be agnostic on the question of whether man is or is not, by nature, a political being, whether citizenship is or is not a human need. But it seems indubitable that, in the Western tradition, he has sought to reconcile two competing political ways: maximum freedom in the private sphere coupled with collective deliberation over the content of justice and the shape of moral value. If men are citizens, it is because they cannot avoid the constantly renewed and ever changing dimensions of this choice. The pendulum of choice may swing and we are, indeed, in a strong market phase. It is strictly impossible, however, for this phase to endure forever because the choices that have been made are too fraught with contradiction to remain unchallenged.

What, then, are we to expect when the pendulum begins to shift away from the liberal market phase towards a renewal of the civic phase? We cannot expect a restoration of the *status ante quo*, a return to the post-war welfare state consensus. In the postindustrial economy, it is hard to envisage government once again in the commanding heights of industry, simply because the acceleration of economic change makes it imprudent for government to manage areas where risks are more safely left to private managers. Government will stay out of the economy, in other words, for reasons of political prudence: in order to reduce the political costs of failure and misjudgment. In the sphere of what is now the welfare state, one can easily envisage that citizens on rising real incomes will

want to spend more of their disposable income on private welfare services—health care, education, pensions—and that state resources will be increasingly concentrated on ensuring adequate provision for those in need. This implies a new contract of citizenship no longer based on universality of coverage and contribution, but one more explicitly based on obligations between those who "have" and those who "have not." There is the risk that those in need will be stigmatized by dependency and maintained at the lowest levels consistent with social decency. They are treated this way now and it is to be feared their condition will deteriorate once the welfare state ceases to be a collective social asset and becomes instead what it once was in the Poor Law era, a set of social provisions exclusively for those in need. A new social contract is only saleable politically if the middle class receive sufficient reductions in tax to offset their foregone benefits and if administration to those in need is seen to be a credit, an honor to the whole community, a sign of its civic spirit. The crucial point here is that the demand for equality of opportunity, for common starting conditions, is something more than a passing political fad or contingent political allegiance of the social democratic and socialist tradition. As we have seen, the belief that a *polis* cannot either be a community or a democracy unless there is rough equality of opportunity among its citizens is constitutive of our oldest and most distinguished political inheritance. As such, the demand for equality simply will not go away, because it is coequal with the even more basic demand of human beings that they live in a community. To paraphrase John Kenneth Galbraith, no one, to my knowledge, has ever proposed the squirrel wheel as an adequate model of human society.

Yet it is also clear that the very notion of community is changing and becoming ever more global in its reach. There is a new politics about in the world since 1945 which takes the universal human subject as its subject and the doctrine of universal human rights as its chief demand. In such a politics, dramatically instanced in organizations like Amnesty International, the responsibilities of the citizen are held to cede before the obligation to be a human being. When a man is being tortured in another jurisdiction, I can no longer regard our difference of citizenship as grounds to leave it to someone else to protest. Likewise in the politics of environmental protection,

the field of political intervention is now global, since the threats to that habitat are now global. Pollution from one country's steel and automobile industries becomes acid rain in another country. When the rain forests in Brazil are felled, the lungs of the whole world come under threat. Weapons made in one nation's laboratory can end human life on the planet. If we are becoming citizens of the world, it is because the threats to our lives and livelihoods no longer stop at the frontier of the nation state. It is perhaps here that the ancient myth of citizenship serves us least well in its explicit distinction between citizens and barbarians, between those who rule and those who are ruled. As Canadians know, citizens of other countries are now wading ashore claiming our protection against oppression in countries we have never heard of. We may try to use our citizenship laws to deny them right of entry, but there is simply no escape from the impingement of their problems upon us because these problems have become ours too. In more practical terms, this means, I think, that our national citizenship and our national government are important to us chiefly to the degree that they become the instruments by which we exert our influence in the international community of nations. We are the first human beings ever to see the planet Earth from outer space, the first to grasp the fragility of its environment and the total interdependence of our fates. Our conception of citizenship will have to adjust to that knowledge; it will have to become a myth, an ideal, adequate to the way we live now. The paradox of a global economy is that the nation state becomes *more* not *less* important as our instrument for defending our interests and solving our problems in the international sphere. Any tendency to balkanize spheres or to concede self-determination to provincial interests puts us in a dilemma. We want a strong local government to be responsive to our local needs and we need a strong federal government to speak for us in the global sphere.³

Notes

1. "Man," in the context of this article, refers to man and woman.
2. *The Needs of Strangers* (New York: Viking, 1984). See chapter 4, "The Market and the Republic."

3. This chapter is a substantially revised version of a lecture given at Queen's University on 22 September 1987. The lecture was given in the annual "Corry" series, which was established to commemorate the former Queen's Principal.