

# Beyond the Family Crisis

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**I**n the late 1970s and the 1980 election there was much discussion of the crisis of the family. Jimmy Carter concurred with Ronald Reagan while Phyllis Schlafly and Betty Friedan both called for policies designed to “strengthen the family.” Christopher Lasch and Jerry Falwell lamented the breakdown of family authority. Fevered regard for the plight of the family has diminished recently but this lull is not likely to last. For quite apart from the comprehensive family legislation of Senator Paul Laxalt and the pressure for a constitutional amendment banning abortion there have simply been too many changes in the structures of family life, personal life, and the position of women for that to be the case.

The time is opportune for a rethinking of what is meant by the “family crisis.” At the simplest it is clear that there is a change in what has been designated the ideal-typical nuclear family: a wage-earning father, a caretaking mother, and their progeny. In 1977 only 15.9 percent of households fit this mold and only 18.5 percent more households were added when the definition was broadened to include working mothers as well as fathers. In short only one-third of households contained *both* a married couple and their children. By contrast, slightly more

than one-third contained *either* a married couple or a parent and children, and nearly one-third of households contained *neither* married couples *nor* children. Moreover, the fastest growth rates during the last decade have been among singles, unmarried couples, and single-parent families. Women are marrying later in smaller percentages and having fewer babies, while the divorce rates continue to grow.

Since there is no reason to think that any of these trends will alter significantly in the near future, it seems safe to say that this typical family is not merely in danger but that it is an endangered species. Yet we want to suggest that the focus on family crisis is mistaken nonetheless.

What is more at issue, we believe, is a fundamental transformation in the ways we produce people rather than goods and services. We believe that the family crisis is but a stalking-horse for a more fundamental change in social reproduction—the system of institutions and practices (from hospitals, families, schools, workplaces, media, and churches to prisons, mental institutions, and nursing homes) by which people are produced, the life cycle is organized, and the class, race, and gender systems are reproduced. Put bluntly, the much ballyhooed “family crisis” masks a reorganization of the social reproduction system that is as substantial in its way as the reorganization of the production system in the industrial revolution.

While this transformation of people-production has already largely occurred, our conceptions of what has happened lag far behind. We still cling to the “family” as a surrogate for “tradition” and make of it an ideological totem, denying the mounting contrary evidence of experience, history, and statistics.

The plain fact is that without mandating marriage, outlawing abortion and divorce, restoring the fast-disappearing family wage, abolishing the state’s health, housing, education, and welfare subsidies, and legislating three-generation households, there is no way of making the isolated, heterosexual, and patriarchal family the all-encompassing emotional institution of a lifetime. And even if we wanted to return to a family-based production and social reproduction system (and we suspect few would) there is little prospect that we could. For the dramatic development of the social reproduction system outside the family in the past century has already altered our definitions of ourselves and our responsibilities for others. And our life patterns are now largely inconceivable apart from the subsidies of an extensive system of social reproduction that frees individuals to pursue more individualized life courses. In this respect the recent dramatic increase in women’s employment, single-parent families, and nonfamilial definitions of adulthood, to say nothing of the increase in single-person households and the presumption that retired persons will live apart from their children, are of a piece with the new order, a natural extension and development of it.

The history of the past several centuries has seen a glorification of the ideal

family that has increased proportionally as its functions have decreased and been appropriated by other institutions, until now the family has collapsed in on itself and sparked a new politics of social reproduction. What is common to that politics, right and left, is that it accepts the central role of the state in organizing, regulating, and subsidizing the social reproduction system yet challenges the terms under which the state does so. What is at stake in this politics is not simply the constitution of families but more broadly the production of persons, the organization of the life cycle, and the reproduction of the class, race, and gender systems. It goes to the very forms of social-emotional life we choose to live by as we work, affiliate, and create from generation to generation.

In order to appreciate the depth and complexity of the changes that underly these politics, it is essential that we review our past the better to see the present and envision our future. At the root of our misapprehension of the family crisis is a misunderstanding of the family's historical place in our social-emotional life, the role of the state, experts, and capital in *underwriting* as well as undermining the ideal-typical nuclear family, and the internal contradictions and frailties of that family. Indeed only as we appreciate this shared history can we appreciate our increasing dependence on extrafamilial institutions, the recent revolt against the family, and the inevitable emergence of a politics of social reproduction.

**H**istory records a multiplicity of different ways that human relations and emotional life can be organized. It was not until this century, in fact, that the mode of sociability enshrined in the concept of "the family" achieved either ideological or practical hegemony. In the preindustrial West, among lords and peasants and New England Puritans as well, social relations were not characterized by special deference to domestic bonds.

Seventeenth-century New England presents an illuminating case of this comingling of conjugal affections with ties to the larger community. The parents, children, and servants who worked in New England farm households were enjoined in the interest of productivity and piety to adopt an emotionally temperate attitude to one another. At the same time that Puritan divines frowned upon intense domestic affection they endorsed a wider distribution of human love and loyalty. Accordingly New England villagers compacted with one another to "live together according to the rule of love, in faithful mutual helpfulness."<sup>1</sup> The small nucleated settlements that resulted were hardly models of perfect Christian fel-

1 Kenneth Lockridge, *A New England Town: the First One Hundred Years* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), p. 29.

lowship, but they did permit the family, friends, church brethren, neighbors, and even the town pariahs to mingle together in an emotionally intricate circle of face-to-face relations. The American social and emotional landscape was not yet scarred by a sharp division between family and society.

It was only in the nineteenth century and within the urban middle-class that the family was invested with especially profound and distinctive emotional meaning. This redistribution of affection coincided with the rapid expansion of the capitalist marketplace and the earliest stages of America's industrial development. As production was increasingly organized for the market and outside the household, the home became an emotional center characterized by the mutual and voluntary love of husband and wife, the development of an intense mother-child bond, and a new emphasis on the moral and intellectual development of the child. A whole series of social polarities ensued from the spatial separation of the workplace from the familial residence and the redefinition of the household as a home. By 1850 the vocabulary of social life was polarized into contrasts between the family and work, the home and the street, private and public, love and money. These divisions were enscribed in an ideological cult of domesticity and mapped out an emotional gulf between the family and the public world.

It would be a mistake, however, to take this domestic ideal entirely at face value. The borders of emotional and social life were far more jagged than a simple dichotomy between family and society. While emotional life was profoundly altered by the separation of production from the household and the consequent creation of the home as an emotional haven of privacy and security, one of the sharpest emotional boundaries of the nineteenth century was actually drawn not between family and society but between the male and female spheres. The two divisions were not one and the same. Historians of women have discovered an extensive network of fervent female friendships that often endured a lifetime and took emotional precedence over conjugal relationships. Although historians have hardly begun to investigate the personal lives of males, there are suggestions that they also derived considerable emotional satisfaction from relationships with members of their own sex, often expressed in the rough-and-tumble camaraderie of the lodge, the tavern, or the ball diamond. The nineteenth century may well have witnessed a revolution in sentiment, but these intensified personal attachments affixed themselves not only to the family but also to sex-segregated primary relationships outside the home.

These homosocial bonds often took on a formal and institutionalized form. Nineteenth-century men and women alike organized themselves into gender-specific voluntary associations that served, among other things, as extrafamilial centers of emotional expressiveness as they exercised a sense of social responsibility that transcended the bonds of kinship. In almost every American municipality women assumed a major responsibility for the public welfare by organiz-

ing private charities, orphan asylums, and industrial schools as well as controversial movements for social reform, from abolitionism to female suffrage. At the same time their brothers, husbands, and sons assembled in countless fraternal associations, mutual benefit societies, trade associations, unions, and political parties. In short, while nineteenth-century industrial urban America saw the destruction of the well-modulated continuum of personal relationships that characterized a New England village two centuries before, it nonetheless witnessed the proliferation of social networks, secondary associations, and primary bonds between members of the same sex that assured a multiplicity of centers of social and emotional satisfaction outside the home.

**A**s the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, however, the establishment of a national economy and regulative state, the shift to urban-industrial capitalism, and the unsettling effects of the massive migration associated with these changes fundamentally altered the conditions of material and social life. And as they did the capacity of intermediate networks to organize social and emotional life and to bridge the gap between the "private" family and the "public" sites of production, governance, and exchange was radically diminished.

Somewhat similar dynamics had, of course, been manifested earlier in the shift to market capitalism in the 1830s, but now the scale of the transformation was broader and deeper. Not only were more workers leaving their families, networks, and secondary associations never to return, but the increasing organization of industrial production was even beginning to take over the production of such household goods as clothing and canned foods. The effects were far more disorganizing for the existing definition of the family than they had been before.

Moreover, at the bottom of these developments there was an awkward but inescapable paradox. To develop the economy and transform the nation it was necessary for the state and capital to encourage the free movement of labor—irrespective of the effect of such mobility on families and the social coherence of communities. Yet without some minimal level of family life and social coherence questions arose not only about the vitality of individual life but also about whether individuals would have the necessary discipline and identification with the system for daily toil, political deference, and the proper raising of children. The course of necessary political-economic developments not only risked anarchic disorganization and social protest but clashed with the maintenance of families as emotional havens and reproducers of workers, citizens, and parents.

This at least was the dire prospect that loomed in the minds of the many social commentators who excoriated the breeding of the ill-educated, undisciplined children in the nation's slums and immigrant enclaves. Throughout the nineteenth

century concern had grown for the control and management of the unproductive, the rebellious, and the marginal, leading to the establishment of schools, asylums, and prisons. But by the turn of the century it was not just the marginal who were the subject of concern. The heretofore reliable working poor and many among the middle classes were also experiencing the effects of social disorganization. Between the late 1880s and 1904 divorces increased by nearly two-thirds, and by the turn of the century two-fifths of American women 20–29 years old had never been married.

Diminished rates of marriage and fertility for the native-born middle class in particular led the likes of Theodore Roosevelt to sound the alarm of “race suicide.” And nearly every faction of society had its view on the interrelated problems of community, economic development, individualism, and social justice—from the Populists’ vision of a native American socialism, to the social Darwinists’ and eugenicists’ versions of “selection,” to the Progressives’ vision of a national social household, and the social sciences’ conceptions of social organization and control. Whatever the vision, it was increasingly clear that coherent family and social life could no longer be taken for granted and treated as a free good, self-reproducing, and comfortably left out of the calculations of capital and the state.

**A**s a consequence, the Progressives (in uneasy alliance with labor) worked to establish the “living” or “family wage” (that is, a wage that would allow a man to support his family without the full-time work of his wife and children), to end child labor, to restrict the woman’s working day (outside the home), and to create adequate housing for workers so that the integrity of the home could be maintained. Moreover, under the mantle of the Progressive movement, government bureaus with their staffs of social experts and social workers took it upon themselves to define the family and its responsibilities and to provide extra-familial support-structures. Thus, new domestic laws laid out the responsibilities within marriage, the grounds for divorce, the status of family members, and the requirement that families send their children to school, maintain their health, and refrain from excessive abuse or neglect. Moreover, Progressive legislation encouraged the development of day nurseries, kindergartens, extended school attendance, medical examinations and free meals for needy children, public health and safety measures (from sanitation to pure food and drug legislation), public parks and recreational programs.

Yet there were important paradoxes in the Progressives’ attempts to mandate and support the family. For if their legislation underwrote the changes in

wages, hours, and working conditions necessary for family life and eased the family's burden, their attempt to organize and regulate family life shifted the ultimate locus of responsibility for the family (and especially its children) toward the state. Indeed as these new Progressive policies provided external supports for the family and regulated its internal structure, they carried an implied threat that if the family did not produce persons of the right type it could go into receivership and have its human assets (especially children) directly managed by the state.

As long as private households managed to support and reproduce their members according to the standards of state experts, of course, there was no occasion for most families to become aware of this paradoxical role of Progressive legislation. But if they failed financially or morally (or got divorced), the apparatus of the state held the right to become the husband and parent through programs such as mother's aid (child support) and the juvenile justice (child custody) system. Indeed Rothman quotes a juvenile court judge saying, "with the great right arm and force of the law, the probation officer can go into the home and demand to know the cause of dependency or delinquency of a child. . . . He becomes practically a member of the family and teaches them lessons of cleanliness and decency, of truth and integrity."<sup>2</sup>

This threat of state intervention was more likely to be realized against the immigrant and poor, of course, but it stood in the background for everyone, suggesting that the family was increasingly a creature of the state as the ultimate guarantor of social reproduction.

There was another paradox as well. The Progressives' creation of family-support institutions and experts undermined the family's preeminent authority in the areas of childbirth, infant care, nurseries, play, education, medicine, marriage counseling, and conflict resolution. Indeed, with the turn of the century's dramatic expansion of a state-accredited professional class (schooled in social science and dedicated to the scientization of medicine and child development) the foundations were laid for a long-term appropriation of the family's role in the production of persons—an appropriation parallel to the market capitalist system's appropriation of goods-production from the household. In the vision of this newly broadened class, the production of persons could be rationalized and managed as scientifically as the production of steel.

In short, just as the Progressives endorsed the nuclear family they simultaneously hedged their bets on it by superintending its tasks and responsibilities (if not appropriating them outright). And the authority of the family became increasingly divorced from the performance of its once essential tasks. The roles

<sup>2</sup> David Rothman, "The State as Parent," in Willard Gaylin et al., *Doing Good: The Limits of Benevolence* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), pp. 78-79.

of family members and the meaning of their contributions to the family became increasingly uncertain. Thus while the nominal structure and authority of the family remained, family members were increasingly divorced from a clear idea of the functions they were to perform.

By the 1920s many observers and social movements grasped this situation and began to pull in opposite directions. On one side proposals were advanced for the dismantling of traditional family structure and authority—most notably the family's demand for the segregation of its members from the world at large. Feminists, inspired by the theories of Charlotte Perkins Gilman (among others), took aim at the isolated family hearth as they circulated plans for cooperative housekeeping units and collective cooking facilities. Margaret Sanger led a movement for birth control; Edward Carpenter defended homosexuality; Judge Ben Lindsay of Colorado endorsed trial marriages; and the redoubtable behaviorist John B. Watson urged that the family's role in childrearing be diminished so that the care of infants could be entrusted to experts and laboratories. On the other side, the sweeping revitalization of fundamentalist religion and the parallel movements for temperance and moral purity led to demands for the sanctification of the home and familial authority.

Thus, in a kind of dress rehearsal for the family-crisis controversy of our own day, the reorganization of social reproduction already underway by the 1920s generated a debate about the future of the family. But then, unlike today, the problem of the family's structure, authority, and tasks was apparently resolved in a masterful stroke of synthesis.

**A**s the social movements of the 1920s surged around them, a cadre of American academics put forward an ingenious resolution of the debate and breathed new ideological life into the domestic ideal. Pioneers in the field of family sociology, they reasoned that the family's earlier loss of authority over production and its increasing loss of authority over childbirth and development (to hospitals, day nurseries, public schools, and movie houses) were part of the larger division and specialization of labor that was essential to industrialization. Far from representing a decline and fall this process freed the family at long last to specialize in the tasks most appropriate to its internal nature: intimacy, emotional life, and the personal development of its members. As Willystine Goodsell put it in 1928, the family crisis would lead to a "new type of family in which freedom and a sense of obligation and mutual love and respect for the personality of each member shall unite to furnish the most wholesome condition of personal growth."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Problems of the Family* (New York: Century, 1928), p. 430.

Marvelously, this family would serve both as a refuge from the competitive order of individual achievement and as an arena of personal development. And as such it would provide a solution to the tension between the industrial and familial orders.

Yet, for all its avowed intentions, it was not as free, voluntary, and satisfying as its proponents claimed it to be. For if this family was now specialized for emotional life and had thus solved the problem of its function and task, it was still imagined to be a restrictive, exclusive structure under patriarchal authority. Indeed, far from envisioning the emotionally specialized family within a broader, extrafamilial structure comparably specialized for social-emotional life, the new theorists of the family specifically took aim at gender-based friendships and the sociability of extrafamilial social arenas—from taverns and political parties on one side to women's clubs and suffrage campaigns on the other. Tolerance of such extrafamilial life was incompatible with these sociologists' distrust of sociability and their veneration of both intense heterosexual bonding within the socially safe confines of marriage and intensive parental involvement in the development of children. Social life was to be reduced to the family and emotional life was to be bounded by its confines. By no means was it to be "politicized" or integrated into general schemes of societal reform.

The onset of the Depression did little to disturb this restricted, asocial, and apolitical vision of the family. On the contrary, the programs of the New Deal firmly endorsed the sociologists' vision of the family and further articulated an extrafamilial support structure. National programs of relief, welfare, and aid to the aged, the unemployed, the disabled, and dependent children were created—often with the explicit rationale of saving the family and thereby preserving discipline, maintaining personal identity, and undercutting social protest. Mortgage programs to save homes, farms, and small businesses were designed to underwrite the family as well as the economy. But the profamily stance of the New Deal was not limited to a quantitative extension of the Progressives' approach. For where Progressive practice was "based on the premise that . . . an individual's needs were properly met [through] the family and the market economy,"<sup>4</sup> New Deal practice was built on the premise that citizenship entailed the right to make social-welfare claims upon the nation. Thus the state's social-welfare activity was no longer solely residual to and compensatory to the primary functioning of the family and the market but was rather a normal institutional complement to the family/market system.

In fact, governmental supports for the nuclear family became as essential to the legitimacy of the state as its comparable underwriting of the economy. And

<sup>4</sup> Harold Wilensky and Charles Lebeaux, *Industrialization and Social Welfare* (New York: Russell Sage, 1965), p. 139.

after the New Deal few seriously expected the family or the market to function without the direct or indirect support of the state, ideological niceties notwithstanding. By the postwar period, the extent of the state's new double-Keynesianism was obvious to all but the most dull-witted as the state underwrote both the family and a large part of the domestic economy through the establishment of the suburban-industrial complex.

**I**n the name of the domestic ideal promulgated by state propaganda during the war and by legions of experts and advertisers thereafter, individuals were encouraged to marry young and have two or more children that women were encouraged to stay home and care for while their husbands went to work (or extended their education by going to college—often with government subsidies). From there it was but a step to the exaltation of the single-family dwelling as the ideal setting for healthy child development and happy family life. A suburban home of one's own far from the madding congestion (and corrupting influences) of the city was the ideal machine for the new life. What the industrial city had been to the rise of mass production, the suburb now became to state-based mass social reproduction and the domestic ideal.

At each and every point in the construction of the new suburban order the state and capital worked as partners to serve the family and the sacred task of childrearing. The state built roads, schools, and hospitals, subsidized water and sewer systems, offered low-interest loans and provided tax advantages to homeowners and families with children. And, of course, capital happily fanned the flames of consumer frenzy and employed millions to supply the material correlates of the suburban ideal: houses, shopping centers, toasters, television sets. Finally, the two combined to draw the apparently obvious lesson, that neither class struggle nor fundamental political conflict was necessary in a liberal capitalist society where everyone was or soon would be middle class and able to partake in the domestic ideal.

But at this moment, the very epitome of social endorsement of the private family ideal, that ideal was being dramatically undermined by the very domestic arrangements designed to preserve and enhance it. As the family was isolated in the suburb it was divided against itself, and increasingly subordinated to a pervasive apparatus of production and marketing on one side and schooling and social services on the other, mediated more by television and peer culture than parental direction or subcultural norms. The daily migration and activity patterns told the tale. As the father departed to the city to work, the children went off to school, sports, and lessons, the mother stayed at home or shopped; each

inhabited different, incommensurable worlds and did not rejoin each other until dinner, if at all. Even the house itself bore testimony as the ideal of the separate suburban home reproduced itself within: the demand for separate bedrooms, bathrooms, phones, TVs, and stereos increased until some homes became little more than boarding houses for those with blood ties.

The very idea of the developmental family designed to foster the personal growth of its individual members, it became clear, was at odds with the domestic values of unity, interdependence, and permanence. For if the family fulfilled its goal of nurturing highly individuated personalities it would sharply differentiate its members and almost inevitably plant the seeds of its own dissolution. In any case a small, restricted, nuclear household was poorly equipped to fulfill its psychological functions. For one adult of each sex and about the same age, two or three children, also similar in age and background, did not constitute a very rich mixture of personalities, cultures, or generations. And for all intents and purposes the awesome responsibility of developing personalities and providing for the family's sociability and emotional gratification was placed on the shoulders of the wife and mother.

Under these circumstances women often experienced the suburban reduction of social-emotional life to the home as a form of solitary confinement or house arrest. One woman described the claustrophobia of the suburb as follows:

I have no co-workers, and my children have no playmates other than one another. Here our yards are fenced in and we have no sidewalks. Neighbors keep to themselves. Each private home on the street has its own snowblower, lawnmower and a car for every person over sixteen years of age. In the evening a different supper is served in each house on the street, and at the end of the day a lonely housewife puts the dirty dishes into the dishwasher. Here in the suburbs there is no sharing and no caring.<sup>5</sup>

In short the contradictions always latent in the isolated nuclear family were coming back to haunt it. The suburban investment in familial love, warmth, and emotional interaction, according to this first-hand account, had been purchased at the expense of larger social bonds.

But that was not all. Just as the suburban explosion peaked it became clear that rather than a permanent, self-sufficient site of social activity, the family was a center of social and emotional life for only a small portion of the family life-cycle. Indeed, after the period of infancy and early childhood development the family increasingly became a way-station in a maze of more impersonal relation-

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Theodore Rozak, *Person/Planet* (Garden City: N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1979), p. 146.

ships. Family members passed through this domestic station, accumulating emotional and psychological sustenance from it, but using it ultimately as a staging area for a personal life geared to school, work, and consumption.

Tragically, the nuclear family had sought the emotional and personal development that was its ideal at the expense of wider emotional and social satisfaction and growing dependence on the essential support of capital and the state. And even then its short life was only a prologue to the dispersal of its members to an increasingly afamilial personal life.

While these contradictions were hidden from view in the 1950s as the new order was taking shape, they began to burst through the seemingly placid surface of family life early in the 1960s as housewives and their children in the developmental family sought a place in the political and economic life outside the home. In the 1963 bestseller, *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan articulated the inner voice of domestic anguish and labeled the "problem that has no name." Friedan sharply criticized the domestic confinement of women and issued modest proposals to provide wider opportunities for married women in the labor force and voluntary work. To the millions of women who like herself were reaching the stage of the family cycle when their children demanded less attention, Friedan's message was compelling. Card-carrying feminists or not, millions of women began to transform the whole pattern of female life and the internal structure of the family. After 1960 the rate of employment for married women rose dramatically until by 1980 two-thirds were gainfully employed. And as such employment expanded, the two-income household gave practical foundation to the critique of the patriarchal domestic ideal and its feminine mystique, though women continued to bear a disproportionate burden of domestic duties.

The sons and daughters of the domestic ideal and the suburban home marked their transition out of the family with even greater panache. This bulging cohort of young men and women marched out of the family as the staging area of personal life to create or join the civil rights movement, the student movement, the antiwar movement, the counter-culture movement, and the women's liberation movement. In part their politics reflected a renewal of the New Deal's politics of social inclusion and social welfare repressed during the Cold War, but it was also a product of lives lived within the isolated world of the suburbs, whose life alternated between over-organized activity and solitary vacuity. For this generation the experience of daily life was, to use the phrases of the day, a matter of growing up absurd in the lonely crowd created by organization men.

Yet these young activists carried with them more than the banner of a generation gap. They simultaneously proclaimed their origins in and discontent with the restrictive, expressive family by thrusting out upon society at large the family's cherished values of love, sharing, and caring. Reversing the reduction of politics to the domestic and the private, their cry was that the personal was polit-

ical and that politics must take as its aim the humanizing of the extrafamilial worlds of government, work, education, and social life without respect to race, class, or gender. For neither the family nor society could be humanized in isolation. Ironically, the principal success of the domestic ideology was to produce a return of the long-repressed politics of social-political life, a politics that renounced the family as a haven and sought to change the world.

The contemporary diagnosis of a family crisis was not made until the 1970s, but with the emergence of these movements the writing was on the wall. The domestic ideal and its family were simultaneously a failure and a seedbed for change.

**I**ndeed a break had come. Behind the back of the suburban explosion, the decades-long transformation of the social-reproduction system had taken on a qualitative significance and broken asunder the restricted, asocial world of the family to lay the foundations for a politics of social reproduction.

As the coherence and authority of the family has eroded in proportion to its loss of functions, and as the actual responsibility for structuring our lives, providing for our health, educating, employing, and tending to us in our final years has passed from the family to a range of extra-familial (and often governmental) institutions, it is at last possible to comprehend what is happening.

Just as the market-capitalist reorganization of production outside the household both transformed it and led to titanic struggles between labor and capital over wages, hours, and working conditions, so, now, the increasing reorganization of social reproduction outside the home is transforming it into a transitional site of social relations and leading in turn to a series of struggles between "private" social movements and the state, struggles over the terms and conditions by which the production of people will occur, the lifecycle will be organized, and the class, race, and gender systems will be reproduced.

Thus it is no accident that the late 1960s and the early 1970s saw the flowering of a new series of movements (from the human potential activists, students, women, gays, children's rights advocates, the aged, and ecologists to the disabled, welfare recipients, mental patients, and prisoners) whose struggles were not organized around the point of production but rather around the points of social reproduction.

Nor for that matter is it an accident that the late 1970s witnessed the flowering of an answering set of movements. For those of the "new right" are themselves better understood as part of the new politics of social reproduction than as separate from it. Indeed the new right does not dispute the central significance of social reproduction politics, but rather seeks to outdo its opponents in emphasizing its importance and underlining the close relationship between the organization

of the state and the structure of sexual, social, and emotional life.

The left-liberal movements of the late sixties and early seventies and the new right, "pro-family" movements of the late seventies are but two sides of the same coin. And together they have constituted a politics of social reproduction whose hallmark is acceptance of the central role of the state in organizing, regulating, and subsidizing social reproduction and a corollary acceptance of the politicization of the once private universe of personal and family life.

Despite appearances, the family crisis is but a smokescreen for a fundamental crisis in organization of social reproduction and the restructuring of social-emotional life. And we are, despite our continuing fixation on the family, in a new era.