

a competitive edge in the economic struggle with Japan. He notes that the National Machine Tool Builders Association, which sent a study mission to Japan in 1981, did *not* find that Japan was more advanced technologically. The strength of the Japanese firms was due not simply to investment in equipment but to “dogged” long-term management, to “aggressive” marketing, and to the fact that the Japanese “pay an unusual amount of attention to the training and motivation of [their] work force.”

The issues raised by Melman and Noble will influence profoundly the life of everyone in this country; they deserve to be the focus of a sustained national debate. That debate is not taking place and shows no sign of starting, so it comes as no surprise that neither author displays much optimism about the future.

For Melman, the classic social contract—that is, the ability and willingness of management to carry out the efficient organization of work—has been broken. Economic renewal will require new modes of governance in economic life and, most fundamentally, the extension of decision-making power to those within the producing

occupations. While Melman offers a number of exciting possibilities for instituting the reforms he considers essential, there is at present little or no movement in this direction.

Noble envisions the promise of a rational and humane second Industrial Revolution in broader terms than Melman. Not only could it bring economic renewal, but also a more democratic, egalitarian, creative, and enjoyable society. But the social promises and consequences are excluded from the decision-making process, while the compulsion to make technical fixes continues, fueled by newly inflamed competitive fears:

“[W]e see not the revitalization of the nation’s industrial base but its further erosion; not the enlargement of resources but their depletion; not the replenishing of irreplaceable human skills but their final disappearance; not the greater wealth of the nation but its steady impoverishment; not an extension of democracy and equality but a concentration of power, a tightening of control, a strengthening of privilege; not the hopeful hymns of progress but the sadder sounds of despair, and disquiet.” **WV**

enables us to invent our own way of life, unwittingly brought into the world the unnatural condition of anarchy from which stems the destructive and tormented quality of what we call history. As we move forward, our task is to knit together a new wholeness to contain the pathogen of power and to allow our most humane values to dictate our destiny. The task is demonstrably begun and in the coming centuries can be achieved, God willing we have the time.

In the meanwhile, as we strive for this more whole order, we are compelled to wrestle with the problem of power and the painful more dilemmas it imposes upon us.

Andrew Bard Schmoockler

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Brian Thomas responds:

“For instance” may not be proof, but it can be refutation, which the case of Gandhi is for Schmoockler’s parable—the alleged humaneness of the British empire notwithstanding. (The British have yet to relinquish Northern Ireland, by the way.) A disconfirming instance need not have universal application, and so I share Schmoockler’s skepticism of nonviolent noncooperation as a method of Native Americans in their war against genocidal, territory-grabbing whites. I also share his hopes for containing “the pathogen of power” and allowing humane values to prevail. I remain skeptical of his parable.

Correspondence

TRIBAL CONFLICT

To the Editors: In his review of my book, *The Parable of the Tribes* (September '84), Brian Thomas begins by lamenting the cheerlessness of my theory of the role of power in shaping the development of civilization. He concludes by adducing the cheerier example of Gandhi and by declaring that this example “undermines the parable’s pretensions to explanatory power.” This does not do the theory justice.

Gandhi’s example suggests the glad tidings that we can have our cake and eat it too, i.e., that we can maintain moral purity and still win, rendering unto God what is God’s without having to pay a moral tax for living in Caesar’s realm. Would that it were so; would that the requirements for survival in a dangerous world did not compel us to make morally painful choices.

“For instance is not proof,” Mr. Thomas says in criticism of my method of argument—and of course he is right. That applies also to his use of Gandhi. Gandhi’s success with nonviolence occurred against perhaps the most humane and liberal of the imperial systems, and at a time when powers weakened by two devastating world wars

were having to relinquish their colonies anyway. Does this “for instance” really undermine my theory of the necessities imposed upon civilized peoples by the unrestrained play of power in an anarchic intersocietal system? It has been well asked, how many Gandhis have disappeared unnoticed and ineffectual into the Gulag? And is it plausible to think that Native Americans—and countless dispossessed and decimated peoples throughout history—could have escaped their fate had they been adept at practicing non-cooperation?

The inevitability of the rule of power in an anarchic world is the pessimistic thrust of the parable of the tribes. Mr. Thomas criticizes not only this dark view, but also the “discrepancy” between this and my optimistic goals. I’ve done my work too well, he says, leaving no escape hatch. But there is an escape, and a reason for optimism: The historic anarchy of the overarching intersocietal system need not be permanent.

We emerged out of the regime of nature, a harmoniously ordered system shaped by eons of biological evolution. Ten thousand years ago we, the creatures whose creativity

ISRAEL: THE INCIDENT IN QUESTION

To the Editors: Mark A. Bruzonsky’s contribution to your issue of September, 1984 (Excursus: “Israel: A Shameful Silence”), is a shameful statement, mixing half-truths, innuendo, and lies.

He says: “Last April 12 four teenage Israeli Palestinians commandeered a bus.” They were, he says, “not armed with guns.” He fails to say that these four terrorists (“teenage”) were armed with dangerous explosive devices, that the hijacked bus was an Egged passenger bus, that the terrorists held the passengers hostage and threatened to blow up both bus and passengers.

Mr. Bruzonsky talks of the length to which Israeli authorities went to suppress the evidence of “this occurrence” (the storming of the bus by Israeli forces and the death of two of the terrorists while in their custody) and observes that “for the first time in Israel’s history, an establishment Hebrew newspaper was closed.” He fails to disclose that the newspaper, *Hadashot*, was closed