

sixteenth "Japanese blood" or more were required to show up for transfer to the barbed-wire-enclosed camps. No one was officially charged with, much less convicted of, specific criminal acts. Most were American citizens.

There was no revolt against this injustice. As they moved from Seattle to a temporary holding camp and then on to an internment camp in Minidoka, Idaho, they followed their leaders, who repeatedly told them "*shikata ga nai*"—it cannot be helped. Yet before long the internees turned camp land into vegetable fields, and organized schools, medical care, and, of course, their own baseball teams. Then, improbably, the American military recruited young men from these officially suspect people to fight in the European theater of war in a Japanese-American regiment. Some of these soldiers plucked out of the detention camps in America helped liberate the death camps at Dachau.

In 1976 President Ford apologized officially to the Japanese-American community and rescinded Executive Order 9066. In 1983 Washington state made amends to the Japanese-Americans who were on the payroll in 1942 and lost their jobs when they were sent to the camps. A congressman from Seattle introduced the first bill asking redress from the federal government for the Japanese-Americans interned in World War II; in 1988 a bill was passed that promised each surviving internee reparations of \$20,000.

Since then the Japanese-American community has become so integrated that the older generation worries about preserving its cultural identity. However, at the end of the exhibit there is a newspaper report on a 1991 poll showing "persisting hostility for the Pearl Harbor attack" across the country. In 1941 the fear of Japan quickly evolved into a persecution of Japanese-Americans. Now anti-Japanese sentiment is couched in economic terms. But the thought that it might evolve into something more virulent is never far from the minds of Seattle's Japanese-Americans.

ELIZABETH BECKER is the author of *America's Vietnam War* (Houghton Mifflin).

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## And Labour's demise.

# SUBURBIA'S REVENGE

By Michael Ignatieff

There is a certain majesty in an election. It is much more than a verdict on politicians and policies. It is a moment when we learn the truth—sometimes bitter—about who we are. For many English liberals last week's election result was

just such a moment of truth. It was much more than a political shock. It administered a moral, emotional, and cultural shock as well. Many millions of us woke up on Friday morning wondering what kind of society we were living in, forced finally to confront an ineluctable issue: Why did we fail to understand our own society?

Almost everyone who took part in the traveling election circus became so bewitched by the spin doctors and photo-ops of each campaign that we missed one fundamental reality: 1992 merely consolidates the great sea change election of 1979. Beginning then, the deep movements of social change—rising real incomes, diffusion of property ownership, the suburbanization of Britain—were all moving against Labour. Although the old working class, in declining manufacturing areas, in the council estates, in public-sector employment, remained Labourites, the new working class (*owner-occupiers, non-unionized, private sector, and high tech*) was moving in droves to the Tories. And the Labour middle class—professors, civil servants, teachers, union officials—was losing its prestige and political power to the new private-sector Tory-voting middle class—managers, entrepreneurs, businessmen.

Looking back, I can now see what I should have seen. Not just in Southeast new towns like Harlow and Stevenage, but south of Birmingham, down in the West country, in East Anglia, indeed everywhere the bus took me, the new suburban Britain flew by, the sprawling world of modest detached and semidetached affluence, flowing along the freeways, congealing around the supermarkets and hardware superstores. Thatcherism was there to see in double-glazed front windows, gleaming plastic conservatories on back extensions, burglar alarms over the garage doors, and new cars in the driveways. Conservatives knew how to reach the hearts and minds behind the lace curtains. One Tory candidate in the Northwest shrewdly observed in midcampaign that it usually takes a decade for a mortgage and a house to turn a Labour voter into a Tory. This, in a nutshell, is why it has been a Tory decade and threatens to become a Tory epoch.

The Tories won because they mastered the symbolic politics of suburban Britain. John Major kicked off his first major day of campaigning at a suburban hardware store. The metropolitan London media jibed at a prime minister caressing paint tins and stroking wallpaper samples. But reporters with chic inner London addresses missed the point. The store is the temple where cash is exchanged for the symbols of aspiration and achievement: bathroom tile, carpet, garden gnomes. John Major, son of a garden gnome manufacturer, understood this world so much better than those members of the high-minded, altruistic, personally ascetic urban middle class who ran the Labour campaign.

The crucial misunderstanding, of course, was over taxes. Labour economists studied the income distribution statistics and concluded that suburbia wouldn't mind if the taxes began to bite at around \$38,000. But it is in the nature of suburban aspiration that you judge your interests not from where you are, but from where

you hope you might get to. Especially in the Southeast, the Labour tax policy appeared to put a cap on the suburban dream.

In its inquest, Labour is bound to ask: How could we have lost in the middle of a recession? But this may well turn out to be the wrong question. Neil Kinnock got to the edge of the truth when he admitted that recessions don't turn people into revolutionaries. If anything, the recession worked to the Conservative's advantage. As one ruddy-faced Manchester businessman cheerfully confessed, "The Tories got us into this economic mess, and they're the only ones I trust to get us out of it." Major played to the defensive instincts of a worried suburbia and won handsomely.

But interests alone are not enough. Values count as well. Major's rhetoric of the classless society at ease with itself boxed in Labour as a party defending old class traditions and loyalties, and its conversion to the language of personal freedom was too hasty to sound convincing. As Major said in a speech in Perth a year ago, Labour always tells people what it is going to do for them. It never encourages them to do it for themselves. In other words, Labour's language of rights and entitlements lost the battle of values to the language of personal initiative. Its core value—redistributive justice—was decisively rejected.

**M**ore effective presentation cannot help Labour now. As it was, Labour played down the redistributive message nearly to the vanishing point. But it did not matter. Most voters clearly did not seem to mind that the rich have gotten richer under the Conservatives and the poor poorer. Apart from supporting the release of lower-income earners from taxes, voters clearly prefer tax policies that leave the rich in possession of what they have. Labour appealed to a bedrock of moral commitment to equity and they lost. Indeed, even among their own middle- and high-income supporters, one suspects there were more than a few who felt like the London ad man who told the newspapers last week: "I'm voting Labour and praying like hell the Tories get back."

Labour thus overestimated the altruism of its middle- and upper-income electorate and failed to alleviate the insecurities of its lower-class voters. Worse, it failed to spot a key contradiction between the asceticism of their fiscal and economic policy and the generosity of their social expenditure plans. On the one hand, it was committed to keeping the pound pegged to the deutsch mark and to joining the Economic and Monetary Union. On the other hand, it pushed a strongly redistributive social policy, requiring higher public spending and borrowing. Voters spotted the problem instantly: they were easily persuaded that Labour's sums simply did not add up.

Labour can progress only if it re-examines its position on the welfare state. It is merely preaching to the converted on socialized medicine. The party will not gain new adherents until it accepts the use of market pricing in allocating health care resources and addresses the

question of rationing health service use to the neediest and most urgent cases. It also must rethink its commitment to universal entitlements. Its traditions lead it to abhor the means test, but means-tested and targeted programs are a better way to address poverty than blanket entitlements. Such policy revisions are the only way to square redistributive ambitions with available resources. The British election shows with pitiless clarity how little electoral appeal there is in the classic strategies for redistributing income within an economy in relative decline. Bill Clinton might take note.

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## Why the United Way lost its head.

# CHARITY CASE

By Joseph Funder

**H**ead the latest one about William Aramony, the ousted head of the United Way of America?... He took at the office. If ever there was a scandal for the '90s, this was it. The president of America's largest charity, William Aramony, was suddenly unmasked as a limo-riding, Concorde-flying tycoon. Not only has the reputation of the most successful charity head in the nation's history been tarnished, maybe irredeemably, but with all the sensationalism, the crux of the matter has been entirely unexamined: Is it really wrong for the head of the nation's most efficient multibillion-dollar charity to earn a big salary?

Now, I must point out in the interest of full disclosure that I'm distantly related to Aramony by marriage. I may be compromised, but I also had the opportunity to witness the development of a full-blown scandal from a rare vantage point.

Once *The Washington Post* broke the story of what it called Aramony's "lavish," "grandiose" lifestyle, his fate was sealed. His salary was \$369,000—a large chunk of change by any measure—and it just plain looked bad. And the *Post*, *The New York Times*, and later the networks and everyone else chose to use the even more grating figure of \$473,000, his salary plus his pension and health care benefits. What they failed to explain is that with a tenure of twenty-two years, he's the longest-serving head of a major charity, and that his salary and perks, far from being aberrant, are close to the norm among the big charities.

The United Way board hitherto had been delighted with Aramony's performance, giving him an average pay raise of 6 percent pay a year (although last year he chose

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