

it seems, Garvey and his project evaporated until the mid-1960s, when the Black Power movement in the United States and new political leaders in Africa and the Caribbean rediscovered them.

There can be little doubt that Garvey's legal troubles and eventual deportation struck the UNIA a blow from which it never recovered. Yet although our knowledge of the world of Garveyism without Garvey remains limited, there is much more of a story than Grant lets on, and one that hints at a far more significant legacy than is generally recognized. The African continent itself felt the powerful effects of Garveyism—beginning in the 1920s, when the UNIA and the *Negro World* found a beachhead in South Africa, particularly among the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union but also among many in the fledgling African National Congress. Their influence then spread north, east, and west, first to Namibia, southern Rhodesia, and Mozambique, and then to Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya, where Garvey's ideas fired two generations of activists, most notably Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta, who helped to defeat European colonialism and presided over the creation of new independent nations. Garvey's vision of "Africa for the Africans" became a rallying cry for anti-colonial movements throughout the continent and, ultimately, a version of postcolonial reality.

Garvey's legacy in the United States was less dramatic and politically consequential than it was in Africa, but still it was significant. UNIA divisions, especially outside New York City, always had a good deal of autonomy, and while there were substantial membership declines and serious organizational ruptures after Garvey's departure, the UNIA survived in a variety of forms. In some cases, powerful leaders kept large divisions afloat; in other cases, smaller divisions were consolidated. Either way, community ties were maintained or reinvigorated as the UNIA, during the difficult years of the Great Depression, set up youth groups, operated businesses, provided food and clothing to the needy, paid for burials, and helped fight battles over housing and employment. Where the UNIA disbanded entirely, former supporters often continued their community-based activities or gravitated to the NAACP, the Communist and Socialist parties, the Future Outlook League, the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaigns, the CIO, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, or (especially in the urban Midwest) the Nation of Islam.

The many avenues that took African Americans from a powerful encounter with Marcus Garvey and the UNIA into later worlds of political activism suggest that strands of black thought and politics long regarded as distinct and antagonistic were far more interconnected and mutually reinforcing: integration and separatism, assimilationism and nationalism, NAACP and UNIA, civil rights and black power. The interconnections are to be seen in leaders such as E. D. Nixon, a Garveyite who later affiliated with the NAACP and helped to organize the Montgomery Bus boycott; Charlotta Bass, who published the widely read *California Eagle*, joined both the UNIA and NAACP, ran for Los Angeles City Council and then the United States Congress, and remained involved with struggles for fair housing, economic empowerment, voter registration, prisoners' rights, and South African apartheid through the 1960s; Bob Moses, the revered grassroots organizer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the early 1960s, whose grandfather was a fiery Garveyite Baptist preacher; and, most prominently, Malcolm X, who was the son of a

Garveyite, embraced the Nation of Islam, and later insisted that "every time you see another nation on the African continent become independent you know that Marcus Garvey is alive."

Even today there are active UNIA divisions—in Philadelphia, Washington, Richmond, Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Detroit, Durham, and Baltimore, as well as in Montreal, Dakar, Port Harcourt (Nigeria), Bergville (South Africa), Montego Bay, and Kingston—and Marcus Garvey is commemorated in many black communities, especially among the generation of African Americans born in the waning years of Jim Crow. His ideas, translated for decades by black activists in a variety of nationalist discourses, remain relevant for thousands of blacks, young and old, particularly among the working poor. As we struggle to contemplate what a post-racial world might be like, what its points of cohesion and fissure may be, what its prospects and limitations are, we would do well to take seriously the power and the influence of Marcus Garvey's extravagant messages and visions. History has shown that they made a great difference. ♦

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Paul Starr

## WELCOME TO THE PARTY

**ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS:  
AN APPRECIATION OF PARTIES  
AND PARTISANSHIP**

By Nancy Rosenblum  
(Princeton University Press,  
576 pp., \$29.95)

**P**ARTISANSHIP IS resurgent in America, and hardly anyone likes it. To say that American politics has become polarized along party lines is tantamount, for most people, to acknowledging that something has gone wrong with the country. And, indeed, the differences between Republicans and Democrats are less easily bridged than in the past: the two parties now stand for different worldviews, not just different policy positions.

The divergence between the parties is not just a phenomenon of election time. In Congress, liberal-to-moderate Republicans and conservative Democrats have nearly disappeared. The parties no longer overlap ideologically, and party votes (a majority of one party voting against a majority of the other) have increased. On

television and radio, old barriers against the expression of partisanship have crumbled—on the Internet, there never were any—and party feeling has intensified among the politically engaged public that follows the news. According to public opinion surveys, the American people as a whole are no more divided on national issues than they were three or four decades ago, but they are now sorting themselves into the parties on a more ideological basis. As a result, the two parties are further apart, and the temperature of the body politic has risen.

All this has upset many people who long for a return to the days when the parties were less adversarial and more philosophically muddled. Yet that era had its problems, too. The parties did not get much respect then either, and partisanship got even less. The term "partisan" has generally been used in an accusatory way,

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as if it were synonymous with narrow-minded, shortsighted, self-interested. Tapping into a long tradition of anti-party thought, high-minded editorialists and elder statesmen regularly tell us that it is a far better thing to be above party, to be bipartisan or nonpartisan, than to take the side of a party and fight for it. Anti-party sentiment is so much a part of the American political idiom that even the two parties' standard-bearers in 2008 affect to disdain partisanship, one casting himself as a crusty independent and the other as a cool post-partisan. But to anyone who thought that nominating John McCain and Barack Obama would mute partisan antagonisms, the campaign has surely been a disappointment.

At the root of the rise of partisanship is a change in what parties and party attachments in America signify. The standard observation used to be that the United States, unlike Europe, had no mass ideological parties. Both the Democrats and the Republicans were alliances of convenience that included both liberals and conservatives, and the more ideologically defined third parties, such as the Socialists, were too small to be of consequence. Activists tended to form protest groups to influence the major parties from the outside, while the parties themselves often seemed intellectually vapid at best, unprincipled and corrupt at worst. Learning whether someone was a Republican or Democrat did not necessarily tell you much about that person's beliefs. If you took political ideas seriously, it was hard to take party spirit seriously.

That is no longer so. As a result of the defection of white southerners from the Democrats and the conservative revolution within the GOP, the parties have become more coherent. The change is not exactly symmetrical—the Republicans have moved further right than the Democrats have moved left, according to analyses of congressional voting—but one party is now unmistakably conservative, the other predominantly liberal. Activists who formerly kept their distance from the parties are more inclined to work with one of them and to identify strongly with it. Learning whether people are Democrats or Republicans now says a lot about their thinking. And as the parties have moved apart ideologically, the stakes in choosing between them have become undeniable.

To favor a party today, in sum, is to recognize inescapable contemporary realities about how anything significant can be accomplished politically in America. And to be indifferent to party

is to be indifferent to all the ends achievable only through politics. Still, a cloud of opprobrium lingers over partisanship. There is no grand intellectual tradition that presents parties and party spirit in a positive light. And though there has been a revival of democratic theory in recent years, that work has had little—if anything—good to say about parties.

IT IS TO CORRECT this blindness and this bias that Nancy Rosenblum has written her book, which is both a critical history of political thought about parties and a defense of the contribution to democracy of both parties and partisanship. Rosenblum is an unsentimental democrat. In her previous book, *Membership and Morals*, she rejected the tender view of voluntary associations as the font of virtue, community, and the good society. But on the grounds that associations prepare people for life in a democracy, she defended them in all their partiality, even to some extent when they are illiberal (for example, when a group such as the Jaycees discriminates against women).

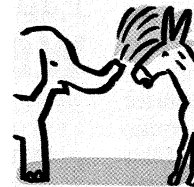
*On the Side of the Angels* repairs an omission of that earlier book, which, as Rosenblum herself says, gave “short shrift” to political parties; but her impetus is still to uphold the democratic uses of partiality. Parties do not automatically spring up out of society's divisions; political issues do not simply take shape on their own. Parties define the lines of division, shape the issues, stage the battle, motivate public discussion—in short, they animate democracy, and partisanship is crucial to that achievement. Rosenblum does not focus on the recent rise in partisanship as American politics has become more polarized. But if ever there were a time to give parties and partisanship a realistic and more accepting look, it is now.

Concerns about the anti-party slant of democratic theory are not new. In 1942, in his book *Party Government*, the political scientist E. E. Schattschneider wrote that the hostility to parties was so pervasive that even “the champions of democratic government” treated them with contempt, while political philosophers tended to “ignore the subject altogether.” It testifies to the depth of the anti-party current in political theory as well as in popular sentiment that Rosenblum finds the same pattern more than half a century later. But whereas parties still are, in Schattschneider's phrase, “the orphans of

political philosophy,” they have also become, as Rosenblum says, “the darlings of political science”; and it is partly by drawing on empirical research on democratic politics that she tries to show what democratic theory gets wrong.

The more one agrees with a book, the more one may be frustrated by its shortcomings. Although some sections are incisive and deftly written, *On the Side of the Angels* is a labor to read. Cutting it by a third would have strengthened the force of the argument. Rosenblum's prose is so undisciplined, so maddeningly repetitious, so given to wandering into tangential thickets, that it is easy to lose patience with her book. And then there is her exasperating habit of stringing one direct quotation after another, often without identifying the source in the text, forcing the reader to guess who said what or to shuffle back and forth between the text and the endnotes (of which there are typically more than two hundred per chapter, amounting altogether to more than one hundred pages).

These limitations are particularly conspicuous in the first third of the book, which at great length—and sometimes to no clear purpose—reviews political thought about faction and party up to



the period in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when parties were accepted and electoral party competition developed. Rosenblum identifies two “glorious traditions of anti-partyism.” The first line of thought views parties as “unwholesome parts.” Although “holism,” as she calls it, comes in many varieties—hierarchical, communitarian, egalitarian—the common element is a concern for unity above all else and a rejection of pluralism of any kind. Hobbes and Rousseau are the two most influential holists. The second line of anti-party thought accepts pluralism in general but dreads parties as “fatally divisive” because they aggravate and inflame conflict. This perspective holds that some types of parties are especially dangerous because they cultivate a feverish factional spirit—partisanship—that threatens harmony. Madison, though he was himself the co-founder of a party, fits into this second category.

Amid the overwhelmingly hostile early view of parties, Rosenblum does find a few pro-party glimmers. She points to Burke's conception of “regulated rivalry” between parties within government as an alternative to violent conflict, to Hegel's notion of parties as organizations

prepared to assume responsibility for governing, and to the "proto-Millian" view of parties as sources of productive disagreement ultimately leading to better decisions. (Rosenblum calls the latter "proto-Millian" because John Stuart Mill himself, though the greatest exponent of "trial by discussion," did not see parties as the agents to bring it about.)

The book at last gains focus and energy in its middle third, a little too cutely titled "Post-Party Depression," where Rosenblum turns to anti-party thinking after parties were fully established. Here she takes up the tradition of "progressive antipartyism," which serves as her primary foil. By "progressive," she means not just the reformers of the Progressive Era in the early decades of the twentieth century, but also their descendants—"the people of the uplift," as Thorstein Veblen called them.

Rosenblum sees the progressive animus against parties and partisanship as an unreasonable, overly individualistic, and naïve response to the vexations of democratic politics. "In its original and every subsequent incarnation," Rosenblum observes, "progressivism is moralistic. Its mantra is reform. In politics it is paired with 'good government' and 'clean elections.'" From the progressive standpoint, good government requires voters as well as officials to guide their decisions according to their individual conscience and the public good, whereas parties are corrupting because they appeal to profane interests and group loyalties. Accordingly, parties should have no role in determining the public's choices.

Toward that end, the progressives of the early twentieth century famously pioneered such measures as nonpartisan elections, primaries, and the creation of technical commissions and other bodies of experts to take over functions from elected officials. There is no contradiction, Rosenblum argues, between the progressives' emphasis on direct democracy and on professional expertise, "pushing democracy back on the people and then snatching it safely away to the expert. Both are antiparty. Both rest on the assumption that there is one, objectively discernible public interest that can be identified and promoted by disinterested public servants and an untainted, nonpartisan popular will."

Although Rosenblum's criticism of progressivism neglects its accomplishments—progressive reforms early in the twentieth century strengthened democratic government, and some similar measures would be constructive today—she is right about the anti-party impulse.

Parties and party labels help to make politics intelligible. Stripping away those cues in nonpartisan elections and popular initiatives deprives voters of critical information, leaving them vulnerable to manipulation. Instead of more accurately reflecting the people's will, referenda have regularly been hijacked by well-financed special interests. Anti-party progressives are unrealistic about what informed and active citizenship requires in practice. As Rosenblum points out, parties create a "we," and this sense of identification and membership connects partisans to politics. In contrast, the independents idealized by progressives are typically less informed and less likely to vote. If you want citizens, you cannot exclude partisans.

**M**ANY PEOPLE WHO call themselves progressives today—and who identify with the Democrats—would have no trouble with this critique of anti-partyism. But Rosenblum sees the same old anti-party progressive animus at work in two currents of thought that in recent decades have aimed at correcting democracy's ills.

The first of these looks to a revival of civil society but unjustifiably excludes political parties from the "charmed circle of the civil": "A moral hierarchy of modes of civic activism sets members of voluntary associations on top and partisans on the bottom." Such a view, Rosenblum suggests, misses certain crucial advantages of partisanship. Many associations are limited in their concerns to a single issue, and do not have to confront the difficulties of carrying out the policies they favor, and are not responsible to the electorate as a whole. In contrast, parties have to take a broader and more practical view of the interests at stake, because they need to win elections and, if they do win, they need to be able to govern.

A second line of thought seeks to repair democracy by strengthening pub-

lic deliberation, but it unjustifiably views partisanship as contaminating public discussion. The ideal known as "deliberative democracy" calls for reasoning out through dialogue the differences among those with opposed positions. Its premise is that through hearing the other side as well as getting more information, citizens may discover areas of agreement and possibly better answers to their problems. For many advocates of the deliberative model, that means keeping partisanship out. The organizers of citizen juries and deliberative polls, for example, bring together groups of people to discuss particular issues, providing them with presumably neutral, expert information, while usually excluding partisans and party representatives.

Yet partisanship, Rosenblum says, is "desirable as well as unavoidable." Partisans provoke each other to take positions, and even when their provocations do not rise to the standard required for deliberation, they provide the "fuel" for more refined argument. Deliberation stripped of the emotions of politics and unconnected to participation isn't likely to have any urgency. "In the real world," Michael Walzer has remarked, in a passage quoted by Rosenblum, "the theory of deliberative democracy seems to devalue the only kind of politics that could ever establish a practical egalitarianism."

Marrying deliberative democracy to civil society, Rosenblum insists, will not solve the difficulties. To expect that deliberative debate will take place in civil society rather than in the partisan arena is delusory, because people tend to join groups of the like-minded. As Diana Mutz has shown in *Hearing the Other Side*, "those highest in voluntary association memberships are least likely to report cross-cutting political conversations." Democratic deliberation more often occurs in the rough contest between partisans than in the cozy circles of voluntary groups.

## Catch Some of The Flack

In TNR's newest blog, Howard Wolfson offers up the war room perspective.

\* [TNR.com](http://TNR.com)



Here, as throughout the first two-thirds of *On the Side of the Angels*, Rosenblum may seem to be giving indiscriminate approval to parties and partisanship, but in the last part of her book she draws some crucial normative distinctions. Elaborating an “ethic of partisanship,” she sets out three principles, which she suggests more or less correspond to the patterns followed by the major electoral parties in mature democracies. The first of these principles is inclusiveness: it calls for parties to seek members across the various segments of a society. The second is comprehensiveness, which refers to the aspiration of parties to offer a narrative about a society as a whole, its history and direction. And the third is the disposition to compromise, which involves practical commitments to seeking majority support. These principles certainly are a start, but they are hardly exhaustive—and they do not indicate where partisanship should stop. And finally, in what may seem like a surprising turn at the end of her long discussion, Rosenblum examines the criteria for banning parties. She is not a free-speech absolutist. A democratic society has a right to defend itself against parties that, for example, refuse to lay down arms or threaten to eliminate essential liberties, such as the right to vote, if they win one election.

**T**HE MOST PROVOCATIVE part of *On the Side of the Angels* is not the discussion of parties as institutions; most people will readily grant that democracies require parties. What is more striking is Rosenblum’s case for partisanship. The old progressive belief that independents are morally superior to partisans—more rational, more civic-minded, more self-reliant—still has its hold on contemporary political thought, but Rosenblum is right that the empirical data do not support that view. Instead, she argues, independents are basically free-riders on the parties, inattentive to civic affairs, voting at a low rate, and refusing to take any responsibility for the practical demands of politics. In an article in *Perspectives in Politics* in 2006, Russell Muirhead made much the same case: unlike independents, partisans do not just “stand for”; they also “stand with,” and by standing with others, they are able to “stand against” their opponents effectively, instead of just making gestures. Or as Rosenblum writes, “If, as Ignazio Silone says, the crucial political judgment is ‘the choice of comrades,’ Independents do not make it. ‘Atomism’ is an overworked metaphor, but it applies to Independents:

atoms of the unorganized public bouncing off the structures of a party system.”

Contrary to progressive “antipartisanship,” Rosenblum insists, “what is needed is not more independence but more and better partisanship.” And this, I think, is how we ought to approach the current American political condition. The philosophers as well as the high-minded sermonizers ought to lose the vestigial anti-party and anti-partisan impulses. Polarization along party lines may be uncomfortable, but the parties now actually stand for something, and it makes more sense than ever to stand with one of them. The voters have a clearer and better basis for holding parties and party philosophies accountable. Partisan identity is now a more important aspect of

Americans’ personal identities, and we are going to have to live with it. We should not be averse to doing so.

And yet we must take care not to be too partisan about partisanship. It ought not to be welcome in every aspect of life—certainly not in arenas such as the schools, the churches, and the sciences, where concerns for other values ought to dominate, and under ordinary circumstances completely exclude, the partisan mentality. Yet in a society in which the parties stand for different worldviews that encompass education, religion, and science, maintaining those limits is increasingly difficult. Even in a partisan America, or perhaps especially there, the ethic of partisanship has to include rules for keeping partisanship in its place. ♦

## Jenna Weissman Joselit PASTE AND FUTURE

### SCRAPBOOKS:

#### AN AMERICAN HISTORY

By Jessica Helfand

(Yale University Press, 244 pp., \$45)

**M**ARK TWAIN had one. So did Anne Sexton, Lillian Hellman, Harry Wolfson of Harvard, and little Hattie Briggs of rural Michigan. I also had one, and I suspect that you did, too. I am referring to the scrapbook—that odd assemblage of memorabilia and mucilage that once ruled the roost when it came to recording the details of one’s life and one’s sentimental education. By the interwar years, rare was the American household without its own copy of *Our Baby’s Biography*, *Alma Mater Days*, or *Him Book*, in which moony teenage girls compiled notes and stored away confidences on prospective beaux. Even the devout sang its praises. Following church and Sunday dinner, there was no better way for children to observe the Lord’s Day than to create a “Sunday Scrap-Book,” or so the *Ladies’ Home Journal* advised in May 1891. “Select a picture and cut it carefully from the paper; paste it neatly into the scrap-book, somewhat above the centre of the page. Then, by aid of the Concordance, select a verse which the picture suggests, and

write it neatly below the picture, adding the chapter and verse from which it is taken.” This exercise, counseled the popular magazine, “cultivates the imagination, the hand gains skill. Great facility is obtained in finding Scripture references.”

A domestic artifact made possible by the invention of chromolithography and the Brownie Camera, the scrapbook was both a book and an object, print medium and canvas. Within its pages, text combined with image and penmanship culled with fabric and flowers, dog tags, ticket stubs, and the wrapper on an Oh, Johnnie! Milk Nut Roll to yield an amateur but truthful document of private historiography. The scrapbook exuded physicality, to say nothing of idiosyncrasy; it was a kind of cabinet of personal wonders. Though mass-produced versions abounded in rules and carefully demarcated boundaries (“paste here”), consumers gleefully defied these strictures. Whether pasting outside the lines, or layering a photograph atop a clipping, or substituting the details of a circumcision for those of a baptism on the page reserved for that Christian rite of passage, the owner—or more precisely, the author—of a scrapbook made it his or her own.

And yet, for all their willed fancifulness and fierce individuality, scrapbooks reflected more than the limited universes of their creators. They also engaged the wider world. It is tempting to read these decidedly quirky compilations as little more than the musings of a would-be siren from Sarasota or an aspiring line-

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