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AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND THE MEANING  
OF CITIZENSHIP.

City University of New York, Ph.D., 1977  
Political Science, general

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1977

AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND THE MEANING  
OF CITIZENSHIP

by

DENNIS HALE

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate  
Faculty in Political Science in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City  
University of New York.

1977

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## PREFACE

This thesis began long ago with my discovery of a book by Joseph Tussman entitled Obligation and the Body Politic. That work was my introduction to the mysteries of political theory, and while it is acknowledged at several points in the text, I would like to take special notice of it here. Wilson Carey McWilliams, who helped me to an understanding of Joseph Tussman and many other things besides, deserves special thanks; his guidance and support have been important factors in my life for over a decade. At the City University of New York, Robert Engler helped me think through the beginning of this project, in his seminars and in private talks, and he was especially patient while the project grew to its present form. Benjamin Rivlin, while Executive Officer of the Ph.D. Program in Political Science at the Graduate Center, helped me over several hurdles and gave me the time to figure out what to make of my academic career. Kenneth Sherrill has gone over the writing with me, sparing time from an extremely busy life, offering suggestions and counsel of great value. To all of these I offer acknowledgement and gratitude, and also to other friends outside the Graduate Center--especially Marc Landy and Henry Plotkin--who gave help when it was most needed. I would also like to thank my parents, who helped support me through an academic apprenticeship that has consumed many more years than it ought to have. And finally I would like to thank my wife, Adele Travisano, whose mounting impatience with this project has provided an important inducement to finishing it.

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## INTRODUCTION

This is a thesis about citizenship, one of the oldest and most important concepts in the political tradition of the West, and its place in the literature of twentieth-century American political science. It will be argued here that citizenship occupies a very small (and shrinking) place in that literature, a fact which can be related to the general decline in the experience of citizenship in Western democracies. I am not arguing that this relationship is causal, only that it is interesting and significant: the withdrawal of citizenship from the field of vision of the American political science discipline has been in part a symptom of citizenship's decline in the real world, and in part a reason for the general indifference to that decline among those trained to observe political phenomena. The concerns of the profession mirror the concerns of the nation, and the decreasing interest in the problems of citizenship is a good example of this general rule.

In arguing a relation between political science and the decline of citizenship--or what is called elsewhere in the thesis "the crisis of citizenship"--I am attempting to make an argument about language and its effect on our understanding of political reality. Like all modern professional disciplines, political science has evolved a special language of its own, based on its members' understanding of their goals and the special requirements those goals have revealed to the members of the discipline. Very early in its career, American political science adopted a

set of goals inspired largely by the success of the natural sciences. Biology, chemistry, and physics have all, in one way or another, contributed models and definitions to the social sciences, and political science has shared with psychology, sociology, and economics the benefits and the quandries of that inheritance. But of all the social sciences, political science seems to have been most deeply challenged (and disturbed) by the example of natural science. Indeed, the modern history of political science seems to some observers to have revolved almost entirely around this issue alone.<sup>1</sup>

The result of this cross-fertilization between disciplines is this: political science has tried to use a language borrowed from natural science to work with a set of concepts that are derived from a much older language, and the match has not always been successful. Concepts such as citizenship--and terms from the same tradition, such as authority, obligation, justice--owe their meanings to a tradition of inquiry that is in many ways alien to the spirit of modern social science. The older tradition honored a different set of goals. As Werner Jaeger has pointed out, Greek political science understood its role to be similar to that of the physician. Just as the physician sought to preserve a state of health in his patients, the political philosopher sought to preserve (or to establish) a state of health in the polis. In search of the appropriate method for achieving that goal, Greek political thought gave special attention to the widest possible

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<sup>1</sup>See for example Bernard Crick, The American Science of Politics: Its Origins and Conditions (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), and Arnold Brecht, Political Theory: The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Political Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

education of the citizens whose separate lives comprised the life of the city. The search for the good state was, in effect, the same as the search for the right form of civic education: for paideia.<sup>2</sup>

Modern political science has, for the most part, used a different language because it has usually pursued different goals. In keeping with the inheritance from natural science, political science has sought above all things for a way of dissecting and describing political phenomena as a prelude to controlling them. The contrast is clear: where ancient political science sought to define the good state and to derive from that definition the form of education that would produce it, modern political science has sought to describe contemporary states as a prelude to understanding and controlling them.

This is an important theme, but it is at most a secondary one in this dissertation. What I am concerned with here are much more limited questions. What effect has the language of modern political science had on our understanding of one of the traditional concepts of politics? What has happened to the shape of modern citizenship as it has been worked through the models and theories of contemporary political science?

To anticipate the argument somewhat, we will find that the political science discipline was formed in an atmosphere of concern for the future of American democracy. The men who founded the American

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<sup>2</sup>Werner Jaeger, Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939-44), esp. Vol. 2, In Search of the Divine Center (1943), Ch. 9. A similar argument has been made by Christian Bay in "Politics and Pseudopolitics: A Critical Evaluation of Some Behavioral Literature," American Political Science Review, 59 (March, 1965), pp. 39-51.

Political Science Association in 1903, and who established the first political science departments in American colleges and universities, were motivated in part by a desire to make American politics more comprehensible to the class that was destined to govern. But several factors made this task a problematic one.

In the first place, there was some doubt as to whether the students at American universities would, in fact, play a prominent role in government. Politics had an unsavory reputation around the turn of the century. Scandals, corruption, machine government--all these familiar problems combined to dissuade the "best men" from entering the public service. For this reason, we will see, political science made an early alliance with the various forces of "reform" in American life, which gave a characteristically moralistic tone to much of the early political science literature, typified by the work of Woodrow Wilson. At the same time, the profession developed a continuing anxiety about the proper object of its educational efforts: Were they to be directed at the students of political science, on the assumption that these students might eventually assume the leadership their training qualified them to assume, or were they to be directed at the public at large?

A second problem facing the discipline was the nature of American citizenship itself. Never precisely defined in either the Constitution or the early court decisions, the rights and duties of American citizens occupied the uncharted land of political custom. In each generation, moreover, as the political community changed its shape, custom changed with it, so that at no time in American history had

there been a settled consensus on the rights and duties of citizenship, or even on the basic question of who was entitled to be a citizen. This made the entire field of citizen education fair game for whatever theory of citizenship happened to be popular at the time. In an era of mass immigration and industrial growth, this flexibility proved to be a major source of confusion.

Another major obstacle to the successful resolution of the crisis of citizenship was the liberal tradition which formed the intellectual background of all reform movements of the period, political science included. It was the nature of that tradition to place man's role as citizen in the background of his existence, and to elevate other relations instead: his role as a producer, or as a member of a group, or as the member of a specific class. American political thought was firmly rooted in the liberal individualism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly in the theories of John Locke.<sup>3</sup> Starting from that foundation, the men who wrote the Constitution and the men who interpreted it and governed under its laws, saw the political order as a secondary reality, a set of institutions and mechanisms designed to confirm a pre-existing social order, to maintain it in the face of internal and external threats, and to guide it, where necessary, away from obvious perils. In such a worldview, the growth of citizenship and the education of citizens was bound to

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<sup>3</sup>Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955); also Wilson Carey McWilliams, The Idea of Fraternity in America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 109, pp. 556-70.

take second place to concerns for stability and orderly social change.

Taken together, these factors lent to the early debates in the political science discipline a distinctive tone of uneasiness. Uncertain of its audience, its subject matter, and its methodology, political science entered the twentieth century with two separate, and often contradictory goals: to reform American government, and to order the material data of politics in the way a chemist or physicist would order the data of molecules and atoms. At times these two goals became hopelessly confused--we will encounter one APSA president who was moved to speak of the "civic atom," and another who sought insight into the "civic order of ants." At other times they simply obstructed one another, as, for example, when the movement for an expanded program of citizen education encountered an equally powerful movement to divorce the American Political Science Association from "propaganda" of all kinds. But most of the time these different tendencies went their own ways, resulting eventually in an exhausted truce between "normative" and "objective" political science.

Meanwhile, as the discipline groped for a clearer understanding of its proper role in the intellectual and political communities, the crisis of citizenship continued unabated, providing the underlying theme, the bass line for the often discordant melodies of the chorus. What was happening to the experience of citizenship in modern states? Were the foundations of the American community eroding, and, if so, how could they be repaired? What forms of civic education were appropriate for American conditions? And above all, in what language could the complexities of American politics be expressed? How could politics

best be studied? These are some of the questions that underlie the literature of political science in the twentieth century. I want to consider them first in some statements made by presidents of the American Political Science Association as they tried to define the scope of the discipline, its methods and its subject matter, and then, in more detail, in the work of Arthur Bentley, Charles Merriam, and the school of contemporary political science known as "group theory" or "pluralism." But first it will be necessary to establish a starting point by considering some older conceptions of citizenship and civic education, in three traditions: in the political thought of democratic Athens; the tradition of seventeenth-century liberalism; and the American variant of that tradition as enunciated by the authors and defenders of the Constitution.

## CHAPTER I

### WHAT WAS CITIZENSHIP?

"The tradition of political thought is not so much a tradition of discovery as one of meanings extended over time." -- Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision

#### 1.

##### The Classic Conception

In the ancient republics from which our political vocabulary is descended, citizenship was three things: it was an office, an orientation, and a skill. As an office, it implied other offices, in which citizenship played its necessary part. As an orientation, it implied a set of values without which citizenship was unstable and subject to decay. As a skill, it implied knowledge and the power to use that knowledge.

##### Citizenship as an Office

The citizen was first a governor, one who shared the responsibility for managing the affairs of a city. Our language tells us that politics in the modern sense was born with cities, i.e., with the problems posed by large numbers of people, unrelated by blood, living together in a single space without the traditional ties of kinship to bind them together. The Greek polis gives us politics; the Latin civitas gives us city and citizen.

Although citizen has practically become a synonym for resident, citizenship was, at the beginning of our tradition, a status confined

to a small minority, a prized possession and an honor not lightly bestowed. For many centuries in Greece, for example, citizenship was associated almost exclusively with the ownership of land.<sup>1</sup> Even during the most democratic period in Athens, the body of citizens probably did not exceed twenty-five percent of a city that may have had as many as 300,000 inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> This citizenry, already expanded from a much smaller body of nobles, included a majority of the free males of all classes and ruled over a larger population of slaves, foreigners, women and children.<sup>3</sup>

Citizenship was thus a privilege, and ceremony and solemn oaths attended the introduction of new citizens.<sup>4</sup> But citizenship was not simply an honor; it was also a task. Citizens were expected to be

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the social system of Athens and its relation to citizenship, see A. H. M. Jones, Athenian Democracy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), Chs. 1 and 4.

<sup>2</sup>The population of Athens has been estimated in many different ways, and the results are a matter of controversy. Jones claims that there were, in the first quarter of the fifth century, approximately 20,000 citizens in Athens, 10,000 free foreigners, 90,000 women and children, and 20,000 slaves. These estimates are based on contemporary records of the size of military forces (which give a rough estimate of the number of citizens) and assumes three women and children to every male. The total population of 110,000 (of whom twenty-five percent were citizens and twenty-five percent slaves) agrees, according to Jones, with the number that could have been supported by the grain harvests. Jones, *ibid.*, pp. 76-79. G. Glotz estimated 40,000 citizens out of a total of 140,000. G. Glotz, The Greek City and its Institutions (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1965), pp. 126-27. Victor Ehrenburg estimates the population reached a peak of 300,000 during the height of the Empire, and that 35,000 of these were citizens. Victor Ehrenburg, The Greek State (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1960), p. 97.

<sup>3</sup>A. H. M. Jones, "Athens and Sparta," in Hugh Lloyd-Jones, ed., The Greek World (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>Glotz, The Greek City, pp. 132-33.

capable of forming sound opinions and defending them in the public debates: thus the importance which Greek education gave to rhetoric and oratory.<sup>5</sup> They were expected to know the history of their city, its religious customs, and its laws. They were expected to attend the Assemblies and vote on matters touching every detail of the city's life, as well as elect jurors, generals, magistrates, and a host of other officials. They were also, of course, expected to serve in these posts if chosen by election or lot.

Citizenship was the focus of Greek political speculation because the city was the focus of Greek political life.<sup>6</sup> Upon a firm base of virtuous citizens, Greek political theory attempted to build a virtuous city: thus the importance of political education in Greek texts. Plato based his ideal Republic on a rigorous system of educating citizens in their several duties, a thought central not only to his own works but to Greek practice in general.<sup>7</sup> Aristotle thought that in the ideal state, the "good man" and the "good citizen" were one and the same, and that the polis had a duty to see that citizen virtue was encouraged during all the stages of life.<sup>8</sup>

The office of the citizen was a set of tasks; those holding the office were expected to perform them. During Athens' most democratic

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<sup>5</sup>Werner Jaeger, Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939-44), Vol. 2, In Search of the Divine Center (1943), pp. 126-59.

<sup>6</sup>Leo Strauss, The City and Man (Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1963).

<sup>7</sup>For Plato, education was the state's highest purpose. Justice, the guiding spirit of the best state, must originate within the soul of the citizens, or it would not take root. Jaeger, Paideia, Vol. 2, pp. 200-203.

<sup>8</sup>Aristotle, Politics, III, iv, 8-18.

period, offices were filled both by election and lot, and certain offices could not be held more than twice by any one person.<sup>9</sup> In this way, all who shared the obligation to govern were given the opportunity to meet it. Private concerns and duties were not expected to interfere with the performance of one's public duties, and this applied to the poorest of citizens as well as to the most leisured. Thus, those who attended the Assemblies or who served as jurors and magistrates, were paid for their service, in order that all could take part regardless of wealth.<sup>10</sup> At times, citizens were also paid to attend religious ceremonies and dramatic productions, in order to deepen their commitment to the city's religious and emotional life. Those who could afford it were also expected to sponsor such festivals.

Greek thought and experience has given to the word citizen a connotation which it has never completely lost, although, as we shall see, other meanings emerged to take their place alongside of the older meaning. A citizen is one who shares the obligation to govern.<sup>11</sup> For the Greeks, this obligation was very much rooted in a particular place: foreigners did not share it, whatever their status might be in their home city.<sup>12</sup> Exile was a punishment as terrible as death (to Socrates,

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<sup>9</sup>Jones, Athenian Democracy, p. 105.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 80-81. During the fourth century, the Assembly was made up mostly of the humblest citizens. Plato complained that it was composed of "laundrymen, shoemakers, carpenters, smiths, peasants, merchants and shopkeepers." Jones, "Athens and Sparta," p. 72.

<sup>11</sup>To Aristotle, a citizen is "he who enjoys the right of sharing in deliberative or judicial offices . . ." Politics, III, 1, 12.

<sup>12</sup>Jones, Athenian Democracy, pp. 10-11.

more terrible) because to be cast out of the home city was to be thrust into a world where one had no place, no credit, and no fellows: in short, no public life or public space.<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that exile did not deprive the Greek of his rights, and this marks what is perhaps the most important difference between Greek conceptions of citizenship and contemporary ones. Citizenship has been defined by an American Supreme Court Justice as "the right to have rights."<sup>14</sup> But in Athens and other Greek cities, non-citizens (resident foreigners and slaves) possessed a wide range of civil rights. They could engage in business and rent land (although they could not own it).<sup>15</sup> In fact, slaves and metics played major roles in the economic life of Athens, as merchants, artisans, and tenant farmers.<sup>16</sup> Despite his lowly status, the Athenian slave could accumulate wealth (including wealth in the form of other slaves) and some slaves became affluent enough to purchase their freedom, at which point they became, essentially, members of the metic class.<sup>17</sup> Upon proof of mistreatment, a slave could demand the right to be transferred to another owner, and there were fines imposed for striking a slave.<sup>18</sup> But the one status

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<sup>13</sup>Condemned prisoners were usually allowed to escape. Exile was called by Roman jurists "capital punishment." Fustel de Coulanges, The Ancient City (New York: Doubleday, 1955), p. 201.

<sup>14</sup>Chief Justice Warren, in Trop v. Dulles, 356 US 86 (1958).

<sup>15</sup>Jones, Athenian Democracy, p. 11. <sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 10-16.

<sup>17</sup>Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 62, n. 59.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*; Jones, Athenian Democracy, p. 19.

denied to both metics and slaves was the status of citizen, which was thought to be not only a right, but a way of life with religious as well as political meaning.<sup>19</sup>

Citizenship has come to be associated so strongly with the protection of private rights that it takes an effort of the imagination to understand what the ancient language meant. In Greece, as Hannah Arendt has reminded us, "privacy" retained a strong element of its root meaning: "privation," the absence of something valuable.<sup>20</sup> The private realm, the household, was the realm of biological necessity: birth, death, subsistence. It was a lower order of existence, albeit a necessary one. Without a private space in the world man was a slave, a being dependent upon others for his survival. But without a public space man was a mere animal, a being whose life was entirely bound up with mere survival.<sup>21</sup> Greek society, consequently, was not stratified simply on the basis of wealth, but on the basis of access to the public spaces.

At the lowest level were slaves, often captured prisoners of war. Next in order were women, excluded from the citizenship regardless of their family connections, confined to the household and the realm of biological mysteries. Above this level of householders were foreigners, who possessed, as we have seen, several important rights and who norm-

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<sup>19</sup>Freed slaves were rarely granted citizenship rights, and then only after serving in the army or navy during extreme emergencies. Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>20</sup>Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 38.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 36-37.

ally played, along with slaves, an important economic role. It is important to note that none of these categories of "privation" necessarily implied poverty. They implied nothing more nor less than exclusion from the citizenship.

Above all others and, in their public capacities at least, existing on a plane of equality, were the citizens, a class which included free and native adult males regardless of occupation or wealth.<sup>22</sup> This was the class admitted to the public realm. Their common denominator, aside from sex and nativity, was that they were all able to devote some time and thought to public affairs, because circumstance had released them from total devotion to their own survival. "Public life," Arendt notes, "was possible only after the much more urgent needs of life itself had been taken care of."<sup>23</sup> Greek writers frequently cited this release from private burdens as a prerequisite for citizenship, and Coulanges points out that in light of the numerous duties citizens were expected to perform, this requirement did not reflect a prejudice in favor of the leisured classes but was a simple statement of fact about Athenian conditions.<sup>24</sup>

The public space in which the office of the citizen existed was a place in which men gathered to perform a task for which the community had decided they and they alone were suited. The relations of citizens

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<sup>22</sup> Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 32. Property qualifications existed for admission to the citizenship, but during the fourth century they were quite liberal, amounting to approximately four to five acres of land or its equivalent (e.g., slaves). Jones, Athenian Democracy, pp. 79-80.

<sup>23</sup> Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 65.

<sup>24</sup> Coulanges, The Ancient City, pp. 335-36.

have been compared by Joseph Tussman to the relations of colleagues, in the sense that citizens and colleagues both unite for the achievement of a common purpose. The citizen's role is to "deliberate" rather than to "bargain," an activity which properly belongs in the marketplace rather than in the forum.<sup>25</sup>

It was understood that upon entering the public realm, the citizen was entering a different world, with different standards of conduct.

The polis gives each individual his due place in its political cosmos, and thereby gives him, besides his private life, a sort of second life, his bios politikos. Now, every citizen belongs to two orders of existence; and there is a sharp distinction in his life between what is his own (idios) and what is communal (koinon). Man is not only 'idiotic,' he is also 'politic.'<sup>26</sup>

The public realm had this special significance because it was in public interaction that men could grow and develop their faculties to the fullest. The public space was the common space; its events were seen and heard by all, and it was where the citizen himself was seen and heard by all. The polis provided the "framework within which the social animal [could] achieve his telos, [could] develop to the full his highest nature."<sup>27</sup> The public space was "the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately

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<sup>25</sup> Joseph Tussman, Obligation and the Body Politic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 108. It is interesting to note that the Oxford English Dictionary entry for "colleague" bears the notation "not applied to partners in trade or manufacture."

<sup>26</sup> Jaeger, Paideia, Vol. 1, Archaic Greece, The Mind of Athens (1939; Galaxy Edition, 1965), p. 111.

<sup>27</sup> H. Mark Roelofs, The Tension of Citizenship (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1957), pp. 42-43.

owned place in it,"<sup>28</sup> but it was at the same time "the most comprehensive and highest society . . . ." <sup>29</sup> In this world the citizen was called upon to make decisions which pertained not to his own life, but to the life of all, not to what was transient, but to what was permanent in the world.

In the polis, the public space was a "community of things which [gathered] men together and [related] them to each other . . . ." <sup>30</sup> The common space existed between the private households and, as Arendt points out, paradoxically united the private spaces at the same time that it separated them, as a wall joins two pieces of private property. ("Good fences make good neighbors . . . .") For the Greeks, a man who chose to remain within the private world (who chose to accumulate more wealth rather than devote his time to public affairs) was an idiot, a private man, one who was deprived "of the things essential to a truly human life." To be private meant to be

deprived of the reality that comes from being seen and heard by others, to be deprived of an 'objective' relationship with them that comes from being related to and separated from them through the intermediary of a common world of things, to be deprived of the possibility of achieving something more permanent than life itself. The privation of privacy lies in the absence of others; as far as they are concerned, private man does not appear, and therefore it is as though he did not exist. <sup>31</sup>

The public realm was the source of the "moral unity" that

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<sup>28</sup> Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 52.

<sup>29</sup> Strauss, The City and Man, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 55.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

Bertrand de Jouvenel has described as the only alternative to force in holding society together. The achievement of this unity was one of the important responsibilities of those who held the office of citizen and the chief reward of citizenship.

But Greek political customs recognized the fragility of this moral unity, and the manifold difficulties in the way of attaining it. Greek thought on this matter understood that moral unity was premised on several prior conditions.

First was religion. Athens was a society in which religious belief provided the foundation for political life, in the sense that the gods had been implicated in the founding and preservation of the city.<sup>32</sup> Coulanges observes of Athens that "there was not a single act of public life in which the gods were not seen to take a part."<sup>33</sup> Men were therefore responsible for the preservation of an order that was both older than themselves and sacred in origin, a belief expressed in frequent religious rites and festivals. Most important of all, perhaps, was the sense that religion gave to political life: political order was obliged to reflect a higher order, one that existed before the city came to be.

The exclusion of foreigners from the citizenship suggests another condition for the successful performance of civic duties: homogeneity.

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<sup>32</sup> Coulanges, The Ancient City, esp. pp. 127, 132, 142-73, 187. Coulanges notes that "among the Greeks and Romans . . . law was at first a part of religion. The ancient codes of the cities were a collection of rites, liturgical directions, and prayers, joined with legislative directions." Coulanges, p. 186.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

The exclusion of foreigners was not based on the modern notion of genetic or cultural inferiority, but on the simple fact that strangers observed different customs--especially in regard to the all-important question of religion.

If we wished to give an exact definition of the citizen, we should say that it was a man who had the religion of the city. The stranger, on the contrary, is one who has not access to the worship, one whom the gods of the city do not protect, and who has not even the right to invoke them.<sup>34</sup>

The foreigner was thus an alien in the most profound sense of the word, and no matter how much he participated in social life, he could not take part in anything which involved religion, and that included being a citizen.

A climate of trust was a third condition for successful citizenship, and in Athens this climate was carefully protected by the laws. Fines were imposed and, in extreme cases, citizenship was revoked for actions which violated the climate of trust, actions which we would probably consider private. The failure to pay a private debt, for example, was punishable by a fine, as was lying, defaming the character of another citizen, or failing to perform one's religious duties. Public officials were under the strictest obligation to perform their offices faithfully, and courts, chosen by election or lot, were periodically convened to try public officials and pass judgement on them.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>35</sup>Fines were imposed and citizenship revoked for a host of public offenses: failure to take part in the annual census, which was primarily a religious ceremony; failure to take sides in a public dispute; proposing measures in the Assembly judged to be contrary to the laws; misleading the people; malfeasance of office. Coulanges, The Ancient City, pp. 161, 221, 333; Jones, Athenian Democracy, pp. 107-108.

Although inequality was the rule in the household and the entire sphere of private relations, in the public realm equality prevailed. During the democratic period in Athens, this belief in equality was carried to extreme lengths, as can be seen by the frequent use of the lottery to choose public officials. Men met as equals in the public realm because it offended the Athenian sense of justice for one man to be placed above other men when it came to a discussion of what was common to all. Ascendancy there was, of course; election was considered a less democratic method of choosing officials because it allowed considerations of family prestige to enter the deliberations--yet elections were used whenever it was felt that a job required special talents or virtues. (Generals were usually elected.) Pericles was called the "first citizen" of Athens because of his gifts as a military commander and orator, but his abilities alone earned him the title. This is the form of "natural ascendancy" of one will over another that de Jouvenel has identified with "authority."<sup>36</sup> It was the only form of ascendancy permitted within the Assembly, and in the world for which the Assembly was responsible.

Another condition of citizenship was that it be exercised in a small space. On this ancient thought was of one mind: the possibilities of citizenship were limited and faded as the boundaries of the political order were extended. All conditions discussed so far depended on this one. In a large state or in an empire, there could be no guarantee of common religious belief, common customs, or social trust. Nor was

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<sup>36</sup> Bertrand de Jouvenel, Sovereignty (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. viii, 31.

equality likely to survive the extension of the boundaries of the polis, for the administration of an empire required forms of power that did not spring from natural authority. The form of authority appropriate to the polis was one that depended for its survival on the citizen's being seen and heard by his fellows, judged for his abilities or lack of them by those who knew him and could understand his words. When citizens lost this face-to-face contact, power would become institutionalized, giving some men power over others on the basis of place rather than ability.

The subsequent experience of both Greece and Rome proved the wisdom of these apprehensions about size, for from the middle of the fourth century, with the establishment of the Macedonian Empire, citizenship in the city-states began to undergo a profound alteration. As Sheldon Wolin points out, attempts to broaden the scope of citizenship, to make it more "hellenic," were not successful. Greek thought clung to the "stubborn conviction that political space could never be divided in any meaningful way except according to the specifications of the moral mission of the polis."<sup>37</sup> That mission could not succeed in an Empire where citizenship had changed from something local, concrete, and personal, into something distant, abstract, and impersonal. Both Greece and Rome, after their republican periods, experienced a change in citizenship; what had once been an obligation to govern became a symbol of membership. The older notion of political loyalty as "sustained by friendship among familiars" was replaced by a conception of

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<sup>37</sup> Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1960), p. 74.

loyalty as "common reverence for power personified" in the form of symbols.<sup>38</sup> Citizenship became passive, "sought no longer for its political significance but as an honor, or out of sentiment; the old privileges and duties . . . [were] effaced, and the extension of citizenship [became] the sign of the unification of the Empire within one abiding system of law . . . ."<sup>39</sup>

It was with the growth of empire that citizenship came to take on another meaning: the possession of rights against the state and against other citizens. This development was logical, given the bureaucratic nature of the empires, their vast domains, and the heterogeneous quality of their populations. But this new experience of citizenship as the guarantee of private rights contributed to the erosion of citizenship's second dimension, the dimension of belief.

#### Citizenship as an Orientation

Citizenship is not only a task, but also a set of values. What the citizen does is founded upon a set of assumptions about the political order and the citizen's place in it. Any study of citizenship must therefore inquire into these assumptions and must respect the role of belief in human conduct.

The values and beliefs which underlie citizenship have as their focus the existence and importance of a public realm, in which life is lived according to standards different from those applicable in the

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<sup>38</sup> Wolin, Politics and Vision, pp. 75-77.

<sup>39</sup> Adrian N. Sherwin-White, The Roman Citizenship (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 222.

private realm. Civic life--the life lived in and through the civic order--does not come spontaneously to man, but must be learned, unlike family life or social life, to which we all come as infants, by nature and without choice. A human being living permanently outside of Society is inconceivable; a human being living outside of the City is not. (Indeed, most men, at most times, have lived outside of the City and in modern times perhaps all men do.) The members of society must first of all want to live a civic life, and this is the first level at which citizenship and belief come together. Men must want to be citizens and they must value citizenship.

This suggests that the members of a political community must be aware of and acknowledge the rewards and pleasures of civic life. The value of citizenship must be part of the community's literature and history and its living memory. Citizenship must, as Chesterton suggested, take on the aura of "romance."<sup>40</sup> Where such awareness is not part of the community's life, citizenship will appear more of a burden than an honor, since the burdens of citizenship are likely to become evident long before its rewards.

Another important factor in the orientation of citizens is the vividness of the public realm. To be meaningful, the public order must be visible, knowable, tangible--that is why it is important for it to be small. The City must be tailored to the necessary limits of human intelligence and emotion. This is the dimension of politics that Wolin calls "political space," and he points out that the enlargement of this

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<sup>40</sup>G. K. Chesterton, What I Saw in America (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1922), p. 16.

space under the Roman Empire was a cause of the decline both of political thought and the experience of citizenship.<sup>41</sup>

Another dimension to which Wolin calls attention is "political time." This dimension is the citizen's sense of his and the City's place in the stream of human life, to the citizen's sense of himself as part of a continuing community linking the past to the future.<sup>42</sup> Events which disturb this sense of continuity--the destruction of political communities and challenges to a community's life and values--also disturb the state of mind necessary to citizenship. Wolin describes the growth of Empire and the emergence of "other-worldly" religions as symbiotic developments, and Arendt declares that the sense of "worldlessness" is a characteristic of ages in which the viability of the public order has been disturbed.<sup>43</sup> Tocqueville made an instructive comment in this regard when he declared that the religious withdrawal so characteristic of early Christianity was caused less by the Empire's cruelty and persecution than by its materialistic and privatistic philosophies of life.<sup>44</sup> And Tertullian's comment--"No matter is more alien to us than what matters publicly"--is a sign that by the second century, public life in the Empire had ceased to have a vivid meaning

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<sup>41</sup>Wolin, Politics and Vision, p. 95.

<sup>42</sup>Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 55.

<sup>43</sup>Wolin, Politics and Vision, pp. 95-100; Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 55.

<sup>44</sup>Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, translated by Henry Reeve, edited by Phillips Bradley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), Vol. II, p. 135.

for the Empire's Christian subjects.<sup>45</sup>

Assuming a public space which is vivid and meaningful, the orientation of citizens focuses next on a set of ideas about how citizens ought to perform their public duties. "How should a citizen act?" was a more important question for ancient political science than "Who should be a citizen?"<sup>46</sup>

Stated simply, the citizen must believe that there is such a thing as the public interest, that reason can discover it, and that the individual citizen can and must act in accordance with it. Where this set of ideas does not command general agreement, the framework of civic life must collapse. Joseph Tussman writes,

Democratic political life turns upon the office of the citizen and upon the demands of that office. The citizen is, in his political capacity, a public agent with all that that implies . . . . He must, in this capacity, be concerned with the public interest, not with his private goods.<sup>47</sup>

But we know from long experience that the public interest is neither self-evident nor simple. Citizens, as de Jouvenel points out, "are not irresistably swayed by certain knowledge regarding the good-of-the-whole" and such knowledge is, in any case, not always available. Instead, we have "a mixture of disagreements about the common good and of personal wants."<sup>48</sup>

We also know from long experience that talk about the public interest or the common good is frequently only a mask for private inter-

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<sup>45</sup> Arendt, The Human Condition, p. 74.

<sup>46</sup> de Jouvenel, Sovereignty, p. xii.

<sup>47</sup> Tussman, Obligation, p. 108.

<sup>48</sup> Bertrand de Jouvenel, The Pure Theory of Politics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 187-88.

ests. Yet it is equally certain that the common interest is a reality, partly because logic demands it (if there is a "public" then it must, with all entities, be capable of suffering harm) and partly because of the frequent use made of the concept by the unscrupulous: as de Jouvenel argues, if there is no such thing as the public interest and no concern for it on the part of citizens, then attempts to use the idea as a camouflage for private interest should fall on barren soil.<sup>49</sup>

On this question, de Jouvenel's arguments are compelling. The "problem of the common good" as it presents itself to the public authority (of which the citizenry is the greater part in a republic) begins with the fact that the members of a community do in fact act collectively, regardless of their private differences. Collective action is in fact the condition of all social existence--without it, civilized life would not be possible. As de Jouvenel concludes, "life in society is the condition of each man's individual good, indeed of his being a man at all."<sup>50</sup>

Successful collective action, however, is not an inevitable consequence of people living together, but an endeavor that depends upon several difficult achievements: "Art is necessary to its support and development," the point made by the social contract theorists, for whom civic disintegration was a vivid reality. Civic order is held together by the constant attentions of the public authority and the citizens who comprise it. Thus, the "curbing of the ego and the aware-

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<sup>49</sup>de Jouvenel, Pure Theory, p. 188.

<sup>50</sup>de Jouvenel, Sovereignty, p. 113.

ness of the whole" are the first steps on the path toward achieving common goals.<sup>51</sup>

Out of this awareness grows the possibility of "social friendship," a relation between citizens that is based on trust and certainty. All members of a society must be reasonably certain of how others will act toward them, or they will not bring themselves to trust one another. This is especially true of the public order, where those we meet will not be known to us as family members or close friends. But social friendship and trust, as de Jouvanel shows, are still only a "framework," a means to an end. That end is implicit in the outlines of the first human communities, from the time that human beings took the first step away from the family and the tribe and the raw survival these natural communities made possible. That end is the creation of a larger society within which the manifold possibilities of human existence can be realized. "The highest legitimate end" of men is the preservation of that larger society made possible by the City, the favorable advancement of its members, and their continued well-being. It follows then that the "public interest" is to be found in those policies which prevent emotional dissolution within the City, the wasting of its resources, and the destruction of its social ties, while at the same time allowing scope for the elaboration of the possibilities lying dormant in the human condition.<sup>52</sup>

All of which is to say that the orientation toward the common good which is a part of being a citizen is a continuing education, a

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<sup>51</sup>de Jouvanel, *ibid.*, pp. 113-14.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 129.

discipline to which the citizen submits his private motives and inclinations. Citizens are not born, any more than scholars or priests; they are taught, and they teach themselves and others. The readiness to share in this discipline is one of the conditions upon which citizenship depends, and the most important element in the complex of beliefs which support it.

This raises the complicated question of political education and how it is best accomplished. Attempts to simplify the problem by discovering a formula for the public good have not been successful. These attempts have taken several forms. The common good has been identified with strict obedience to authority and with strict obedience to individual conscience. It has been identified with the interests of a certain class and with the greatest good for the greatest number. For two hundred years or more it has been linked in the West with the interplay of private interests within a representative legislature. More recently, political scientists have thrown up their hands and declared that the thing does not exist at all.<sup>53</sup>

These efforts have come and gone and left us as confused as ever. What we need is not new formulas but better examples. Ancient political science understood that political education must respond to the special needs of a time and place and to the outlines of a particular crisis, which is why political speculation, in the works of Plato, Thucydides, Machiavelli, and others relied so heavily on historical example. Political education, for these theorists, began with prompting the audience's

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<sup>53</sup>See, for example, Pendleton Herring, The Politics of Democracy (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1940), pp. 424-25; David Truman, The Governmental Process, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971).

memory: recall, they said, when this man did this deed. Why did he do it? What did it mean? Was it right or wrong? Out of these examples and out of an assessment of their consequences, the common good might begin to take a living shape.

The examples taught another lesson as well. The citizen acts by making choices, by responding to proposals put forth by others and by making proposals himself. In the life of each citizen, the necessity for making such choices will occur repeatedly, and the stories which made up much of the content of ancient political science served to remind the audience that this task would fall to them.

But of course there must be examples before example can be of any use. A City which provides the wrong examples will get the wrong kind of citizens, which suggests the possibility of a "law of decay" in regard to citizenship. Citizenship decays geometrically. Each defection from the body of the citizenry counts twice, once as a subtraction from the number of citizens and once as an addition to the total of bad examples. It is easy to see that, under this law, the outer limit of decay will be reached very quickly.

#### Citizenship as a Skill

Citizens perform a task, and they honor the values which give shape to that task, the task of governing. But they must also have the ability to govern. They must have power and they must know how to exercise it. This dimension of citizenship is the hardest to define, because power itself is a mystery, the more so as society becomes larger and more complex. But theorists have agreed through most of our history that the possession of citizenship requires the possession of

something else before it can be meaningful. That "something else" has been variously defined: land, wealth, prestige, independence, family, sound genes, military skill, honor, slaves, a guaranteed income.<sup>54</sup> The case of citizenship is similar to the case of liberty as it is described by de Jouvenel. Liberty, he notes, is the sovereignty of "man over himself . . . mastery and responsibility for his destiny." This liberty originally belonged to the members of families strong enough to defend it against all challenge. These were the "virile families" who entered as equals into a larger federation. "Whosoever belongs to one of these families is free, because he has 'brothers' to defend him or avenge him."<sup>55</sup> Coulanges records that Athens under the aristocracy was "merely a confederation of these powerful heads of families, who assembled on certain days for the celebration of the central worship or for pursuit of common interests" and that "they alone were citizens."<sup>56</sup>

This is the "aristocratic origin of liberty," and citizenship has the same ancestry. Citizens were the members of those families powerful enough to shape the public space, to call into existence and determine the shape of the City. It is important to notice that citizenship, originally, was not sought to protect the private liberties of these individuals. It was a relationship sought by individuals whose

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<sup>54</sup>"Long before there can be responsible or irresponsible popular government . . . the problems of survival must be solved so that a political community itself can develop, so that people can direct some of their attention to politics." James C. Davies, Human Nature in Politics (New York: Wiley, 1963), p. 28.

<sup>55</sup>Bertrand de Jouvenel, On Power: Its Nature and the History of its Growth (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), pp. 317-319.

<sup>56</sup>Coulanges, The Ancient City, pp. 248, 228.

lives, liberty, and property already were secure. Citizenship was not a source of power, but a use of power, an extension of power from the private domain to the public.<sup>57</sup>

Citizenship was not seen as a guarantee of private rights for another reason as well: private rights were guaranteed by divine law and social custom rather than by political authority.<sup>58</sup> It was "ancient usage" which guaranteed to each individual the preservation of what was his. To change an established custom or relation required the most urgent reasons and was held by ancient political science to be a symptom of disorder and illness in the body politic.

It was, de Jouvenel argues, the breakdown of religious belief and the destruction of custom that brought private interests and private rights to a state of nearly universal insecurity, leading to the widespread demand for possession of the citizenship as a means of self-defense.<sup>59</sup> The Western world has gone through several periods of such heightened insecurity, and each has been attended by a change in the prevailing notion of citizenship, from a view which sees it as a result of security and an extension of private power, to one which sees it as a source of security and a defense of the private domain. The growth of the Roman Empire was one such occasion, as was its subsequent collapse.

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<sup>57</sup> However, compare a contemporary definition of citizenship: "Citizenship creates a community under law; it makes those who belong a part of the system of rules which protects them from one another and, by creating a sort of club, from outsiders." Ralf Dahrendorf, "Citizenship and Beyond," Social Research, 41 (Winter, 1974), p. 674.

<sup>58</sup> de Jouvenel, On Power, p. 265; 320-22.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 265.

The rise of a merchant class in the late feudal period was another. The most recent occasion, perhaps, was the period of capitalist industrial expansion in the late nineteenth century, a period rife with new demands from workers for more effective participation in politics as a means of defense against modern industry.

Developments such as these mark a profound alteration in the meaning of citizenship, a major shift in the focus of political activity from public to private goals. When subjects can find no security except by capturing the public authority, then conflict inevitably takes on the nature of the "war of all against all" that Hobbes identified with the state of nature. And as Hobbes understood, one outcome of such a struggle is the permanent destruction of all rights and interests.

It follows that citizenship flourishes where neither subjects nor citizens--neither the least nor the most powerful--are fearful. They must not be afraid of losing what is theirs, of having their world deranged or destroyed, of seeing their plans and expectations overthrown. Anxiety is the natural condition of man in society, and any development which increases this natural anxiety will decrease the security upon which citizenship depends.

It also follows that citizenship flourishes best where those who are formally admitted to the citizenship have a roughly equal access to its prerequisites.

The first prerequisite for citizenship is the most obvious, and, perhaps for that reason, the most overlooked. To be a citizen, one must first live in a City.

Nor is this as simple a matter as it might at first seem. Greek

political science understood the nature of citizenship to require a particular kind of City, one whose institutions were shaped with a specific goal in mind. The City drew its identity from the goals implicit in its laws (or its constitution), just as a chorus drew its identity from the nature of the drama it performed, having one identity when it performed comedy, and another when it performed tragedy.<sup>60</sup>

In the same manner, a polis was defined by its purpose rather than by its physical characteristics. In the Politics, Aristotle says that "the identity of the polis is not constituted by its walls. It would be possible to surround the whole of the Peloponnese by a single wall: but would that make it a single polis?"<sup>61</sup> For Plato and Aristotle, and for Greek culture generally, the polis was above all else an educational institution, one formed to mold the character of its citizens according to a preconceived pattern. That pattern was implicit in human nature. Just as humanity had naturally formed families and then villages, following its instinct for association, so too it had gone on to the next step and founded the city, and for much the same reason. The city was a form of association which expanded knowledge, permitted a wider range of accomplishment, deepened man's understanding of his problems and potential, and provided a surer standard of justice. By making men better, the polis brought them closer to a realization of their true natures. "Thus fulfilling the whole nature of man, the polis is particularly and specially 'natural,' in that sense of the

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<sup>60</sup> Aristotle, Politics, II, iii, 7.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., III, iii, 5.

word which means the final and perfect condition of ultimate development."<sup>62</sup>

This is the meaning of Aristotle's demand that the city be "self-sufficient," a term defined in the Ethics as "that which by and of itself makes life desirable and lacking in nothing."<sup>63</sup> The good city contains within itself all that is needed for the accomplishment of its educational goals.<sup>64</sup> It also, of course, contains all that is needed for corruption, as well, since life in the city represents a relaxation of the sterner moral disciplines of the village and the tribe, where religious custom governed every act. That is why the laws are so important: they must be written so as to make goodness more likely than evil. To Aristotle, therefore, the law is not simply a covenant, a "guarantor of men's rights against one another," but "a rule of life such as will make the members of a polis good and just."<sup>65</sup> As in Socrates' famous metaphor, the laws are the citizen's parents, demanding obedience, respect, and devotion.

This is why the City is such a difficult accomplishment, and

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<sup>62</sup> Ernest Barker, ed., Aristotle's Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), note B, pp. 7-8.

<sup>63</sup> Ethics, I, vii, 7, cited by Barker, *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>64</sup> This notion of autarkeia has sometimes been assumed to have an economic rather than a moral meaning. Robert Dahl, for example, says that modern states cannot meet Aristotle's demand that they be "self-sufficient" because modern economies are too complex. "The City in the Future of Democracy," American Political Science Review, 61 (December, 1967): 953-70. It seems, however, that it was moral autonomy, or rather "completeness," that Aristotle had in mind, since he assumed his ideal republic would continue to have relations with other states, engage in trade, and so on. This is why the republic must have a sound foreign policy. Politics, III, vi, xi.

<sup>65</sup> Cited by Barker, Aristotle's Politics, "Introduction," p. lxxii.

Aristotle believed that "the man who first constructed such an association was the greatest of benefactors."<sup>66</sup> To that extent, therefore, citizenship is an inheritance, and one that must be carefully preserved against the numerous tendencies in human nature which lead to its dissipation.

Once within the City, those who would join its citizenry must possess several qualities and dispose of several resources. The most important resource is time. Citizenship is not simply a state of being, but an activity which takes time to perform. We have gotten used to the saying "time is money" and often confuse the two, but the evidence suggests that being a citizen does not require great wealth so much as it requires moderate leisure. No one whose energies are completely absorbed by private burdens, such as earning a living or caring for a household, can hope to be a citizen. And this applies equally to the poor man who must hold two jobs in order to survive, and to the rich man who gives sixty hours a week to his private business. Neither has time for public concerns, the one through necessity, and the other through greed.

A second resource is related to the first. The citizen must be in some sense independent of influences not appropriate to the public realm. His speech and actions must not be liable to coercion. He must be able to dispose of his vote without being influenced by those to whom he is in debt for his life or well-being. This may mean that the citizen is a man of wealth, that is, a landowner or businessman or a member of a wealthy family. But it most often means simply that he is

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<sup>66</sup>politics, I, ii, 15.

an artisan or merchant of independent means, anyone, in fact, capable of earning a living. This requirement is much easier to define in a non-industrial society, of course, but we have plenty of examples from our own history to suggest what it might mean in the present. The factory workers who read notices threatening the closing of a plant if a local election or referendum does not go a certain way certainly suffer a form of coercion not appropriate to the public realm. City councils considering environmental legislation in the face of threats to move a plant also suffer it.

Another resource which the citizen must have is "social credit." The citizen must be a person to whom others are willing to listen with respect; or, to be more precise, he must be given credit for a certain amount of respect, even though he may, in the end, waste that credit. If social custom dictates that certain non-political characteristics (such as sex) disqualify a person from access to social credit, then citizenship is diminished to that extent, which was Plato's reason for including women among the class of Guardians.<sup>67</sup>

Related to social credit is a final resource: a citizen must, as Plato knew, have friends. The need for friends is an important but troublesome prerequisite of a public life: important because no project worth doing in public can be done alone, and troublesome because friendship straddles the boundary between private and public, often

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<sup>67</sup> See Jaeger, Paideia, Vol. 2, p. 244. David Rapoport notes that "when men will not give each other the benefit of doubt, ordinary circumstances . . . can breed consequences as unforeseen by those who cause them as by those who suffer from them." "The Corrupt State: the Case of Rome Reconsidered," Political Studies, 16 (October, 1968), p. 423.

dragging the needs of one realm into the other and often confusing them.<sup>68</sup> E. M. Forster's remark is much to the point: he hoped that if the time came, he would have enough courage to betray his country for a friend, proving that even in the altered conditions of the modern state, such a choice might not be an easy one. The obverse is also true: while it is inconceivable that a citizen would actually betray his friends for his country, he might at least have to quarrel with them or separate from them, and that too would take its own kind of courage.

As important as the resources at the citizen's disposal are the personal qualities that make citizenship possible. Foremost among these is what the ancients called character, or nobility, or simply virtue, and what we would probably call today "sense of self" or "ego strength."<sup>69</sup> This is another way of saying that the citizen must have a reasonably high opinion of himself, and not be the victim of the excess of humility that Tocqueville thought was typically "democratic."<sup>70</sup> If we are to take part in public life we must be confident that its issues are not beyond our comprehension, and we must be willing to defer only to those who have demonstrated their wisdom or competence in ways that accord with clear public standards.

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<sup>68</sup>The tensions between citizens, and between citizens and their community, are discussed by Wilson Carey McWilliams in The Idea of Fraternity in America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), especially in Chs. 1, 2, and 3.

<sup>69</sup>Robert Lane, Political Ideology (New York: The Free Press, 1967), pp. 54-55. S. M. Lipset calls this quality "ego security" in Political Man (New York: Doubleday/Anchor, 1963), Ch. 4.

<sup>70</sup>Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. II, p. 248.

The personal qualities needed for citizenship are defined by their end, which is governing. They are the qualities most suited to politics: the ability to make judgements, to reason dispassionately, to empathize, form and reassess commitments and loyalties. Ancient political science placed a great value on these qualities, and believed their exercise was more likely to occur in public life than in private. It was for this reason that the "good man" and the "good citizen" merged in the ideal republic.

This is the classical understanding of the matter. This tradition underwent many changes as Western society developed, and I want to turn to one set of changes--liberalism--before directly confronting the problem of citizenship in the American context. For it was the liberal tradition which first gave voice to conceptions of citizenship and civic education which came to life in the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

## 2.

### Citizenship and the Liberal Tradition

Liberalism attacked the classic conception of citizenship in all of its parts. It substituted notions of "subject" and "member" for notions of office; it replaced the public orientation of classical theory with a fiercely privatistic individualism; and it substituted for political education a reliance on social conformity and obedience.

#### The Liberal Citizen and His Office

The basic shift in orientation from the ancient to the liberal tradition can be suggested by the different meanings of "member" and

"citizen". It is no semantic accident which forbids us to talk of the "citizens" of the AFL-CIO or the "members" of Athens. These terms, different as they are, are nonetheless used, in modern language, in a somewhat confused manner. We talk about becoming "useful members of society" or "productive citizens," without realizing that we are talking about very different things. The difference lies chiefly in this: that "member" is indifferent as to object, while "citizen" is not. While both terms link an individual to a place, "citizen" links him to a special kind of place and to a special vocation as well. Where "member" implies only that one belongs to something, "citizen" requires that one do something as well.

We owe this shift in the language to liberalism--or, more precisely, to the responses of political philosophy to the special disorders of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Hobbes and Locke looked out upon a world deranged by civil war; the public world was a dangerous place and men were capable of a terrifying violence.<sup>71</sup> As a result, liberalism was moved to provide a new answer to the perennial questions of political philosophy: What is the nature of political order, where does it come from, and how can it be preserved?

For the classics, order was of two kinds: the order which men imposed upon their private, pre-political existence (the order of tribes and families and clans) and the order imposed through and upon life in the City. Pre-political order enabled man to survive; political order allowed him to grow, to fulfill himself through participation in

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<sup>71</sup>Wolin, Politics and Vision, pp. 243-44; Leo Strauss, "The Spirit of Hobbes' Political Philosophy," in K. C. Brown, ed., Hobbes Studies (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 25.

the public life of a civilized community. The problem of political order was therefore intimately connected to the office of the citizen and to the education and attitudes appropriate to citizenship.

Liberalism, however, started with a different theory of human nature, and from that premise it constructed a new theory of political order. For Hobbes, man was not a political animal, but the very "beast" that Aristotle had identified with the man living outside of the City. The view that man is naturally social Hobbes identified with the "vain philosophy and fabulous traditions" of "heathen" political science. And while men were capable of reason, according to Hobbes, they were more often the creatures of passion, propelled by a "perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death."<sup>72</sup> Men do not seek justice, but pleasure: that is their true nature, says Hobbes, and so say all liberal philosophers since.<sup>73</sup> Consequently, the central goal of liberalism is peace: the release from the constant fear of violent death which plagues all men in the state of nature, and which can only be allayed by the construction of a Power equally terrifying to all.<sup>74</sup> This power, of course, is the Leviathan, a giant created by the collective powers of society itself, and turned against whoever would break the king's peace.

Peace took the place in Hobbes' philosophy that justice had occupied in the classics: it became the end of civic order. It therefore became part of the nature of citizenship to preserve peace by obeying

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<sup>72</sup>Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. by Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946), p. 64.

<sup>73</sup>Strauss, "The Spirit of Hobbes' Philosophy," p. 3.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

the sovereign: "The citizen had thus become synonymous with the subject . . . ." <sup>75</sup>

But while he was writing a theory of obedience, Hobbes was also creating a theory of rights, a paradoxical union which came to typify liberalism. Again, the reason must be sought in Hobbes' view of human nature. For the Greeks, the "state of nature" was the healthy City, because it was in the City that man's true nature was fulfilled. <sup>76</sup> For Hobbes, and for all liberal philosophers who succeeded him, man's "nature" was to be sought in the hypothetical time before the founding of civil society, when man was free to

use his own power . . . for the preservation of his own nature; that is to say, of his own life; and consequently, of doing anything which in his own judgement and reason he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereto. <sup>77</sup>

The state of nature was thus a state of war--"a war of all men against all men." <sup>78</sup> In their brief moments of reason, however, men were able to perceive the natural law which suggested the way out of this state of war, i.e., those rules of peaceful conduct which followed logically from the state of nature: keeping one's word, laying down arms, acknowledging others as one's equals, and so on. <sup>79</sup> But all of these rules followed logically from rights, and when men came to create an

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<sup>75</sup> Wolin, Politics and Vision, p. 271.

<sup>76</sup> Strauss, "The Spirit of Hobbes' Philosophy," p. 15.

<sup>77</sup> Leviathan, p. 84.

<sup>78</sup> Hobbes, The Citizen, edited by Sterlin P. Lamprecht (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949), p. 29.

<sup>79</sup> Leviathan, Prt. I, Ch. 15.

authority powerful enough to enforce these rules, the reason for doing so was to preserve the rights which the state of nature had rendered insecure. This led to a conception of the purpose of government which was radically different from the purpose envisioned by classical thought: "Since the fundamental and absolute moral fact is a right and not a duty, the function as well as the limits of civil society must be defined in terms of man's natural right and not in terms of his natural duty."<sup>80</sup> Since Hobbes believes that man is morally complete before the creation of civil society, the state has no educational purpose. It exists simply to enforce a state of peace, and is held together, not by the citizens' sense of their duty to share in the vocation of governing, but by their interest in seeing their rights preserved. And for that purpose they need only obey.

Locke too was preoccupied with order, and followed Hobbes at least to the extent of seeing the political order as the source of potentially disastrous passions. Both theorists gave to liberalism a view of government that would survive into the nineteenth century and beyond, especially in America. In this view the state would play the role of policeman, helping tame the egotism and pride of citizens and regulating the clash of wills. The image of the "good citizen" which emerged from this theory was also radically different from the classics. The liberal citizen is something of a scoundrel perpetually at war with his neighbors and with his own baser instincts. His common sense--"self interest, rightly understood"--tells him to accept orders without cavil because only then will his safety be assured. But things are more

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<sup>80</sup> Strauss, "The Spirit of Hobbes' Philosophy," p. 13.

complex than this, for this safety will result only if others obey the law as well, only if each citizen understands his self-interest in the same way. Self-interest might lead one man to put a check on his ambitions while leading others to set their greed free. As a result, the liberal citizen must move in a world of constant anxiety, where the political treachery of his fellow citizens is added to the certain treachery of nature.<sup>81</sup>

The liberal citizen is not called upon to govern: his office is to police both himself and his fellow citizens, an office which demands a totally different set of attitudes and skills.

#### Privacy vs. Publicity

The attitudes and values conducive to citizenship turn, as we have seen, on the visibility of the public realm and the consciousness of a public interest. Citizenship implies a public life shared by people who, despite their differences, have important beliefs, values, and interests in common. But liberal philosophy proclaimed a radical individualism in which what men had in common was subordinated to what was particular or personal. Privacy was transformed from a privation into a shelter.

In fact, the English language reflects this change very clearly. Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, the word "privacy" lost its political antonym. The Oxford English Dictionary gives the first definition of "publicity" as follows: "The quality of being public; the condition or fact of being open to public observation or knowledge." It gives an example from 1832 that would almost certainly

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<sup>81</sup> Wolin, Politics and Vision, p. 329.

be misunderstood today: "Publicity is the very soul of justice." By 1907, however, the word had come to have its contemporary connotation of "promotion" or "propaganda": "The . . . fantastic publicity schemes now in vogue." The synonym "publicness" is listed as "rare" and there is no example of its political use after 1641: "The King may not exact money for passage in and out of his Court gates, because of the publikness of his Person." The example from 1890 shows how the word had changed: "The publicness of a resort."

This etymology suggests that after a certain point, however gradually, English-speaking people no longer felt the need for a word that referred to the general character of their public lives. The result is that it is now quite difficult to talk about that life (or threats to it) while it is quite simple, by contrast, to talk about one's "privacy."<sup>82</sup>

To ancient writers, the City's mission was to call men out of their privacy, but liberalism dared not issue such a summons for fear of the consequences. It was only the protection of the private estate that provided the motive for what little social unity liberal man might achieve. Below the surface of that unity lurked emotions which could destroy society. Liberal man was told that his private interests--i.e., his safety--depended upon the existence of an omnipotent public author-

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<sup>82</sup>It is interesting to speculate on what practical difference this loss of the old sense of publicity makes. For instance, citizens who become identified with controversial political movements, and who subsequently find their telephones tapped or their mail opened by the government, invariably say that their "privacy" has been invaded, when in fact it may be something else that has been invaded, something for which they have no word. It may be truer to say that their "publicity" has been invaded. Among modern writers, only Hannah Arendt, as far as I have been able to discover, uses the word in the older sense.

ity. This was the promise of Leviathan: that the existence of an omnipotent public authority would assure to each subject the integrity of his private existence. Hobbes, Wolin observes, did not wish to overcome the "particularity" of the citizen, but to guarantee it. Society would be based on the desire to guarantee through unity what would be lost through disorder.<sup>83</sup>

Wolin notes further that this unity was not to be considered "regenerative." That is,

it did not seek to fashion a 'new man' nor did it demand that men purge their old natures. It sought, instead, to exploit man as he was and to promise him the assured satisfaction of his desires if he would agree to accepting certain limits on them.<sup>84</sup>

Citizens would be educated to a kind of intelligent selfishness and the only moral mission they would know would be the preservation of order. This task emphasizes once again the important difference between ancient and liberal conceptions of the state and the citizen. To classic writers, the best regime was one whose aim was the virtue of its citizens. To liberal writers, by contrast, the right social order depended, not on the character of its members, but on the right arrangement of its institutions.<sup>85</sup>

Paradoxically, the education of liberal citizens involved an important contradiction: while nurturing the "particularity" and the "privacy" of the individual, it also trained him to suppress much of

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<sup>83</sup>Wolin, Politics and Vision, p. 274.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Strauss, "The Spirit of Hobbes' Philosophy," p. 23.

what was uniquely his--private conscience, for example.<sup>86</sup> While teaching him an elaborate cultivation of his private affairs, it urged him to suppress private judgements about political affairs in favor of an amorphous public opinion and the dictates of the legitimate ruler. For Hobbes, especially, conscience was subordinated to the prior decision which established the Leviathan: once that decision had been made, the citizen gave up his "right" to judge the sovereign's actions. He escaped, in other words, from the obligation to be wise, and could no longer be subjected to the penalties that Greek law, for example, imposed on the citizen who offered the City bad advice. But the sovereign--the other partner to this covenant--also escaped these penalties. If the citizen gave up his right to judge, the sovereign escaped the threat of being judged. As Strauss has put it,

consent is not effective if it does not transform itself into subjection to the sovereign. . . . the sovereign is sovereign not because of his wisdom but because he has been made sovereign by the fundamental compact. This leads to the further conclusion that command or will, and not deliberation, or reasoning, is the core of sovereignty . . . .<sup>87</sup>

The vocation of the citizen, having been stripped of the educational content so characteristic of ancient political science, needed a new focus, and liberalism found that focus in interest. Interest took the place once held by conscience, becoming man's most sacred and inviolable possession. It was, after all, self-interest, not the instinct for politics, which formed the state; interest was thus the bond which would continue to hold the state together. And each indi-

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<sup>86</sup> Wolin, Politics and Vision, pp. 338-44.

<sup>87</sup> Strauss, "The Spirit of Hobbes' Philosophy," p. 17.

vidual interest was the moral equivalent of every other individual interest, each as worthy of protection as the others. In this way, reason would unite men to the maintenance of social order.

But in so ennobling economic interest, Wolin notes, liberalism "wrought a revolutionary change in the conception of politics," because it made economic interest a competitor of political participation. Moreover it gave interest the edge in this competition, for that is what the sovereign has promised to defend.<sup>88</sup> Both Hobbes and Locke demonstrated an aversion to participation--indeed, to politics itself--that would become part of the standard vocabulary of liberalism and, as we shall see, of much of the political literature produced in the United States.<sup>89</sup>

This conception of politics had important implications for the range of skills and the kind of knowledge which citizens would need to possess. Liberalism paid much more attention to the skills of private life than to the abilities needed in public life, producing a vast popular literature of self-improvement (Benjamin Franklin was a famous contributor to it) designed to help the average man rise in the world and profit from the example of others and from his own mistakes. But Poor Richard's maxims were of little help to the citizen attempting to find a place in the public world, or to understand his public obligations.

For the growth of political skills, liberalism relied instead on a formal political equality quite at odds with the facts of life in

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<sup>88</sup> Wolin, Politics and Vision, p. 280.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 281.

a society that was becoming increasingly commercial and industrial. "Equal access" and "equal opportunity" became the favored slogans of liberalism, but they were not enough on which to build a tradition of citizenship. In the first place, they were passive: political participation became one more "possibility" of which men might take advantage or not, as they chose. There is no sense here of obligation, as there was in classical theory. By contrast, there was a much stronger sense of obligation, especially in popular literature, to excel in private life, to be economically mobile, ambitious, and enterprising.<sup>90</sup>

Secondly, the slogans of access and opportunity were excessively formal, glossing over the problem of unequal resources. The resources needed for political participation have never been equally distributed, but the range of social inequality has, since the industrial revolution, been magnified thousands of times.

It is also striking that at a time when society was becoming more complex, there emerged a theory of politics that was almost spartan in its simplicity. Liberal citizens have interests. Being rational, they are conscious of these interests and vote for the men and policies that support them. If everyone were to behave in this rational manner, the invisible hand of compromise would arrange the greatest good for the greatest number. The Federalists were typical of this mood when their spokesmen declared that recent innovations in the "science of politics" had resolved some of history's most perplexing problems of government.

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<sup>90</sup>This was the message of the Horatio Alger novels, of course, and it was an important theme in all of the literature which extolled the frontier and the self-made man.

These new discoveries, however, did not make possible a deepening of citizenship; on the contrary. Liberalism looked forward to a "government of laws, not men," and Harrington dreamed of "sinful citizens in a perfect commonwealth," in which good would triumph despite the corrupt nature of the citizenry.<sup>91</sup> In a similar fashion, Immanuel Kant believed that even "a nation of devils" could establish the perfect state, if only their institutions were arranged in the appropriate manner.<sup>92</sup> The mechanism of private interest would take the place of the citizen's educational mission, which classical theory had set as the focus of civic life, and participation would be restricted to regular though infrequent elections.

Under such a regime, the citizen needs only a few simple skills. He needs to understand the need for obedience, and he must be able to look out for the main chance.<sup>93</sup> Beyond that, he must be predisposed to let the complexities of public business be taken care of by leaders who are talented enough to understand them. Political education, which to classical writers had been a process by which the citizen's true nature and needs were revealed to him through governing, acquired in liberal theory an almost propagandistic tone. To Locke, the individual mind was an empty sheet on which society would inscribe its rules. To Hobbes, the citizenry was a homogenous mass on which the Leviathan imposed the prescripts of the Natural Law. And, as we shall see in the next section,

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<sup>91</sup>Wolin, Politics and Vision, p. 390.

<sup>92</sup>Strauss, "The Spirit of Hobbes Philosophy," p. 23.

<sup>93</sup>Although the liberal citizen would need an elaborate set of psychological defenses; for a bizarre compendium, see Herman Melville's novel, The Confidence-Man, His Masquerade (1857).

to the American heirs of the liberal tradition, the citizen was a man to be distracted by his conflicting interests from too great a concern for the complexities of public life.

3.

Citizenship and the Federalist Tradition

The Federalist Papers, the Constitution, and the apologia which have grown up around them--these are among the most powerful themes and symbols American political thought has to offer. The Federalists brought American politics firmly within the liberal tradition, and anchored it there with a Constitution that has survived longer than any other. The work they accomplished has been preserved by generations of scholars, jurists, and politicians who made of the Constitution and its most famous defence an enduring symbol of solidarity and continuity, so much so that the thirteen years of America's existence as an independent nation prior to the adoption of the Constitution have nearly disappeared from our historical consciousness.

Political science, from its inception, followed the approved custom of venerating the Constitution and the Fathers. James Bryce praised the "pessimism" of The Federalist Papers, finding it a more valuable quality than the excessive "abstraction" which he found in the second volume of Democracy in America.<sup>94</sup> Charles Beard, who was certainly no blind enthusiast for the Founding Fathers, nevertheless felt that the Papers was the only American political treatise bound for

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<sup>94</sup>James Bryce, The Hindrances to Good Citizenship (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1909), pp. 12-13; "The Relations of Political Science to History and to Practice," American Political Science Review, 3 (February, 1909), pp. 6-7.

immortality.<sup>95</sup> More recently, Clinton Rossiter has bluntly stated that

The Federalist is the most important work in political science that has ever been written, or is likely ever to be written, in the United States . . . . [It] stands third only to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution itself among all the sacred writings of American political history . . . . an exposition of certain timeless truths about constitutional government.<sup>96</sup>

The significance of the Founding Fathers, Norman Jacobson points out, is that they "provided more than a theory, they set the conditions for its verification."<sup>97</sup> The Constitution they helped to write would train citizens to behave in ways expected of them by the theory, launching what Jacobson has termed a "gigantic self-fulfilling prophecy."<sup>98</sup> In this section I want to show that the Federalists gave us a set of teachings--and a set of institutions to bolster them--that have helped make American citizenship difficult to comprehend and to preserve.

In the Ninth Paper, Alexander Hamilton announces what will be the basic theme of the defense. The history of republics, he argues, shows that they are inherently unstable, constantly subject to "tempestuous waves of sedition and party rage." Republican citizenship would be impractical in America were it not for the happy fact that "the science of politics . . . has received great improvements." The most important improvement concerns the new understanding of the relation between the size of a nation and the performance of republican

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<sup>95</sup> Charles Beard, "Time, Technology, and the Creative Spirit in Political Science," American Political Science Review, 21 (February, 1927), p. 9.

<sup>96</sup> Clinton Rossiter, "Introduction" to The Federalist Papers (New York: New American Library, 1961), p. vii.

<sup>97</sup> Norman Jacobson, "Political Science and Political Education," American Political Science Review, 57 (September, 1963); p. 568.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 562.

institutions. Hamilton's audience was familiar with the standard arguments of political theory, which held that the small state was the most appropriate setting for republican government. More importantly, his audience had also inherited a strong tradition of local self-government, and they were now being asked to alter that inheritance in important ways. The small state, long the object of philosophy's praise, was now listed among the "wretched nurseries of unceasing discord and the miserable objects of universal pity. . . ." Small republics, Hamilton declared, were the breeding grounds of all those faults which "the advocates of despotism" had used to discredit republican government: factional strife, inefficiency, fiscal disorder, divided counsel, stagnant commerce, and war. These faults the Constitution proposed to remedy by the ingenious discovery Hamilton recommended: the "enlargement of the orbit" of democratic institutions, the chief advantage of such a union being its tendency to "repress domestic faction and insurrection."<sup>99</sup>

It was left to Madison, in the Tenth Paper, to refine this argument and lay to rest some of the apprehensions it must have aroused. Much has been written about this essay, but what concerns us here is what its arguments reveal about an emerging American conception of citizenship.

Despite John Jay's optimistic appraisal in the Second Paper that Americans had become a "band of brethren, united to each other by the strongest ties," Madison paints a grim picture of America's fate under

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<sup>99</sup>Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, James Madison, The Federalist Papers, edited by Clinton Rossiter (New York: New American Library, 1961), pp. 72, 73, 75.

the Articles: "instability, injustice, and confusion introduced into the public councils," an "interested and overbearing majority" ruling by force rather than by "the rules of justice." His response to this problem is more interesting for what it omits than for what it says. Factional strife can only be dealt with by: 1) eliminating the liberty that fires it; 2) eliminating the differences of opinion and interest that nurture it; or 3) controlling its effects.<sup>100</sup>

What is omitted here, of course, is the classic remedy for a diseased polity: civic education. In the seventeenth century, Madison's view would have seemed more novel than it apparently did in the eighteenth century. In certain parts of the country, in fact, Madison would have been branded a heretic. The puritans held to an image of human nature every bit as grim as Madison's (if not more so), but they deduced from that image the necessity of a strict system of moral education. John Winthrop had equated "civil liberty" with moral education, defining liberty as "the liberty to that only which is good, just and honest."<sup>101</sup> The Puritan Commonwealth was based upon what John Schaar has termed "covenanted patriotism," in which "individuals became members of the community only upon acceptance of certain articles of religious faith and morals . . . . Social institutions were designed to encourage performance of the covenant."<sup>102</sup> An elaborate teaching was the centerpiece of the "covenanted community" and moral education

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<sup>100</sup>Federalist Papers, pp. 77-78.

<sup>101</sup>Cited by Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. I, pp. 42-43.

<sup>102</sup>John Schaar, "The Case for Patriotism," American Review, 17 (May, 1973), p. 74.

was as strict as anything in The Republic or The Laws.

Controlling the effects of a corrupted liberty would have seemed to a man of Winthrop's training as sinful as setting aside a reservation for the worship of the Devil. Since men were corrupt, civil government must help them to be virtuous. The City existed in order to help men make the appropriate choices with their liberty.<sup>103</sup> That task did not recommend itself to the Federalists, for several reasons.

First, the tendency to combine in factions grew from the depths of human nature. Fallible men, seeing and reasoning differently, would ultimately be led to that form of behavior which typified faction for Madison: actions that were "adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community."<sup>104</sup>

Secondly, factions were nurtured by an equally permanent human characteristic: the differences in human faculties and talents, which gave rise to the different classes in society. And although it might be theoretically possible to abolish classes, such a course would be the very definition of tyranny, an intolerable interference with the natural movement of society, i.e., with rights.<sup>105</sup>

But there was another reason for departing from the stern moralism of the puritans, or the equally severe civic education recommended by ancient political science. The nation the Federalists were contemplating was a large one, and had every prospect of growing larger. The Union was in fact an Empire, as ancient political science would have understood the term: a confederation of small states banded together

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>104</sup>Federalist Papers, p. 78.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., pp. 78-79.

for the purposes of self-defense and commercial expansion, with some provision for guidance from the center.<sup>106</sup> Such an Empire was simply too large for civic education to be practical; it was too large, that is, for the direct participation and the "moral unity" that would have been major elements of such an education. States small enough to be managed directly by their citizens--and they would have to be very small, Madison thought, since even a moderately large body of men tends to degenerate into a mob<sup>107</sup>--would not be large enough to engage in any but the pettiest of projects, and would, in any case, be the constant prey of larger states. A republic large enough to defend itself and to pursue "great national projects" would be a danger of another kind, unless its power were hedged about by complex checks and balances. Such a state would certainly not be able to tolerate frequent direct intervention by the people in its government, since this would invite instability and injustice of the worst sort.<sup>108</sup>

But Madison is apparently conscious of his audience's fear that a large federal union would be unmanageable except by autocratic means, and he engages in an ingenious and somewhat devious argument to the contrary. First, he must accustom his readers to thinking of the new Union as a republic, instead of a direct democracy, and then he must show why the former is preferable to the latter. The first reason, of

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<sup>106</sup> Madison and Hamilton were conscious of this analogy, and devoted two papers (Nos. 18 and 19) to an analysis of the decline and fall of ancient and medieval confederacies, assuring their readers that the Constitution had taken care to learn from the mistakes of the past.

<sup>107</sup> "Had every Athenian citizen been a Socrates, every Athenian Assembly would still have been a mob." (Federalist No. 55, p. 342)

<sup>108</sup> Federalist Papers, p. 318.

course, is the republic's ability to manage factions. A large republic with a representative system of government will "refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country . . . ." <sup>109</sup> This argument has a hole in it which Madison moves immediately to close. Why should we assume that this "medium of chosen citizens" will be any more immune to the vagaries of human nature than the common run of citizens? <sup>110</sup> Madison's answer is complicated and somewhat disingenuous.

First, he says, let us agree that regardless of the size of a country, the number of representatives must be at least large enough to "guard against the cabals of a few . . . ." But the number must not be so large that it becomes a "confused multitude." He appears to believe that this point is uncontroversial, but it is not clear (even before the "iron law of oligarchy") why a small body is more likely than a large one to be run by a "cabal." Nor is it clear why a large group must always be a "confused multitude." Madison merely assumes that this is so, and proceeds to the next point. <sup>111</sup>

Since the proportion of representatives to voters is greatest in a small republic (that is, each representative represents a smaller number of voters than in the larger state), it follows that if the

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>110</sup> There is another problem that Madison avoids: things that are "refined" are not normally "enlarged" thereby, but it would not do to say that representatives will "winnow" the public's views and separate the wheat from the chaff, although this metaphor is much closer to what Madison has in mind.

<sup>111</sup> Federalist Papers, p. 82.

proportion of fit citizens is the same in a large as in a small state, then the larger state offers the greater number of good citizens from among whom representatives can be chosen. Second, since more voters must choose the representative in the larger state, it will be harder for a bad representative to pass himself off as a good one.<sup>112</sup>

But what if the large state were to share the characteristic Madison attributes to large assemblies; what if, that is, it were to become a confused multitude? If that were the case, then Madison's conclusion would be exactly wrong, and the larger state would contain a greater proportion of corrupted (or at least confused) citizens. And in the confusion, it would be easier for a dishonest or incompetent politician to convince a crowd of utter strangers that he was fit to be sent to Congress or elected President.

It was just this possibility that worried the advocates of the small state, who were convinced that in a large union with a complex government, public officials would grow distant from the people. Dazzled by the trappings of federal power, they would come to constitute a separate class, and "soon feel themselves independent of heaven itself."<sup>113</sup> Not only would direct participation be impossible in the

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>113</sup> "Letters of Brutus" (Robert Yates of New York), Number XV, in Michael N. Danielson and Walter F. Murphy, eds., Modern American Democracy: Readings (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969), p. 33. As Wilson Carey McWilliams has pointed out, many of the anti-Federalists were even more pessimistic about human nature than the Framers were, especially those from New England, many of whom were closer to the Puritan tradition than Virginians such as Madison. To them, "the work of the Framers bespoke naivete, not pessimism, regarding human nature. Man's depravity was too deep, his cunning too great, to be trapped by 'devices.' The only safeguard of republican government was a virtuous, active public." McWilliams, Fraternity, pp. 202-203.

large state; so would the atmosphere of trust upon which citizenship depends.

Having proceeded this far, Madison was prepared for the part of the argument that has become the classic defense of the Constitution:

Extend the sphere and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or, if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength and to act in unison with each other.<sup>114</sup>

In the large state, in other words, citizens would be prevented by the multitude of different interests and the sheer size of the country from knowing one another deeply enough to combine their efforts. John Jay's "band of brethren" has, in Madison's words, been "broken into so many parts, interests, and classes of citizens, that the rights of individuals, or of the minority, will be in little danger from interested combinations of the majority."<sup>115</sup>

Of course, Madison is talking only of those combinations motivated by sinister designs against private rights or the public interest, but the difficulties that prevent bad factions also prevent good ones, as Hamilton was candid enough to admit in Federalist No. 73:

It may perhaps be said that the power of preventing bad laws includes that of preventing good ones; and may be used to the one purpose as well as to the other. But this objection will have little weight with those who can properly estimate the mischiefs of that inconstancy and mutability in the laws, which form the greatest blemish in the character and genius of our governments . . . The injury which may possibly be done by defeating a few good laws will be amply compensated by the advantage of preventing a number of bad ones.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Federalist Papers, No. 10, p. 84.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., No. 52, pp. 324.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., No. 73, pp. 443-44.

But since American government is to be ultimately responsible to society--the same society that is to be "broken into so many parts"--it follows that authority itself will be shattered. This, too, is part of the plan. In fact, in order to assure that result, the government will be broken also into parts, each part given a material interest in seeing that no one part usurps the rights of others. The division and separation of powers will complement the division and separation of citizens, "by so contriving the interior structure of the government as that its several constituent parts may, by their mutual relations, be the means of keeping each other in their proper place."<sup>117</sup>

A divided citizenry and a shattered authority: it is hard not to see in such a prescription evidence of a profound hostility toward politics and toward the notions associated with citizenship. Sheldon Wolin has written of the eighteenth-century constitutionalists that they "longed to transcend the political," forgetting that doing so "meant denying the central referent of the political, abandoning a whole range of notions and the practices to which they pointed--citizenship, obligation, general authority . . . ."<sup>118</sup> The regenerative potential of politics, the "moral mission of the polis," is completely absent from Federalist constitutional theory. In its place is a worldview which Martin Landau has termed "a monument to the image of the machine," a clockwork mechanism designed to work as nearly as possible without human attention, a "government of laws, not men."<sup>119</sup> It is

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., No. 52, p. 320.

<sup>118</sup> Wolin, Politics and Vision, p. 417.

<sup>119</sup> Martin Landau, "Baker v. Carr and the Ghost of Federalism," in Charles F. Gnudde and Deane E. Neubauer, eds., Empirical Democratic Theory (Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1969), pp. 131-41.

Harrington's dream of "sinful citizens in a perfect commonwealth" all over again.

There is a well-known sentence in Madison's 51st Paper that reveals a great deal about the premises of this worldview. The sentence is particularly striking, given the experience of revolution against arbitrary government through which Americans had recently passed.

In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.<sup>120</sup>

A government that could control itself was surely a novelty in the world of political speculation. That such a utopian vision could have become so popular is the result of a peculiar set of circumstances that have their own implications for American citizenship.<sup>121</sup>

4.

The American Citizen

When Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States, the Constitution was scarcely a generation old, and the Eastern seaboard had been settled by "Americans" for just over two hundred years. So it was a relatively new country that Tocqueville observed, and a new regime governed it. Yet patterns had already emerged, and habits of mind had developed, so that Tocqueville was able to gather enough evidence and impressions to justify a general theory about American politics. That theory has much to teach us about what citizenship became in the American context, and what effect constitutionalism had on its subsequent fate.

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<sup>120</sup> Federalist Papers, No. 51, p. 322.

<sup>121</sup> Wolin, Politics and Vision, p. 390.

Briefly, Tocqueville argued that republican institutions, citizenship especially, were liable to be eroded by American culture, specifically, by individualism and social equality. "Democracy," he observed, "loosens social ties, but tightens natural ones; it brings kindred more closely together, while it throws citizens more apart."<sup>122</sup> Democratic individualism--the "atomistic social freedom" that Louis Hartz has identified as the "master assumption of American political thought"--interfered with the creation of a lasting republic because it hampered the growth of a vivid public consciousness.<sup>123</sup>

Certain aspects of American culture were especially troubling to Tocqueville. The love of material gratification, a uniquely American belief in self-reliance, the absence of an hereditary aristocracy, the wide expanse of territory, the availability of cheap land as an inducement to mobility--all these led Americans to a love affair with privacy and a withdrawal from public affairs. In America, John Schaar has written, "liberty was defined as private liberty, namely, as the liberty to enhance one's private estate and possibilities to the limits of his power."<sup>124</sup> The corollary, Tocqueville concluded, was an indifference to the common life and to public business. "Private life in democratic times is so busy, so excited, so full of wishes and of work, that hardly any energy or leisure remains to each individual for public life." But even when Americans found time to

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<sup>122</sup>Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. II, p. 197.

<sup>123</sup>Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1955), pp. 59-64.

<sup>124</sup>John Schaar, "The Institute Papers" (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Civic Values, 1975), p. 24.

pursue the public's business, certain difficulties presented themselves; or, rather, the culture's individualism lent to political awareness a distortion of its own.<sup>125</sup>

Specifically, individualism and equality eroded the supports that citizens needed in order to participate effectively in political life. The sense of connection to others, of sharing a common life, which is crucial to any cooperative endeavor, grew only fitfully in America. American culture broke the chain that aristocracy had forged between all classes in society; it encouraged men to believe that their "whole destiny is in their own hands," and made any other view of the citizen's destiny difficult to conceive, or, once conceived, to communicate.

In place of a sense of connection to his fellows, the American citizen nurtured a much wider sense of belonging, one that encompassed the entire nation: "the bond of human affection is extended, but it is relaxed."<sup>126</sup> The sense of solidarity, stretched so far and so thin, could not provide the emotional support that citizens needed in political life.

Thus not only does democracy make every man forget his ancestors, but it hides his descendants and separates his contemporaries from him; it throws him back forever upon himself alone and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart.<sup>127</sup>

From this solitude, the American citizen looked out upon a vast and confusing world. Compared to this vastness, the citizen felt himself

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<sup>125</sup> Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. II, p. 294.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

to be only a small part of something immeasurably large, "a very puny object. . . . Nowhere do citizens appear so insignificant as in a democratic nation; nowhere does the nation itself appear greater or does the mind more easily take in a wide survey of it." Between the isolated individual and the "great and imposing image of the people at large" lay a void. But it was in that void--the area between the one and the many--that political life took place. American politics was consequently weakened from within because the political arena appeared to most citizens to be "extremely general and vague," a shadow world of indistinct shapes and unknown quantities. Tocqueville feared that few Americans would be bold enough to venture into that void alone, and that the time would come when corrupt or foolish leaders might encourage that fear, preparing the way for despotism.<sup>128</sup>

To combat this possibility, Tocqueville looked to political organizations.

As soon as a man begins to treat of public affairs in public he begins to perceive that he is not so independent of his fellow men as he had at first imagined, and that in order to obtain their support he must often lend them his co-operation.<sup>129</sup>

This effect could be produced by associations of various kinds. First of all, Tocqueville looked to the legislatures of the various states to focus the citizen's attention on public objects. Second were the general political associations formed for promoting public safety, commerce, industry, religion, and so on. It is important to note here that Tocqueville has in mind something quite different from the "interest

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., pp. 53, 290, 77, 102.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., pp. 102-103.

groups" of twentieth-century American politics. Whereas the modern interest group is an office supported by the dues of hundreds of thousands of people who have never met one another, whose officials are paid to effect certain changes in legislation, Tocqueville is talking about an association whose major characteristic is its effect on the lives of those who belong to it and who directly shape its policies. A political association in this sense is defined by "the public assent which a number of individuals give to certain doctrines and . . . the engagements which they contract to promote . . . those doctrines."<sup>130</sup> The example he gives is the Anti-Tariff Convention which met in Philadelphia in 1831: a public meeting called to debate a matter of public policy and framing its conclusions in terms of public law.

Associations of this type often grew into political parties, and these, especially at the local level, also brought citizens out of their isolation into closer contact with one another, even if at the expense of public harmony and tranquility.

The desire of being elected may lead some men for a time to violent hostility; but this same desire leads all men in the long run to support each other; and if it happens that an election accidentally severs two friends, the electoral system brings a multitude of citizens permanently together who would otherwise always have remained unknown to one another. Freedom produces private animosities, but despotism gives birth to general indifference.<sup>131</sup>

Finally, there were the non-political associations which Tocqueville saw blossoming everywhere for a thousand purposes: sponsoring entertainments, founding seminaries, building inns, fixing roads, distributing books. These were the social projects which in England

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

would normally have been sponsored by the aristocracy, but which in the United States were taken up by small groups of neighbors united by at least a temporary sense of solidarity and common concern.

Tocqueville understood that Americans were not, in fact, a "band of brethren," and that their normal relations would be characterized by distance rather than intimacy. Under these circumstances, factions were not to be feared as much as the general indifference to public life that American conditions encouraged. Bertrand de Jouvenel has pointed out that in modern states, "amity" is not and cannot be the general rule in citizen relations. Nations are too large for that, and factions are often no more than an attempt to create a partial city-state within the larger community.<sup>132</sup> Tocqueville was making a similar argument, understanding that the education of citizens through political life was a better medicine for a diseased polity than all the mechanical devices embedded in the Constitution.

In the second volume of Democracy in America there is a paragraph on this subject that almost seems a direct response to Madison's Tenth Federalist Paper, and which might serve to sum up the paradox of Federalist teaching on citizenship.

When social conditions are equal, every man is apt to live apart, centered in himself and forgetful of the public. If the rulers of democratic nations were either to neglect to correct this fatal tendency or to encourage it from a notion that it weans men from political passions and thus wards off revolutions, they might eventually produce the evil they seek to avoid, and a time might come when the inordinate passions of a few men, aided by the unintelligent selfishness or the pusillanimity of the greater number, would ultimately compel society to pass through strange vicissitudes. In democratic

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<sup>132</sup> de Jouvenel, Pure Theory, p. 182, n. 1.

communities revolutions are seldom desired except by a minority, but a minority may sometimes effect them.<sup>133</sup>

"Strange vicissitudes" is a fair description of what America would suffer during the nineteenth century, partly because Federalist teaching, and Federalist institutions, only deepened the cultural problem Tocqueville analyzed. Federalist hostility to "petty republics" weakened local government. Madison's attempt to make "the private interest of every individual" stand "sentinel over the public rights" called forth the very tendency Tocqueville most distrusted in Americans: the constant quest for private enrichment. Federalist hostility to the "little arts of little politicians" and the Constitution's system of divided authority inhibited the growth of just those forms of organization which Tocqueville hoped would penetrate the citizen's isolation and educate him to his larger role in a democratic community.

Two attitudes competed during the Revolutionary period, Norman Jacobson has argued. One was "notable for its expression of friendship and brotherhood, for its insistence upon individual spontaneity and uniqueness . . . . The other displayed a preoccupation with social order, procedural rationality, and the material bases of political association and division . . . ." This latter view prevailed with the Constitution and became the seed of a form of political education that was passed on from generation to generation, training citizens to "prefer certain goods and conduct over others."<sup>134</sup> The Federalist tradition taught citizens to prefer social mobility to community, privacy

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<sup>133</sup>Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. II, p. 256.

<sup>134</sup>Jacobson, "Political Science and Political Education," p. 561.

and the pursuit of private gain to political commitment and participation, equal opportunity to equality, change to tradition, and order to the instability that is the constant risk of democratic politics. The teaching did not succeed entirely, of course; trends counter to those valued by the Federalist tradition could always be found. But these attitudes did not benefit from the sanctity of the Constitution, nor did they benefit from the assistance of Federalist ideology and Federalist law.

The United States was about to enter a phase of its history in which this fact could be seen very clearly. For America began to grow, and very rapidly at that. Scarcely thirty years after Madison tried to persuade his countrymen that America was not too large for a centralized government, President Jefferson doubled the size of the nation in one stroke. The Louisiana Purchase opened a vast domain in the West, and shortly thereafter American society began to undergo tremendous expansion and change. Between 1810 and 1830, two million people moved West. Indiana's population increased by one hundred percent; Illinois tripled its population. By 1840, one of every three Americans lived west of the Appalachian range. The ratio of urban to rural residents declined between 1800 and 1830 from one in fifteen to one in ten; by 1850 it was close to one in five. Cities over 8,000 in population quadrupled in number between 1820 and 1850. Banks proliferated; from the founding of the first bank in 1782, until 1828, 329 banks were created. By 1837 there were 788. In each decade, thousands of new businesses were formed and the corporate form of organization, rare and controversial and difficult to manage in 1800, was the

established form of doing business by 1850. On top of all this, between 1828 and 1844, one half million immigrants arrived in the United States.<sup>135</sup>

Society was shaken, rearranged, and then shaken again. Between one decade and the next scarcely any American community was able to retain its distinctive character. Everything changed. One of James Fenimore Cooper's characters describes the times: "The whole country is in such a constant state of mutation, that I can only liken it to the game of children, in which as one quits his corner another runs into it, and he that finds no corner to get into, is the laughing-stock of the others."<sup>136</sup> Soon the costs of such uncertainty became visible. Tocqueville noted the burgeoning manufacturing sector, and asked a pertinent question about the future of American political life: "What can be expected of a man who has spent twenty years of his life in making heads for pins?"

While the workman became attached to his machines and the manufacturer grew more powerful, the American community became a fascinating spectacle of boom and bust. Individuals, Chancellor Harper noted, were "tantalized, baffled, and tortured" by the pursuit of wealth they could not attain.<sup>137</sup> In the midst of a fantastic abundance, economic anxiety became a perennial feature of the American character,

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<sup>135</sup> Statistics from Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era: 1828-1848 (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 1-17, and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (New York: Little, Brown, 1945), pp. 334-35.

<sup>136</sup> Cited by Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion, p. 75.

<sup>137</sup> Cited by Hartz, The Liberal Tradition, p. 185.

as Americans found themselves squeezed between the fear of losing what they had achieved and their desire to gain more.<sup>138</sup> This atmosphere, and these paradoxes, had their inevitable political consequences. Meyers has analyzed the Jacksonian movement as an example of the public's ambivalence regarding the country's future. The Jacksonians, hating the Bank of the United States as a symbol of the industrial and commercial oligarchy, at the same time yearned to see the country's wealth thrown open to all who could exploit it. Jackson, Meyers says, tried to "recall agrarian republican innocence to a society drawn fatally to the main chance . . . to reconcile again the simple yeoman values with the free pursuit of economic interest, just as the two were splitting hopelessly apart."<sup>139</sup>

Citizenship did not escape these pressures. That was only to be expected. But the problem was complicated by the fact that the Constitution did not provide a clear definition of "citizen" or citizenship to begin with, leaving the concept and the experience doubly vulnerable to the forces of social and economic change.<sup>140</sup>

The Constitution confused the issue in two ways.

First, it did not define precisely who was a citizen "of the United States" or how new citizens were to be created. It is unclear in the Constitution, for example, whether state citizenship precedes federal citizenship, or whether there is any certain relation between

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<sup>138</sup>Hartz, The Liberal Tradition, p. 75.

<sup>139</sup>Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion, pp. 12-15.

<sup>140</sup>John P. Roche, "The Early Development of United States Citizenship," Cornell Studies in American History, Literature and Folklore, Number IV (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1949), p. 1.

the two at all. Under the Articles of Confederation, Congress had no power to naturalize citizens, and each state was free to make its own provisions in this regard. Inevitably, provisions differed, some liberal and some severe. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, accordingly, gives Congress the power "to establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization," but the Constitution is silent on the question of state citizenship. Nor is it clear to what entity new citizens would belong: to a state first, and then to the "united States," or the reverse? The problem was raised on a practical level when the federal government naturalized immigrants living in the territories, thus creating an anomaly: the citizen who was a citizen only of an Empire, with no connection of any kind to a local government.<sup>141</sup>

The records of the Constitutional Convention show, according to Roche, that citizenship "referred to national citizenship as secondary to, and derived from, citizenship in a state." This would be a natural inference, given the prevailing theory that the states were joining together to form a confederated republic. It seemed to be the Convention's belief that naturalization would be accomplished by the individual states, "with the national government merely exercising supervision in the interests of conformity."<sup>142</sup>

But it soon became apparent that the naturalization of "American" citizens involved issues more complex and more controversial than length of residence, and conformity proved difficult to achieve. For

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<sup>141</sup>Roche, "The Early Development . . . ", pp. 1-3; McWilliams, Fraternity, p. 221.

<sup>142</sup>Roche, "The Early Development . . . ", pp. 4, 6-7.

what united Americans were the "self-evident" truths contained in the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the Constitution, and the possibility that some new immigrants might not recognize these truths provoked a series of legislative crises centering on the deceptively simple language of Article I, Section 8.

In 1790, Congress passed a Naturalization Act, providing for the "progressive naturalization" of immigrants. One year's residence earned all of the "rights of citizenship" save the right to hold office, which was granted after two years. States-rights advocates objected that this bill went beyond the authority of the Congress to guarantee "uniform" rules. Others thought the two-year requirement for office-holding should be dropped, since it created a body of citizens who enjoyed fewer rights than others. Congress ducked the issue by giving the courts the responsibility for supervising the entire naturalization process.<sup>143</sup>

Five years later, a fresh wave of immigration, sparked by the Napoleonic wars, sent to the United States a large number of immigrants suspected of "royalist" sympathies. Federalist politicians wanted to raise the residency requirement to five years, and they succeeded. Jeffersonians wanted immigrants to submit to an inspection of their political views. The final amendments, after raising the residence requirement, compromised on the other questions. New citizens would be required to give a declaration of intent to become a citizen three years before being naturalized, renounce foreign allegiances, and swear an oath in support of the Constitution; they would then have to satisfy

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

a court that all of these requirements had been met, and, in addition, that they were of "sound character."<sup>144</sup>

These fears were intensified in 1798. In that year, the Alien and Sedition Acts were passed, reflecting the Federalist party's fear that "republican" and "jacobin" immigrants were swelling the support of the Jeffersonian movement. A new Naturalization Act was passed that year, requiring fourteen years of residence before becoming a citizen; this bill was repealed in 1802.<sup>145</sup>

In 1824, Chief Justice Marshall settled once and for all the vexing question of whether Congress could make distinctions between native and naturalized citizens not made by the Constitution. In Osborn v. Bank of the United States<sup>146</sup> Marshall held that since the Constitution makes certain distinctions between the two kinds of citizenship, Congress may not add any more. The naturalized citizen is "distinguishable in nothing from a native citizen, except in so far as the Constitution makes the distinction."<sup>147</sup> Other court decisions firmly established the principle that Congress has the authority to set naturalization requirements of whatever kind it wishes, so long as naturalized citizens are not left with any disabilities not mentioned in the Constitution.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-14.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-13.

<sup>146</sup> 9 Wheaton 778 (1824).

<sup>147</sup> Cited in Roche, "Early Development . . . ", pp. 16-17.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Golden v. Prince (1814) and Chirac v. Chirac (1817); cited in *ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

However, the old controversy about what makes American citizenship "American" has been with us ever since the Founding, and is still very much alive. The operative naturalization law, dating from 1943, denies naturalization to anyone who advocates or belongs to a group that advocates "the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United States or of all forms of law."<sup>149</sup>

Another confusion has not received nearly as much attention from the courts and from political institutions as naturalization has received. Stated simply, the problem is this: What are the rights and duties of American citizens? Article IV, Section 2, of the Constitution states that "the Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States." These "privileges and immunities" are not listed, however; it has remained to the courts to infer them from other sections of the Constitution (particularly from the Bill of Rights and, later, from the Fourteenth Amendment) and to decide what, specifically, this particular clause requires the federal and state governments to do. The settled doctrine of the Supreme Court is that this clause only means that a state may not discriminate against the citizens of other states residing within its borders in favor of its own citizens, although the Court has also permitted exceptions to this general rule.<sup>150</sup>

This is not the place to go into the history of the Supreme Court's gradual assumption of responsibility for the protection of various rights against interference by state or federal officials. Suffice it

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<sup>149</sup> Edward S. Corwin, The Constitution and What it Means Today (New York: Atheneum, 1964), p. 56.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., pp. 167-68.

to say that this has been a controversial and confusing area of legal maneuver, and that there has never been, and is not now, a settled consensus about what rights American citizens enjoy, and still less agreement about their responsibilities. In the confusion, a bewildering variety of rights has been asserted or denied, from the right to be born to the right to die, and an equally bewildering variety of court decisions has emerged to deal with these questions.

The important point here is that since "American citizenship" has been ambiguous from the start, it came to be many things to many people. The social institutions that had helped to shape it in the early republic vanished or declined. Town government, for example, which Tocqueville had praised so fervently, became impossible as the "close New England town gave way to the isolated homestead, or to the city of recent immigrants . . . . Our teachers began to teach, and we to value, private life and liberty above all."<sup>151</sup> Industrial and commercial expansion quickened the pace of erosion, altering familiar landscapes and shifting populations to distant places. John Schaar has eloquently stated the effects of these pressures on American life.

Outward changes of such magnitude were not without devastating effects on the quality of inner experience. Venerable institutions, especially family and church, were twisted into strange shapes. Respected habits of thought, notably the doctrines of the moral individual and the higher law as the sources of ethical canons, were attenuated and weakened. . . . a new material environment tore great chunks from the moral codes which had held liberty in check and kept men united in a sense of community.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>151</sup>Schaar, "The Case for Patriotism," pp. 75-76.

<sup>152</sup>John H. Schaar, Loyalty in America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), pp. 99, 100.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, citizenship began to assume a more precise meaning, one impressed upon it by social and economic changes. By the turn of the century, the transformation was nearly complete. The new meaning of citizenship owed its existence to many different factors: immigration, industrial growth, the expansion of cities, new economic ideologies, the decline of traditional institutions, the weakening of political organization, and the sentiments of "reform." It differed almost entirely from ancient notions of citizenship, and substantially even from the eighteenth-century liberal concepts which were its forebears.

One characteristic of the new understanding was its emphasis on citizenship's "social" dimension, at the expense of the political. In 1918, R. L. Ashley's The New Civics expressed this view more bluntly than most: "The citizen . . . is a regular member of the large society which we call the United States of America. Citizenship is therefore social rather than political. It is a natural right, not a conferred privilege." A decade later John Dewey said that the citizen is no more than "a thoroughly efficient and serviceable member of society."<sup>153</sup>

Arguments such as these took several forms, but all called attention away from politics to the private groups and circles within which the "real" or "fundamental" life of men and women took place. Economics rediscovered "interest," and Charles Beard used that discovery to reassess the Founding Fathers. Sociology dwelled on the small groups

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<sup>153</sup>William O. Penrose, Freedom is Ourselves: Legal Rights and Duties of the Citizen as a Basis for Civic Education (Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press, 1952), p. 19.

in which men worked and played and worshipped. Psychology discovered the unconscious. As new analytic categories were added, however, each was accompanied by a rejection of political institutions and political life (this was especially clear in Dewey's work, for example), partly because politics was so clearly in need of "reform," but also because the discovery of "society" seemed to offer a richer method for understanding man's world. The new social science disciplines--economics, sociology, psychology, and political science--urged thinkers to look below or beyond the formal institutions of the community and the formal behavior of men and women to find the hidden springs which made the whole thing work. As Tocqueville had predicted, the vividness of the private sphere had become heightened; the public sphere had become a "void."

This approach made a contribution to the new understanding of citizenship that can best be described by comparing it to the classic conception. The City had lost its center, which was the Forum. Men no longer went out from their private spaces to the space they shared in common. The life of society was now to be sought closer to home: in the routines of daily existence such as marriage, vocation, dreams, commerce. Here men led the only lives that had any concrete meaning--visible, analyzable, measureable. And just as the City had lost its center, the citizen had lost his relation to the City. No longer a citizen of a particular place, he became a member of a particular group, and that membership became his most important characteristic.

The mass immigrations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries made their own impact on notions of citizenship. It was during

this period that citizenship and nationalism became hopelessly confused. The most visible sign of this confusion was the formation of nationalist organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution (1890), the Sons of the Revolution (1883), the Colonial Dames (1890), the Aryan Order of St. George (1892), the Daughters of the Cincinnati (1894), and the Society of Mayflower Descendants (1894). Purely defensive in character, these organizations defined "Americanism" in terms of what it was not, and revealed better than anything else the insecurities among "native" Americans about their own citizenship. Where the fears prompted by immigration did not lead directly to the demand that immigration be halted (as the American Protective Association demanded) it led to attempts to "Americanize" immigrants as they arrived, the chief vehicle for this transformation being the public schools.<sup>154</sup>

While it had many facets and many motives, the "citizen education" movement was hampered by its inability to disentangle the idea of citizenship from the simpler idea of national identity. Well-meaning groups such as the Young Men's Christian Association, and benevolent projects such as the School of Citizenship founded by the American International College, gravitated very quickly to the lowest common denominator, nationalism. How do Americans talk? How do they dress? What symbols do they hold sacred? What opinions do they profess? These were to be sought out and passed on to those of doubtful loyalty and foreign nationality. Jacob Riis, no hysterical nativist by any means, was deeply moved by one public school experiment designed to turn immigrant pupils

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<sup>154</sup>G. David Garson, "Citizenship as an Ideology," Maxwell Review, n.d., p. 26.

into "Americans":

Very lately a unique exercise has been added to these schools that lays hold of the very marrow of the problem with which they deal. It is called 'saluting the flag' and originated with George T. Balch of the Board of Education [of New York City], who conceived the idea of instilling patriotism into the little future citizens of the Republic in doses to suit their childish minds . . . . In the flag it was all found embodied in a central idea which they could grasp . . . . The thing took on at once and was a tremendous success . . . . Every morning sees the flag carried to the principal's desk and all the little ones, rising at the stroke of the bell, say with one voice, 'We turn to our flag as the sunflower turns to the sun!' . . . . Then with a shout that can be heard around the corner: 'To our country! One country, one language, one flag!' <sup>155</sup>

Unfortunately, once the children grew up there was no one to instruct them in the deeper subtleties of citizenship (with the possible exception of Tammany Hall, an organization much older than the D. A. R. and, for all of its unsavory reputation, steeped in the republican imagery of the early nineteenth century) and the simplistic vision of a nation of immigrants held together by nationalist symbols carried the day by default. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that efforts to Americanize the immigrants were often taken over by conservative business interests whose major concern was the suppression of "Bolshevism" and the creation of placid workers. <sup>156</sup>

Parallel to the Americanization movement was the social work movement, examples of which are Jane Addams' Hull House in Chicago and the Boys' Club organizations in New York and other cities. This movement, like the Americanization movement, hoped to nurture a "higher" form of citizenship in the nation's slums, but was not as susceptible

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<sup>155</sup>Cited in Garson, *ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>156</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 28.

as the former to the confusion of citizenship with nationalism. But the social work profession, with its natural concentration on the more urgent needs of its desperate clients, did not have the wherewithall to develop a general theory of citizenship in a modern urban setting. In addition, it displayed a disturbing upper-class-reformer's habit of mistaking citizenship for personal hygiene or, in the case of the religious missions, personal salvation. This movement, like the others, lacked its own understanding of citizenship's political dimension, and so was just as liable to be co-opted by industrial groups whose major interests were promoting "such desirable moral and social qualities as . . . self-subordination and obedience to authority."<sup>157</sup>

Gradually, these scattered efforts succeeded in molding a more or less precise image of the "good citizen." The model citizen's loyalty was evidenced by his recognition of the nation's symbols and his adherence to an extremely vague set of principles which changed from year to year. He was an efficient and happy worker (in that order) and he did not join socialist labor unions. "To be a good citizen," Teddy Roosevelt declared, "a man must first be a good bread-winner, a good husband, a good father . . . ." Woodrow Wilson told a group of newly-naturalized citizens that "the good citizen must be physically, vocationally, and culturally competent . . . He must be an efficient, right-thinking, right-acting individual." In 1928, a popular civics text declared: "We can conclude therefore that vocational and civic education must be judiciously combined, so harmonized as to produce a citizen who is an effective worker, and a worker who is an effective

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

citizen."<sup>158</sup> But it didn't work. Attempts to reform the immigrant and clean up the slums, whatever their motives, achieved only limited results, and by 1917, in the midst of a war that saw nationalist and "patriotic" sentiments reach fever pitch, Congress passed a restrictive immigration law which required a literacy test for applicants and established national quotas (and which would have been much more severe, were it not for the opposition of the immigrant factions within the Democratic party).<sup>159</sup> The end of the war, however, did not bring with it an end to insecurities about American loyalty and identity. The Palmer raids of 1919-20, the anti-union drives sponsored by industrial groups, and the popularity of new "patriotic" organizations such as the American Legion all attest to the persistence of these widespread anxieties.

Pessimism moved in more respectable circles, as well. Scholars looked at America and found much to disturb them. In 1925, Walter Lippman captured the mood of despair with The Phantom Public, in which he argued that the "common man" displayed little of the informed opinion upon which democracy was supposed to rest.<sup>160</sup> Walter Shepard, in his Presidential address to the American Political Science Association in 1934, was even more pessimistic than Lippman, and while we can assume that Shepard's is an extreme view, his fears were shared by the majority of his colleagues:

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<sup>158</sup> Penrose, Freedom is Ourselves, pp. 7-9.

<sup>159</sup> Garson, "Citizenship as an Ideology," p. 27.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

The dogma of universal suffrage must give way to a system of educational and other tests which will exclude the ignorant, the uninformed, and the anti-social elements which have hitherto so frequently controlled elections . . . . There is a large element of fascist doctrine and practice which we must appropriate.<sup>161</sup>

American intellectuals were ready for a reappraisal of American citizenship and American politics generally. It is the intent of this thesis to examine some of their discoveries and analyze their general conclusions. Briefly, we will find American political science handicapped by the absence of an American tradition which valued citizenship and understood its political dimensions. In the 1920s and 1930s, especially, political science returned to its roots in the Federalist tradition and, like its forebears, looked for a way to make the "private interest" stand "sentinel over the public rights." In the process, it would resurrect once more the familiar language of Hamilton and Madison: order, stability, harmony, groups, and interest.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup>Walter Shepard, "Democracy in Transition," American Political Science Review, 29 (February, 1935), pp. 18-19.

<sup>162</sup>Jacobson, "Political Science and Political Education."

## CHAPTER II

### TWELVE PRESIDENTS IN SEARCH OF A THEME

"Our search is for the common interest, but where shall we find it?" -- Woodrow Wilson

The period of American history following the Civil War was one of crisis for American intellectuals. During this time, and in response to that crisis, most of the great professional academic associations were formed: the American Historical Association (1884), the American Economic Association (1888), the American Academy of Political and Social Science (1889), the American Sociological Society (1903). It may be significant that the American Political Science Association was formed relatively late in this period (December, 1903), and that its original membership of two hundred was composed largely of members from the American Historical and American Economic Associations.

For the place of politics and its very definition were problematic. Somewhere between (or beyond?) economics and history, politics was distinguished by its intimate connection to the myriad crises of American life. The American Political Science Association was born in an atmosphere of deep concern for the future of American democracy. Everywhere they looked, these new political scientists could see the framework of constitutional government crumbling around them: in the Civil War and its revelation of the terrifying violence immanent in public affairs; in business scandals; in the labor strife spreading

throughout the country; and, above all, in the tenacious grip which political machines had fastened on the country's cities and states.

Everywhere social change was eroding the facade of the eighteenth-century structure so carefully constructed by the Founders. The country's "best men," moreover, no longer in command of the government, were powerless to stop the decay. It was out of this atmosphere that the hope for a "scientific study of society" emerged. Political science, of course, had begun to sort itself out as a separate university department long before the APSA was founded. Even before the Civil War, many college students, dissatisfied with American education, fled to Europe, notably to Germany, to study "Staatswissenschaft"--the science of the state. Although some would return as dissatisfied as they had left (Henry Adams was a famous skeptic, and Arthur Bentley and Charles Merriam were also unhappy with their German sojourns), many others would, on their return to American universities, attempt to instill a new brand of political study. Herbert Baxter Adams started a graduate program in political science at Johns Hopkins in 1876; his initiative was followed four years later by John W. Burgess, founder of the Columbia Graduate School of Political Science. Soon political science departments on the graduate level were to be found at Harvard, Cornell, Pennsylvania, Chicago, and Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup>

Burgess modelled his graduate school after the doctoral programs he had seen in Germany. Students took a three-year course of lectures, after which they were expected to do a piece of original research for

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus, The Development of American Political Science: From Burgess to Behaviorism (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), pp. 7-20; Charles E. Merriam, American Political Ideas: Studies in the Development of American Political Thought, 1865-1917 (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1923), pp. 374-75.

the Ph.D. "Original" was taken quite literally by these early schools: students were encouraged to unearth their own source material and documents--laws, treaties, and so on--with a premium placed on the age of the materials. The older the better. This approach would eventually spark the initial demand for "relevance" in political science by students such as Woodrow Wilson and Charles Beard, who felt political scientists should deal with more contemporary issues.<sup>2</sup> But the German influence survived in the structure of the doctoral programs, which offered general courses of instruction designed to help the student go out into the world to research the "facts" of political life.

But the facts, once they were found, were distressing, suggesting forcefully the need for political reform. Andrew D. White, the first president of Cornell and a leading figure in the attempt to establish political science as a separate university discipline, wrote that political science would help citizens understand the principles of free government, and the "causes, prevention, alleviation and cure of pauperism, insanity, and crime."<sup>3</sup> In The American Commonwealth (1888), James Bryce warned that severe tensions were building in American life, involving all of "the chronic evils and problems of old societies and crowded countries." Indeed, much of Bryce's book, friendly as it was to American institutions, was a catalogue of evils democratic governments could fall prey to: irresponsible parties, corrupt leaders, ignorant voters. In like manner, Woodrow Wilson, president of the APSA in 1911,

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<sup>2</sup>Somit and Tanenhaus, Development, pp. 20-33.

<sup>3</sup>Bernard Crick, The American Science of Politics: Its Origins and Conditions (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), pp. 21-22.

had made his early reputation with a scholarly criticism of American government, calling for more efficiency and responsibility from the Congress and the Executive.

In its formative years, roughly from the 1870s until the First World War, there was basic agreement within the discipline on several points. Most of the early political scientists agreed that the discipline ought to help promote better government, through making students aware of their rights and obligations under the American system, and by providing statesmen with the guidance of expert opinion. To this extent, the "new" political science would have agreed with the "old" school, represented by Joseph Haven, who wrote in his text, Moral Philosophy (1859): "It has seemed to the author that the youth of a free country should be carefully instructed in the first principles of civil government, and in the rights and obligations of the citizen. It is the proper province of Moral Philosophy, which treats of the several duties of life, to do this."<sup>4</sup>

Attitudes such as this fit well with the state science that Burgess and others brought back from Germany, for that science was seen as an aid to the accomplishment of the ends of the state, a well-ordered government being the first of those ends. Theodore Woolsey's text, Political Science (1878), for example, followed the historical and comparative methodology then popular in Germany: the state, Woolsey said, is based on the "nature of man," and is the means for attaining the highest ends of man as citizen, and it is thus the business of political science to help the state fulfill its historic mission.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Cited by Crick, The American Science, pp. 12-13.

<sup>5</sup>Merriam, American Political Ideas, pp. 378-80.

There was also general agreement as to where "political science" diverged from Haven's "moral philosophy"; that was in its attitude toward the facts of political life. A time of crisis called for a systematic understanding of the "actual workings of government." Younger members of the discipline rebelled against the German school's obsession with ancient documents and the history of European political forms in favor of more pragmatic, problem-oriented research. Woodrow Wilson, as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins, typified this rebellion when he chose to do a doctoral dissertation on the United States Congress.<sup>6</sup> Charles Beard was another young scholar who chose to investigate the facts of American political life with a view toward solving contemporary problems.

The two schools came together on the common ground of scientific method. Burgess himself felt that the discipline should adopt the method "which has been found so productive in the domain of Natural Science."<sup>7</sup> John Dewey looked forward to "the possibility of a new kind of history in which kings and warriors will give place to men of science."<sup>8</sup> And Lester Frank Ward carried the faith in science to what was at the time (1883) an extreme position (it would become more popular in the 1920s and 1930s) when he linked the notion of progress to the idea of government by experts in the social sciences--"sociocracy."<sup>9</sup>

It was, however, a rudimentary conception of science that social scientists of the time were working with. Efforts to refine it would

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<sup>6</sup>Somit and Tanenhaus, Development, pp. 30-33. <sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>8</sup>Cited by Morton White, Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p. 57.

<sup>9</sup>Crick, The American Science, p. 50.

spark unending controversy. It was a conception in which "the conquest of nature by applied science" (as Beard put it) was held as a model of what could be accomplished in a social world gone out of control. Just as natural scientists had conquered disease, natural resources, electricity, and molecules, so could the social scientist conquer poverty, violence, party corruption, apathy, and a thousand ills. He would do it, moreover, by following the methods of the natural sciences: by being objective, by digging for the facts, by eschewing propaganda and rationalizations, by being nonpartisan.

The faith in facts was truly extraordinary. James Bryce, who should have known better, believed that if only English leaders would travel to Ireland to learn the "facts" about that land, Anglo-Irish relations would improve immensely.<sup>10</sup> Political scientists agreed with the muckrakers that if the people only knew the facts about Tammany Hall and other machines, they would arise in a spontaneous rebellion and throw the rascals out. This was the motive behind the numerous municipal research bureaus that sprang to life around the country during the early part of the century. Nonpartisan but openly reformist, they were dedicated to providing the public with the truth about municipal misrule, fully expecting the facts to speak for themselves.

Science seemed to have another promising quality: it bore no attachments to the dead past. No natural scientist paid any heed to outworn theories or outmoded techniques. The natural sciences lived in the present and dealt with contemporary problems. The reformers of the

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<sup>10</sup> James Bryce, "The Relations of Political Science to History and to Practice," American Political Science Review, 3 (February, 1909), p. 13.

period appreciated such enthusiasm for abandoning the deadwood of custom, and sought to emulate it in the political realm.

These views had come to dominate the world of social science so completely that by 1903 the members of a new organization calling itself the American Society for Comparative Legislation voted before their first meeting to change their name--to the American Political Science Association. Addressing its first convention, Frank Goodnow defined the purpose of the new organization as bringing together "upon common ground those persons whose main interests are concerned with the scientific study of the organizations and functions of the state."<sup>11</sup> This description was general enough to suit the needs of a new organization, but it did not succeed in quieting the new discipline's self-doubt: there began almost immediately a debate within the association, which continues to this day, about what the subject matter of the discipline should be, and whether or not it could be studied "scientifically."

In his Presidential address of 1907, Albert Shaw sounded the reform note when he argued that current conditions in American life proved the need for an association dedicated specifically to studying politics. We need, he said, to study the problem of the proper exercise of the police power by municipalities, and only a political science association could do that: i.e., a nonpartisan organization made up of "men who are both willing and eager to see the results of their scientific study of political life and conditions converted to the practical

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<sup>11</sup> Cited by Jesse S. Reeves, "Perspectives in Political Science, 1903-1928," American Political Science Review, 23 (February, 1929), p. 2.

ends of statesmanship." The APSA should dedicate itself to the "presentation of facts and the formulating of conclusions that will be of practical benefit to the perplexed legislator in his time of need."<sup>12</sup> Shaw also defined a popular conception of the "scientific spirit" in his address, equating it with "the spirit of calmness, of inquiry, of reasonable discussion" and with "nonpartisanship." ("Nobody cares any longer whether members of an association like this are classed as republicans or democrats . . . ." <sup>13</sup>)

James Bryce expanded on these themes in his own Presidential address, two years later. How, Bryce asked, can politics be considered a science? Politics is not a science in the sense that physics is, he answered, because it cannot be expressed mathematically. Nor is it, like meteorology, an inexact science capable of becoming a more exact one. "Human phenomena may be described, but cannot be counted or weighed . . . . The data of politics are the acts of men. The laws of political science are the tendencies of human nature . . . ." But how can such material be made into something remotely resembling a "science?"<sup>14</sup>

Bryce's answer to this question went to the heart of the American social scientists' conception of science. "I start by offering to you one maxim of universal validity. Keep close to the facts. Never lose yourself in abstractions. Never fancy that a general proposition means

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<sup>12</sup> Albert Shaw, "Presidential Address," American Political Science Review, 1 (February, 1907), pp. 180-81.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 184-85.

<sup>14</sup> Bryce, "Relations," pp. 1-3.

anything more than the facts which it sums up." Noting that much of political science was dull and hard to read (examples being J. S. Mill and the second volume of Tocqueville's Democracy in America), Bryce offered a close attention to facts as an antidote. He urged his readers to emulate the "father of political science," Aristotle, and other thinkers who presumably had stuck to the facts and shunned abstraction: Montesquieu, Burke, Bagehot, Tocqueville (in the first volume of Democracy), and the authors of The Federalist Papers. We cannot study political institutions ("the principal subjects with which our science deals") in vacuo, as "Platonic forms." We can treat a political institution only "through its growth and in its environment. . . . The essential point is to get hold of the thing in its working."<sup>15</sup>

James Bryce was very far from the "extreme" end of the scientific school of political studies of his time. So we may take it that Bryce was not uttering an extreme position when he urged his colleagues to "study everything in the light of everything else" and to set "no limit" to their investigations of political fact.<sup>16</sup> We may assume also that he expressed the views of the dominant group within the discipline when he asked, "What can be more windy and empty, more dry and frigid and barren than such lucubrations upon sovereignty as we find in John Austin and some still more recent writers?"<sup>17</sup>

Bryce had envisioned quite a different purpose for political science than the production of "lucubrations upon sovereignty." Political scientists, he hoped, would have a profound influence on the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-7. My emphasis.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

survival of constitutional government by influencing, through teaching and research, the five percent of Americans who would be significant political leaders. "The chief aim of your science is to create in the class which leads a nation the proper temper and attitude towards the questions which from time to time arise in politics."<sup>18</sup>

Charles Beard thought it necessary to repeat this injunction and add a warning of his own, in his Presidential address of 1927. Charles Merriam had addressed the APSA as President the year before, giving an optimistic view of the possibilities of a science of politics. Beard took his predecessor to task in terms similar to Bryce's, urging his colleagues to prepare the nation for the shocks of the future. The "continuous conquest of material environment by applied science," fruitful as it was, was nevertheless something of a tyrant: technology, like time, "devours the old." Political science thus had a difficult responsibility: it must help prepare students, citizens, and politicians for a problematic future. Science appeared in this address as a manichean force, and the tone was somber, even pessimistic. Beard was upset at the various forces which stood in the way of "connecting political science with the flowing stream of time and technology," fearful that that stream would run wild. He criticized the kind of research being done in American universities, and was scornful of teachers who substituted "monoculous inquiries for venturesome judgments, . . . narrowing the vision while accumulating information." Such research left untouched "a vast array of driving social forces for which such words as conviction, faith, hope, loyalty, and destiny are

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

pale symbols--yielding to the analysis of no systematist." Political science needed more imagination and less induction; there had been no great work in political science written in America since The Federalist Papers.<sup>19</sup>

But by 1927 such pessimism found a diminished audience, and Beard's warning struck a false note amid the general chorus in praise of "objective" science. The more popular tone was indicated by A. Lawrence Lowell in 1910, whose own Presidential address pursued a lengthy metaphor linking the political scientist to the biologist. Lowell's speech was curious in spots; it suggested an ambivalence toward science which the speaker struggled to suppress. Lowell began with a statement that was clearly meant to be sarcastic: political science, he said, lacked "the first essential of a modern science--a nomenclature incomprehensible to educated men." Yet he then went on to urge political scientists to adopt such a language for themselves, or at any rate to approach more closely the precision of the natural sciences. And why not? The branches of political science, after all, paralleled those of biology. Morphology, which studied the structure of animals and plants, was similar to the branch of political science which described the institutional structure of the state. Physiology, which studied the "functions of the various organs," found its parallel in the branch of political science which studied the functions of institutions--the functions they actually perform, of course, not

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<sup>19</sup>Charles Beard, "Time, Technology, and the Creative Spirit in Political Science," American Political Science Review, 21 (February, 1927), pp. 1-11.

the functions they are supposed to perform.<sup>20</sup>

Lowell complained that statesmen were not turning to political scientists for advice the way engineers turned to professors of applied physics. The reason for this lack of prestige was that political science had till then been too "theoretical." Both the public and the statesman realized that political scientists "do not study enough the actual working of government."<sup>21</sup> Lowell urged his colleagues to get out of the library and into the "outside world of public life." This is the "laboratory" in which political scientists must labor if they are to earn the respect and trust of political leaders.<sup>22</sup>

Lowell struggled to maintain the teleological function of political science--the guidance of citizens and statesmen--in the face of his own injunctions to be objective, impartial, and fact-oriented. "The ultimate object of political science," he noted at the end of his address, "is moral, that is, the improvement of government among men." And yet the discipline must go about this task scientifically: it must be impartial, showing no moral bias for or against any practices, institutions, laws, or beliefs. "It may seem strange," he mused, "to assert that in order to encompass an end we must lose sight of it, and yet the human mind is so limited that this is often true."<sup>23</sup>

Probably the most extreme positions on the parallels between political and natural science were taken by four APSA presidents serving between 1917 and 1928: Jesse Macy (1917), Henry Jones Ford (1920),

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<sup>20</sup> A. Lawrence Lowell, "The Physiology of Politics," American Political Science Review, 4 (February, 1910), pp. 1-2.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-8.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

Harry A. Garfield (1924), and William B. Munro (1928).

Jesse Macy traced the "scientific spirit" to the period prior to the Civil War; the war appeared, in retrospect, as a terrible throwback, a tragedy which could have been avoided if the scientific spirit had been more widespread. Macy was impressed by the triumphs of molecular chemistry, and saw a parallel between that science and politics: the former dealing "with oxygen, hydrogen, and gravitation; the other with cities, states, and numerous other political and social institutions."<sup>24</sup> Science was a simple affair for Macy, and politics could presumably be equally simple: a matter of calm debate, honesty, and plain Christian charity. "The modern scientific spirit is simply the Christian spirit realized in a limited field of experience . . . ." And Macy had no doubts about the relation between science and the salvation of American politics. "Science and democracy have come into the modern world at the same time. They are mutually related as cause and effect."<sup>25</sup>

Henry Jones Ford chose as his presidential theme the prevailing mood of pessimism regarding the contemporary performance of American government. "It is unfortunately the case--and it is a fact that it would be unwise to ignore--that the most important and influential studies that have been made of the institutions of the United States show an increasing spirit of depreciation."<sup>26</sup> Political science, he

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<sup>24</sup>Jesse Macy, "The Scientific Spirit in Politics," American Political Science Review, 11 (February, 1917), pp. 1-3.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>26</sup>Henry Jones Ford, "Present Tendencies in American Politics," American Political Science Review, 14 (February, 1929), p. 4.

seemed to argue, was in danger of becoming only a negative science: "What is the matter with political science if it may serve to undermine the institutions of government?" But this negative impact of broadcasting the "facts" about politics could be counteracted if political science realized its therapeutic potential. To Ford, the appropriate metaphor had political science playing the role of physician: an old metaphor, as we have seen, for the mission of political science, although Ford intended the ministrations of the professional to be confined to the "organization of public authority" rather than to the character of the citizenry.<sup>27</sup>

Among the facts which troubled Ford and others in the discipline was the emergence of large, powerful private organizations, particularly corporations and national lobbies. Here among the "trusts" was palpable evidence of the need for a review of the "actual working" of American government, an urgent demonstration of the need to get away from the lawbooks and into the "real world."<sup>28</sup> This sense of urgency was undoubtedly one of the reasons for the decades-long debate over the nature of sovereignty (divisible? indivisible?) which so tried the patience of realists like Bryce: the growth of large private organizations capable of influencing government made the traditional state-orientation of political science suspect. Could it be that scholars had all along been missing the forest for the trees? G. David Garson

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> It was almost with a sense of joyous discovery, for example, that Peter Odegard reviewed Pendleton Herring's Group Representation Before Congress in the APSR: "Here," he announced, "is the substance and the reality of the process of government." American Political Science Review, 23 (May, 1929), pp. 469-71.

has described this bewilderment as the source of one of the discipline's most persistent theoretical constructs: group theory. What motivated group theorists was a break with the "normative theory of the state" that had been such a large part of the older schools of political science, and a jelling of a new normative theory, one which welcomed the new groups into formal partnership with the previously sovereign state. With the "consolidation of corporate capitalism and the rise of organized labor" social scientists were faced with a crisis in the relations of groups to the state. "The activities of these groups seemed to contravene with some frequency the norms of political process held by political scientists and, indeed, most Americans."<sup>29</sup>

Garson may be overstating the faith of Americans in constitutional norms, but there is no doubt that the new landscape of American politics provoked concern among political scientists. In 1917, Harold Laski admonished his colleagues:

You must . . . admit that the State is only one of the associations to which [the individual] happens to belong, and give it exactly that preeminence--and no more--to which on the particular occasion of conflict its possibly superior moral claim will entitle it.<sup>30</sup>

Laski, of course, did not speak for the entire discipline, but he did represent the feelings of a growing school in America. Opposed to him were those who had been trained in the traditional "state science" of the late nineteenth century, for whom the State remained, as Woolsey

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<sup>29</sup>G. David Garson, "On the Origins of Interest-Group Theory: A Critique of a Process," American Political Science Review, 68 (December, 1974), p. 1507.

<sup>30</sup>Harold Laski, Studies in the Problems of Sovereignty, cited by Garson, *ibid.*, p. 1509.

had put it, the means for attaining the highest achievements of man as citizen.

But others would attempt to integrate these new sovereigns into the constitutional framework, and it was this attempt which gave pluralism its firmest hold in American political science. Among those congenial to pluralism was Harry Garfield, President of the APSA in 1924. His Presidential address of that year dwelled on the problem presented by "group influence" on government. His solution was to put an end to "indirect" influence (the stuff of scandal) by giving groups a direct role to play in policy-making. The mechanism of this influence had already been developed during World War I: the expert advisory commission. "The representatives of financial, commercial, and industrial groups," Garfield argued, "are the best qualified to supply facts and furnish expert opinion. They may also profitably discuss, but may not wisely be permitted to determine, policies of government affecting their interests."<sup>31</sup> Garfield was convinced that the distinction between "discussing" and "determining" policy would be easy to maintain in practice, and that the country's experience with price and production control during the War had proved "that a principle of first-rate importance to the conduct of public business had been developed."<sup>32</sup>

Thus did one man, at least, come to terms with the industrial order that had so altered the Federalist republic. Nor was Garfield alone in his adjustment. Several years earlier, another APSA President,

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<sup>31</sup> Harry A. Garfield, "Recent Political Developments: Progress or Change?" American Political Science Review, 18 (February, 1924), p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

Albert Shaw, had praised the "general liberality" of American corporation law, which made it possible for capital to "concentrate and apply itself with advantage." Neither Shaw nor any other political scientist of note traced the changes in American life--some of the same changes they found disturbing--to this same liberality in regard to private wealth. Certainly, no prominent political scientist of the time suggested that the corporation laws be repealed or amended, or that the concentration of capital and power in the hands of private individuals and organizations be reversed. The general pessimism about America's political institutions was not matched by concern over its economic institutions. Manifest destiny was seen to be at work in American economic life, a beneficent (though disturbing) growth and expansion. Shaw was persuaded that it would be better in the long run to seek a greater production of wealth rather than to insure a "more ethical distribution of it," even if this policy tolerated terrible abuses in the short run. On economic questions, at least, Shaw was correct in his assessment that "this Association is not . . . a body of reformers [and] is concerned with no propoganda."<sup>33</sup>

By the late 1920s, developments in theoretical physics had forced the discipline to take another look at the parallel between social and natural science. The static, mechanical physics of the 1870s had been replaced by relativity theory, or as William B. Munro understood it, the idea that there is "nothing that is not continually in process of change." This revelation, Munro believed, was bound to have important implications for sciences other than physics, including political

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<sup>33</sup>Shaw, "Presidential Address," pp. 183-84.

science. Yet "too many political scientists are still dallying fondly with the abstract formalism of Locke and Montesquieu . . . . [Political science] is still in bondage to eighteenth-century deification of the abstract individual man."<sup>34</sup> Munro surveyed the group universe that America had become, and reasoned that eighteenth-century concepts such as those which posited a tension between the individual and the state had no place in it.

For even as every molecule of physical matter is conditioned and directed by those with which it interacts, so the individual citizen is similarly motivated and controlled by the influence of those with whom he associates . . . . Hence the first problem of political science is not that of adjusting social control to the interests of the individual citizen but of securing and maintaining a fair balance between the various groups to which the individual belongs.<sup>35</sup>

Political science, therefore, must begin its investigations with the "civic atom." Munro was willing to push the analogy between physics and politics just about as far as it would go. "The individual citizen, when you pull him apart, is first of all a nucleus. He is the creature of a habit system." This human nucleus is bombarded by opinions and ideas the way a physical atom is bombarded with electrons. Some electrons stick, and others do not; some citizens are receptive to idea-electrons ("Hence we have the hydrogen citizen") and others are not.<sup>36</sup>

Munro had no doubt as to the direction the discipline should pursue. Political science must emulate physics by getting rid of the

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<sup>34</sup>William B. Munro, "Physics and Politics: An Old Analogy Revised," American Political Science Review, 22 (February, 1928), pp. 1-3.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-6.

"intellectual insincerities" with which the discipline abounded: insincerities such as sovereignty, the general will, natural rights, consent of the governed, the equality of men. All these eighteenth-century illusions must be replaced by concepts "that will stand the test of actual operations . . . . Today the new physics may well suggest the discarding of our atomic theory of ultimate, equal, and sovereign citizens in a free state."<sup>37</sup>

The depth of the quandries confronting the discipline in its early years is suggested by two addresses, given nearly twenty years apart, by Woodrow Wilson and Edward Corwin. Corwin's, delivered in 1929, the year before he became President of the APSA, represented the skepticism toward laboratory science of the juristic school of political studies. Corwin took note of the growing alliance between political science and behavioral psychology, an alliance which he felt called into question the basic fundamentals of the discipline's creed. Political science, he felt, was an outgrowth of eighteenth-century rationalism (Munro's "illusions") and thus "sprang from the same matrix as the democratic dogma." Behavioral psychology, on the other hand, had rendered suspect the democratic dogma's faith in the rationality of the individual citizen. Did this in turn render political science itself suspect? Corwin was skeptical of the achievements of behavioral psychology. "The problems set were of no great evident moment, and the solutions provided either were inconclusive or merely substantiated what must have been the off-hand verdict of any rather intelligent and well-read observer." But he also worried that those achievements, modest

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

though they were, may have revealed an essential truth about human behavior. War propaganda, crowd behavior, and advertising, Corwin admitted, lead to the conclusion that people might be infinitely malleable. But this suggested also that they were educable, and also re-educable. Thus the "primary task of political science is today one of popular education, and . . . therefore it must still retain its character as a 'normative', a 'telic' science."<sup>38</sup>

By 1929, in any case, technology had revealed some of its disastrous potential: the First World War was a sobering experience. In light of this, Corwin called his colleagues to abandon their efforts to model political science after physics and chemistry, and to return to the image of the discipline as a "science of the state."

Why, indeed, should there be another laboratory science anyway? The general obtuseness of the laboratory sciences is boasted by their would-be imitators, and is as notorious as it is infantile. With modern physics and chemistry brandishing sticks of dynamite with the insouciance of a four-year old, what could be more preposterous than to induct political science into the same nursery of urchins? . . . The real destiny of political science is to do more expertly and more precisely what it has always done; its task is criticism and education regarding the true ends of the state and how best they may be achieved.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps the most soul-searching attempt to come to grips with the role of political science was Woodrow Wilson's Presidential address of 1911. Here can be seen all of the bewilderment of the intellectual community at the sweeping changes in American politics, the search for some means of comprehending and coming to terms with them.

Wilson began by placing politics at the center of the human

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<sup>38</sup> Edward S. Corwin, "The Democratic Dogma and the Future of Political Science," American Political Science Review, 23 (August, 1929), pp. 570-89.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 591-92.

experience: "Politics is of the very stuff of life. Its motives are interlaced with the whole fiber of experience, private and public." Thus, he argued, political science could not study politics while remaining ignorant of the literature of "human aspiration," novels, poetry, music, and philosophy. Our task is made more difficult, he continued, by the changes in modern states. Once upon a time, nations seemed "to move forward in mass, all together, their internal interests, at any rate, linked and interrelated in some reasonably manifest fashion." But as civilization became more complex, "differentiation" increased, with the result that "society is too various to see itself as a whole, and the vision of those who study it is confused."<sup>40</sup>

At the same time, government itself had become confused and disordered, prey to the war of all against all. In recent years, especially, American government had become a case of "everybody for everything upon a disordered field. There [has been] no attempt to coordinate. Our legislation has been atomistic, miscellaneous, piecemeal, makeshift." Individual interests proliferated, but "they have not been harnessed to a common cause."<sup>41</sup>

Wilson criticized the American tradition of allowing those who were strong enough "to use the country and its resources for the release of their private energy and the piling up of their own wealth." As a consequence, the country had become one in which "common obligations" were neglected in favor of "separate opportunities": a fact

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<sup>40</sup>Woodrow Wilson, "The Law and the Facts," American Political Science Review, 5 (February, 1911), pp. 2-3.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

which had been institutionalized in law. Courts saw their own role as "mediating between" private interests rather than accomodating private interests "to the interests of communities and of men of every kind outside directors' rooms and offices and banks."<sup>42</sup>

Political science reflected this situation. The political scientist, attempting "to see how the forces move" finds that "experience does not move with an even front." Political scientists must look away from the disordered and fragmented legal structure "to the life of men," in which Wilson was certain the common interest, the "essential unity," could be found. The life of man, "whether it will or no, whether it is conscious of it or not, must be of a piece, must have a pattern which can be traced."<sup>43</sup>

Where pluralism saw a need to accomodate private interests to one another, Wilson saw a need to unite private interests into something greater than the sum of its parts: no "mere task of compromise and makeshift accomodation, but a task of genuine and lasting adjustment, synthesis, coordination, harmony, and union of parts." Statesmen and scientists alike must "discover, amidst the confusion of modern elements, the common term, the common interest--or, rather, they must discover the missing term," since the scattered pieces of American society "do not disclose, when put together, a whole and consistent pattern. The letters they contain do not make a complete word." Physics might pull the universe apart into its separate components; economics might treat as isolated that which was not in fact isolated. But politics must be defined in the opposite sense, as a unification, "the accomodation of

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

all social forces . . . to the common interest."<sup>44</sup>

Wilson was among the least "scientific" of political scientists, as that term was coming to be understood, even though he carried impeccable credentials in the "realist" school. Now he confessed that he did not like the term "political science" at all. "Human relationships . . . are not in any proper sense the subject-matter of science. They are the stuff of insight and sympathy and spiritual comprehension . . . . Know your people . . . not as congeries of interests, but as a body of human souls."<sup>45</sup>

I have dwelled at length on Wilson's address, because it contains within one speech so many of the tangled themes of the period. There is, of course, the basic question of science itself: can the political world be studied in the same way as the natural order? The answer that political science was settling on was a qualified Yes, and yet the very fact that the question could be asked so often suggested the possibility that the two provinces were in some sense alien to one another.

There is too the very definite sense that the political world needs to be studied because there is something wrong with it, a motive that natural scientists would not normally share. Wilson was certain, and most of his colleagues agreed, that the republic their forefathers had so confidently passed on to them was beginning to slip away, a victim of greed, disunity, and the corrosive force of social change. As time passed, as a new generation of students grew to maturity, this sense of the lost order of American politics began to recede into the

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

past and take on the appearance of affectation. As Charles Beard knew, time and technology alike devour the old. But in these first decades of the twentieth century, Woodrow Wilson's plaintive query must still have found a considerable audience: "Our search is for the common interest, but where shall we find it?"<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

## CHAPTER III

### ARTHUR F. BENTLEY: POLITICS VS. PROCESS

"Historians who live in democratic ages, then, not only deny that the few have any power of acting upon the destiny of a people, but deprive the people themselves of the power of modifying their own conditions, and they subject them either to an inflexible Providence or to some blind necessity . . . The historians of antiquity taught how to command; those of our own time teach only how to obey." -- Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

#### 1.

##### The Perennial Arthur Bentley

Arthur F. Bentley's reputation is probably one of the most curious in the history of American political science. Hailed by one faction of the discipline as a pioneer, scorned by another faction as a menace, he is nevertheless a regular feature of political science bibliographies and histories of the discipline. It is an article of faith that Arthur Bentley is important, somehow, even if there is no agreement about why. This is all the more remarkable because Bentley never considered himself a political scientist, and in fact held the profession in low esteem. He never joined the American Political Science Association and never sat on a political science faculty. The fact that he can be claimed at all by political scientists is partly due to the fact that he does not fit any single discipline very well, and so can be claimed indiscriminately by many: by sociology, linguistics, economics, philosophy, even physics, the one branch of knowledge Bentley

felt truly deserved to be called a science.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, little of Bentley's work (especially from his later period) is well-known among political scientists, either those who attack or those who defend him, and his reputation rests almost entirely on one work, The Process of Government, published in 1908. That work solidly established Bentley as a forerunner of group theory and pluralism, even though Bentley did not much appreciate his induction by those schools, and denied his affinity with "the group concept" in its conventional form.<sup>2</sup>

Bentley would much rather have been remembered for his association with John Dewey, and for the work they did, singly and together, in linguistic philosophy. Dewey and Bentley shared many attitudes and concerns, the most significant being their belief that language was inadequate for expressing scientific truth, and both devoted much of their professional lives to constructing a new language. This was the goal to which Bentley devoted the remainder of his long career after the publication of The Process of Government (although the concern with language and science is evident throughout that book as well), and it is the pursuit for which he is most remembered outside the political science profession.

Yet political scientists continue to rediscover the "group" Bentley. Friends of that approach hail him as a pioneer; enemies label

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<sup>1</sup>When he died, in 1957, his obituary was published in the journals of three disciplines: philosophy, sociology, and political science.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur Bentley, "Epilogue," in Richard W. Taylor, ed., Life, Language, Law: Essays in Honor of Arthur F. Bentley (Yellow Springs, Ohio: The Antioch Press, 1957), p. 212.

him the source of an infection. But most agree that it is for the invention of group theory that Bentley should be remembered.

The Process of Government was used in this sense by Charles Beard and Charles Merriam in their graduate classes in the 1920s and 1930s. It was cited by the numerous chroniclers of pressure groups in the 1930s and 1940s. And it was rediscovered by the interest group theorists of the 1950s, most prominently by David Truman in The Governmental Process.<sup>3</sup>

So why discover Bentley one more time? As John Schaar and Sheldon Wolin have asked, "Is there anything left to say about Arthur Bentley?"<sup>4</sup>

The answer to that question will be evident (for good or ill) by the end of this chapter. For now, I want to speak in general terms about my motives for discussing Bentley in the context of citizenship, civic education, and American political science.

Bentley made his contribution to the literature of political science when the discipline was very young. The Process of Government was published only five years after the founding of the American Political Science Association, before there were political science departments in more than a score of colleges. As difficult as it is to assign influence to a work, it is nevertheless clear that Bentley shared many of the aspirations of his colleagues in the intellectual community, as eccentric as he must have seemed to many of them.<sup>5</sup> Like them, Bentley

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<sup>3</sup>New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2nd Edition, 1971.

<sup>4</sup>John Schaar and Sheldon Wolin, "Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics: A Critique," American Political Science Review, 57 (March, 1963), p. 129.

<sup>5</sup>Norman Jacobson, "Causality and Time in the Political Process: A Speculation," American Political Science Review, 58 (March, 1964), pp. 15-22.

was eager to discover the nature of the science that seemed to promise so much at the turn of the century, and to learn what it could teach to the students of society.

Above all, it was science that obsessed Bentley. He was determined to bring its methods and accomplishments to the study of society. With Dewey, Beard, James, and others, Bentley hoped to dethrone the ancient gods of philosophy and religion and replace them with more modern ones.<sup>6</sup> And among the expendable gods were the gods of politics, the "spooks" and "soul stuff" of ideas and ideals. The new gods would be taken from the raw data of social experience; the new social scientist would devote himself to the observation of social fact and nothing else.

A second reason for studying Bentley has been suggested by Norman Jacobson, who argues that Bentley provided the link between early American constitutional theory and later American political science. Bentley took the thought central to the Federalist tradition--that social groups are the given from which politics must build as best it can--and made it into a science.<sup>7</sup> As we shall see later, Bentley was not so much concerned with groups per se as with social activity, what he constantly referred to as "men actually doing something in the world." This activity, according to Bentley, simply exists: it is not the business of political science (or the state) to impose meaning on it, or to order or shape it in any way. What Bentley had most in

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<sup>6</sup>Morton White, Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism (Boston: Beacon Press, 2nd Edition, 1957).

<sup>7</sup>Norman Jacobson, "Political Science and Political Education," American Political Science Review, 57 (September, 1963), p. 561.

common with the Federalists (and the comparison can easily be overdrawn) was a radical skepticism about politics itself: in their case a doubt about the ability of the political order to reform the disruptive passions of social groups; in Bentley's case, a doubt about the basic reality of the political order, its philosophic coherence. To both Bentley and the Federalists, society was a reality before which the polity faded from view.

Bentley is also important because political science seems to owe him so much. I emphasize the word seems because this influence is not easy to trace and turns out, I believe, to be something other than what three generations of political scientists have represented it to be. It is certain, first of all, that Bentley did not discover the group. Since at least the end of the eighteenth century, America has appeared to countless observers as a society in which private, utilitarian social organizations have been of paramount importance. The group literature written since the 1920s could certainly have been written (and was, in most cases) without any noticeable help from The Process of Government.<sup>8</sup>

But what political science does owe to Bentley is the benefit of his example of how the traditional group orientation of American political thought could be translated into the scientific language that was

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<sup>8</sup> Some of the group studies which did acknowledge Bentley's inspiration or guidance were: Peter Odegard, Pressure Politics (1929), Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought (1943), Pendleton Herring, Group Representation Before Congress (1929), E. E. Schattschneider, Politics, Pressures, and the Tariff (1935), Belle Zeller, Pressure Politics in New York (1937), Dayton McKean, Pressures on the Legislature of New Jersey (1938), Oliver Garceau, The Political Life of the American Medical Association (1941), and Bertram Gross, The Legislative Struggle (1951). Also, of course, Truman's The Governmental Process (1951).

becoming obligatory by the first decades of the twentieth century. Many political scientists of the past fifty years have approached Bentley as a prophet without honor in his own time, a pioneer whose steps others were finally beginning to follow. Their admiration is a tribute to the sheer audacity of Bentley's ambition, which was no less than the reconstruction of all social knowledge. That ambition knew few bounds. All previous theory was suspect, if not obviously false, and parts of The Process of Government echo the arrogance of The Communist Manifesto. A great spectre was haunting social theory, Bentley declared--the spectre of science. The whole temple of learning would have to be cleansed before the new priests could move in and begin their work of reconstructing knowledge. An exciting prospect, no doubt, to the men of Bentley's generation and their descendants.

But questions must be asked about the example Bentley set, especially for political science. As we saw in Chapter II, the discipline was not motivated solely by the desire to make political studies more scientific. It was moved also by its members' sense of an impending crisis in American political life. Like so many of his colleagues, Bentley sought the solution to that crisis outside of the political order itself, in the more "basic" relationships which lay "below" or "behind" politics. By denying the specifically political nature of the crisis, Bentley set a standard that would be emulated by his successors; and in so doing, he established a pattern of inquiry that for over sixty years has virtually ignored the phenomenon central to the discipline's subject matter: the phenomenon of citizenship.

2.

"The mystery of society"

Arthur Bentley was born in Freeport, Illinois, in 1870, the son of a prosperous banker. He was educated in public schools in Illinois and Nebraska, then entered York College in Denver, spending one semester there before dropping out for reasons of health in 1887. Bentley then took up a position in his father's bank, where he worked until 1890. His health restored, he continued his education at Johns Hopkins University, where he intended to study economics under Richard Ely; but Ely left Hopkins soon after Bentley's arrival, leaving the young man "on the loose" (as he later termed it). In 1892 Bentley published an M.A. thesis on "The Condition of the Western Farmer," and promptly embarked on his Wanderjahre in Europe.<sup>9</sup>

Later in life, Bentley would confess that he got very little out of his years at Johns Hopkins, and even less out of his experience in Germany, where he spent the academic year of 1892-93. In 1953 he recalled that he wanted to combine sociology and economics in some fashion, but that he was still on the loose and looking for some intellectual anchor. He failed to find it, apparently, in Europe.

Bentley's roommate on that journey, Hutchins Hapgood, has described him in a memoir, A Victorian in the Modern World, as a "strangely vivid young man" much distressed by the "mystery of society" and passionately devoted to solving it. Hapgood describes Bentley

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<sup>9</sup>Sydney Ratner, "Arthur F. Bentley's Inquiries into the Behavioral Sciences and the Theory of Scientific Inquiry," British Journal of Sociology, 8 (March, 1957), pp. 40-43.

wandering through the slums of London [observing] the mass of suffering human beings . . . so unhappy that they didn't even know they were unhappy . . . . Ever since that time Bentley has been working, and still is working, on that effort to solve the problem of human beings in organized society . . . . Bentley's passionate desire to discover the sociological ultimate revealed an infinite mental turmoil. He was an unhappy soul, bitterly critical of himself and his inability to reach the heights.<sup>10</sup>

When he returned to Johns Hopkins, Bentley began a doctoral dissertation which attempted to find his "sociological ultimate" in the individual. "The Units of Investigation in the Social Sciences" was accepted in 1895, and represented the first of many conceptions of the "sociological ultimate" which Bentley would discard as inadequate.<sup>11</sup>

Bentley's teaching career began and ended the following year at the University of Chicago, where he was hired as a docent in sociology. After a few classes he and his students agreed to part company, and Bentley never held a regular teaching position again. (Late in his life he taught a seminar at Columbia University for one semester.) During this year Bentley made the brief acquaintance of John Dewey, while attending one of Dewey's lectures; this acquaintance was taken up again many years later and developed into a close professional collaboration, one of the few personal contacts Bentley ever had with the wider intellectual community.<sup>12</sup>

In 1900 Bentley got a job as a reporter for the Chicago Times-Herald and Record-Herald. He was promoted to editorial writer in 1903,

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<sup>10</sup>Cited in Paul Kress, Social Science and the Idea of Process: The Ambiguous Legacy of Arthur F. Bentley (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1970), p. 16. This book, and the two articles by Norman Jacobson, have been extremely helpful in preparing this chapter.

<sup>11</sup>Ratner, "Bentley's Inquiries," pp. 40-43.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

which gave him much free time for the continuation of his education in the social sciences. The local library contained a wealth of material on politics; his job provided him with much more. Thus he set about the composition of The Process of Government. In 1911, again for health reasons (apparently a nervous collapse brought on by the labors of writing) Bentley quit newspaper work and retired to a farm in Paoli, Indiana, where he lived for the rest of his life.

From this rustic retreat Bentley sent forth a torrent of articles and manuscripts to journals and publishers, and this, with the exception of his correspondence with Dewey, was his sole contact with the intellectual world which he so ardently desired to reform. It is a mark of his persistence that the academic world remembers him at all, given the difficulty non-professionals have in gaining acceptance by professional communities. Yet when he died in 1957, Bentley was remembered as a sociologist, a linguist, a philosopher, and a political scientist.

Although he described himself as being intellectually on the loose, he was not, of course, isolated from the philosophical movements and currents of his time. As unsatisfactory as his education seemed to him to have been, it introduced him to one of the major influences on his development--the European sociological schools represented by Ludwig Gumplowicz, Georg Simmel, and Gustav Ratzenhofer.<sup>13</sup> These schools had characteristics with which American social science would become increasingly familiar in the years to come. The Europeans (Gumplowicz and Simmel, especially) were concerned to divorce sociology from the philosophy of history and idealism. For them, the primary fact of social

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<sup>13</sup>Kress, Social Science, pp. 26-35.

life was not the meaning to be discovered in it, but its impermanence, its flux. Sociologists would have to seek meaning in change, rather than hope to impose meaning onto the chaos of experience. For Simmel, the "central tension" in science was the attempt to reconcile "ordered thought" with the flux of experience--not, as the classics would have it, the other way around.<sup>14</sup>

From the Germans (and their American followers) Bentley took the notion of group conflict as the engine of this impermanence. Society emerged out of the conflict of groups; the conflict of groups shaped the past and would determine the future. Bentley was especially familiar with Albion Small and the "Chicago school" of conflict theorists, and in general agreement with Small's belief that sociology must deal with the "mechanisms of the [social] process rather than . . . the content of the process." In General Sociology (1905) Small wrote:

Our present thesis anticipates nothing with reference to the nature of the social process, or its mechanism, or its results. We are concerned at the start merely with the empty, formal conception that, so far as it goes, whether taken in its minutest fragments or in the largest reaches which we can contemplate, human experience is a congeries of occurrences which have their meaning by reference to each other.<sup>15</sup>

The second major influence on Bentley's development took root when he met John Dewey. Bentley associated himself thereafter with the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 98-99. See also Samuel Krislov, "What is an Interest? The Rival Answers of Bentley, Pound, and MacIver," Western Political Quarterly, 16 (December, 1963), pp. 831-33. Significantly, Max Weber is not mentioned in The Process of Government, although his agricultural studies had been published in the 1890s and Bentley was, of course, thoroughly at home in German.

pragmatist movement in philosophy, although he differed from some of its major emphases in important respects. Morton White has labelled this movement a "revolt against formalism." Bernard Crick has called it a "revolt against politics itself."<sup>16</sup> Both labels apply to Bentley. White has said of the pragmatists that "all of them insist on coming to grips with life, experience, process, growth, context, function. They are all products of the historical and cultural emphases of the nineteenth century, following, being influenced by, reacting from its great philosophers of change and process."<sup>17</sup> Crick remarks of these same thinkers that they displayed a general concern for "objectivity," which they tended to view as the power of "facts" to overthrow prejudice and superstition. Like Bentley, they were eager to oppose the older authorities in the name of a science that was willing to look without blinking at the realities of society.<sup>18</sup> "Facts are hard things," C. S. Pierce had written, "which do not consist in my thinking so and so, but stand unmoved by whatever you or I or any man or generations of men may opine about them."<sup>19</sup>

Most of the pragmatists shared another attitude with Bentley and with the social science of his day. This attitude was best expressed by Charles Beard, when he remarked in a Columbia lecture in 1908 that "man as a political animal acting upon political, as distinguished from

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<sup>16</sup>White, Social Thought; Bernard Crick, The American Science of Politics: Its Origins and Conditions (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959).

<sup>17</sup>White, Social Thought, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup>Crick, The American Science, pp. 73-94.

<sup>19</sup>Cited in Kress, Social Science, p. 23.

more vital and powerful motives, is the most unsubstantial of all abstractions . . . . The human being is not essentially different when he is depositing his ballot from what he is in the counting house or at the work bench."<sup>20</sup> It was one of Bentley's main intentions in writing The Process of Government to demonstrate the insubstantiality of politics, and to promote the view that he who wishes to understand society must look behind or below the political order, as Beard claimed to be doing when he wrote An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution five years later.

But Bentley departed from the pragmatists and their allies in one important respect. He was more philosophically ambitious than they, less concerned with institutions and history, more consistent in his objectivity. He opposed all dualisms, including the popular dualism of fact and value, insisting that his own writings were no less an expression of group affiliations than anyone else's, and that all facts were equally suspect until proved.<sup>21</sup> He was also less evolutionary than Beard or historians such as James Harvey Robinson, who saw history as the record of progress from the simple to the complex.<sup>22</sup> According to Bentley, there was no warrant for such teleology, and while he

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<sup>20</sup>White, Social Thought, p. 30. My emphasis. On the anti-political component of modern social science, see Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960). The view of modern social science, Wolin argues, is "that there are no distinctively political phenomena and hence no special set of problems." (p. 288)

<sup>21</sup>See for example Arthur F. Bentley, Relativity in Man and Society (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), p. 195, where he confesses that his support for world peace only expresses certain of his group interests (he doesn't say which ones).

<sup>22</sup>White, Social Thought, pp. 53-54.

accepted natural selection and attempted to work it into his system, he was skeptical of much of the implications of Social Darwinism, including the theory of progress.

Bentley took these varied strains and concerns and constructed out of them something much greater than the sum of their parts, but something recognizable nonetheless as the product of a distinct intellectual tradition.

3.

" . . . we must fly to activity"

The Process of Government has seemed many things to many people. To Charles Beard it was a "thought-provoking book that will help to put politics on a basis of realism, where it belongs." James Garner, however, reviewing the book for the American Political Science Review, found it of "little value as a contribution to the literature of political science." Charles Merriam and Harry Elmer Barnes praised the book in the History of Political Theories in Recent Times, in 1924, which marked the first of many rediscoveries of Bentley. Morris Cohen discovered the book again in the 1930s, calling it the most important contribution to political theory in America in three hundred years.<sup>23</sup> The book lay fallow once again until 1950, when Bertram Gross reviewed a new edition for the Review, calling it one of the "most important books on government ever written in America," and attributing its neglect

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<sup>23</sup>Charles Beard's review appeared in the Political Science Quarterly, 23 (1909), pp. 739-41; Garner's review appeared in the American Political Science Review, 3 (May, 1908), p. 457; Morris Cohen is quoted by Ratner, "Bentley's Inquiries," p. 45.

to the fact that Bentley had never been a member of the political science community, and that pressure-group analysis had not been respectable when the book was first published.<sup>24</sup> Shortly thereafter David Truman rediscovered Bentley, perhaps decisively, in The Governmental Process. Since then Bentley's work has achieved the status of a classic.

Yet the estimates of its worth vary considerably. They range from that of Sidney Ratner ("the most important contribution to systematic political theory ever made in America") to that of the contributors to Herbert Storing's volume, Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics, who hold Bentley responsible for much of what they see as having gone wrong in the discipline. In between we might place Arnold Brecht's more cautious estimate of Bentley's life-work as "vague." More recently, Paul Kress has argued that Bentley's work failed to meet the standards he himself set for a valid social science.<sup>25</sup>

Kress also points out that The Process of Government worked with a conception of groups very much different from that used by the many group theorists who later claimed Bentley as their inspiration.<sup>26</sup> And John Schaar and Sheldon Wolin have suggested that Bentley's work "was guided by a thoroughly philosophical orientation and intention, which we doubt whether even his acknowledged followers have begun to under-

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<sup>24</sup>In the American Political Science Review, 44 (September, 1950), pp. 742-43.

<sup>25</sup>Sidney Ratner, "Arthur F. Bentley, 1870-1957," Journal of Philosophy, 55 (July 3, 1958), p. 574; Herbert J. Storing, ed., Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1962); Arnold Brecht, Political Theory: The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Political Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 513; Kress, Social Science, passim.

<sup>26</sup>Kress, Social Science, pp. 81-82.

stand, let alone accept."<sup>27</sup> Bentley himself described The Process of Government as "an account in terms of 'group interests,' understanding by this, of course, something far broader in scope than the 'interest groups' of conventional presentation."<sup>28</sup> Kress suggests that American political scientists were simply unable, by training and inclination, to respond to the more philosophical Bentley, and were more attracted to the empiricism of Bentley's discussion of groups. The more philosophical component of The Process of Government, Kress notes, is the idea of "process analysis."

Those political scientists who have accepted Bentley's teaching seem to have made the 'group' their central concept and to have allowed 'process' to become the general milieu in which the group 'functions.' As a consequence, the level of theoretical focus has been shifted from the philosophical to the empirical plane.<sup>29</sup>

The Process of Government begins with a long attack on the "language of everyday life" and its reliance on metaphysics. "My concern," Bentley announces, "is . . . always with the process of social life," and never with the hypostasized "things" to which language assigns meanings: the "spooks and soul stuff" such as "ideas, ideals, feelings, and faculties." Feelings and faculties are "irresponsible and unmeasurable," animistic but useless elements in the explanation of social fact. In everyday life, the use of such concepts as feelings and ideals is good enough, but in science it can lead only to error.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Schaar and Wolin, "Essays," p. 132.

<sup>28</sup> Bentley, "Epilogue," p. 212.

<sup>29</sup> Kress, Social science, p. xi.

<sup>30</sup> Arthur F. Bentley, The Process of Government: A Study of Social Pressures, ed. by Peter Odegard (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 3-5.

What social science needs most of all is a language free from ambiguity and metaphysical control.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, process is to be the key organizing concept of social science, a "tool" whose primary function is to resolve "the conceptual problems of 'stating.'"<sup>32</sup> Bentley insists that this problem poisons all of our communication, from the simplest statements of day-to-day life to the highest levels of social theory. To say, for example, that a man is "tricky" or "kind" is to assume the validity of a complicated metaphysics that cannot be tested or proved.

Now the feature of these personal qualities to which attention must specifically be given is that they are looked upon as a sort of 'thing' acting among other 'things' in the social world. They are a sort of 'stuff,' different, or not different, as one likes, from the material 'stuff' of the world, but in either case interacting with the latter in series of events that can be linked together, with each event in the series explaining the other that comes after it . . . . The real question . . . is why the living, acting men and women change their forms of action, cease to do now what they did formerly, use their 'qualities' in some places and not in others, in short live the particular social lives they do live.<sup>33</sup>

The personification of qualities cannot answer such questions, Bentley finds, because we cannot "show either qualitative changes in it, or quantitative increases in some form of it."<sup>34</sup>

In politics, the attempt to use qualities or ideals as causative agents leads to total confusion. The ideals expressed in a Fourth of July speech, for example, bear little or no relation to the realities of politics or history. The party meeting and the oratory produced there, to be sure, are facts, "but when it comes to taking the procla-

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-3; Taylor, Life, Language, Law, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup>Kress, Social Science, p. 42.      <sup>33</sup>Bentley, Process, pp. 5, 18.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

mations of ideas and ideals, word for word, at the values set forth in the speeches, what is the use of discussion?" Ideals are only "dry, thin, bloodless" abstractions until they are expressed as some form of group activity: until, that is, they become action.<sup>35</sup> Once they become action, and can be observed, there is no longer any need even to refer to the "spooks" that allegedly "caused" them.

As the personification of qualities has led to confusion in everyday language, so too has it destroyed scholarship. We have, Bentley insists, a dead political science and a dead sociology. The works of von Jhering, Ward, Morgan, Spencer, Giddings, Dicey, Marx, Mill, Willoughby, Ely, H. C. Adams, and Durkheim are criticized for their dependence on personified ideals and other abstractions in analyzing society. Nothing can be learned by treating ideals, ideas, and feelings as independent or even semi-independent variables. "What trifling meaning they have will appear only when they are seen from beneath where lie the wheels within the wheels. On the surface, taken at their own valuation, they are but illusion . . . . Beyond content and process there is nothing at all."<sup>36</sup>

Bentley takes care to warn the reader that he does not believe that feelings and ideals have no reality at all. They merely have no reality as a cause or explanation of anything. Ideal-following people are among the things science must study; ideals are thus important as bits of data. It is ideals-as-cause that Bentley denies:

what I have thus far said amounts to about this: that the 'feelings,' 'faculties,' 'ideas,' and 'ideals' are not definite 'things' in or behind society, working upon it as causes, but

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 110-14.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 153, 117.

that they are--or rather, what is meant by them is--society itself, stated in a very clumsy and inadequate way.<sup>37</sup>

It is the activity itself, which traditional social science assumes to be the result of an ideal, which is the only reality the ideal can have; the feeling or ideal is the activity. There is nothing of importance in society but observable effects.<sup>38</sup>

Bentley was sensitive to the charge that he was denying any importance or meaning beyond what could be observed, and measured, and he attempted to answer that charge in advance by claiming that activity possessed as much meaning as any spook or "idea ghost."

In casting them out [i.e., feelings and ideals] we must be very careful not to cast out that meaning, that order, with them . . . [But] if we can get the activities analyzed we may be very confident that no feelings and no ideas will get lost in the process.<sup>39</sup>

Yet this defense leaves many questions unanswered. To transfer the focus of attention from the "feelings-as-cause" to the "activity-as-fact" does not obviate the search for meaning. We may agree that it is idle to explain the storming of the Bastille by saying simply that Parisians were animated by a love of liberty. But to describe the storming of the Bastille in the minutest detail and then stop may still leave something unsaid. We may still wonder why it happened when it did, whether it was right or wrong, if it had any significant consequences, and so on. But how are we to derive meaning or order from the process of events without reintroducing spooks? (Bentley would flounder in these waters for the rest of his life, conjuring spooks of

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 165. Also, see Jacobson, "Political Science and Political Education," p. 567.

<sup>38</sup> Bentley, PROCESS, p. 165.      <sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 166; 198.

his own, such as interest, to explain apparently meaningless social behavior.) A hint of the use Bentley saw for process analysis is suggested by his comment that the "feeling elements" symbolize "certain regularities or tendencies in activity stated as individual conduct." In other words, activity is to be observed, recorded, and then sifted for previously invisible patterns, and these patterns must not be influenced by preconceived notions of meaning or order. For example, if a boy is kind to a dog, he will probably also be kind to other animals, and we are therefore tempted to say that the boy is kind. But we mean by that only that we have observed a "patterned regularity" in the boy's behavior and given it the symbol, kind. This pattern, however, is not complete, for the boy is not kind to mosquitoes. Thus, we need to make the feeling or idea increasingly specific in order to fit the facts; then it "becomes the same thing as our activity itself."<sup>40</sup> Process, consequently, leads to activity. "We must fly to activity," Bentley urged.

We must deal with felt things, not with feelings, with intelligent life, not idea ghosts. We deal with felt facts and with thought facts, but not with feeling as reality or with thought as truth. We must find the only reality and only truth in the proper functioning of the felt facts and the thought facts in the system to which they belong.<sup>41</sup>

By felt facts and thought facts Bentley meant activity itself, the "men-doing-something" which we actually observe--which is all that we can observe--when we look at the world. Here is the only true raw material of social science. The raw material of study is "first, last, and always activity, action, 'something doing,' the shunting by some

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 168-69.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 172.

men of other men's conduct along changed lines, the gathering of forces to overcome resistance to such alterations, or the dispersal of one grouping of forces by another grouping." The raw material is the relation among men; or, rather, the relations among men is the activity. Even Bentley has difficulty expressing this complex idea concretely enough for his purposes:

The activities are interlaced. That, however, is a bad manner of expression. For the interlacing itself is the activity. We have one great moving process to study, and of this great moving process it is impossible to state any part except as valued in terms of the other parts.<sup>42</sup>

Activity is always deceptive. Behind each activity lie other, more fundamental activities. Thus, the scientist must not only study the passage of laws, but the "actually performed legislating-administering-adjudicating activities in the nation and in the streams and currents of activity that gather among the people and rush into these spheres."<sup>43</sup> Language, too, is deceptive, a "sea of words in which political movements swim." It must be analyzed as activity and never taken at face value. (Even though a sea is a substantial reality, especially for those who swim in it. More on this subject below in Section 6.)

Seemingly familiar events must always be broken down into their component activity segments. Each activity is really a relation among many separate activities, each influencing the other. All of these parts must be taken up together and included in a single, all-encompassing statement. Take the simple case of a man getting angry. We must see his face, his fists, his body "poised as if to spring." However, because we are unwilling to invent a soul-state ("anger") to explain

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 176-78. My emphasis.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

this activity, we "must try what we can do by getting all the activities that are involved stated as fully as possible." And this will include the "many tendencies" in his world that are "working through him at the same time . . . . All the troublesome human soul states can be reduced to terms of human activity."<sup>44</sup>

Measurement is the core of science, according to Bentley. Human activity, considered simply as bits of action, is quantifiable, or at least potentially so. (Bentley was skeptical of the possibilities of quantification, more so in his later years than in 1908; but he always hoped that new methods would be discovered that would improve the quantification of social facts.) But we cannot measure an ideal. We can only measure the actions that are the ideal. We can measure wars, votes, referenda results, and so on. We can "go far back and examine the quantities that have been in play to produce the given results."

The quantities are present in every bit of political life. There is no political process that is not a balancing of quantity against quantity. There is not a law that is passed that is not the expression of force and force in tension. There is not a court decision or an executive act that is not the result of the same process. Understanding any of these phenomena means measuring the elements that have gone into them . . . . The statement that takes us farthest along the road toward quantitative estimates will inevitably be the best statement.<sup>45</sup>

It is from quantifiable activity that Bentley's version of group theory is derived. Surveying the world's activity, discovering its patterned regularity, we do not see individuals doing this or that thing. We see activity "aggregated." We see men acting together, even when they do not know that they act together. Every act of communication presumes the existence of specified or unspecified others. We never

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 188-94.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 200.

act alone. It is in this sense that we see groups of men. Bentley's notion of group is much more general and philosophical than that used by the interest-group school of political science since the 1920s. It is not organizations that Bentley has in mind when he uses the word group. It is categories. He applies the word group to organizations, per se, but also to nations, races, religions, the Supreme Court, cities and towns, classes, occupations, opinions--to any recognizable category whatsoever. Group is simply a "mass activity . . . so many men, acting, or tending toward action."<sup>46</sup>

To make this concept clearer, Bentley used a favorite metaphor, one that he used many times in later works. Society can be pictured as a sphere through which various planes (representing the categories to be studied) have been passed; each plane defines a group, but many of the planes intersect. The task of picturing these intersections is difficult, but with practice, Bentley assures us, it becomes easier. These planes are purely analytical; the scientist places them where he will, according to whatever category he wishes to study. He might choose to sort out all men with red hair, or all workers, or Catholics, or farmers. The important observation to be derived from this exercise is not the categories themselves, but their intersections, for these intersections are the clues to human behavior. "What a man states to himself as his argument or reasoning or thinking about a national issue is, from the more exact point of view, just the conflict of the crossed groups to which he belongs." What men say is important only in so far as it can provide clues pointing to interest. The reasoning comes after the fact.

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 211. My emphasis.

"Indeed, the only reality of the ideas is their reflection of the groups, only that and nothing more. The ideas can be stated in terms of the groups; the groups never in terms of the ideas."<sup>47</sup>

Bentley's interest in groups is therefore methodological, not empirical. He makes no systematic attempt to describe the familiar groups in American politics, their operations or their origins.<sup>48</sup> The group concept mated to the process/activity concept is the "tool" that Bentley announced in the beginning, the "hook into reality" for which he had so desperately searched. The reason for concentrating on political groups is trivial. Political groups are highly "differentiated," which makes them easier to study. Moreover, political groups, because they "reflect" or "represent" other, more fundamental groups (such as social or economic groups) are the first step in the chain of analysis, the first probe into the complex reality of society. A full social science would state all of the groups, and on this point Bentley is uncompromising. Aggregated activity is the beginning and the end of social reality. It is what social science is meant to study: that, and nothing else. Bentley's insistence on this point is well-known:

The great task in the study of any form of social life is the analysis of these groups. It is much more than classification, as that term is ordinarily used. When the groups are adequately stated, everything is stated. When I say everything, I mean everything. The complete description will mean the complete science.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 204-206.

<sup>48</sup> In the Appendix to Process, Bentley offered a sample of a process analysis of the organizations active in Chicago, but it was very sketchy, as he himself admitted.

<sup>49</sup> Bentley, Process, p. 209.

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" . . . beneath the argument lies strength."

If the group is a methodological concept, its empirical manifestation is interest. The way to discover interest, in turn, is to analyze activity. Activity is the spoor of interest; the first leads to the second. Or to use Bentley's more cautious phrase, the interest and the activity are two phases of the same thing. It is fruitless to say that interest underlies activity. This is to introduce a false sense of causation into the analysis and to reintroduce a particularly noxious variety of "soul stuff." Interest is simply a "commonality factor" that has social consequences.<sup>50</sup> Activity is the observable phase of this commonality factor, the phase most open to empirical observation. However, they are always found together. There is no such thing as an unstated interest. And just as there is no interest without activity, there is no group without an interest.

An interest, as the term will be used in this work, is the equivalent of a group . . . . The group and the interest are not separate. There exists only the one thing, that is, so many men bound together in or along the path of a certain activity.<sup>51</sup>

The question of which came first--the group or the interest--does not interest Bentley. It is the sort of question he would dismiss as meaningless. "What we actually find in this world, what we can observe and study, is interested men, nothing more and nothing less. That is our raw material and it is our business to keep our eyes fastened on it."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Kress, Social Science, p. 69.

<sup>51</sup>Bentley, Process, p. 212.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

Because interest and activity are two phases of the same thing, they can only be judged in terms of one another--never in terms of some third standard, such as ideals. We can never, for example, judge a group's interest by reading its literature or listening to its speeches. We can only observe what the group does (or, rather, what the people composing it do). And if a group's behavior appears erratic, that is only a trick of perception. It is the job of the political scientist to discover the logic of group behavior by plotting each step in the progression from activity to group to interest. When the scientist has it "all together--the group, the activity, and the interest"--then the meaning will be apparent.<sup>53</sup>

The steps in the process are these. First, the observer must isolate a particular activity. Then he must describe the interest being put forward in terms of the course of action being followed by the group (and this is the only way in which interest can be delineated). Then the observer must consider the power of the group vis-a-vis other groups--the number of members it has, the intensity of their interest, the techniques of operation. The final step in the procedure is to consider the context of the group's activity--no group can be understood except in terms of its environment (a word which has no clear limits for Bentley). All group activities are part of a system, each exerting continual pressure on the others.<sup>54</sup>

Further, activity and interest have no past; they exist only in the present. Although Bentley would later radically change his views on this subject, when he wrote The Process of Government he was persis-

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 213-14.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 217.

tently and dogmatically ahistorical. The past had simply ceased to have any bearing on the present. "Long, in point of time, as may be the trains of activity which we must follow [in analyzing activity], we never grasp them except at some present moment."<sup>55</sup> He would almost completely reverse this rule in Relativity in Man and Society (1926), by which time he had come to believe that the analysis of behavior must take into account the eternities of time stretching backwards and forwards from the present.

The identification of interest with group defines out of existence any conception of a specifically public interest. The public, not being a group, cannot have an interest.<sup>56</sup> Or, to be more precise, since we never see the public acting as a group we cannot treat it as such (since there can be no group where there is no activity). It may be also that Bentley's denial of a public interest is a consequence of his observation of the ubiquity of social conflict. "The phenomena of political life which we study will always divide the society in which they occur, along lines which are very real, though of varying degrees of definiteness. The society itself is nothing other than the complex of groups that compose it."<sup>57</sup> But it is also a consequence of Bentley's basic orientation. The American public is too much like a mental construct, a thing conjured by the will, to suit Bentley. (As Wilson put it, "the letters . . . do not make a complete word." That suited Bentley fine.) It is too unwieldy an abstraction to be granted status as a unit of analysis. He is quite convinced that we never see such a thing as a

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>56</sup> Schaar and Wolin, "Essays," p. 138.

<sup>57</sup> Bentley, Process, p. 222.

public, let alone a public interest.

On any political question which we could study . . . we should never be justified in treating the interests of the whole nation as decisive. There are always some parts of the nation to be found arrayed against other parts.<sup>58</sup>

Statements to the contrary, he notes, are usually only facades covering a group interest.

It was Bentley's belief that concentrating on activity and interest, the investigator would be able to get behind the surface manifestations of politics--such as formal laws and institutions--to the reality of social life. That reality was a bubbling, churning mass of activity and if it appeared meaningless when looked at this way, then, Bentley would say, we have gotten close to the essential truth. We have stripped away the false meaning, the false categories, and begun anew with the raw material itself. Accepting the chaos of social life was the first step towards understanding it.

With this in mind Bentley turned his attention to the government and the other specifically political "groups" in society: a list which included public opinion and law. Where other investigators had concentrated on the formal institutions, Bentley would use the process/group/activity tool to see them with fresh eyes.

Public opinion is "an expression of, by or for a group of people." This is the only sense of the word public that Bentley recognizes: "a general name for masses of groups at a certain stage of the process." Public opinion is the verbal expression of the condition, at any given

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 220. Compare de Jouvenel's argument, cited in Chapter I, p. 25.

moment, of the interest-group struggle. It is another form of activity, since speaking, writing, expressions of any form are to be seen for what they are: men-doing-something. The analysis of public opinion helps us to see "what interest groups are most active, what are dominating, what are absorbing others into themselves to their increased activity, what are the representative relations between them."<sup>59</sup>

Government has very little to do in this scheme of things except to perform "governing functions for the underlying groups of the population."<sup>60</sup> Bentley is no Marxist--the government does not perform governing functions for a group, but for all groups. It registers the success or failure of group activities, and makes the necessary adjustments among the groups, dictated always by the actual balance of power among the groups. Bentley is clearly at a loss to explain how the government knows which groups are more or less powerful than others. Generally, he says, the government of a democratic nation is forced to make adjustments for large but weak interests (i.e., the mass of men) at the expense of small but intense interests (i.e., pressure groups). This, and this alone, is what "control by the people" means. But sometimes the government is forced to act as "the representative of the 'absent' or quiescent group interests," and in this capacity it is sometimes thwarted from expressing those interests by the power of small groups.<sup>61</sup>

This makes the entire interest theory difficult to understand, because earlier Bentley had insisted that there can be no interest without

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<sup>59</sup>Bentley, Process, p. 244.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., pp. 260-61.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 453-54.

activity. Thus, there can be no "absent or quiescent group interests": there are only weak interests and strong interests, and government, as the agency whose purpose it is to register the balance of power, has no business preferring weak interests to strong ones.

Interest expresses itself through government in the form of law, administrative decisions, executive actions, and court rulings. Each of these activities is an expression of an underlying group interest. The sum total of these activities--the total work of government--is the existing balance of power in the society. That is, it is the balance among the contending groups, expressed as public policy.

Each law . . . is a habitual activity, maintaining itself through organized government, and resting in a great bed of such activities . . . . We shall . . . find that our fullest and richest statement of the law is in terms of the group activity tending to spread itself.<sup>62</sup>

Law is thus another word for "habitual social activity . . . either formulated or enforced, and most commonly both, . . . through a differentiated governing body." Since law is just another phase of group activity, it makes little sense to classify governments or legal systems on the basis of majority or minority rule. Such forms of rule are only "bits of technique."<sup>63</sup> The fact that law is coercive does not distinguish it from other forms of group activity. Only from a "very limited view-point" can we distinguish the state's power to punish from the group's own sanctions. "Voluntary and involuntary are artificial distinctions."

The general rule here is quite clear. There is simply no important difference between a nation and a group. "The state and minor

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 288, 292.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 274, 283.

groupings need to be assimilated to one another, rather than sharply contrasted." All political phenomena are on the same continuum. All political manifestations are one form or another of the basic social formula, which by this point in The Process of Government has grown rather long: masses of men/groups/interest/opinion/government/political process/law. All are the same, "only stated from a different angle."<sup>64</sup>

The president, the Congress, and the courts all express those interests which are "big and strong enough to win out." Strength and size are the only requirements for getting expressed. Congress exists because groups have found talking to be a great improvement over conflict (violent conflict, that is) as a way of adjusting their interests. "But beneath the argument lies strength." That is, beneath the rhetoric lie the familiar tools of group struggle: pressure and force masked behind a facade of argument and ideals. But Congress expresses certain kinds of interests more readily than others, and Bentley does not see how this observation contradicts his hope of demonstrating the automatic equation of policy and group interests. The peculiarity here, according to Bentley, is that Congress formally represents "locality groupings," whereas "occupational groupings" and "self-protection" groups (i.e., pressure groups) are in reality the most important interests represented in Congress. "In a condition of this kind the control of the representatives by the voters is usually weak." Also, log-rolling becomes the "most characteristic legislative process."<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, the pace at which legislative bodies operate

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., pp. 360-71.

also interferes with the automatic group/government equation.<sup>66</sup>

Something else interferes with the equation, something perilously close to being what Bentley would, in another mood, have termed a "spook." This is the "habit background" or "rules of the game" which interpose themselves (he did not phrase it this way, but this is what it amounts to) between the participants in the group struggle in the legislature.

There are limits to the technique of the struggle, this involving also limits to the group demands . . . . Or, in other words, when the struggle proceeds too harshly at any point there will become insistent in the society a group more powerful than either of those involved which tends to suppress the extreme and annoying methods of the group in the primary struggle.<sup>67</sup>

This "habit background" must not be confused with a nascent public interest, since it is merely procedural and only brings the group struggle back within manageable limits. Nor is the "group more powerful than either of those involved" the public itself, or even, necessarily, the government. In fact, it is unclear from the text what or who this strange group is, which leads us to believe that it is only a chimera, an inconsistent element in the theory or a deus ex machina which prevents the system (and the theory) from self-destructing. If the group struggle is the society, then there should be no mysterious force to mediate between the group struggle and society. But Bentley needs such a force, because in fact there is no automatic equation between public policy and group demands.

One way of resolving this contradiction would be to posit an institutional government interest and ascribe to that any inexplicable

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 398.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 372.

public policy which does not exactly match group demands. This far Bentley does not go, and it is difficult to see how he could. For that would require a demonstration that the policy put forward by government (conceived now as a separate, narrow interest group) bears some relation to its (narrow) group interest, when in fact the policies supported by government are much too varied, and much too broad, to admit of any such demonstration.

Bentley pursues the group/government equation into the courts. In law, he says, "the reasonings are of the process, not its directors." In order to understand the Supreme Court, we must

get the cases and the theories and the precedents and the people all stated in one common set of pressures, every factor in terms of the others with exact reference to what it represented in the others, and what perhaps the others represented in it.<sup>68</sup>

Here too the equation is relentless. Nothing that has ever been done or that might have been done could have altered the simple equation of group pressures and government policy. If Chief Justice Marshall had made different decisions during his tenure, the interests expressed in the decisions he did make would simply have expressed themselves elsewhere. "The power was not in Marshall, but in the interest groups he so adequately recognized and allowed to come so smoothly and speedily to their due dominance in the government."<sup>69</sup>

The Darwinian assumptions are clear. What is, had to be. Strong groups should be represented; the groups that are represented are by definition the strong groups. Everything works out for the best.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 382, 389.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 390. My emphasis.

"Order is now, and order has been, where order is needed. . . ." If the interests had been different from the ones aided by Marshall's decisions (and Bentley does not speculate on what those interests were), then those other groups would have prevailed "by the power of the underlying interests which pump all the logic into theory that theory obtains." The justices, "far from being a sort of legal machine . . . are a functioning part of this government, responsive to the group pressures within it, representative of all sorts of pressures, and using their representative judgement to bring these pressures to balance."<sup>70</sup> It is this attitude that has led Myron Q. Hale to accuse Bentley of providing a "surreptitious sanctification of the actual." It is a valid point, and is no less so because Bentley may have intended something quite different. Whatever his intention, however, his conclusion cannot be avoided. A group's interests are "expressed" by law because the group is strong. It is not strong because its interests are expressed. The political order does not choose which interests are to be expressed through law (i.e., what goals it will pursue)--that would require the introduction of a "spook," a political motive from outside the group struggle. Instead, Bentley sees the political order awaiting the decision of the process as to which group will succeed and which will go under. "The reasonings are of the process."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 390, 393. My emphasis.

<sup>71</sup>Myron Q. Hale, "The Cosmology of Arthur F. Bentley," in William E. Connolly, ed., The Bias of Pluralism (New York: Atherton Press, 1969), p. 35. Hale links Bentley to Darwin; but Bentley's relationship to Social Darwinism is complex. As we will see below, Bentley was not a political conservative, whatever the implications of his "cosmology." He worked for LaFollette's presidential campaign in Indiana and supported the Non-Partisan League. But neither was he a part of the movement that

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Makers, Users and Masters

With the analysis of the courts, Bentley's survey of the process of government came to an end. What are we left with? Since Bentley thought he was giving us a tool useful in the study of politics, it may be helpful to see what use he made of it himself. Does the process concept help us understand political things? In particular, does it help us understand the political crisis that was part of the motivation for Bentley's work? Did it help Bentley?

It did not. The weakest sections of The Process of Government are Bentley's attempts to "explain" political phenomena. There are three controversies in particular which clearly demonstrate Bentley's helplessness in the face of political events: 1) The passage of the federal meat inspection act under Theodore Roosevelt's administration; 2) The tariff reform controversy of the same period; and 3) The agitation in Chicago for the regulation of truck loads. In each case, the process tool fails to explain (or even to describe) political reality.

Since Bentley's theory posits a unity of government and the process of group interaction--he has said repeatedly that they are the same thing--he must show that public policy can be explained as a consequence of group activity. If these phenomena ever become separated,

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Eric Goldman has called "reform Darwinism," whose adherents looked to the competition of social groups to "evolve" the present system and its evils out of existence. See Eric Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), pp. 70-81. Bentley, in The Process of Government at least, denied the theory of progress, and so would have been forced to deny also the teleological implications of both conservative and reform Darwinism. He apparently believed in a purely amoral version of Darwin: change through the interaction of organism and environment, with survival of the fittest (not the best) social groups.

the suspicion will be aroused that they are fundamentally different, and not simply phases of one another. So it is important for Bentley to show that interests are always expressed through government policy if they are strong enough to be expressed at all. "If group interests tend in a certain direction, and are checked in their course through Congress, they will find their way through the presidency."<sup>72</sup> His use of the meat inspection controversy is revealing. Bills calling for the inspection of meat which had the support of the Secretary of Agriculture were bottled up in Congress by representatives sympathetic to the packing industry. Taking advantage of the sudden controversy caused by Upton Sinclair's expose, The Jungle, President Roosevelt

used his chance, proved on the spot that his judgment of the interest grouping of the population was correct, bullied the congressional representatives of the beef industry until they surrendered . . . . The president was the legislative organ, through which the great group interest functioned in this case.<sup>73</sup>

There are several interesting points about this example which suggest the confusion surrounding Bentley's notion of interest and government, and their relation to process. He wants the government/group equation to be automatic, yet he is faced with an interest--meat inspection--which was not getting expressed. Nor can he argue that the president takes up the expression of interests that are too weak to be expressed through Congress, for that would introduce a spook in the form of an agent from outside the group process. So he must argue the improbable--that the meat inspection interest achieved the requisite strength at just the moment President Roosevelt made himself

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 351.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid. Emphasis in original.

available for its expression. Presumably, if the president had not been sympathetic to the regulation of trusts, the meat inspection interest would have expressed itself through the remaining agency of group demands: the courts.

And what is the "great group interest" which functioned through the president? Calling it "great" seems to upgrade its status somewhat. Was it great because it was large? This is hard to believe, since the taste for clean meat was a recent acquisition, and most Americans had only been conscious of it since reading or hearing about The Jungle. Most Americans, certainly, did not place it high on their list of concerns. Was it great because it was general, in the sense that it applied to a wide variety of people with little else in common? This is a possibility, and yet without taking a survey to discover who among the population was expressing an active desire for clean meat, it would be impossible for Bentley to know.

Nor is this the only quandry. For there was one interest which did express itself through activity of various kinds, but which nevertheless "got lost in the process" (literally). This was the packinghouse workers' interest in better working conditions, the cause which The Jungle was meant to support. "I aimed at the public's heart," Sinclair wrote later, "but by accident I hit its stomach instead."

Earlier Bentley notes that one of the characteristics of a primitive society is that "at no stage is the structure able to misrepresent large elements in the society or to block the activity."<sup>74</sup> This would apparently suggest that in less primitive societies it is possible for

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 332.

large interests to be misrepresented. (We have just seen how a relatively small interest can be misrepresented, or even ignored.) But this admission is taken back almost immediately in the discussion of how group interests work through the executive, where Bentley, in discussing the tariff reform, tries to show once again that this process is automatic. Where an interest does not express itself through the executive, the reason is simple. It is not yet strong enough. Despite his known sympathy for tariff reform, Bentley argues, Theodore Roosevelt was unable to achieve any significant reform because the "tariff reform interest" was not strong enough. But this hindrance is only temporary. In a few years, the tariff reform group will express itself in "more emphatic form" and will carry the day.<sup>75</sup>

But of course this is not an explanation of anything. It is simply a restatement of the fact that the tariff reformers were beaten by their opponents. A true explanation of this fact would require an analysis of several factors: the state of public opinion and the obstacles in the way of its expression; the divisions among tariff reformers themselves; the power of small but intense interests and the weakness of large but diffuse ones; the influence of the parties; the control of the press; the traditional hostility of the south to pro-northern tariffs; and so on. Any one of these factors would suggest, however, that American political institutions did not simply transfer the wishes of a majority into public policy. What Bentley wishes to be simple and automatic would be revealed to be complex and deliberate.

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 347.

When Bentley sensed the existence of a wide, public interest that was being thwarted by pressure groups, he was able to convince himself that process would win out in the end. Such was the case with the regulation of truck loads in Chicago. Here was an example of a general interest--the upkeep of the city streets--shared by all citizens (or, as Bentley calls them, taxpayers) but stifled by the power of the trucking industry, whose overloaded vehicles were destroying the city's pavements. The demand for regulation, Bentley is convinced, is bound to succeed sooner or later, "because it genuinely represents the mass of indifferent taxpayers," even those who do not join organizations in support of that demand. Joiners or no, all taxpayers are "potentially comprised in the group activity. There is a tendency to action among them. If sufficiently goaded they will come to 'know' their own interests."<sup>76</sup>

This is the same morass in which David Truman foundered forty years later in The Governmental Process. Bentley's problem is the same as Truman's, and Truman borrowed Bentley's solution. The obvious fact that the "group process" does not represent all interests--even widely shared ones--is to be explained away by positing the existence of "potential" interest groups. As Bentley suggests, however, these "potential" interests are of a special type: they are the wide, diffuse, general interests that so often go unexpressed for lack of a small but efficient group to embody them, for example, the upkeep of the streets, the construction of a sound tariff policy, the working conditions in industrial plants (as contrasted, for example, with the upkeep of a

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., pp. 231-36. My emphasis.

particular street, the tariff on a particular product, or working conditions in a single factory of a single industry). The group process ignores, by Bentley's own evidence, a tremendous variety of public needs. It is, in other words, not a universal phenomenon, not a synonym for "politics," but a particular kind of politics.

Had Bentley continued his political studies, perhaps these problems would have become clearer to him. But for various reasons he abandoned his search for a science of politics after writing The Process of Government, and devoted the remainder of his career to applying the process notion to other subjects--with one exception. This was a curious manuscript written in the early 1920s, some ten to twelve years after The Process of Government, but before Relativity in Man and Society, the major work of his middle years. This manuscript, Makers, Users and Masters, went unpublished until 1969, twelve years after Bentley's death.<sup>77</sup> It reveals as clearly as does The Process of Government Bentley's failure as a political scientist and the limitations of the process tool in comprehending political reality.

Makers, Users and Masters is an impassioned denunciation of the drift and decay of American politics, written by a staunch Progressive, and addressed to a general audience. The contrast with The Process of Government could not be more striking. The author of Process was scornful of tradition, "objective," more excited by the correct "stating" of a problem than by its solution. In Process, politics was an epiphenomenon, a bodiless spook; in Makers, Users and Masters it is a vivid

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<sup>77</sup> Arthur F. Bentley, Makers, Users and Masters, ed. by Sidney Ratner (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1969).

battleground on which the fate of the nation will be decided. But it would be a mistake to consider Makers an aberration, or to see this work as "opinion" and the rest of Bentley's work as "science." This is the same Bentley, but he is expressing, as he might have put it, a different phase of himself. Bentley's method and his basic approach to political order have not changed; all that is unique about Makers is the problem it attempts to solve.

That is the great unsolved dilemma of The Process of Government: What is the basis of the state? What is it that holds the political order together, that makes it more than just a random assemblage of individuals? The answer implicit in Process is that the state has no basis at all, that the political order is simply a name we give to certain phases of the interest-group process--a mistaken name, at that. The process tool was fundamentally an attempt to see behind the "empty formalism" of government to the essential "stuff" of social life, but Bentley's insistence on dissolving the formal categories of social action left the edifice of the state with no foundation at all. Ideals meant nothing; laws were simply a reflection of the group struggle, valid to that extent and no farther; the rhetoric of politics could be studied only to discover the interests which it masked; even individuals were ephemeral, their actions merely the products of the overlapping group affiliations which the process tool was designed to reveal. The intent of The Process of Government was destructive. Makers, Users and Masters had an opposite purpose, but now Bentley was faced with a serious problem. He could not reassemble the state without putting back some of the pieces he had discarded so resolutely in

his earlier work.

One of those pieces was citizenship. Man as citizen does not appear in Process. Like Beard, Bentley believed that "man as a political animal" was the flimsiest construct of all. Since the political dimension of life was only a reflection of a deeper reality, citizenship itself must be only a surface phenomenon. We never see the citizen, Bentley said in effect, but only the man as mirrored in the groups to which he belongs or with which he is identified. The functions of citizens, such as deliberation, are best understood as the result of the process of group interaction, and not as separate "acts" performed by separate "individuals." That is, they emerge out of the process of government automatically, without conscious volition on anyone's part.

But Makers, Users and Masters was concerned with the restoration of order to American politics, and for that task something more would be needed than the rule of process. For it was the group process itself that Bentley intended to criticize in Makers. The same group process extolled in his earlier work now came under fire for delivering too much power to the "masters" and too little power to the "makers and users." And yet Bentley could neither give up the process tool nor reshape it for its new purpose. Consequently, he could not see which of the missing pieces were needed to complete the puzzle.

Using the group/process/interest scheme, Bentley attempted to analyze post-War American problems, and ran into trouble straight away. Announcing the subject of the book to be the "facts of wealth and power in the United States," Bentley declared his intention to state these facts

objectively . . . in terms of groups, of their interests as related to one another . . . . No observer or student of such facts can hope to occupy a position outside of them from which he can judge them . . . . Whoever we are, whatever we say or do, we express some special phase of the process . . . . The content of our thought is the people and the interests of the people as manifested in the various groups with which we are more or less identified.<sup>78</sup>

So far this is familiar language. Society is simply the groups, and the group interests, which the analyst can describe by observing activity. But since Bentley is arguing for reform, he must have interests that would logically lead to a call for restoration. So he proceeds to do what he had abjured in The Process of Government: he assigns these interests to himself. Some of them are a middle-class appreciation for opportunities to work and for the leadership which affords these opportunities, and "very little sympathy for suffering . . . . [I am] compelled to accept it as it is." (Nevertheless, Bentley helped to organize the Red Cross in Indiana, which shows how complicated interest can be.) He also dislikes "bartering and traffick- ing" but does enjoy "initiative and adventure" (more complexities still). He has a "prejudice for" civil liberties. He is a "representative of the interests of farmers and investors" (he was running an apple orchard at the time). And then the paradox: "Even more characteristically he [that is, Bentley] would seem representative of the interests of consumers--those vital and broad interests, vaguely formulated, subor- dinated by most people to their more clearly defined interests as producers."<sup>79</sup>

Bentley admits that this is not the typical middle-class viewpoint, but this admission makes the interest theory difficult to maintain. Be-

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-5.

cause if Bentley has a different attitude than the "people and groups with which he identifies" then the link between group and attitude has been broken. Likewise, if he is conscious of "vital and broad interests" with which his brothers in the middle class are unfamiliar, then the link between group and interest has been broken as well.

What necessitates this crucial lapse in the process theory is Bentley's intention to speak as a citizen rather than as a scientist. His view in Makers, despite protestations to the contrary, is not "objective" at all, but polemical. In a way he did not understand, he fulfilled his own dictum that "no observer . . . can hope to occupy a position outside of" the structure of interests, but the interests involved here are ones for which Bentley has no word. They are, as he put it, "those vital and broad interests, vaguely formulated," which classical thought would have identified as the citizen's interest. But since Bentley has already dispensed with citizenship, along with the rest of the "soul stuff" of politics, he is forced to come up with a new term to substitute for it. What political theorists had traditionally called the citizen's interest, Bentley calls "the interests of consumers."

To my knowledge, Arthur Bentley is the first American writer to use "consumer" as a synonym for "citizen," a shift in usage of tremendous import, and one which has become quite common in recent years. What this new definition of citizenship suggests most forcefully is this: as the political order faded from Bentley's view, the economic order grew more vivid, so that the role of consumer could naturally arise to take the place once held by the citizen. If the public could

not be a "group" with an "interest," surely the mass of consumers could take the public's place, since "consumer" is a category which logically must include everyone. Furthermore, the consumer's interest bears a family resemblance to the interests Bentley was most aware of: the quantifiable, specific, economic interests of the pressure-group system.

For obvious reasons, the economic order in which consumers are forced to operate is a poor replacement for the political order which Bentley had banished from his theory. Consumers typically make their decisions on the basis of private need and economic necessity, not on the basis of their "vital and broad interests." Economic theory even requires them to behave in this way. Strictly economic reasoning would persuade a consumer to "purchase" private solutions to various problems. To borrow Bentley's examples from The Process of Government, economic reasoning would persuade a consumer to buy clean meat, even if at inflated prices; to worry only about the tariffs on goods with which he is involved (cotton in the South, machine goods in the North); or to secure zoning ordinances which keep overloaded trucks out of his own neighborhood. Political reasoning--which is what Bentley clearly has in mind in Makers--would seek more general solutions to these problems. In fact, Bentley himself, the Red Cross organizer who professes no sympathy for suffering, is a perfect example of the contradictions to which his own theories lead.

Using the economic order as a pattern, Bentley proceeds with his reconstruction of American society. In doing so, however, he returns to the focus on groups which marked The Process of Government. But in Makers, Users and Masters there is a difference: the groups are now

part of a recognizable moral universe and are even ranked according to a scale of values. Some groups belong in the system because they conform to the pattern with which Bentley is working. Other groups are alien to that pattern and disruptive of sound order. Large organizational structures, Bentley believes, have upset a pre-existing democratic equilibrium characterized by small business, subsistence farming, and independent artisans. The cure for this domination by powerful interests is the creation of more groups to offset them, a process which should be aided, where necessary, by government. Here, as in The Process of Government, the state appears as both a registrar of group interests and as a guarantor of equilibrium--a contradictory set of responsibilities which Bentley is never able to reconcile.

There is nothing startling about Bentley's sense of the lost order of American politics. It is the familiar liberal vision of a nation of rugged but well-behaved individualists. In this dream, government has little to do but guard the "highways" of trade and communication, keeping them open to the enterprise of honest men. Bentley asks his readers to rebuild the country according to this pattern:

. . . a nation with a functioning representative government, its citizens showing some practical participation in its control, its workers having . . . opportunity to direct or control or own some individualized part of its industry; a society of laissez faire, of competition and the benefits of competition, and of individual freedom. Such a society as we had, or assumed we had, or at least assumed we were building, through almost the whole course of the nineteenth century.<sup>80</sup>

The despoiler of this idyll is the industrial revolution--specifically, the concentration of wealth and its corollary, the concentration of

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

power over the once-open highways of life. Today, Bentley says, "wealth is not so much substantial property to use and enjoy, as it is the powerful assertion of claims upon the future income of the people." These claims constitute a highly organized "industrial government." And although the industrial government gets its formal right to exist from the political government, essentially it created itself and is a co-sovereign with the state.<sup>81</sup>

The difference between the industrial government and more conventional, old-fashioned economic activity is the difference between "profiteering" and "profit." The distinction is more than one of degree. Profiteering tends to "perpetuate itself," while "profits, on the other hand, . . . have a tendency to disappear."<sup>82</sup> That is, once the new invention or method that was the source of a profit has become widely imitated, the profit becomes widely distributed. Profit is caused by efficiency, innovation, or luck: profiteering is based on the dominance by one firm over an entire market, with or without the sanction of law.

Assume profits, in the old way, as that part of the product which a man gets for his special ability, skill, or luck in managing his enterprise, and we have something of a rent while it lasts; modified by a tendency to wipe it out with the free spread of knowledge and training. . . . [But with] progressing industrial organization we have elements, not merely of efficiency in service, but of prestige, good will, of control of a market or of a series of markets; and finally, of control of output and prices, subject to such modifications as self-limitation of wants and needs by consumers may give.<sup>83</sup>

Profiteering (and Bentley includes strike-enforced wages under this

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., pp. 31, 40.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

heading) is a result of position, monopoly, organization.

. . . when many great adventurers mass together and perpetuate their requirements of reward, then the payment which society must make becomes enormous in its total. There was a time when the great adventurers were, in the end . . . mastered by the industrial process in which they were a part. But now there has come a time when they have banded themselves together to master that process itself.<sup>84</sup>

As a result, "the little profits of man with man disappear; the little freedoms of man in trade with man disappear. The great profiteering, the autocratic control of centralized industry, takes their place."<sup>85</sup>

Nothing is quite so revealing of a man's inner thoughts and motivations as the things which make him angry. We can see very clearly here what motivates the considerable passion of Makers, Users and Masters. There was once an order to American life; that order has been lost, and must be restored. The fundamental characteristic of that order was its natural harmony, a harmony guaranteed by the automatic rule of social process. ("There was a time when the great adventurers were mastered . . . by the industrial process . . . .") Society governed itself without the need for political arts, political judgement, or political intervention. Bentley now calls for a reassertion of that sovereignty of process: "When such situations arise, and they are always arising, always being forced upon us as new masters appear in new positions, it is for society to deal with them."<sup>86</sup> The masters of process must be overthrown by the social groups whose relations are the process of government. The role of government, however, is contradictory. Whereas in The Process of Government it appeared primarily as a

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 101. My emphasis.

registrar of interests--all interests, even those of the "masters"-- here it appears as an active participant in the reinvestment of process and as a harmonizer of interests.<sup>87</sup> These two roles can only be seen as complementary if process is seen as the font of a natural social harmony. Otherwise, the performance of one task might interfere with the performance of the other.

Process, moreover, is the agent of its own investiture. Like a bastard prince, it crowns itself. No specific group will end the domination of the masters: all the legitimate groups banded together will perform that task. It is "the nation at work, . . . the mass of men with tools in their hands" that will form the cadres of the "counter-revolution" against the industrial government. "We are, all of us, makers and users . . . the real thing, the fundamental fact, is the man with the tool."<sup>88</sup> Bentley is not talking about the working class here. He is scornful of such groups as the American Federation of Labor, and does not look to them to lead the fight against the masters. Labor unions are themselves masters. They divorce the worker from, and set his interests against, the industrial process itself. The working man who belongs to a union "regards himself as a man out to get something, not as a man with a tool in his hand out to produce something."<sup>89</sup>

The one group to whom Bentley does look for a special leadership role in this battle is the middle class--"the middle classes, illuminated as to where they themselves stand, as to how their own interests are at stake. Far as it is from a certainty that they will so act, there is

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 255, n. 7.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., pp. 181, 101.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

just as certainly a hope."<sup>90</sup> Although the American middle class is "the most ignorant . . . in the world" because of its manipulation by the pro-business press, it nevertheless possesses one outstanding characteristic. As the rightful inheritors of the American political tradition, the members of the middle class have no interest in dominating the natural processes of social life, only in bringing them back through a "restorative intervention." Bentley's image of the middle class suggests a teeming mass of social interactions awaiting release from their fetters, a natural balance, poised to happen:

[The middle-class man is] the man working in the world with his tools in his hand, playing the game with his fellows, adventuring his full within the rules of the game, taking his ups and downs as skill and chance may give; but always a member of the great organization of makers and users, with some approach to sureness and safety and equality as a man among men . . . . The essential fact about the middle-class man, for the political purposes of the immediate future, is that his interests as a consumer have become superior to his interests as a producer or appropriator.<sup>91</sup>

Bentley always had a fascination for economics. That was his intended field of study when he enrolled at Johns Hopkins, and he said late in his career that he wanted to write a book about economics but could not find enough data, and so wrote The Process of Government instead. That early fascination is evident in both Process and Makers. The models and metaphors of both works are derived from classical economic theory, with its focus on the transactions between economic "units," the objectivity of its method, its search for the hidden springs of social behavior and "laws" to explain them. Bentley has simply substituted this model for the political order, and tried to make it perform the requisite duties.

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 190.

But the economic metaphor would not bear the weight placed upon it, and Bentley was forced repeatedly to conjure the "spooks" of politics for assistance. Whereas in Process the Constitution was defined in good process language as simply "the actual working everyday organization of our political society," it is now made of sterner stuff. The "privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States," Bentley wrote in Makers, are no "mere matters of verbiage, no sop to the theorists, but hard-won possessions, the heritage of centuries of struggle," which must be protected against the attacks of the industrial masters. The power of corporations is not just a fact to be reckoned with un sentimentally, but a usurpation of a "public right." The government is no longer simply a registrar of group demands, but a champion of the public interest.<sup>92</sup>

Bentley's call to battle against the trusts could only be answered by citizens, and yet Bentley's world was populated only by groups of consumers and producers whose lives were defined by their interests as units of an economic order, not by their interests as citizens of a republic. A "restoration" such as Bentley envisioned in Makers was in reality a thorough-going revolution against the entire course of American social and economic development from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Such a revolution could not possibly be carried out within the structure of interests which that same development had created. The world of small business, subsistence farming, and independent artisans was a far cry from the world of giant corporations and nationalized commerce that Bentley inveighed against, and yet he could not

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<sup>92</sup> Bentley, Process, p. 55; Makers, pp. 209, 111, 194-206.

bring himself to see how much of that old world had simply passed away. (Perhaps because his own apple orchard was precisely the kind of small, local enterprise which was able to survive the transition to commercial agriculture and national markets.) In this respect, as in others, Bentley was typical of the Progressive movement. He managed to combine a deep anxiety over the direction of American "drift" with a remarkable optimism about the ease of reversing that direction. But he was most like the Progressives in his belief that the undirected and unregulated competition of social groups would provide the surest and most "American" way of restoring the nation to its original pattern. It was man as group member, as maker and user and consumer, who would be the hero of Bentley's counter-revolution--and not man as citizen.

6.

" . . . a sea of words"

Makers, Users and Masters was Bentley's last foray into the world of politics. His next major work, Relativity in Man and Society, launched a new career in the "sociology of language" that would occupy him for the rest of his life.<sup>93</sup> Most of Bentley's later work is beyond the scope of this thesis,<sup>94</sup> but there are several points about it which should be emphasized, for they confirm and clarify some of the political implications of Bentley's earlier writings.

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<sup>93</sup>Besides journal articles, the other major works from this period are Behavior Knowledge Fact (Bloomington, Ind.: The Principia Press, 1935), and, with John Dewey, Knowing and the Known (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949). Bentley's essays have been collected by Sidney Ratner and published as Inquiry into Inquiries: Essays in Social Theory (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954).

<sup>94</sup>For a discussion, see Kress, Social Science, pp. 130-212.

Language, Bentley wrote in The Process of Government, "is a sea of words in which political movements swim." This intriguing metaphor, which Bentley intends to suggest the evanescent quality of political language, is an early statement of the ruling preoccupation of his later career. Bentley was convinced that the conventional treatments of political rhetoric were hopelessly naive. Not only did the conventional methods take political rhetoric at face value (an utterly worthless approach, according to him) they also failed to identify the most important fact about language in general, which is that language is a process, like all activity. It can therefore only be studied through use of the process tool.

What Bentley meant by this is that a conversation between two people cannot be understood if we take the conventional view and assume that two isolated individuals are exchanging "thing" called "words." The reality of language, as with all activity, lies in process, i.e., in a way of seeing which includes the "things," the space "between" them, and whatever transpires within that space. Meaning is derived not from action, but from what Bentley eventually decided to call "trans-action."<sup>95</sup>

There can therefore be no reason for postulating a distinction between the individual and the environment. Both are part of one procedural, transactional unity. The term "consciousness," for example, is conventionally understood in psychology as a relation "between a living organism and its world." But this simple statement of a familiar concept is unacceptable to Bentley, because it keeps

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<sup>95</sup>Kress, Social Science, p. 148; Bentley, Behavior, pp. 70-77.

the organism and the world separate, [posits] a relation, and [places] this in a series of relations . . . . And yet, no matter how we crystallize each of them, the one most probable remark about consciousness is that it is that aspect of experience in which there is a comprehensiveness of organism and world and relationship.<sup>96</sup>

Our conventional use and understanding of words is thus incapable of expressing process. The reality of the world is flux; the basis of language is definition. Where the world as seen is unbounded activity, language separates and divides what is inseparable and indivisible. Until language finds a way of expressing the reality of process, science will be necessarily a primitive and misleading endeavor.<sup>97</sup>

This notion is clearly an extension of the much simpler "group process" concept of The Process of Government. In that work Bentley dissolved the traditional categories of action, particularly the political categories. Now he has embarked on the dissolution of language itself. But his purpose is the same. All of Bentley's work is animated by the search for a way of stating social reality ("the sociological ultimate") that would encompass everything at once. For that purpose it was necessary to break down first the boundaries between politics, economics, and society; later, as Bentley became more ambitious, it was necessary to break down the boundaries between the individual and the environment in which he (it?) operated.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Bentley, Relativity, pp. 75-76.

<sup>97</sup>Bentley, Behavior, p. v.

<sup>98</sup>This required some tricky grammar. In The Process of Government, activity was described as "men doing something." But as Bentley's world became increasingly formless under the assaults of the process tool, activity became "something being done." The passive tense is necessary because the individual--the "man doing something"--has been dissolved along with everything else. All that is left is the pure activity, like the smile on the Cheshire cat.

It was also necessary to break down the boundaries between time and space. Bentley's reading of Einstein's work in theoretical physics convinced him that man's "most stable words, space and time, have crumbled under his hands . . . . How much more will the same probably prove to be true with the vague and passing words which he used to denote his relations in his societies?"<sup>99</sup> The idea of relativity pushed Bentley farther and farther down the road in his search for the "sociological ultimate." The next step on that journey was "the conversational remark," which Bentley offered in the 1920s as a likely candidate for the "basic unit of investigation." For if we cannot understand the conversational remark, bringing to our understanding the process of its expression, and its meaning as extended in space and time, how can we hope to understand anything? But the obstacles to this seemingly primitive beginning were vast. Foremost among these obstacles was

the habit of attributing the most significant phase of the event to 'man as actor' and . . . setting off to one side all that part of the event which is not adequately expressed in individualized reference, and treating it as 'abstract' existence or as 'history.'<sup>100</sup>

If two people are having a conversation about a presidential election (although the subject of the conversation is irrelevant to the point he is making), traditional analysis would assume that there are: 1) two distinct individuals who are 2) using a common language to 3) discuss an event external to themselves which 4) has a separate history. Bentley would insist that we get rid of all these divisions, between the individuals and their environment, between all these "things" and the history of which they are assumed to be "parts." We have

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<sup>99</sup>Bentley, Relativity, pp. 16-25.

<sup>100</sup>Bentley, Behavior, p. 208.

instead one process without separate "parts." The meaning lies in the total interaction which is the conversational remark.

This is obviously a difficult method--difficult to understand, let alone use. Bentley had considerable difficulty with it himself, especially with those aspects of process summed up by the words "time" and "space." Relativity in Man and Society was written to clarify this special problem, but each time Bentley widened the process concept, he sank deeper into the mire.

For example: in Relativity Bentley used the Volstead (Prohibition) Act to demonstrate how "considerations of duration in time and space" should be worked into the analysis of a "social fact." In order to study such a fact, we must subsume everything about it under the heading of "activity . . . however variously that activity may be analyzed." Most importantly, however, the analysis must not be arbitrarily limited as to time and space.

[We] can combine in one field all of Western Europe with the United States, requiring for that an extension of duration into the near future. We may or may not find a possibility of extension across the Russian field, and still more remotely across the Mohammedan field. We will watch the contacts with other activities across government controls and through opinion and discussion.<sup>101</sup>

We must be careful to analyze everything: the law itself, the documents in which it is written, the debates, the lobbying, the medical reports on drinking, the social customs of drinkers and non-drinkers, the enforcement, the law-breaking, the system of industry and trade which produces alcohol, the foreign events which effect it.<sup>102</sup> Extending in

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<sup>101</sup>Bentley, Relativity, p. 100.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

space in an ever-widening circle, and backward and forward in time, a process analysis of Prohibition might turn into the kernel of a Hegelian Universal History--there is at any rate nothing in the method that can tell us when to stop collecting and analyzing data. We might well go on forever, like a rogue computer trying to resolve the value of pi.

Relentless as he was, Bentley eventually was forced to the conclusion that the individual analyst too must be dissolved in the solvent of process. In Behavior Knowledge Fact he even dissolved himself:

Consider the 'act' in which I am now engaged. I have here a typewriter, a copy of Psychologies of 1930, and sundry memoranda made in the course of the last few months. On a table near by are copies of several books written by Dewey. An 'act' is in progress; namely the writing of this paragraph. This 'act' certainly implicates--and in its wider spatial-temporal envisionment directly involves--all the items I have mentioned, as well as my fingers and body and the rest of 'me' and long histories of all these phenomena. It is certainly 'trans-action,' and it certainly involves 'experiencing.' Certain 'parts' of it also can be taken out and inspected as 'life-career'--if that happens to be worth while . . . . If we want to study this bit of 'what is happening' with any thoroughness at all, we shall have to deal with it elaborately in a frame of wider happenings across thousands of years and thousands of miles--a frame wherein it secures a significance vastly greater than that of 'life-career,' though perhaps not so currently interesting.<sup>103</sup>

This is the "trans-actional" method for which Bentley had been groping all along. There are several curious features about it, but perhaps the most curious is its relation to the "individualism" for which Bentley had such contempt. At first glance, of course, it seems the very antithesis of individualism. What could be less individualistic than this furious self-dissolution into disembodied "fingers and body and the rest of 'me'"? However, Bentley has not only dissolved himself; he has dissolved everything, and everyone, else as well, as can be seen in

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<sup>103</sup>Bentley, Behavior, pp. 80-81. My emphasis.

this remarkable passage from "New Ways and Old to Talk About Men," published in 1929:

Jack, the anatomical organism, is the out-growth of germ cells from parents and uncounted ancestors; better said, he is the present durational aspect of the age-long history of those cells: he contains within himself germs of countless descendants, due to appear as aspects of the same history in later generations. Jack, the physiological organism, has sunlight and star-rays in his very being, the very explosion of atoms on the sun is working in him always.<sup>104</sup>

To dissolve the entire universe from the beginning to the end of time into one undifferentiated flux is an individualism of an unpleasantly maniacal sort, like that of the character in the Chesterton story who convinces himself that the streams of rain running down the window glass are moving in response to his silent commands.<sup>105</sup>

This thought brings us back to the metaphor with which this section began, and now we can understand why that metaphor is so ambiguous. As Bentley suggests, the "sea of words" is the proper environment--the natural environment--of politics. But this fact gives to language a role and an importance that Bentley intended the metaphor to deny. Far from being evanescent, language is to politics what the sea is to the creatures that swim in it: the atmosphere which shapes it and gives it life. But what has happened to that language under the

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<sup>104</sup> Arthur Bentley, "New Ways and Old to Talk About Men," reprinted in Ratner, ed., Inquiry, pp. 37-52, at p. 51. My emphasis. Originally published in The Sociological Review, 21 (October, 1929).

<sup>105</sup> G. K. Chesterton, "The Crime of Gabriel Gale," in Raymond T. Bond, ed., The Man Who Was Chesterton (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1954), pp. 501-522. Chesterton devised an exquisite cure for this particular form of monomania: his poet-hero, Gale, ties the victim to a tree and sticks the two prongs of a hay-fork on either side of his neck, leaving him to struggle with material reality and discover for himself that matter (himself included) has boundaries and limitations.

impress of the process concept? To complete Bentley's figure of speech, the sea itself has dissolved, and the creatures who once lived in it are left to perish in an alien environment.

Bentley sensed these wider implications of his assault on the language, and he was fully prepared to accept--and to generalize--them. The intellectual fraternity, he felt, would either learn to talk in terms of process, or it would fail to found a true science of society. "Only in that certain intermediate stage in time and place which is occupied by the man in the street . . . [will] the cosmos insist upon being solid and substantial Fact."<sup>106</sup> But even the ordinary citizen would have to accept the dissolution of his world and learn to see it as boundless, meaningless activity.

John Doe will strongly object to the substitution of any 'postulate' in place of his 'real' world. He is confident he himself can provide a backbone of security for such a real world . . . . His view is that small, prim, assertive, and tenacious view embodied in our practical everyday language . . . . 'Man,' says John Doe, in effect, 'is the measure of all things'; but he says it in sharp assumption that not only the 'man' and the 'things,' but above all the 'measuring' procedures, are within his personal and immediate competence and knowledge.<sup>107</sup>

Rather than offer the confused citizen some assurance that there might somewhere be an order to events and a language capable of expressing that order, Bentley offered this somber news instead:

The difficulty now is that John Doe must cease to be absolute, cease even to keep a small consolatory fragment of absoluteness in reserve, and must yield himself to be just one 'local' in a world of 'locals.' Driven from one defense after another, there comes a time when there is nothing left for him except to be sullen, and that is exactly the mood in which we are apt to find him; and it is only because of this

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<sup>106</sup> Bentley, Behavior, p. 172.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., n. 4.

mood, and because of its assertive interference with the analysis we are forced to make, that I take him into account here at all.<sup>108</sup>

This is a truly extraordinary claim. Bentley has taken the final step here and simply eliminated humanity from the analysis of human societies: the final dissolution. Man is no longer even the subject of study, but only an interference with it. And just as process has become the subject of Bentley's science, it has also replaced man as the source of values. Bentley's appeal to later generations of political science may lie here: he was one of the first American social scientists to make the claim that society could be studied with the same detached motivation with which the natural scientist approached the study of molecules, atoms, and chemicals. Bentley seemed to be saying something like this: If we concentrate on the process of social interaction, we need not concern ourselves with the meaning of that interaction. "We observe what we observe, and that is all there is to it, except as we analyze it." And since we cannot observe meaning, we cannot discuss it.

What this view meant to political science can be seen in the confused pages of Makers, Users and Masters. When Bentley needed a voice that could articulate political meanings, he found himself struck speechless by his reliance on the process tool. "Beyond activity," he had said, "there is nothing." But it was in that realm of "nothing" that he searched for the answers to the problems confronting America in the 1920s. Yet he scarcely knew the words to describe what he was looking for.

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

Bentley dealt with the subject of language in one of his last articles, "Kennetic Inquiry," published in 1950.<sup>109</sup> As a sign of how serious he was in his insistence on the abolition of meaning, he quoted with approval Percy Bridgman's attack on Einstein. Einstein, Bridgman asserted, had failed to draw the proper implications of his own discoveries, and insisted on searching for "absolute meaning" somewhere in the cosmos. "[Einstein] believes it possible to . . . sublimate . . . the point of view of the individual observer into something universal, 'public,' and 'real.'"<sup>110</sup> Nothing could better describe the enemy Bentley labored a lifetime to overcome. The universal, the public, and the real: process theory would abolish them all. And American political science would follow Bentley at least part of the way down that road, with important consequences for the language of citizenship.

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<sup>109</sup>Kennetic is a word of Bentley's invention. It is formed from the Middle English kennen, meaning "to perceive." Arthur Bentley, "Kennetic Inquiry," in Ratner, Inquiry, p. 349. Originally published in Science, 112 (December 29, 1950).

<sup>110</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER IV

### CHARLES MERRIAM: POLITICS VS. PROGRESS

"It may well be that politics must lose its way before it finds itself again in the modern world of science."

--Charles Merriam

#### 1.

#### "Fear, Force, Custom"

Charles Merriam, like Arthur Bentley, belongs to the second generation of the political science movement in America. Only thirty years old when the American Political Science Association was founded in 1903, Merriam straddled the approaches to politics of his teachers--men like William A. Dunning--and his students--among whom were V. O. Key and David Truman. For many years he devoted himself to building what he would later call (somewhat contemptuously) a "five-foot-shelf of erudition" in the approved school of historical and comparative politics. He wrote his Columbia dissertation on "A History of the Theory of Sovereignty Since Rousseau" under Dunning, and his first published work, A History of American Political Theories (1903), followed the techniques he had learned at Columbia. So did two later works: American Political Ideas: Studies in the Development of American Political Thought, 1865-1917 (1923), and A History of Political Theories, Recent Times, written with Harry Elmer Barnes in 1924.

But while Merriam was churning out his histories of political

thought, his mind was on the present. In this respect he was much like Bentley, with whom he shared many other characteristics. Like Bentley, Merriam was the son of a Protestant, small-town, Middle Western banker; Merriam too had gone east for his education, continuing on to Germany to sit at the feet of the masters of modern social science, only to return dissatisfied with what he had been taught there.<sup>1</sup> Merriam settled in Chicago at about the same time Bentley did, and taught there while Bentley was writing The Process of Government. But while Bentley returned to the small-town life he had known as a boy, Merriam knew that the city, with all its disorder and corruption and the challenges these presented, was where he wanted to stay.

Merriam entered Columbia in 1896 when the Graduate School of Political Science there was only sixteen years old. But Merriam found even at this early date that the history of political theory was not half so exciting as the political life of a great city. Merriam got involved in this whirl of activity, making speeches in favor of municipal reform, seeking out the corruption and disorder that he would devote his life to ending.<sup>2</sup> When he went to Berlin two years later to study with Otto Gierke and Hugo Preuss, he felt once again the lure of contemporary events dragging him from the classroom. This time, however, it was not corruption which drew him, but the orderliness of German cities and towns, which he and his fellow students studied for the lessons they might bring back to America.<sup>3</sup> And Merriam must have noted as well the example of his

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<sup>1</sup>Barry Dean Karl, Executive Reorganization and Reform in the New Deal: The Genesis of Administrative Management, 1900-1939 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 52-55.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

teacher, Hugo Preuss, who was a liberal member of the Berlin City Council as well as a leading scholar.<sup>4</sup>

In 1900 Merriam began his half-century association with the University of Chicago, bringing with him an impatience with political theory and an intense interest in contemporary politics. For many years he was able to maintain this tension by teaching political theory and dabbling in politics in his spare time: He served two terms on the Chicago City Council and ran for Mayor in 1911.

But for nearly twenty years he worked futilely to change the orientation of his department and his college toward the study of politics, trying to turn it in the direction of a scientific rigor in which he passionately believed but which he could never explain to his own satisfaction. At times this passion took the form of a search for a "systematic" approach to politics, an ill-defined concept which seemed to mean a careful accumulation of all available knowledge on the organization of political communities and the behavior of political men. At other times, Merriam's passion was directed toward more tangible goals. One was the creation at the University of Chicago of an "Institute of Government," which would combine "citizenship training" with preparation of students for the public service, an idea which met the implacable hostility of the university's president, William R. Harper.<sup>5</sup>

But whatever project occupied his attention, the central focus of his concern remained what it was when he had first discovered politics in New York City: political reform. All of his life he labored to bring to the political system the one ingredient he felt indispensable

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 42-45.

to genuine reform: science. Scientific political reform was as much his motive in calling for more systematic research as it was in running for Mayor of Chicago, and if he was thwarted in this latter ambition, he was more successful in the first.

Merriam's brother, John, a biologist, was involved with the founding of the National Research Council, which brought scientists together for the purpose of organizing research and cooperating on common projects. During the early 1920s, Charles was in constant communication with colleagues in the other social sciences, promoting the idea of a "Social Research Council" modelled after the NRC. Although the idea met with mixed feelings, it generated enough interest to persuade one member of the NRC itself, Wesley C. Mitchell, to give it his support. Mitchell had been brought in to help run a study that went somewhat beyond the NRC's initial focus on natural science. It was a study of the implications of population movement ("human migration"), and Mitchell felt that Charles Merriam's proposed organization could help conduct it. Accordingly, the Social Science Research Council was chartered in Illinois, in 1924, with funds from the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial, supplemented by funds for the population study supplied by the Russell Sage Foundation.<sup>6</sup>

The founding of the Social Science Research Council offered a chance to secure funding and coordination for the kind of political scholarship Merriam wished the discipline to honor and emulate, and it provided a showcase for that scholarship for the world outside the discipline. Most important, the Social Science Research Council gave

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 45.

the political scientist an opportunity to match his unique talents to social needs to produce the scientific information policy-makers needed. This was the key to Merriam's conception of political science: the orchestration of scientific knowledge and political decision-making.

In 1929, President Hoover fulfilled Merriam's ambition in a more direct way by creating a Research Committee on Social Trends, whose members were Wesley Mitchell, now Chairman of the SSRC; William F. Ogburn, a sociologist; and Merriam. Here, finally, political scientists were being asked by the government to help with a pressing problem for which they had a special expertise: the prediction of social trends and the location of "trouble spots." This was the role which Merriam had been arguing for political science, and he expressed it eloquently in the Committee's three-volume report:

How shall we blend the skills of government, industrial and financial management, agriculture, labor and science in a new synthesis of authority, uniting power and responsibility, with a vivid appeal to the vital interest of the day, able to deal effectively with the revolutionary developments of our social, economic and scientific life, yet without stifling liberty, justice, and progress?<sup>7</sup>

Social change and the need for social control were Merriam's favorite topics. He lectured his readers continually on the need for adjusting to the "new" world that was coming to be, and for discovering ways of controlling the effects of the disruption that social change left in its wake. Merriam had an almost religious faith in change of any sort, however, and the "newness" of something was almost certain to recommend it to him. Consequently, the "new" and the "inevitable" and the "good" had a disturbing tendency to merge into one concept, so

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<sup>7</sup>Cited by Karl, *ibid.*, p. 39.

that he was able to proclaim with confidence that things were getting better all the time, a manic optimism which he could carry to quite extreme lengths.

But the most important point for our purposes here is that ever since his first contact with urban politics in 1896, Merriam had firmly identified politics as the enemy of the New. Again and again this identification emerges in his writings. Politics is the realm of the past, of tradition, of unthinking routine; science is the realm of the future, of the new, the pragmatic. Thus, one of the fundamental obstacles to scientific political reform was politics itself. Merriam sought to create a partnership between government and science, in which science would "whisper" suggestions and government would make decisions based upon the information at the disposal of the scientist. Before this partnership could succeed, however, government would have to be civilized, brought into the modern world, or--to use a favorite term of the era--streamlined. That term is revealing, in that it suggests a minimum resistance to a speeding object. "Social development," Merriam believed, was occurring at a more rapid pace than "political development," and government would have to catch up, throwing off the baroque encumbrances that made the political order such a conservative force in society.<sup>8</sup>

If political power exists to conserve, private groups exist to change society. Merriam accepted the conventional group theory of his time, in which political power was only one member of a "family" of powers, and the state only one member of a family of groups, and not the

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Merriam, The Making of Citizens: A Comparative Study of Methods of Civic Training (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), p. 324.

oldest member, at that. Political power was born out of the struggle of social groups and "situations requiring balance and equilibrium among groups." At times Merriam defends the notion of politics as a unique sphere of life, but at other times he merges it with other categories of activity, such as "economics" or "society," arguing against drawing "too exclusive lines of difference" between "what [some theoreticians] may call 'economic' and 'political' activities, where the experienced observer of social trends and problems in various periods of social development is unable to discover any adequate ground for such exclusive differentiation."<sup>9</sup> But whether a separate sphere, or simply a subordinate member of a family, politics always grows out of society and is controlled by "social forces." "Government is set in a series of associations, all concerned with the development of the human personality in the frame of reference of the group--economic, cultural, familial, political."<sup>10</sup>

As with all group theorists, from Bentley to the present, the concept of "balance" is crucial to Merriam, for government must have some role which differentiates it from the "social forces." That role, variously sketched as umpire, recorder, director, traffic-controller, or policeman, is summed up for Merriam in the concept of balance. The government of the city of Chicago, for example, is "only a balance of

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<sup>9</sup>Charles Merriam, Political Power (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1934), pp. 15-24; Charles Merriam, The Role of Politics in Social Change (New York: New York University Press, 1936), p. 42. Power was a ubiquitous phenomenon for Merriam, evident even in the "civil government" of ants. (Political Power, pp. 4-5)

<sup>10</sup>Charles Merriam, Systematic Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), pp. v-vi.

. . . conflicting or concurrent interests, an instrument for their use and not a master to drive them."<sup>11</sup> In The Making of Citizens, he proclaimed:

The balancing of group interests is in short a continuing problem, of which no permanent solution is possible. The readjustment of changing groups, interests, and fixations is precisely the continuing task of the political agencies of the community.<sup>12</sup>

The political agencies of the community are surrounded by a world of groups whose shifting goals set the boundaries of political action and public policy. The very cohesion of the society is a function of groups, an "integration of different social and individual forces and attitudes finding an equilibrium in the state."<sup>13</sup> These groups (which Merriam at times refers to as the "invisible government") are responsible for what the political agencies do, and it is therefore difficult at times to understand why Merriam is interested in government at all. If politics is only a function of the group system, then it would seem to make more sense to study the group system directly.

In fact, Merriam scarcely studied politics at all; he spent most of his time trying to rehabilitate government in order that it could hold up its end of the partnership with science. Government, corrupt and inefficient as it was, nevertheless possessed authority (unfortunately) and it was through association with this authority that science could come into its own.

Merriam had no sentimental illusions about the nature of authority. Like all theoretical concepts, he said, authority is merely a

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<sup>11</sup>Charles Merriam, Chicago: A More Intimate View of Urban Politics (New York: Macmillan Co., 1929), p. 132. My emphasis.

<sup>12</sup>Merriam, Making Citizens, pp. 86-87.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

rationalization of a power position. Around political power has grown a world of art, legend, music, symbol, decoration and ceremony designed to identify the "power process" with "harmony and beauty" rather than "blood and cruelty," which are, presumably, its truest characteristics.<sup>14</sup> These are what Merriam calls the "credenda and miranda" of power. Credenda "contain the reasons which oblige the intellect to give assent to the continuance of authority" and miranda are the emotional symbols which prod the intellect.<sup>15</sup>

The state, in other words, is merely the most successful of the power groups contending for dominance, and it maintains itself in this position largely through sleight of hand and propaganda. The state's specific function, however, is to balance the groups beneath it, to make of their struggles a harmonious community of interests.

Behind the formal social legislation in a democracy there is a large body of non-political representative bodies of many types operating as a part of the democratic process. These groups are not repressed, intimidated, or controlled by the state, but their activity is encouraged in the interests of sound formulation of public policy--in the interest of the process of common consent to the broad policies of the nation. Some of these groups are able from time to time to dictate to the government their programs, but on the whole one is likely to be balanced by others, and the net contribution is that of a broader discussion of legislative policies.<sup>16</sup>

Merriam is interested in this "governing process" (he uses this term in the paragraph preceding the one quoted above) because there is a new group on the scene, contending with the other members of the power family

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<sup>14</sup>Merriam, Political Power, pp. 102-107.      <sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>16</sup>Charles Merriam, On the Agenda of Democracy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), p. 24.

for the symbols of authority. This group is science, "the intellectuals, the intelligentsia." In modern times, "science occupies a far more important position than in other periods of history." Other members of the power family "look askance" at science because "it may dispell the illusion upon which authority rests." Science is a threat because all forms of authority are based upon "amenities and illusions" that are maintained by all rulers, great and small, to bolster their rule.<sup>17</sup>

This situation can be altered now, because science, unlike politics, is "less closely dependent upon authoritarian propaganda, and nearer the domain of scientific technology."<sup>18</sup> It is less likely to be "conscripted . . . in the service of class and race and group."<sup>19</sup> Science mated to political authority is the way out of the "jungle" of contemporary politics, into the future of rational government. The tendency of politics in the modern scientific era is thus away from "fear, force and custom as agencies of control" toward "political prudence and political science." This combination Merriam calls the "New politics."

This "new politics" would not be new "merely in the sense that it reflected new social forces," although that would be part of its "newness." It would be new in the more fundamental sense that it

utilized the new developments in modern science . . . . The new politics would be a synthesis of significant factors in

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<sup>17</sup>Merriam, Political Power, p. 81.

<sup>18</sup>Charles Merriam, New Aspects of Politics, 3rd ed., with a Foreword by Barry D. Karl (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 73.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

modern mental life, applied to the problems of government, released from traditional or authoritarian conditions or precedents.<sup>20</sup>

Political scientists, he continues, must not necessarily govern the world, but they must be heard "before decisions are made," and the spirit of science must be "found in the governors and the governed as well."<sup>21</sup> The "modern creative intelligence," Merriam believes, "is transforming the world almost as if by magic." It should continue to do so, on an even larger scale. To this end, Merriam urges his colleagues to make a thorough study of "human engineering."<sup>22</sup>

Fortunately, Merriam assures us, democracy is more suited than totalitarianism for the special advantages of scientific government; that is, it is more efficient, provided it discovers the proper organizational form, and the search for that form is a major responsibility of contemporary democrats. Furthermore, democracy is more likely than totalitarianism to take advantage of the modern science of administration, because democracy can be streamlined.<sup>23</sup>

Above all, scientific government--political science--was made necessary by the social change which Merriam saw engulfing the modern world. Change was altering the very basis of human association in political communities. Past societies could be based on "fear, force and custom," but modern societies could not because they knew too much. Science had seen to that by calling into question the rationalizations of political authorities everywhere. Just as the divine right of kings had ceased to be convincing as an explanation of authority, all other

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<sup>20</sup> Merriam, New Aspects, pp. 313-14.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 280, 278.

<sup>23</sup> Merriam, Agenda, pp. 1-9.

explanations of a traditional nature would also cease to convince modern people.

Social change was altering the conditions of modern politics and the problems it would have to face. The larger control over nature, the emergence of science as a substitute for "ignorance and tradition," the spread of scientific invention, the revolutions in transportation, industry, and communications, the growth of cities--all these changes meant that politics as it had been known ("jungle politics") would have to disappear.<sup>24</sup>

We may ask the question, What are the types of change most likely to be considered by governors in the period into which we come? These changes will, of course, be the result of variations in technology, in social invention and control, in social directives. New machines for controlling our physical resources, new modes of remaking men, new patterns of social invention seem to lie on the horizon, assuming that our civilization does not bog down of its own weight in the swamps of violence and strife . . . . In the rational control of the processes of political change lie some of the richest possibilities for the human race, and at the same time some of its blackest dangers.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the primary task facing politics in the modern world is social control; the primary responsibility of citizens is adjusting to change.

2.

Making Citizens

Progressives stood appalled and somewhat dumbfounded before the spectacle of municipal politics: here, if anywhere, was the one area of American political life most in need of scientific reform. The facts of urban corruption and mismanagement seemed clear enough. There were

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<sup>24</sup>Merriam, Political Power, pp. 279-88.

<sup>25</sup>Merriam, The Role of Politics in Social Change, pp. 100-101.

even explanations tailor-made to fit them. A great number of immigrants had recently settled in these cities, and they had had little or no experience with democracy in their home countries. They could hardly be expected to understand the complicated demands of American citizenship. The result was inevitable: graft and thievery on an unprecedented scale. "If the white light of truth should beat down upon the secrets that are hid from the public eye," Merriam was certain, "the end would quickly come. An authentic picture of present politics would doom it."<sup>26</sup>

This explains some of Merriam's enthusiasm for "fact-gathering" and "municipal research"--two techniques he encouraged as director of the Social Science Research Council. But Merriam's enthusiasm beat against the same wall that previous reformers had dashed against. No matter how many sordid facts were published about urban political machines, citizens kept on re-electing them.<sup>27</sup>

By the middle 1920s, the Progressive impulse toward political reform had all but spent itself, having accomplished a revolutionary series of changes in American politics, primarily in the weakening of party structures through such devices as the Australian ballot, the direct primary, the nonpartisan and at-large election, and the institution of periodic registration of voters.<sup>28</sup> Merriam was more interested than many others in the fate of reform, since his activities on its behalf had not been confined to writing and research. Although he did

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<sup>26</sup> Charles Merriam, "Citizenship," University of Chicago Magazine, 3 (July, 1911), p. 280.

<sup>27</sup> Wilson Carey McWilliams, The Idea of Fraternity in America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 490-91.

<sup>28</sup> Walter Dean Burnham, Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), pp. 74-84.

not run for office after 1919, Merriam turned his attention to analyzing the failure of reform to make a larger impact on the public consciousness and the conduct of government. Out of this analysis there emerged a lengthy commentary on the nature of modern American citizenship.

American citizens are ill-informed, apathetic, and discontented, Merriam says. Citizenship, once a source of privilege for those who could obtain it, has become universal among democratic nations, "easy to cast off and easy to acquire." The importance of citizenship has gradually broken down under the pressure of population increase, industrialization, and immigration. The "mingling of races and the development of democracy" have expanded the citizenship to the point where it is practically meaningless. Perhaps citizenship is only meaningful, Merriam speculates, when it is bought at a "great price." When it is acquired without effort it is likely to be devalued.<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, citizenship has also become a burden too heavy for many citizens to bear. Social change has created new conditions of life which demand different standards from citizens, but most citizens are not yet ready for their new roles. Citizen apathy toward corruption and mismanagement means that they do not fully understand the demands of citizenship in the modern era; they are willing to die in war but unwilling to fulfill their role in peace, which sets Merriam to wondering if perhaps peacetime government cannot compete with war for the attention of modern citizens.<sup>30</sup>

Merriam shared with his colleagues a fear that perhaps the mass of citizens were simply not capable of performing their political duties

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<sup>29</sup>Merriam, "Citizenship," p. 275.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 275-77.

under modern conditions. James Bryce voiced this apprehension in the clearest of terms: "No sensible man ought ever to have supposed that under such conditions as modern communities present, the bulk of citizens could vote wisely from their own private knowledge and intelligence." And Bryce spoke for many when he traced the source of this failure to such causes as "indolence, personal self-interest, and party spirit."<sup>31</sup>

But Merriam thought he saw a way around this pessimistic conclusion: civic education in the hands of political scientists. The qualities which this civic education would inculcate were the polar opposites of the qualities Merriam saw in municipal affairs. The good citizen would be patriotic and obedient; public officials would obey the law and fulfill their responsibilities honestly; citizens would respect officials and the laws; they would love liberty; they would have a deep respect for their nation's traditions and its hierarchy--despite the debunking of science. And they would possess one more trait which citizens in the past never had, according to Merriam: an inclination toward accepting the views and methods of science. No nation, he complained, trains its citizens at the present time to analyze the community's claims scientifically. Merriam looked forward to the day when civic education would be in the hands of "professionals" rather than "casual propagandists." These professionals would be able to train citizens to resist the propaganda of competing groups, although the professionals, of course, would have to be supervised by the public in some unspecified way.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>James Bryce, The Hindrances to Good Citizenship (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1909), p. 15.

<sup>32</sup>Merriam, Making Citizens, pp. 334-46.

Merriam surveyed the world of civic education, and seemed to see things working out to his satisfaction. Everywhere, he noted, the trend was away from traditional methods of civic training toward bureaucratic methods, away from the forces of tradition ("fear, force and custom") toward the methods of reason and science.<sup>33</sup> Civic training was becoming more cosmopolitan and less parochial as the connection between local culture and socialization was breaking down. Schools were being used more deliberately in a "systematic attempt to inculcate civic qualities." This trend marked a "transition from drift to conscious social control, and foreshadows the scientific organization of political education." Prisons and wars will disappear, to be replaced by hospitals and arbitration. Merriam saw on the horizon a "revolution in the bases of organization of the elements of civic cohesion."<sup>34</sup>

But at the same time parts of the civic education apparatus lagged behind. The public schools, despite hopeful signs of change, were not yet scientific enough. They continued to transmit "group traditions in inelastic form." Group indoctrination of this sort was producing a "stiff and inflexible type of citizen who finds difficulty in adjusting himself to the changing circumstances of life." Modern systems of civic education, Merriam concluded,

are fundamentally defective in their over-emphasis on the role of the inflexible elements of the state and in their failure to recognize adequately the role of invention and adaptation.<sup>35</sup>

The "chief task of the modern citizen" is discriminating between different

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 264-65.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 264-73; 286-89.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 292.

leaders and different policies in the context of a changing world. A citizen is valuable to the extent that he can make the "necessary choices and adjust himself to changing situations."<sup>36</sup>

With this sort of scientific citizen education, Merriam was confident that America could create in one generation a "new majority with an entirely new political education, with new political values, attitudes, interests, capacities." We could make the coming generation anything we choose, he said, although he confessed that it was "not yet clear" what we should turn them into.<sup>37</sup>

If it was not clear what citizens should become, it was abundantly clear to reformers what they should not be. The negative examples were to be found in every urban community in America. The task was also clear: "What we have called the 'better conscience' must," Bryce wrote, "be grafted onto the 'wildstock' of the natural Average Man." This task was made more difficult in the United States by the presence of the immigrants, men and women who, in Bryce's words, "are ignorant not only of your institutions, but of the general principles and habits of free government . . . . They will not so soon or so completely acquire your intellectual and moral standard, or imbibe your historical and religious tradition."<sup>38</sup> The old order of American politics, which had been based to a large extent on a homogenous population, was in danger of being swallowed up in the melting pot.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>37</sup> Merriam, New Aspects of Politics, p. 286.

<sup>38</sup> Bryce, Hindrances to Good Citizenship, pp. 121-122.

Merriam was confident, however, that education could overcome even this obstacle. The immigrant clings to "those human beings who satisfy his immediate and urgent needs, however much they may neglect and betray his higher wants." The task then is to reach them, to take advantage of their desire to assimilate. The drive to assimilation, Merriam noted, is one of the "outstanding characteristics" of America's immigrants. Their "exploitation by clannish leaders is often only a short phase of their experience, out of which they soon emerge into responsible citizenship."<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, the very social change so noticeable in American life was working to destroy the immigrant communities, to break down their defenses and make their members more amenable to assimilation. The "traditional and symbolic strength of the ethnic group" was "strained" by the conditions of modern life, particularly by modern economic organization. "Economic prestige" competed with "ethnic prestige"; the ethnic group was in the realm of the past; the present and future belonged to "economic security."<sup>40</sup> The ethnic populations of American cities, more so than most, were slaves to the past, and this trait was the most serious obstacle to their becoming good citizens. Devotion to tradition made citizens prey to political parties, with their appeals to emotion and blind loyalty. (The same traits, curiously, made them prey also to the appeals of anarchism and communism.)<sup>41</sup>

The high type of citizenship is not that of the man who piously follows the customs of his fathers or ancestors, merely because

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<sup>39</sup>Merriam, Chicago, pp. 137-40.

<sup>40</sup>Merriam, Making Citizens, p. 43.

<sup>41</sup>Merriam, New Aspects of Politics, pp. 84-85.

they are customs, but of the one who comes to realize that he lives in a world of adaptation and begins early the process of constructive thinking . . . . retuning or modifying practices as situations develop.<sup>42</sup>

Merriam was never willing to see urban political machines as an example of the very adaptation to changing conditions which he so frequently called for. As sensitive as he was to the fact of massive social change, his vision of "good government" remained fixed in a small-town mold in which men of independent means and similar views managed the day-to-day affairs of the community. In the new world, of course, science would join these deliberations, but otherwise the model is fairly close to the sort of environment in which Merriam had grown up, and in which his own family had been persons of consequence in the government of the town. Merriam did not favor--if it ever occurred to him at all--the notion that citizenship in an urban setting might require new forms of participation and new sources of political loyalty, as well as new "knowledge." In this respect he was a typical Progressive, part of a movement

deeply imbued with traditional old-stock American middle-class values (individualism, anti-corruptionism, nativism, and anti-urbanism) [whose members regarded] the ascendancy of party organizations and the rigidity of mass voting behavior as the enemy to be attacked.<sup>43</sup>

Barry Karl has noted that the need for municipal reform stemmed largely from the new demands placed upon political institutions as a result of industrialism, immigration, and the explosive growth of cities.

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 242. Merriam never acknowledged the possibility that immigrant customs might in some ways be superior to native ones, or that a reasonable man might want to preserve old customs because they provided a guide to conduct during a time of change.

<sup>43</sup>Burnham, Critical Elections, p. 74.

He has stated the resulting problem very well, and deserves to be quoted at length:

As long as the institutional structures of city government remained the same, changes in leadership, even under the aegis and enthusiasm of public-spirited citizens, had a tendency to reproduce the evils they had been instituted to correct. The new tensions and strains of city life had pressed well beyond the capacity of older governmental forms. Corruption was often the only available method for solving problems which went beyond the capabilities of traditional methods. New brooms could not sweep away new problems. The injustices of corruption could be preferable to the injustices of total neglect.<sup>44</sup>

Merriam was aware of these problems, certainly. He wrote over and over again that "new times" were upon us, that "new methods" were needed in a "new world." Greater populations, expanded leisure, widespread education, new forms of work and of commerce, the decline of religion, the rise of science--of these changes Merriam was abundantly aware. To the need for change he was passionately devoted. But when it came time to imagine what the new citizen would look like, the vision was one with which middle-class Protestant Americans could easily identify. It was the traditional small-town progressive transplanted into the urban scene: secular, mobile, rational, independent, adaptable, unafraid of progress because he was unattached to the past.

Merriam had no doubts about science's ability to create such a citizen. "It is possible to build the citizen from the ground up," Merriam proclaimed. For one thing, science had learned a great deal about the body and the mind that might be useful in citizenship training, since a sound mind and body are two prerequisites for good citizenship. "The balanced body, mind, and temperament will be found the inevitable

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<sup>44</sup>Karl, Executive Reorganization and Reform, pp. 8-9.

basis for the construction of the effective type of citizen."<sup>45</sup> Science may one day even be able to determine which political characteristics are inherited, and how such heredity may be altered--the key "to social training and education."<sup>46</sup> Taking note of the controversies over IQ tests, Merriam agreed that these tests were open to question, but he was confident, as usual, that the future would bring more accurate forms of "mental measurement." If psychologists discover that intelligence follows fixed genetic laws, then we must plan accordingly.

If we reach a point where by scientific process we can breed and train what types of men we would, it does not seem that we should breed and train 3 per cent of geniuses and 97 per cent of morons. We should probably contrive a more balanced society, with some in advance and some a little behind . . . . leaving the mass of human beings on something like a democratic [sic] basis.<sup>47</sup>

Merriam had great hopes for the science of eugenics, even though he confessed that at the time much of the movement for eugenics was occupied by "race and class hostility, often of the most unscientific kind." (This was written in 1925.) Nevertheless, "the time cannot be far distant when its methods will have wide vogue" in every developed community.<sup>48</sup>

It may be possible to predetermine in considerable measure the types of persons desired in the commonwealth of the future, negatively at first by forbidding certain unions and later by constructive measures in which compulsory processes need play no role.<sup>49</sup>

Eugenics will "impose upon every system of social control a burden which

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<sup>45</sup> Merriam, Making Citizens, p. 328.

<sup>46</sup> Merriam, New Aspects of Politics, pp. 224-27. <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 103.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

it has in large measure hitherto avoided," but that burden cannot be escaped. Change is ubiquitous and irresistible. The benefits are enormous. Eugenics will make it possible to put scientific policies into effect with "greater certainty and swiftness" than ever before. It will enable us to determine "what traits and types [of men] we shall encourage and foster, and which we shall direct our eugenics systematically against."<sup>50</sup> Ultimately, Merriam said, it "may be necessary and possible to decide not merely what types of law we wish to enact, but what types of person we wish to develop, either by the process of education or of eugenics."<sup>51</sup>

Despite Merriam's interest in "making citizens"--which at this point in the argument has taken on some disturbingly literal connotations--he opposed a trend during the 1930s to involve the American Political Science Association more directly in citizenship training within the public schools. Many others opposed that trend also, and its chief proponent, Thomas H. Reed, could only carry on his programs with outside grant support. It was Reed's idea to bring lay members into the Association, to organize conferences with public officials on the question of citizenship skills, and to recruit high school civics teachers. Reed's Committee on Policy also sponsored a radio program in the early 1930s entitled "You and Your Government," which attempted to inform citizens

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 104. Merriam has taken Plato's interest in eugenics and turned it upside down. In the Republic, Plato argued that the members of the ruling class would have to be carefully bred; Merriam appears to believe that it is the governed who must be bred.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

about the workings of state and federal government. This radio program (ironically, it was aired between "Molly Goldberg" and "Amos 'n Andy") was not popular with APSA members, and when Reed's Carnegie grant expired, the citizenship program expired with it.

The problem, as Merriam and others saw it, was that citizenship training of this sort was really an unsophisticated form of propaganda. The tension between educating citizens and creating a science of politics was to be resolved in favor of the latter. In 1922 an Association committee chaired by William B. Munro reported that "it is not the function of a . . . course in Civics to carry on any form of social, economic, or political propaganda." An article in the American Political Science Review in 1926 said that introductory courses in political science should instead mount a challenge to the "validity and thought processes and opinions of the students with respect to all social phenomena and . . . indicate how much of the political credo of the average man has no rational quality so far as his relation to it is concerned."<sup>52</sup> The training of citizens, a popular goal within the Association in its early years, had by the 1920s and 1930s become a minority interest.<sup>53</sup>

Merriam pushed instead for a study of citizen training, and in

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<sup>52</sup> See the American Political Science Review, 16 (1922), p. 117, and 20 (1926), p. 425. Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus, The Development of American Political Science: From Burgess to Behavioralism (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), pp. 135-36.

<sup>53</sup> Bernard Crick is confused on this point. While it is true that citizenship training and civic education were important concerns at the beginning of the Association's history, they very quickly became minority concerns, swamped by the interest in "objective" science and the concern to project a nonpartisan image for the profession. See Bernard Crick, The American Science of Politics (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), pp. xii-xv.

the late 1920s he organized a cross-cultural study of the "making of citizens" and published the introductory volume of that title in 1931. This essay is interesting for two reasons. First, it reveals Merriam's extraordinary concern for what he called "civic cohesion" and his interest in various methods of cementing together a nation which seemed to him to be flying apart. Second, the concern for civic cohesion led to a casual merging of two very different concepts: citizenship and nationalism.

Above all, Merriam urged, the nation must hold together; it must be made up of people whose loyalties are pointed in the same direction. The citizens of a nation must hold common beliefs, respect common symbols, behave in similar ways. They must believe the "credenda and miranda" of the "power group" in their community. They must accept their nation's values as their own. They must be enmeshed in a "web of social and political relations."<sup>54</sup> Fortunately, Merriam continued, men are made for this kind of "belonging." The citizen does not wish to escape the "chain" of obligations, "for nature has provided the basic compensation and satisfaction which make sacrifice itself a pleasure." Nature has made sacrifice a fulfillment of the personality.<sup>55</sup>

Furthermore, all of the customs, institutions, and organizations of society bolster this civic cohesion, and in The Making of Citizens Merriam analyzes these forces in turn. Among the more important elements contributing to a cohesive society are: government services; political

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<sup>54</sup>Merriam, Systematic Politics, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup>Merriam, Political Power, pp. 126-28. Note that now credenda and miranda are no longer myths to be dispelled by science, but props to be maintained by it. "The citizen must believe that no other political order than his own is tolerable in his community." Making Citizens, p. 7.

parties; patriotic groups; traditions; symbolism; language and literature; the press, radio, and movies; the "love of locality"; and, most important of all, the various groups which form the basis of the state.

In The Making of Citizens, the state appears as an artificial construct based upon interest and held together, or broken down, by groups. Civic education, the making of citizens, is the process by which these groups train their members to exhibit the appropriate loyalties. This process must be continual, or the state will break down into its component groups. The political community, in other words, has no credit; loyalty is given first to the groups and then, with the cooperation of the groups, it is given to the state, and then only on the basis of group interest.

It cannot long be forgotten that political loyalty depends upon the balance of social interests of which it is an index, and without which it is nothing. The feeling of political loyalty must in the long run have a functional basis--must serve some useful social purpose in the life of those associated in the community.<sup>56</sup>

Loyalty is thus "provisional," and "the state must make its case not once and for all but continuously, for each new generation and for each new period."<sup>57</sup>

It is not difficult to see the connection between this conception of citizenship and Merriam's concern with social change and the decay of social order. A nation whose cohesiveness is threatened can be held together only by the most tangible force known to American political thought: interest. But at the same time Merriam is fearful that this motive for belonging is not really very powerful at all. It must be bolstered by emotion and symbolism. Modern citizenship must partake of

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<sup>56</sup> Merriam, Making Citizens, p. 9.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

the same emotions associated with the "induction into citizenship" of the members of "primitive tribes." It must somehow become a solid sense of membership in a single nation.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, Merriam points to the importance of factors such as "patriotic" groups, whose purpose is the "defense of nationalism, and the development of sounder civic habits of thought and action."<sup>59</sup> He sees American language and literature as "powerful bonds of unity," and the press as important to the "development of habits favorable to the maintenance of the political group."<sup>60</sup> He approves of the comparative unimportance of the "love of locality" in America, associating regional loyalty with "isolation."<sup>61</sup> He notes the importance of such symbols as flags, holidays, and martial music. He sees the radio and movie industry as rife with "great possibilities" for civic cohesion. He applauds the declining strength of tradition (illogically, given the traditional elements in patriotic symbols), offset as it is by population changes, economic development, and mass communications.<sup>62</sup> And he suggests that "the force of economic and social conditions" is bringing about a sense of "national unity" in the United States, despite its great size.<sup>63</sup>

Finally, Merriam comes to the subject of political parties and the role they play in the growth of civic cohesion. Merriam shared the Progressive hostility to parties; at times they seemed to him to be necessary evils, at other times an avoidable menace to good citizenship and rational government. (The "party spirit" was one of the "hindrances" to citizenship listed by Bryce.) Parties, though they were responsible

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 45-46.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp. 160, 166, 137-38.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

for much chicanery, thievery, and graft, nonetheless had a tendency to compel "several parties to speak the language of the common good, to profess the commonwealth, to stimulate political interest and activity" on the part of citizens.<sup>64</sup> Political machines, of course, were another matter entirely. The power of bosses was the worst sort of power, resting on "the ability of a few selfish and powerful men willing to exploit an unorganized community at any cost, and upon widespread indifference and apathy."<sup>65</sup> But where political parties could be purged of the spoils system they had an important role to play in the achievement of national unity. Merriam saw parties as an integrating force, agents of assimilation for ethnic groups, and a force working toward the breakdown of regional loyalties.<sup>66</sup>

These are curious hopes, and a curious analysis. Political parties, of course, tended to accomplish exactly the opposite of the things Merriam hoped they would accomplish. They provided a shelter for ethnic groups resisting assimilation (even if only a temporary shelter), and they were very nearly the last institutions in American politics with a purely local or regional power base. Furthermore, Merriam supported all of the traditional Progressive remedies for party abuses, remedies which were designed to weaken the party's hold on its members, its control of jobs, and its influence in public affairs.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 268-69.

<sup>65</sup>Charles Merriam, American Political Ideas: Studies in the Development of American Political Thought, 1865-1917 (New York: Macmillan, 1923), p. 299; see also Charles Merriam and Harold F. Gosnell, The American Party System, 4th ed. (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1969).

<sup>66</sup>Merriam, Making Citizens, pp. 106-107.

<sup>67</sup>Merriam, American Political Ideas, pp. 280-83.

In any case, Merriam's hopes for political parties were set in the future, after they had been sufficiently reformed. Meanwhile, in the real world of Chicago politics, parties showed a different aspect. Instead of assimilating ethnic groups, parties made themselves available for the expression of certain "indefensible . . . ethnic and territorial and class aspirations."<sup>68</sup> Instead of unifying the polity, parties grouped citizens around defensive emotional symbols, narrowing the citizen's focus rather than broadening it. And rather than provide an opening for intelligence in politics, parties called upon the least admirable of human qualities, the devotion to tradition, locality, the familiar and the secure--worse characteristics, in Merriam's view, than the party's tendency to graft and corruption.

Merriam's own empirical work, however, challenged much of his own analysis of politics, although he did not appear to be aware of any conflict. His studies of Chicago, for example, revealed a picture similar to that drawn in Bentley's Makers, Users and Masters: a polity whose citizens were so caught up in private pursuits and private organizations that they had no contact with public life, leaving it, by default, to the better organized, more wealthy private interests. Political parties might have been able to alter this situation, as even Merriam, despite his hostility to parties, recognized. Yet Merriam notes that by 1929, when his book on Chicago was published, the political parties in Chicago (the machine included) had been weakened to the point where they offered no real challenge to more powerful private interests, such as the utility companies. Little was left of the political parties in

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<sup>68</sup> Merriam, Making Citizens, p. 324.

Chicago, Merriam notes, except a "tradition and an appetite," and even the appetite was being starved by reform. Consequently, voters in local elections did not divide according to any clear sense of the issues.

Merriam's empirical work does not support the argument that political decay in Chicago was the result of any special lack of sophistication or public-spiritedness on the part of Chicago's citizens. The city was changing, and its political institutions could not handle such massive change. Districts overlapped, jurisdictions conflicted, the city could not keep up with its own suburbs, taxation was inequitable, the state refused to give the city the power to deal with its problems, and law enforcement was crippled by the unenforceable prohibition of liquor.<sup>69</sup> The visible government was in chaos, with over 1600 separate governments in the metropolitan area, having responsibility for over four million people. The invisible government, the government of private interest groups, ruled by default. Utility companies, in particular Samuel Insull's Commonwealth Edison, carried the day. "Public spirited" organizations, such as the League of Women Voters, the City Club, the Crime Commission, and the Bureau of Public Efficiency, were attempting to perform the role of political parties in organizing voters in favor of general, city-wide interests, but these organizations possessed drawbacks which rendered them impotent. Unlike the political parties, for example, they did not have the support of labor, they were more interested in honesty than in alleviating the hardships of urban life, and they had no support among ethnic groups.<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile, the system of graft and favors satisfied what appetite remained among the professional politicians,

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<sup>69</sup>Merriam, Chicago, pp. 24-69.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

and even Merriam admitted that this system would remain until the poor found "readier recourse for the rightings of their wrongs." In short, the political parties provided the only popular base of power in Chicago, and social change and the ministrations of reformers were weakening that base beyond repair.<sup>71</sup>

Merriam's empirical evidence, however, does provide another explanation for the sorry condition of citizenship in the city. That explanation indicts the city's election laws rather than its citizens. In the case of non-voting, at any rate, Merriam and Gosnell discovered that the major cause in the 1923 mayoral election was not apathy or ignorance, but much simpler things, such as confusing registration procedures, the mobility of the population, inconvenient voting hours, and a scarcity of voting locations. The major ideological reason given for non-voting was a reluctance by many newly-enfranchised women to take advantage of their right to vote.<sup>72</sup> As with so many other aspects of the erosion of citizenship, the cause was to be found not originally in the citizen, but in the structure of the community in which he lived: its institutions, its laws, and its political customs.

The picture Merriam paints of citizenship present and citizenship future is not a very pretty one. Contemporary citizenship is characterized by apathy, ignorance, warped emotion, and parochialism. But the picture of citizenship future is not much better; indeed, in some respects

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 102. On the role of parties in Chicago, see Theodore Lowi's excellent Foreword to Harold F. Gosnell's classic study, Machine Politics: Chicago Style, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

<sup>72</sup>Charles Merriam and Harold Gosnell, Non-Voting: Causes and Methods of Control (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), passim.

it is much worse. Its most disturbing element is nationalism--the focusing of the citizen's attention and his emotions exclusively on the national state, the withering of loyalties to city and state, ethnic group and religion, even (if we are to take his eugenics seriously) the family. Merriam envisions this nationalistic loyalty bolstered by the crudest symbolism (flags, martial music, and "patriotic" organizations) and locked into place by the creation of a "national culture." (A culture, remember, created in part by radio, the press, and movies.) Political parties will also be part of this national culture, and will no longer express the resistance of local cultures to "assimilation." Furthermore, the beliefs necessary for the maintenance of this "civic cohesion" will be taught in the public schools by social science professionals trained in the arts of persuasion (but not propaganda). And finally, in the indefinite future, eugenics will come to the aid of education, and we will "build the citizen from the ground up."

It is hard to believe that Merriam--who by most accounts was a perfectly amiable democrat--would have accepted this catalogue of horrors as his own handiwork if he had seen it presented as bluntly as this. But no other presentation is supported by the evidence. This is what Merriam wanted, and if he never fully thought out the implications of his own proposals, that may only show how desperate he felt the situation to be. But in the 1930s his focus shifted somewhat, from the "making of citizens" to the administration of government programs, and his work lost some of the urgency it possessed in the 1920s. The New Deal seemed to offer hope that another way might be found out of the morass of American politics--a way that would circumvent the citizen completely,

by reforming government from the "top down" rather than from the "bottom up." That way was the science of administration.

3.

"Make no small plans."

Merriam visited a Conference of Town Planners in Vienna, in 1926, and was impressed with the spirit he encountered there. His enthusiasm led him to make a characteristic and revealing comment about the relation between science and politics. The town planners, he said, had been trained "in invention and adjustment rather than in uncritical hero worship." Consequently, they were not slaves to tradition and custom. They were not interested in the "rich moldiness of ancient city outlines" but only in "utility in the present and in the future."<sup>73</sup>

This comment reveals better than any other the spirit with which Charles Merriam approached the related concepts of administrative management and national planning. He found in these new points of view the flexibility, the boldness, the experimentalism that he hoped political science could bring to the arts of politics in the United States, and he liked their attitude toward the materials of politics. Citizens and their political movements might be defensive and devoted to the moldy past, but scientific administrators and planners looked at the political community with the skeptical eyes of outsiders, unsentimentally deciding which values and institutions were to be altered or scrapped, which new methods would be adopted in the future.

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<sup>73</sup>Merriam, Making Citizens, p. 299.

Merriam saw in the science of administration several exciting possibilities. As we noted in Section 1 of this chapter, a reform of public administration would provide an opening for science. By creating a new core of government officials dedicated to expertise and independence, the experience and values of the social science community would have the opportunity to influence government that old-style politicians refused to give them. Merriam was fond of quoting Le Conte's statement that "science must be introduced into politics only as suggesting, counselling, modifying, not yet as directing and controlling."<sup>74</sup> And yet, Merriam saw the enemies of science among those very agents whom science was supposed to counsel. At the beginning of his career he complained that "the advances of science were not fully reflected in the domain of social phenomena where the earlier doctrines based upon tradition and the influence of class and group interpretation continued to be dominant."<sup>75</sup> At the end of his career, he was still afraid that political passion would from time to time trample on scientific objectivity, although he was optimistic that this problem would eventually be overcome by education.

Public administration would enable the government to take the kind of rapid actions that modern conditions demanded, while at the same time increasing the factual basis of that action. Like so many intellectuals of the 1930s and 1940s, Merriam was worried about democracy's performance in competition with totalitarian regimes. Democracy

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<sup>74</sup>Karl, Executive Reorganization and Reform, pp. 56-57.

<sup>75</sup>Charles Merriam and Harry E. Barnes, A History of Political Theories, Recent Times (New York: Macmillan, 1924), cited in Karl, ibid., p. 57.

seemed chronically inefficient and befuddled when compared to the Soviet and Nazi regimes, with their centralized planning and their ruthless suppression of opposition. Something would have to be done to make democracy more competitive without, at the same time, making it less democratic. "The surviving types of life and conduct," he wrote in 1931, "are those that are able to adjust themselves to this changing world, and raise new temples on the ruins of the old."<sup>76</sup> Merriam and a great many of his colleagues believed that "specialized knowledge systematically applied was necessary for the preservation of democratic government."<sup>77</sup> As the international scene worsened toward the end of the 1930s, Merriam became increasingly convinced that democracy was about to face its most fateful challenge, one in which scientific control of political processes would prove vital. All resources would have to be mobilized for "total war," and, beyond that, for future emergencies equally fateful. All facets of life--civilian, military, economic, and political--would have to be rationally and competently administered.<sup>78</sup> "We do not propose to adopt totalitarian principles or methods," Merriam wrote, but we must, nevertheless, "counterattack."<sup>79</sup>

In the 1930s, Merriam served on President Roosevelt's Commission on Administrative Management, which advocated changes in the administration of federal laws, the hiring and training of personnel in government agencies on the basis of professional standards, more independence for

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<sup>76</sup>Merriam, Making Citizens, p. 300.

<sup>77</sup>Karl, Executive Reorganization and Reform, p. 50.

<sup>78</sup>Merriam, Agenda, pp. 42-51.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

administrative agencies, and centralized planning within the federal government. Barry Karl has discussed the history of this particular commission and the reforms it led to elsewhere, and there is no need to go into them here.<sup>80</sup> The important point for our purposes is the hope Merriam had for these reforms, and his motives for advocating them.

Of paramount importance is Merriam's conception of the relation between science and politics. He frequently made a distinction between science and what he called "political prudence." He defined political prudence as the "conclusions of experience and reflection regarding the problems of politics--wisdom that does not reach the state of science, yet has its own significance."<sup>81</sup> Political prudence is, in short, the best intelligence available outside the scientific community, the sort of intelligence that must be relied on in emergencies, when calm and lengthy consideration is not possible. But political prudence contrasts unfavorably with science. Unlike science, it is liable to be influenced by "passion" and "propaganda." And of course it does not go deep enough to provide the basis for the decisions that modern conditions call for.

Since "we are living in a world of adaptation with constant reconstruction in process," something else is needed. Merriam was confident that the "something else" could be provided by a mating of science and political authority. Politics will be "the residuum left after all ascertainable facts have been exhausted" unless it moves to "catch up" with the "new intellectual techniques of the time." Why not join these natural scientists, Merriam asks, "without examining too closely or too

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<sup>80</sup> Karl, Executive Reorganization and Reform, passim.

<sup>81</sup> Merriam, New Aspects of Politics, p. 246.

long their pedigrees or their passports?"<sup>82</sup> He disputes Bryce's claim that "we cannot experiment with political forces" by noting that we can, for example, measure the different impact on a person of reading Tolstoi and Teddy Roosevelt, or measure Bryan's effects on a crowd. "The shifts and turns in human political positions are susceptible of analysis, and the result should yield scientific material of the greatest value."<sup>83</sup> In New Aspects of Politics, Merriam urged his colleagues to integrate their work with the work being done in several disciplines, including the natural sciences. Political science would learn much, he argued, from anthropology, physics, "psychopathology," medicine, biology, and so on. With the aid of the natural sciences, political scientists could "build up a science of political behavior" of immense value.<sup>84</sup> This challenge represents "the greatest task that humanity has yet faced--the intelligent understanding and control of human behavior . . . . conscious control over its own evolution."<sup>85</sup>

Merriam was not unaware of the difficulties in the way of such an approach, as we have discussed above. For one thing, there was a conflict between the need of science for "initiative, criticism, and reconstruction," and society's need for order and conformity. Political phenomena were difficult to isolate for study, and it was hard for the observer to separate himself from the phenomena being observed. Political science lacked "controlled experiments" and "laboratory equipment." It was difficult to obtain accurate measures of political phenomena.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 182-83.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 306-308.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 348.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 352.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., pp. 132-38.

Merriam's optimism, however, was untiring, and in his books and articles over a thirty year period, that optimism prevailed over the most serious doubts. Each new probe into social reality seemed full of promise, including some of the most controversial (eugenics) and the most quixotic ("the attempt to interpret in terms of iodine the characteristics of certain regions").<sup>87</sup>

Out of the opposition between science and tradition, however, there emerged a serious conflict between the scientist and political authority, since Merriam had so firmly identified politics and tradition. This conflict would have to be resolved in favor of science, or democracy would not survive, but it is not clear what values would be served by this resolution, or where they would come from. Merriam was not willing to make science into a source of moral values, and he was determined to take that role away from the political order. But that left no moral authority of any kind. Yet Merriam believed that the adjustment between science and politics could be made without threatening democratic values, and in the controversies of the 1930s and 1940s over "planning" versus "freedom," Merriam pleaded for the view that the two were not inconsistent.

As Barry Karl has pointed out, this view amounted to an act of "faith" rather than a careful analysis. Merriam stuck to his conviction that science would not violate democracy, and that planning could be achieved in ways that did not threaten democracy. Democracy is apparently infinitely adjustable; "In a democracy the community is the beneficiary [of change], no matter what advances may be made, or whose personal

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

status may be altered. A free and democratic society is therefore the most readily adaptable and adjustable of all forms of political association."<sup>88</sup> But others found this faith difficult to maintain, discovering, according to Karl, that "the language of a more scientific study of society did not admit such commitments into the new vocabulary."<sup>89</sup> As we saw in Chapter II, some of Merriam's colleagues in the American Political Science Association--Charles Beard and Edward S. Corwin, for example--were beginning to criticize the emphasis on a scientific attitude toward politics, but Merriam stuck to his guns. In the 1920s he had even advocated a "scientocracy" or "sociocracy," a government made up of "representative" bodies of wise men representing all opinion and having the confidence of the public--an early and more ambitious version of the "science of administration." He looked forward to the day when an "international assembly of the world's political wise men" could be found "disseminating tolerance and reasonableness."<sup>90</sup>

By the 1930s, this faith had been toned down somewhat, but Merriam continued to look for the "indefinite perfectibility of men," assuming still the "validity of continuing creative evolution . . . in the direction of higher levels of physical, intellectual, and spiritual" existence.<sup>91</sup> "The future belongs," he predicted, "to those who fuse intelligence with faith, and who with courage and determination grope

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<sup>88</sup> Merriam, Agenda, p. 102.

<sup>89</sup> Karl, Executive Reorganization and Reform, p. 62.

<sup>90</sup> Merriam, New Aspects of Politics, pp. 255-59.

<sup>91</sup> Merriam, Systematic Politics, p. vii.

their way forward from . . . blind adaptation to creative evolution."<sup>92</sup>

Merriam could remain optimistic about the relation of science and politics because he assumed that the merger of political and scientific authority would remain a smooth one so long as each side kept to its prescribed role, following and working for familiar liberal values. These values, for all of Merriam's enthusiasm for the destruction of tradition, were fairly ordinary ones. Merriam's sense of "balance" anchored his theory firmly in the world of recognizable landscapes. A good ruler should know his community, understand its power structure, and make use of its best intelligence. The ruler should comprehend the various ideologies of the community and distribute rewards in accordance with the balance of power.<sup>93</sup> He should be moderate, should delegate power, should have a clear understanding of his role as a trustee, and should make intelligent plans for the future. He should be secular, progressive, national in his orientation, adaptable and pragmatic. Above all, he should maintain the "balance of power" in his community, for power "sickens and dies" when the equilibrium it was created to establish is disturbed.<sup>94</sup>

As with most things, Merriam was of two minds about the relation of the scientific ruler--the bureaucrat or expert advisor, or the politician whom these advised--and the ruled. At times, notions of balance prevailed. At other times, the ruler was pictured as almost in

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<sup>92</sup>Merriam, Political Power, cited by Karl, Executive Reorganization and Reform, p. 59.

<sup>93</sup>This description of the ruler's art sounds very much like the traditional activity of the "party boss," with his concern for ticket-balancing, attention to local grievances, and the like. Merriam, however, never drew this comparison.

<sup>94</sup>Merriam, Political Power, pp. 192-277.

a state of war with an intransigent community, and it was in this role of "mover and shaker" that he most needed the guidance of science. The excitement of the New Deal brought out this activist version of the ruler's responsibility. Certainly, Merriam saw in Franklin Roosevelt a more hopeful sign of change than he had seen in previous executives, and Roosevelt rewarded this confidence by appointing Merriam to two Commissions: the Commission on Administrative Management and the National Resources Planning Board.

In his activist phase, Merriam was willing to give a great deal of power to expert commissions and public administrative agencies. In this mood he was ready to admit that the scientific ruler would meet with opposition from tradition-bound citizens, and he was prepared to see that opposition ignored or circumvented in some unspecified way. "Politics as the art of the traditional" would have to give way to "politics as the science of constructive, intelligent social control."<sup>95</sup> In The Making of Citizens, he alluded to the problem of overcoming traditional resistance to new ways of thinking and doing. "Ethnic and territorial groupings are likely to find themselves hard-pressed as the tide of science sweeps along and tests their presuppositions and their functional values." This will result in a "tension" in civic training that must somehow be resolved. Merriam has no doubt as to how that resolution will turn out: "Localisms and parochialisms will resist coordination and centralization with all their force" but the "new types" of organization are "likely to find their course coincident with lines of discovery and development in the near future."<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Merriam, New Aspects of Politics, p. 101.

<sup>96</sup>Merriam, Making Citizens, pp. 322-23.

On the other hand, Merriam was willing to counsel the ruler to be sensitive to those who might oppose his ambitious plans. Merriam may have had Roosevelt's problems with the Congress and the Supreme Court in mind when he gave this advice, in 1936:

The resistances to be encountered in a given phase of political development, the degree to which and the manner in which these resistances may be modified or overcome, the types and forms of cooperation or attraction to be found, these are the material which the statesman cannot ignore. They are indeed the essence of his contract.<sup>97</sup>

But the resistance of citizens is still something to be "overcome" or "modified." Here science can perform the task of laying out in clear fashion where the weaknesses are in the political community, how deeply the resistance goes, where it can be overcome. Science is no longer a source of truth, neutral and objective, but a tool, once again, of reform.

Almost as in battle there are at times open places in the line through which advance might be made, if only they were known. Examples of this in recent American experience are the passage and acceptance of the selective draft law in the late war [i.e., World War I]; the sudden collapse of national prohibition; the quick thrust of policies such as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration . . . . The metes and bounds of modifiability are written large in the records of many revolutionary movements and in many abortive attempts at social change . . . . We do not have, however, the exact indices of modifiability, and herein lies the possibility of deep-seated antagonisms in proposals for social alteration.<sup>98</sup>

Public administration and planning agencies must, if they are to succeed, be given considerable independence in their operations.

("Graveyards are full of timid men and timid nations who died because they trusted no one.") The application of the "new science and art of

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<sup>97</sup>Merriam, The Role of Politics in Social Change, p. 85.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., pp. 85-87.

administrative management" requires that administrative agencies be given "sub-legislative powers." Merriam is part of the tradition that Theodore Lowi has labelled "interest-group liberalism," and he shares the "jurisprudence" of that tradition: the shift of allegiance from the law to administration in the hope of avoiding what seemed a cumbersome and coercive legislative process.<sup>99</sup> In Merriam's analysis, the Congress would be responsible for the "broad outlines" of policy, and administrators would handle the "minutiae." He attacks the notion of judicial review of administrative agencies, saying this would "cripple administrative efficiency" and make impossible "dynamic government" in a "dynamic society." "Over-restriction might properly be called the 'kiss of death' to modern types of technical competent administration."<sup>100</sup>

Merriam is trying with this argument to avoid the charge that planning involves regimentation; as Lowi shows, liberalism attempted to remove coercion from politics by placing its faith in a presumptively informal administrative process that dealt only with cases and not with principles. Merriam expresses a similar idea: planning deals with the "zoning of power," with "the broad diffusion of initiative and responsibility most conducive to the welfare of the group at a given stage of development."<sup>101</sup> By "zoning" power, power will thereby be controlled, and no one need worry about regimentation.

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<sup>99</sup>Theodore Lowi, The End of Liberalism: Ideology, Policy, and the Crisis of Public Authority (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), passim.

<sup>100</sup>Merriam, Agenda, p. 41.

<sup>101</sup>Merriam, The Role of Politics in Social Change, pp. 127-28.

It is commonly taken for granted that liberty is protected chiefly by the courts. The judicial agencies play their part in this process, but in large measure the administrative agencies supply the 'zoning of power' upon which the growth and play of individual initiative rely for their protection and stimulation. The degree of initiative within the administration itself, the readiness with which it accepts suggestions from outside, the facility with which it is able to effect friendly and cooperative relations with various non-governmental or quasi-governmental associations of variegated types; these are factors that will be effective in determining the scope of free play of activities outside the formal framework of regulations. Legal omnipotence is not inconsistent with administrative amiability and administrative fostering of initiative.<sup>102</sup>

This argument, I think, amounts to an admission that the democratic political institutions of American society cannot be trusted with legislation or the making of public policy. That means that citizens cannot be trusted either, since they will inevitably be shut out of the private groups with which the administrator is to cooperate. We have already seen Merriam's hopes for these private groups--that they would be inclined to take advantage of the intelligence of the scientific community in fostering new forms of "civic education." That seems also to be the meaning of a paragraph following the one quoted above:

The assumption of the modern state builder who wishes to advance other than by means of violence and brutal regimentation must be that the emerging regulative system will recognize the pattern of scientific and technological change in an educational setting as the basis of continuing organization. Without this western civilization is doomed.<sup>103</sup>

Merriam's search for a new basis for civic order led here: scientific and technological change, in an educational setting, in cooperation with the regulative system of the government, would create a new political

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid., p. 129. My emphasis.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

environment, in which the basic contract between citizens and government would no longer be a commitment to common public objectives, but an agreement by citizens to allow government administrative agencies and private interest groups to manage social change in a scientific manner.

Merriam's scholarly career began with his interest in the disorder and confusion of urban life at the turn of the century. He spent nearly fifty years trying to find a way to eliminate that disorder. It was an objective he shared with thousands of American intellectuals, with the Progressive movement, and with many political leaders as well. But in his enthusiasm for mating science and government he was tempted by the short-cut of circumventing the need for an informed and active citizenry. He was not anti-political in the sense that many of the Progressives were; he did not talk about "taking the politics" out of this or that institution or procedure. He enjoyed politics, and occasionally spoke movingly of its drama and excitement. In another century he might have devoted more time to the political career that he only dabbled in during his lifetime.

But the twentieth century seemed to offer unusual challenges, calling for unusual solutions, and the citizens of twentieth-century America seemed woefully ill-equipped to deal with them. It must have seemed to Merriam the greatest good fortune that "new techniques" had arrived coincidentally with the "new times," and that the development of science offered the possibility of a new politics just when the old politics was showing signs of its age. He grabbed at that good fortune, and because of its promise he did not have, or was able to suppress, misgivings about the uses to which it could be put. Science had wrought

marvels; it had altered the face of the earth and extended the life of man. Could it not also govern him? The expertise of technocrats and specialists would not, Merriam was confident, offer any threat to the traditional authority of democratically-chosen political leaders, even if expertise put narrow limits on what policies the public could choose.

In the meantime, citizens would be helped to "catch up" with the new age through the mechanism of a revamped civic education. Merriam was certain here as well that political science, social science in general, had a role to play in the salvation of American democracy. The dream of "building the citizen" anew was a great challenge, and Merriam was sure that science was equal to it. If he was less certain about what the new citizen would look like, he was ready to let such questions wait for future generations to answer. "The new world will not be without its new politics. But to what distant shores the quest may lead us, who can say?"

## CHAPTER V

### THE CONTENT OF MODERN CITIZENSHIP:

#### WHO GOVERNS, AND WHO DOESN'T?

"In liberal societies, politics is a sideshow in the great circus of life." -- Robert Dahl

We have seen so far that the growth of the political science discipline, the development of its theories and methods, was partly guided by motives of reform. Born in an atmosphere of concern for the future of American democracy, political science was led to examine the performance of American citizens and American institutions, devising a characteristic set of attitudes toward civic education. But as the discipline grew, both in size and methodological sophistication, the reform impulse came to be seen as an obstacle to the creation of a "science" of politics. Where much of the early work in political science expressed an almost prophetic gloom about American society, the later work was animated by a much different spirit. Political scientists, looking for a more appropriate model for their mission in life, saw in Bentley's relentless attacks on idealism that rigor which typified the scientific outlook. Merriam hoped to reshape citizenship in the image of the science he served. But both Bentley and Merriam shared the sense of impending disaster, the fear that America faced a crisis of loyalty and cohesion, that marked them as members of the "old school," with visible ties to the great movement of progressive reform that had given

birth to the political science discipline.

By the end of the Second World war, the generation that created political science in America, and the generation that sent it on its way, were both being supplanted by the generation of Merriam's students, trained in scientific techniques and increasingly distant from the controversies of the discipline's formative years. But the crisis of citizenship remained, and could be read in the catena of surveys and empirical investigations of the 1950s. These studies documented the apprehensions of Wilson and Bryce in unmistakable terms. Most Americans did not possess, or did not often demonstrate, the qualities of democratic citizens. They did not participate; they did not understand; and they were not, during one dark period, rational. Despite the changes in American life and in political science since the beginning of the century, therefore, the discipline of the 1950s and 1960s confronted familiar questions. Of what, precisely, does American citizenship consist? What kind of citizens has America produced, and how have they served their country and themselves? Survey research has unearthed a great wealth of information about the activities and attitudes of American citizens, and the data reveal information about the content of democratic citizenship in its three dimensions: as an office, an orientation, and a skill.

This chapter will examine some pertinent aspects of that evidence, in an attempt to understand the nature and the context of contemporary citizenship. The sixth chapter will then examine one popular attempt to integrate that evidence into a coherent theory of democratic politics, one that has accomplished a further dilution of the traditional understanding of what it means to be a citizen.

1.

Citizenship as an Office:  
The Dimension of Participation

Americans are called upon to do many things as citizens. They are asked to elect nearly 500,000 executive, legislative, and judicial officers to staff several layers of government. They are asked to sit on juries, to vote on referenda, amendments, and revenue bonds, to select the candidates of major and minor political parties, to vote in town meetings, to serve their country in times of war or local emergency. But these are the most elemental of their duties, the ones of which the law takes special notice. These fundamental duties imply several other, more complex responsibilities: to understand, to be informed, to take sides, to defend their rights and the rights of others, even to disobey illegal orders or laws of doubtful validity.<sup>1</sup> How widespread is the performance of this "official" dimension of citizenship?

The literature is unanimous on at least one point. Political participation in the United States is unequally distributed; in general, it declines with the decrease in income, education, and social status. Participants are congregated in the upper level of the social system-- and they are also, as a result, a minority of the population.

Nor is this a new development. Sophisticated measures of participation have only been in use since the 1930s, but voting statistics

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<sup>1</sup>Wilson Carey McWilliams, "The American Constitutions," in Gerald Pomper, ed., The Performance of American Government (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 45; and McWilliams, "Civil Disobedience and Contemporary Constitutionalism," Comparative Politics, 1(1969), p. 222; Joseph Tussman, Obligation and the Body Politic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); Gerald Pomper, Voters' Choice: Varieties of American Electoral Behavior (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1975), p. 1.

are available for a much longer period. These statistics show a sharp decline in voting in presidential elections, beginning in the 1890s and continuing throughout the twentieth century, with lows of below 50% of eligible voters in 1924, 1944, and 1948, compared to highs of over 75% of eligible voters prior to the election of 1900.<sup>2</sup> After the 1930s, presidential voting edged upward in fits and starts, maintaining a fairly steady increase and averaging between two-thirds and three-fourths of eligible voters,<sup>3</sup> until 1964, when it began to go down again. Recent presidential elections have continued this downward trend, with the 1976 election registering a 53% turnout. In the period between 1900 and 1936, then, we know that on at least one simple but important measure of participation, the United States experienced a very high level of withdrawal from political participation--a trend that may be showing itself once again.<sup>4</sup>

Sidney Verba and Norman Nie have provided more recent and more detailed data on this phenomenon. Their study reveals that while nearly

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<sup>2</sup>William H. Flanigan, Political Behavior of the American Electorate (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968), pp. 14-19; also Walter Dean Burnham, Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), p. 54.

<sup>3</sup>William Andrews has calculated that registration requirements keep many voters from voting who would normally vote in presidential elections, and that a corrected figure gives a total of 80% turnout of the "eligible" electorate in the 1964 presidential election. "American Voting Participation," Western Political Quarterly, 19 (1966), p. 639.

<sup>4</sup>Or perhaps it was a widespread exclusion from political life. Burnham argues that the sharp decline in voting after 1896 is a consequence of the "fourth party system," one characteristic of which was the erection of numerous barriers to voting (poll taxes, personal registration, literacy tests, etc.), the destruction of parties by progressive reforms, and the dampening of political enthusiasm in general. Burnham, Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics, pp. 74-84.

75% of their sample "regularly voted in presidential elections," a much smaller proportion of them engaged in any other political activity. Only 4% said that they "always voted in local elections"; only 32% were active in at least one community organization; no more than 28% had ever "attempted to sway another's vote," and only 8% "belonged to a political club or organization."<sup>5</sup>

This evidence is consistent with the findings of numerous surveys conducted throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. Summarizing this data, William Flanigan calculates that from 1952 to 1964, no more than 9% and as few as 3% of the American adult population took an active part in political life beyond the act of voting. Only four million people participated, on the average, in presidential election campaigns during this period--which is less than the number participating in any other voluntary activity. Stein Rokkan and Angus Campbell, in a comparison of participation in Norway and the United States, estimate that fully 57% of the American public undertakes no political activity beyond the act of voting, and that only four to nine percent are "organizationally active" in politics. V. O. Key's estimate is somewhat higher. "The highly attentive and active public," he concludes, makes up "no more than 10 to 15 per cent of the adult population, although at times of crisis far higher proportions may focus their attention on particular actions of government."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), Table 2.1, p. 32.

<sup>6</sup>Flanigan, Political Behavior of the American Electorate, pp. 6, 95-96; Stein Rokkan and Angus Campbell, "Citizen Participation in Political Life: A Comparison of Data for Norway and the United States of America," in J. Meynaud, ed., Decisions and Decision Makers in the Modern State (Paris: UNESCO, 1967), pp. 254-55; V. O. Key, Public Opinion and American Democracy (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1961), p. 546.

In 1950, Julian Woodward and Elmo Roper found equally low levels of political activity in America. They found that only 21% of their sample discussed public issues "frequently" and only 31% belonged to an organization that occasionally took stands on public issues. Only 11% said they had worked for a political candidate in the recent past.<sup>7</sup> It is also clear that those citizens who do participate are not representative of their silent and inactive fellows. Participation increases with social status, income, and education. Woodward and Roper found that those of their sample scoring high on political participation were members of the highest economic level, executives, professional people, stockholders, and college graduates. Those scoring low on political participation were laborers, housewives, those with only a grade school education, blacks, and members of the lowest income level. Verba and Nie confirm this pattern, finding that the "inactives" among their sample (22% of the total, i.e., those who did not vote either in presidential or local elections, who did not belong to organizations, and who took no other part in campaigns or politics) contained disproportionate numbers of low-status citizens: those with low income and education, blacks, housewives, and unskilled workers. Conversely, "Campaigners" and "Complete activists" (15% and 11% of the total, respectively) tended to be college graduates, and those with high incomes and high-status occupations.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Julian Woodward and Elmo Roper, "Political Activity of American Citizens," American Political Science Review, 44 (December, 1950), p. 877.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 877-88. Verba and Nie, Participation in America, pp. 79-80; Figure 6.1, p. 98; Figure 6.3, p. 100.

The obvious correlates of weak citizenship, then, are low income, low education, and low social status. But a closer examination of the survey data reveals some interesting qualifications to this general rule.

In the first place, the relationship between low participation and low socio-economic status is neither simple nor ubiquitous. For example, the group Verba and Nie call "parochial participants"--those whose political activity is confined to initiating personal contacts with local officials--is fairly widespread throughout the population, and actually over-represents some of the groups typically under-represented in other categories of participants: young people and Catholics. Urban blacks display a higher "sense of political effectiveness" than whites with the same income and education. Urban residents of all social classes and income levels report more organizational memberships--an important source of political mobilization--than residents of areas classified as rural. Ethnic loyalties tend to increase participation, which counteracts to some extent the low participation of the urban working class.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, political structures seem to have an independent influence on political participation. Concentration of power in the hands of an elite leads to a general (although unequal) decline in participation levels, whereas the existence of strong ethnic or working-class organizations and a wide diffusion of power increases participation

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<sup>9</sup>Verba and Nie, Participation in America, Figure 6.2, p. 99; Robert E. Lane, Political Life: Why and How People Get Involved in Politics (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 154; Charles R. Wright and Herbert H. Hyman, "Voluntary Association Memberships of American Adults: Evidence from National Sample Surveys," American Sociological Review, 23 (June, 1958), pp. 290, 293; Lane, Political Life, p. 180.

for all groups. Participation is also higher in areas where there is a "match" between group boundaries and party boundaries; where a large percentage of the population has lived in the community for a long time; where elections are partisan rather than nonpartisan; where ethnic conflict is great; where the local municipal administration is less "bureaucratized" and "impartial."<sup>10</sup>

Finally, one form of specifically political participation--party politics--violates the correlation between high status and high participation, for, as Verba and Nie conclude, party affiliation "has an effect on the rate of participation over and above that of the social status of the citizen," offering "a route to political participation alternative to that of the standard socioeconomic model."<sup>11</sup>

What these qualifications suggest, is that the pool of potentially active citizens is much larger than the number of currently active citizens. In other words, changes in factors other than the social status of the individual citizen serve to activate the previously inactive. Conversely, changes of another kind can deactivate citizens of all classes and income levels. In short, political participation is one of the few important forms of social interaction not determined entirely by social class.

To what other factors, then, does political participation respond? This is an important question, but not much of the survey literature deals with it. This literature assumes, for the most part, a simple distinction between "active" and "passive" citizens, without inquiring

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<sup>10</sup> Lane, Political Life, pp. 261, 345, 265, 269, 311, 243, 244.

<sup>11</sup> Verba and Nie, Participation in America, p. 216.

very deeply into the causes of passivity, treating it largely as a consequence of poor education, low income, and low social status, or as a general consequence of "the conditions of modern life."<sup>12</sup> But the truth seems to be that participation is not simply a function of social status, but of a variety of factors beyond the personal characteristics of the individual. "Participation," Lane concludes, "is a product of multiple factors; it is embedded in an area of multiple causation."<sup>13</sup> Some of these factors are:

#### The Nature of Political Conflict

Conflict that is public and intense tends to draw citizens out of their private worlds. Gerald Pomper, for example, argues that the excessive level of quiescence found in the survey literature of the 1950s was in part a reflection of the lack of conflict among political leaders and between the parties during that period, and that increases in participation in the late 1960s and 1970s reflect a more tumultuous political environment.<sup>14</sup> But where any stratum of the population is well-organized, the participation of members of that stratum increases, even among those who do not belong to organizations. Participation also increases in areas where political parties are strong, and particularly among voters whose views on issues, candidates, and party choice are congruent. Where the image of the party is hazy--either because of a general agreement between the leaders of the two major parties, or because

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<sup>12</sup>John Schaar, Loyalty in America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), pp. 118-19.

<sup>13</sup>Lane, Political Life, p. 347.

<sup>14</sup>Pomper, Voters' Choice, pp. 13-14.

of a general agreement between the leaders of the two major parties to exclude certain issues from public debate, or because of the party's failure to take clear stands on issues--participation (in voting at least) declines.<sup>15</sup>

These observations suggest a general rule: Political conflict will increase participation when it is intense, when it involves some facet of the citizen's life (e.g., ethnicity) that is already important to him, when it is "clear", and when it is encouraged by various kinds of openly political organizations, such as parties, machines, neighborhood associations, trade unions, ethnic associations, and so on.

#### The Coherence of Politics

One cause of non-participation, Lane speculates, is the fact that "the focus of political concern in America tends to be shapeless and diffused." Participation is discouraged by incoherence anywhere in the political system: in the law, in public debate, in institutions, in party affairs. Whenever citizens are confused about the source of some particular policy, or when public issues are discussed in a way that makes their comprehension unlikely, people will withdraw from politics. This is an acute problem in the United States, since the division and separation of powers mandated by the Constitution makes a certain amount of incoherence inevitable. And as Theodore Lowi has demonstrated, the custom of delegating public authority to private and quasi-public groups and agencies lends its own significant measure of incoherence to public life. A further source of confusion comes from the disjunction between political problems and effective political jurisdictions. Agencies and

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<sup>15</sup>Lane, Political Life, pp. 303-304.

levels of government with the authority to deal with problems often do not have the power or resources to do so, creating, in Lane's words, "a disharmony between the location of power and the focus of popular attention."<sup>16</sup>

The coherence of the community itself is another factor affecting participation. A community's coherence is made up of several things: its size, the percentage of its citizens who are residents of long standing, the nature of its political institutions, the nature of community conflict, the rate of social change, even its physical appearance. Verba and Nie report that "as communities grow in size and, more important, as they lose those characteristics of boundedness that distinguish the independent city from the suburb, participation declines." Several studies have shown that those citizens who are connected to their community through membership in several organizations are more likely to participate than those who are not. Participation is further encouraged by long residence in a community, and is low in communities with a large percentage of transients.<sup>17</sup>

The "sense of community" is an idea that has perhaps been overworked in recent years, so it is well to be clear about what is meant by "coherence." As conceived by classical theory, the city was a self-sufficient environment. (See Chapter I, Section 1.) It contained within itself all

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 140-41, 320; Theodore Lowi, The End of Liberalism: Ideology, Policy, and the Crisis of Public Authority (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), passim; Robert Dahl, "The City in the Future of Democracy," American Political Science Review, 61 (December, 1967), pp. 953-70.

<sup>17</sup> Verba and Nie, Participation in America, p. 247, Ch. 11; Wright and Hyman, "Voluntary Association Memberships," p. 293; Lane, Political Life, pp. 140, 269.

that was necessary for a full (and fulfilling) human existence. An important characteristic of such a community is that all aspects of its life revolve around a common center. The city is both a social and economic center, at the same time that it is a political center. As a result, the important problems and activities of life are integrated and can be related to one another and made coherent.

This is a quality, obviously, that has been more typical in our own age of the small town than of the modern city, and still less so of the "metropolitan area." Towns and cities are today characterized by their specialization. Thus, it is possible to talk about a "manufacturing town," or an "oil town," or a "bedroom suburb." The typical modern community is a disconnected series of functions. Economic life, social life, and political life revolve around separate centers: jobs may be concentrated in one location, residential areas in another, administration in a third. The residents of such "communities" (which often overlap legal city boundaries) must find it difficult to get much of a sense of their residence in a common environment.

Strong political institutions can help to combat this fragmentation, because there is an irreducible minimum beyond which the fragmentation of politics cannot go. Because government possesses ultimate authority, it tends to draw attention toward the center rather than disperse it outward, the way economic life and even social life do.

There are, for example, strong incentives for economic and financial institutions to move out of the city center, and strong incentives for citizens to follow them. But government is by nature fixed in one place, its jurisdiction settled and unchanging. To some extent, this is

a problem: the central city is unable to keep pace with the general movement of people and services out to the suburbs. But in another sense, this handicap is also a corrective: by remaining fixed, the political center does not fragment the way social and economic centers do. The city's political institutions, if they are strong, can thus orient all of the citizenry to a common center, even as their more pluralistic social and economic lives are pointed in several directions at once.

#### Public Values

This is a more difficult factor to measure, but it seems to be the case that participation is higher where active citizenship is publicly valued. Where schools, public officials, and the media honor such acts as working for a candidate, taking sides on public issues, running for office, giving money to a political party, and voting, "marginal participators" are more likely to act than they would be in the absence of such inducements. In light of this possibility, it is disturbing that the profession of politics has fallen to such low esteem in the United States. Citizenship must inevitably suffer where politics is seen as a profession fit only for would-be criminals.<sup>18</sup>

#### The Urgency of Public Affairs

When policy has a direct and visible impact on the lives of citizens, participation and political concern increase. The impact may take

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<sup>18</sup> On the effect of the media, and the values it promotes, see Lane, Political Life, p. 287. In light of the importance of the "public morality" to the experience of citizenship, recent attempts by candidates to cash in on the "post-Watergate morality" by pretending not to be politicians can only make matters worse.

several forms. Public policy may simply enrich some at the expense of others, thus activating both those who profit and those who pay. Or a proposed policy may threaten a group's life style, or relieve it of some burden or humiliation. In either case, such an immediate impact on the citizen's life, if it is perceived, is a powerful source of political interest and involvement. It is also an unequal motivator, since those with higher education and income tend to perceive the relation between public policy and their own fortunes more readily than lower-status citizens, for whom the political universe is often formless and chaotic.<sup>19</sup>

For this reason, it is important that public policy and law be clear in their effects and in their enforcement. Incoherence, vacillation, favoritism, and inconsistency in the law confuse citizens about the source and the impact of public policy, and the evidence is that this in itself is enough to depress the levels of political participation.

2.

Citizenship as an Orientation:  
The Dimension of Belief

In the first chapter, I discussed some of the general attitudes and convictions that are part of the necessary orientation of citizens. These convictions comprise the moral education of political men, their induction into the civic community. The persistence of these convictions is essential to the survival of citizenship, for without them, participation--even if it is widespread--loses its focus and becomes, in Ellul's

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 234.

phrase, "ephemeral."

Summarizing the conclusions of nearly twenty-five years of opinion surveys, Sheldon Wolin noted:

Few would contest the proposition that today Western societies exhibit little in the way of widespread political consciousness among their members and fewer still would doubt that political things are mostly held in disrepute by the members of these societies.<sup>20</sup>

Hundreds of studies have documented the problematic quality of "public opinion" and the tenuous grasp most citizens have on public affairs. As John Schaar notes, the "liberal model of the politically alert and involved citizen does not correspond to the facts. The salient feature of modern political life is not involvement in, but abstention from, politics."<sup>21</sup>

But as with participation, the evidence on citizen attitudes and beliefs can tell us more than the simple fact that many do not comprehend, or care about, politics. The evidence can also suggest some of the factors which affect this widespread indifference and withdrawal, for attitudes, like participation, are vitally affected by two things: political structures and the nature of the "consensus" that those structures create and maintain.

The major attitude surveys of the 1950s and 1960s tended toward the same conclusion: American citizens were not motivated by clearly defined philosophical views, they did not appear to care very much about "the issues," and their voting and other political behavior seemed to be

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<sup>20</sup>Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1960), p. 290.

<sup>21</sup>Schaar, Loyalty in America, pp. 118-19.

more the result of group affiliations than of reasoned analysis. "A person thinks, politically, as he is, socially," and his vote "is formed in the midst of a group decision." Voters in general do not display a coherent "ideology," and do not agree on support for the fundamentals of democracy. Most people, at most times, "pay little attention to issues, rarely worry about the consistency of their opinions, and spend little or no time thinking about the values, presuppositions, and implications which distinguish one political orientation from another." And however much party leaders may disagree on public questions and basic philosophies, voters do not follow suit. The major voting study of the period concluded, unflatteringly, that the American voter "is almost completely unable to judge the rationality of governmental actions; knowing little of particular policies and what has led to them, the mass electorate is not able to appraise either its goals or the appropriateness of the means chosen to serve those goals." Even a staunch defender of "the responsible electorate" admitted that most citizens do not know what to think about political questions, and that "public opinion" is largely the creation of a minority of political activists.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Helen Gaudet, The People's Choice (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), p. 27; Bernard Berelson, Paul Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Election (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 321; Herbert McClosky, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," in Joseph Fiazman, The American Political Arena, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), p. 65; Herbert McClosky, Paul Hoffman, and Rosemary O'Hara, "Issue Conflict and Consensus Among Party Leaders and Followers," in Peter Woll, ed., American Government, 3rd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), pp. 158-82; J.W. Prothro and C. M. Griggs, "Fundamental Principles of Democracy: Bases of Agreement and Disagreement," Journal of Politics, 22 (Spring, 1960), pp. 276-94; Samuel Stouffer, Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1955), passim; David B. Truman, "The American System in Crisis," Political Science Quarterly, 74 (December, 1959), pp. 481-87; Angus

As we will see in Chapter VI, many political scientists used these findings to explain or to justify low levels of political participation on the grounds that such a confused citizenry could only menace the state if it were somehow to become aroused. But the data suggest another hypothesis: that political confusion is to some extent a consequence of political withdrawal (or exclusion), and not a cause of it, a hypothesis that would logically suggest more participation as a remedy rather than less.

This was not, of course, the conclusion drawn by the opinion studies of the 1950s and 1960s. In general, political science explained the confused state of political belief and opinion by pointing to the complexity of modern states.<sup>23</sup> Under modern conditions, Herbert McClosky argued (echoing Bryce), citizens "know the political world only as a bewildering labyrinth of procedures and unceasing turmoil in which it is difficult to distinguish the just from the wicked, the deserving from the undeserving." But the same data which indicted the average citizen found that "political influentials" had more knowledge of public affairs, saw issues more clearly, and were much more confident of their ability to accomplish political goals. On the face of it, this seemed an obvious discovery. After all, who would we expect to participate except those with knowledge, coherent views, and a sense of political competence? It did not occur to any of the major behavioralists that they were finding

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Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, The American Voter (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1967), p. 243; V. O. Key, Jr., "Public Opinion and the Decay of Democracy," in Charles G. Mayo and Beryl L. Crowe, American Political Parties (New York: Harper, 1967), pp. 245-50.

<sup>23</sup>There were exceptions, of course, V. O. Key being the most prominent. See The Responsible Electorate (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966).

evidence for the educational effect of participation--even as they stared it in the face. Herbert McClosky admitted that the difference in the belief systems of the masses and the influentials might be a result of the latter's proximity to the "centers of decision" and the former's distance from them. He concluded that

democratic beliefs and habits are obviously not 'natural' but must be learned; and they are learned more slowly by men and women whose lives are circumscribed by apathy, ignorance, provincialism, and social or physical distance from the centers of intellectual activity.<sup>24</sup>

Having come this far, however, McClosky would go no further; instead of advocating more participation, he expressed relief that the very citizens who are most confused are the ones who participate the least, and offered the hope that public education could eventually reduce the levels of political ignorance.<sup>25</sup>

Recent survey data support the conclusion that the major behavioral studies of the 1950s and 1960s missed the educational potential of participation and the effect of political structures on attitudes. Gerald Pomper's study of presidential elections from 1960 to 1972 offers convincing evidence that political attitudes are not uniformly the result of "modern conditions," but respond quite significantly to political events, the nature of political debate, and the behavior of political leaders. Pomper found that, beginning with the 1964 election, voters began to display at a steadily increasing rate characteristics which differed sharply from those displayed in the 1950s. Voters today, Pomper concludes, are: 1) more ideological, 2) more aware of ideological differences between the two parties, 3) more consistent in their descriptions

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<sup>24</sup>McClosky, "Consensus," pp. 59, 61.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 62-67.

of the basic positions of the two parties, 4) more disposed toward participation, even if outside the electoral system, 5) more inclined to challenge authorities of all kind, 6) more likely to view problems as "national" rather than "local," 7) less partisan in their voting, and 8) where they are partisan, less likely to use their class or group affiliations as the major determinant of their partisanship.<sup>26</sup>

Pomper speculates that these changes in attitude and orientation can be attributed in large part to the altered political climate of the 1960s and 1970s, when issues of great drama and significance were played out in Congress, the courts, the media, the schools, and the streets. These issues were inevitably taken up by the major parties, and as a result, voters were able to make distinctions between candidates and parties that they were unable to make in the 1950s. The 1950s, Pomper argues, were abnormally quiet, a condition encouraged by a bipartisan harmony on most questions of domestic and foreign policy. The 1960s, on the other hand, were characterized by fairly sharp disagreements among political leaders on a wide range of issues, and these disagreements had a predictable influence on voters. "As politics has become more pressing and more relevant, Americans have developed a more coherent, constrained belief system."<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, techniques of political participation outside of the normal political channels--through demonstrations, for example--have mobilized large numbers of people previously excluded from politics, and

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<sup>26</sup> Pomper, Voters' Choice, pp. 11-12, 14-17, 28, 32, 36, 44-46, 58-59, 61, 180-83.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-14; 180.

have spread very rapidly from one group to the next: from blacks and students to women and even to lower-middle-class whites.<sup>28</sup> This mobilization of previously passive citizens has had two important consequences for political belief: it has increased the level of political awareness, and it has decreased the tendency to disapprove of "deviant" political behavior. Pomper feels that "recent turmoils can be seen, not as passing events, but as evidence of a major change, the political modernization of the United States," and that modernization will create the conditions for "a participatory and aware citizenry."<sup>29</sup>

If political beliefs are influenced by the political climate and by political structures, they are also influenced by what some have called the "public ideology." It will be argued here that several components of what Louis Hartz has called "the liberal tradition" inhibit the growth of attitudes appropriate to citizenship, that our public ideology has, in effect, helped speed up the decline of citizenship.

#### Privatism

Tocqueville was apprehensive about the American's tendency to withdraw into a private domestic world where public cares were seldom entertained. American life, "so full of wishes and of work," had little room for civic concerns, which were left to unknown "others" or not dealt with at all. Robert Lane, investigating the political beliefs of a group of men in "Eastport," found that this pattern of privatism had survived

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<sup>28</sup>One need only mention the recent demonstrations in South Boston against school integration. These demonstrations, while occasionally violent, relied for the most part on the proven techniques of sit-ins, boycotts, and marches. Whatever one might think of the justice of these protests, it is clear that they are an obvious improvement over the helpless violence that attended school integration in Little Rock and Mississippi.

<sup>29</sup>Pomper, Voters' Choice, pp. 14-17, 210-212, 13, 15-16.

the century since Tocqueville's visit. "The lives of the men of Eastport, like most Americans' lives, are much more concerned with the business of buying and selling, earning and disposing of things, than they are with the 'idle' talk of politics." Rosenberg found similar feelings among the citizens of Ithaca, New York. Members of this sample felt that politics was a waste of time for several reasons: it was too complex, the government was unresponsive, and politics lacked important psychological satisfactions.<sup>30</sup>

Politics is centrally concerned with the pursuit of common goals, but vast numbers of Americans are apparently not conscious of sharing in any collective enterprises. Lane found this to be true of his sample of men in Eastport. The typical Eastport man, he concluded, "has no purposes developed and exchanged with others, no common goals whose pleasures are increased by being shared; he has no sense of the future beyond his own generation," and is, as a result, essentially "history-less."<sup>31</sup>

The tendency toward privatism and individualism is reflected in other ways, as well. Americans, long thought to be a "nation of joiners," do not in fact have a very rich organizational or community life, at least according to the statistics on organization membership. Only 32% of a recent sample of American adults said that they were "active in at least one community organization," and only 8% reported membership in a political club. The Almond and Verba study, The Civic Culture, found that only

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<sup>30</sup> Robert Lane, Political Ideology (New York: The Free Press, 1967), p. 25; Morris Rosenberg, "Some Determinants of Political Apathy," in Heinz Eulau, Samuel J. Eldersveld, and Morris Janowitz, eds., Political Behavior (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1956), pp. 162-66.

<sup>31</sup> Lane, Political Ideology, pp. 212, 291.

4% of Americans would "work through a formal group to which they belong" in order to change an unjust law or regulation. Fully 43% of this sample did not belong to any organization at all, and only 33% belonged to a group that engaged in political activity. In addition, organizational activity follows the pattern of political participation generally, and is greater among those with higher income and status, and among those who live in cities.<sup>32</sup>

How much of the privatism of American life is a result of a cultural inheritance of long-standing, and how much the result of social structures of a more recent vintage, is difficult to say. There has without question been a strong emphasis in popular American political thought on the virtues of individualism and self-reliance, often with an explicit connection between these virtues and political quietism. But it is also true that privatism receives substantial reinforcement from political institutions which discourage participation by presenting to the citizen a forbidding image of complexity, distance, and indifference.

#### Nonpartisanship

Writing of the loyalty oath controversies of the 1950s, John Schaar observed that the real problem of disloyalty was not posed by Communists, but by those who had never felt loyalty to anything. "Many of today's citizens," he argued, "have never had, or have lost, personal experience of genuine loyalty."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Verba and Nie, Participation in America, Table 2.1, p. 32; Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), pp. 136-37; Wright and Hyman, "Voluntary Association Memberships," p. 290.

<sup>33</sup>Schaar, Loyalty in America, pp. 181-82.

The relation between partisanship and loyalty is complex. As Schaar noted, many Americans experience a form of loyalty that is "too narrowly partisan and gathered around symbols of power and authority."<sup>34</sup> Aggressive nationalism is the most common form of such narrowly partisan loyalty. But where there is no partisanship of any kind, loyalty is also impossible. Where citizens are unwilling to join their fortunes with others--to be identified with them, to share a common fate with them, and to feel loyalty for a principle and those who espouse that principle--democratic institutions cannot survive.

Nonpartisanship involves more than attenuated loyalties, however. It draws on one of the oldest and most persistent features of American political thought: the fear of faction and the hope that a "government of laws" might replace a "government of men." Partisanship means taking sides and making choices, often unpleasant ones. It pits one group against another and asserts a controversial claim: "to the victors belong the spoils of battle." It requires citizens to define their place in public life and to abandon the hope that public issues can be dealt with through the automatic mechanisms of the marketplace. And in the two-party system that has prevailed in this country, partisanship forces the citizen, at least temporarily, to submerge his narrow group affiliations in a much broader party identification.

Survey research shows that party identification is the most important form of partisanship in America, and a major determinant of political behavior. "Few factors are of greater importance for our national elections," Campbell and his associates concluded, "than the

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

lasting attachment of tens of millions of Americans to one of the parties."<sup>35</sup> But "strong" party identifiers make up only about one-third of the electorate: "independents" and "weak" party identifiers have increased in recent elections, as have related phenomena such as the ideological homogeneity within parties and the incidence of "issue voting."<sup>36</sup>

The impact of party identification on political beliefs is clear. Those with strong attachments to one of the two parties tend to have a "greater psychological involvement in political affairs." They are more interested in, and concerned about, elections than those with weak party attachments or no attachments at all, and more likely to participate in election campaigns.<sup>37</sup>

These are obviously important benefits, important counter-weights to the prevailing privatism and individualism of American culture. But political parties, as the major source of partisanship and political mobilization, are bearing a heavy burden, and they bear it virtually alone. There are other factors in American life and in American political belief which undermine and counteract the partisanship of the

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<sup>35</sup> Campbell et al., The American Voter, p. 67.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Table 5.1, p. 69, Table 5.2, p. 70; Pomper, Voters' Choice, pp. 65-76. The social background of independents has also changed, an important point emphasized by Burnham: "A new breed of independent seems to be emerging . . . --a person with a better-than-average education, making a better-than-average income in a better-than-average occupation, and, very possibly, a person whose political cognition and awareness keep him from making identifications with either old party. The losses the two parties, particularly the Democrats, have suffered in this decade have largely been concentrated among precisely those strata of the population most likely to act through and in the political system out of proportion to their numbers." Burnham, Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics, p. 130.

<sup>37</sup> Lane, Political Life, pp. 176; Campbell et al., The American Voter, pp. 83-84.

electoral system. One, of course, is the historic weakening of the parties themselves, a trend noted by many.<sup>38</sup> But a major obstacle to the development of partisan attitudes is simply the fear of partisanship and the psychological value of "independence."<sup>39</sup> Lane's in-depth interviews with the men of Eastport revealed this fear in unmistakable ways. The Eastport men "avoid exposed positions, yield quickly in an argument, . . . and compromise where they can." They do not like to think of themselves as capable of being "influenced" in their vote, especially by organized groups. Although they are working-class men, and some of them are members of unions, they fear unions as much as (or more than) business groups. There is "no place for strong identification with unions in their ideology; there are too many friction points; there is too much dissonance." In general, the men, when faced with a conflict, "search for middle ground" and are uncomfortable when faced with questions about their own class loyalties and identifications. The men of Eastport, so uncertain about their place in society, suffer a form of identity diffusion which makes partisanship impossible.

They cannot easily develop a social conscience on their own, and they are not helped by group life to develop one they can use. By weakening group structures modern society tends to homogenize and to demoralize opinion. The clash of various groups forces each to invoke moral norms in its own defense; where this clash is lost in a broader consensus, this pressure to moralize positions is weakened.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Among the recent discussions of the weakening of American political parties, see Gerald Pomper, "Party Functions and Party Failures," in Gerald Pomper, ed., The Performance of American Government (New York: The Free Press, 1972), pp. 46-96; and Burnham, Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics, pp. 120-30, 137-73.

<sup>39</sup> Lane, Political Life, p. 176.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 472.

### The Private Interest

The final element in the structure of liberal belief is the faith that a public interest can emerge from the clash of private wills; or, as Madison phrased it, the conviction that the private interest can stand sentinel over the public rights. This idea has taken many forms in American political thought. As expressed in The Federalist Papers, it was, as we saw in Chapter I, a way around the dilemma of political education. The need to train citizens in the traditional republican virtues would, if taken seriously, have mandated a confederacy of small states. It would also have required what Madison and his colleagues felt to be an unjustifiably sanguine view of human nature. Much better, they argued, to rely on the clash of separate, private interests in a large republic, where the primary focus of loyalty--the national government--was far removed from the parochial passions which generated those private interests. In this way no single interest would be able to prevail; the public good, defined procedurally as stability, would emerge automatically.

Later in our history, Social Darwinism offered an updated version of the theory of private interest, in which the natural evolution of society was made up of the individual, unconscious acts of each member of the race, each private fate making its involuntary contribution to the fate of the whole. Here, too, although for different reasons, there could not be conflict between private and public morality. No external standard could or should be applied to the acts (or to the fate) of the individual citizen. The importance lay exclusively in the results of a million separate behaviors, no one of which had any significance by itself.

Economic theory made its own contribution to the veneration of private interest, declaring bluntly that no public will could shape the outcome of collective behavior in the marketplace. Again, the good of the whole could be sought only in the interplay of private goods, unfettered by extraneous standards and values.

In political science, the related themes of private interests and the competition of groups were taken up by the pluralists and group theorists, who argued that public policy was simply the result of the interplay of these groups. The notion that a common good or public interest could be imposed upon these private goods, or that citizens could be educated to seek such a public interest, soon came to be counted among the myths to be dispelled by science.

Taken together, these variants of the marketplace theme had a powerful effect on the popular understanding of politics. Every version of the theory of private interest contained one especially significant ingredient. This was the conclusion that politics was in some sense an "automatic" process, working itself out without conscious direction, the way prices emerge out of the rise and fall in supply and demand. Lowi has made the point that liberalism never understood the extent to which art was necessary to make the "free market" work.<sup>41</sup> So it was with the belief that government could be no more than the sum of private acts committed for private motives. This belief tended to hide from public view the complex and deliberate policies which were the true impetus behind American growth. To that extent, politics became a realm of

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<sup>41</sup>Lowi, The End of Liberalism, pp. 7-29.

mysterious forces which altered the landscape without leaving a trace either of motive or of plan.

But perhaps the most important effect of this faith in private interest is not to be found in the attitudes or behavior of individual citizens, but in the political institutions which that faith has shaped. Americans are citizens of a community that places a great reliance on the ability of private groups to manage the public's business. The participation of private interest groups in the determination and administration of public policy is both expected and encouraged in the United States. The expertise and standards of these groups shape the content of much of our public policy, which makes certain conceptions of the citizen's role difficult to maintain.

Lowi argues, for example, that "interest-group liberalism" and the custom of parcelling out authority to private groups have led to a crisis of public authority. Such practices, which permeate all levels of government, "shut out the public" and disenfranchise "all that part of the mass that is not specifically organized around values strongly salient to the goals of the program. The crisis of authority, then, is also a crisis of citizenship, for political questions are taken out of the public arena and removed to places remote from the lives and the awareness of most citizens."<sup>42</sup>

The bias toward private interest and government by groups also warps political debate by undermining, at the outset, the conceptual tools necessary for resolving public questions. Joseph Tussman has said that "we hear much more frequently that the democratic citizen is expected to

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

participate in the political process than that he is expected to be a guardian of public purpose."<sup>43</sup> But it could hardly be otherwise, given the history of American political institutions and American political thought.

Shut out of the groups that determine public policy, unaffiliated for the most part with groups of any kind, and forced to speak a language from which notions of public interest and public obligation have been stripped, the American citizen is severely handicapped before he even considers the possibility of participation. Citizenship, which by nature is oriented toward those things which men have in common, is at the very outset wrenched in another direction entirely, toward the expression of what is particular to each man--so much so that a popular expression has a "solid citizen" being a man who "minds his own business." Thus deprived of its meaning and taken from its proper context, citizenship is liable to be twisted into strange and alarming shape.

But discussions of political belief must in the end remain largely speculative. Opinion surveys designed to ferret out the public's attitude toward various questions--including, as in the civic culture study by Almond and Verba and the work of Robert Lane, attitudes toward the political community itself--may be deceptive, because they capture those opinions outside of their natural environment. Political beliefs, after all, are those beliefs which citizens utilize in their role as political actors. They mean one thing when expressed in an abstract situation, such as an interview, and another thing when acted upon in a distinctly political situation, such as voting, attending a town meeting, speaking

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<sup>43</sup> Joseph Tussman, Obligation and the Body Politic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 73.

at a party meeting, or making a decision in one's capacity as an agent or representative of others. The specific content of political belief may not be as important as the fact that so few Americans have ever experienced the activity which transforms abstract opinion into concrete political action.

The question then becomes: What resources do citizens need in order to take that first step out of the security of the private, domestic world, into the "void" of the political community?

Citizenship as a Skill:  
The Dimension of Competence

In a democratic system, where all adult residents possess the legal rights of citizens, and are expected to fulfill the obligations of citizenship, it is essential nonetheless to make a distinction between the active and the passive citizen. This distinction reproduces, in many respects, the ancient separation of cities into citizens and subjects or clients, or "freemen" and serfs, although the legal disabilities of passive citizens are of course not to be compared to those of dependent clients. But there is a similarity in the source of the distinction between these two classes, which, now as in the past, is the unequal distribution of the resources which are the unofficial prerequisites of citizenship. The literature is far from unanimous as to which resources are essential and which superficial, but those most commonly discussed fall into the following categories.

Material Resources

Wealth in all of its forms, in at least moderate amounts, has always been considered a prerequisite for those who would be active and

effective citizens. As we saw in Chapter I, citizens were originally those individuals whose power gave them the ability to call a City into existence and to shape its growth. But if only those with great wealth could be effective in politics, no nation could hope for more than a large minority of citizens. It is not opulence that is required (in fact, opulence may be prohibited by the needs of citizenship) so much as security, or the ability to escape "clientship." In the middle ages, one who had attained such a status was called a "freeman" and was distinguished from a slave or serf by his right to participate in the election of officials of his city.

As we have seen, survey research supports the expectation that wealth makes citizenship possible--or, more precisely, that the poor do not exercise the options of citizenship nearly as much as the well-to-do. In light of this finding, then, it is surely a fact of great importance that the distribution of wealth in the United States is highly unequal and that it shows signs of becoming more so in the future. Robert Heilbroner concludes that "the statistics of income distribution clearly show a regular drift of income toward the upper end of the income spectrum."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Robert Heilbroner, The Limits of American Capitalism (New York: Harper Torchbacks, 1967), p. 87. A few statistics might be useful to bring this point home. In 1910, according to one estimate, the top 10% of the population earned 33.9% of total national income, and the bottom 10% earned 3.4%. By 1959, these figures had changed very little: the top 10% earned 28.9% of income, and the bottom 10% earned only 1.1%. Gabriel Kolko, Wealth and Power in America (New York: Praeger, 1962), p. 14. Robert Lekachman has sorted the same data in a slightly different fashion, and finds that in 1910 the highest 50% of the income earners received 73.2% of income, and the bottom half received 26.8%. In 1929, on the eve of the Depression, this disparity had grown: the top half got 78% of income, the bottom half only 22%. In 1967, after the New Deal, the Fair Deal, and the Great Society, the only visible change was an

The concentration of income at the top of the pyramid mandates the existence at the bottom of a poverty class that may be as large as 20% of the total population.<sup>45</sup> To that figure must be added perhaps another fifth whose incomes place them just a notch or two above the subsistence level, and who are in constant peril of sinking into the poverty class. The members of these two classes cannot possibly give time to political affairs. Furthermore, those who are born into these classes are almost certain to remain there, fated to a life of more or less permanent unemployment and limited prospects.

There are other signs that the economy may be one of the chief barriers to the wider diffusion of citizenship. One is the alarming incidence of business cycles in our history, a source of chronic insecurity and a profound disturber of the relations of citizens with one another and with their community. What this boom and bust experience means is that no man can be secure in what he possesses, and this anxiety tends to produce a pattern of political quietism interrupted by occasional bursts of resentment.<sup>46</sup>

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insignificant one: the top half earned 77.7% and the bottom half earned 22.3%. Moreover, the share going to the very poorest of the poor dropped from 8.3% in 1910 to only 3.7% in 1969. On top of this problem, "taxes do not alter the relationship. Overall, the American tax system is proportional rather than progressive." Robert Lekachman, National Income and the Public Welfare (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 73.

<sup>45</sup>Michael Harrington, The Other America (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962).

<sup>46</sup>Hans Speier argues that political instability and "partisan violence" are usually the result of one class changing its position relative to another class, a common result of a cycle of inflation and depression. "Democracy and the Social Insecurity Level," in Hans Speier, Social Order and the Risks of War (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1969), pp. 27-36.

Another economic fact of life which has grim implications for the future of citizenship is the growth of a large labor surplus in the United States. For the first century of its existence, the United States did not have to face a serious unemployment problem, because all who could work found employment in the enterprises spawned by the growth of cities and industries. Western expansion and cheap land absorbed those who could not be employed in the settled areas of the country. By the beginning of this century, however, that was no longer the case, and from that moment the country has faced a severe and chronic unemployment problem which shows no signs of abating.<sup>47</sup> The consequence is a growing sector of the population for which there is quite literally no use. Here is a form of slavery the world has never seen before: slavery divorced from labor, a serfdom of idleness whose subjects are slum residents, the rural poor, the old, the working-class youth for whom there is no job, the members of racial minorities who never made it into the stable working class. If there is no reorganization of the productive system which finds

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<sup>47</sup>This is, of course, a point of contention between liberals and Marxists--the latter claiming that capitalism cannot provide for full employment, and the former insisting that it can, by manipulating spending and tax policy. But the fact of unemployment seems clear enough, even if its true dimensions are a matter of dispute. For example, Robert J. Lampmann estimates that in the post-war period, about 15% of the labor force experienced some form of unemployment during any given year. Tom Christoffel notes that the "official" unemployment rate has dropped below 4% only twice since 1929 (in 1946 and 1947). And the Social Science Research Council reported a finding in June, 1961, that suggests the "hidden" unemployment rate is much larger than the official one. In that survey, 14.5% of a national sample reported at least one member of the family had been unemployed at some time during the previous year. Robert J. Lampmann, "Recent U.S. Economic Growth and the Gain in Human Welfare," in Walter W. Heller, ed., Perspectives on Economic Growth (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 145 ff.; Tom Christoffel, "The Permanent Job Shortage," in Tom Christoffel, David Finkelhor, and Dan Gilberg, eds., Up Against the American Dream (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970), pp. 259-72.

gainful employment for America's "client-subjects," then this class will continue to grow until it constitutes a separate nation for whose members citizenship will remain little more than a bitter promise. (For a grim projection of this particular future, see Kurt Vonnegut's science fiction novel, Player Piano.)

#### Social Resources

Under this heading we find two separate resources, one simple and one complex: leisure and social credit.

The rights and obligations of citizenship take time, and time, like wealth, is an unequally distributed resource. The pressures of economic life, particularly in a depression or recession, do not effect all citizens in the same way. Those who must put in overtime or work more than one job in order to make ends meet will obviously find little opportunity to attend meetings, study the issues, or even think about politics. And modern economic organization, although it has been characterized by a progressively shortened workweek, has at the same time increased the amount of time necessary for certain other tasks--commuting, for example--at the expense of both leisure time and income-producing time.

Social credit is a resource that is much more difficult to assess. It can be defined as the ability to be heard, or the ability to get one's views listened to with respect. We know that the absence of social credit can have a devastating effect not only on one's performance as a citizen, but upon the entire range of human behavior, as suggested by the striking metaphors of "invisibility" used by W. E. B. DuBois and Ralph Ellison to describe the effects of racial discrimination:

Then it dawned on me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhaps, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil . . . . I held all beyond it in common contempt, and lived above it in a region of blue sky and great wandering shadows. (W. E. B. DuBois, Souls of Black Folk)

I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus shadows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination--indeed, everything and anything except me. (Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man)

Racial prejudice is not the only cause for the loss of social credit. There is one category of person to whom credit is always denied, regardless of race: the stranger, the newcomer. And just as residency requirements deny the franchise to millions of citizens, so does the pattern of mobility deny social credit to the millions who, at any given moment, are settling into a new city, often for only a brief stay, and then moving on again. This is a condition which effects, at one time or another, a majority of American citizens. Campbell and his associates found in the 1950s that 60% of the population were "movers." It would be risky to make too many claims for the importance of this kind of mobility. New arrivals, obviously, are not always, or forever, strangers. But they are for a time at least, and we know from other studies that communities with a high percentage of "transients" have lower levels of participation than more stable communities. What effect migration has on less measurable forms of civic involvement than voting is a matter for speculation.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Campbell et al., The American Voter, p. 231, 237; Lane, Political Life, p. 267.

### Psychological Resources

The psychic resources which citizenship requires are numerous: a strong ego, the ability to trust others, self-control, a solid social identity, freedom from anxiety, empathy, willingness to express unpopular political opinions. These are some of the components of what Robert Lane has called the "democratic personality." However, Lane found in his interviews with the Eastport men that a great many of them lacked important psychological resources and displayed a syndrome he labelled "the impoverished self," a combination of low self-acceptance, low self-esteem, and low ego strength.<sup>49</sup>

Low self-acceptance--the rejection by the individual of some part of his unconscious life or his social memberships--was associated in Lane's study with authoritarianism and alienation. Low self-esteem was found among many of the men, who felt that they were "unworthy to hold opinions, to make demands upon the society, to be treated as . . . important." Lane defined low ego strength as the absence of self-control and mastery of the environment. Several of the men were handicapped in this way: "Without the inner experience of control, a man hardly understands how control processes work . . . without a gyroscopic mechanism, a strong ego, he becomes putty; he has no will of his own."<sup>50</sup>

This paucity of psychological resources seems to be connected to another fact of life in Eastport: the "diffuse social identity" which Lane found among almost all of the men. Social identity "refers to the use of attributes derived from a man's identification with social groups

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<sup>49</sup>Lane, Political Ideology, pp. 400-12, 409.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 412.

to describe and define himself." In Eastport, this "sense of belonging to some specified part of human society" is made difficult by three important aspects of Eastport's (and America's) culture: social mobility, religious tolerance, and ethnic assimilation. "Conflicted identity" might be another way of describing this phenomenon, for, as Lane concludes, the major social ties of class, religion, and ethnicity are simultaneously "experienced and denied. The feelings associated with them are ambivalent; the ties are thought to be somewhat illegitimate; history is thought to be working against them so that, in some ways, they are thought to be transitory."<sup>51</sup>

Too intense an identification with one narrow group might be thought to be a hindrance to the growth of citizenship, but the fact is, paradoxical though it may seem, that those who cannot make the narrow identification do not make the broader ones either. Citizens who are not certain of their membership in some group smaller than the total community have only a tenuous sense of connection with that broader group, the public. The Eastport men who display the symptoms of "diffuse social identity," for example, find partisanship of any kind difficult to sustain; indeed, it is difficult for them to articulate any goals or interests which they share with others. This is a major obstacle to participation and citizenship.<sup>52</sup>

The Civic Inheritance:  
Political Community

One of the citizen's most important resources is the City itself:

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 389, 392.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 399.

a political community with a vivid public life. The City must be knowable, its boundaries relatively familiar and fixed, its size within the range of human comprehension. As noted in Chapter I, the City is an inheritance, difficult to create within the lifetime of a single generation. And some of the factors which inhibit the growth of the psychic resources of citizenship also erode the communities which are the citizen's most important resource.

Tocqueville hoped that experience in local government would teach Americans the lessons of publicity that the culture disregarded. It was a fundamental tenet of ancient political science that the City had an educational function which could only be met under certain circumstances: the City would have to be small, homogenous, isolated from corrupting influences. But the universal experience of locality in contemporary America is quite different. American cities are not, in most cases, vital political spaces. The economic and political forces which shape the lives of Americans have moved out of the local communities, stranding them in a kind of symbolic backwater of life. The consequence is that there is nothing for Americans to be citizens of except the nation-at-large.

Lane found that communities in Eastport were disintegrating, that the men did not retain neighborhood ties, that ethnic groups had been dispersed: the dissolution of social bonds went hand in hand with the atrophy of the political community. As a result, many of the men were wary of close friendships. Social mobility and change, having altered so many of the "givens" of life, posted a warning against dependence on social ties that might be broken in the future. The men were literally

"homeless."<sup>53</sup> Lane concluded that this "touch of anomie" was necessary for the continued functioning of democracy, but the price is a heavy one, for the decay of vital political communities at the local level lies behind much of the alienation and withdrawal that Lane and others have found rife in America, and which are themselves threats of the first magnitude. The Eastport men, for example, could hardly be citizens under conditions such as these:

In Eastport, as in most cities, the political spaces marked off into wards and precincts has almost no congruence with any meaningful classification of space in the minds of the Eastportians--not neighborhoods, which are themselves of declining importance, not ethnic boundaries . . . [nor] county, the state senatorial district, the congressional district . . . Even the state has little meaning, loyalty, community.<sup>54</sup>

Little wonder, then, that some of the men are tempted to fill this void with "Americanism," or that those who were rooted in the community seemed to be so mainly because of their fear of the outside world or because of their immersion in family life.<sup>55</sup>

Intellectual Resources:  
Information and Skill

From the earliest use of survey research, political scientists have been alarmed by the low levels of political information and comprehension demonstrated by American citizens. Campbell and his colleagues found that, depending on the issue, from one-tenth to one-third of their respondents could express no opinion whatsoever; 10% to 39% could express an opinion but had no information on the subject; and that on certain issues only 45% of the electorate could express an opinion and display some information to support it. About 25% of their respondents were

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 226-27.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 305-306.

familiar with less than half of the issues presented. "The fact seems to be," the authors concluded, "that the human preceptorium is highly selective, and unless it happens to be tuned to a particular wavelength, the message transmitted over that wavelength will be received only as noise."<sup>56</sup>

Digging deeper, Lane found in his Eastport study that most of the men had difficulty in placing political knowledge in any useful or productive context. "The items and fragments of life remain itemized and fragmented--at least at the conscious level." Knowledge about government was associated with "school knowledge" and disvalued for that reason, and because it evoked painful memories of failure in school. Furthermore, most of the men had no idea of who to see for advice about some political question, and most of them were not certain they would ask for advice if they knew who could give it. They had a "morbid fear of being influenced." Nor were they conscious of any major event which had brought about a change in their political thinking, or to which they could refer in explaining their opinions. The working-class men of Eastport could "hardly talk about the sources of their political orientation" and were uncomfortable in making the attempt. But many of the men had what Lane called "insider's knowledge" about local government: who to see to get a street repaired, for example.<sup>57</sup>

It was in the area of systematic explanation that Lane found the greatest handicap. Although most of the Eastport men were prepared to accept and to invent impersonal explanations for things--eschewing the

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<sup>56</sup>Campbell et al., The American Voter, pp. 101, 99.

<sup>57</sup>Lane, Political Ideology, pp. 353, 365-67, 374-77.

"bad man theory" as an explanation for all problems--they were unable to go much farther than that, and some were too dependent upon impersonal explanations. Their understanding of problems was often vague, diffuse; responsibility was difficult to pin down. Beyond the vague sense that problems lay somewhere in "the system" was a vast, uncharted sea. The men did not possess the knowledge that would help them place their scattered facts in context, to help them arrive at what might truly be called an explanation of anything. In particular, they had no historical understanding--present events were not often related to past events. The Eastport men bear out Lipsitz's argument that "the most vaguely developed aspect of poor peoples' (and most peoples') political views is likely to be the area of explanation--why things happen and don't happen."<sup>58</sup>

"Political skills" are those which help a citizen persuade or cooperate with others. There are not many places or times in life in which these skills can be learned. Citizens might learn them in groups, except that group life in America is not intense and, in any case, most groups, since they are not run democratically, do not give their members much chance to learn the skills appropriate to a democracy. Participation in party affairs is confined to a very small minority of citizens. Nor is there much chance that citizens will learn these political skills

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 309-310, 329-30, 379. Lewis Lipsitz, "On Political Belief: The Grievances of the Poor," in Philip Green and Sanford Levinson, eds., Power and Community (New York: Pantheon, 1969), pp. 167-68. Attributing problems to "the system" is a habit which calls to mind Tocqueville's fear that the political community would come to seem a "void" to the democratic citizen. Democracy in America, 2 vols., trans. by Henry Reeve, ed. by Phillips Bradley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), Vol. II, p. 77.

on the job, for most jobs do not encourage the kind of initiative and independence that are required here. Particularly among working-class citizens, the work environment is a hindrance to the development of civic competence. Several studies have documented the negative effects of the industrial work environment on the development of political skills. Blauner, in Alienation and Freedom, finds that "the social personality of the auto worker . . . is expressed in a characteristic attitude of cynicism toward authority and institutional systems," and that the workplace leaves little room for independent thought or initiative. In the textile industry, Blauner concludes, the "worker is resigned to his lot . . . more dependent than independent . . . He lacks confidence in himself . . . he is humble . . . the most prevalent feeling states . . . seem to be fear and anxiety." Chris Argyris argues that the typical worker can use few of his abilities on the job and so experiences a "decreasing sense of self-control and self-responsibility." And Robert Lane's evidence suggests that men feel less alienated by their work only to the extent that they have outside experiences of a qualitatively different sort than those provided by the factory or shop: e.g., if they have friends or relatives in positions of authority, or if they are members of a union. On the job itself, the men learn "social cooperation" divorced from a sense of common purpose"--i.e., they are "homogenized", to borrow Lane's phrase.<sup>59</sup>

This, then, is the quality of contemporary citizenship: the negative side, to be sure, but disturbing, nonetheless. It is a picture of

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<sup>59</sup>Studies cited by Carol Patemen, Participation and Democratic Theory (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 50-53. Also Lane, Political Ideology, pp. 248, 247.

low participation, the dominance of a belief system that is in many ways a serious obstacle to the growth of citizenship, and a highly uneven distribution of the resources which citizens need. It is a picture which has haunted political scientists throughout this century, and they have responded to it in different ways. It is the purpose of the next chapter to examine the response that most typifies political science in the post-war period: the school known as pluralism.

## CHAPTER VI

### POLITICS WITHOUT CITIZENS

"Where the rational citizen seems to abdicate, nevertheless, angels seem to tread."

-- Bernard Berelson et al., Voting

#### 1.

#### The New(er) Science of Politics

After the Second World War political science entered upon what might be called its third generation, as students of Charles Merriam and others of that generation came into possession of the discipline. As often happens, the acceptance of the inheritance was not accomplished without some ruffling of feelings and charges of usurpation. A young Turk movement was necessary before the new owners were safely in possession of the property.

At first the revolt seemed little more than the rise of new men impatient at the continued dominance of their elders. Gradually, however, there emerged more serious issues of method and substance which transcended generational boundaries, and by the 1950s it was clear that the political science discipline was becoming divided between two schools, one vaguely associated with what was called "normative political theory" and the other with what was coming to be known as "behavioralism." A great war of words ensued which it is not necessary to report on here.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Bernard Crick, The American Science of Politics (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959); Arnold Brecht, Political Theory (Princeton:

What is necessary is to abstract from the methodological and substantive arguments some of the themes that relate to citizenship, for the crisis of citizenship was as much a part of the post-war debates in political science as it was of the debates attending the formative and middle years of the discipline's growth.

The "behavioral persuasion," to borrow Heinz Eulau's phrase, was a long time coming, and was visible in the professional journals long before the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> Merriam, as we have seen, had been advocating a scientific study of political behavior since the 1920s, and many others joined him in that call. But in the 1930s and 1940s, the experience of political scientists who had been called into the government service during the New Deal and the Second World War gave Merriam's abstract advocacy a vivid meaning. Scholars attracted to the government service discovered that the institutions of American politics did not work the way the textbooks said they worked. The law and the texts said one thing; the actual behavior of bureaucrats and politicians was very different. The scholar in government, Pendleton Herring wrote in 1945, discovers that "laws or theories setting forth what men should do are bound to contrast with what is actually done."<sup>3</sup> This wartime discovery would prove to be a useful corrective to the discipline, Herring believed. "The more we know of the intricacies and variables that make up the governmental

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Princeton University Press, 1967); Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus, The Development of American Political Science: From Burgess to Behaviorism (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967).

<sup>2</sup> Heinz Eulau, The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics (New York: Random House, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> Pendleton Herring, "Political Science in the Next Decade," American Political Science Review, 39 (August, 1945), p. 763.

process, the more difficult our task of studying government is recognized to be."<sup>4</sup> The more difficult but, presumably, the more rewarding as well.

The Second World War also gave many scholars the feeling that political science was not "tough" enough (during the next decades "rigorous" would become their favorite word) to meet the demands of the age, and that what it lacked in the way of stiffening could be provided by more scientific methods. This resolution coincided, happily enough, with the increasing sophistication of computerized information processing--another legacy of the war and the welfare state. Survey research, particularly, had in a very short time blossomed from the rudimentary techniques of Harold Gosnell to the major collective enterprise typified by the Survey Research Center.

All of these varied motives and moods contributed to the school called "behavioral political science," which, in the 1930s, had simply been a euphemism for "social science," chosen to avoid confusion with "socialism."<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the most important theme in the behavioral literature of this early period was simply that the discipline wasn't realistic enough. In part, this was an inheritance from the pragmatists, and reflected pragmatism's hostility (and almost wilfull misunderstanding of) theory; in part, as we have seen, it was a reflection of wartime discoveries of the actual complexity of American institutions. It was also a reaction against the "history of ideas" approach to politics, what

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Or so the story goes; see Somit and Tanenhaus, The Development of Political Science, p. 183.

Merriam had contemptuously referred to as the "five-foot shelf of erudition." The corrective, many thought, was to get out into the field and to do some actual research. A complete description of government, David Truman wrote in 1951, "can be supplied only by systematic observations of actual behavior, not by pure speculation or by the exegesis of texts."<sup>6</sup>

At a later stage in its development, behavioralism became associated with "scientific value relativism"--the notion that scientific methods in the social sciences are incapable of revealing anything about "ultimate values."<sup>7</sup> But it is interesting to note that in the beginning, this understanding of science did not keep behavioralism from sharing the reform impulse that is the heritage of the political science movement. The early devotees of behavioralism agreed with Merriam and others that science must have a great deal to do with values: that it must, in fact, remake society. Certainly Harold Lasswell entertained such hopes, despite his relentless "tough-mindedness."<sup>8</sup> So did others. Peter Odegard, in his 1951 Presidential address before the American Political Science Association, told his colleagues that they were all "partners in a common quest for understanding and control of

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<sup>6</sup>David Truman, "Implications of Political Behavior Research," Items, 5 (1951), p. 38.

<sup>7</sup>Arnold Brecht, Political Theory, p. 118: "But when it comes to the point where the question is which ultimate evaluations are right and which are wrong, . . . Scientific Method must consistently refuse to take a stand."

<sup>8</sup>Harold Lasswell, "The Political Science of Science," American Political Science Review, 50 (December, 1956), pp. 961-79.

what Hobbes so accurately named The Leviathan."<sup>9</sup> Pendleton Herring, six years earlier, had predicted that political scientists would be especially useful in the future, because they were uniquely qualified to help statesmen understand the "philosophical justification" for various policies, and he called for more "men of understanding" to complement the "men of action" and the "men of belief" (i.e., theorists). The "systematic study of political behavior," he urged, was not incompatible with the preaching of democratic values and the espousal of specific policies.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps the most explicit expression of the reform theme came in two reports written by the Ford Foundation in 1949 and 1953, which became the basis of a series of substantial grants to the behavioral sciences in the early 1950s. Bernard Berelson has written that these reports, and the subsequent grants, influenced "at least the nomenclature, and probably even the conception," of the entire field of behavioral study."<sup>11</sup>

The Ford Foundation Report on the Behavioral Sciences for 1949 argued that "the most important problems of human welfare now lie in the realm of democratic society, in man's relation to man, in human relations and social organization." The Report then urged the Foundation to support behavioral research relevant to five major goals: "the establishment of peace, the strengthening of democracy, the strengthening of

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<sup>9</sup>Peter Odegard, "Variations on a Familiar Theme," American Political Science Review, 45 (December, 1951), p. 963.

<sup>10</sup>Herring, "Political Science in the Next Decade," pp. 762-65.

<sup>11</sup>International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (1968), s.v. "Behavioral Science," by Bernard Berelson.

the economy, education in democratic society, and [the understanding of] individual behavior and human relations."<sup>12</sup>

The 1953 Report defined behavioral science as "research" programs rather than "action" programs, and it defined science in terms of "objectivity, verifiability, and generality," but it reaffirmed the commitment to reform. The Ford Foundation, it said, was not interested in knowledge for the sake of knowledge, but only that knowledge "which promises at some point to serve human needs. The program is thus oriented to social problems and needs."<sup>13</sup>

But at the same time, spokesmen for behavioralism were pursuing other avenues of thought which either diverged from the main one or ran in exactly the opposite direction. It was not unusual for one man to espouse several views at once. Lasswell, for example, while hoping to commit political science to the goals of reform, could not refrain from projecting an image of the policy scientist as an amoral specialist in scientific forecasting, a role which, while not incompatible with reform, is not especially congenial to it, either. In his Presidential address of 1956, Lasswell criticized the profession for not having prepared the statesman for the consequences of nuclear weapons. The political scientist's job, he said, is to scan the horizon, "defining in advance the probable import of what is foreseeable for the navigator of the Ship of State."<sup>14</sup> The political scientist's job is not to tell

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<sup>12</sup>Report on the Behavioral Sciences, Ford Foundation, 1949, cited in *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>13</sup>Report of the Ford Foundation, 1953, cited in *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>14</sup>Lasswell, "Political Science of Science," p. 965.

statesmen what they already know (e.g., how to get elected) nor is it to reiterate and celebrate "the ideal aspirations of the body politic." It is simply to "project a comprehensive image of the future for the purpose of indicating how our over-riding goal values are likely to be affected if current policies continue." This job would involve three specific tasks: 1) "Clarifying the fundamental goal values of the body politic"; 2) "originating policy alternatives"; 3) using the political specialist's knowledge to recognize "new patterns" in history and the disappearance of old ones.<sup>15</sup>

"Clarifying fundamental goal values," however, was not as easy as it sounded. For one thing, the belief that values needed no more than "clarification" assumed more consensus, even among political scientists, than actually existed. (As noted in Chapter V, the lack of consensus on the "fundamentals" of democracy was one of the more important findings of the survey research of the 1950s.) When applied to society as a whole that assumption was simply a way of begging the question. Furthermore, values need to be criticized and understood, which involves looking into the past as much as peering into the future. Introspection is as valuable a tool as quantification. In Power and Society, written with Abraham Kaplan in 1950, Lasswell tossed off the confession that "our own values are those of the citizen of a society that aspires toward freedom."<sup>16</sup> Leaving aside the accuracy of that description of the United States in 1950, this is an awfully sketchy treatment for some-

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 978.

<sup>16</sup> Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. xiii.

one who wants to "clarify the fundamental goal values" of an entire nation. "We are not concerned," the authors continued, "with the justification of democratic values, their derivation from some metaphysical or moral base." Values, in other words, will be treated simply as "data" and accepted as given--or as found. The task of justification will be left to specialists in "political doctrine" (examples being Plato, Rousseau, and James Madison). The political scientist, by contrast, will concern himself only with "the study of the shaping and sharing of power."<sup>17</sup> Political science should concentrate on methods and procedures and leave discussions of purpose to "doctrinists" and "philosophers." This deceptively simple division of labor follows the view that theorists such as Plato were utopians unconcerned with the real world--men who dealt in the business of imagining values and ideals.<sup>18</sup> It forms the basis of those views of political science which distinguish "normative theory" from "empirical theory," a view which became increasingly popular during the 1950s. This division of labor made it possible for one political scientist to specialize in facts or empirically testable hypotheses while leaving utopian speculation to others.<sup>19</sup>

This conception, while it gained a respectable following, was completely at odds with the original reform impulse of the early behavior-

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. xiv.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Dahl, Modern Political Analysis, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. v-vi.

<sup>19</sup> Sheldon Wolin offers a different conception of political theory in his article in the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, s.v. "Political Theory," and in "Political Theory as a Vocation," American Political Science Review, 63 (December, 1969), pp. 1062-82.

alists. The newer school professed a rigid and simple distinction between statements of value and statements of fact, emphasizing the objective character of the scientific method. It saw its role as the collection of data and the invention of systematic, empirical theory.<sup>20</sup> It attracted those political scientists most enamored of the methods thought to characterize the natural sciences. At its best it produced a tremendous wealth of information and insight on voting behavior and public opinion, among other subjects; at its worst, it encouraged a preposterous pseudo-science in which the simplest and most obvious narrative statements were reduced to elaborate "mathematical notations" or in which only those theories were considered relevant which could be verified by the standards of empirical research.<sup>21</sup>

So far we have been concentrating on methodological questions. But there were several substantive themes which emerged after World War II which should be discussed briefly, for they were also to have an important effect on post-war concepts of citizenship.

The first theme to emerge was inspired by the war itself. As we have seen, many political scientists came away from their wartime government service with a new sense of the discipline's mission. They also

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<sup>20</sup> Evron Kirkpatrick, "The Impact of the Behavioral Approach on Traditional Political Science," in Austin Ranney, ed., Essays on the Behavioral Study of Politics (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1962), pp. 1-29.

<sup>21</sup> For example: " $NP(x,y) > NP(y,x) \leftrightarrow xPgy$ ." This means that "if the number of people who prefer alternative 'x' is greater than the number of people who prefer alternative 'y' then it implies / or is a function of --the double arrow can mean both/ that (according to the principle of majority rule) alternative 'x' is preferred by the government to alternative 'y'." Robert Dahl, A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 60.

came away with a new area of study--international relations. The study of diplomacy, of course, had been an important part of the old political science, but the new interest in foreign affairs marked a sharp break with past methods and theories. For our purposes here, the most important change was the heightened consciousness of the relation between international relations and domestic politics, which brought with it the realization that a further responsibility had devolved upon an already overburdened citizenry. Nuclear weapons, bi-polarism, the Cold War, international political movements, anti-colonialism, the increased importance of defense budgets, national security problems--all these now became "inputs" in the analysis of domestic affairs, and domestic politics, in turn, became an input into the study of international politics. In his Presidential address of 1951, Peter Odegard took note of these developments and declared that the distinction between international and domestic politics had been rendered "artificial" in the post-war world.<sup>22</sup>

Another important theme, one which dates back before the war but which survived into the 1950s, was the problem posed by mass movements and totalitarianism. These movements, with their tremendous potential for destruction and with the possibility that, once in control of a modern state, the world's fate might rest in the hands of irrational leaders or irrational citizens, prompted a re-examination of some of the traditional assumptions of liberal democracy. The emergence of a right-wing movement in the United States itself during the McCarthy investigations only added to these concerns.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Peter Odegard, "Variations on a Familiar Theme," p. 961.

<sup>23</sup>Michael Paul Rogin, The Intellectuals and McCarthy (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1967).

Meanwhile, statistical techniques and information-processing were delivering a great deal of bad news about American politics and American citizenship. The major voting and opinion studies of the time, as we saw in Chapter V, were anything but sanguine in their revelations. The discovery that Americans did not behave the way good citizens were supposed to behave encouraged the realists in the profession in their attempt to go beyond normative theory into the "actual workings of politics." In 1951, Oliver Garceau wrote that the "apparent and oft-berated contrast between observable behavior patterns and the heritage of democratic belief" had presented the discipline with a "stimulating quandry." The quandry could be resolved, he argued, only if political science gave up its "mistaken tendency to attribute descriptive validity to the normative literature of our culture," most of which, because it was written before the industrial age, was of doubtful relevance anyway.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, opinion research encouraged the century-old doubts about whether the American system had the capacity to withstand the numerous challenges of an industrial society, a doubt which was in itself an important motive for reassessing the discipline's methods and theories.

These themes merged into a fourth--into what has been called variously "group theory" or "pluralism." Bertram Gross and David Truman signalled the reaffirmation of group theory in 1950, with Gross's review of a new edition of Bentley's The Process of Government in the American Political Science Review, and with Truman's publication of The Governmental

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<sup>24</sup> Oliver Garceau, "Research in the Political Process," in Heinz Eulau, Samuel J. Eldersveld, and Morris Janowitz, eds., Political Behavior (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1956), p. 43.

Process.<sup>25</sup> But group theory, like everything else, had been changed. Most of the early group studies had been doggedly realistic, in the special sense in which that word had been understood in the 1920s and 1930s. They detailed and catalogued the various interest groups operating in American politics, and were dominated by the concern to describe the way politics "really worked," especially at the legislative level. Group theory, as it re-emerged after the Second World War, bore the marks of a subtle but important change of emphasis. It was, for one thing, a theory about groups, rather than simply a concern to describe the operation of groups in American politics. It is not unfair, I think, to characterize the difference in addition as being a normative one, in that the new group theory was marked by a different evaluation of groups and the functions they performed in American society.

By way of contrast, we can consider Peter Odegard's Pressure Politics, written in 1928, which told the story of how the Anti-Saloon League, representing a tiny fraction of the total population, had been able to distort public opinion and warp the legislative process so as to burden the country with an unpopular and unenforceable law. Odegard saw this one group, at least, as a menace to sound government, and his attitude was shared by many other group scholars, who approached their subjects with something of the reform zeal of the old progressive muckrakers.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Bertram Gross, review of Arthur F. Bentley, The Process of Government, American Political Science Review, 44 (September, 1950), p. 742; David B. Truman, The Governmental Process, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971).

<sup>26</sup> Peter Odegard, Pressure Politics: The Story of the Anti-Saloon League (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928).

But a note of defensiveness had crept into the group literature by the 1950s. Where the early group studies had attacked their subject with a critical eye, group theory in the 1950s began to argue that groups, in some sense, "made the system work." As we shall argue below, this conception of group theory was partly an attempt to circumvent the decay of citizenship, and find a new basis for the establishment of civic order. Groups were being groomed to become citizens.

This came to be necessary for several reasons. As the McCarthy period demonstrated, foreign policy was the most divisive issue on the American scene in the early 1950s. In addition to its role as a source of partisan controversy (thus the attempts to make foreign policy "bi-partisan"), foreign affairs also possessed an awesome potential for violence on an unprecedented scale. The nuclear "balance of terror" and the competition for the "minds and hearts of men" invested even the most trivial domestic problem with an almost fateful urgency. Under these circumstances it was not unnatural for American political scientists to wonder about the nation's ability to manage its affairs in a sensible and orderly manner. This had always been an important theme in the literature of political science, but the primacy of foreign policy and America's new role in world affairs altered the terms of the debate in important ways. During the Progressive period of political science, the question of democratic control of policy-making had been attacked from the Left, and the debate had generally concentrated on making American institutions responsive to a (reformed) public opinion. (Even Bentley contributed to this literature with his Makers, Users and Masters.) During the 1950s, however, many political scientists came to the conclu-

sion that foreign policy had simply become too complex and too dangerous to be left to popular control, or influence, and that domestic affairs, to the extent that they impinged on foreign policy, had also outgrown their traditional political channels.

Thus, the conclusion seemed inescapable: citizens were largely excluded from one area of policy-making, and inhibited in another. The official dimension of citizenship had been whittled away by circumstance.

The survey literature had an even more direct connection to citizenship. If the citizen's duties had been circumscribed by the nature of post-war political problems, his abilities seemed barely adequate for the responsibilities which remained. This second theme, of course, played back into the first--the survey data seemed to offer ample justification for the diminution of the citizen's role in policy-making.

Yet having gone this far, political science was left with an alarming portrait of American democracy: an ignorant and apathetic citizenry, living in a world of dangerous and unpredictable forces, in a nation whose democratic institutions were being challenged by complexities that would have bewildered the wisest of philosopher-kings.

Different political scientists responded to this dilemma in different ways. Some were deeply troubled by the conclusions of their own research. Some found in the survey data evidence for a frankly-expressed elitism.<sup>27</sup> But others--and they are the ones I want to deal with in this chapter--tried to use the traditional concepts of political science

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<sup>27</sup> Joseph Schumpeter came to this conclusion as early as 1942 and his Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942) became extremely popular during the 1950s, although his elitism was quite extreme in comparison to most political scientists of the time.

to shape a theory of American politics that would attempt two tasks at once: to reconcile the ability of American political institutions with the demands of twentieth-century politics; and to demonstrate that the resulting political system was not incompatible with the image of a democratic republic.

This dual task was accomplished at the price of abandoning what little was left of the traditional meaning of citizenship.

2.

The Crisis of Citizenship  
and the Crisis of Theory

Perhaps the most interesting fact about the discussion of citizenship in post-war political science is that citizenship is hardly discussed at all. There are not many references to "citizen" or to "citizenship" in the indexes of the major works of this period, and "citizenship" has even been expelled from the new International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences.<sup>28</sup> This lack of concern contrasts sharply with the early decades of this century, when exhortations and jeremiads on the subject of citizenship were quite common.<sup>29</sup> But citizenship--like "sovereignty" and the "cordon sanitaire"--is clearly an issue from the discipline's past. The sense that citizenship is a settled question, at least in the United States, is increased by the fact that when it is discussed at all today, it is often in the context of "political development," a stage

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<sup>28</sup>The old Encyclopedia had a long entry under "citizenship." The new International Encyclopedia (1968) contains no separate entry for citizenship but mentions it in reference to political opinion surveys and community action programs.

<sup>29</sup>A representative volume is Seba Eldridge, The New Citizenship (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1929).

which America is commonly thought to have weathered in the previous century. Developing nations, it would seem, need to develop citizens, whereas modern nations can safely be assumed to have them already.<sup>30</sup>

The literature on development suggests as well that political science is operating with a notion of citizenship that equates it with "national identification" or even with "nationalism." The dissolution of societies and the search for ways of maintaining cohesion are popular themes in modern social science--not an unreasonable preoccupation, given the political history of the twentieth century.<sup>31</sup> Even in the United States, the model of stability, the experience of making one nation out of numerous and diverse ethnic groups has firmly attached citizenship to the concept of socialization: this, as we have seen, was

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<sup>30</sup> For examples of the "citizenship as development" approach, see S. M. Lipset, Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics (New York: Doubleday, 1960) and The First New Nation (New York: Basic Books, 1963); Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1958); Karl Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1953); Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965); Reinhard Bendix, Nation-Building and Citizenship (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday/Anchor, 1969). Compare Samuel Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), esp. Ch. 2, and Gerald Pomper, Voters' Choice (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1975), pp. 2, 14-17, Ch. 10.

<sup>31</sup> Two experiences contribute to this apprehension: the extraordinary violence of the twentieth century, which may have taken as many as 100 million lives to date; and the precariousness of many of the new states created following the Second World War. There is a parallel here, I think, to an earlier period of political science, discussed in Chs. II and IV: the fragility of the new states has prompted anxieties (and theories) that reproduce those prevalent among American political scientists during the height of the immigrations to American cities. Then, as now, a theory of citizenship emerged which linked it to "solidarity" or "integration" or sometimes explicitly to "nationalism." Some such concern certainly animates a study such as Reinhard Bendix's Nation-Building and Citizenship, and is visible also in Karl Deutch's concern for the factors which keep nations from disintegrating.

Merriam's understanding of the concept, and it has been inherited by many of his successors.

The concept of citizenship has also suffered from the tendency to see politics as a superficial reflection of "deeper" realities: group, economic, or organizational relations, for example.<sup>32</sup> Since the citizen finds the meaning of his vocation in the special discipline of political judgement, theories which (like Bentley's) deny the reality of politics or which merge politics with other areas of life (such as economics) cannot offer much guidance either to the citizen or to those concerned with citizenship. And when even political scientists deny man a "political nature," as does Robert Dahl, citizenship will naturally be far down the list of scholarly concerns.<sup>33</sup>

A further complication arises from the way in which policy-making is discussed by contemporary political science. The discovery that policy is often made, even in democracies, by relatively small groups of self-interested people is certainly a gain for realism in the study of politics. But the discovery that this is so has too often led to an assumption that it is right, or (what comes close to the same thing) that it is "normal." By revealing that citizens do not govern, political science has often encouraged us to forget that citizens are supposed to govern, and that the consequences of their losing or abandoning that

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<sup>32</sup>On this point, see Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960), pp. 290-305.

<sup>33</sup>Robert Dahl, Who Governs? (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 223-25. Dahl has apparently had second thoughts about this question, as will be discussed below. For a merger of (or confusion of) politics and economics, see Anthony Downs, "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy," Journal of Political Economy, 65 (April, 1957), reprinted in Peter Woll, ed., American Government, 3rd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), pp. 138-157.

role are likely to be quite serious.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, political science has, for good and sufficient reasons, concentrated on the analysis of groups and institutions. For reasons which are not quite as good, it has placed its hopes in them as well. In this it has followed a long tradition of political inquiry going back in this country at least to the Framers and to Madison's hope for a government that would not have to rely on fallible men for its sustenance. It has adopted as its working premise the curious combination of pessimism and optimism that marked The Federalist Papers: the belief that good citizens are a luxury the modern state must do without, and the faith that a democratic republic, if organized on sound principles, would scarcely notice their absence.

These general comments will serve to introduce a more detailed consideration of how pluralism and group theory have dealt with the three dimensions of citizenship: office, orientation, and skill.

#### Citizenship as an Office

The torrent of research in the years following World War II had a singular effect on the political science discipline's understanding of democratic theory. The revelations of low voter awareness and low interest in politics--even if they only confirmed empirically what many already knew--led very quickly to a demand that democratic theory be re-evaluated.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See Bertrand de Jouvenel's comments about the dangers of a "factual science of politics" for "weak moral constitutions." The Pure Theory of Politics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 36.

<sup>35</sup> There is a great deal of this literature. Perhaps the most important version of it is Bernard Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and

This demand was interesting in itself, for the discovery that Americans did not participate at very high levels might logically have led to a re-evaluation of American democracy. But the mood of the 1950s was not congenial to such an enterprise. American intellectuals, for the most part, were on the defensive, and criticism of American institutions did not flourish in a world where Joseph Stalin and Joseph McCarthy seemed to define the major reference points of politics. So the evidence that might have suggested a crisis of citizenship suggested instead a crisis of political theory.

The language varied, but the form of the argument was basically the same: Democratic theory expects citizens to behave in a certain way; the data show that citizens do not behave that way; therefore, democratic theory must either be revised or dispensed with. "The theorists tell us how a democratic electorate is supposed to behave," Bernard Berelson wrote in 1952, "and we public opinion researchers claim to know something about how the democratic electorate in this country actually does behave."<sup>36</sup> In a similar vein, Robert Dahl wrote in 1961:

It would clear the air of a great deal of cant if instead of assuming that politics is a normal and natural concern of human beings, one were to make the contrary assumption that . . . politics is a remote, alien, and unrewarding activity.<sup>37</sup>

Two aspects of this approach are of particular importance here: its conception of human nature; and its willingness to trim the concept

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William N. McPhee, Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Election (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), pp. 305-323.

<sup>36</sup> Bernard Berelson, "Democratic Theory and Public Opinion," in Eulau et al., Political Behavior, p. 107.

<sup>37</sup> Dahl, Who Governs?, p. 279.

of citizenship to twentieth-century proportions.

Attempting to account for the lack of interest in politics which he found in New Haven, Robert Dahl was moved to speculate that "civic man is, at heart, simply man . . . . In spite of ideas and ideals, the human organism still relentlessly insists on its primordial quest for gratification and release from pain. . . . Homo civicus, is not, by nature, a political animal."<sup>38</sup> What needs to be explained, in other words, is not why so few participate but why anyone participates at all. This approach toward man's nature has been shared by many in the pluralist school--in fact, it is a necessary assumption behind much of contemporary political science--and naturally it makes the task of explaining political withdrawal much easier. It also provides a weapon with which to attack the embarrassing requirements of traditional political theory: compared with the findings of survey literature, the attempts by Plato and Aristotle to place politics at the center of the human experience seemed naive indeed, a point Dahl was making when he suggested that classical theory cared little for "facts" but was good at providing "unsettled questions."<sup>39</sup> In fact there is a serious misunderstanding of the classical notion of "human nature" underlying theories such as these. As we saw in Chapter I, classical theory understood "nature" to refer to the ends of existence: It was the nature of man to be morally incomplete; his growth, consequently, required education, and the most important educational institution known to classical theory was the city. Man was "by nature" political because his nature implied

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 223, 225.

<sup>39</sup> Dahl, Modern Political Analysis, p. v.

the need for association within the polis. But pluralism understands "natural" to mean "spontaneous." Thus corrected, Dahl's formula should read "homo civicus is not spontaneously political," a definition with which classical theory would agree and from which it derived the entire discipline of political education.

Another way of responding to the survey data was to argue that low rates of political interest and involvement are, in the end, "functional" because they promote stability. Bernard Berelson and his associates made what is perhaps the best-known attempt along these lines in their study of Elmira, New York. This work suggested that "traditional theory" was perhaps too severe in the demands it placed on the average citizen. Finding the usual low rates of participation, knowledge, and concern, the authors of Voting concluded that the political system in Elmira (and, by extension, the United States) seemed to do impressively well anyway.

Individual voters today seem unable to satisfy the requirements for a democratic system of government outlined by political theorists. But the system of democracy does meet certain requirements for a going political organization. The individual members may not meet all the standards, but the whole nevertheless survives and grows. This suggests that where the classic theory is defective is in its concentration on the individual citizen. What are undervalued are certain collective properties that reside in the electorate as a whole and in the political and social system in which it functions.<sup>40</sup>

But this particular revision of "classic theory" fails for three reasons:

1) Traditional theory expected a great deal more from a political system than mere "survival and growth." Mere survival was what men left behind when they formed the City, and there was no virtue to be found in

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<sup>40</sup>Berelson et al., Voting, p. 312.

the growth of something corrupt.

2) The major component of the Voting theory is an ingenious division of labor which assigns certain "functions" to various classes of citizens. Some citizens are to be involved and some indifferent; some promote change and others resist it; some disturb the state and some protect it; some citizens promote consensus and some promote cleavage; some citizens defend individualism while others urge the pursuit of collective enterprises.<sup>41</sup> What may be a fault from the point of view of traditional theory (indifference, for example) might be a virtue when seen within the context of the system as a whole.<sup>42</sup>

But the Voting theory does not offer a clear statement of what proportions of the citizenry can safely demonstrate the "wrong" characteristics. The authors present a chart at the end of their study which suggests that the model citizen ("political man") will occupy roughly half of the population: i.e., political man sits at the top of a bell-shaped curve whose extremities are "sociable man" and "ideological man."<sup>43</sup> Yet the data of the Voting study and of virtually every other attitude study of the period show that such model citizens occupy an extremely small percentage of the total citizenry. The bell of the curve is occupied by the indifferent citizen, and not the model citizen, which would seem to make a great deal of difference, especially considering the third problem.

3) The entire system, according to Berelson and his associates, is so precariously balanced that one suspects even the slightest shock

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 315-21.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 316.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 323.

to knock it over. Metaphors of balance dominate this theory: The system has "enough consensus to hold the system together and enough cleavage to make it move." The citizenry is sometimes progressive, and sometimes conservative, but never too much of any one thing at any given time.<sup>44</sup> The average citizen seldom changes his political views, but he does change them sometimes.<sup>45</sup> Like the baby bear's porridge, the citizen is "just right." If this were an accurate description of the state of American politics, the prospect would be frightening. But the experience of the 1960s made clear that American society is not so delicately balanced between the extremes of total indifference and total activism. It has apparently been capable of absorbing a large increase in participation by previously indifferent citizens without falling into either anarchy or civil war.<sup>46</sup>

While behaviorism was arguing for the private nature of man, and devising a concept of democracy that would accommodate low rates of participation and awareness, its methodology was forcing it to trim the official dimension of citizenship to those actions which lent themselves to quantification and statistical measurement.<sup>47</sup> These actions--voting, joining political organizations, sending letters, talking about politics

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 318.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>46</sup> Pomper, Voters' Choice, passim.

<sup>47</sup> "The 'scientific' position frequently consists of denying the existence of whatever does not belong to current scientific method." Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), p. 18. See also Christian Bay's article, "Politics and Pseudopolitics," American Political Science Review, 59 (March, 1965), pp. 39-51. Bay argues that political science has avoided the "perennial" questions of politics "by the neat device of definitions that limit the scope of . . . inquiry to observable behavior." (p. 40)

to friends and co-workers--gradually came to define the content of twentieth-century citizenship.

What could not so easily be measured was the context and texture of these acts, the qualities which related them to the central vocations of citizenship: governing and deliberation. Science can measure the frequency of voting, but it cannot measure the meaning of a vote. Public opinion research can tell us how often the average citizen discusses politics with his friends, but it cannot offer statistical assurance regarding the meaning of that talk. Where political scientists have captured something of the texture of political life (as, for example, in the work of Robert Lane) they have done so with samples that cannot be considered meaningful by the standards of statistical research.

But if we are correct in emphasizing that citizenship is an office, then the trimming of citizenship must leave a set of tasks that no one fulfills: a set of responsibilities floating free of the agents to which classical theory had assigned them. Logically, of course, it is conceivable that these responsibilities are never met in the absence of a viable citizenship, but contemporary political science has been anxious to demonstrate that they are performed--but by agents other than citizens: that is, by groups, institutions, and elites.

Classical theory, as we argued in Chapter I, based the survival of republican institutions on the virtue of republican citizens. It was they who would ultimately be responsible for judging the city's policies, maintaining public standards, and preventing the growth of tyranny, whether of the one, the few, or the many. The struggle of groups and classes--between the rich and the poor, between merchants and farmers--

was a problem to be overcome by wise policy, namely by making it possible for citizens to behave with justice toward one another and to learn what sort of behavior justice required. (It was for this reason that Aristotle warned of the dangers of concentrated wealth, for extreme inequality led to jealousy and suffering among the poor, and arrogance among the rich, emotions and experiences which blocked the understanding of civic virtue.) The realistic tradition of American Constitutionalism, as we have seen, hoped to use these jealousies and ambitions against one another, thus rendering superfluous the necessity of a majority of public-spirited citizens, a condition which the Federalists thought unlikely in any case.

From the perspective of the twentieth century, American pluralists have read into Madison's Tenth Federalist paper a recognition of the existence and importance of private groups, and have argued for the National Association of Manufacturers and the AFL-CIO a function which Madison had assigned to much broader divisions of the population--the "manufacturing interest," or the "agricultural interest." Madison's "factions" were both more encompassing and more abstract than pluralism's "interest groups."<sup>48</sup> But that is not all. Classical pluralism had seen in the strength of non-governmental groups and institutions a check on the power of the state.<sup>49</sup> American pluralism, following Madison's lead, has looked to factions, and then to interest groups per se, for the taming of popular passions, the protection of individual liberties from state interference, and the creation of public policy--a much more ambitious

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<sup>48</sup>Theodore Lowi, The Politics of Disorder (New York: Basic Books, 1971), pp. 32-33.

<sup>49</sup>David Nicholls, Three Varieties of Pluralism (London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1974), pp. 5-17.

set of tasks.<sup>50</sup>

With the authority of the Framers seemingly behind them (an authority which has been claimed repeatedly by twentieth-century political science), it was an easy transition from the existence of groups to their central role in politics, and from there but a simple step to the devolution to them of the traditional tasks of citizens. It is time now to specify those tasks, and the ways in which group theory has accounted for their fulfillment in a republic without citizenship.

1) Classical theory assigned to citizens the vital role of deliberation, the careful weighing of purpose and consequence which must precede decision.<sup>51</sup> For this reason, the Forum is the institution most often associated with the image of classical citizenship. But with the growth of the nation-state and the atrophy of local government, the Forum has become increasingly inappropriate as an image of the citizen's vocation. Responding to this predicament, pluralists have offered an alternative image: the Conference of interest-group leaders. Here pluralists expect to be performed the ancient task of deliberation, but in the context of the Conference that task assumes a strange new shape.

This happens for several reasons. First, the orientation of group leaders is not the same as the orientation of citizens. For the citizen, the relevant category is the City; for the group leader, the relevant categories are the group, the group's needs as interpreted by

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<sup>50</sup>Paul F. Bourke, "The Pluralist Reading of James Madison's Tenth Federalist," Perspectives in American History, 9 (1975), pp. 271-95.

<sup>51</sup>Joseph Tussman, Obligation and the Body Politic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960).

the leader, and, beyond that, the special world of group leaders.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, the techniques appropriate to the Conference involve bargaining rather than deliberation, a distinction of great importance that pluralists consistently ignore.<sup>53</sup> But the bargain is the archetypal political act in the pluralist world: it dominates the entire range of pluralist thinking on politics, driving out all other conceptions of political action. Even decision-making is assimilated into the bargaining model: the artful leader is portrayed as one who orchestrates the demands of relevant groups and produces a compromise acceptable to all. (This was Bentley's view, for example: Theodore Roosevelt was to be analyzed as an office "through which" interest groups operated, achieving their "due dominance" in the system.)

With the loss of deliberation, group theory has lost sight of one of the central requirements of a healthy politics, and lost also a standard against which it could measure the performance of modern governments. The result has been a tendency to ignore certain pathologies of modern democratic nations, which in the absence of any standards to the contrary must appear as "normal." The failure of American government in the area of planning is one such pathology. The long-ignored waste of resources and the pillaging of the environment are others. These are concerns that have long been left to the "process of group bargaining"

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<sup>52</sup>This was, of course, what Michels meant by the "iron law of oligarchy." For a glimpse of how that law operates in the context of American group politics, see Ed Schwartz's description of his tenure as President of the National Student Association in Will the Revolution Succeed? (New York: Criterion Books, 1972), pp. 145-48.

<sup>53</sup>Tussman, Obligation and the Body Politic, passim.

with results that have only recently become apparent.<sup>54</sup>

2) One of the functions which citizens share with leaders in a democratic republic is the initiation of proposals for change. Classical theory understood that the City, if it were to enlist the loyalty and affection of its citizens, must be based on widespread participation in what is now called "the policy process"--widespread participation, that is, by all those who "counted," who possessed the resources of citizens. This understanding was grounded on more than just an idle preference. It was based on the realization that societies, if they are to survive, must often call for great sacrifice from their members, and that a sullen, abject population is a weak foundation for an enduring state.

But group theory assigns this function to groups--in particular, to group leaders. It is to groups that pluralists look for the prodding which moves society to respond to new challenges and a changing environment. It has been the great fear of post-war pluralism that social change would mobilize masses of citizens, unaffiliated with groups, without loyalty to established group leaders, propelling them onto the political stage with explosive force. In this imagery, group leaders and elites temper the public's enthusiasm, translating the incoherent yearnings of the mass into workable policies. In another imagery, group leaders are innovators--it is their demands which lie behind public policy, their expertise which makes policy work.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Grant McConnell, Private Power and American Democracy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966); Theodore Lowi, The End of Liberalism (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1969).

<sup>55</sup>William Kornhauser, The Politics of Mass Society (New York: The Free Press, 1959); A. A. Berle, Power Without Property (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959).

There is more involved here, of course, than a simple descriptive statement that elites make policy. There is a prescriptive element as well, in that pluralists expect certain values to be served by the pre-eminence of elites. "Stability" is the major value served by elites and group leaders--their leadership inhibits, according to David Truman, the emergence of "demagogues" from among the masses. Elites, because they wish to preserve "the political system on which their privileges rest," will defend "the rules of the game" against attacks by the irrational or the discontented.<sup>56</sup>

As Lowi has ably demonstrated, another major value served by the government of interest groups is "informality." There is a strong element of voluntarism in American political thought, and this element is served by the belief that interest groups provide a way for policy to be made and administered on a purely voluntary basis. The group, in this imagery, becomes an agent of the state, representing public authority among those to whom a particular policy applies. Farm policy, thus, is administered and devised in part by farm groups. It thereby loses its "coercive" nature.<sup>57</sup> It may well be that groups recommend themselves as alternatives to citizenship because of this widespread preference for the voluntary over the coercive. Citizenship, unlike group affiliation, is to a large extent compulsory.<sup>58</sup> One may not legally evade certain of the

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<sup>56</sup> David Truman, "The American System in Crisis," Political Science Quarterly, 74 (December, 1959), pp. 481-97.

<sup>57</sup> McConnell, Private Power, pp. 80-89.

<sup>58</sup> Robert Pranger, Action, Symbolism, and Order: The Existential Dimension of Politics in Modern Citizenship (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), p. 14. Citizenship, Pranger observes, represents "a 'given' status to which the self must adjust."

obligations of citizenship (taxes, military service, jury duty, etc.) and the ethics of democratic life do not permit the avoidance even of those duties which are not legally binding (voting). It is true that many group affiliations are voluntary in name only, since government has given to many groups the right to demand membership as a condition of employment (e.g., the closed union shop). But this involuntary character of group membership is not generally acknowledged by group theorists, and in the myth of groups, members are free to join or not, as they choose.<sup>59</sup>

3) The participation by citizens in the affairs of their city was thought by classical theorists to be a need sown into the nature of man. Political life, the life lived in common, was a continual education in the expanding possibilities of human existence. Only slaves were thought to be so degraded as to have lost consciousness of this need. For all others, the denial of political rights was an affront to the dignity of a mature human being.<sup>60</sup>

Contemporary theory, however, is not comfortable talking about needs. A need is not quantifiable and its very existence eludes statistical proof.<sup>61</sup> Pluralists in particular would much rather base their investigations on demands or wants, which can be discussed objectively and studied with statistical techniques. Thus, if citizens do not

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<sup>59</sup> McConnell, Private Power, p. 150; Michael Rogin, "Nonpartisanship and the Group Interest," in Philip Green and Sanford Levinson, eds., Power and Community (New York: Pantheon, 1969), pp. 112-42; Lowi, Disorder, p. 76.

<sup>60</sup> Bachrach, Democratic Elitism, pp. 1-9.

<sup>61</sup> Bachrach, "Politics and Pseudopolitics," *passim*.

express a demand for greater participation, they can be assumed not to have a need for it either.

But even where participation is demanded, pluralists are likely to see that demand as a secondary one; what is really being demanded, in other words, is the satisfaction of a particular interest. Participation is valuable to the extent that it keeps the system pluralistic, making room for the expression of new group interests as they arise. Those interests may be represented at various levels of the political system. For some, the only important moment is when representatives and other governmental officials stand for re-election. "Democracy," Schumpeter wrote, "means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them."<sup>62</sup>

For other pluralists, representation comes through the activity of groups and group leaders. In pluralist theories of representation, it is the group that is represented, not the citizen or the member. For "such control as we exert over our political leaders in democratic organizations," Robert Dahl has argued, "we must rely heavily on the competitiveness of leaders, that is, on their constant and unending rivalry in satisfying the demands of relatively small groups."<sup>63</sup>

This presents no difficulties for pluralism's revision of democratic theory, because of two assumptions. The first is stated bluntly by Dennis Thompson, who asserts that it is "reasonable to assume" that most citizens'

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<sup>62</sup>Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, cited in Bachrach, Democratic Elitism, p. 21.

<sup>63</sup>Robert Dahl, "Hierarchy, Democracy, and Bargaining in Politics and Economics," in Stephen K. Bailey et al., Research Frontiers in Politics and Government (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1955), pp. 45-69 at p. 58.

interests are "symbolically represented" by groups and associations.<sup>64</sup>

Robert Dahl and Charles Lindblom make the same claim:

. . . the problem is not so much one of insuring that every citizen is politically active on every issue as it is one of insuring that all citizens have approximately equal opportunity to act, using 'opportunity' in the realistic rather than the legalistic sense. If all citizens have an approximately equal opportunity to act, there is a high probability that those who do act will be roughly representative of those who do not.<sup>65</sup>

The second assumption is that the interests of a group are sufficiently understood by group leaders to permit a simple identification between leaders and members. As Michael Rogin has phrased it, pluralists must do for the group what they deny can be done for the nation, i.e., they must invent a "group spook" by giving personification to what is in fact a complex of competing interests within the association.<sup>66</sup>

Both of these assumptions have been attacked repeatedly. The evidence on association membership leaves no doubt that most Americans simply do not belong to associations outside of their religious affiliation. The assumption that interest groups "represent" those who do not belong to them is so sanguine as to approach naivete. Dahl's and Lindblom's hope that active citizens will be representative of passive citizens is belied by the survey data, which consistently find social and class differences between the two categories. And the evidence on the private government of interest groups leaves little doubt that they are characterized, for the most part, by apathetic members, entrenched leadership, and

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<sup>64</sup>Dennis Thompson, The Democratic Citizen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 58.

<sup>65</sup>Cited in Hannah Pitkin, The Concept of Representation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 265.

<sup>66</sup>Rogin, "Nonpartisanship," p. 114.

undemocratic procedures.<sup>67</sup>

4) Perhaps the most important duty imposed on citizens by classical political theory was the duty to preserve liberty--the liberty of all citizens, and not merely one's own. Liberty was of a piece to classical thought: its denial to one part of the citizenry threatened the liberty of all.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, liberty was defined by its object: it was firmly tied to certain conceptions of the public good, certain objects which it was thought proper to use one's liberty to pursue. As such, its survival depended upon the loyalty of citizens not only to their country, but also to the principles embodied in their country's law. In American political thought, this notion has been expressed most clearly by the Puritans. Here, for example, is Winthrop's definition:

The other kind of liberty I call civil or federal [as opposed to 'natural' liberty, or license]; it may also be termed moral, in reference to the covenant between God and man, in the moral law, and the politic covenants and constitutions, among men themselves. This liberty is the proper end and object of authority, and cannot subsist without it; and it is a liberty

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<sup>67</sup> Bachrach, Democratic Elitism, pp. 39 ff.; Henry S. Kariel, The Decline of American Pluralism (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1961); S. M. Lipset, Political Man, pp. 387-433. As this chapter was being written, the President of the Teamsters' Union, Frank Fitzsimmons, informed the reformers in the union that they could simply "go to hell." He was loudly cheered by the assembled business agents and local union presidents, a fact which should be read in the context of David Truman's belief that groups operate within a "democratic mold" and that violations of democratic procedure invite "censure from other groups" and engender "guilt feelings" among members. At the same time, however, Truman noted that "one way--often the only way--of retaining a measure of amity in a majority may be through the secession or expulsion of a rebellious minority." (Truman, The Governmental Process, pp. 129, 188) This fact makes comparisons between the dynamics of the group and the dynamics of the state particularly ominous.

<sup>68</sup> Solon's rule was that "the most perfect state is one in which an injury to one is an injury to all."

to that only which is good, just, and honest. This liberty you are to stand for, with the hazard not only of your goods, but of your lives, if need be.<sup>69</sup>

It hardly needs to be emphasized that modern Americans do not think of liberty in these terms. For us, and for our ancestors going back two hundred years or more, liberty has meant the right of the individual to increase his mastery over nature and over his fellow men: in obedience to certain vaguely formulated (and oft-violated) "rules of the game."

Contemporary political science shares the biases of American thought, in this case as in others. Specifically, it maintains two related positions on the subject of liberty and the citizen's vocation: 1) the citizen who is passionately committed to anything is a menace to the liberty of others; and 2) liberty can be more successfully defended by the competition among groups than by the vigilance of citizens.

Passionate commitments are suspect because of the fear that they will easily get out of hand. The danger faced by the American system, David Truman wrote in 1952, is instability generated from below, by demagogues such as McCarthy arising suddenly from among the masses.<sup>70</sup> In this sense, the "rules of the game" are thought to be fragile indeed, even by those theorists who place so much importance on them. In fact, the rules are the invention of the elites, and it is for that reason that we must look to the elites for their preservation. And even then we must rely on the elites' sense of their own self-interest.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana, cited by Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, trans. Henry Reeve, ed. Phillips Bradley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), Vol. I, pp. 42-43.

<sup>70</sup>Truman, "American System in Crisis," *passim*.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*

Michael Walzer has gone so far as to identify even "civic virtue" as a passion fraught with danger in the context of a liberal society. "What we cannot have, and ought not to ask of one another, under present conditions, is civic virtue." To do so, he argues, would require the unleashing of "yearnings" that are dangerous because "they cannot readily be met within the world of liberalism." Much better to expand feelings of "patriotism" within the context of a privatistic "civility" based on traditional American values such as "individualism, secularism, and toleration."<sup>72</sup>

Pluralism looks instead to the competition of groups for the preservation of liberty. Tyranny, in this sense, is defined much as Madison defined it, as the dominance of a single faction in possession of the state. But it is important to notice that there is an important element missing from this conception of liberty, one that is logically tied to the office of citizenship and which must disappear with the elimination or diminution of that office.

The missing element is what might be called "civic education," the purpose classical theory assigned specifically to the polis. "The chief purpose of the city is the noble life and therefore the chief concern of the city must be the virtue of its members and hence liberal education."<sup>73</sup> But lacking the educational goal which was so important an element in the classical understanding of liberty, pluralism acknowledges only growth and survival as the purposes of the state. Thus such favorite terms as

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<sup>72</sup>Michael Walzer, "Civility and Civic Virtue in Contemporary America," Social Research, 41 (Winter, 1974), pp. 611, 607-08.

<sup>73</sup>Leo Strauss, The City and Man (Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1963), pp. 31-32.

"system maintenance," "stability," "survival over time," and so on. The survival of the system, in fact, is the only content pluralists are willing to concede to the notion of a "public interest."<sup>74</sup> Beyond that there is only the clash of private interests, the unending and normatively empty "process of government."

Looked at from the citizen's viewpoint, this process must frequently appear pointless. In its grimmest form, as sketched by Arthur Bentley, the citizen was expected to move in a universe in which no valid distinctions could be made between one "interest" and another, in which no final judgements could be offered on public policy, in which language itself had been stripped of the ability to convey political meaning. Having accepted Bentley's imagery, it was no wonder that Charles Merriam worried that only war could capture the fancy of the modern citizen.<sup>75</sup> Even in the less austere imagery of contemporary pluralism (as in the passage quoted above from Michael Walzer's article) the state is pictured as a realm of morally neutral forces whose competition produces the compromises (also morally empty) which pass as public policy. Such a state can have very little use for the classic office of citizenship, and if there is a widespread feeling among Americans that "politics doesn't matter," then it may be well to ponder what paltry objects the citizen is called upon to achieve.

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<sup>74</sup>Truman, Governmental Process, pp. xlv-xlvi.

<sup>75</sup>Charles Merriam, "Citizenship," University of Chicago Magazine, 3 (July, 1911), pp. 275-77. See also Wilson Carey McWilliams, The Idea of Fraternity in America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973): ". . . such societies rouse a desire for purpose, for escape from the sheer boredom of life according to the 'rhythm of nature' that, sadly, is one of the great appeals of war." (p. 53)

### Citizenship as an Orientation

Pluralist texts give to groups the primary responsibility for shaping the citizen's political orientation. Groups define the political universe; they are the raw materials of politics. They make politics comprehensible and accessible. At the same time, groups civilize the citizen by teaching him the virtues of tolerance and moderation. This explains the horror with which William Kornhauser and other pluralists have greeted the prospect of the "un-grouped" man--the mass man, the subject with no loyalty to groups and, therefore, no reins on his passion. "In the absence of intermediate groups to act as representatives and guides for popular participation," Kornhauser writes, "people must act directly in the critical centers of society, and therefore in a manner unrestrained by the values and interests of a variety of social groups."<sup>76</sup>

There are several assumptions here, and they are the heart of the pluralist attack on citizenship. The most important assumption seems to be that there is no alternative to the group orientation except "mass society" or "totalitarianism." Pursuing this thought, Peter Drucker has argued that "throughout our history it has been our special concern and our special ability to make the common good issue from the conflict of particular and self-centered interests . . . . The task in the world today is to make pluralism work." The only alternative, he concludes, is totalitarianism.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Kornhauser, Politics of Mass Society, p. 77.

<sup>77</sup> Peter F. Drucker, "Individual Freedom and Effective Government in a Society of Super-Powers," in William V. D'Antonio and Howard J. Ehrlich, eds., Power and Democracy in America (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961), p. 23.

Kornhauser wants to show that men without attachments to "proximate objects" are dangerous, and with that much of his argument, I think, there can be no quarrel. It is true, no doubt, that "those who do not possess a variety of relations with their fellows are disposed to seek new and often remote sources of attachment and allegiance."<sup>78</sup> And it is also true that the search for remote attachments can lead to chiliastic political movements with unrealistic expectations and a propensity for violence. But Kornhauser also wishes to show that interest groups are a solution to this problem, which is another matter entirely. Kornhauser shares the widespread tendency among pluralists to attribute to interest groups the qualities of associations, and, beyond that, the qualities of the City itself.<sup>79</sup> This enables Kornhauser to claim several important virtues for groups which most of them do not, in fact, possess. For example, in order to accomplish its most important task--"integrating people into a wide range of proximate concerns"--a group would have to be small and local in character, and general in its scope of concerns. We know that most groups do not combine these qualities. If they are small they tend to have a narrow focus of concern; indeed, they are likely to be concerned with one issue only (the preservation of local historical sites, say, or the upkeep of the local parklands). If a group is large, on the other hand, and has a more general set of interests (the American Civil Liberties Union, for example), it tends to play only a small part in its members lives, losing the intimacy that is an important part of the "civilizing" influence of associations. Or it may be so narrow in focus

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<sup>78</sup>Kornhauser, Politics of Mass Society, p. 60.

<sup>79</sup>Lowi, Disorder, pp. 32-33.

that members will scarcely give it any thought at all, beyond sending in their membership dues or responding to occasional appeals for emergency support. (The National Rifle Association is an example of an interest group of this type.)

Kornhauser expects groups to perform another important function. They give citizens (limited) access to political leaders. This is, admittedly, access by proxy, since it is the group leader who has access, and not the group member. But here again the fiction of democracy within the group--"associational democracy"--is employed to make the theory work. In this fiction, citizens shape the policies of groups, and groups shape the policies of government. Competition within the group is mirrored in competition among groups.

A plurality of independent and limited-function groups supports liberal democracy by providing social bases of free and open competition for leadership, widespread participation in the selection of leaders, restraint in the application of pressures on leaders, and self-government in wide areas of social life.<sup>80</sup>

It is no accident that groups do not perform these functions. As critics of group theory have pointed out, the structure of American government, with its multiple layers of authority, forces groups to adopt a strategy of narrow concerns.<sup>81</sup> The prize in American politics has most often gone to groups which could mobilize a small number of members behind an extremely specific goal, and concentrate that energy in one carefully chosen spot: on an undersecretary of the Department of Interior, or a regional director of the Federal Trade Commission. Groups succeed by

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<sup>80</sup> Kornhauser, Politics of Mass Society, pp. 230-31; see also Truman, Governmental Process, p. 156.

<sup>81</sup> McConnell, Private Power, pp. 109 ff.; Lowi, End of Liberalism, passim.; E. E. Schattschneider, The Semi-Sovereign People (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960), passim.

identifying a single goal and monitoring decisions so as to know when and where to bring their power to bear. A strategy such as this one cannot survive a debate within the organization over the goals of the organization, nor can it tolerate frequent challenges to the group's leadership.<sup>82</sup>

In terms of the citizen's orientation, then, the effect of group politics is to privatize rather than civilize the citizen. And on closer inspection, this turns out to be just about what group theory expects groups to do. Pluralists have searched for ways of containing political enthusiasm, and group politics is admirably suited to this purpose. Kornhauser counts as one of pluralism's virtues the fact that "self-selective involvement in national politics tends to limit the number of people who are vitally concerned with any given issue."<sup>83</sup> Edward Shils has praised the group system in similar terms:

The pluralistic society keeps men's sentiments from flying outwards towards fixation on those remote objects which unsettle equanimity and disturb the pluralistic equilibrium. A well-working pluralistic society absorbs sufficient of the attention and affection of its members into a wide range of more proximate concerns--workshop, neighborhood, club, church, team, family, friends, trade union, school, etc. At least as

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<sup>82</sup>Such challenges are in any case extremely rare, since another characteristic of the "primary group" is its homogeneity. "Ordinarily, primary groups do not tolerate high levels of political tension and conflict . . . . It is most probable that members of any primary group are socially, economically, ethnically, socially alike." William H. Flanigan, Political Behavior of the American Electorate (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968), pp. 54-55; also Herbert McClosky and Harold E. Dahlgren, "Primary Group Influence on Party Loyalty," American Political Science Review, 53 (September, 1959), p. 760. This is not true, of course, of large, mass membership organizations, where constraints against challenges to group leaders arise from the hierarchical and undemocratic way in which such organizations are governed.

<sup>83</sup>Kornhauser, Politics of Mass Society, p. 82.

important, it keeps down the need for a unification of all these loyalties into a single loyalty.<sup>84</sup>

Madison is invoked once again at this point--by Kornhauser and by virtually every other group theorist--in order to demonstrate the extent to which overlapping memberships prevent tyranny by preventing the citizen's total commitment to any single group or interest. These "cross-cutting solidarities," according to Kornhauser, "help prevent one line of social cleavage from becoming dominant, and they constrain associations to respect the various affiliations of their members lest they alienate them."<sup>85</sup>

Arguments such as these reveal the extent to which citizenship has become an "excluded category" in contemporary political science. The posing of the two stark alternatives--"group orientation" vs. "mass orientation"--leaves no room for the consideration that citizenship is itself an orientation of great, perhaps central importance in a democratic nation. The fear of political enthusiasm and the casual acceptance of politics as the concern of only the few also require the abandonment of citizenship. But the dilution of citizenship--indeed, the dilution of politics itself--is nowhere better demonstrated than in the pluralist treatment of the idea of the public interest.

"In liberal societies," Robert Dahl has concluded, "politics is a sideshow in the great circus of life."<sup>86</sup> This presents liberal societies with a problem of epic proportions. If politics is merely a sideshow, who will attend to the public's business? Not the public, certainly.

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<sup>84</sup> Edward Shils, The Torment of Secrecy, cited *ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>85</sup> Kornhauser, Politics of Mass Society, p. 80.

<sup>86</sup> Dahl, Who Governs?, p. 305.

For one thing, citizens are too preoccupied with private concerns to devote much attention to politics. Furthermore, they are scarcely conscious that there even is a public, or that they are a part of it. And if politics is only a "sideshow," why should citizens pay more than superficial attention to it?

Group theory gets around this difficulty by several different routes. One way is by denying that there is anything like a true "public" interest, at least in an operational sense. As we have noted above, Truman takes this route, arguing that the "assertion of an inclusive 'national' or 'public interest' is an effective device" for groups trying to "reduce or eliminate opposing interests." Following Bentley, Truman asserts that "these claims . . . do not describe any actual or possible political situation within a complex modern nation."<sup>87</sup> Truman admits that there must be something holding society together besides the narrow group interests of the Farm Bureau, the AFL-CIO, and other lobbies. This "something else" Truman defines as "ideals" and "traditions" such as "civil liberties, constitutionalism, representative responsibility, and the like." But these are only interests after all, the expression of potential interest groups, which are just as real as any other, even if we can't locate their national headquarters or their executive secretaries.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Truman, Governmental Process, pp. 50-51. see also Frank Sorauf, "The Public Interest Reconsidered," Journal of Politics, 19 (November, 1957), pp. 616-39; Glendon Schubert, The Public Interest (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1961); John D. B. Miller, The Nature of Politics (London: Duckworth, 1962), Chs. 3 & 4; and for a different view, Brian Barry, "The Public Interest," in William E. Connolly, ed., The Bias of Pluralism (New York: Atherton Press, 1969), pp. 159-77.

<sup>88</sup> Truman, Governmental Process, p. 51.

Another, more ambitious route begins by admitting that there is such a thing as the public interest, but then identifying that interest with "stability" or "survival of the rules of the game." As we have seen above, Truman flirts with this idea himself. The advantage of this solution is that it is plausible to identify "survival of the rules" with group leaders, as Truman does, since leaders are mainly responsible for devising the rules in the first place, and are the ones who benefit most directly from their operation. Does this solution work?

Imagine a society divided sharply between a small minority with full enjoyment of the trappings of power, and a vast majority without influence. The powerful minority--a band of conquerors, for example--would naturally be aware of a certain community of interest with their subjects. They would understand that their occupation of so vast a multitude constrained them to cooperate in the sharing of the burdens and rewards of office. But we would hardly confuse this interest of the conqueror's band with a public interest. Moreover, we know that bands of this sort often--perhaps usually--fall into disagreement and are either dissolved entirely or are taken over by one man who sets himself up as chief brigand.<sup>89</sup>

This is not unlike the situation Truman describes when he says that elites defend the rules--i.e., preserve stability--because the rules are the source of elite privileges. But what happens when group leaders are faced with a problem which requires the surrender of some of their privileges? To the extent that groups possess veto powers, nothing

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<sup>89</sup>For a discussion of this process, see Bertrand de Jouvenel, On Power: Its Nature and the History of its Growth (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), Bk. II, Ch. 5.

happens, and stalemate results. To the extent that a problem does not come within the province of any group's interest, the result is much the same: inaction. As Theodore Lowi has put it, "any political theory in the United States . . . must begin with the recognition that our political system is almost perfectly designed to maintain an existing state of affairs--any existing state of affairs."<sup>90</sup>

In order to circumvent this problem, group theory is forced to a belated recognition of something which looks very much like a public interest or a citizen's orientation. Bentley called this "something extra" the "habit background" of a culture. Truman has called it the "democratic mold." The mold consists of all those values which are

so widely held . . . that they are in effect imposed on an organized group from without as well as demanded from within. Such widespread attitudes, in fact, are indicative of potential, or even actual, interest groups that may, or do, exert claims for conformity upon other groups in the society.<sup>91</sup>

In other words, there are general sentiments in the culture which influence the behavior of group leaders and the "active minorities" within each group who determine its policy and its behavior.<sup>92</sup> But the mechanisms by which these sentiments work their beneficent powers are exceedingly vague, as are the sentiments themselves. And Truman's identification of them as "potential, or even actual, interest groups" is not very encouraging. Another interest group is no cure for the problems posed by the dominance of interest groups.

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<sup>90</sup>Lowi, Disorder, p. 53.

<sup>91</sup>Truman, Governmental Process, p. 129.

<sup>92</sup>Berle contends that the group struggle is regulated by consensus, "the body of those general, unstated premises which have come to be recognized." Power Without Property, p. 111.

Furthermore, where will these generalized sentiments--the citizen's orientation--come from? Truman believes that groups are the major influence on the citizen's political orientation--the major agents, that is, of "political socialization." "It appears, then," he writes, "that the group experiences and affiliations of an individual are the primary, though not the exclusive, means by which the individual knows, interprets, and reacts to the society in which he lives."<sup>93</sup> What, then, are the "experiences and affiliations" which produce the values that transcend group politics and provide its corrective?

Such experiences and affiliations are extremely rare in modern America, perhaps in all modern states. Religion provides the justification for many of the culture's general values, but the strength of religion as a molder of character has been on the wane for a long time. Patriotism is another source of values more general than those of the interest group, but as John Schaar has argued so well, patriotism in America rested on two foundations: a social system which has been eroded by industrialism, economic expansion, and social mobility, and a set of principles that may no longer command general approval or even comprehension.<sup>94</sup> Finally there is democratic politics itself. As E. E. Schaatschneider has argued, democratic politics is an important force for the "socialization of conflict" in the American community. It forces groups to broaden their alliances and it enables public concerns to emerge from the confining world of group bargaining.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Truman, Governmental Process, p. 21.

<sup>94</sup>John H. Schaar, "The Case for Patriotism," American Review, 17 (May, 1973), pp. 59-99.

<sup>95</sup>Schaatschneider, Semi-Sovereign People, passim.

Yet it is precisely this phenomenon which group theory rejects. Social movements with heterogeneous memberships and general concerns have most often been associated in the literature of group theory with instability and the rise of demagogues. What, after all, is the citizen's orientation, if not an occasional interest in "those remote objects which unsettle equanimity" (Shils) or the "remote attachments" so feared by Kornhauser?

Group theory is thus left with a paradox as old as Bentley: it needs the public, but its theory denies the public's existence. It needs a citizen's orientation to correct the tendency of the group system to become a rigid hierarchy of narrow concerns, but it cannot square that need with its devotion to stability and "process." And it is forced to paper over these contradictions with an unjustifiably optimistic belief that the group system can somehow correct itself.

#### Citizenship as a Skill

Perhaps the most troublesome issue in the literature of contemporary political science is the manifest inequality which characterizes modern societies. The formal guarantees of equal rights, the most important legacy of the eighteenth century, exist in uneasy proximity to the economic inequality which is the peculiar legacy of the nineteenth century. And while eighteenth-century political rights have steadily expanded in our times, the economic inequality created by industrialism is with us still and shows no signs of abating.

Added to social and economic inequality is another form of inequality characteristic of our times: that which is spawned by the technology of organization. As the size and scope of the organization

expands, so, according to Michels, does the tendency of the organization to be run by an ever smaller, ever more entrenched oligarchy. Nor have contemporary group studies provided evidence to refute the "iron law." In Chapter V I discussed some of the implications of modern inequality for the experience of citizenship. In this section it is necessary to discuss the ways in which group theory has handled the related problems posed by the unequal distribution of the skills, and resources, of contemporary citizens.

Here we can see once again the extent to which groups have replaced citizens in the pluralist universe. In pluralist theory, the lack of equality among citizens is compensated by the equality of groups. There is not much sense in group literature of the inequality among groups themselves; instead, there is a tacit agreement that a rough equality exists among groups because of the system's sensitivity to organized pressure. Every group, in this view, has some influence: enough, in most cases, to veto proposals falling within its sphere of influence. And all groups suffer equally from the limitations imposed on them by the rules of the game, the democratic mold, and the overlapping loyalties of their members. As a consequence, inequalities among citizens are balanced by the equality of the groups to which they belong. The relative weakness of blacks vis-a-vis the business community is partly cancelled by the fact that on specific issues, the NAACP and the Chamber of Commerce can bring approximately equal pressure to bear on Congress, the courts, the President, or the local political establishment.

This is the clear implication of Robert Dahl's well-known theory of "dispersed inequalities." This theory holds that many kinds of resources

are available to citizens, that those who possess great resources in one area do not possess great resources in other areas. And no group is without resources of some kind.<sup>96</sup> If it is true that most organized groups possess some resource, and that "nearly every group has enough potential influence to mitigate harsh injustice to its members,"<sup>97</sup> we are still very far from a serious challenge to the inequality of citizens themselves. This is true for a couple of reasons.

First, most citizens do not belong to political organizations, and thus cannot benefit from the presumed equality of groups. Unorganized workers are not strengthened by the existence of unions to which they do not pay dues, as an examination of the farm labor laws will attest. Second, and most important, the equality of groups is more often than not purely defensive in character--a way of protecting a small patch of ground from the encroachment of other groups and the public. The licensing powers of the American Medical Association no doubt enhance the power of individual doctors by regulating the entrance of new physicians into the profession. But the AMA cannot help doctors secure a decrease in their real estate taxes, nor can it improve general working conditions that have nothing to do with medicine per se: the high crime rate in neighborhoods surrounding urban hospitals, for example. The NAACP could probably repel an attack on the fair housing laws, but it is powerless to reduce the unemployment rate or the cost of food. There are countless examples of this kind in which interest groups are powerless to affect

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<sup>96</sup>Dahl, Who Governs?, p. 228; "Equality and Power in American Society," in D'Antonio and Ehrlich, Power and Democracy, pp. 83-85.

<sup>97</sup>Dahl, "Equality and Power," p. 89.

most of the issues of concern to their members.

The power of groups is extremely limited in scope, and this fact is an important qualification to the theory of dispersed inequalities. Those citizens who do belong to groups actively engaged in political affairs--and they are a small minority, as we have seen--are strengthened only in regard to those narrow concerns which the group has made its own. And this qualification is itself qualified by the well-known tendency of groups to be dominated by an even smaller minority, whose views on the group's interests may or may not coincide with those of the inactive majority.

These qualifications are important, because group theory's confidence in the performance of American institutions rests almost entirely on the ability of groups to overcome political and economic inequality. For beyond the boundaries of the group, inequality is ubiquitous. Dahl's own evidence from New Haven leaves no doubt on that score. Resources are unevenly distributed all along the spectrum. All decisions, he finds, are made by white collar workers. Political skills are middle-class skills, and political tasks are white-collar tasks. Wage earners have less familiarity with politics, and less confidence in their ability to affect political decisions, than other classes. Wealth is extremely concentrated: in 1949, less than five percent of the population earned over \$10,000. And while money is a resource of "diminishing importance," Dahl feels that Mayor Lee's renewal program could not possibly have succeeded if he had switched its focus from renewal of the business districts to renewal of the residential areas of the city. Businessmen have a clear understanding of their stake in local politics, while other classes of the population,

and other group leaders (union officials, for example), do not perceive the way in which political decisions influence their lives. This, too, is a resource of considerable value. The business class, furthermore, benefits from the general political ideology of New Haven, which gives to the goals of business a sanctity denied to the goals of other groups.<sup>98</sup> In addition, the business community has a substantial influence on the two newspapers in the city.<sup>99</sup>

Even where citizens do possess an important political resource--the vote--they do not have the inclination or the skills to use it effectively. "The first fact, and it overshadows everything else, is that most citizens use their political resources scarcely at all."<sup>100</sup> The situation in New Haven, Dahl concludes, can be defined as "citizenship without politics," a curious hybrid, indeed.<sup>101</sup> Nor is this pattern unique to New Haven. As Dahl is candid enough to admit, this is the typical pattern of polyarchies everywhere, the consequence of the extreme inequality brought on by the impact of industrialism on a society of free farmers and artisans.<sup>102</sup> His explanation for the persistence of this pattern is that Americans must have deluded themselves into believing that the old equality continued to exist despite overwhelming evidence to the

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<sup>98</sup> Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz have made the point that the political system in polyarchal communities simply excludes certain issues from the agenda of political leaders, making decisions only on issues that are "safe" from the point of view of the dominant groups, primarily the business class. "The Two Faces of Power," American Political Science Review, 56 (December, 1962), pp. 947-52.

<sup>99</sup> Dahl, Who Governs?, pp. 230-32, 233, 239, 244, 83.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 279.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 276.

<sup>102</sup> Robert Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 103.

contrary, or that it would reappear in the future, or that it was simply no longer important. In fact, American history shows a continuing subterranean struggle to reconcile the image of republican government with the destructive conditions spawned by industrial and technological innovation.<sup>103</sup> What Dahl is not quite ready to admit--although he comes close to doing so--is that inequality is in fact one of the defining characteristics of polyarchies, which is perhaps the reason behind his reluctance to use the term "democracy" in describing modern liberal states.<sup>104</sup>

The consequences of inequality are visible in the community power studies, including those written to dispute the claim that American communities are governed by irresponsible elites. In every case the picture that emerges is of a large class of citizens who are unable to fulfill their public obligations because of the condition of their private lives. In Atlanta, Floyd Hunter concludes, the underprivileged are not articulate; their spokesmen are "half-hearted" in their defense, and the weapons arrayed against them include violence and "isolation from all sources of support." Rulers are difficult to identify, even by "insiders." In Ypsilanti, Schulze found that the "economic dominants" normally prevailed with little or no opposition from other factions in the community, sharing power only with the newly-arrived leaders of major corporations and

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<sup>103</sup> See McWilliams, Fraternity, pp. 95-111, 372-406, 469-506.

<sup>104</sup> Dahl explains that he will not use the term "democracy" because it has "emotional overtones" (a curious reason, especially given the heat generated by the term "polyarchy"); but his subsequent discussion suggests that he is reluctant to use that term because it is simply not accurate. (Polyarchy, p. 9)

large, bureaucratic organizations.<sup>105</sup> Similar conditions were found in the Elmtown, Middletown, and Jonesville studies.<sup>106</sup>

In attacking these findings, pluralists have been forced to adopt some unusual and frankly dubious arguments. Nelson Polsby has claimed that political quiescence is by definition a sign of contentment. The "interclass harmony of interests," he says in criticizing some of the "power elite" studies, is demonstrated by the absence of sharp class conflict.<sup>107</sup> He criticizes the Lynds' conclusion that the business class dominated the political life of Middletown, citing various "victories" by workers, such as the "capture of a KKK chapter" and their defeat of a sewage bond issue.<sup>108</sup> He disputes Schulze's description of Ypsilanti, arguing that since no one offered a serious challenge to the power of businessmen, we cannot know that businessmen would have prevailed had conflict actually occurred. He sees the Chamber of Commerce's appointment of a Negro union leader to a citizen's commission as an example of "sharing power."<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), pp. 146-47, 131, 138, 176-79, 228-61; Robert O. Schulze, "The Role of Economic Dominants in Community Power Structure," American Sociological Review, 23 (February, 1958), pp. 3-9.

<sup>106</sup>August B. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth (New York: Wiley, 1949); Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, Middletown and Middletown in Transition (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929 and 1937); William Lloyd Warner et al., Democracy in Jonesville (New York: Harper, 1949).

<sup>107</sup>Nelson Polsby, Community Power and Political Theory (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 23.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 15-23.

<sup>109</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 62.

Ralf Dahrendorf has taken another tack and simply denied that citizenship has anything at all to do with social or economic equality. In fact he is alarmed by what appears to him to be an intrinsic tendency of citizenship to expand from its proper political sphere into other areas of life, from the "political marketplace" into the "economic marketplace."

[Citizenship originally] defined the role of a member of a community with respect to those rules which are common to all, and thus binding on all institutions and organizations, but it did not as such apply to their own internal structures.<sup>110</sup>

In other words, citizenship does not require any particular set of private relations, or any particular set of private circumstances, nor does it place any demands on the private government of groups, where the most extreme inequalities may exist without endangering citizenship in the larger community. In this sense, citizenship is simply

a set of equal rights, and rights are in one sense chances, opportunities to make choices . . . . The classical citizen as an ideal type invokes almost naturally the social world of classical liberalism: equal rights to choose in a world of unequal alternatives, participation in a system of representative government, a generalized public of individuals which safeguards the rules of the market of which all are a part.<sup>111</sup>

But this is hardly a "classical" image of citizenship. It bears more resemblance to the image of "irrational Lockeanism" which Louis Hartz has traced through American political thought. But it differs even from classical liberalism in one important respect. That tradition, having been born into a very different world, did not require that political values be enforced within private organizations and institutions, since

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<sup>110</sup>Ralf Dahrendorf, "Citizenship and Beyond," Social Research, 41 (Winter, 1974), pp. 693-94.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., pp. 684, 698. My emphasis.

private associations (church congregations, small businesses, and the like) were expected to enforce their own norms. And those norms were not markedly different from the general, republican values of American life, which included a strong emphasis on social equality. But a church congregation and a mass trade union are very different things; a small family business is not anything like General Motors. The vast changes in social and economic organization since the industrial revolution have opened up possibilities for inequality that classical liberalism never had to confront and could scarcely imagine.<sup>112</sup> What Dahrendorf has called "institutions and organizations" are much the same institutions that Bentley denounced as the "masters" of social and economic life. Dahrendorf does not have to resolve Bentley's problem, however, because he has simply ignored its existence.

Yet classical liberalism, born before the full effects of industrialism and organization were apparent, could afford to pay little attention to inequalities in the private sphere. Those of us who can see those consequences cannot afford that luxury. The obstacles which modern economies place in the way of full citizenship are among the most serious obstacles of all. Modern political science must therefore learn again what ancient political science knew: that private inequality, if it is

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<sup>112</sup> Tocqueville could imagine the consequences, however. "What can be expected of a man who has spent twenty years of his life in making heads for pins? . . . the workman becomes more weak, more narrow-minded, and more dependent. The art advances, the artisan recedes. . . . Thus at the very time at which the science of manufactures lowers the class of workmen, it raises the class of masters . . . . I am of the opinion . . . that the manufacturing aristocracy which is growing up under our eyes is one of the harshest that ever existed in the world . . . . If ever a permanent inequality of conditions and aristocracy again penetrates into the world, it may be predicted that this is the gate by which they will enter." Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. II, pp. 158-61.

severe enough, will break through to the public sphere and erode the political equality upon which citizenship depends.

There is one final citizen resource which must be discussed here, and that is the City itself. As noted in Chapter I, this is the resource most often ignored by contemporary analysts, and pluralists are no exception to that rule. With their eyes fixed firmly on the group, pluralists have until recently all but ignored the fate of the City. And "city" must be taken here in both of its senses: as a particular urban jurisdiction, and as a special kind of political order.

The city in the first sense has received more attention than the city in its second sense. Much of that attention, however, has not been welcomed by its recipients. We know what the progressives thought about cities: that they were ill-governed, perhaps ungovernable; that they were destructive of the virtues of "true" citizenship; that they spawned America's worst institutions and customs. The progressive tradition made a substantial impact on the profession of political science: it was at the behest of progressives that political scientists first began devising schemes for municipal reform and first began gathering statistics on urban life. Eventually that impulse gave birth to a specialty, urban studies, one that has inherited much of the progressive attitude toward urban politics.<sup>113</sup>

But the city in its second sense has not been favored with so much interest. Perhaps because the progressives and political scientists were

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<sup>113</sup> See especially Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson, City Politics (New York: Vintage, 1966), one of whose major theoretical constructs--the difference between the "private-regarding" and the "public-regarding" citizen--is taken directly from Progressive political ideology.

so intent on reforming the "real" city, they paid little attention to the "essential city," that is, to those characteristics which made the city such a powerful image in the history of political thought. Perhaps also because of the peculiar fragmentation of political authority in the American system, the city--existing at the very bottom of that system, sharing what little power was left after passing through the hands of federal and state officials--came to seem an encumbrance, a later addition to an already perfected constitutional pattern.

American cities have also been the first jurisdictions to suffer the effects of social changes that impinged much later on state and federal administrations. The cities were the first to experience directly the waves of immigration, the effects of unemployment, the erosion of traditional social institutions, and the massive movements of population known as "suburbanization." In this country, in other words, there has always been an "urban problem" of one sort or another. And that has made cities seem uniquely ill-suited environments, perhaps hopeless ones: environments to be ministered to, tampered with, reformed. "Our cities are not merely non-cities," Robert Dahl said a few years ago, "they are anti-cities--mean, ugly, gross, banal, inconvenient, hazardous, formless, incoherent, unfit for human living, deserts from which a family flees."<sup>114</sup>

Dahl has recently addressed this problem--the problem of the city in both of the senses discussed above. His basic concern in his recent explorations has been the appropriate size of the democratic city, a question he has accused the political science profession of ignoring for

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<sup>114</sup>Robert Dahl, "The City in the Future of Democracy," American Political Science Review, 61 (December, 1967), p. 964.

too long.<sup>115</sup> The problem, as he sees it, is that the small city, long the ideal of classical democratic thought, is too small to deal with the wide array of problems with which modern governments must cope, and the large community (both the megalopolis and the nation-state) is too large to be controlled by its own citizens. The small community is deficient in other respects, as well: it is typically homogeneous ethnically, hostile to strangers and to dissent, enforcing a conformity against which its citizens have few effective weapons. Conflict, if it does arise, is likely to pit one major faction against another, threatening to tear the community apart. For this reason, Dahl concludes, the optimum democratic community may be the medium-sized city of 50,000 to 200,000 inhabitants. In such a community it is possible for representative government to be manageable and comprehensible; a wide range of problems can be dealt with by government, although it is not, and cannot be, autonomous; and it is large enough, and heterogeneous enough, for dissenters to survive and find allies, and for conflict to be dealt with at a level short of total mobilization.<sup>116</sup>

This is certainly a start toward a serious consideration of the nature of the city and the possibility of restoring democratic communities. It is also a major departure for Dahl, whose earlier works were marked by a willingness (increasingly reluctant) to accept low levels of political involvement as the price of modernity. Now Dahl is prepared to describe modern communities as "fragmented and . . . shattered," and to look forward

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid., p. 965.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., pp. 960-62, 964, 965-66; also Robert Dahl and Edward Tufte, Size and Democracy (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973), pp. 91-92.

to the time when democratic cities can be agencies of "educating citizens in civic virtue." What we need now, he concludes, is

a political unit of more truly human proportions in which a citizen can acquire confidence and mastery of the arts of politics--that is, of the arts required for shaping a good life in common with fellow citizens.<sup>117</sup>

Dahl's injunction to search for the optimum democratic city and the conditions which maintain it was made a decade ago, and it is impossible to say what effect it had on the political science discipline. A professional association of any kind is not the best soil for the sowing of new ideas; and political scientists, trained for the most part in a tradition that has slighted the needs and possibilities of citizenship, cannot be expected to respond readily to such a radical departure. Such a new direction would require a reassessment of many of the discipline's most cherished beliefs: that groups are where the citizen must live his public life; that the education of citizens can be left to groups and elites; that civic education can be conducted without serious consideration of the ends (or lack of them) of the modern state; that groups can perform the ancient offices of citizenship; that groups can prevent the growth of an omnipotent state.

The rebirth of the democratic city, however, will require more than the determination of its appropriate size. But that fact opens a discussion which should be left to the final chapter of this thesis, in which an attempt will be made to discuss some of the requirements for a revival of citizenship and some of the obstacles in the way of achieving that goal.

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<sup>117</sup>Dahl, "The City," p. 967.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FUTURE OF CITIZENSHIP

The title of this chapter is deliberately hopeful, in its assumption that citizenship has a future. But in the past fifteen years or more there have been many reasons for hope. Who could fail to notice in the desperate movements and protests of the 1960s a yearning for the oldest of political relationships, citizenship, and for the oldest of places, the city? That those yearnings were so often frustrated and misunderstood may be the most important fact about what has happened in the United States during the past decade or more, more important than assassinations, riots, and the lost war in Vietnam.

Yet the very existence of the desire for citizenship, and its continued expression, is reason to believe that Americans have at least been conscious of having lost something valuable. And they have lost it: the "eclipse of citizenship" is an undeniable fact of life in contemporary America.<sup>1</sup> The possibility for a revival of citizenship depends first of all upon our willingness to admit the truth. Despite its considerable Bicentennial imagery, the United States is only an embryonic republic, and its residents cannot be considered citizens in any but the most attenuated sense of that word. The common defense against this assertion only proves its accuracy: when challenged, we often prove our citizenship

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Pranger, The Eclipse of Citizenship (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968).

by comparing ourselves to the inhabitants of totalitarian states.

But the true standard of comparison must be the meaning of citizenship as it has been handed down from one generation of theorists and citizens to another. As we have seen in preceding chapters, that meaning has changed under the impress of changing social conditions. Twentieth-century America is not fifth-century Athens and, as Robert Dahl has said, "there is no going back to the childhood of man."<sup>2</sup> But the tantalizing image of the citizen persists through all the centuries that separate us from the beginnings of political philosophy. It persists because the classics were right: citizenship and the community that only citizens can create are needs which grow from the nature of man. Those needs can be frustrated, and they can be distorted, but they remain needs nonetheless, and will last as long as humanity.

It would be presumptuous to write a manual for the restoration of citizenship, but if what has been said so far has any validity, there are certain conclusions which can be drawn which have general application to the political science profession. These conclusions suggest several possibilities and several warnings.

1) We have surrendered far too much of our political heritage to the drift of events, apparently in the hope that technological progress and mounting affluence would balance everything in the long run. The country is now three centuries old, and that would seem to be a long enough run. Things have not balanced. The "tendency" of America's problems to recur in every generation--racial conflict, economic depression, abuse of the environment, the waste of resources, the concentration

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<sup>2</sup>Robert Dahl, "The City in the Future of Democracy," American Political Science Review, 61 (December, 1967), p. 960.

of wealth--should suggest that what once seemed a tendency might better be called a law. Calling it a law will be no improvement, however, unless we realize that it is a law of our own (and our ancestors') making. The problems American society continues to face are not just the temporary consequences of "growing pains" or "adjustment" or "coming of age." They are problems that have always been with us because they originate in our concept of ourselves as a nation and in our theories about how we should be governed.

2) This realization places a special responsibility on the shoulders of the political science profession, whose job it is to understand the complex relationship between man's political nature and the environment in which he lives. This requires, at the very least, a critical understanding of political ideas and their consequences. But the schools of political science discussed in this thesis have been typically American in their tendency to take ideas for granted and to consign political "values" to the netherworld of "utopian speculation" or "normative theory." The standard operating premises of American government have been in desperate need of critical evaluation, for those premises, good or ill, have brought us to our present condition. And with due regard for the important exceptions, that critical evaluation has not been forthcoming.

Specifically, political science must re-think the requirements of citizenship, given the nature of contemporary society. The Framers gambled that in a largely agrarian republic, with a substantial equality of conditions, representative government would be both efficient and well within the control of most people, most of the time. If there is one thing that can be said about American political history without fear

of contradiction, it is that the Framers lost that bet. Some may admire them for making it anyway; others may criticize them for being too optimistic. But the time has long since passed when we can view their work as charitably, and as complacently, as American scholars have been wont to do.

But to criticize the Federalist teaching on citizenship, as I have argued in Chapter I and elsewhere, is to criticize more than just the generation of men who wrote the Constitution. It means following a set of assumptions about the nature of man and the political community through several generations into contemporary classrooms and modern texts on government. Those assumptions continue to dominate the field of American political thought. With Madison, contemporary political science believes that men's passions are more to be feared than their passivity; that countervailing power is a substitute for civic education; that a divided public authority is a safeguard of liberty; that the public interest is no more than the sum of private interests; that a buzzing universe of social mobility and economic growth can satisfy all of man's legitimate needs.<sup>3</sup>

3) If these assumptions are wrong, it is especially important to understand their impact on the experience of citizenship. That experience has been hampered by institutions, customs, laws, and ideas that have been with us for generations. If political science is to contribute to the restoration of citizenship, it will have to turn its attention to the historic obstacles we have erected in its path.

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<sup>3</sup>Norman Jacobson, "Political Science and Political Education," American Political Science Review, 57 (September, 1963), pp. 561 ff.; Wilson Carey McWilliams, The Idea of Fraternity in America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 476.

4) Some of those obstacles have been discussed in the body of the thesis, and need only be mentioned briefly again here. There are important institutional arrangements which inhibit citizenship and which have received increasing attention in recent years. Theodore Lowi and Grant McConnell have drawn our attention to the way in which public authority is divided and distributed among private groups, and Lowi has drawn attention to the special effects of this practice on citizenship. By making private groups into agents of the state, "interest-group liberalism" makes the group, rather than the political community, the most important arena of politics, thus shutting out of the system all those who do not belong to the groups in question.<sup>4</sup> And E. E. Schattschneider has demonstrated how the "pressure group system" biases participation toward higher status citizens, who are then doubly blessed by disproportionate political and economic power.<sup>5</sup>

5) The traditions of private power and fragmented public authority have reached into every level of government, drying up the sources of citizenship in local politics. Urban politics especially, but to some extent all local government, is characterized by a hopeless proliferation of boards, committees, commissions, and authorities, making government incoherent and crippling the ability of public officials to carry out their mandates.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, a century-old tradition of "municipal reform" has resulted in the exclusion of the public from wide areas of

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<sup>4</sup>Theodore Lowi, The End of Liberalism (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969); Grant McConnell, Private Power and American Democracy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966).

<sup>5</sup>E. E. Schattschneider, The Semi-Sovereign People (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960).

<sup>6</sup>Robert Wood, 1400 Governments (New York: Doubleday, 1961).

decision-making. Such devices as nonpartisan elections, at-large councils, council-manager regimes, expert advisory commissions, barriers to voter registration, and the like have had the effect (and often had the intent) of significantly depressing participation in local politics.<sup>7</sup> Until such "reforms" are curtailed, abolished, or circumvented, it is difficult to imagine how the restoration of citizenship will begin. In order for citizenship to emerge from its "eclipse," the area of policy-making open to democratic political control will have to be greatly expanded. The progressives managed to "take the politics out of local government." The time has come to put politics back where it belongs.

6) Recent analysts have detected a decay of political parties, and have warned that the consequence may be the loss of what is left of the public's ability to control elected officials.<sup>8</sup> Efforts to save the political party, however, will meet with stiff opposition. The ambiguous tenets of the "post-Watergate morality" and the traditional American suspicion of politicians will see to that. Americans have learned a curious lesson about power. We are willing to tolerate unprecedented concentrations of power in the hands of industry, private organizations, and bureaucrats, but we become extremely nervous when politicians talk about "delivering the vote" or otherwise demonstrate an unseemly amount of

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<sup>7</sup> A recent Mayor's Commission in Boston has offered a significant comment on municipal reform by recommending the abandonment of virtually every progressive-era political reform measure, including at-large elections, nonpartisan voting, and independent school committees. The Mayor's Commission has accused the political system created by these progressive reforms of being "unrepresentative and unresponsive," taking note of the extremely low participation in Boston's municipal elections during most of this century.

<sup>8</sup> Walter Dean Burnham, Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970); Gerald M. Pomper, Voters' Choice (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1975).

"clout." But those who have warned of the decay of parties are right. As Samuel Huntington has observed, "the capacity to create political institutions is the capacity to create public interests."<sup>9</sup> And the party, as the one institution which organizes citizens around interests more general than those of the group, the class, or the region, is the closest approximation in politics to the kind of institution Huntington had in mind.

Protecting parties, however, will require more than overcoming the traditional suspicion of them, which will be no easy task by itself. It will also require a reappraisal of the entire range of campaign customs, from the direct primary to the televised coverage of nominating conventions. None of this analysis is likely to be easy or even welcome.

Unfortunately, recent reforms, particularly in the Democratic party, have not helped matters much. Certainly, it would be hard to argue that the recent campaigns conducted under these reforms were unambiguous victories for the democratic process. If the recent campaign gave us one candidate without ties to any notorious "special interests," it also gave us an election in which nearly half the registered electorate failed to vote: no great gain, and one more indication that reforms designed to "open up" politics to "the people" often fail to do any such thing.

The conventional wisdom has it that the most important lesson of the Watergate scandals is the menace of money in politics--reforms in campaign finance have followed with reasonable speed. It is difficult to

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<sup>9</sup>Samuel Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 24.

be hopeful about such reforms, however, since they fail to attack the basic problem, which is the fearsome cost of campaigning since the introduction of new campaign technology. Instead, the finance laws attack a popular and obvious solution to the problem of money, which is to find an individual or a group with lots to spare and persuade them to part with it. This solution has clear disadvantages, but it should be understood that the influence of the wealthy on candidates is the result of something: the nationalizing of campaigns and the introduction of expensive technology into politics, two trends which no legislature has yet seen fit to combat. Loopholes in the campaign finance laws which allow unlimited expenditure of one's own money only alert us to what is really going on. The whole thrust of campaign finance reform, in fact, is to heighten the already existing class bias of American politics, by making it harder for anyone to run for office who 1) is not wealthy himself, or 2) does not have a vast number of wealthy acquaintances willing to donate the legal maximum.

7) It is not enough, of course, to expand opportunities for participation, since participation can often be ephemeral: as Ellul reminds us, as ephemeral as the 99.9 percent voting rates achieved in totalitarian states.<sup>10</sup> It is equally important that the political communities in which Americans live become cities in the true sense, the problem Robert Dahl urged political science to study back in 1967.

This is perhaps the most difficult problem of all. The obstacles are clear enough, however. A significant (and growing) percentage of the

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<sup>10</sup>Jacques Ellul, The Political Illusion (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), Ch. 2.

American people lives in urban conglomerates that cannot possibly provide a secure home for citizenship. There is every reason to encourage not only changes in the structure of the governments of these megalopoli, but the reduction of their populations as well.

We have already permitted one kind of population movement: that from the central cities into suburban areas--tract developments, instant subdivisions, and "bedroom communities." This means that the shape of our "new cities" has been determined by the needs of real estate development, architects and bankers, rather than the needs of citizenship. These new communities have, for the most part, turned out to be even less congenial to the growth of citizens than the blighted urban areas they were supposed to replace.

As Dahl has suggested, the problem of democratic control of our cities is related to the problem of jurisdiction.<sup>11</sup> It is obviously impossible to give a city government final authority to deal with every problem coming within its view--that would mean giving to the city the authority to make foreign policy.<sup>12</sup> Dahl pictures a new variety of federalism in which different units of government have different mandates, each larger unit having authority to deal with increasingly broad sets of problems, much the way "Chinese boxes" fit one inside the next.<sup>13</sup>

There are obvious problems with this view, not the least of which is the difficulty of dividing "problems" into such neat pieces. As

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<sup>11</sup>Dahl, "The City," pp. 964-67.

<sup>12</sup>That this is not just a fanciful academic question was demonstrated by the recent controversy over landing rights for the Anglo-French Concorde, in which New York City and Boston made something very much like a demand to make their own foreign policy.

<sup>13</sup>Dahl, "The City," p. 959.

Gerald Pomper has pointed out, at the same time that Americans have been demanding more opportunities for local political participation, there has been a growing awareness that problems are "national" in scope, two trends which do not complement one another very well.<sup>14</sup> To the extent that problems demand national solutions, there is not much that citizens can do in their local communities to resolve them.

Despite this fact, local governments have for many years been the focus of attention on a wide variety of issues: race relations, unemployment, land use, environmental protection, law enforcement, and many more. There is certainly no dearth of problems that lend themselves to local action, and if those problems often lack the drama of the "great issues" of national affairs, they at least offer one intriguing aspect: they are complicated enough to have thus far evaded all attempts at their solution.

As Dahl has pointed out, local government provides a versatile arena for political education.<sup>15</sup> Local governments, with restored powers and more democratic institutions, perhaps also with more realistic boundaries and jurisdictions, could teach a great deal to citizens about problems of justice, participation, and trust which must be learned at the local level before citizenship can have any meaning on the larger stage of national politics.

8) Political science will have to become much more sensitive than it has been to the nature of the American class system and the American economy. No changes in party structures, the size of communities, or the

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<sup>14</sup> Pomper, Voters' Choice, pp. 14-17.

<sup>15</sup> Dahl, "The City," p. 967.

methods of government will avail so long as private economic power continues to govern so much of American life, and as long as the nation remains divided between those who can work and those who cannot.

The time has come for political science to pay attention to our nation's "fictitious citizens," the corporations, and the influence their behavior has on the nation's living citizens. The time has come, in fact, when it is appropriate to ask whether those institutions ought to be altered or even abolished. The corporation has been the mechanism for vast changes in American life, permitting the exploitation of resources (and people) which could not have been accomplished in any other way. Under the shelter of the corporate charter, private concentrations of wealth have expanded to the point where they now display the trappings of miniature governments, with armies, budgets, secret police organizations, and even palace revolts. They are so much a part of American life that they have come to seem the natural way of doing business. Yet the acceptance of the corporate form of business organization dates only from the early decades of the nineteenth century. The corporation is thus a relative newcomer to American life, younger than the Constitution, scarcely as old as the Democratic party.<sup>16</sup> And just as it appeared only recently, it may disappear in the future. But it will not shuffle off the stage by itself; it will not evolve out of existence, like the dinosaur, but will have to be pushed, like the passenger pigeon.

It is curious that this proposal has not been made more often in discussions of the American economy. So sacrosanct is the corporation

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<sup>16</sup>For a discussion of the early controversies over the spread of corporations, see Louis Hartz, Economic Policy and Democratic Thought: Pennsylvania, 1776-1860 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), and Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion (New York: Vintage, 1960).

that its abolition seems as unthinkable as the abolition of the profit motive itself. The silence on this subject may be a consequence of the belief that the economy runs itself, in obedience to natural laws, and not in response to human will. Yet we managed to accomplish a great deal without the corporation in its present form, and the future may require us to accomplish things that the corporate form prevents. The preservation of communities and protection of the natural environment may require a form of business organization that gives much less freedom to private wealth than the modern corporation allows.

The corporation, in fact, is the classic "bad citizen." With "neither body to kick nor soul to damn," the corporation is immune from the constraints on behavior that private citizens must accept. It is even immune, according to David Truman, from that greatest of pluralist moral restraints, "overlapping memberships."<sup>17</sup> It exists for one purpose only: the accumulation of wealth. It is legally responsible for its actions, of course, but the individuals who run it are not. It cannot learn what other citizens must learn, and it cannot feel what real citizens feel. It can exploit a community until the community's resources have run dry, and then depart, without a moment's hesitation. In fact, it cannot do anything else. It can even betray its country without fear of reprisal; indeed, in the age of multinational corporations, a business firm can scarcely be said to have a country. Finally, its great wealth makes it the perfect analogue to the classic aristocrat: smug, suspicious, unfeeling, and arrogant.

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<sup>17</sup>David Truman, The Governmental Process, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), p. 160, note.

This is standard knowledge, and has been bemoaned for as long as corporations have existed. But we have not been willing to risk damaging the prospects of continued economic expansion and the greater control of nature that the corporation promises. In the long run, we believed, there would be so much for everybody that no one would cavil at, or even recall, the terrible price our universal abundance had exacted. This was an overly optimistic view, as should be evident by now.

The concentration of economic power in the hands of a few has always been seen by political theorists as a danger to democratic government. But to the traditional arguments against extreme concentrations of wealth we should add one more, one that modern citizens can perhaps appreciate better than their predecessors. That is the power of the corporation to alter not only the economic landscape, but the social and political landscape as well. The energy of industrialism is destructive and constructive at once. While it obliterates communities and institutions with one hand, it creates new structures with the other, only to move on, continuing the process in another place, rearranging the landscape to suit the arcane plans of board members and bankers. The cities of antiquity, too, were called into being by the "lords temporal" and the "lords spiritual." But the ancient aristocracy felt, or came to feel, a profound connection to the communities and institutions it created. No such claims can be made for the corporation, whose rulers are distant physically and emotionally from the consequences of their actions. They bear a closer resemblance to the overseers of ancient empires, who governed vast provinces that they had never seen.

9) Finally, political science must learn a new respect for the nature of political beliefs, treating them not just as inconsequential bits of data to be entered along with other inputs, but as crucial elements in the construction of a unique political community. It is often said that America has been fortunate in its avoidance of sectarian ideological disputes, from which the conclusion is drawn that Americans do not believe anything in particular about politics, preferring a reliance on pragmatism rather than "theory." Daniel Boorstin, for example, has written that the United States must remain free of the "un-American demand for a philosophy of democracy."<sup>18</sup>

Nothing could be further from the truth. As G. K. Chesterton observed many years ago, America is unique in being

the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed. That creed is set forth with dogmatic and even theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence . . . . It enunciates that all men are equal in their claim to justice, that governments exist to give them that justice, and that their authority is for that reason just . . . . America invites all men to become citizens; but it implies the dogma that there is such a thing as citizenship.<sup>19</sup>

If we have not had disputes about philosophy, it is because we have been in general agreement about what our philosophy is. "Citizenship," Chesterton went on, "is . . . the American ideal; there is an army of actualities opposed to that ideal; but there is no ideal opposed to that ideal."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Daniel Boorstin, The Genius of American Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 184.

<sup>19</sup>G. K. Chesterton, What I Saw in America (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1922), pp. 7-8.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

Expanding on this argument, John Schaar has recently described a unique form of American patriotism, which he calls "covenanted patriotism"--one founded not on love of place so much as on dedication to a set of principles.

We are a nation formed by a covenant, by dedication to a set of principles and by an exchange of promises to uphold and advance certain commitments among ourselves and throughout the world. Those principles and commitments are the core of American identity, the soul of the body politic. They make the American nation unique, and uniquely valuable, among and to the other nations. But the other side of this conception contains a warning very like the warnings spoken by the prophets to Israel: if we fail in our promises to each other, and lose the principles of the covenant, then we lose everything, for they are we.<sup>21</sup>

Many new ideals now clamor for our allegiance: we are asked to follow the banners of technocracy, international socialism, universal love, and wierd combinations of these and other ideals. If political science were really the value-free analytic tool that its founders hoped it would be, then we would merely throw these doctrines in with the other inputs and cast a cold eye on whatever emerged from the output end of the box. But political science is no more value-free than any other attempt to comprehend the world, and there has been mounting apprehension among students, scholars, and citizens alike that the thing emerging is not a very pleasant thing at all, that it is in fact a frightening distortion of values that have too long been taken for granted.

Political science bears part of the blame for that distortion, and it has a consequent obligation to teach a more valuable lesson in the future. For if Bertrand de Jouvenel is correct in saying that part of

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<sup>21</sup>John H. Schaar, "The Case for Patriotism," American Review, 17 (May, 1973), p. 69.

the job of the political scientist is to foresee trouble, then the discipline must consider what troubles may follow the continued erosion of the basic idea of the American community: the idea of a common allegiance to a set of principles about self-government, the "pure classic conception that no man must aspire to be anything more than a citizen, and that no man should endure to be anything less."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Chesterton, What I Saw in America, p. 16.

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