I. PERSPECTIVES OF A GENERATION: 1927-1967

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Representative government may be considered an invention, more precisely a set of inventions, like the steam engine, forms of psychotherapy, photography, and radio. There was a time when it did not exist as such. Then we experienced prototypes. We saw changes, complications, periods of disuse, wierd models. Conscious and unconscious adaptations occurred. The instrumentation of representation was merged into the conglomerate of social institutions. Today representative devices are subjectively necessary in all governments and perhaps, objectively considered, they may be as necessary to modern society as a garbage disposal system.

To call representative government by the word "invention" implies that it has at least two characteristics:

1) It can be said to work only when it aids somebody in the achievement of his goals;
2) It can be altered to some degree to produce more or less of satisfactions of desires.

Like other inventions, man can do without it, though perhaps on terms that may seem insufferable. In its form at a given time, it also risks "technological obsolescence" in favor of more "efficient" new inventions in social relations.

To appraise now the status of this set of inventions, one would logically ask:

1) Who is being served how by present applications of the technology of representative government?

2) How can the state of the applied science be rationalized to perform better for specified uses.

Forty years ago a group of scholars were asked, in effect, the same questions and responded with essays of reply.* They were men of ability and note; their names may well be recognizable: Harold Laski of the University of London, Gaetano Mosca of the University of Rome, Charles Borgeaud of the University of Geneva, F. Larnaude of the University of Paris, and M.J. Bonn of the Institute of Advanced Commercial Studies at Berlin. What they considered the principal problems of representative government in that generation is worthwhile to hear again.

Gaetano Mosca was then riding hard his opinion that universal suffrage makes parliamentary government impossible by letting extreme demands for equality be given mass expression and effect. (There seems to be a contradiction, evident in the revolutions of the barricades of his day as well as in the American urban riots of today, between the notion that universal suffrage allows the masses to rule and the observation that the masses do not see that their vote will permit them really to rule.)

*L'Évolution actuelle du régime représentatif (Paris: Payot, 1928)

Mosca also warns that a general interest can only be arrived at by a general electorate, not by organized minorities; he opposes in principle what came later to be Fascist corporatism. He finally appeals to the European leading classes to "manifest more coherence and maturity."

Borgeaud was captivated by the possibilities of determining public policies by popular referenda. He dwells upon the Swiss and American experience in this regard.

Larnaude was concerned with reducing the claims of extreme pluralists and syndicalists and lamented the grasping for power of legislatures. "What must be represented is the State: that lofty personality, formed in the course of centuries, that which is not made up alone of those living today." Representation furthermore lies in all manifestations of society, not only in the organs of today's politics; so in order to grant the family, the church, and other parapolitical institutions their place, he goes back to corporatism of a kind, perhaps in some Senatorial apportionment.

Larnaude regrets the draining of talents from the State into private professions and deplores the ignorance of the mass electorate. Parliamentary procedure destroys the technique of planned legislation: "We follow the worst method ever practiced for making the law." And he recommends a new legislative council, composed of ministers, judges, legal scholars, bar associations and the like. He recommended as well the reform of French government by creation of permanent under-secretaries, on the British

model, and a strengthening of the law-making powers of the President of the Council of State. He would cause the making and the unmaking of fundamental law to be a matter of special institutional procedures. He regrets the interference of members of parliament in executive appointments on grounds of the separation of powers, even while he rejects the separation of powers in setting up legislative councils.

Prof. Bonn in turn deftly sketches the efforts of reformers of parliamentary systems and concludes rather sweetly and pessimistically, somewhat in the style of Roberto Michels, that happiness is not to be achieved by political machinery, or myths about machinery. A government"based on the right of democratic suffrage has to mirror the nation and its forces... Whoever would ameliorate it would have to reform himself."

Laski, palpitating with the future, alone accepts the demands of the Twentieth Century upon parliaments. And unlike Larnaude, he urges larger executive powers, not as a conservative force against the revolt of the masses, but as a force on behalf of the masses.

He blames the decline of assemblies on:

1. demands of the people for economic solutions which the legislatures cannot handle, because they require attention to and skill at economic detail.(Later he was to say that assemblies will not handle economic problems, being bourgeois creations.)

2. The executive power has grown and is better at economics than parliaments are.

3. Members have particular, not general, interests of the society at heart.

4. The average man is ignorant of civics.

He recommends:

1. Education in civics.

2. Commissions of the Assembly to "consult" with the bureaucracy.

3. "Public hearings."

4. Legislative reference bureaus.

(In respect to 2, 3, and 4, he is mistaken in dismissing the rich precedents of American legislatures.)

5. Territorial decentralization. (He is later to excoriate American federalism.)

6. Functional decentralization (and representation of interests).

It is curious how often political scientists who base their discipline upon the study of power are forever committing themselves to institutional devices in which the principle of power is lost. Power requires a social foundation, and power exists (by definition) in its exercise. When reformers of legislatures furiously work to strengthen them by depriving them of a base and by removing their powers, we can only conclude that they are hypocrites or deluded. What Professor Laski argued for then, and what most neo-liberal reformers have been promoting since his time, is a breaking down of the real power of legislatures behind a smokescreen of technical improvements.

Vague pleas for territorial and functional representation become, under the circumstances, merely words to curry popularity. There is little appreciation of the fact that both territorial and functional decentralization depend

ideologically, structurally, and operationally upon a pluralistically-determined central government. Central bureaucracy and the chief executive are born enemies of territorial and functional decentralization. If logic is not enough, history can furnish all the necessary evidence. I do not read of any exception, whereas a hundred cases of the opposite are at hand.

From the book of essays of a generation ago, we draw several conclusions:

1) That representative government then was thought to have no pertinence outside of Western Europe. This not only involves a loss of data, but also a loss of perspective.

2) Corporatism in some form was popular, but the extent of devolution of policy-making to functional elements varied greatly in different proposals.

3) There was on the one hand a wariness of some devices of representation, such as proportional representation, and a naive acceptance of others, such as popular referenda.

4) There were no schemes about which we might say today: "Ah, if only we had followed the ideas of Monsieur X!" The referenda are today in disrepute. Legislatures have not become much more competent technically, but where they have, a loss of power accompanies the expertness. Functional representation is less tried than then, and also stands in low esteem.

In general, theory of representative government was in the same impasse in 1927 as it is today. Yet representative institutions have persevered and I suppose that we should give three (perfunctory)cheers for institutions that manage to stagnate successfully for a century or more, and at the same time inspire counterparts in every country.

II.

What happened in the intervening period was more of what was happening then:

1) Although none of the scholars of 1927 expressed concern over the phenomenon now called "charismatic leadership*," they would probably accept its nomination as a thorny problem of representative government. Ataturk, Pilsudski, Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler, Mao, De Gaulle, Churchill, Roosevelt and many another leader have dominated their legislatures or sacked them.

2) The forces of the top executives and of the bureaucracy have moved ahead rapidly. Centralization of government and integration of the economy have proceeded apace. What Professor Laski thought were such complicated matters that legislatures would not

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*But their contemporary, Roberto Michels, treated charisma explicitly in the same year in his work, which I presented as First Lectures in Political Sociology (U. of Minnesota Press, 1949; Harper's Torchbooks, 1965).

handle them -- the economic policies of the Twentieth Century -- have been shown to be quite as sloganizable as the old "political" problems. In America, we had "54°40' or Fight" in the 1850's and "The War on Poverty" in the 1960's. The notion that any species of problem is so technical and matter-of-fact that it cannot be distorted or incite struggle is nonsense; and if legislatures are competent to handle political problems they are also competent to deal with economic ones.

3) The centralized, nationalized, and sometimes governmentalized political party -- a phenomenon preferred by Professor Laski and most political scientists since his day -- has taken its toll of legislative power, whether by the imposition of strict internal party discipline as in England or by communist party control of program and proceedings, as in Eastern Europe.

And, if truly the pathology of representative government has changed little despite the horrendous events of the last generation, it is also true that the doctors of politics have not evolved a new set of diagnoses and prescriptions. One scarcely knows where to begin, unless it is with that earlier puzzling observation that the sick man has survived. Although the indicators of its health are depressed, the formal apparatus of representative government is de rigeur

everywhere, even more than in 1927. How do we explain this fact?

I think that it may be owing to the universal need for a principle of legitimacy, of which, for better or worse, only several have been discoverable in human history thus far. Of these, tradition is gone as an ultimate justifier of governments, though it may remain an immanent determinant of political behavior. So, too, charisma. Even while the asserted outstanding qualities of leaders can justify their momentary preeminence, the system-need of modern societies is unsatisfied by a principle of successive charismatics.

The principle of popular sovereignty, which is generally accepted, must find a structural embodiment. It has no simple apparatus of decision attached to it; it is inherently turbulent. So the principle leads directly to constitutionalism which embodies the popular will through a rational act, and anoints certain representatives, who can be few or many. Why then can we not believe that a popularly elected president, controlling a large centralized bureaucracy, under a constitution and in the name of a people, would suffice for all practical purposes as a stable type of legitimate representative government? (The alternative would be the less stable complex system of representative government known as government by assembly.) The U.S. and France are currently approaching this situation. Britain and the U.S.S.R. are well into it. We hark back to 1927 and reflect that Professor Laski and

others may have been correct as to the future of representative government; they were perhaps only mistaken in believing that to have representative government, a legislature is required.

But here, an acceptable, indeed forceful, principle of elective kingship encounters the equally forceful facts of modern life. Only in the most primitive conditions of world society today can government subsist without an elevated group of professorial, trained persons, rationalistically skilled, technocrats in embryo. And the conditions for the generation of this class require an environment, a serum, that is teeming with the germs of dissident personages. The very competition of technologically advanced societies requires the germination of free ideas and practices. And only a monopolistic international condition -- where, so to speak, all countries are retrograding in the same direction -- can prevent the progressive recognition of internal divisions, of pluralism, and of consequent schemes for the allocation of authority on less than a purely concentrated basis. Perhaps it is too early to challenge the durability of centralized states with elected kings, but we can deny their efficiency.

Thus, some representative principle gropes back from the unity of pure integration. It could be designed as such, and ought to be, to the mind of one who would rationally work his way out of the technical impossibilities of the purely autocratic rationalized hierarchy. But history will not permit this. For as it reaches back, it encounters the historical configuration of representative government, just

as the tide of the ocean having produced a low water mark must advance to a high and recapture its former littoral outlines.

The requirements of a scientific age (without begging the question of its true "scientificity") would appear to invite some representative character in government, but must fall back upon admitting history, which pre-establishes the human condition. Still, the fall-back need not be so historically determined that it cannot admit the interests of the new groupings, which are not of traditional social class, nor of cavalier ethnic, nor of denominational commercial or military interests, but are of something else, as yet undefined.

Perhaps the new social functions are to be perceived in the ideas of St. Simon of a scientific elite or of the original, seemingly absurdly broad, Soviet conception of the intelligentsia. Having no a priori configuration, the impression of the new group must be diffused and uncertain. It is no wonder that political theorists have been unable to breathe life into it.

The elements of the past that one would retain and revive should be clear enough. To assert them makes one an exponent of "vintage whiggery." (Or so I have been called by recent critics.) For the new shape must connect with selective elements of history and go beyond them. The historical elements that can connect with the future are not

the working class, nor the bureaucracy, as originally perceived in its hierarchical skilled absolute mastery of the national interest, nor the old military.

More appropriately, the rag-tag collections of politicoes surrounding the old legislatures, who gave them both life and a bad name, are to be considered. They have a welding capacity, a way of conglomerating the society. They can adhere to a futuristic form because of their baseless quality, provided that they can be kept alive.

And the commercial interests of the past, the territorial, the ethnic, the associational -- all of these elements of the old -- those whom political theorists of the past two generations have regarded as flotsam and jetsam on the wave of history -- these have to be accommodated and appreciated, because only they are ready sources of contact for the still uncertain forces of a future representative government. At the least, so long as this set of groups survives, the transition to new modes of representative government may be less catastrophic.

Then where do we go for the new forms? It would appear that the knowledge-groupings of the contemporary society have the greatest likelihood of presenting a new face to the problems of representative government. The risks of politicizing knowledge are many, of course; most of them already have been

experienced in one way or another, and presumably the risks will augment as the involvement of the social organization of knowledge in representative government increases. Still, what is there that is better, government being always a poor estimation of individual perfectibility.

If within each area of human life there were abstracted, by some devices of representation, those most skilled in that given area, and if these gained a disproportionate weighting in the making of public policy with especial reference to the area, then we might have some new form of government with a character of its own. It would stand for a distinctive qualification of the popular principle but would be acceptable, perhaps as an extension of it.

Not surprisingly, I can think of this in the terms of history. We are talking again of philosopher kings, of government by experts, of the rule of merit, and so on. Truly these concepts are not to be waved aside, but rather to be received.

In addition, we should like to see representative government have a much broader basis of power in a <u>free public</u>, informally instrumented, operating voluntaristically. We should also like to give a general suffrage power boost for those capable of extended civic activity in areas of special competence. A distinction should be made between

those who simply exist as citizens and those who wish to make something more of the word.

The points of access in the representative system must be largely familiar, such as qualification for office, nomination by experts, double elections, new types of districts, specialization of powers and requirements for the scientific processing of legislative or policy material, and especially the encouragement of habits already developing among the decision-makers -- of consultation, pre-planning, espousing new schemes with the help of all those thoroughly versed in the subject matter.

Now there is more than one way to incorporate the potential intelligentsia into the power elite. One is by assimilating them to the bureaucracy. There is great deal of this going on. Another is by using them to connect up with the conventional elements, some of them in disrepute, that I have previously mentioned. The latter is obviously preferable, if only because the freedom of identification offered the knowledgeable elements is greater in the conventional settings of legislative politics than it is in the bureaucracy, whatever the current opinion to the contrary. (It is a formidable truth of social politics that the tutored classes believed that they are more compatible with and better treated by the bureaucracy than by businessmen and politicians.)

However, in no manner can we avoid the necessity of stipulating that there must be propaganda, agitation and organization for the proposed changes. For instance, a social doctrine should contain the element of inevitability, as does Marxism, so that people can be told that, if they tire, they can stop pushing the Juggernaut of History, which is rolling downhill anyway. These relentless inertial vehicles, as with Marxism, are seen to be, in historical perspective, prone to drop their wheels or break their axles, so that today the myth of inevitability does not perhaps play so much a role in assisting creative politics.

Still, the new doctrines can benefit by an accord with the future. Fortunately, the very potency of the knowledge-groupings that I have alluded to earlier imposes its effects inevitably upon the cognoscenti of political science, enabling them to expect that an equal amount of energy on their part will have a much more than ordinary impact upon the events that shape the future of representative government.

III.

I can do little more here than allude to this problem of shaping the institutions of representative government via knowledge -- institutions and practices of society. Invention is very much in order. Going back to what was said at the beginning of this argument on the nature of representative

government as invention, we can offer two propositions.

First, in respect to the process of invention, scholars and politicians are alike vague and partial. They hover between assertions that "A is bad because it seeks the bad," and "A is bad because it ineffectively seeks the good." So long as the distinction is not made, the process of invention becomes a process of accident, of hoping for a penicillin mold to appear by accident, or of a stroke of lightning to ignite the furnace. That is, invention is a victim of politics and self-delusion (which may be saying the same thing.) The nature of invention must be understood, and the idea of seeking and applying political inventions must be accepted if we are to proceed towards the improvement of representative government. This is so whether one calls himself a conservative, a radical, or anything else. Self-delusion and misperception, which together often destroy diplomatic negotiations, business deals, and marriages, also frequently disrupt attempts at the conciliation of social interests and activities in representative government. Myopia has ruined far more human relations than Machiavellism. The paramount failure is to not recognize"the other fellow's stake in the deal."

Second, in respect to the ineffectiveness of representative systems, given their goals, we have more reason to be confident today than ever before. We have actually means for assessing

fairly closely the effects of a device or system of devices of representation. Given the goal, the invention of modes of introducing interests and opinions into law can proceed apace. Suffice in every case to make "proper allowances" for resistances to innovation.

However, it is of the essence of such "resistances" that they tend to prevent scientific dissection of institutions for achieving their goals. Therefore, it is necessary to reiterate that any fluid, flexible,rational, scientific system of representative government requires an operative agreement by a political coalition on the goals of change, on rationality and on the priority to be granted to the larger social needs.

Apropos of that type of consensus, it is proper to assert that representative government has not much to do with majority rule. It would certainly make the problem of representative government impossible to say: "I don't care what kind of representative government you have, so long as it is egalitarian." It would be just as wrong as saying, "I don't care what kind of representative government you have, so long as absolute rule is preserved."

The very complexity of arrangements and the complexity of societies for which they are intended make of systems of representative government now one thing and now another. To say otherwise is to say that structure has no meaning or possibility. There is some kind of general meaning of representative government. I have tried to indicate that here.

Founded upon the doctrine of popular sovereignty, it is a system of devices supported by a belief in political invention. It evolves a society that is fairly popular, fairly open, and fairly just.