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REVISION OF DEMOCRACY

BY
A. APPADORAI, M.A., PH.D.

HUMPHREY MILFORD
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1940

Dr Appadorai attempts the revision of democracy in these two essays on 'The Idea of Democracy' and 'The Institutions of Democracy'. That such revision is necessary is not only stated by the enemies, but admitted by the friends of democracy, of whom Dr Appadorai is one. But he is not blinded by partisanship, and this work is marked by impartiality and realism. If in the course of his study he exposes democracy's weaknesses, his conclusions do not challenge Mill's central thesis that democracy is superior to other forms of government.

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To the Memory of
My Father

FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to write these words of introduction to Dr Appadorai's book. He has been known in Madras as a successful teacher of Political Science. He is more than that; he is an eager and conscientious student of politics. He has already entered the literary field with an adequate book on Indian Dyarchy. In this present work of political criticism, he has made an attempt at the revision of democracy. That democracy requires revision not only enemies of democracy, but its friends have for some time been convinced. But it is of democracy as a system of government and not of democracy as a social system that Dr Appadorai speaks. And that is why I am glad he brings out and emphasizes the view by no means widespread in our country that democracy is government by the people. From Aristotle and the Greek States down to Lincoln and De Tocqueville and modern experience, democracy has been held to mean just government by the people —nothing less than that, but certainly nothing more. Dr Appadorai insists that 'in the last analysis' democracy means 'the supremacy of the popular will on basic questions of social direction and policy'. It does not necessarily result in liberty. Democracy

has been compatible with slavery, imperialism and religious persecution. The author suggests there must be some curb on democracy in the delimitation of the territorial boundaries of a state, in limits to state action and in the gradualness of legislation.

Apart from this useful contribution to the clarification of political thought in this country, one cannot help admiring his industry, his impartiality and his realism. Now that the democratic experiment is being tried in India, Dr Appadorai's work of revising our ideas on democracy deserves widespread attention.

M. Ruthnaswamy

PREFACE

At the invitation of the University of Mysore the author delivered, at Mysore, in December 1939, the two lectures printed here. The book must speak for itself. Here I would only acknowledge the debt I owe to Mr K. Subrahmanyam, Lecturer in English and the Rev. Fr Basenach, S.J., Professor of Economics, Loyola College, and Mr M. Ruthnaswamy, Member, Madras Public Service Commission. I need not say that none of them has any responsibility for the opinions herein expressed.

I also owe a special debt of gratitude to Mr V. L. D'Souza, Professor of Economics, for the interest he has evinced in these lectures and their publication; Principal Rollo for his encouragement and the Vice-Chancellor and the Council of the University for having invited me to deliver the lectures and sanctioned their publication in the University Extension Lectures Series.

A. APPADORAI

Madras
18 June 1940

CONTENTS

I

THE IDEA OF DEMOCRACY

The theory of democracy received its classic exposition in Mill's *Representative Government* (1861). In its essentials, its thesis is still valid: Democracy is superior to other forms of government because the rights and interests of every person are secure from being disregarded only when the person interested is himself able and habitually disposed to stand up for them; and the general prosperity attains a greater height and is more widely diffused in proportion to the amount and variety of the personal energies enlisted in promoting it. It works properly only if the people are willing to receive it and are willing and able to do what is necessary for its preservation and to fulfil the duties and discharge the functions which it imposes on them. It is defective if it does not concentrate in the hands of the authorities power sufficient to fulfil the necessary offices of a government, or if it does not sufficiently develop by exercise the active capacities and social feelings of individual citizens. It has to guard itself against two dangers: general ignorance and incapacity in the controlling body and the possibility of its being

under the influence of interests not identical with the general welfare of the community.

The working of democracies since Mill's time has only confirmed his fears as may be seen from Bryce's *Modern Democracies* (1922). Ignorance, indolence, private self-interest and partisanship, slowness and inefficiency, the instability of the executive; the unwillingness of the best men to enter politics; irreconcilable opinions and direct action; the unwillingness of minorities to abide by the decision of majorities —these defects have driven sane observers to denounce democracy as an imposture and a delusion. The reappearance of autocracy in a number of major states, the rise of new political theories such as Fascism and Communism, and the growth of authoritarian trends even in the democratic states (for instance over-centralization and the strengthening of the power of the executive) are other indications of the growing dissatisfaction with democracy. Again, the economic and political results of scientific development in a world of sovereign but interdependent states have become clearer since Mill's day. Within the state, intervention by government has everywhere increased, not only in the economic and social but in the intellectual field, the control of the radio and other educational agencies enabling it to manufacture opinion; externally, the security of

democracies is perpetually at stake. Somewhere the doctrine of popular sovereignty as conceived by its apostles seems inconsistent with the essential facts of human experience. A re-examination of its political principles seems necessary.

Democracy may be described as a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by themselves. This is the older, and in the writer's judgement, more fundamental conception of democracy. There is, however, an influential school of thought which considers democracy as a form of society, a way of social life, the chief characteristic of which is equality (not only political but social and economic). This divergence in conception is not merely a difference in nomenclature; it raises the fundamental question: What is the basis of democracy?

Democracy, we have suggested, is simply government by the people. This means that a state may, in political science, be termed a democracy if it provides institutions for the free expression and, in the last analysis, the supremacy of popular will on basic questions of social direction and policy. Other factors such as economic equality, fraternal feeling and the small size of the state are desirable and make for its successful working—the optimum of

democracy; political liberty is the indispensable minimum. Economic or social equality has not been attained in Britain: 'There is no political idea', said Gladstone, 'which has entered less into the formation of the political system of this country than the love of equality.' A political science which, therefore, rejects the title of Britain to democracy is unlikely to apply to a world of realities. What are we to think of a science of anthropology which restricts the term 'man' to the best developed among men in character and intelligence?

The content of political liberty has differed in different countries at different times; but its essence is the right of every man bound by the decisions of any authority to contribute whatever it is in him to contribute to the making and re-making of those decisions. Its institutional expressions are the equal rights of all normal adults to vote and to stand as candidates for election, periodical elections, equal eligibility for executive and judicial office (provided the essential qualifications for the performance of the duty are satisfied) and freedom of speech, publication and association. These rights provide the opportunities for political participation —for choosing the rulers and deciding the general lines of their policy. They enable those who are so minded to devote themselves to political problems

as much as they please. Differences in the social environment, in economic resources and in natural endowments decide the extent to which these legal rights are effectively used; but even to those who are the least politically minded, they afford the opportunity to pass judgement freely and frequently on the work of the political engineers whose decisions affect their lives. Political freedom is thus based on the principle that no man or group of men are, by themselves, good enough to determine the destinies of others. Only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches.

The right to political participation is thus at a minimum basis identical. But this democratic idea of political equality does not imply, as it has sometimes been wrongly interpreted to mean, 'one man, one unit of influence'. Neither in theory nor in practice is that idea true. Democratic theory has for long recognized the position that the aristocratic principle of the primacy of the few permeates every domain of life. Did not Mill say in forceful language: 'One person with a belief is a *social power* equal to 99 who have only interests'? Again, 'the instructed minority would in the actual counting count only for their members, but as a moral power they would count for much more, in virtue of their knowledge, and of the influence it would give them over the rest'. In other words, the differences among men

do make themselves felt in the discussion which precedes the voting. In fact, the central problem of democracy is how to ensure free play and effective fulfilment to the opinions of men of character and knowledge, so that they may counteract the forces of corruption and unreason. The emphasis on discussion as a cardinal tenet of democracy would lose its value if it did not implicitly recognize that men should be influenced by the wisdom of others and therefore one man's real influence is not equal to that of another.

Political participation is the avenue to political freedom in the sense that it gives every one a voice in determining the conditions under which he lives; and thus, in theory at any rate, prevents oppression by the one or the few. But, clearly, it is by itself insufficient to secure freedom, because the individual or a group may be tyrannized over by the community as a whole, i.e., in effect the majority. Rousseau, the prophet of democracy, has said that the sovereign general will, which is by definition always directed to the common good, may *force* the individual to be free! It is no answer to this to urge that life in any state involves such subjection, for, this is to give up even in principle the superiority of democracy to other forms of government. Neither does the provision of institutional safeguards for the rights

of individuals or minorities, through electoral devices for instance, solve the crucial problem; for, in so far as it still leaves the majority free to decide, it falls short of the ideal.

The ideal of liberty in relation to democracy must therefore mean something more than political participation. It involves, secondly, a view of the sphere of the state in relation to the individual and the way in which the rights of the individual are interfered with—briefly, of the content of laws and the process of legislation. That view, which may be called liberal, is that the ultimate purpose of man is man himself; the state is a means to the development of individual personality and not an end by itself. Therefore, there are limits to state action. Totalitarianism and democracy are, from this point of view, opposites. The former considers man as a means to the state's end; it recognizes no limits to state action, for 'there is nothing beyond the state, nothing against the state, nothing outside the state'. Rights are but the creatures of the state. As against this view democracy stresses the primacy of personality in matters spiritual. Rights are not derived from the state, but it is the state that derives its right to exist from maintaining them. They are derived from the moral order underlying social relations. The aim of democracy is to enable the individual to

think and express what he likes, to plan his way of life in his own way and to grow to his natural height without dictation from outside, provided he does not interfere with the equal freedom of others and *does not exploit the weakness of others to his private advantage.* Its ideal is a free and functional society in which opportunities are organized in such a way that no man's personality suffers frustration to the private benefit of others. The extent of state action will necessarily vary with the extent to which this ideal is attained.

It is important here to stress how far opinion on this subject has moved since Mill. His famous doctrine of individuality is no doubt still valid in its insistence on individual initiative as the key to individual and social progress. But the *laissez-faire* doctrine which held that every individual knew his own interest and was capable of obtaining what he wanted under free competition is now seen to be crude and productive of the most mischievous social, or rather unsocial, results. Mill, it is true, was not wholly for *laissez-faire*; but, with all the modifications he made, he would still leave trade and industry largely free. Greater state regulation in order to moralize competition is the key-note of modern social legislation and is quite in accordance with modern democratic theory. While the democratic state does

not set up a pattern of good life, it has to provide the conditions under which good life is possible; its activity has therefore to be attuned to that end.

Democracy differs from totalitarianism, we said, not only in the extent of state interference but in the way that interference is effected. The essence of that difference is that in the democratic theory, law is not only a command, but an appeal. It is an appeal to the reason of man that a change in the social system is necessary. Democracy, as has aptly been said, is social control not by authority from above commanding man to do this and that, but social control by a common law which defines the reciprocal rights and duties of persons. Equally important is it that the law emerges as a result of free discussion. The process of law-making allows full scope for the consideration of different and opposing viewpoints. There is a judicial element in legislation:[1] law is a judgement rendered for certain interests against certain others. When, therefore, with the evolution of new ideas and needs, a change in social behaviour is called for, even those who are adversely affected must feel that their case has been properly heard, and they must not feel the change acutely distressing. That is best done by

[1] LIPPMANN, *The Good Society*, p. 287. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1937)

taking care to avoid violent changes, and to preserve all such constituents of the existing order as are valuable or are not particularly harmful. Where it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change. In the expressive words of a French writer,[2] the law to a certain extent should correct national tendencies, it should be loved a little because it is felt to be just, feared a little because it is severe, hated a little because it is to a certain degree out of sympathy with the prevalent temper of the day and respected because it is felt to be necessary.

This emphasis on the gradualness of legislation is connected with an essential principle of democratic theory, viz., majority rule. The moral ground for the acceptance of a majority decision is not that to count heads is better than to break them; the minority may have the greater physical strength. It is also not that the majority may always express the better reason, but the fact that the 'majority is simply the largest number willing to work together for a particular time'.[3] Government by majority is simply the easiest form of government by sympathetic co-operation, without which modern government

[2] FAGUET, *The Cult of Incompetence*, p. 69. (London: John Murray, 1911)

[3] BURNS, *Democracy*, p. 81. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1929)

is impossible. But the minorities acquiesce in the decision of the majority, not only because they know 'they will have their day', but because they feel that every effort has been made to understand and meet their point of view. Majority opinion in a democracy must be such that while the minority may not share it, they feel bound by conviction and not by fear to accept it, though only as a second best; and if democracy is real, the submission of the minority must be given ungrudgingly, remembering that the majorities also have rights. That requires a give and take, a balancing of interests, which is necessarily slow. Gradualness and tolerance are essentials of the democratic method of legislation. It is, however, necessary to insist that such a temper is difficult to secure in a society where there are deep cleavages concerning their fundamental institutions. It is difficult, for instance, to secure compromise where a strong minority believe passionately that private property is theft, whereas the majority believes in its sanctity. Strong differences in the cultural outlook of different social groups also create the same difficulty.

That is perhaps why political theory has on the whole agreed with Mill that it is in general a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of government should coincide in the main with

those of nationalities. The sense of belonging together creates a readiness on the part of the members of a state to subordinate their differences to the common good. There lurks, however, in this coincidence a danger, pointed out by Lord Acton, to which too little attention has been given. That danger is that, under such conditions, the majority may be tempted to increase the sphere of political regulation and enforce ways of behaviour which are akin to totalitarianism. Said Acton:[4] 'The presence of different nations under the same sovereignty is similar in its effect to the independence of the Church in the State. It provides against the servility which flourishes under the shadow of a single authority by balancing interests, multiplying associations and giving to the subject the restraint and support of a combined opinion. In the same way it promotes independence by forming definite groups of public opinion and by affording a real source and centre of political sentiments and of notions of duty not derived from the sovereign will. Diversity in the same state is a firm barrier against the intrusion of government beyond the political sphere which is common to all into the social department which escapes legislation.' Whether one may agree with

[4] ACTON, *The History of Freedom and other Essays*, pp. 289-90. (London: Macmillan, 1922)

this idea or not, it at any rate shows that one method of increasing the sense of political freedom in a country with fundamental social cleavages is the strict limitation, not the extension, of state activity.

With all safeguards, it is idle to deny that the tendency to give free play to the will of the majority is a permanent danger to the freedom of minorities in popular government. And, therefore, in the final analysis, liberty must imply the moral right of the individual to resist the state. This right is no doubt conditioned by three factors: the individual cannot resort to it, unless he has employed constitutional methods to attain the object he has in view; he must make sure, so far as may be, that the proposal which he advocates is better for the common good than the alternative offered by the state; and resistance is to be used only for what may be called significant issues, as distinguished from minor matters of detail. Truly, as Burke said, the right to resist must be the medicine and not the daily food of the constitution.

If political liberty is the first essential, and therefore the determining principle of democracy, the provision of adequate opportunities is a close second: it makes liberty possible. This is the main direction in which democratic theory has advanced since Mill: that political liberty, unless it is based on adequate

opportunities for the individual to develop his personality, becomes unreal; democracy becomes in effect oligarchic.

By adequate opportunities we mean a basic equality in those conditions of social life which are essential to enable the individual to realize his personality—access to knowledge through a system of state-aided free education, security against unemployment, a minimum wage (which should include provision against sickness and for old age), coupled with fair conditions of work, leisure and some voice in determining the conditions of work to guard against economic slavery. This implies that vast disparities in the distribution of national wealth should be progressively reduced. The connexion between such a postulate and effective democracy is clear; men languishing in want and living under insecure and deleterious conditions of work can hardly be blamed for not taking that intelligent part in government which democracy demands. Great accumulations of wealth also lead to an undue influence of money power in politics with all its attendant evils.

It is remarkable that democracy, starting with political liberty and minimum political equality, should contain within itself the seeds of its own expansion. For, the claim of equality, once awakened in the masses, develops from an opposition

against unjustified political privilege to opposition against unjustified economic privilege. They use their political power to provide educational and economic opportunities. But the possible danger is —and the possibility is becoming a probability—that the claim of equality might develop further into an opposition against inevitable economic and social inequalities. Socialism is demanded as the next step in democracy.

The debate between capitalism and socialism, or the outline of an ideally perfect economic system is largely outside the scope of this lecture. But the provision of adequate opportunities, which we considered a support to democratic freedom, raises certain issues which cannot be ignored.

(i) We assumed above that the masses in a democracy use their political power in order to secure those conditions of life which help them to develop their personality. Has this attempt a reasonable chance of success within the framework of a modified capitalistic economy, and under democratic conditions discussed above?

(ii) Is socialism, especially in its revolutionary aspects, helpful to democracy?

The answer to the first question must be to some extent a matter for speculation; but the facts[5] we

[5] The facts here given largely relate to England.

know indicate, notwithstanding impatient denials, that, given good will, understanding and patience, the masses in a democracy can secure the required conditions. These facts are: the main body of the working classes is absolutely (and relatively to the propertied classes) a good deal better off in terms of material well-being than it was a century ago, before the advent of democracy. According to Sir Josiah Stamp,[6] the average level of real wages today is at least four times as high as it was at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Social legislation in its manifold forms—unemployment and health insurance benefits, old-age pensions, the provision for the treatment of the sick, free education and the increase of amenities in general—has improved the lot of the common man in terms of vitality and happiness, a longer life as well as more energy during life. These social services in effect give large numbers of people the benefits, if not the rights, of property.

This has obviously been made possible by the application of the progressive principle to taxation (steeply graded income-tax, death duties, etc.), and the transfer of the money so obtained to the poor in two ways: by direct transfer of cash as in the

[6] *Britain's Industrial Future* (*being the Report of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry*), p. 6. (London: Ernest Benn, 1928)

payment of unemployment and old-age benefits or by the provision of communal benefits such as better roads, schools, hospitals, parks, libraries, museums, etc. The increase of communal benefits really means that public property has grown relatively to private and that the inequality of distribution to that extent has been reduced. A brilliant book[7] recently published estimates that in England public property excluding roads and armaments has increased from 6 to 8 per cent of the total in 1911–13 to 8 to 12 per cent in 1932–34; and if roads and armaments are included in the valuation it is said that the proportion would be raised to 11-17 per cent.

Other hopeful features are: factory laws and the like are giving to property-rights a shape and content which make it more and more difficult for some men to exercise undue power over the lives of others. The increase in the number of joint-stock companies has enabled a wider diffusion of capital. In America, we are assured[8] that, in addition to the increase in the standard of living, there is a constant passage of individuals from the ranks of the workers to the class of employers and vice versa.

[7] CAMPION, *Public and Private Property in Great Britain*, pp. 90-91. (London: Oxford University Press, 1939)

[8] WILSON, *The Elements of Modern Politics*, p. 233. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1936)

Above all, the middle class, lying between the rich and the poor, has increased considerably both in relative numbers and in social importance. Grading the people by numbers of families,[9] in 1934 21·3 per cent of the families in England received from £4-10*s*. a week—as compared with 73·4 per cent with less than £4 a week and 5·3 per cent with over £10. Great inequalities still continue; but the rise of the middle class is a social factor of great importance.

As to the possibility of such continuous improvement in the future, it is sufficient to quote the high authority of John Maynard Keynes: 'In a hundred years' time, the standard of life in progressive countries will be between four and eight times as high as it is today.'[10] The author of *Economic Consequences of the Peace* can well be believed.

But socialists, especially of the revolutionary school, deny such a possibility. According to them, the limit of expansion within the existing economic system has been reached. Poverty, inequality and the irregularity caused by the trade cycle cannot be removed except by abolishing private capital and private enterprise. The communists believe, further,

[9] COLE, *The Condition of Britain*, pp. 59-69. (London: Gollancz, 1937)

[10] KEYNES cited in JOAD, *Liberty To-day*, p. 78. (London: Watts, 1938)

that according to the materialistic interpretation of history, the class war between the capitalist and the proletariat is to be resolved, not by constitutional methods, but only by a revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the liquidation of classes. Ultimately, the state will wither away and society will be reorganized on the principle: 'From each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs.'

What is the relation of this communist thesis to the theory of democracy? Fundamentally it means a disbelief in discussion, gradualness, and appeal to reason, which are implicit in political liberty, and a belief that the provision of adequate opportunities is insufficient as a basis of that liberty: that there must be absolute not only proportional equality. Briefly, it raises the question both of the ideal to be attained and the method of attaining it.

On method, it appears to me, the fundamental mistake of communism is that it ignores the wholesome moral principle that good ends can be achieved only by the employment of appropriate means; that the end cannot justify the means for the simple reason that the means employed determine the nature of the ends produced.[11] 'Revolutions have never

[11] HUXLEY, *Ends and Means*, p. 9. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1938)

lightened the burden of tyranny', said John Tanner, 'they have only shifted it to another shoulder.' Further, it exaggerates the abuses of private property and minimizes the evils of power. Did not Acton say, all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely? Again its theory of materialistic interpretation is built on the idea that reason is the natural instrument of animal desire; but does not the same animal desire continue to drag reason along with it into the future society? Is man's animal nature so malleable as to be turned into an instrument solely of social service—and that by means of violence and bloodshed? The class-war theory is not founded on facts, as the fascists recognize. The Marxian analysis of society into the Haves and the Have-nots is too simple to be true. What we in fact find is a social structure with several classes (not entirely rigid) having varying degrees of economic freedom—government servants, professional classes, independent artisans, wage earners, farmers, agricultural labourers, employers, middlemen, etc. Even if we take the working classes alone into consideration, it is difficult to find a homogeneity either in efficiency or in disposition;[12] the interests of the different

[12] ROBBINS, *The Economic Basis of Class Conflict and Other Essays in Political Economy*, pp. 17-22. (London: Macmillan, 1939)

groups are sharply opposed; for instance, those of the skilled and the unskilled. Even assuming that all labour is homogeneous, the theory takes for granted that such a group is confronted by a general monopoly on the part of the employers which is not the case. The inevitability of revolution is a figment of the imagination, for, even granting that there is a tendency to it in the capitalist economy, we may do our best to alter the course by timely measures. Economic tendencies are altered by the very fact that we study them.

A true theory of politics, we suggest, depends above all upon the rejection of communism because it takes too gloomy a view of the past and the present and too optimistic a view of the future. Political inquiry deals with man as he now is and with the change in the organization of his life that can be made during the next few centuries; political and economic institutions must be made for human beings as they are or as they are capable of speedily becoming. From this point of view, the widest possible diffusion of ownership, instead of the concentration of capital in the state, seems the more desirable ideal; for where means of livelihood are controlled by the state, there is the perpetual danger that the real holders of the state power may obstruct the self-expression of those who work under them: socialism

may then be felt to be a return to despotism. But until that idea is attained, a social system in which no one is so much richer or poorer than his neighbour as to be unable to mix with them on equal terms, and in which every one has a fair start in the adventure of life, is all that is demanded by democracy.

Economic practice and theory are slowly discovering the outlines of such a system: a capitalism transformed so as to combine safeguards for public interest with scope for private ownership and initiative, public supervision to be proportionate to public interest, seems to be its essence. A central planning machinery with a view to increase efficiency in production all round; the nationalization of public utilities and their direction for public ends with adaptable commercial business management through the public corporation; the encouragement of consumers' and producers' co-operation to eliminate the middleman; the organization of marketing; the avoidance of large fluctuations in the demand for capital goods through the control of the rate of interest and a wise public works policy; the development of the Investment Trust for the rational direction of the flow of investment; the limitation of profits; minimum and maximum wages; the organization of the industrial unit in such a way as to secure

efficiency as well as freedom; the collaboration of capital and labour in joint councils or corporations on the model of the corporative state; income and inheritance taxes; these are among the methods canvassed to secure the object. Details apart, the economic basis of a free society should be a basic equality, the differences to be the outcome of genuine variations and explicable in terms of the common good. This will naturally lead to the predominance of the middle class in society, which Aristotle considered the greatest bulwark of stability in the state. The principle of the mean is the safest one: democracy is corrupted not only when the spirit of equality is extinct, but likewise when the citizens carry it too far. The landlord of the *Rainbow* in *Silas Marner* had firmly grasped this truth when, after having listened to hundreds of political discussions, he framed his formula: 'The truth lies atween you: you're both right and both wrong, as I allays say.'

Political liberty and basic equality make certain demands from the common man: a rational conduct and active participation in government; intelligent understanding of public affairs; independent judgement; tolerance and unselfish devotion to public interest. It is the excellence of individual character that has made Switzerland the envy and pattern of

modern democracies. 'Survey the countries of the world', writes Dubs;[13] 'you may find elsewhere greater political achievements, but assuredly in no country will you meet so many good citizens of independent opinions and sound practical judgement; nowhere so great a number of public men who succeed in fulfilling their functions in minor spheres with dignity and skill; nowhere so large a proportion of persons who, outside their daily round, interest themselves so keenly in the welfare and in the difficulties of their fellow citizens.'

Two evidences, however, seem to cast a doubt whether, in general, this is not too great a demand to make, viz., democracy in practice, and recent developments in psychology.

In practice democracy shows intolerance, sectionalism, the free play of self-interest, an easy gullibility and liability to mass suggestion, and, above all, ignorance and indifference. A large number of citizens still regard government as something quite apart from the main business of life in which they have no vital concern: they work and play; practise the professions and the arts; plough, sow, harvest and sell, and forget that they are the governors.

[13] DUBS in *Manuel de Droit public*; cited in BONJOUR, *Real Democracy in Operation*, p. 17. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1920)

Perhaps, as Bagehot acutely remarked,[14] if all citizens were intelligent and serious minded in politics, it would be difficult to get on with the work: 'I fear you will laugh when I tell you what I conceive to be about the most essential mental quality for a free people, whose liberty is to be progressive, permanent, and, on a large scale: it is much *stupidity*. . . . I need not say that, in real sound stupidity, the English are unrivalled.' But there is no doubt that there is a limit even to stupidity, whatever was the meaning attached to it by Bagehot.

The new light, specially from group psychology, is that our conception of the rationality of man (that man will act in a certain way if convinced intellectually that it is right and proper), on which earlier thinkers on democracy like Mill had built their hopes, has to be revised. Graham Wallas has taught us that the citizens in a democracy are not necessarily guided by reason in the use of their vote, and that the political opinions of most men are the result

[14] BAGEHOT, *Literary Studies*, pp. 328-9, 334 (London: Longmans, 1891). It is fair to add that Bagehot means by 'stupidity' a certain desirable slowness to take in new ideas; 'it keeps him from being led away by new theories . . . it restrains him within his old pursuits, his well-known habits, his tried expedients, his verified, conclusions, his traditional beliefs.'

not of reasoning tested by experience, but of unconscious or half unconscious inference fixed by habit. Further, the excitement of the crowd and the moral oppression of numbers render it very difficult for the average citizen to exercise an independent judgement. The play of reason is also restricted by the strength of emotions and instincts in the mental life. Of the last, perhaps the most important from our point of view is imitation; 'it has its seat mainly in very obscure parts of the mind, whose motions so far from having been consciously produced are hardly felt to exist; so far from being conceived beforehand are not even left at the time.'

This new understanding, however, makes the case for democracy not weaker, but stronger, for society can hardly be left to the merciless play of untrained emotions and instincts. It only makes it more urgent to guide the instinctive dispositions of man in healthy, social channels, train his emotions and heighten the play of reason in politics.

These two evidences only remind us that democracy has not yet learned the lesson taught by Aristotle that education *in the spirit of the constitution* is necessary for the success and stability of any form of government—a lesson so well and in so short a time learnt by totalitarian states. And yet, in democracy, perhaps, it is more important than in any other

because it demands more from the average citizen by way of participation in government.

Free and compulsory education is not sufficient; two generations of men and women have grown up under that system, and yet the evils remain. The problem is one of evolving the type of education suited to the requirements of democracy.

How to produce thinking human beings, men and women, who will take an intelligent interest in public affairs, will be critical of government, will think for themselves and come to an independent and balanced judgement on controversial issues, who will be tolerant of views different from their own and who will not pervert public power to private interest, is really the great problem of education in a democracy. Further, that education must induce in them a love of freedom and democracy, for a government is like everything else: to preserve it, we must love it. That the problem is insoluble is too early to say, for investigation into the kind of education suited to a democracy is still in its infancy. But if, after careful experiment, education fails in its objective, democracy will have to be pronounced a failure; but until then, perhaps it is better to suspend our judgement. 'On one thing, however, there is fair certainty: where the educational system and the general social environment in a democracy do

not evoke a critical faculty, intellectual honesty and fairness, but instead produce fear, an uncritical herd instinct, selfishness and indifference to common affairs, the government will sooner or later be turned into a dictatorship open or veiled.

Democracy has its specific conception not only of the common man, but of the leader. It is now a commonplace, after Mallock, that leadership by the few is a necessary condition in every form of government; but the nature and functions of leadership in a democracy differ radically from those of other forms of government. That difference arises from the intrinsic nature of the governments. In the rule by the one or the few, the leader or leaders are those with whom the political power is also legally vested; in a democracy the ultimate power is legally in the hands of the common man, the led. The position of the leader in a democracy may broadly be compared to that of an intelligent servant, whose duty it is to discover and interpret the wishes of an ignorant master to the master himself, and in anticipation of, or with, his consent, has to carry out the same. If the servant is not only intelligent but selfish, and the master not only ignorant but indifferent and easily led, the danger of the master's interests being overlooked and badly managed is evident.

The difficulty, and the importance, of leadership in democracy arise from two factors:

(i) In the complex society of modern days, on most of the questions which matter in government, a general will—in the sense of a clearly desired end related to the means by which this end may be realized—simply does not exist.

(ii) For most people, government is only a part, and with many the least important part, of the business of life. Earning a living, family and social relationships and amusements occupy a good part of their time and attention.

To rouse such men and women to a sense of their common interest and their public duty; to think out what are, in a given period, the best interests of the community and the means to achieve them; to present them in a simple, intelligible and interesting form to the common man and get his general (and continuing) consent to them and to reshape them in the light of altered circumstances, are the function of leadership in a democracy. Legislators and ministers are the most prominent of such leaders; but all those who have some influence in the shaping of public opinion, such as the leading men of all parties, editors of newspapers, public speakers, authors and teachers also share in that function.

A leader's duty is to lead, not only to follow,

public opinion. This truism demands repetition. For President Coolidge of America went so far as to assert that a president who would imagine that he had the right to precede and lead, instead of following, public opinion would be a traitor to American institutions. That opinion, held and expressed on public platforms by many leaders, is based on the erroneous doctrine that whatever is generally agreeable is right. The leader's duty is to inspire and guide the wills of men to the accomplishment of a high and disinterested purpose. In doing so, he will have to be in advance of, not behind, public opinion and to risk unpopularity. To surrender one's conscience and suggest solutions simply because they are popular, instead of trying to convince the people of what one believes to be right, is neither morally nor politically right. A set of leaders following the voters is much like a railway company letting the passengers drive the train; it cannot reach its destination. Such a democracy is like an army stultifying itself, because it is organized to carry out the impulses of the average soldier. Bernard Shaw aptly compares the statesman who confines himself to popular legislation to a blind man's dog who goes wherever the blind man pulls him, on the ground that both of them want to go to the same place. That is the abdication of a leader's legitimate function

—to suggest and guide. When a house is to be repaired, the repairer does not ask the occupant for a solution; he thinks out one and presents it to the occupant clearly and convincingly, gets his consent and does his job. Leadership in politics is, after all, like leadership in any other art. Initiative and guidance are the functions of the superior in intellect, character and ability; free discussion and consent, those of the people who make use of their services. Freedom to criticize the leader and to replace him if necessary is the essential privilege of a citizen in a democracy as distinguished from a dictatorship; it is essential and it is also sufficient.

Of leaders in a democracy, the most important, we said, are the legislators and ministers. In their hands lies the real power to decide and execute national affairs; it is by their quality that democratic leadership is tested. The qualities required of them are especially the following: a will directed to a high purpose clearly visualized and courageously pursued; the instinct of gauging clearly the needs of the people and the initiative in formulating means to realize them; the ability to present issues clearly to the people and to arrive at a fair judgement of the content of public opinion at a given time; self-reliance; honesty and a sense of responsibility.

Is democracy as a political system capable of producing the required type of leaders? Plato and Carlyle were sure that universal suffrage could not find the best men; Bernard Shaw still waits for a trustworthy anthropometric machine for the selection of qualified leaders. Complaints heard in France and America of the scarcity of political leaders and the unwillingness of the best men to enter politics would seem to substantiate such a view.

Admittedly, the task is not easy; that is because democracy itself is the most difficult of all forms of government. The difficulty is enhanced by the fact that in a democracy the qualities necessary for securing office are not the same as those required for fulfilling the responsibilities of office. Perhaps only this much can safely be said: the emergence of a Gladstone and a Roosevelt shows that the task is not impossible; the level of leadership will rise *pari passu* with the rise in the level of character of the common man; and the *continual emergence* of resourceful men is possible, if anywhere at all, only in an atmosphere of freedom, not in one of dictated conformity. A state which dwarfs its men in order that they may be docile in its hands cannot produce great men.

Liberty, basic equality, and a certain level of individual character and leadership are the most

important constituents of the democratic idea, and, if a state were assured of external security under all circumstances, these are also exhaustive. Such a condition is, however, rarely realized, as the present war rudely reminds us. Pacific internationalism, therefore, seems necessary to complete that idea—to ensure the successful working and the survival of democracy.

Democracy is the political expression of the idea of right; war, of might. They are in the long run incompatible. Democracy cannot be at its best under a haunting sense of insecurity. The preparation for war and its conduct divert the wealth and energy of the community, which would otherwise be utilized in making the political and economic foundations of democracy more secure. War inevitably concentrates power in the executive and lessens the freedom of individuals and finally leaves a legacy of misery and a totalitarian spirit behind, which makes recovery of the normal difficult. That is the relevance of non-violence in the theory of democracy: in the ideal, non-violence alone can lead to pure democracy. In the world as we know it, however, it is better to conceive of non-violence both in the domestic and the foreign affairs of the state as the ethical optimum, and consider physical coercion justified where those with whom one has to deal are known to be stone-

deaf to persuasion, care being taken to see that (i) it serves the cause of right and is understood as such by the effective opinion of the community, and (ii) continual efforts are made to readjust the conditions of international life which would make persuasion normally possible.

The experience of the League of Nations suggests that, with all efforts, the persuasion of states based on the theory of national sovereignty may fail; and recent opinion has come to regard the surrender of the principle of national sovereignty essential in the cause of democratic freedom. A league of states is inadequate and a federal union of people with a common authority in matters affecting all is necessary. In other words, democracy needs to include in its dominion not only more and more aspects of life but also wider and wider territory. For, what concerns all must be decided by all. Ever since the Industrial Revolution, world inter-dependence in economic life has clearly increased; the citizens of every state have had vital contacts with, and are deeply affected by the doings of, the nationals of other states. The extension of the democratic idea to cover a larger territorial ambit seems therefore but reasonable. There are great, almost insuperable, difficulties, especiallly traditions of national sovereignty, rivalry, prestige and prejudice. A readjustment

of territorial claims in accordance with population ratio and other relevant factors seems a necessary condition, otherwise even a federation of democracies is likely to be considered just a clever trick to preserve an unjustifiable *status quo*. It seems as though the creation of greater and greater difficulties is inherent in democracy as it progresses; yet it has somehow to solve them.

To conclude, the revision suggested by developments in theory and practice—the increase in state functions, a view of democratic legislation, basic economic equality, education more in accord with the spirit of the constitution, the importance of leadership and pacific internationalism—leaves Mill's central thesis untouched, viz., democracy is superior to other forms of government; men need political rights at least in order that they may not be misgoverned. These new considerations only add to the conditions which he realized were essential for the successful working of democracy. These conditions indeed substantiate another part of Mill's thesis that democracy has no meaning except in relation to the material on which it is to operate; they mean that, to adapt Burke's phrase, a political system equally suited to China, Germany, Britain and India must be equally unsuited to them all.

> Since each group as it rose was determin'd apart by conditions of life which none other coud share.[15]

The most perfect government is that which guides men in the manner most in accordance with their own natural tendencies. A long training, adapted to circumstances, will indeed enable a people to work democracy successfully even though the conditions are at the start not favourable, because man is capable of learning things afresh; but often this condition tends to be overlooked by people new to it. The truth seems to be that democracy contains within it the seeds of dissolution and decay, as well as of life and progress.

It may conceivably lead to the despotism of a collective mediocrity, the negation of freedom, the free play of self-interest, and the deterioration of individual and national character. But under favourable conditions it encourages the intelligence, self-reliance, initiative and social sense of free men by placing the ultimate responsibility for government on the citizens themselves; it makes authority a trust, and ensures equal consideration for all. That depends on (i) the spiritual effort the people put forth, and (ii) the readjustment of democratic institutions in accordance with changing conditions.

[15] BRIDGES, *The Testament of Beauty*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1929)

II

THE INSTITUTIONS OF DEMOCRACY

The three-quarters of a century which have elapsed since the publication of Mill's *Representative Government* have witnessed a variety of constitutional experiments. It cannot, however, be said that democracy has yet discovered its appropriate institutions. Democracy is still a matter for exploration rather than for complacency. The problems which confronted Mill are still perplexing us: how to secure the free and effective participation by the people (including the minorities) in their government, and how to organize the legislature, the executive and the judiciary in order to ensure the passing of wise laws and their effective administration and impartial interpretation.

The rise of authoritarianism in recent times has especially thrown into relief the ineffectiveness of democratic government in solving problems, whether at home or abroad. The democratic governments of post-war Italy, Germany, Poland, Spain, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia have shown themselves contemptible. The instability of their executive, their administrative inefficiency and weakness in solving

the economic problem of capital and labour and the political problem of discontented minorities have all been too evident; dictators have solved them much more adequately, displaying a certain quickness and resoluteness which have been lacking in democracies. The political inexperience of the masses in these countries, due to the fact that popular government had not really taken root in them, partly accounts for this weakness. But, perhaps, there is something in the very nature of democratic freedom, its tolerance of differences, which contributed to this result. Clearly, democracies must become more competent if they are to succeed.

Nor have democratic institutions been successful, in any large measure, in bringing about a free and effective participation by the people in their government. Let it be remembered that our demands from the common man are moderate enough. We do not expect him to govern. Indeed, representative democracy is based on the postulate that popular sovereignty can exist without popular government. There is, however, an irreducible minimum. Every one must form an informed and independent judgement on questions of social policy, and vote intelligently for the best men. Men of education and character must, further, offer themselves for election and educate the common man. Democracy expects

every man to do his duty, each in proportion to his capacity and resources. Experience, however, shows that the common man does not still consider himself a partner in government. He is no doubt vaguely aware of 'political news', just as he is of sports or commercial news; but he hardly takes the trouble to form an independent judgement on them. His active participation in both central and local government is practically limited to recording a vote once in two to five years in favour of a candidate (nominated by a party caucus), of whom and of whose political views he may have but the vaguest idea. Where elections (or Recalls) are held also for administrative offices, he records more of such indifferent votes; and where the Referendum and the Initiative exist, he also expresses his ignorant preference for laws. The better sort of men keep aloof from politics, unwilling to mix themselves with 'politicians', who have acquired a sinister odour about them. A small percentage, it is true, take a further part as legislators, party leaders and organizers, government servants, jurors or critics of the government in the press and on the platform. But, taken all in all, it is clear that Aristotle's lofty conception of democratic citizenship, as the capacity to rule as well as to be ruled, has hardly been realized.

It is, however, a remarkable tribute to the wisdom

of Mill that the basic principles (apart from details or the specific institutions which he supported) which he laid down for the organization of government have rather been substantiated than disproved by the working of democracies since his time. These principles are:

(i) Every one ought to have a voice in government, but not an equal voice. If, with equal virtue, one is superior to another in knowledge and intelligence —or if, with equal intelligence, one excels the other in virtue—the opinion, the judgement, of the higher moral or intellectual being is worth more than that of the inferior, and ought to be recognized as such by the institutions of the country.

The franchise is not a right but a trust, a duty. Representation in proportion to numbers is the first principle of democracy. Therefore, while a majority of the electors should have a majority of the representatives, every considerable minority should have a proportionate number.

(ii) A numerous representative assembly is not fitted for the direct business of legislation which is skilled work, demanding study and experience. It is competent not to do the work, but to cause it to be done; to determine to whom or to what sort of people it shall be confided, and give or withhold the national sanction to it when performed.

(iii) A popular assembly is still less fitted to administer or to dictate in detail to those who have the charge of administration. Here again, its proper office is that of superintendence and check: to throw the light of publicity on the government's acts; to censure them if found condemnable, and, if the men who compose the government abuse their trust or fulfil it in a manner which conflicts with the deliberate sense of the nation, to expel them from office, and virtually appoint their successors.

(iv) No executive or judicial officers should be appointed by popular election.

In so far as modern democracies have departed from these principles, they have rather had reason to regret such departure than to congratulate themselves on it.

The theory of the representative system is that the best man of each district brings the best wisdom of his constituents to a central place, and that a sifting of these combined wisdoms results in an enlightened central wisdom. Its principal fallacy is its pre-occupation with the ascertainment of opinion rather than with its formation. It assumes that the voter has a genuine desire to form an impartial judgement on social institutions and social policy; that he has adequate information on which to base that judgement; that social discussion among men, who share the

same life, refines the individual will and gives that judgement a social bias; and that this judgement is somehow embodied in that of the representative. Nothing of the sort really occurs. Granting that the citizen has the requisite desire, he has hardly the requisite data. The territorial constituency, having lost its original organic character of a living association of men sharing a common life, no longer provides an effective centre of sympathetic social discussion; and the contact between the representative and the voter is hardly organized. Finally, the electoral system does not always succeed in making the legislature a true mirror of public opinion. A better organization of representative government to rectify these four defects seems clearly indicated.

(1) The organization of a machinery of knowledge to collect and disseminate facts is necessary, because the citizen has to understand the political world beyond his personal observation; the continuous reporting of an unseen environment is therefore inevitable. This is now the function of the press, which, with the film and the radio, are the most influential 'newsvendors'. The amount of space devoted to political news in the modern press is large; political events are reported (often 'coloured' through bright headlines and other methods of display) and interpreted, and political personalities made

known. Through its leading articles, letter columns and cartoons, it disseminates political views as well.

But even to the most casual observer the defect of the Fourth Estate as a supplier of facts will be obvious: one cannot always be sure of its impartiality. Newspapers, it is true, render an essential public service; but they are also private commercial concerns, having a vigilant eye on their profits. They look to an increase in the number of their readers, both for the direct increase in revenue it brings and for the indirect increase in the revenue from advertisements it makes possible. The tastes of the reader, the advertiser and the proprietor condition the contents of the press. The selection of news, its suppression, exaggeration and 'colouring' are effective methods for influencing the mind of the reader in the direction desired.

The untold influence which the press exercises over the minds of men has been utilized by the totalitarian states in their support, by the simple device of allowing only members of the dominant party to be the editors of newspapers. Such a device is not open to the democracies because it strikes at the root of their freedom. Nor is the device of a state-owned or state-subsidized paper helpful, because from the first it will be suspect.

One way out of the difficulty, which has received

some support,[1] is to distinguish clearly the function of the press as a newsagency and as a forum of opinion. The latter demands, as now, private ownership of the press and full freedom, consistent, of course, with the law of libel and security. The function of fact-finding and dissemination must, however, be freed from the uncontrolled power of the proprietor and the advertiser. A corporation on the model of a public utility concern, manned by men chosen from all parties for their outstanding ability and impartiality, seems the best possible solution. The state would have no control over its day-to-day administration. Indeed 'newsmanship' would be a profession on the lines of the judiciary. Similar traditions of independence and impartiality will have to be built up. A minimum qualification, especially some knowledge of social sciences, would be required of those who enter it.

(ii) The reorganization of the constituency to give it greater social cohesion is necessary, not only to make the representation of opinion more real but also to enable the better creation of that opinion itself. The territorial constituency, in origin, was not only smaller, but socially more cohesive; there was a certain social homogeneity which made a mingling

[1] MADARIAGA, *Anarchy or Hierarchy*, pp. 231-6. (New York: Macmillan, 1937)

together, and the creation of a 'common mind' possible. The word *Commons* (identical with the French word *Communes*) signifies communities; the House of Commons was in origin the House of Communities — shires, boroughs, dioceses and cathedral chapters. The freeholders of the shire, the burgesses of the town and the clergy of the diocese and the cathedral represented communities of far more complete and balanced life than the artificially equalized constituencies of today. They had property which could be seized; their members could be made responsible. The community of electors, as Jenks reminds us,[2] was also local: they met and talked at shire-moot and market, at chapter-meeting and visitation; they could form a common mind. The growth of towns, the differentiation of occupations, the rise of individualism, the decline in family and religion and the large increase in numbers have destroyed this corporate character. In many of our urban constituencies, the voter does not know his next-door neighbour, his needs or aspirations. The development of the printing press, broadcasting and other means of communication, though useful, have not been sufficient to restore the sense of community and locality.

[2] JENKS, *The State and the Nation*, p. 193. (London: Dent, 1928)

The problem bristles with difficulties and the solution is not yet in sight. A school of thinkers, particularly the Guild Socialists, have argued that the only remedy is to substitute the occupational (or in an extended sense the functional) constituency for the territorial. They argue that no man can perfectly represent another, much less a body of other men. A man knows, and can know, nothing but what he practises. Men should therefore vote as engineers, farmers, lawyers, musicians, etc., in the trade or profession in which they work, instead of in the district in which they reside. Representative government, as it now works, is therefore misrepresentative and unreal: it is 'government by men who know just enough to do everything badly, and not enough about anything to do anything well'.

We have no hesitation in saying that the remedy is worse than the disease. It is true that a man's occupation does and should control his attitude towards questions of public policy. But occupation as a basis of representation has the fatal defect of emphasizing difference, not unity; it is partial and inadequate. Territorial representation is real because it is not based on any function but the function of citizenship. It is indeed a rough device for the expression of the common interest; but citizenship and the sense of the commonwealth are real, though

beclouded by the particular interests of groups. 'The very existence of institutions which even formally stand for the general interest is of great service in directing towards it the thoughts of men.'[3]

Similar considerations apply to communal constituencies in vogue in India, however necessary they may be in a transitional period before the sense of common citizenship is sufficiently widespread.

The solution, then, is not the abolition, but the improvement, of the territorial constituency. The most fruitful suggestion that has yet been made on this subject is that of Miss Follet (in a book,[4] called by Bosanquet, 'the most sane and brilliant of recent works on political theory'): people should organize themselves into neighbourhood groups to express their daily life, to bring to the surface the needs, desires and aspirations of that life; these needs should become the substance of politics, and these neighbourhood groups should become the recognized political units. The idea of an integrated neighbourhood needs greater elaboration in order to be related to the existing basis of representation; but as a principle of organization it clearly seems sound.

[3] MACIVER, *The Modern State*, pp. 464-66. (London: Oxford University Press, 1926)

[4] FOLLETT, *The New State*, p. 190. (London: Longmans, 1923)

Something indeed on these lines prevails (or used to prevail) in Japan, the cities being divided into wards of about a hundred inhabitants apiece. The people in each ward accept a measure of liability for one another, and are to some extent responsible for good behaviour and the observance of law within their own small unit.[5]

(iii) The contact between the representative and the elector needs better organization to the advantage of both. Burke has said that it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinions, high respect, their business, unremitted attention; otherwise, indeed, he simply does not perform his duty. From his central position in the constituency, he has a unique opportunity to instruct his constituents and to broaden their horizon. The relationship of men like Macaulay, Mill, Morley and Bryce to their constituents is an object-lesson in the performance of such a duty. Speeches and talk are not the only methods of keeping in touch. The experience of an unusually active member from South Derbyshire, Mr Graham Pole (reported in

[5] HUXLEY, op. cit., pp. 81-2.

The Star)[6] indicates some directions in which a lively sympathy and human touch can be established. Voters like to know for a certainty that their member is not only always accessible, but that he is really interested in their concerns, their problems and their worries. He therefore made it a point to acknowledge every communication from his constituents *by return of post*, and later dealt with them to the best of his ability, individual cases being taken up with the ministry or other authority concerned. His correspondence averaged from fifty to sixty letters a day, and they dealt with every aspect of the lives of the constituents in so far as they were affected by legislation. He had not long been in the House when he realized that his correspondents raised matters that were both informative and valuable to others than themselves; so, each vacation time (Christmas, Easter and Midsummer), he went through his files, provided a summary of their contents, with a general commentary on the parliamentary situation, and had it printed and broadcast to all the villages and towns in his division. This is adult political education of high quality.

Parliamentary work is exacting; it cannot be lightly undertaken. It is only right to add that, as the work is so onerous, the remuneration of the member

[6] *The Star*, June 1931.

of a legislature should be raised high enough to attract the best available talent, though not so high as to offer a career to ambition.

(iv) A distortion of the representative system occurs where the legislature does not include members of every important opinion and interest in the community roughly in proportion to its strength in the country. To avoid this defect, Mill advocated the substitution of the multi-member constituency for the single-member, coupled with the Hare system of proportional representation.

The single-member constituency, it may be admitted, does not make any provision for the effective representation of minority opinion (political, economic or otherwise). But is not this defect to some extent exaggerated? Laski and Finer have argued that the horizon of a minority is not limited to the boundaries of a constituency; the disproportionate representation of minorities will occur only when the constituencies are so arranged that the minority opinion is in a minority in all or most of the constituencies. It is significant that Gladstone, introducing the Re-distribution Bill of 1885, defended the single-member system on the ground that it provides for minority representation. 'It may be termed the representation of minorities; it may be termed the representation of separate interests and pursuits; but, give it what

name you like, there is no doubt that by means of one-member districts, you will obtain a very large diversity of representation.'

Experience since Mill has shown that the single-member constituency distorts the representative system in quite a different way: under certain circumstances it enables a minority party, i.e., one which does not command the confidence of the majority of voters in the country to secure an absolute majority of seats in Parliament. This was the experience of England under the three party system in 1922 and 1924.[7] This defect indeed conceals another: the system makes possible the return of candidates disliked by the majority of the constituents. It is obvious that both defects are due to the triangular contest possible under the system and the fact that a relative (instead of absolute) majority is deemed sufficient to get elected.

Impressed by these defects, reformers have followed

[7]

	1922		*1924*	
Total number of seats	615		615	
Seats secured by the conservative party	344	...	412	
Percentage ..	55.9	..	67	
Total number of votes	13.9	millions	16.6	millions
Votes secured	5.5	,,	7.9	,,
Percentage ...	39	...	47	

Mill in advocating the replacement of the single-member system by the multi-member, coupled with some form of proportional representation (the single-transferable vote, the single non-transferable vote, the list system, the cumulative vote or the limited vote, the Hare system advocated by Mill not being generally favoured). But experience of this system shows that it multiplies the number of groups in the legislature, making it difficult for any one to command a majority or to form a strong government. It is not suggested that the electoral system is alone responsible for the multiplication of parties; other causes may lie deeper in the body politic, such as social, economic and religious differences. But a system, which makes it possible for all parties, however small, to obtain separate representation, encourages disintegration.

We urged earlier that democracy would fail in its purpose if it did not provide a strong government. But this is precisely what happens under a system of proportional representation. A parliament elected under this scheme will no doubt be a more truly democratic parliament, in guaranteeing the representation of all shades of opinion in the legislature. But, in the wise words of Huxley, it is also in most cases, an instrument not of rule but of anarchy. For the multiplication of small groups within the parliament

makes the formation of a stable and powerful government impossible. 'Proportional representation in Italy led through anarchy to fascism.'

The working of electoral systems throughout the world indeed points to the lesson that the single-member constituency has solid advantages. It is simple and economical, especially to the candidates. It is, therefore, more democratic; it does not place the poor candidate at such a disadvantage as in a larger constituency. It is likely to encourage local talent. Men of moderate means and position hesitate to enter the political arena where the constituency is large and where their local influence will not count; but in a smaller constituency, they are likely to feel more confident. It is an advantage to the community that more and more of its leaders are induced to take an active part in the political process. Above all, it tends to provide more stable party majorities in the legislature and, therefore, stronger government, than the multi-member system.

What is necessary is to reform the system in order to obviate its defects. The two possible methods are the Second Ballot and the Alternative Vote. The practical objections to the former are too great to permit its adoption. The necessity of holding a second election involves an undesirable prolongation

of electoral disturbance; and the difficulty of inducing the electors to vote a second time would probably result in a large diminution in their number, which would correspondingly reduce its value. Further, the interval between the two elections offers undesirable temptations to bargaining and intrigue.

There remains the Alternative Vote. This method too has its defects. It is unintelligible to the ordinary voter. It prevents the election of what may be called the worst candidate, but does not secure the election of the best. It makes the representation of great constituencies dependent on the second preferences of the hindmost candidate. There might be a multiplicity of weak and fictitious candidatures to make sure that the differences between No. 1 and No. 2 should be settled not by the second votes of No. 3 but by the second votes of No. 4 and No. 5. And, finally, in Australia, where it was tried, the opportunities for party intrigue and the gratification of personal ill-feeling, which are conferred both by the power of using and by that of withholding preferences were found to produce regrettable results.

On balance, however, the Alternative Vote remains the best method of removing the most serious defect which a single-member system can possess, viz., the return of minority candidates.

The representative system is in the modern

democratic state so closely connected with the political party that the latter cannot escape blame for its distortion. Mill was, of course, aware of the party system. But, then, its evil effects were not prominent in his time. These evil effects have been aggravated by the later extension of the vote to the 'dumb millions'. Now there are many who consider the party the villain of the piece. It lowers the moral tone and intellectual standards of society. Adhesion to the party creed becomes the supreme political virtue. To keep up the vigour and zeal on one's side, one has to keep up the fiction that there is an agreement on the political principles of his party. The party leader has to make the worse seem the better reason; he can seldom afford to speak out the full truth, except perhaps to his intimate circle. The party system thus encourages hollowness and insincerity. Intellectual honesty is at a discount, for an appeal to the honour of the party is considered sufficient to silence possible opposition. Political conformity is applauded and political difference derided. The party system thus enhances the evil effect of the sense of the insignificance of individual effort already caused by the extension of the vote to millions of men. It puts a premium on cowardice in public life and obstructs the free course of opinion. Tact, agreeableness, flattery, the 'gift of the gab'

and such other adventitious social qualities receive undue importance; truth, justice and reason recede into the background.

While the individual is thus silenced by the moral oppression of numbers, all those who exploit the public interest may manipulate the party as they please. The party becomes a lever for private interests under cover of the public weal; elections to the legislature conducted by it, while ostensibly national, really turn on selfish interests. That is why it is said of the House of Representatives in America that it represents every interest except the public interest. Corruption becomes a fine art and incidentally drives the finer sort of men away from politics. All this criticism amounts to this: the party in effect is a *faction*; it aims at securing personal and sectional benefits rather than at carrying out a programme of public policy. Pope's definition of party as 'the madness of the many for the gain of the few' is seen to be more realistic than its broader and more well-known formulation by Burke in terms of national interest.

Doubtless it was such realization that led Rousseau to declare that any community in which parties existed was incapable of a true common will. A non-party democracy is therefore hailed by thinkers (both in the West and in the East) as the remedy

which will make representation more real and public life more honest. It has the support of America's first and greatest president. In his farewell address, Washington warned the Americans against the party spirit. For the alternating domination of one faction over the other, sharpened by the spirit of revenge natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. 'The disorders and miseries gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this despotism to the purpose of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest instead of warming, it should consume.'

A non-party democracy, attractive as it is, we suggest is not practicable, even if it were desirable. If we were writing on a clean slate, it might perhaps be possible by means of a constitutional provision to prohibit party organization and party funds; but we have to deal with states where parties have come to stay. There is the initial difficulty: who is to bell the cat? If a government in power (themselves

a party government) prohibits parties, will they apply the rule to themselves? If they do not, the road to one-party dictatorship is clear—a possibility with which one has to reckon in this imperfect world.

Further, the suggestion is based on the facile supposition that existing institutions can easily be abolished, and new ones devised which will work properly. It is much more useful to ascertain how far existing institutions are a product of the conditions in which they exist and to suggest measures by which the institutions and the men who are to work them can be improved. Observation shows that parties in some form are found almost everywhere, and, as Lowell points out, their activity and persistence are roughly in proportion to the size of the electorate.

Why do they persist? Obviously because they fulfil a necessary function. They make articulate the inarticulate desires of the masses. Out of the innumerable problems which call for solution in a state, they select those which are the more urgent, study them, think out solutions and present them to the people. They act, in Lowell's phrase, as the brokers of ideas. They preserve a sense of continuity in public policy. They organize and educate "the electorate." They dramatize politics and keep the nation politically alive. They sometimes help to discover ability,

though only as part compensation for the repression of other abilities. Under a two-party system, further, they help to maintain a keen and responsible opposition which keeps the government on their mettle; and give strength and confidence to the government, so necessary to enable them to plan long-term policies.

Any alternative, to be acceptable, must fulfil these necessary functions while removing the defects of the existing system. In a non-party democracy, the only means for the education of the electorate are the speeches of independent candidates at the time of the general election, the discussions in the legislature and agitation in the press. But without the association and discipline provided by the parties, these are likely to lack a sense of unity, responsibility and continuity. Politics will lose its 'colour' and interest. If there were no party and each voter voted for the one who of all his acquaintances seemed to him the best, no candidate would be likely to secure an absolute majority; and we come back to the queer position where a member, disliked by the majority of his constituemts, might be returned to represent the whole. No government in power will be able to reckon in advance the support which it could normally command, and therefore be bold enough to cope adequately with its problems. These are serious defects which a governmental system can

have, and would have to be met before the non-party system could be adopted.

The most original solution for the evils of party that has so far been proposed[8] is the substitution of *special combinations for limited objects* instead of permanent parties. The thesis is this: parties in the sense of combinations of citizens for common action are indispensable under a free government, but should be confined to their proper function. That function is to promote discussion and co-operative action for achieving some particular purpose on which members are agreed. The exercise of political power by parties is unnecessary, it being a survival of the age of struggles for liberty. 'It is no longer necessary to ensure the benefits of liberty.' Therefore, let permanent parties with their regular organizations, through which power is won and exploited, be abolished. The evils of party will automatically disappear. As a necessary corollary, the cabinet, with its collective responsibility and dependence on a majority in parliament, should go. Parties are natural but party government is unnatural and mischievous.

Experience alone can assess the value of this thesis;

[8] OSTROGORSKI, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, Vol. II, p. 658. (London: Macmillan, 1902)

and perhaps it is well worth experiment, if such were possible. But from the theoretical standpoint, it is open to three objections. First, it ignores the great importance in modern government of a united executive, united in purpose and confident of active sympathy from the legislature. That is the least that democracies can learn from dictatorships. Temporary leagues and the individual responsibility of ministers will hardly be conducive to this end. Second, it is a mistake to think that the struggle for liberty is ever over; fredom, like love, has to be continually won. In the past, the struggle for liberty meant a defence of individual rights against despotic government; now it means a struggle against the holders of unsocial privilege for the enlargement of the area and the improvement in the quality of freedom. Third, it minimizes the possibility of temporary unions developing into more permanent ones. An association of persons is as potent as an association of ideas. Their influence lingers even when the original cause has ceased.

It is better, then, frankly to recognize the existence of parties and to regulate them. More stringent laws to root out corruption and fraud in making up the party roll and in the conduct of business at party meetings and for the prevention of bribery and undue influence at elections may go some way to

improve matters. The more active participation by upright and public-spirited citizens in party politics is essential. The more they keep out of them the more do they help to increase the evils which they hate. Further, the rigidity of parties in the legislature has to be lessened by the provision of greater opportunities for the 'free' vote of members. While conceding that membership in any group involves some restrictions on the freedom of a member's individual judgement in the larger interests, it is a mistake to ask him to surrender it on every question. The distinction between fundamentals and details, though not always clear-cut, has to be borne in mind; only on the former is a 'whip' appropriate. Finally, we must rely on the existence of a mobile body of public opinion, 'owing no permanent allegiance to any party, and therefore able, by its instinctive reaction against extravagant movements on one side or the other, to keep the vessel on an even keel'.

Granted parties are tolerated, there is no doubt that the two-party system is preferable to the multiple-party. It gives strength and stability to government and evokes keen and responsible opposition. The multiple-party system not only enfeebles the executive, but gives a disproportionate power to self-seeking minorities, turns important branches of legislation into class bribery and lowers the tone of public

life. The two-party system is based on the premiss that the members will be willing to subordinate their differences on minor questions for the sake of the larger principles which they hold dear. Such willingness is a sign of political maturity. Popular government, as Root points out,[9] shows an evolution from the formation of an indefinite number of individuals into parties with the idea of putting men into office, to the formation of an indefinite number of parties grouped especially with regard to advancing special interests and ideas, and thence to the formation of two great parties representing fundamental differences in the general principles and policies of government. The development is from the unmixed preponderance of personal and selfish motives to the predominating motive of the common good of the country.

The revision called for in the organization and the functions performed by the legislature is in three directions.

(1) Some parliamentary bodies are too large. In order to create a proper thought-organization, their size ought to be so reduced (to somewhere between 300 and 400) as to secure more efficient deliberation;

[9] ELIHU ROOT, *The Citizen's Part in Government,* pp. 76-7. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920)

and all duties which the reduced body cannot carry out without make-believe should be abandoned.

(ii) There has been an enormous development, since Mill, in the organization of economic interests. Legislative bodies, as they are now constituted, do not appear well equipped to deal with them, with the result that the development of pressure groups and lobbying has reached monstrous proportions. In America there are more than 500 sectional groups represented at Washington (with their offices and paid staff) ranging from religious organizations and the Mosquito Extermination Society to the many associations representing business groups. And the lobby is corrupt. An Economic Council, somewhat on the lines of the one which existed in pre-Hitler Germany to give a preliminary consideration to bills in their economic aspects, will be a useful supplement to the legislature, especially to meet the need which now exerts pressure on the lobby.

(iii) On the functional side, the legislatures have forgotten Mill's wise caution that the proper office of a representative assembly is to watch and control the government, not to govern. They attempt far too much to be effective. This criticism especially applies to a country like the United States, where the executive has not a clear responsibility in legislation and finance, and where, therefore, the legislature

has the initiative in law-making and a considerable influence in finance. It is a simple case of being paralysed by trying to do too much—'a democracy obstructing its own path by too much baggage'.

The executive's initiative in legislation and finance is clearly desirable; where the constitution prevents such healthy co-operation, inconvenient and inadequate artifices will develop to make up the deficiency. The right of the private member to propose new items of expenditure should be restricted, because it puts a premium upon particular interests as against the general interest, upon the immediately apparent as against the more essential. A permanent law-revision committee on the lines indicated by Mill to suggest changes in law from time to time is clearly called for. The possibility of a separation of the function of representation from that of legislation (as has been attempted in Mysore) may well be explored, the latter being entrusted to a smaller body of men chosen not so much for their ability to interpret the popular will as their capacity to 'hammer out into efficient legislative acts the proposals of legislation passed in the Representative Assembly'.[10] An extension of the principles of decentralization and devolution may reduce parliamentary congestion.

[10] RUTHNASWAMY in *The New Review* (Calcutta), Vol. VII, p. 461.

The legislature should be enabled to realize the difficulties of the administration by being brought into closer contact with it. For this purpose, standing committees of the legislature attached to each department or group of departments, with purely advisory functions, could be constituted (though the experience of their working in the Indian provinces during 1921–30 was somewhat disappointing).[11] They ought to help to familiarize the private members of the legislature with the processes of administration and make the relations between the executive and the legislature more intimate. They could also be empowered to examine the statutory orders made by the departments from time to time to see that they are within the limits of the law passed by the legislature. One such committee could usefully keep in touch with developments in foreign policy.

Methods of popular legislation through the Initiative and the Referendum have been a development since Mill. The present writer feels that organized contact between the representative and the constituency will make the Initiative superfluous. A limited use of the Referendum on simple and intelligible

[11] *Report on the Working of the Reformed Constitution in Bengal*, 1921–27, p. 127. (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Depot, 1929.)

issues could, however, be retained as an agency of political education. The Recall is wrong and mischievous; it asks too much of the average voter and is likely to undermine the morale of the representative, besides giving free play to sinister influences.

On the executive side, the main development since Mill has been in two directions.

(1) It is being realized that the executive must establish contact with organized interests. Administration in modern times is so complex and extensive in scope that orthodox parliamentary representation is found inadequate to enable the government to avail themselves of the knowledge and experience of all sections of the community affected by its activities. The inadequacy is felt also by the interests affected. They bring to bear influence directly upon administrative officials—lobbying extended to administration. It is found better to provide recognized channels by means of which the impact of administration on the interests can be gauged. Different methods of constituting such bodies and calling them into consultation have been developed. Here it is sufficient to point out that their object is to advise, not to decide; they are attached to the executive departments; the personnel are chosen from representative associations of organized

interests for their special knowledge or experience. 'Modern government often involves action affecting the interests and requiring the good will either of large sections of the community or of the community as a whole. The action cannot be made acceptable without detailed explanation of this necessity for which mere announcements in the press are insufficient. In such cases, the prior explanation and the assent of committees of representative men, who, if convinced, will carry the assent of the several sections of the community who look to them as leaders will be of the greatest possible value.'[12] They thus help to popularize the administrative process.

(ii) A second idea, which has been finding increasing acceptance, is the necessity in a democratic state of some stabilizing influence, a second base in politics, of persons independent of the tactics by which electoral opinion is formed, and having *influence*, though not *power*. A constitutional monarch or a President is of course the obvious example. The new constitution of Eire has such an institution in its Council of State, chosen for personal merit and with power to advise the President in specified national affairs.

[12] LASKI, *A Grammar of Politics*, p. 376. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1930)

Public administration must be scientific and efficient; the expert is essential. Is it possible to make the expert responsible to the people? It may at once be said that the popular election of administrators, in vogue in some American states, is not the best way of securing efficiency. Modern practice has clearly established the superiority of the choice of the bulk of the personnel in administration by an impartial and independent Public Services Commission as advocated by Mill. Its great virtue is that it makes administration a non-party matter. It relieves the people from a function which they cannot do well; it avoids the spoils system and corruption, and leaves the chief executives free to devote themselves to more important work than the unpleasant one of interviewing a succession of uninteresting men in search of jobs and their friends who come to support their case.

But it may be urged that this does not directly secure a *responsible* civil service. Popular confidence in the civil service is more than ever necessary, because, with the increased sphere of the state, the interference by the official in the personal life of the individual is increasing, and because the co-operation of the citizen in administration in varying degrees is found essential, especially in the social services such as education, town-planning, drainage

and public health, prohibition and the administration of unemployment insurance. Further, until economic opportunities are made more equal, the official class must largely continue to be recruited from the upper strata of society; but the official mind must be prevented from siding consciously or unconsciously on all questions of administration with its class.

The solution of this problem seems to lie in three directions.

(i) The public must be satisfied with an indirect control over the administration. They must be content with ensuring that the chief executive or the ministers are those who enjoy their confidence, and who in turn take the responsibility for the conduct of the civil service.

(ii) There is, secondly, the legal responsibility of the officials to courts of law. This of course does not secure their responsibility to popular opinion, since judges are not elected. But in so far as law approximates to a true reflection of social conscience and is interpreted by judges who are, by common consent, independent and impartial, it secures the desired result, though indirectly.

(iii) A working connexion must be maintained between the official and the public. 'Lacking such a connexion the danger of mutual misunderstanding

and misconception is great.' The science of public administration has yet to evolve proper methods; perhaps the advisory committees, outlined earlier, will in part fulfil such a function.

On the judiciary, there is not much to be said. Modern democratic states have generally been able to evolve a tradition of government according to law, through an independent judiciary. The independence of judges is secured by the observance of a simple rule. While the executive appoints the judges, they have no power to dismiss them or reduce their salary during their tenure of office. It is sufficient if this tradition is maintained.

From this point of view, the popular election of judges prevalent in some American states cannot be commended. Only in three out of the thirty-eight states, where the popular election of judges prevails, has the system given any satisfaction.[13] This experience confirms the principle that the more the judiciary is separated from politics, the better. Again, it is necessary to guard against the theory prevalent in Nazi Germany that judges must interpret law according to 'healthy' public sentiment. That is the death-knell of judicial independence, for the

[13] OGG and RAY, *Introduction to American Government*, Fifth Edition, pp. 779-81. (New York: Appleton-Century, 1935)

judges should have nothing to do with public opinion in their interpretation of law. Their duty is to divine, as best they may, what the law-maker meant by the clause or word which he interprets. The judges' sphere is in terms of art, not of philosophy. It is the duty of the law-making body to adjust the laws according to the prevalent social conscience. Luckily, jurisprudence in democratic states has not accepted the Nazi way, but there is a perpetual danger of its imitation. Already in the United States, in respect of constitutional laws, a demand is being made that the constitution being rigid, it is the duty of the Supreme Court to interpret the constitution to suit changing times. The acceptance of that view would seriously undermine the esteem in which the judiciary is held in the community, because its impartiality will be open to question when it attempts to perform a *political* function. The proper remedy, of course, is to make the amending body of the constitution less rigid.

One last point that needs emphasis in connexion with democratic institutions is the need for a continuous agency of investigation as an integral part of government. In the business world, the most successful manufacturer takes care not only to keep in touch with the latest inventions but to invent new machinery and new methods. In government, the

need is at least as great. Social phenomena, with which they are concerned, undergo unceasing change, and the institutions to deal with them need continuous readaptation to secure continued efficiency. The organized acquisition of facts and their co-ordinated interpretation is essential. The ordinary type of government department seems hardly adapted to perform this essential function. That requires a regular relationship between the world of thought and the world of action; the meeting of the academic and the practical mind is necessary. Universities can do something in this direction by having properly equipped departments of economics and politics; but a healthy co-ordination is necessary with government departments not only to supply material for investigation but to help to give that practical bias which academic investigation is otherwise likely to lack. That healthy co-ordination will come only when social investigation is recognized as the ally, not the enemy, of government.

The final thought I should like to leave with you is this: let us not over-emphasize the value of institutions in a scheme of government. A political institution is a machine; the motive power is provided by the national character; its purpose is determined by the national ideal. In other words, it is moral forces that control the nature and the

efficiency of the democratic system. And moral values, we know, unless they be incarnate in individuals, cannot attain to life. Therefore, it is on the individual that democracy turns, as does the earth on its axis. It is the individual who conditions its working; and in his highest good it finds its justification. Hence arises its perennial interest.