

Liberalism and American Government

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The Democratic Republic; An Introduction to American National Government. By Martin Diamond, W. M. Fisk, and Herbert Garfinkel. Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1966. \$7.50.

Pluralist Democracy in the United States; Conflict and Consent. By Robert A. Dahl. Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1967. 471 pp. \$7.50.

THE textbook occupies a peculiar position in the folkways and mores of American education. What I refer to especially is the position of such manuals in higher education. On the surface they are bland, but the ideas of the dominant theory of life are always there. It is the "soft sell" of the world of propaganda. In the theory of the matter, the textbook is supposed to present "the state of the science" in whatever subject is being discussed. Such a presentation is clearly more difficult in political science than in physics or mathematics. The state of the science doctrine is a noble ideal; it has helped to transplant to America some of the achievements of European university education. While the European practice has often left it to the professor's syllabus to present the current stage in scientific development, in America the professor may adopt a textbook because it confirms his disciplinary prejudices.

Dr. Wilson, *professor of political science at the University of Illinois*, is the author of *The Elements of Modern Politics*; *The American Political Mind*; *The Case for Conservatism*; *A Theory of Public Opinion*; and *co-author of Political Thought Since World War Two*.

In reflecting on the two books at hand it becomes clear that the spirit and the doctrines of the Establishment are presented. That is, they reflect the terms of the liberal victory of the last generation. In fact, these books defend the order of government and politics as it apparently exists now in the United States. Such a defense is institutional, with some suggestions of minor structural tinkering, but it is also a defense of the policies of the liberal revolution. One gets a more than faint suggestion that democracy means the further achievement of the already adopted policies of our political order. Surely, as Robert Browning said in his Song from "Pippa Passes," "God's in his heaven—All's right with the world!" We have seen the problems of our day, we have met the enemy, and he is ours—though there is a lot of cleaning up to do after crushing Herbert Hoover and his Republicans.

In a sense, also, the spirit of the textbooks on American government says that we have solved the ideological problems of our time, and there is a consensus among the informed and the intelligent. Only the ignorant and the prejudiced break the consensus of the democratic republic and the pluralist or polyarchal democracy. It is the end of ideology by the triumph of ideology. We now understand the problems of the technological age. Assuming the unity of spirit is not broken, we can solve our problems with a continuous national social and technical policy. The age of the end of ideology moves without a break into the age of the liberal judge, the administrator, the fiscal and economic expert (in macroeconomics), and the engineer. Both of these books under review reflect the orthodoxies of our time. They af-

firm without too much definition or dialectic the permanence of democracy; their authors seem to believe our governmental problems do not need much European background, or an extended background of European intellectual history or political thought, for an intelligent discussion. Like Emerson in 1837 in his Phi Beta Kappa Address, they leave behind the sere remains of old and worn-out European culture.

Such a position means that the authors of these volumes have rallied to the respectable posture of the behavioral scientists as a guideline for their study. This posture means that they are primarily empiricists, that for them concepts arise from the accumulation of fact. Without adequate empirical information, thinking may be sustained but it becomes thin and futile. In the part of *The Democratic Republic* which deals with political theory, the authors say they have consulted Leo Strauss and his school. This is surely a respectable position, but it is hardly beyond controversy or beyond a certain fatigue in the search for meanings that are not apparent in reading a text. One may rejoice that on the positive side both of these books defend the American institutions of government, though policy is another matter. They leave aside both a sterile local government reformism (or tinkering, indeed), and the proposals of those who would reform the major institutions of national government (that is, the Supreme Court, the Presidency, and Congress). But in our democracy, which is so clearly oriented toward the Supreme Court's vagaries and the Presidency, it is doubtful how serious the present orthodox political scientists can be about the strengthening of Congress.

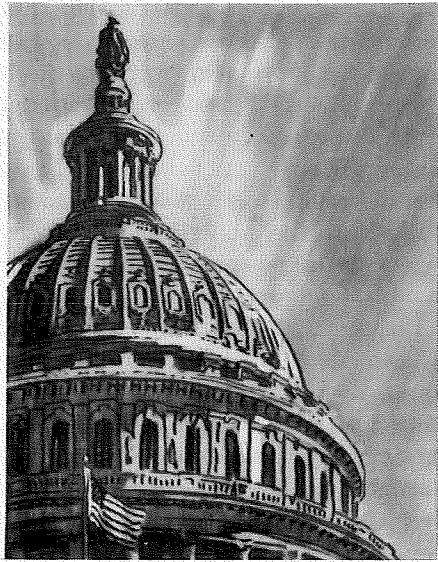
II

PROFESSORS Diamond, Fisk and Garfinkel offer us a straightforward textbook on American government, mainly national government with only such treatment of state government as seems necessary to make the analysis clear. They make many of the customary analyses; a brief statement of the historical origins of the American

system, the contents of the Constitution, an analysis of Congress, the Presidency, the judicial branch and the administrative system. Parties, politics, and "groups" are described. There is a chapter on suffrage, immigration, and the laws of citizenship. The basis of the electoral system, such as apportionment, nominations, and elections, is discussed. Political behavior comes in strong in the description of campaigns and voting activity, but what seems to be a central love of the authors is their presentation of civil rights, or civil liberty, and the constitutional order. Yet more than most of our brethren in the social sciences, the authors recognize some virtue in the economic order or the economic and business system, though clearly the concept of the authors is not so much "civil and economic liberty" as the government of the economy by the national authority itself. I think one may say that the authors try to describe the actual amount of property-economic liberty we have, but it is also clear that they have difficulty in thinking of our system except in terms of the liberal-moderate socialist order which seems to prevail in our times. Finally, they seem to take in stride and with approval the conduct of foreign relations as it has emerged from a powerful Presidency supported by his international bureaucracy.

Naturally, a textbook must be a cheerful production, but it might seem that there is a little too much satisfaction with the current developments in American government and politics. The authors claim they have taken the "most authoritative contemporary historical scholarship" as the foundation for their work. Now such a selection works its effect in different directions. In one direction it has meant that the authors support, approve, and even extol the American institutions of politics. It has meant that they have rejected the scholarship of the Progressive Era almost in toto. There is no stress, for example, on the work of J. Allen Smith, who was one of the inspirers of the pseudo-intellectuality of the Progressive Movement. Some have said Smith was the man who inspired the political theory of Charles A. Beard in his *An Economic Interpretation of*

the Constitution, and Vernon Louis Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought*. It is, however, most pleasant to get beyond the bitter sterilities of Smith's *The Spirit of American Government*. They quote both Beard and Robert E. Brown that few adults were excluded from voting in 1787. With Brown they say that most free adult men had the vote in 1787 and that few were disfranchised by law. (pp. 325-326) Thus, America from the outset has been a democratic republic. It has not been simply



republican but also democratic. Here we have a frontal attack on those who have insisted, with one of the quotations from Madison in No. 10 *Federalist*, that we have a republic and not a democracy (in the Classical Greek and Roman sense). After saying "pure democracy" at least twice in No. 10, Madison then refers to "democracy," and I would think without a change of meaning. It is the latter quote the authors take to help them stress the idea of a representative, democratic republic.

Chapter three of Diamond *et al* is called "The Fundamental Political Principles." Anyone who may be considering using this text can read this chapter and make up his mind. For in this chapter the authors make their judgments, not only of our historical material, but also of the history of ideas. There is unwillingness, I think, to regard American

principles or political philosophy as an outgrowth of a long Classical-European development. There is far too much of a tendency to consider American tradition as something disconnected with the history of political ideas. There are numerous American social scientists who justify their lack of philosophical inquiry by insisting that America has made a philosophy of having no philosophy. They say we are pragmatic, without facing the issue squarely that pragmatism was in its origins and remains a philosophy, though heavily slanted toward the problems of epistemology. For example, is it not a distortion to consider the doctrine of equality without its ancient moorings in Classical-Christian thought? And can one repudiate natural law while keeping the doctrine of natural rights? These are some of the issues that intrude.

III.

THIS book rejects the view of the Constitution as undemocratic, declare the authors of *The Democratic Republic* on p. 69. "It holds that the Constitution is now, has been, and was intended by its Framers to be fundamentally democratic. The constitutional forms, therefore, need not constantly be evaded or warped to permit democracy to function. Rather, the constitutional forms help to generate the political system and are in harmony with it. To study American government, we believe, is to study the complex but compatible relationship of the jointly democratic constitutional aspects of the American polity." This statement is a large order. It alters profoundly the liberal argument in favor of the current revolution in the American system. It makes life simpler for all of us. Robert Dahl takes a different view in his *Pluralist Democracy*. He says: "The Founders did not create either a democratic republic or an aristocratic republic. Whatever their intentions were—as we have seen, they did not agree on these—what they did was to create a framework of government which, once it had been accepted, might become either an aristocratic republic or a democratic republic." (p. 55) A democratic republic has been created, according to Dahl, in the course of American history.

Let us note, first of all, that the whole tradition of the once-existing aristocratic society is pushed aside. Some framers were aristocrats in attitude it is true, but it might be urged that to get the Constitution adopted this question of aristocracy-democracy had to be left to the component federated states. A world of Progressive scholarship is here rejected. There must be, to make the case of the democratic-aristocratic republic, a re-evaluation of those elements in our political system which have been regarded as the bulwarks of an aristocracy. Thus, indirect election, the equality of states in the Senate, and judicial review by the federal courts must all be re-tailored for democracy. And we must hurry to say that some delay in accepting the will of the people is not to be considered undemocratic. Somehow must we not soften as well the asperities we have long hurled at the so-called aristocrats of the age? Must we not accept the heartfelt assertions of Hamilton that he loved the Constitution and that he was no monarchist, in spite of the mud-slinging of the Jeffersonians? Must we not also look back again with sympathy at John Adams, who realized no monuments would be erected to his memory? Might we not at this late date erect monuments to him in the grateful memory of the democratic republic? But it can hardly be denied that the discussion of democracy in Diamond *et al* is provocative and full of interest.

There is deep controversy in the authors' discussion of "the pursuit of happiness." In two paragraphs there is a kind of a summary of the history of political ideas. Few, I suppose, would accept the authors' interpretations of the Middle Ages as a time of close and effective regulation of "the moral and economic life of the people." Natural and divine justice is pictured as supporting the function of government to control every act of human behavior. The authors hold that natural and divine justice, (i.e., natural law and divine law) were engines of justice and not for rights (but justice, let us note, was not repudiated in the Preamble to the Constitution) until the eighteenth century when, the authors hold, the scene changes. Hobbes,

Locke, and Montesquieu (eighteenth century) are credited with shifting the emphasis on natural law to natural rights. Hobbes (and Filmer) surely allowed at least one natural right, the right of the ruler to govern; Montesquieu's deistic natural law as the "necessary relations of things" was hardly an impressive shift to the rights of individuals against government. Locke was interpreted, to be sure, as the great proponent of the rights of the individual, but there are some (like the late Willmoore Kendall) who have asserted the predominance of the theory of majority rule in John Locke. The earliest assertion of natural right I recall at the moment is in the *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* in the sixteenth century, where it is asserted that under the law of nature we have a right to resist tyrants.

But the point, I think, that most students of the history of political theory would make is that natural rights are an outgrowth and not a repudiation of the very ancient doctrines of the law of nature, which in some ways always contained the implication that there are rights of cities (as in Hobbes) and of individuals under God (e.g., the Christian theory of duties and virtues which implies the perfection of right to exercise them). The authors' assertion that natural rights meant toleration and the separation of church and state is clearly unsound. For even after the adoption of the First Amendment there were five states which in measure supported religion, though toleration may have been granted long before. We have added in recent times both toleration and the separation of church and state (since the final Massachusetts disestablishment in 1832) to the Whig tradition of rights and limitations on government. And further, might not one say that the idea of natural law or right of economic freedom comes more cleanly under the doctrines of the law of nature than under the eighteenth-century doctrines of the natural rights of man? Is not this the doctrine of Adam Smith, that is, competition under just laws?

The point is simply this: one of the great contributions of the Classical and Christian tradition is the law of nature. This law has

never ceased to reflect the aspiration of men for political justice, the attainment of their liberties, and their rights, which the editors of the Declaration of Independence (as a Classical-Christian statement of doctrine) summarized as "the pursuit of happiness." Its ideal value is no less if we say with Euripides and Sophocles that never have happy men stood before the judgment of the gods.

IV.

DAHL'S book is offered as a textbook, though clearly the author is seeking to make a contribution to the theory and practice of political reconciliation in America. It is not clear just what the textbook is for. As is characteristic of the behaviorist, his concepts seem to spring directly from fact—mostly statistical and tabular—and such a derivation of concepts is either one of the strengths or weaknesses of the contemporary American social scientist. As Dante Germino once pointed out in *The Journal of Politics*, we have here only one "theory of theory." It seeks to be a spare, Spartan, and muscular epistemology without a neighboring Athenian richness of metaphysics. On the other hand, there is a forceful clarity in Dahl's summary propositions, and it is this that gives intellectual stature to the book. Furthermore, Dahl has used some of the work of one of his most incisive critics, the late, distinguished Willmoore Kendall, (and his collaborator, Austin Ranney), in the study of American political parties and democracy.

Still, it is difficult to catch the underlying postulates. It might seem that Dahl, in the totality of his work favors, like the liberals generally, a Presidential, plebiscitary democracy, which might in the end reduce the power of the representative order to something like the contemporary parliament in France or Spain. One of Kendall's criticisms has been that there are two majorities in American politics; one which springs from the structure of the communities which elect members of legislative bodies, and the other (the Presidential) which springs from a kind of national plebiscite. And as Kendall pointed out, it is sometimes the finest expression of

majority rule when the representative bodies refuse even to examine a proposal which has emerged from the secret depths of the executive and bureaucracy. (See Kendall's *The Conservative Affirmation*). My conclusion is, I think, that the behaviorist analysis of democracy has not swept all before it. Dahl has made some effort to penetrate the European backgrounds of Western thought, but I am often distressed by the unwillingness of American political scientists to consider the Classical-Judean-Christian background of American thought and institutions.

One of the richest aspects of Dahl's book is his analysis of the labors of the Founding Fathers. It might be thought that nothing fresh could be said about them. However, Dahl's analysis of democracy and aristocracy in the Convention is of great value, though I suppose those who read statistical tables for their philosophy and history will hardly bother. T. V. Smith might have been of help in the analysis of compromise, and George Santayana (p. 8) might have given background to the statement of democratic-aristocratic ideas. Charles H. Hyneman's work on the Alien and Sedition Acts could have been a stabilizing force, and the criticism of parties by Walter Lippmann and the National Committee for an Effective Congress might have given depth to the theory of political parties. And certainly some study of the obscured records of the Haymarket Affair (Chicago, 1886) might have made the liberal prejudice on the subject less uncritical (p. 285). He might have used Kendall's answer to McCloskey's attempt to denigrate the conservative personality (p. 363). It would, indeed, have shown light on a dark page. The contrast between ideologues and pragmatists (p. 450) is hardly a philosophical contribution; and the alternatives described in Chapter 17 hardly depict the race war of the Black Community against the Whites, which has, it seems, moved quite beyond the theory of legal equality, or the nineteenth-century colonial theory of the "Black Englishman."

But, in spite of all this, Dahl has, considering his postulates (half articulated, I believe), written a notable book on consen-

sus, conflict, and political reconciliation.

V.

WHEN we reflect on the contemporary textbook in the social sciences, and on political studies in particular, we move on to consider the intellectual who writes them. Ultimately, a conservative will reflect with some melancholy on the dominant liberals in his university. The battle to shape the mind of the intellectual is the battle to control the education of youth on a stage once removed, since the liberal intellectual writes many of the books and comes face to face with the student. The character of the contemporary liberal intellectual is imposed on the student who moves on into economic effort. In this sense, to state the characteristics of the intellectual tells much about textbooks, libraries, librarians, higher education, and the students who finally do the work of the world.

One of the salient characteristics of the American social scientist is a stubborn philosophical blindness, which seeks in self-justification to respond to every fact. It is not just that facts are free and equal, but that they are *almost* free and equal. For to say that one fact is more important than another makes one both a philosopher and an activist. The philosophically blind impose their image on all situations. At the core is the belief in the progressive character of the "Left," and this has made it impossible to be critical or angry at the violence of the left. One must exculpate the Russian Revolution and its Communist children, and one must look with hope to the angry stirrings of the 800 tribes in Africa. At home the awful truth is that the liberal revolution has taken over the centers of influence and intelligence during the era since the Great Depression, and thus the textbook has, by paradox, become the defense of the new *status quo* in America. It is the conservative who is the critic of the welfare revolution, the archaizing of the Constitution, and the fiscal madness of a Johnson budget.

In the textbook the best defense seems bland acceptance, which is in turn a denial

of the existence of the problems with which the conservative may be concerned. The textbook seems to indoctrinate the student with the proposition that our problems may soon be solved, or will be as soon as prejudiced white men and greedy businessmen have been met in political battle and have been overcome. What irony! The student in a private school supported in large measure by the contributions of those who have conserved their profits and donated them to education is taught that the barbarian in a street riot is superior to a man attached to his tradition or one who has been an able businessman. This clearly is one of the grim paradoxes of our time.

Still, the unphilosophical, the unabstract, and empirically conceptualized individual, may see evil for a time; but in the end he is often trapped into the acceptance of forms of evil he may have resisted in his youth. Let us say it is at least in part the disappearance of courage in his days of prosperity. As the textbook writer on American government and economics becomes a junior millionaire—and there are numerous ones who have—there is a softening of left-wing anger but no resistance. The mind of the liberal who has no philosophy or at most a very incomplete one begins to grind the gears; this mind may become immobile before the evils of the age. Or the facts, like the Arthur Sylvester theory of the news, are juggled to fit the immobilized posture. A great Spanish liberal, who later became a harsh critic of the sovietizing of the Spanish Republic, Dr. Gregorio Marañon, said in his exile in 1937 that the terrible mistake the liberals always make, and continue to make, is to support anything that smacks of the left. Thus, the Spanish liberals were immobilized. They entered a catatonic state when the Russian Communists moved in and controlled the war. As William S. Schlamme said recently in *National Review*, "The American Left begins to understand that it has no other vision to offer but a national existence in tired despair." So the liberal intellectual, writing his textbook on American government, bids the student consider that all is well though we may watch in the night.

chases of materials, supplies, and services. The U. S. companies strengthened Cuba's balance of payments position through their exports and their capital inflows, and by generating activities designed to save foreign exchange (e.g. petroleum refining and general manufacturing) for the host country.

The economic cost to Cuba of U. S. business holdings, measured by the rate of return (profit) on investment, was lower than for U. S. investments in Latin America generally and Western Europe.

Postscript

IN June 1960, Premier Castro declared: "We'll take and take until not even the nails of their shoes are left. We will take American investments penny by penny until nothing is left."³⁷ Within a few weeks United States investments exceeding one billion dollars³⁸ were confiscated by the Cuban Government in complete disregard of the nation's Constitution. Premier Castro may have pleased some ultra-nationalists with his emotion-charged tirades and arbitrary actions. Before long, however, the Soviet-oriented regime confiscated private Cuban investments "penny by penny until nothing was left." By 1962 the Cuban State had seized virtually all private means of production: the policeman and the employer became one. Cuba became the first Marxist-Leninist nation in the Western Hemisphere as acknowledged by Premier Castro in his December 2, 1961 nationwide address. In identifying himself as a Marxist-Leninist, Castro explained that he had concealed his Communist beliefs from Cubans and from American friends for years "because otherwise we might have alienated the bourgeoisie and other forces which we knew we would eventually have to fight."³⁹

37. *The New York Times*, Loc. cit.

38. Including the Nicaro properties of the U. S. Government and enterprises of United States citizens who became residents of Cuba.

39. *Cuba, The U. S. and Russia, 1960-63* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1964), p. 55.

The Eisenhower Administration offered Cuba economic assistance during Premier Castro's visit to the United States in April 1959⁴⁰ and nearly a year later, in January 1960, declared its willingness to negotiate all disputes, including those arising from Cuban seizure of American properties.⁴¹ In both instances the official response from Cuba was negative. As Theodore Draper put it, "Only the ingenuous can still believe that Fidel Castro walked into a Communist trap or that he gave up the democratic road because the United States did not give him enough support in his early months in power."⁴² In July 1960, following the confiscation of most U. S. business holdings in Cuba, the United States Congress suspended the island's sugar quota and authorized its reallocation to other nations.

The Cubans who joined forces in good faith against Fulgencio Batista lost the opportunity when it presented itself in 1959, to complete Cuba's social and economic transformation within the Western frame of development, characterized ideally by the "open society," broadly shared material benefits, and individual freedom. The consequences of recasting Cuba's political economy were profound: the market economy gave way to central planning and command; the island's external orientation shifted from the Western bloc to the Soviet bloc; and many of the nation's most capable human resources were lost, perhaps forever, to more hospitable lands.

40. Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, Roy Rubottom, "invited Castro's aides to discuss Cuba's financial needs and offered help." See Robert F. Smith, *The United States and Cuba: Business and Diplomacy, 1917-1960* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1962), pp. 157-159.

41. Arthur P. Whitaker and David C. Jordan, *Nationalism in Contemporary Latin America* (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 156.

42. *Castro's Revolution, Myths and Realities* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p. 107.

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