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# The Forum

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# THE NEW DESPOTISM

A. WASHINGTON PEZET

*FORMERLY nations found it necessary to depose a sovereign king for his inadequacy to guide the destinies of his subjects. Now we are questioning the ability of his successor, "the sovereign people," to take care of themselves. With the rapid advance of science, civilization has become an intricate and unwieldy machine that only experts and specialists can control. Are we going to let it run away with us and wreck us? This is the first of a series of three papers on the reconstruction of politics.*

**M**OST thoughtful men are agreed that something is radically wrong with our civilization. Only twenty-odd years ago most of us viewed the future with fatuous confidence. Science was remaking the world. Today we look about us and see a civilization shaken to its foundations. The concert of Europe is a weird cacophony of hate and vengeance. In Western Europe, Britain is dangerously impoverished

and faced with a desperate unemployment situation. Italy and Spain are snatched from anarchy only by the strong arms of dictators. Neutrals, like Holland, muddle along doing less than one-fifth of their pre-war business. France, feeling herself abandoned by her friends and obsessed with terror, walks on with the relentless detachment of a somnambulist, bearing the fate of Europe, helpless, in her arms as she treads her way toward a precipice. From the Rhine to the Pacific there is chaos, with here and there a meagre oasis of relative law and order. Central Europe is a land of starvation and misery. The Balkans, with their parochial nationalism and intolerable feuds, have expanded northward, eastward, and westward to include portions of Europe that formerly were highly civilized. The Near East is in a ferment; China is in the midst of an endless revolution; India and the Philippines are smouldering; and Japan is but slowly recovering from an unparalleled disaster. In Australia and the Americas are felt the violent repercussions of all this turmoil.

Nor are we, in the United States, lacking in ills of our own. Our churches are rent with schism and strife. A fanatical intolerance is the order of the day. Disrespect for law is a commonplace. Crime has reached the proportions of a social revolt. The mere business of living has become more intricate, more arduous, and more precarious than it was two decades ago. Even

the standard activities of material civilization have obviously deteriorated.

We open our newspaper and find therein an astounding record of crimes, of tyrannies, of organized imbecilities, of wars and the threat of wars, of wrangles and recriminations, — personal, national, and racial, — a record of twenty-four hours of chaos. We are coming to regard calmly a list of happenings any item of which would have set us in a frenzy twenty years ago.

As to the cause of all the misery and incertitude of our age there is as yet no unanimity of opinion. Most people regard this deplorable state of things as an inevitable aftermath of the Great War, and they are apt to fall into the easy error of regarding that conflict as the primal cause of all our troubles. But that is rather putting the cart before the horse. In the strict use of the word the War caused very few things; it was itself a symptom of the insidious infirmity that afflicts our civilization. It merely enhanced and aggravated a condition that already existed. To the thoughtful it dramatized and brought out into the realm of observable phenomena much that was present before, festering unseen beneath the surface of things.

To understand the true cause of the *débâcle* of civilization we must first form a rational estimate of its true nature.

Civilization is the outward and visible manifestation of the mind and spirit of Man. It is the material embodiment of his intelligence and will. It is the sum of all the tools he has made and all the things he has wrought with them, of all the dreams he has recounted, set down, and realized in whole or in part. It is the progressive adaptation of the environment to his needs resulting from his ceaseless war against Nature. But from the beginning to the present this war against Nature, this progressive dreaming, making, and adapting, has been the pursuit not of Man but of an amazingly limited number of men. To these conspicuously superior few we owe our civilization. Unfortunately the progress of civilization has been so rapid that it has produced a wholly artificial environment to which Man, the animal, has never fully adapted himself. Furthermore, civilization has produced such interferences with Nature and the natural working of natural laws as virtually to dislocate those processes whereby Nature preserves the best of the race. The result is that civilization is a

systematic killing of the geese that lay its golden eggs, for it uses up and fails to replace the intelligence which alone can produce and sustain it.

These generalizations are as true of all past civilizations as of our own, and it is to this primal cause (the killing of the geese that lay the golden eggs) that we may safely ascribe the fall of all past civilizations, whatever the superficial and apparent cause of their fall may have been.

It may be argued, however, that our civilization has not yet fallen, that in some respects it seems still to be progressing. In some respects it is, and therein lies the clue to the true nature of our present difficulties. For our civilization, more than any that has preceded it, is an unbalanced civilization. In certain directions our advance has been astounding; in other directions we have made only picayune gains. A vast disharmony results.

Certain aspects of our civilization are a direct inheritance from the various classical civilizations that were fused by the Roman Republic and then diffused throughout Western Europe by the conquests of the Caesars; other aspects are the results of our contacts with Oriental civilizations; still other aspects are almost wholly new. The new in our civilization we owe to modern science, which may be defined briefly as an organized quest for truth by experimental and analytical methods. All those things which markedly differentiate our civilization from past ones are due to science and its manifold applications. And a close analysis of our civilization will clearly reveal that its failures and evils arise out of our lack of adaptation and adjustment to the new environment science has created, out of the disharmony that has resulted because science has been applied to some things but not to others.

It is true that in some respects civilization is still advancing at an unprecedented rate. Each day records a new invention or discovery which will in some way, either great or small, further transform our environment and create new problems of adjustment. The things that have been touched with the magic wand of science are alive and moving forward at an ever accelerating speed; those that have not are stagnant. Industry, agriculture, surgery, navigation, transportation, communication, — these things and many others have advanced more in the past century

than in the preceding six thousand years. But politics, laws, morals, customs, and religion have remained comparatively stagnant. Throughout the entire period of modern history our material advance has been incomparably greater than our spiritual advance. And so our civilization stretches out like an ever lengthening rubber band, one end free and advancing, the other rooted in primitive emotion, in superstition, precedent, and reaction.

How soon will the rubber reach the end of its elasticity? How soon will our civilization snap and break? For sooner or later it must break unless we can find some way to free the fastened end.

I believe, and I am confident that most thoughtful men will agree with me, that science is the agency through which we may free our civilization from the morass of illusions and prejudices that are slowly but surely encompassing its destruction.

By science I mean, of course, not so much the limited body of knowledge, the little store of fact, that has been wrested from the Infinite by the researches of scientists, as the spirit of science, — that spirit of impartial observation, diligent research, unprejudiced deduction, tolerant and unselfish co-operation, which on the whole has characterized those men of highest intelligence who have consecrated themselves to the quest for truth. Such men are not afraid of ungarnished facts, and in their search for truth they set no theory, hypothesis, or opinion, however attractive and desirable, above the truth. Rather, they use such theories, hypotheses, and opinions as mere tools in their quest for truth. They are future-minded men, men who labor not for a vanishing present but for an infinite tomorrow.

Unfortunately such future-minded men do not occupy a position of sufficiently great importance in the organization of present-day society. Though they are the creators of civilization, it is not controlled by them but by the present-minded delegates of present-minded groups.

Government is the agency through which civilization is controlled, and government is in the hands, not of scientists but of politicians. Of all the sorts of men constituting contemporary society none is more hopelessly present-minded, more hopelessly unscientific than the professional politician. He cannot see or imagine anything more remotely placed in time than the next

election; his vision, therefore, is restricted to a maximum range of four years, and to an average range of only two years; often his horizon is no more remote than the middle of next week.

Few people nowadays realize that politics is the science of government. To most of us the word "politics" has acquired an altogether different significance. When we say that they are "playing politics" in a club, church, or office, we mean that some man or faction is intriguing against some other man or faction, and that a petty partisan motive is being placed above the true interests of the organization. When a man says, "I'm not good at politics," he is saying euphemistically that he is not good at intrigues, evasions, ambiguities, and deceptions.

Most people labor under the delusion that our advance in politics has been as real as our advance in other fields of activity. They look back pityingly to an age when government was no more than a single man or small group of men exercising arbitrary will, and point with pride and satisfaction to the enormous progress we have made by attaining true democracy.

What such persons see is a mirage. Our democracy is a delusion. Though for a while we made real political progress, in the past hundred years we have steadily lost ground previously gained. What we have today are the old shibboleths, the old delusions, differently expressed. The divine right of the king has become the divine right of the people. The sovereign, all-powerful king has become the sovereign, all-powerful people. The old saying that the king can do no wrong has been re-stated in slightly different terms; now it is the people who can do no wrong. Today we are earnestly assured that the opinions of a majority, no matter how irrationally arrived at, must of necessity be just and wise; that if only enough people believe a thing to be true it must be true. It is quixotically assumed that human nature in masses is something altogether different from human nature in those individual human units which make up human masses; that whereas an individual king may be selfish, stupid, and ignorant, a mass of selfish, stupid, and ignorant individuals will by some miracle be converted into an unselfish, intelligent, and well-informed public opinion.

It is all myth-making and delusion! There is no "The People." It is an invention of the politicians and of the new demagogues

who speak through their newspapers. There is but a mass of people, — that is, a mass of utterly present-minded and inevitably selfish individuals. What moves them “is not thought but emotion. And what sets emotion going is self-interest.” Today, as of yore, this mass is governed by the courtiers and sycophants who hem about the majesty of the sovereign, whether we call him king or people.

A new despot has appeared among us. He is hydra-headed; he wears a thousand crowns and wields a thousand sceptres. Though he is known by a thousand different names, the politician always addresses him reverently as “The People.” He is the organized militant minority, — for as the mass of men is incapable of political action as a mass, men group themselves in accordance with their dominant self-interest into organized minorities. Thus the mystic “The People” dissolves into a congeries of intolerant, self-seeking, present-minded, organized militant minorities, each one sacrificing the state and the individual citizen to its own peculiar and special interests, and using the courtier-politician for its indecent traffic.

To remedy this evil state of things further extensions of democracy are suggested, and in some cases adopted. Obsessed with the notion that there is or ever can be a real “The People” our reformers advocate the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall, — instruments whose purpose is “to make the people as sovereign in fact as they are in theory.”

There is about such political thinking and acting an unreality, an evasion of plain demonstrable truths so stupendous as to amount to a vast collective insanity. In politics we tolerate conditions and suggest remedies that anyone would be considered a madman for tolerating or advocating in any other field of human activity. Yet politics is the science of government; it is the instrumentality through which we control and direct civilization, through which we control our destiny and the destiny of posterity.

Let us ask ourselves if it would be sane for prospective travelers bound for Chicago, for instance, to gather in the Pennsylvania Terminal in New York, hold a meeting, select candidates from among themselves, and by ballot elect the engineer, conductor, firemen, brakemen, and porters of the Broadway Limited; and

then to embark upon their journey with such amateurs in charge of their lives and destinies? Having done this much, and the train being under way, would it be sane of the passengers to form into groups, each with a distinct opinion as to how the train should be run, and throughout the journey to ply the engineer with instructions, to send "lobbyists" to the cab to argue with him, to harass and threaten him for his failure to run the train to their liking? And such methods failing, would it be sane to demand the right to recall him and the other train officials en route? Would it be sane of the passengers to insist that all decisions dealing with the train's operation should be initiated by them? Would it be sane to demand that every little matter dealing with the train's operation should be submitted to a referendum of the passengers?

The analogy seems grotesque only because we have not yet freed our political thinking from preconceived ideas. If we could once view politics realistically we should see that our present political practice is no less grotesque than the behavior of these hypothetical travelers. It is even more grossly irrational. The operation of the machine of civilization has become a job far more intricately technical than the operation of any mere train; it calls for a higher degree of intelligence and for far more specialized knowledge. And it cannot be maintained that there is an important difference due to the motion of the train through space, for civilization is not motionless; it is advancing in time, and today we know that time, being the fourth dimension, such movement is as real as the movement that seems to us to occur solely in space. Unlike the train, civilization not only moves forward with prodigious rapidity but grows as it moves, changing its form and adding complexities to its structure new in the experience of its operators.

The operators are the politicians who govern us. We who live are the passengers. We reach our station when we die, but the train of civilization does not stop for us; it drops us off like mail bags and goes on with unslackened pace. Other passengers, those yet unborn, await its coming in the stations of the future. If we wreck it before it gets to them they will be deprived of their chance to travel upon it. And is it not our supreme duty to preserve it for their use?

Today we find ourselves in a condition analogous to that in

which the passengers upon my hypothetical Broadway Limited would find themselves if they were not only constantly wrangling among themselves and with their incompetent train officials, but also at each station letting off an increasing number of the most intelligent and taking on an increasing number of those of mediocre and inferior intelligence. Who doubts that such a train in time would be wrecked? Who doubts that unless we mend our ways our civilization will be wrecked?

We are at a crisis in civilization far greater than any that has ever occurred. It is no exaggeration to say that our present form of government, which makes articulate and gives deciding influence to the most present-minded elements in the community, which sacrifices the inalienable rights of posterity, — hence of Mankind, — to the passing whims of ephemeral groups of the living, is hastening the collapse of civilization.

In the past, when monarchical despotism reached the state of mind of not caring what came after it, of deliberately living solely for the present, civilization found it necessary to eliminate the influence of monarchs. We are confronted with a similar but more complex task. We must find some way in which to destroy the preponderant influence of the present-minded despot of today. But we cannot lop off his head. Being hydra-headed he will grow a dozen new ones while we pause for breath. We must find some other way to overthrow this despot, who is ourselves and yet not ourselves.

If we would give the future-minded a chance to control and direct human destiny we must create a standard to which they will repair. To change the personnel of government we must change its principles. To attract the highest type of future-minded, creative thinker into the public service we must create the art of statesmanship and the science of government. And to do these things we must completely reconstruct our politics both in theory and in practice.

Both of these are practical matters of immediate concern to us. For if we are to save civilization, the first steps must be taken by the present generation.

*The second paper on "The Reconstruction of Politics" will point out how our Constitution fails to secure to us the rights insisted upon in the Declaration of Independence.*

# CONSTITUTION VERSUS DECLARATION

A. WASHINGTON PEZET

*STEAMBOATS, locomotives, and the telegraph were invented after our Constitution had gone into effect. Had its framers foreseen the social changes which the scientific revolution would bring about they would doubtless have devised a Constitution more adequate to the vastly different environment of their posterity. We have fallen victim to the very ills of democracy from which they sought to free us. What we need is a new kind of republicanism, in which government shall be in the hands of intelligent minorities.*

THE reconstruction of politics is a two-fold enterprise. There is pure politics, and there is applied politics. Or, otherwise stated, there is the pseudo-science of politics which must be made into a true science, and there is the art of government which must be brought up to a level of excellence commensurate with the demands of civilization. The pure science of politics is today simply non-existent. What passes for it is a chaotic mass of unverified dogmas and beliefs, unsystematized facts, ambiguous and contradictory terms and definitions. It is a science as backward as the science of chemistry in the Middle Ages, when the alchemists were searching for a magic elixir and attempting to transmute baser metals into gold; it is no further advanced than was astronomy before that science had been disentangled from astrology and theology.

But the task of modernizing politics is not one that can be accomplished by one man, and certainly it cannot be done within the limitations of a brief paper. My aim here is merely to clarify certain prevalent ambiguities, to give the reader a general idea of the sort of political thinking he must do if politics is ever to be brought out of the nebulae in which it is at present enshrouded. Although I shall devote my attention principally to politics in the United States, we must not lose sight of the general oneness of political problems throughout Western civilization.

From the first there has been a most unfortunate but quiet inevitable duality in the American Government. From the first two wholly antithetical elements have struggled for the mastery of our institutions. The Constitution is the symbol of one of these elements, the Declaration of Independence is the symbol of the other. For convenience we may call these warring elements republicanism and democracy.

To many it must seem startling that I make a distinction between the terms republicanism and democracy. To such an appalling extent has the obvious necessity for creating a distinction been lost sight of, and so universally are they now used synonymously by politicians, publicists, journalists, and the general public, that it will be necessary to go into the matter of their basic differences at some length.

The word "republic" is generally used to mean any non-monarchical government, and the word democracy to mean any government that derives its powers from the consent of the people. Thus England, though not a republic, is undoubtedly a democracy. And many Latin American nations, though they are certainly not democracies, are obviously republics. These distinctions are all right as far as they go, but they do not go far enough.

A moment's consideration will reveal the fact that there are at least two quite distinct forms which democracy may take. There is that form of government, by the people and for the people, in which the sovereign power is vested directly in the people, retained at all times by them, and exercised by them either directly, or indirectly through the agency of elected delegates subservient to their will. And there is the form of government in which the sovereign powers of the people are diffused among the several organs of the government in accordance with the provisions of a constitution, and in which these powers are exercised by representatives, executives, and judges who are by temperament, intelligence, and training especially fitted to carry on the business of government so that government may be more efficient and the people more free to follow their own pursuits.

Since both of these very different forms of government are democratic and republican, in the common use of the terms, it is essential to create a nomenclature which will distinguish between them. We might call the first "absolute" democracy, and the second "limited" or "constitutional" democracy. But it is the usual fate of such qualifying words to be dropped. Therefore I shall follow the example of the Founding Fathers in calling the first "democracy" and the second "republicanism."

The inherent and basic differences between these two forms of government, though numerous, are easily summarized in one

paramount difference: in a democracy the public officials are delegates of the people, subservient to popular will, and in reality it is the people who govern; in a republic the people elect or select representatives who govern according to laws and their own independent and theoretically expert judgment. In a republic the representative is a free agent, for the duration of his term of office if that is regulated by law, or for as long as he enjoys the confidence of the people if there is no legal limit to his tenure. In a democracy the delegate is merely a practical instrument, albeit an instrument of flesh and blood, for carrying out the will of the people. (To-morrow invention may supercede him with some mechanical device by which the popular will may be better expressed.)

In a republic the representative decides upon any issue before him as an expert, according to his own independent judgment. In a democracy the delegate decides upon any issue before him in accordance with the dictated opinions of his constituents, regardless of his personal judgment in the matter. Moreover, in a democracy each constituency regards itself as The People, and as such is sovereign; and the people's will being supreme, the people are not bound or limited by any constitutional law and may directly alter their constitution as often and as completely as they please. But in a republic, though the government derives its powers from the consent of the governed, that consent is expressed by the constitution, and the sovereignty of the people is never absolute, but strictly limited by the constitutional law which they may not directly change. Such law is a limitation upon their freedom of will and exercise of power, inherited by the living people from those of the people who are no longer living, and which they (the living) as guardians and trustees must bequeath to those yet unborn unimpaired by rash and hasty additions or subtractions. The constitution thus becomes a self-imposed instrument limiting the sovereignty of each living generation in the interests of all the people, those unborn no less than the living.

The greatest republican instrument in the world, the original Constitution of the United States, clearly recognizes the ineluctable rights of the unborn in the magnificent yet simple words of its preamble: "We the People . . . in order . . . to secure the

Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity do ordain and establish this Constitution. . . .” And by the well thought out difficulties the Constitution places in the way of the living, in their exercise of the right of amendment, the interests of posterity are safeguarded. Democracy sweeps away all these safeguards and renders supreme the arbitrary will of those ephemeral groups of the living who constitute the people and give utterance to what is called public opinion.

In a republic Congress is theoretically an assembly of free and independent experts gathered together to deliberate, interchange ideas, and form opinions in accordance with facts, as discussion and inquiry may reveal them. In a democracy the legislative assembly becomes a mere human voting machine existing solely to ascertain the majority's will by counting in units of several thousand instead of in units of one at the polls.

These differences are of profound significance and infinitely far-reaching in their effects. They create a gulf between republicanism and democracy far more abysmal than that which exists between either democracy or republicanism and monarchy. Though the inexactitude of political science has permitted the growth of a loose and ambiguous terminology, though few writers have distinguished between republicanism and democracy as *terms*, no important writer on politics in the past century and a half has failed to distinguish between them as *facts*, whatever may have been the terms by which he labelled them.

So far we have been dealing wholly in theory. In practice all governments are mixtures of many diverse elements. Theoretically the United States is a republic, for the Constitution is essentially a republican instrument, but in practice our government has been growing more and more democratic. This evolution, which most of us regard either with favor or complacency, has been almost wholly detrimental to the quality of our government and consequently injurious to the development of civilization. The reason is to be found in the nature of the evolution, — an evolution away from the modicum of science that had been attained, toward a system of government wholly dependent upon the will and changing opinions of organized militant groups. The republicanism we had attained in the Constitution of 1787 was the result of a long evolution of government begun among the

Teutonic tribes of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, continued in England after their conquest of Britain, and later in the thirteen American Colonies which were settled by the English. It was realistic, — based upon facts and experience and owing next to nothing to political theories of any sort, — and, therefore, as nearly scientific as any government the world had thus far produced.

The democracy to which the Declaration of Independence gave such brilliant utterance was, on the other hand, not the product of evolution; neither realistic nor scientific, but theoretically created out of the *a priori* speculations of seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophers. Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration, was an avowed Democrat, and while it may be that he was not directly influenced by Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, he was certainly quite familiar with the works of John Locke and the other English philosophers who did their share toward shaping democratic doctrines. At any rate the second paragraph of the Declaration is the most perfect literary setting the glittering baubles of democracy have been given:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, . . .

There is not one of these generalizations that the march of time and the progress of analytical science has not disproved. The first and foremost no man believes in at this day. Today when we speak of equality we mean equality of opportunity. But democracy is built upon the obvious falsehood that men are equal in their mental and moral capacities. And all our most vital institutions and customs are being shaped by this stupendous fallacy. The result is a lopping off of heads that stand above the mass; a feverish shoving up of the obviously unfit; a levelling to a common denominator of dull mediocrity. This in its turn has resulted in a veritable famine in leadership at the hour of history when great leadership is most urgently needed.

The really great men who wrote the Constitution were keenly



alive to the perils of this theoretical democracy. They had had experience with it in those turbulent years between 1776 and 1787. And in the Constitution they drew up they sought to avoid anything that smacked of the nebulous vagaries of democracy. In the words of one of them, Mr. Randolph of Virginia, the purpose of the Constitution "was to provide a cure" for evils whose origin could be traced to "the tribulations and follies of democracy. . . ."

Nevertheless democracy prevailed. The spirit of the democratic Declaration triumphed over the republicanism of the Constitution. Through the advent of Thomas Jefferson to power democratic theories became widely diffused. With the advent of Andrew Jackson there began the steady encroachment of democratic practices. Today, in spite of our republican Constitution, we are subject to all those ills of democracy which the Founders foresaw and sought to avoid in the government they created.

It should be unnecessary to insist that a government should be realistic: that its organization must reflect the real conditions that obtain in the social organism for which it is called upon to govern. If a society is approximately democratic in the equalitarian sense of the word, — that is, if a relative equality exists among the people, — if they are racially, socially, and economically homogeneous; then that society may be called democratic (equalitarian) in fact, and therefore a democratic (equalitarian) form of government will prove less unworkable than with less homogeneous peoples. Such has been the case in Switzerland, Australia, and New Zealand, — countries whose populations are approximately democratic and whose governments, though they have advanced furthest toward democracy, are on the whole adequate to their tasks.

The United States, though once racially homogeneous, has become one of the most heterogeneous of nations. Though formerly there were no great inequalities of intelligence, education, and wealth, today inequalities in all three respects are marked. Today the United States can no longer be regarded as a nation democratic in fact. But it has been the ironic and tragic fate of the United States that its government has grown more democratic in form almost in direct ratio to the degree to which the country

itself has become less democratic in fact. Thus, by becoming not only less and less scientific, but also less and less real, government has become increasingly unfit to perform the great tasks which it must perform if civilization is to be preserved.

The thoughtful reader will be likely to ask, if republicanism is all that I claim for it, why was it possible for the fallacious theories of democracy to undermine it? Why has this devolution from republicanism to democracy taken place?

Everything being a link in the endless chain of cause and effect, we cannot do otherwise than seek for the causes of the rising tide of democracy in some weakness or weaknesses inherent in republicanism itself. A healthy organism can resist the attacks of disease; a weakened one succumbs. Republicanism was the product of an evolution which had taken place before the scientific revolution. When the Constitution of the United States was drafted, men rode to Philadelphia in stage coaches; they lived at the same slow pace at which men had lived for untold ages. In 1807 Fulton invented the steam boat; in 1814 Stephenson invented the locomotive; in 1837 Morse invented the electromagnetic telegraph. Thus, within a few years of the adoption of the Constitution, there began those transformations in human environment which are known collectively as the scientific revolution. But politics remained untouched by science. Because of this, republicanism failed to adapt itself to the stupendous changes which took place in the environment, with the result that inherent defects, inconspicuous and unimportant in the simpler days of the past, now became magnified and made possible the rapid inroads of a parasitic democracy.

The practical problem involved in the reconstruction of politics is to reverse this evolution without running too far counter to the popular prejudices that evolution has aroused. This problem is made comparatively easy by the fortunate circumstance that American democracy is almost wholly extra-legal in character. The Constitution still exists without great alteration. The first task is therefore to return to the republicanism of the Constitution and to permit no further encroachments of democracy. But a return to the republicanism of the Constitution is not of itself sufficient. If we limit our program to that we shall be labelled reactionary and assailed by every militant democrat in the

country. We can return to republicanism only as to a spring-board for a fresh leap. Not the old and lost republicanism, but a new republicanism, which attempts to apply its undying principles to the realities of our present and future needs, should be our aim.

Now what are these principles of republicanism upon which we must build? First, a recognition that the real purpose of all government is to safeguard the interests of the unborn by securing the continuity of civilization. It is conceivable that any living generation might get along without government, but it is inconceivable that the "social heritage" of laws and customs, sciences, arts and crafts which we call civilization could be transmitted to posterity if there existed no human agency for safeguarding such things in the present. Second, that men are created unequal. Third, that being unequal there must exist a minority better qualified to govern than any other. Fourth, that it is the business of the majority to find this minority, to give it the power to govern while holding it strictly accountable and responsible for the right exercise of those powers.

The Constitution of the United States does not state these principles as theories of government. It is not concerned with theories; it is the blue print of a practical government and we deduce these principles from its practical provisions.

Though, as was indicated earlier, the Constitution made ample provision for safeguarding the rights of posterity, it unfortunately failed to create adequate machinery to enable the people to select the governing minority. That is without question its greatest weakness. Then, too, the framers of the Constitution did not foresee the scientific revolution, and so they failed to make provision for the tremendous changes it has brought about in society and in the scope of government's activities.

Our task is to bring republicanism in line with present conditions by remedying these two defects and, by making provision for the changes the continuing scientific revolution must produce in the future, to enable government to evolve in harmony with future changes in civilization.

*In his third and final paper Mr. Pezet will discuss the prospect of making government safe for civilization*

# A POLITICAL WEST POINT

A. WASHINGTON PEZET

*IN order to save government for civilization we need, first, a qualified body of voters, — citizens who have passed a test to show their capacity for forming intelligent political opinions, — and second, a body of professional politicians who have been trained in the intricate science of government. We need a Political Service, analogous to the Civil Service and to the military and naval academies. This is the third and final paper in Mr. Pezet's series of articles dealing with the scientific reconstruction of politics.*

THOMAS PAINE, writing before the scientific revolution was well under way, could say that "the more perfect civilization is, the less occasion has it for government, because the more does it regulate its own affairs and govern itself." But today when we echo such an opinion we are talking nonsense. Consider the basic unsoundness of Paine's reasoning: how is civilization to "regulate its own affairs" except

through some human agency? And, whether we call it government or not, what is that agency but a form of government? Business, educational, scientific, professional, labor, and religious organizations are all of them forms of government. Every organized human agency for regulating the relations between man and man and for transmitting to posterity some phase or aspect of civilization is performing the functions of government. What we have today is a wholly uncoördinated multitude of partial governments, almost all overlapping, each interfering with the others, and all interfering with political government. But the unity of civilization and the inter-relation of its problems calls for unity of control, — that is, for unity of government.

Most persons fear an expansion of the scope of government's activities because they invariably think of government in terms of an incompetent democracy, or of the corrupt bureaucracies of oligarchy or monarchy. But government need be neither incompetent nor corrupt. It can be purged of incompetence and corruption and made safe for civilization by applying science to it, or, in other words, by taking politics in the popular sense out of Politics in the scientific sense.

Our first step in applying science to government is to revamp our ideas of citizenship. Citizenship is not merely a right; it is primarily a privilege and an honor, with corresponding duties

and responsibilities that must never be forgotten. Today the voting citizen by mere right of birth has become as anachronistic and as dangerous as the king who rules by right of birth. Today we do not permit kings to govern; they merely reign. Neither should we permit a man to vote just because he happens to have been born a citizen. As a result of the Army mental tests many citizens of the United States were found to be mentally unfit for military service. Yet many of these rejected men have votes! Is it logical or wise to permit a man who is not mentally fit to fight for his country to take part in the government of his country?

In abolishing all the old, unjust restrictions upon the right to citizenship we did well, for none should be denied the right to vote because they own no property or because of their creed, race, color, or sex. But in plunging from such unjust mediaeval restrictions as previously existed into the uncharted and dangerous sea of unlimited universal suffrage, we have acted most unwisely. There is one valid qualification for voting citizenship which no State can long ignore except to its great peril, and that is informed intelligence.

Our present attitude towards citizenship and the vote is indefensible. We actually dragoon and persecute unwilling foreigners into becoming American citizens while they remain alien at heart. In so doing we cheapen American citizenship in their eyes just as our practice of letting any half-wit vote has cheapened the vote in the eyes of the native American. I do not propose that we should disfranchise any who are already voters. But I can see no reason why such morons and near-morons as we may breed in the future should be permitted automatically to become voters at the age of twenty-one. My proposal is that in future no one be considered an active voting citizen merely because he has attained his majority, but that the right to vote be made a privilege to which every American boy and girl may aspire and which they can obtain only by properly qualifying.

Concretely, my plan is that each year the boys and girls of eighteen, let us say (the exact age to be determined by a board of psychologists), should be required to take an examination for active voting citizenship. This examination would be a combination mental and general information test. Following the examination, the successful candidates would be sworn in as voting

citizens with appropriate public ceremonies on an appointed day. This day would be a national holiday on a par with July Fourth, — a day for the expression of genuine patriotic sentiment upon which each boy and girl who had earned the right to vote would be made to feel that he or she had achieved a great honor and assumed a mantle of responsibility. Foreigners who desired to become American citizens would take the same examination and be similarly sworn in on the same day.

At first it would be extremely inadvisable to make the examinations severe. The aim should be to eliminate only those most obviously unfit to vote. As years passed the standard could be progressively raised. Such a plan would greatly stimulate the desire for education, for many intelligent persons who had failed because they lacked knowledge, would be spurred on to acquire the knowledge essential to the attainment of the right to vote. And the existence of such a system would dramatize the present sinister fecundity of the unfit; it would lead inevitably to a popular demand for the repeal of our absurd laws against birth control and, eventually, to the demand for affirmative eugenic legislation. Moreover, we would have created a means of ascertaining the general level of American intelligence and education, and each generation would be encouraged to make a better showing than its predecessor.

If you are inclined to doubt the feasibility of such a plan, bear in mind that while it will be of inestimable advantage to the future, it works not the slightest harm to anyone at present possessed of a vote.

I take it to be virtually axiomatic that minority government is inescapable. The many cannot lead the few; it is the few who must lead the many. Life, early in its history, evolved the brain, the seat of intelligence, the specific part of the organism that controls and directs its activities, coördinates its various parts and enables it to function as a unit. If you decapitate a man he dies. In a complex civilization if you destroy minority government you eventually destroy all government.

Because republicanism failed to create machinery sufficiently scientific to enable the majority to select the governing minority, republicanism quickly degenerated into oligarchy, — government by a self-imposed and irresponsible minority. For oligarchy

we have attempted to substitute democracy. Today, after many years of ceaseless attacks, the old oligarchy is practically dislodged. Democracy, claiming to be the impossible, — government by a majority, — has merely substituted government by camouflaged minorities for the obvious minority government of oligarchy and republicanism.

In modern nations it is manifestly impossible for the mass of the people to select their own candidates for leadership without the assistance of some organized selective machinery. Such machinery not being legally provided for, political parties have arisen out of necessity to fill that need. The party does not provide ideal selective machinery, and in the wake of parties have come all sorts of abuses and corruptions. Such are party-oligarchies, — machines, bosses, professional politicians, and demagogues. These are inevitable unless either one of two things exists: an aristocracy, patriotic, honest, cultured and with leisure and willingness to serve the country; or a citizenry, homogeneous, honest and well-educated, undivided by extremes of wealth, and comparatively unspecialized, of which each individual is willing and able to take his turn at government. England in the past has had the first; Switzerland has had the second. Both have been relatively well-governed. For the first few years of our history, we of America had a semblance of each. Now we have neither, and so we are ill-governed by professional party politicians.

We cannot create an aristocracy, in the usual meaning of the term. We cannot create a citizenry capable of governing itself, for we cannot make a heterogeneous people homogeneous; we cannot equalize wealth, eliminate the tremendous degree of specialization already attained; and we cannot even educate our citizens well enough to enable them to govern themselves.

I know that our ardent democrats will take exception to the last statement. One of the prettiest baubles in democracy's jewel case is the theory that government, being everybody's business, can and will be attended to by everybody. It was that arch-democrat Andrew Jackson who said, "The duties of any public office are so simple or admit of being made so simple that any man can in a short time become master of them." That may have been the case in the relatively uncivilized frontier communities in which Jackson had spent much time, but it was not the case in

the States east of the Appalachian Mountains, and it is most certainly not the case in any country whose population has attained to a high degree of specialization, such as the United States of today. In such countries the same cause that has contributed to specialization of the population, — the increased complexity of the civilization, — has forced the matters with which government deals to become increasingly complex and technical, with the result that the specialized population leaves the technical business of government almost entirely in the hands of professional politicians.

Under the impetus of false democratic theories the politician is moved not by his own convictions but by public opinion. This public opinion to which he hearkens so reverentially is compounded of two sinister ingredients: the self-interest of organized minorities, and the prejudices of uninformed men.

The specialist of superior intelligence, modestly recognizing the inadequacy of his opinions outside his chosen field, refrains from having political opinions, whereas the inferior man, imbued with the idea that he is "just as good as any one," is always ready with glib opinions that are either the ebullition of his own cocksure ignorance or parrotings of the utterances of demagogues. Both inferior and superior, — indeed, all classes of men, — take part in government as members of a group whenever government touches their particular group interests. But on such occasions they take part not as individuals concerned with the common weal, but as narrow partisans actuated by the prejudices and self-interest of their group. And to the degree that they are organized their opinions become part of the body of public opinion. Thus the ideal of government by everybody, in practice becomes government by the selfish and the ignorant.

The remedy for this evil state of things seems to me obvious. It is to be found in the creation of a class of professional politicians who will stand above being influenced by such a worthless public opinion, whose own convictions will be worth while because they will be professionals in the higher and not in the lower meaning of that ambiguous term. We must create a class of men who will regard politics not as a gainful occupation, but as a career of public service, and who will go into politics in the same spirit in which other men go into the ministry, into medicine,

into science or art; a class of men, who, being artists in the science of government, will govern scientifically, dispassionately, and yet humanely, not in the interest of one class or group but in the interests of all; a class of men who will be guided in the formulation of their policy by a common-sense balance between the needs of the present and the rights of the future, between the needs of the future and the rights of the present.

To equip himself for any professional career a man must go through an arduous course of special training. Indeed, he cannot lawfully practise his profession unless he has had such training. It is only the politician among professionals who gets his training as he goes along, — at the tax-payers' expense. Pick up the "want ads" and you will find positions offered only to those who have received some training. No business man wants to waste his time and money on untrained material. But in politics we abdicate common sense and permit untrained men to waste both time and money.

Even the corrupt and self-seeking politician produced by the old party machines is better than the inexperienced idealist whom democracy would substitute for him. The trouble with the party politician is not so much that he is inexperienced as that he has had the wrong sort of experience. He has learned to compromise, to bargain, to intrigue, to invade, to break promises, to sacrifice principle to expediency, to posture, and to pander to jingoism and sentimentality, but he has never learned to govern a civilized people. At his best the present-day party politician is a shrewd and clever lawyer. But the modern politician needs to be more than a lawyer. Though he makes laws, administers and enforces laws, knowledge of law alone is not enough. The politician who aspires to reach the top of his profession should be scientifically educated. He should be well grounded in modern biology and psychology; he should know history well enough to use the record of the past as an index to the future; he should be a sociologist and an economist. Indeed, the demands of his profession are such that he should be better and more broadly educated than the man in any other field.

No such politician exists, and the only way to get him is to start at the beginning, by selecting youths to whom the profession of government appeals, who are by intelligence and tempera-

ment fitted for it, and to educate them along the specific lines indicated.

When we consider the matter sanely, is it not amazing that we should spend vast sums to train especially selected men to be the officers of our army and navy and that we should leave the selection of politicians to irresponsible ward bosses and their training to chance? Is it not incongruous to train our military and naval officers, at great expense to the tax-payer, to fight the country's battles in wars made in peace-time by the acts of untrained and irresponsible politicians? Is it not incongruous to force the trained naval and military expert to fight at the time the untrained politician prescribes, with the weapons and materials he provides, under the circumstances he alone determines? And is it not most incongruous of all to permit the sacrifices and labors of the warriors to be jeopardized by the petty wrangling and indecent bargaining of untrained politicians disputing at the conference table and strutting about the Senate Chamber?

The time has come when we can no more entrust the Ship of State to untrained, uneducated politicians than we could entrust the command of the Atlantic Fleet to any well-seasoned Gloucester fisherman who had sailed the seven seas.

My concrete proposal is for the establishment of a United States Academy of Political Science which shall be to the Civil Government of the United States what the United States Military Academy is to the army, and the United States Naval Academy to the navy. In this Academy the entire personnel of the Federal Government would be trained, excepting of course those minor officials that are at present competently provided for by the civil service system. To enable men beginning their political careers in the States to rise to offices in the Federal Government, it would be necessary to pass laws in the several States making it obligatory for the personnel of their Governments to be graduated from the Academy, or from a State or other University that gave a similar course of training.

Needless to say, any American citizen, regardless of race, color, religion, or sex, who is able to pass the entrance examinations should be eligible to become a student at the Academy. The number matriculating each year would of course be determined by the practical requirements of the Government. Each graduate

would be commissioned into the political service of the United States. He would be pledged, as are the graduates of West Point and Annapolis, not to resign his commission until he had served his country for a stipulated number of years.

In discussing this plan I have found only one general objection to it, and that one is odd enough to be worth recording. It is argued that this plan would destroy the "amateur spirit" in politics. In the first place, there is no amateur spirit in present-day politics. And in the second place, this idea that the amateur spirit is of any value is one of those pleasant delusions with which many fool themselves. If the amateur spirit is of value in politics, then why is it not of equal value in other branches of human activity? Why do we not go into transports of delight over amateur actors and prefer them to professionals? Why do we not encourage rather than prosecute the many amateur physicians and surgeons who have recently been found practising with all the freedom of the amateur spirit? Why not amateur tailors to make our clothes more spontaneous, and amateur architects to add a dash of untrammelled exuberance to our sky-scrapers?

It may be asked, could a Congress composed of present-day politicians be expected to pass a Constitutional amendment creating an institution which will eliminate their kind from the public service? The members of the Congress who pass such a law would not themselves be affected by it. Before a sufficient number of men had graduated from the Academy to fill all the higher offices of the Government, the men who had called this plan into being would have passed, by death or retirement, into a secure place in history as benefactors of the nation, — for unquestionably such a system would give us a political personnel far more efficient, informed, and talented than any we have had since the early days of the Republic.

I hope, however, that no one will assume that I am offering these two plans as panaceas for our political ills. They are but the stepping stones to a more scientific and intelligent politics. Given a higher standard of citizenship and a trained personnel of Government, we would be in a position to carry out those future-minded policies essential to the maintenance of a progressive civilization which today in the mediaeval state of politics lie quite outside the boundaries of the practical and feasible.