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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND TENDENCIES¹

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It has seemed fitting, at this second meeting of the Association in New Orleans, where it was organized a quarter of a century ago, to give some attention to significant happenings during this period, in the affairs of the Association, in the field of political action, and in the analysis and interpretation of political phenomena. At least two former presidents have discussed some phases of these topics; but there is perhaps room for a difference of approach and emphasis.

When this Association was organized, the systematic study and teaching of political problems was but slightly developed. Only a few courses in public law and government were given in some of the larger universities. Of the twenty-five persons who were present at the organization of the Association, and the 214 who became members during the first year, a large proportion were primarily interested in history, economics, and other social studies with political bearings, rather than in political problems themselves.

In the constitution of the Association, its object was stated to be: "The encouragement of the scientific study of politics, public law, administration, and diplomacy." In the first presidential address, President Goodnow outlined the field of work of the Association as including political theory, constitutional and administrative law, comparative legislation, historical and

¹ Presidential address delivered before the American Political Science Association at New Orleans, La., December 27, 1929.

comparative jurisprudence, and political parties. He also noted the opportunity of the Association to secure the active coöperation of teachers of these subjects, and to bring together the student and those actively engaged in political life. A further indication of the plans of those who established the Association may be seen in the appointment of a series of standing committees on different branches of the field outlined, and the reorganization of these a year later into sections.

We may ask how far this prospectus has been carried out, and to what extent the scope of the Association has been broadened or contracted?

That it has established itself may be seen in the expansion of its membership, except for a short period during the World War, to over 1,900. These are in large part those engaged in teaching in the field of its interests; and this growth is an indication of the increasing attention to this subject in the educational institutions of the country. To some extent, public officials and others interested in political affairs have become members and have taken part in the meetings of the Association. But it must be admitted that these form as yet a relatively small portion. On the other hand, many members of the Association have had an active influence in public affairs; and coöperation between the student and public officials is much greater than it was.

The annual meetings of the Association have grown in interest and attendance. For some years these were held jointly with the older Historical and Economic Associations, and other societies in the field of social relations which have come into existence. In recent years it has been more difficult to bring together all of such organizations; and the Political Science Association has united with different groups. These joint meetings have made possible joint sessions for the consideration of common problems.

The particular topics considered have naturally varied from year to year; and there have been changes in the emphasis on different branches of the general field, with political develop-

ments. In recent years, little attention has been given to comparative legislation, colonial government, or jurisprudence. On the other hand, more time has been given to international relations, public administration, and methods of research.

A list of titles of presidential addresses would give some indication of the trend of developments. For younger members of the Association, it may be worth while to recall those of James Bryce on *The Relations of Political Science to History and Practice*, President Lowell on *The Physiology of Politics*, and Woodrow Wilson on *The Law and the Facts*. Most of the present members will remember the more recent addresses by Professors Dunning and Garner on *International Relations*, Professor Merriam on *The Progress of Political Research*, Professor Beard on *Time, Technology, and the Creative Spirit*, and Professor Munro on *Physics and Politics*.

The general plan of standing committees and sections set up at the beginning did not function for a time. But important work has been done by a number of committees; and the recent development of round tables at the annual meetings may be considered a revival of the original plan in a modified form; and these seem now to be well established.

Attention has been given to the problems of instruction in government. A section meeting on this subject was held in 1905; and a committee report was presented in 1908. In 1910 the study of government was discussed; in 1912 a committee on the teaching of government considered laboratory methods; and in 1913 there were committee reports on instruction in colleges and universities and practical training for public service. The more recent committee on policy has made an extensive survey of instruction in political science in universities and colleges, and in technical and normal schools.

A committee on research established in 1921 has given increased emphasis to systematic investigations, was responsible for a series of summer conferences held for three years on methods of research in political subjects, and initiated the movement for the organization of the Social Science Research Council.

The committee on policy appointed two years ago has made extended surveys of the different fields of interest of the Association, and proposed a program for further development.

The publications of the Association have formed an important means for extending its influence. For ten years, an annual volume of the papers and proceedings of the annual meeting were published. From time to time, important committee reports have been issued, notably that on *The Teaching of Government*. In 1906 the quarterly *American Political Science Review* was begun, and has furnished a medium of increasing scope and importance for the publication of important articles in political science, and through its special departments for noting important developments in the political field and records and reviews of publications.

The Association may be said to have fully justified its formation, to be firmly established, and may well look forward to continued life, with an expanding field of usefulness.

A quarter of a century is a brief span in the recorded history of the world. But the first lap of the present century may well seem of outstanding importance to those who have witnessed the march of the times, and signs are not lacking that in the future it may be considered one of the great turning points in political development.

It may be worth while to recall some features of the political situation at the time when the Association was organized. Theodore Roosevelt was president of the United States, as successor to President McKinley; but it was before the intense activity of his term as president in his own right. It was early in the reign of Edward VII in Great Britain, with Balfour as prime minister. William II of Germany was in the second decade of his reign; and Émile Loubet was president of France. It was after the Sino-Japanese, Spanish-American, and South African wars, and before the Russo-Japanese war, and international relations were quiescent, though new problems were in sight.

During the first decade in the life of the Association, before the crisis of the World War, there were significant events. President Roosevelt's elective term set a new high water mark in the tide of centralization and executive power in the United States; and these tendencies were also reflected in the records of such state governors as Hughes and LaFollette, the adoption of two amendments to the "unchangeable" Constitution of the United States, and the legislation during the first term of President Wilson. In Great Britain, the revival of the Liberal party was marked by increased governmental activity in social and financial legislation. In France, a more concentrated party organization led to more stable government, and an active assertion of the authority of the state over the church. Revolutions in Turkey and China were signs of the political awakening of the East to the influence of democratic ideas; while the Russo-Japanese War demonstrated the self-determination of an Asiatic power, which altered the face of international relations.

At the same time, the tendency toward a more popular basis of government continued, by the extension of suffrage in European countries, the increasing agitation for woman suffrage, and the adoption of direct primaries, and the initiative and referendum, in the United States.

The World War not only was the most stupendous conflict in the history of mankind, but marked the climax of centralized governmental authority in the contending nations. But the transformations in institutions which followed have a more permanent significance to the scientific student of political affairs.

Ten years ago, at the close of the World War, our president, Henry Jones Ford, compared the situation during the war to the upset of a stage coach, which had dislodged the student of politics from his observation post to take a direct part in the emergency. Expanding the metaphor, it may be suggested that there had been a general crash of political vehicles of various sorts at an important cross-road, which sent some of

the machines to the junk pile, and damaged most of the others so as to call for extensive repairs. It may now be possible to survey the new models now on the roads, to note the directions in which they are moving, and to consider what developments have taken place in the methods of observing and testing political machinery and in devising traffic regulations to prevent further collisions.

First may be noted the downfall of hereditary monarchies and the establishment of democratic republics in most of Europe, with the enlargement of the basis of popular government in many countries to include women, and the introduction of systems of proportional representation. In the early and middle nineteenth century, such changes would have been considered a movement away from centralized government. But the new democratic republics of Europe have adopted the more centralized cabinet system in preference to the American legal separation of powers; and the German Republic is more highly centralized than the former German Empire. The rise of the Socialist and Labor parties, which has come with the new democracy, has meant an increased exercise of governmental authority, which has reached a maximum in the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia. More recently there have come to power a number of single dictators in several countries; and in most countries executive authority dominates the representative organs of government. Even in England, the Lord Chief Justice has called attention to "The New Despotism" of the bureaucracy.

On the other hand, there have been the "balkanization" of Europe by the emergence of new and smaller states from the former empires of Austria-Hungary and Russia, the notable increase of dominion authority in the British Commonwealth of Nations, and the beginnings of self-government for British India.

But these tendencies toward decentralization are, at least to some extent, counterbalanced by the developments in the field of international organization. The League of Nations,

the Permanent Court of International Justice, the readjustments of reparations, are all agencies in a larger political synthesis. Even the United States, in the Washington Conference and the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact, has taken part in the work of international coöperation.

Within the United States, there has been some decline in executive authority in the national government, though there have been important illustrations of effective leadership by state governors, and new signs of executive leadership are evident at Washington. Moreover, federal centralization proceeds apace—as indicated by prohibition, federal aid to roads and education, and in other fields. But those who declaim about the “vanishing rights of the states” overlook the steady expansion of state activities, and the reorganization and centralization of state administration. In the field of local government, the importance of municipal government and the concentration of power in mayor, commission, or city manager continues to develop; while less generally appreciated is the expanding importance of county government, and the decline of the township.

It may be said that the top-heavy stage coach of dynastic rule has about disappeared, and that the new political vehicles have a more extended basis of popular support, greater power of action, and more concentrated control at the steering wheel. Traffic signals, and a traffic court, have been provided. But the roadway, tires, and shock absorbers do not seem adequate to furnish complete smoothness of motion; and some vehicles show signs of serious internal difficulties. The rules of the road have not yet been fully formulated; some accidents have occurred, others have been narrowly averted, and more serious and more general collisions are still possible.

The analysis and interpretation of political phenomena during this period has not been limited to contemporary events; and it may be worth noting some results of studies in earlier periods. Anthropologists and ethnologists have added much

to the knowledge of primitive stages of social development, through the discovery and study of "fossil" remains of prehistoric civilization and of primitive peoples. Investigations of buried cities have made more definite the extent and nature of early political and legal institutions to the time of Hamurabi and the Sumerians.² Study of early Asiatic writers has disclosed the germs of laissez faire and socialism, and the right of revolution, in the ancient Chinese classics, and a treatise on the art, if not the science, of public administration in India at the time of Aristotle.³ The period of the older empires—lethargic political dinosaurs (the prototypes of Hobbes' Leviathan)—may well be called the true middle ages, the Mesozoic period, of political development. The warm-blooded, humanistic, and later humanitarian, state first emerges into view with the small Greek city-states, submerged in the glacial period of the Dark Ages, to reappear in the Renaissance.

During the present century increased attention has been given, not only to the social and political institutions and life of the Renaissance, but to the political theories and interpretations of that time,⁴ and these have been accepted and applied to present-day conditions by some recent writers. Indeed the most notable contribution to the discussion of fundamental political principles in the early years of the present century was the criticism of the doctrine of sovereignty by such writers as Duguit and Laski, whose views seem to be in accord with the loosely organized political arrangements of the Renaissance. The school of pragmatists in general philosophy aided this tendency, which still influences the discussions of the present time.

But philosophical interpretations of political tendencies during the last decade, like the trend of political events, indicate the operation of conflicting factors. Even Mr. Laski, in his *Grammar of Politics*, while adhering to the ethical criticism

² C. L. Woolley, *The Sumerians; The Code of Hamurabi*, trans. by R. F. Harper (1904).

³ W. S. Pott, *Chinese Political Philosophy* (1925); Kuo-Cheng Wu, *Ancient*

of sovereignty, admits the legal doctrine, and in his discussion of governmental organization he is not willing to endorse any legal limitation on the legal sovereignty of the British Parliament.

The nineteenth century was notable for advances in the physical and biological sciences; and the results of extensive, systematic, and intensive research in these fields in the formulation of comprehensive and supposedly immutable laws and principles so far surpassed the efforts of students of political and social movements to explain the complex variety of their phenomena by simple and lasting principles that the term scientific has been largely appropriated by the former. Not only the foundations, but the main superstructure, of these sciences had been built, and future developments were looked for mainly in working out the finer embellishments. In physics, it was said that its future lay beyond the sixth decimal point.

But in the new century the foundations of the older physics have been undermined; and along with new discoveries and applications of vast practical importance, the former certainty of absolute laws has given way to new views of workable formulas based on statistical averages, with the principle of indeterminacy and uncertainty as to the most fundamental data. As Eddington has said, the latest conception of the structure of the atom is little more definite than the nonsense verses of Jabberwocky:⁵

“The slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.”

Even in the last century, however, some scientists had a realization of the difficulties of absolute rules, and some appre-

Chinese Political Theories (1928); Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, trans. by R. Shamastry (1915), B. K. Sarkar, *Political Institutions and Theories of the Hindus* (1922); U. Ghosal, *History of Hindu Political Theories* (1923).

⁴R. W. and A. J. Carlyle, *History of Medieval Political Theory in the West* (1902 ff); Otto F. Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, trans. by F. W. Maitland (1900); F. J. C. Hearnshaw, ed., *Social and Political Ideas of Some Great Medieval Thinkers* (1923).

⁵A. S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, p. 291.

ciation of the complexities of their problems, which have a resemblance and an application to those of political and social phenomena. In my undergraduate days, Professor Shaler set forth the view that a plexus of factors must be considered to account for the formation of glaciers, as it must for most social happenings; and that tremendous alterations in the physical world might result from slight changes in conditions at critical points, as by a change in temperature from just below to just above the freezing point of water. William James made an earnest plea for the word "some," which those fond of sweeping universals are apt to overlook. He recognized the limitations in the method of analysis, and saw that human experience was not merely an aggregate of distinct sensations, but a fluctuating whole that was more than the sum of its parts—anticipating, in part at least, the ideas of the present day Gestalt psychologists. Organic chemistry illustrates the immense variety of manifold combinations possible from a limited number of elements. The student of political affairs may well keep in mind the complexities of his problems when asked for a simple solution.

The interaction of complex, and often conflicting, forces has many applications. More than fifty years ago, Bagehot noted as the underlying conditions of social progress the opposing principles of custom and novelty, of stability and change.⁶ The same combination may be seen in the factors of heredity and variations which form the basis of biological evolution, in the economic doctrine of the equilibrium of supply and demand, and, as shown by Professor Dewey, in the elements of habit and impulse in the development of human character and conduct. A few years ago, the president of the American Historical Association named as the first two of the general laws of history the law of continuity and the law of mutability.⁷

More general recognition of this paradox in the field of political discussion might open the way to a reconciliation of

⁶ "Politics and Science," 18 *Scientific Monthly* (Jan., 1924).

⁷ *American Historical Review* (Jan., 1924).

opposing forces. Bryce's analysis of the opposing claims of liberty and law should temper the extreme advocates of freedom and of law enforcement. Early in the century, Professor Dicey noted the dilemma in the problem of liberty of combination. More recently, President Hadley has called attention to the inherent conflict between the ideals of liberty and equality;⁸ while Professor Dunning's presidential address traced the long rivalry between these principles in the field of international relations. The trend of political developments in the present century may perhaps be summarized as a combination of despotism and democracy.

Without accepting the extreme views as to the economic interpretation of history and politics, economic principles and considerations have important applications not always recognized. The thesis of Mr. Kales' book on *Unpopular Government*, that the long list of elective officials and numerous elections in this country result in less effective popular control of government, indicates a failure to appreciate the political law of diminishing returns.

On the other hand, the principle of the division of labor has been applied to government in the political doctrine of separation of powers, and extended even beyond that doctrine in the multiplication of governmental agencies; but without a coordinating agency, only inadequately furnished by our present political parties.⁹ The recent tendency to displace the two-party system by economic blocs has been criticized as a type of collective bargaining;¹⁰ but the two-party system itself may be considered as a more comprehensive process of collective bargaining.

Machine methods and large-scale production have been applied to politics, not only in the conduct of election campaigns, but in developing a governmental structure which yields quantity production of legislation. But it can hardly be said that

⁸ A. T. Hadley, *The Conflict between Liberty and Equality* (1925).

⁹ "Separation of Powers," 21 *Michigan Law Review*, Feb., 1923.

¹⁰ A. T. Hadley, *Economic Problems of Democracy* (1923), pp. 79 ff.

as yet satisfactory standardized models have been established, while the advantages of highly skilled craftsmen have been lost.

Economic considerations may also throw light on the trend toward the concentration of political power, and the perennial problem of centralization and decentralization. This tendency may be noted in several directions, often discussed without recognizing their interrelation. The supporters of local home rule against state control often fail to see that the growth of cities and the expansion of municipal functions are also important examples of enlarging spheres of public action, which is gaining ground in the movement for regional planning and regional government. The notable increase in the activities of the national government, and the more recent developments in international organization, are parts of the same general tendency. While in all governmental systems, the increase of executive authority is another phase of the same movement.¹¹

At the beginning of this century, Professor Dicey called attention to the change in the direction of legislative policy in England from the era of Benthamite individualism during the middle period of the nineteenth century to what he called collectivism during the last third of that century.¹² He explained this change of direction by a shift in public opinion on social problems, but noted also its harmony with the development of large-scale and corporate action in the field of commerce. Other economic factors affecting the situation were the applications of steam power to large-scale manufacturing industry, and the development of rapid communication by telegraph and telephone. These changes in the scope and organization of economic activities account in large part for the increased activities of national governments in international affairs, and in the United States, in the field of interstate commerce, and at same time have been closely related to the stu-

¹¹ "Administrative Legislation," *Michigan Law Review*, Jan., 1920; C. T. Carr, *Delegated Legislation* (1921); Lord Hewart, *The New Despotism* (1929).

¹² A. V. Dicey, *Law and Public Opinion in England* (1905).

pendous development of large urban communities and their special problems.

The twentieth century has seen steam power supplemented by hydro-electric power; steamboats and railroads by automobiles and aëroplanes; and telephone and telegraph by the moving and talking pictures and the radio. The old areas of social and economic activities have been enormously expanded; and the large-scale corporation form of management has been extended to all forms of business life, on a steadily expanding scale. A recent French writer has styled American business methods "the high water mark of super-collectivism."¹³ But the same tendencies may be seen in other countries toward the organization of economic and social affairs on a national and international basis.

Political centralization is, then, but one aspect of a general movement in all fields of human action.¹⁴ One factor affecting its development, especially in the United States, perhaps even more in the future than in the past, has hardly been realized as yet. The national income tax, with its accepted principles of progressive rates and centralized administration, gives to the central government vastly greater financial resources than those of the states and local governments, and thus provides the means for a still greater expansion of national centralization, of which flood control and farm relief are the latest illustrations.

Another factor which in some respects retards the movement toward political adjustment, and in others forces it into larger units than would otherwise be necessary, is the rigid character of our political and administrative areas. With our present state boundaries, many problems of interstate commerce must be handled by the national government which could be dealt with by state governments if the country could be regrouped into a smaller number of larger states. County

¹³ A. Siegfried, *America Comes of Age*.

¹⁴ *Centralization of Administration in New York State*. Columbia University Studies, vol. 9 (1898), ch. 6.

areas established in the days of mud roads and ox-carts, and difficult to change in most states, are too small for an age of motor cars and concrete highways; and functions which might be performed by larger counties must now be carried on by the states, by private corporations, or not at all. City boundaries are subject to change, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to expand our larger cities to include the whole of the rapidly growing urban regions. There is need for a more thorough appreciation of the fact that governmental areas require a territorial as well as a jurisdictional field of action adapted to the social and economic conditions of the times.

It may be possible in time to secure a more satisfactory arrangement of local areas. In the meantime, there is a notable development of special districts and special authorities, which serve to meet emergency conditions in some fashion, but add to the complexities and difficulties of local government.

In the larger field, any readjustment of state lines seems as yet a distant prospect. Some beginnings have been made in the coöperation of neighboring states on projects of common interest; and this process may well be encouraged. There have also been some steps taken by the national government in the direction of administrative decentralization, which might be further developed as a counterpoise to the growing legislative centralization. State officials could be more largely used in the administration of national laws, and the policy of grants-in-aid applied to secure more active coöperation between state and national officials. Various agencies of the national government have found it convenient to divide the country into a limited number of large sectional areas, as the ten judicial circuits, the transportation districts of the Interstate Commerce Commission, the federal reserve bank districts, and the federal land bank districts. But as yet these districts have been formed on distinct lines for each purpose. May it not be possible to divide the country into a limited number of such districts for several purposes; and for the national government to establish in such districts advisory councils,

chosen on functional lines, which might assist the administrative officials? By such means a better equilibrium might be secured between the forces of centralization and decentralization.

But the balance will not be a permanent status, nor even like the swing of a pendulum, alternating in equal movements from a fixed center. The variations of political and social forces have more resemblance to the flow and ebb of the tides, where the normal daily rise and fall is surpassed each month, and still more at the equinoctial periods; while the record of centuries may show a continuing advance or recession. Or again, they have been compared to a spiral, where each return of a cycle is in a different plane—but whether higher or lower will depend on the viewpoint of the observer.

An important field of work for the members of this Association is the investigation of such tendencies and problems. This calls for intensive inquiry into the facts of the situation, with the impartial attitude of the physical scientist. It also calls for critical analysis of the data, and for insight and imagination to determine the factors that explain the results. This will involve the presentation of hypotheses and theories to be tested and accepted only so far as they satisfy the conditions.

As to the final outcome of political development, we may indulge in speculations for the distant future with as much, and no more, certainty than the physical and biological scientists. If, like Henry Adams, we accept the second law of thermodynamics, we will follow the astronomers, who looking backward and forward for millions of millions of years, can find no beginning, and at last the ultimate annihilation of energy,¹⁵ and will agree with Spengler as to the permanent decline of western civilization. But we may also find a more hopeful view in Millikan's theory of cosmic rays, as evidence of a continual creation of energy by the formation of atoms, or in the biological doctrine of progressive evolution, in the light of Bergson's philosophy of creative evolution.

¹⁵ James Jeans, *The Universe Around Us* (1929).