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## DEMOCRACY IN TRANSITION\*

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### I

Any civilization may be reduced to two factors, a system of institutions and a system of ideas. By institutions we merely mean collective behavior patterns, the ways in which a community carries on the innumerable activities of social life. The church, the market, the family, the learned society, the trade union, the university, are examples of institutions. We often attribute a personality to such behavior patterns, clothe them with the attributes of a personal will, mind, and purpose; but such attribution is sheer fiction, the product of a purely imaginative process. Institutions are merely behavior patterns—they are nothing else. Government is an institution or a set of institutions. Society achieves certain results through collective political action. The means that it uses are the behavior patterns which we call courts, legislative bodies, commissions, electorates, administration. We idealize these institutions collectively and personify them in the State. But this idealization is pure fancy. The State as a juristic or ideal person is the veriest fiction. It is real only as a collective name for governmental institutions.

A civilization is, however, something more than a complex of institutions; it always embodies a system of ideas, an ideology. Whether such ideologies have clearly come into the consciousness of the members of a community, whether they are only dimly and vaguely apprehended, whether they remain quite completely within the field of the sub-conscious, they constitute the counterpart, the reflex, the reciprocal, of the system of institutions. Institutions and ideologies are the warp and woof of the fabric of history.

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A study of either by itself is incomplete and misleading. Ideologies afford the explanation of institutions. Institutions give content and actuality to ideologies. Civilizations rise and fall, are transformed and reconstituted, but in every healthy and vigorous civilization the relationship between the institutional and the ideological factors is intimate and meaningful. Each is both cause and effect of the other. Sometimes the one, sometimes the other, appears to possess priority in the process of change and social evolution.

It is the primary function of ideologies to afford a scheme of values, a *Weltanschauung*, a criterion by which the rightness or wrongness, the goodness or badness, the utility or futility, of institutions may be judged. Ideologies embody fundamentally ethical norms, which serve as guides, determinants, and motivation of social conduct. As such, they rest ultimately upon faith. They are accepted without demonstration; they constitute the final and absolute postulates of life.

Some dominant idea which orders and controls an entire ideological system, which gives final meaning and purpose to the maze of institutional forms, and thus characterizes the entire social order, can usually be discovered in any great civilization. Thus the idea of the city state was the controlling concept of ancient Greece. Empire was the motivating idea of imperial Rome. The Middle Ages were the age of religious faith. The idea of the national state was the dominant idea of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and early seventeenth centuries. The later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the age of science, when science assumed to be the final end and goal of life. Toward the close of the eighteenth century, men turned their faces toward the idea of democracy as providing the scheme of ultimate values for life. These various dominant ideas have been, for the various civilizations which they inspired, teleological. They have not been conceived as instrumental, or as means to other ends. They have been accepted as ends in themselves. They have been clothed with the garb of finality. And as such, they have aroused in the masses of men an emotional response which has translated them beyond the limits of critical skepticism. As the supreme values of life, they have invoked a devotion that brooks no argument, that admits no exception, that entertains no doubt. They possess the compelling authority of a religious cult. Men have lived and died for these

ideals. To them have been subordinated every interest, every right of the individual. They justify any extreme of cruelty, any excess of power. Against them no consideration of justice, no claim of morals, no judgment of value can be brought, for they are the final embodiment of justice, morality, and value. They are affected by only one influence, the shifting and changing pattern of institutions. They cannot transcend the force of human experience. If ideologies give meaning and purpose to institutions, if they exercise at times controlling influence in the development of institutions, they are themselves subject to modification and change from the institutional impact. The correspondence between ideologies and institutions is never exact. At times there may be an institutional, at times an ideological, lag.

Social revolutions are the mutation points in the evolutionary process, when institutional change has progressed so far that the old ideals no longer command general allegiance. Men's faith is undermined, doubts arise; the vision which has served to give meaning and purpose to life is dimmed; and "where there is no vision the people perish," or, according to the presumably more accurate rendering of the ancient scriptural passage, "where there is no vision the people break loose." Eventually new ideas emerge, they crystallize into systematic ideologies, they embody new schemes of value, they provide new orientations. The institutional pattern which had advanced beyond the point of vital correspondence with the old ideology now lags behind the new system of ideas. It must be brought into closer relationship. A rapid transformation of institutions takes place under the impelling force of the new dominant idea. This has been the course of social evolution in the past. We must expect the same process to operate in the future.

## II

For more than a hundred and fifty years, the western world has lived under the spell of the democratic idea. To the men of the mid-eighteenth century it came as a glorious vision, promising a new heaven and a new earth. Democracies there had been in the past, but they were only institutional patterns. For the Greeks, democracy was merely a form of government to be compared and weighed, as such, against aristocracy and monarchy with reference to its value and usefulness in achieving the ideal of the city state. It was instrumental, not teleological, and Aristotle's judgment

that the best form of government was polity, in which some element of each of the three primary forms existed, indicates that for him the question remained on the plane of relative values. But with the French doctrinaires of the eighteenth century, with the American revolutionists and with the English radicals, democracy became the end and goal of human existence.

This ideology of political democracy was one aspect of a new orientation; the other aspect was economic individualism. It is no mere coincidence that the Declaration of Independence and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* appeared in the same year. Political democracy and economic individualism were products of the same intellectual and historical forces. They both represented revolt against the established order. They were both nourished in the same genial eighteenth-century climate of ideas. They both rested upon similar or identical fundamental postulates. The one posited a rational "economic man," who always bought in the cheapest market and sold in the dearest, and who, pursuing his enlightened self-interest, could be trusted, through the automatic process of natural law, to achieve the greatest possible good for the community. The other posited a rational "political man," who, likewise pursuing his enlightened self-interest, and also under the beneficent control of natural law, would, through the instrumentality of majority rule, achieve the greatest possible collective welfare. These two ideologies were not merely concurrent, they were closely interrelated. Indeed, they were merely two aspects of one fundamental idea. Economic individualism has been thoroughly discredited in recent years; its theoretical assumptions have crumbled under contemporary economic criticism. It is time that we should apply the same critical analysis to the doctrine of political democracy.

The ideals of political democracy and economic individualism have constituted the national faith of the American people from the time of Jefferson to our own day. They have embodied the supreme values of life. Democracy has been the dominant idea, and *laissez faire* has been accepted as its corollary. But the concept of democracy has also gathered to itself a wide array of ancillary doctrines quite outside the field of political or economic thought, doctrines of social equality, of educational philosophy, of religious practice, of ethical conduct. The result, in the generality and multiplicity of its meanings, is as good an example of a stereo-

type as can be discovered. These various meanings of the term "democracy" have contributed to its glorification in the measure that they have blurred and dimmed the sharpness of its definition. They have, however, all derived from the original sense of the term, which was clearly and exclusively political. It is to this original sense that we, as political scientists, must return. And it is in this sense that the democratic ideal must be critically examined.

The classic formulation of the democratic doctrine is found in the immortal words of Thomas Jefferson:

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, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

This passage embodies the entire ideology of political democracy. Either explicitly or implicitly, it includes the various particular ideas that constitute the democratic ideal. There is the assumption of a rational world, a world in which each individual pursuing his own enlightened self-interest may be trusted to reach rational conclusions which serve as guides to his conduct. As the Swiss philosopher, Amiel, has said, "Democracy rests on the fiction that the majority has not only force but reason on its side, and possesses the wisdom necessary for action." There is also the concept of natural law and its corollary (explicitly stated) of natural rights—not a "natural law with variable content," but a absolute and rigid natural law and a definitely determinable and unchanging body of natural rights. There is the doctrine of human equality, not interpreted in the sense that all men are equal in the sight of God, or that every man should have an equal opportunity to the fullest self-realization, but in terms of an actual present equality of capacity to share in the basic process of government. There is the express assertion of the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These rights must be interpreted against the background of the orthodox ideology of the national state of the eighteenth century, and the mounting protest against

its outworn scheme of values. The Declaration implies a definite doctrine of individualism, a transference of ultimate values from the state to the individual. Liberty must be interpreted in the narrow and negative sense of mere freedom from restraint—the sense employed by John Stuart Mill—not in the positive sense given the term by T. H. Green. But it certainly includes the specific rights of freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of religion, and the several rights which under English law protect the individual accused of any crime and which secure to him a fair and impartial trial. The right to the pursuit of happiness embodies the hedonistic and individualistic philosophy of Hume later to be elaborated in Bentham's Utilitarianism.

The Declaration further sets forth the theories of social contract, of popular sovereignty, and of the right of revolution. It implies the doctrine of majority rule, and of the limitation of government to the narrowest police functions. The doctrine of universal suffrage is a fair conclusion, if not a corollary, from other principles stated or implied in Jefferson's pronouncement. On analysis, the democratic ideal is seen to incorporate a considerable range of ideas, most of which would be seriously questioned or modified, if not definitely discarded, by students of political science today, and would, indeed, make little appeal to the mass of American citizens; but some of which represent the most precious values won through a thousand years of political and social conflict.

The central doctrine in this democratic ideology is that of popular sovereignty, the theory that government rests upon "the consent of the governed." Just what did this mean to the democrats of the eighteenth century? Just what does it mean today? It was undoubtedly a reaction against the prevailing theory of monarchical sovereignty, and as such performed a useful purpose in achieving a new orientation. But the idea that government springs from and is dependent upon the will of the people cannot withstand the analysis of modern criticism. Who are "the people" who are assumed to constitute the ultimate source of political authority? Are they the entire mass of the population of a community? Or are they to be identified with the legally constituted electorate?

If the first be the accepted view, the "people" are a legally indeterminate and amorphous body, and the *volonte generale* is

equivalent to public opinion, subject to all the influences of pressure groups and propaganda. We have learned much since the Age of Reason regarding the phenomena of social psychology. Graham Wallas, in his *Human Nature and Politics*, and Walter Lippman, in his *Public Opinion* and his *Phantom Public*, have opened a wide field of investigation which is now being actively cultivated by a younger group of political scientists. They have made us fully aware that the "political man" is a myth. Not reason alone, but sentiment, caprice, and passion are large elements in the composition of public opinion. The successful demagogue is frequently the perfect embodiment of democratic leadership. Government by the people is reduced to a system of techniques by which the uninstructed masses may be swayed, controlled, and used in the interest of self-serving politicians. We no longer believe that "the voice of the people is the voice of God."

If, however, we accept the alternative view that the people are equivalent to the electorate, we encounter the difficulty that this body, which is supposed to be above the law, since it is the ultimate source of law as well as government, is in fact determined both as to structure and function by the positive law of the state. The democratic dogma has never been institutionalized in the absolute legal supremacy of the electorate. Did Lincoln mean when he spoke of "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" merely "government of the voters, by the voters, and for the voters?" Are not the continuous changes in the history of the suffrage and in the functions of the electorate, the short-ballot movement, the proposals for proportional representation, the legal requirements for varying majorities to constitute valid action, the party-system itself, abundant proof that the electorate is not and cannot be accepted as the sovereign authority in the state?

The truth is that the concept "people," the central concept in democratic theory, is in the highest degree ambiguous. At times it is used as meaning the entire population of a community, and as such is surrounded with the mythical halo of sovereignty. It is conceived as a transcendental entity and clothed with all the appurtenances of a metaphysical person. At times it means merely the legally constituted body of voters, the electorate. An unconscious transition, not only in popular discussions but even in serious treatises on political science, is often made from the

people as an assumed entity, the source of all political authority, the uncrowned sovereign of modern democracies, to the electorate, which clearly is only one of the organs of government, one of the instrumentalities which well, or passably, or mayhap very badly, performs certain governmental functions. This unconscious transition is in no small degree responsible for the uncritical persistence of the democratic stereotype in the popular mind. A good example of this muddy thinking is found in the presidential campaign of 1912, when Theodore Roosevelt made his appeal on the slogan, "Shall the people rule?" The answer to this question obviously being an affirmative, the platform conclusions were easily drawn that there should be a wide extension of electoral functions in terms of the initiative, the referendum, the recall, and the recall of judicial decisions. The electorate has its rôle to play in modern government. What that rôle is, as well as how the electorate should be constituted, what qualifications of age, residence, education, and interest should be prescribed, are matters of practical expediency to be determined by law in exactly the same fashion as the composition and functions of other organs of government. Is it not evident that the theory of popular sovereignty, the central idea of democratic ideology, cannot stand up under an objective critical analysis and must be frankly abandoned?

But we may approach the problem of democracy as a system of institutions, as well as a system of ideas. Government in the United States has been generally accepted as the most perfect exemplification of democracy. But in its actual practice our government has never been a perfect reflection of democratic theory. Democracy as idea and as institution have never been closely related in fact. One needs only refer to Dr. Beard's conclusive work, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, to recall how mixed were the interests, how various the motivations, that produced our fundamental law. The Constitution did not implement the Declaration of Independence. It reflected the political philosophy of Alexander Hamilton rather than that of Thomas Jefferson. It incorporated definite aristocratic and monarchical elements. The early state constitutions likewise departed widely from democratic doctrine in their limitations upon the suffrage, and in the privileged position which they secured to the wealthy and property-owning class. The institutional patterns lagged far behind the democratic ideology. If the Jeffersonian

and Jacksonian revolutions brought these institutional patterns into closer correspondence with the democratic ideal in certain respects, particularly in the broadening of the suffrage, they eventually produced the spoils system, the domination of political rings and political bosses, the extensive corruption in politics, and finally the emergence of "the invisible government" of big business. The change which the industrial revolution and the development of modern technology have effected in the economic institutional pattern is a twice and thrice told tale. Though not so immediately apparent, these forces have wrought a similar and corresponding change in political institutions. The result is that government by the people, however interpreted, has been reduced to a mere shadow and semblance of its ideological counterpart.

The chasm between theory and practice perceptibly widened during the later decades of the nineteenth century, but the American people retained their faith in the ideal of democracy. This faith was, however, a pathetic example of "the substance of things looked for and the evidence of things not seen." Critics of democracy were indeed not lacking. Carlyle had thundered against it even before the turn of the century. Lecky and Maine had marshalled their arguments to prove its fatuousness and impracticability. Nietzsche had assaulted its basic postulates. These were, however, voices from across the sea. In 1909, however, Henry Adams, scion of the purest stock of New England and offspring of presidents, announced "the degradation of the democratic dogma," but still to no avail. Our nation sublimely maintained its faith. Theodore Roosevelt, as we have seen, invoked the time-honored traditions and shibboleths of democracy in the campaign of 1912 under the slogan, "Shall the people rule," and even as late as the Great War, President Wilson could appeal to the American people "to make the world safe for democracy." The results of the war and the subsequent national experience have, however, made substantial breaches in the citadel of democratic faith. We have been impressed, more than we care to admit, with the practical failure of democratic government in Europe. The spread of fascism and the success of the communist experiment in Russia cannot be ignored. And finally the breakdown of the capitalistic system and the prolonged economic depression have aroused profound doubts in the popular mind regarding the basic tenets of the demo-

cratic ideology. We are considerably disillusioned; we are becoming a nation of political skeptics.

### III

“Where there is no vision, the people break loose.” It behooves us to discover a new vision, a new faith that will give meaning and purpose to life. But any ideal, to make a real appeal to the American people, must not clash too violently with their historical experience or demand too complete a relinquishment of all the specific values which are a part of their social heritage. The ideal of democracy may have to be abandoned, but some of its constituent elements must surely be incorporated in the new faith. Social revolutions always embody much of the régime which they bring to an end. But there must be a new vision, a new faith, a new scheme of values.

Various winds of doctrine blow more or less tempestuously through the thought of the American people today. Communism constitutes the supreme menace to many timid souls. Its apparent success in Russia, its closely-knit organization, the clear cold logic of its economic and political philosophy, the definiteness of its aims and objectives, the ruthless methods that it employs, and its repudiation of all conventional moral restraints give it a driving force which should not be minimized. But it represents such a complete break with American tradition and American ideology that its achieving control in this country must appear quite outside the range of possibility. We ought, however, to recognize certain elements in communist philosophy and practice which must be included in any new system that we may achieve.

Fascism has made much more of an appeal to the American mind. If no general fascist organization has yet appeared in this country, there are many seething evidences of the beginnings of a widespread fascist movement. We have had our experience, not so many years ago, with the Ku Klux Klan. The smouldering embers of that organization may easily be again fanned into flame. We read of the activities of various groups which imitate, in their varicolored uniforms, the black and khaki shirts of Italy and Germany. But perhaps more significant than these is the spreading feeling among large classes of our people that the solution of our social and economic problems demands the appearance of a strong and unfettered leader. It is a matter of grave concern when the people

of the great state of Louisiana surrender themselves completely to a political adventurer. We have had in the past numerous examples of the political boss who dominated the politics of a state. But these have always at least paid lip service to, and respected the forms of, democratic government. In Louisiana, we see a frank denial of democratic ideology and democratic institutions. Dictatorship stalks across the state naked and unashamed, and openly casts its covetous eye upon the White House. The rapid rise of the British fascist movement is evidence that even a long tradition of parliamentary government and democracy is not a complete safeguard against "the man on horseback." If we are to escape fascism in this country, it can only be by virtue of a thorough understanding of its purposes, its ideals, its methods, and the nature of its appeal, and a frank appropriation of many of its elements into the theory and practice of a new and vital orientation.

Socialism, as expressed and interpreted in the vivid, yet benign, personality of Norman Thomas, is no longer viewed as a menace by most American citizens. Too much of what he has for years been predicting has come true; too many of his diatribes against capitalism are now accepted commonplaces. So far as his program of action is concerned, we feel that, while perhaps we shall have to come to his proposal for a radical and immediate transition to a socialized economy, we are not yet ready to abandon the experiment of a reformed, regulated, and restricted capitalistic system.

The ideology of the New Deal is illogical, inconsistent, and turbid. Its program is a mass of undigested and contradictory experiments. No central purpose appears to govern its policy or its course of action. It veers first to the right, then to the left. It embodies in its personnel men of the most divergent views. If there is leadership, it is the leadership of mounting one's horse and dashing off in every direction at once. In all of this, it is truly representative of American public opinion. And yet it secures unprecedented majorities at elections. It commands the support of farmers, workingmen, the white-collared and professional classes, the small business men, the large business men, the great industrialists, the newspapers, and the bankers. But this is in no instance an unqualified or enthusiastic support. There is much criticism.

If we look beneath the surface, however, both with respect to

official policy and administration and with respect to the seething ferment of public sentiment, we can discern certain fairly definite points of coagulation. These may perhaps, constitute the beginnings of the new ideology that we vaguely seek. In general, there is little insistence on the time-worn principles of our traditional faith. There is little mouthing of the old dogmas of democracy. There is an almost complete abandonment of the philosophy of *laissez faire*. Rather, there is the suggestion of new points of view, novel approaches to the problems of life, a fundamentally new scheme of values. But as yet there has certainly developed no definite ideology, no consistent body of principles, no elaborated *Weltanschauung*. Perhaps there may never evolve from these mere beginnings a new philosophy of life. Perhaps we must go through the scourge of a bloody revolution, or wander for a long period in the blind alleys of frustration and despair. We cannot be too hopeful. We are encompassed by many dangers and many difficulties. Deeply entrenched special and vested interests, widely prevalent blind prejudice, rigid and unbending institutional patterns, stand in the way of an intelligent and statesmanlike solution of our problems. That these problems will eventually be solved, and through the emergence of a new system of ideas, there can be no doubt. The question is whether or not we possess the necessary intelligence, and can sufficiently mobilize it, to accomplish the transition in an orderly fashion and without the high price of violent internal revolution or perhaps external war. It is no easy task that the American people and its government face.

Let us examine these embryonic elements in a possible new and dominant ideology. They are sufficiently distinguishable to have acquired, for lack of a better name, the general characterization of "the good life." The nodules of this emerging philosophy of life are discoverable in the increasing assertion, and in some instances in the general acceptance, of various individual rights never before clearly recognized. The right to creative work, to profitable and useful employment (something more than the mere right to a job) may be assigned the *first* place in this new charter of liberties. It has been proclaimed by the President; it is a central principal of national policy. The right to an adequate standard of living, measured by the productive capacity of the nation, and an equitable distribution of the national income, is a *second* basic right. The right of the worker, through collective bargaining with

his fellows, and through other means, to a substantial share in the management of the industry to which he has devoted his labor and his life is a *third* right, hotly contested at the present moment, but apparently certain to be ultimately recognized. A *fourth* basic right is that to security—security against the hazards of unemployment, accident, illness, and old age. Not only is this right coming to be generally recognized, but the prospect of an immediate beginning toward its realization is seen in the legislation to be proposed to Congress and many of the state legislatures in their approaching sessions. The right to the best service that science can provide in the maintenance of health constitutes a *fifth* great right in the new *Magna Carta*. The people's health must not be left to the accident of individual fortune; its preservation must constitute a public obligation and its cost become a charge upon the public revenue. Here the new ideology encounters bitter opposition from the vested interest of the medical practitioners. A *sixth* great right is that to leisure and to its effective use. Under an economy of abundance, a radical reduction in the hours of toil makes possible a corresponding increase of leisure time, and the opportunity for its profitable employment becomes a social obligation. These six great rights certainly constitute something essentially novel in our national philosophy. They entirely escape the limits of the theory of political democracy.

There are other basic rights which have long been recognized as expressions or implications of the democratic doctrine, and which we may confidently expect will find their place, indeed be given even greater emphasis, in the new ideology. The guarantees of individual and personal rights in the first ten amendments to the Federal Constitution, and similar guarantees in the state constitutions, are specific expressions of the right to liberty and, as such, a definite constituent part of the democratic ideal. They did not, however, originate in the eighteenth century. They are the hard-won prize of centuries of political conflict between the English people and the Crown. They were merely absorbed into the democratic doctrine. They must remain a permanent part of our social heritage. The right to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association, freedom of religion, and the several rights which guarantee to every individual accused of a crime the necessary protective procedures and a fair and impartial trial, must not only be fully preserved but strengthened.

Here the new ideology must break sharply with both communism and fascism. Even more necessary under the philosophy of the good life than under that of democracy is the protection which these age-old rights afford.

There is one further right, that of education, which we must consider. This right was not a part of the original theory of democracy, though Jefferson, in his later years, conceived it as an important function of the State. Public education was indeed one of the first great violations of the strict theory of individualism, and as such was condemned by Herbert Spencer. But its rapid development in practice resulted in its incorporation in the democratic ideology, however inconsistent and illogical this may have been. It is a good example of the modification of an ideology by an institution. But the right to education has been viewed generally as ancillary and subordinate to other rights and to other social ends and purposes. It has been considered definitely an instrument, not an end in itself. It has been looked upon as a means to achieving democracy, as training for citizenship, even as a training for the individual to make a living, or at best a training for life. But if we seek to discover the essence of the philosophy of the good life, it is apparent that education becomes a central element, indeed, the central element, and an end in itself. No longer instrumental, but teleological, education occupies the dominant position in the scheme of values. It gives meaning and purpose to life. It affords orientation and direction to all social activities. It is, indeed, the faith and hope on which the new civilization must rest.

Such a conception of education is radically different from that of the past and present. Supported and fostered, not only by government, but by every other social agency, it must constitute the central purpose and goal of the nation. It must become a spiritual ideal, the ideal of unshackling every capacity and faculty of the individual, of completely emancipating the human spirit. Consider what this may mean in the transformation of social effort, in the complete shift in emphasis from material to spiritual values. The democratic ideal was formulated by Jefferson largely in terms of spiritual values, but it was linked from the beginning with a materialistic economic individualism. Perhaps that was inevitable in an age in which man's conquest of nature was thrust upon him as a primal duty. But nature and her illimitable resources have now been subdued and harnessed. We may at last ask ourselves,

To what end? The accumulation of vast wealth cannot indefinitely be the end of life. The Marxian law of economic determinism may have controlled in an economy of scarcity; it cannot apply in an economy of abundance. We must make our fabulous wealth of farm and forge and factory, of mine and river and air, of laboratory, bank, business, and communication system, contribute to the liberation of human life. Education must no longer be viewed as the privilege alone of the child and the youth. It must be extended to include the entire population, and adapted to every individual.

Can we envisage the philosophy of the good life as centrally a philosophy of education, supported by a *Magna Carta* of rights such as we have outlined? If there is a possibility of this new vision becoming the guiding faith of our people, we can accept the confusion, the suffering, and the conflict of these present days as only the birth-pains of a new and better world.

The emerging system of political institutions must conform more or less closely to the new political ideology. It must be designed to realize and effectuate the ideals which constitute the national faith. We may expect, however, that political and economic institutions will be closely related in the social order of the future. The basic principle in the new economic thought is a planned economy. It is possible that this may be achieved largely without the assistance of government, that industry may set its house in order, and through a system of self-regulation and restraints avoid the necessity of rigorous and detailed governmental control. This is a possibility, not a probability. Whatever the form of industrial regulation and control, the plan must be a national one, and as such emanate, at least in its general outlines, from government. And government must, under any circumstances, possess a function of investigation, inspection, and finally enforcement.

Certain major fundamental changes in government seem obviously necessary if the ideal of the good life be the guiding motivation and if the assumption of a planned economy be accepted. We must anticipate a much more highly centralized administrative organization than has ever hitherto been known in this country. Already the President of the United States has gathered to himself unprecedented powers. These have been viewed in general as arising out of, and limited by, the emergency; but they must be indefinitely continued if we are to persist in the ex-

periment of social control over business and industry which has already begun. The character of the presidential office is undergoing radical modification. Not only are there developing numerous administrative agencies which find their origin and support in the office of the President, and which are undertaking functions never before conceived of as legitimate expressions of the constitutional powers vested in the Chief Executive, but in an unprecedented fashion the President is assuming the policy-forming function of government. Not merely through his influence over Congress in securing statutory legislation, but in numerous ways quite outside the scope of formal law, he is setting the pattern and determining the outline of national policy. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the function of Congress is no longer that of a supreme law-making body, and we may well speculate whether the forces at work must not eventually reduce it to the innocuous position of a registering or ratifying instrument with regard to legislation. On the other hand, the possibility exists of a great extension of Congressional influence and power in the direction of investigation, review, inquisition, and the enforcement of responsibility. If this transition appears at all likely, we may raise the question whether the present constitution and form of Congress will not require radical change. Certainly under the new order the bicameral system would seem to have less reason than it has had in the past. With the states gradually being reduced in their independent position, with larger and larger extensions of power being transferred from the states to the federal government, the Senate, as the institution which has in the past specifically embodied the federal idea, may lose its *raison d'être*. A single chamber, possibly chosen on some basis of proportional, or even functional, representation might constitute a better instrument to do the work which seems to lie ahead of Congress.

If, however, the federal government is to be highly centralized and the cherished tradition of a separation between executive and legislative power is to be obliterated, definite and constructive thought must be given to the best possible organization of the central authority with respect to its function of formulating national policy. We cannot tolerate indefinitely the multitude of discordant voices which emerge from Washington, nor can we expect the President himself to constitute the unifying element necessary for the orderly formulation and achievement of national

purpose. The problems are too numerous and too complex. He must retain the authority and responsibility, but an advisory staff agency must become a central feature in the governmental reorganization. A planned economy is something planned, not something accidental, haphazard, or ephemeral. There must be a high degree of permanence in a national plan. Modification there must be, as experience discloses weaknesses or defects. But in its general unity and integrity it must reflect the results of careful and continued scientific research; it must permit experimentation under complete control; and it must be oriented to a basic policy that does not change, since it embodies the national faith. Such a national plan cannot be made the football of party politics; its continuance cannot be made dependent on biennial or quadrennial elections. A national plan involves a permanent planning agency, a general national staff, comparable to the general staff of the United States Army, supported and assisted by a large and thoroughly equipped technical and research organization. Possibly the beginning of such an organization is to be found in the National Resources Board, successor to the National Planning Board, in the Central Statistical Bureau, and in similar agencies.

The Supreme Court will undoubtedly preserve much of its present character, but the philosophy behind its work will be substantially changed. The new jurisprudence has already discovered that its function is not that of accurately classifying cases which come before it in their appropriate conceptual pigeonholes. More and more we are realizing that this great tribunal possesses broad political powers. The court must recognize the dynamic character of our civilization. It may not thwart the inevitable process of change and progress, but it must insure that this change and progress assume an orderly and consistent form, that reasonable respect for traditional values and for the experience of the past operate to modify the impulses for radical reform. The function of the Court will become less that of a formal judicial tribunal and more that of a board of political censors, an agency removed from the swirl of practical politics, unaffected by the pressure of immediate events, and thus in a position to exercise essential controls in the interest of continuity and adequate deliberation.

What the future of state and local government may be in the United States is perhaps a question upon which it would be too venturesome to offer even a guess. The recent suggestion of

Senator Lewis, of the possibility that the states may entirely disappear quite undeservedly called down upon his head the ridicule of the newspapers. If Washington, like a maelstrom, is drawing to itself powers and functions hitherto regarded as clearly within the province of the states, it is likewise true that state power is growing extensively at the expense of local government. The process is definitely one of centralization on every level. The principle of local self-government, an adjunct of the original democratic ideology, is well-nigh shattered by the technological improvements in means of communication, and the increasing complexity and interrelatedness of social and economic life. The possibility of regional administrative areas developing to meet new needs is definitely suggested by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Without attempting any specific outline that reorganization of state and local government may take, we can express the certain opinion that such reorganization must be extensive and fundamental.

One essential question remains: What shall be the place and significance of the electorate in the new political order? If the major thesis of this discussion be admitted, we are passing from an age in which the democratic ideal has held a dominant position into one in which the achievement of the good life becomes the end and purpose of all our social effort and in which education will occupy a central position. The confusion in men's minds between the "people" and the electorate has theoretically made the electorate the foundation upon which government rests. We have observed how far the fact departs from the theory, but the electorate has nevertheless been endowed with such transcendent importance that it has steadily expanded by the broadening of the suffrage, and its functions increased until the ballot has become an impossible instrument for the expression of the voters' judgment and opinion. The dissipation of the democratic doctrine must result in the reduction of the electorate to its proper position as an organ of government, and its subjection to a critical appraisal, with respect to both structure and function. It must lose the halo which has surrounded it, and be judged by the effectiveness with which it performs the work assigned to it. That work must be radically reduced in amount; and it must be greatly simplified in character. Furthermore, the dogma of universal suffrage must give way to a system of educational and other tests which will exclude the

ignorant, the uninformed, and the anti-social elements which hitherto have so frequently controlled elections. We must frankly recognize that government demands the best thought, the highest character, the most unselfish service that is available. We must admit, as did Aristotle, that an aristocratic as well as a democratic element is necessary in government—not an aristocracy of wealth, or class, or privileged position, but an aristocracy of intellect and character. H. G. Wells is right in insisting that “we want the world ruled not by everybody but by a public-minded organization open, with proper safeguards, to everybody.” We can add that such an organization must be immune to the pressure of propaganda and to the seduction of special interests. The implications of such a change in the electorate with respect to the party system are far-reaching. We can definitely question whether any place can be discovered for the party system, in its present form, in the political order of the future.

If this survey of a possible reorganization of government suggests fascism, we have already recognized that there is a large element of fascist doctrine and practice that we must appropriate. But we need not fear dictatorship, so long as we preserve the guarantees of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association, and so long as we make education, untrammelled by propaganda and unfettered by subserviency to any end or purpose, the central goal, the supreme value of our civilization.

#### IV

In a recent issue of the *New York Nation* there appeared an article written by a wealthy and successful industrialist. It is addressed to his confrères, the wealthy and powerful men of industry and business in this country. The author recognizes that the condition in which the nation finds itself is due essentially to the breakdown of the capitalistic system as it has hitherto operated. He believes that the defects in this system, which have caused its breakdown, can be remedied, and his appeal is to business and industrial leaders to recognize these defects, to come to some harmonious agreement as to what should be done, and to re-assume the leadership in the process of social reconstruction and in carrying on our civilization. It is an interesting, enlightened, and significant appeal.

But it was not so much the article as its title that intrigued me.

The title was "Seize the Torch, Men of Means, Seize the Torch." As I pondered this title, my mind ran back over the thousands of years of human history, and even farther back into that pre-history upon which the science of anthropology is now casting some faint light. And as I traversed the story of human evolution I thought I could distinguish a succession of torch-bearers, each called by some great power outside himself to seize the torch from him who had carried it before, as his step faltered and his grip loosened upon the flickering and dying flame which he had borne. And as each new torch-bearer, young and strong, took over the torch, it burst into new life and brilliance, and indeed shed a different and more penetrating light through the surrounding darkness. From torch-bearer to torch-bearer, the eternal and imperative call came, only varied by the successive names of the bearers. And I could hear from time to time the call come to those who had not the strength or will to bear the torch, or were able only to carry it for a short distance, while some other and stronger one carried a brighter torch that shed its light far and wide. And it seemed to me that I could hear each succeeding call to bear the torch. "Seize the torch, men of magic!" "Seize the torch, men of arms!" "Seize the torch, men of God!" "Seize the torch, men of birth!" "Seize the torch, men of art!" "Seize the torch, men of science!" "Seize the torch, men of means!" "Seize the torch, men of toil!" "Seize the torch, men of eloquence!" And as I followed through this long course of torch-bearing and finally arrived at the present world, I saw the runner fail; I saw his grip upon the torch loosen; I saw the torch grow dim. And then I heard the call: "Seize the torch, men of brains!"