

MAN AND THE STATE

A PREFACE TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS*

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THE NATURE OF POLITICAL MAN

Human Need and Human Knowledge. All government has its ultimate foundation in the needs of man. Foremost among these, from the standpoint of political organization, are those needs arising from man's existence as a social being. Living as he does in association with his kind, he has a fundamental interest in the establishment of authority to help him both in reaping the benefits and meeting the dangers of such association. If we would understand the problem of government, we shall do well to keep in mind the social nature of man. A purely architectural appreciation of political institutions, or of alternatives of constitutional design, is indicative of little insight into the problem. The primary fact is that government everywhere is government by men and for men, with the number of direct participants and beneficiaries ranging from the few at the one end of the scale to the many at the other.

In focusing their attention on the social nature of man, students of politics spare themselves some of the embarrassment of groping their way in the darker regions of the abstract. But they do not escape the enigmatic aspects of human behavior. Man, individually, is concrete enough. Moreover, he has generally thought it easy to understand his own nature, to know what was good for himself, to recognize what he wanted; consequently, his needs, too, have a seductive appearance of being at once obvious and concrete. But if politics could really be reduced to equations about people who know their own minds and can judge their own needs, it would be child's play, not the art and science it is. As poets like Aeschylus, Shakespeare, and Goethe knew in-

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tuitively, long before psychiatric verification was possible, man has little basis for claiming that he understands his own personality and his own good. Too often he cannot explain his actions. Too often he is his own worst enemy.

Comprehension and Emotion. Man's capacity for becoming his own worst enemy stems in part from limitations upon his intellectual perception. His place in the social order has given rise, through all the ages of recorded history, to questions that his intellect lacked the power to answer with finality. Of late, moreover, the questions have tended to get tougher. Modern industrial civilization, supported by the twin pillars of science and technology, is certainly not the simplest structure to comprehend. Because scientific and technical knowledge has pushed ahead at so many points and in so many different directions, no human mind can hope to see the total development except in broadest outline; few minds are good enough even to trace all the outline with some assurance. The great body of humanity is guided by crudely simplified versions of what the best minds say they see. It is thus only too easy for man to become sorely confused over ends and means.

Moreover, man hears different voices within himself. The rational ego lives in constant battle with the irrational ego; nor are the two neatly separated. On the contrary, mental processes are tightly intertwined with emotional processes. As everyone knows, when people are swayed by emotions, their ability to think and act rationally is sharply curtailed if not completely suspended. The extreme testimony to this fact is mob action, which can turn mature and ordinarily restrained individuals into hysterical killers. Emotional urges defying self-control have their origin in a great variety of personal factors, especially in those that cause oppressive feelings of insecurity or inadequacy. The triumph of emotion over reason may also result from an equally burdensome awareness of the growing insignificance of the individual in a society of increasingly large-scale organization. Broadly speaking, when conscious achievement of purpose is smothered by obstacles, smoldering frustration often sets off an explosion.

Political Man's Complexity. Although the only truly concrete element in the structure of government, man therefore is not a standard unit in the calculus of politics. Whe-

ther one likes it or not, it is undoubtedly true that no unduly simplified concept of man can long survive in political science. The greatest errors of political theory have had as cause the oversimplification of human nature. Some thinkers have built the entire edifice of their theory of government on the contention that man is essentially evil. Others have reversed this position, insisting that man is essentially good. Whatever the criteria of good or evil, today the psychologist is rare who would tie himself to either alternative.

Discomforting though it may be, the sounder view is at the same time less categorical. Man is both good and bad, both wise and foolish, both courageous and timid, both strong and weak; and, as the primary factor in politics, he transmits to the latter his own problematic nature by showing in his individual conduct all these characteristics in varying degrees. Complicated rather than simple, he is not seldom baffled by his inability to predict his own behavior. It is therefore obvious that the generalizations of political science must be framed in recognition of the quicksand nature of human motivation.¹

Political man has done and will continue to do many strange things. To mention but a few within the range of our immediate experience: He has persistently voiced a preference for as little government as possible, yet has not found it incongruous to exert steady pressure for an expansion of governmental protection and assistance. He has come to admit the appalling risk of an uncontrolled business cycle, yet has been very slow to dismiss his strong mental reservations toward governmental planning to avert this risk. In hours of exaltation, he has seen the glory of popular rule and acknowledged it as a grand venture in cooperation, yet more often he has cursed government as a scheming agent of interference. He has not remained ignorant of the uncounted ways in which the modern service state sustains the national economy, yet his most familiar nightmare has been the vision of a despotic bureaucracy feasting on the fruits of the people's toil like a swarm of locusts. The fact that there is no familiar cartoon figure portraying govern-

1. Two extraordinarily illuminating documents are *THE DIARIES OF FRANK KAFKA, 1910-1913* (Max Brod ed. 1948) and *THE JOURNALS OF ANDRE GIDE, 1914-1927* (Vol. II, Justin O'Brien's trans. 1948). These books are an eloquent record of man's struggle with himself.

ment as a source of benefits or services further illuminates this complicated rather than simple nature of political man.²

Abstract Man's Trickery. A heroic interpretation of history would find most of its raw material in particular personalities. Political science, on the other hand, deals in the main with the behavior of large numbers of people and so must necessarily place great emphasis upon man in general. Man in particular is concrete, but man in general is always abstract. In fact, so much of an abstraction is abstract man that he has never been met, engaged in conversation, or interviewed. He was not born, nor does he die; he lives as an immortal figment of statistics. In him we have a convenient symbol that is supposed to furnish some idea of what most of us are thinking and doing or are likely to think and do next.

In examining abstract man, we are confronting the conformities of social life, which have a tendency to mask individual characteristics and so inevitably fail in many ways to indicate accurately what particular men are actually thinking and doing or are likely to think and do next. Abstract man, therefore, may claim for himself more consideration than he is justly entitled to receive: there is always the question of for precisely how many of us he has a right to speak. Unless we are careful he may trick us by his quantitative pretenses. We must correct his exaggerations. We must watch him closely. We must doubt him often.

POLITICAL MAN AS ORGANIZED MAN

Man under Government. We have seen, then, that to live as a social being is an expression of the nature of man. At bottom, all society is both part and product of man's social nature. In the social organization and in the processes of social life around him, he always meets in some measure his own social self, or, more specifically, he meets the institutional embodiment of the social nature and needs of his kind.

Because man is a social being, he is also a political being, for in seeking a mode of life satisfying to his social nature, he is forced to create a system of authority that will

2. To borrow a point from H. D. LASSWELL, *POLITICS: WHO GETS WHAT, WHEN, HOW* 37 (1936).

provide him with at least the rudimentary elements of law and order. In doing so, however, he also creates a dilemma, and one that he has never been able to solve. It exists in the possibility that any system of authority he sets up may evade his control—that is, the control exerted in common by the great body of men. When that happens, and to the extent to which it happens, political power usually becomes an instrument of exploitation used in the interest of the few to the disadvantage of the many. Social man needs government sorely; but in equal measure he needs to exert enough control over it to keep it in his service and to prevent it from being turned against him. These needs make social man political man.

It is thus evident that political man cannot be thought of as belonging to a functional or occupational category—as does the policeman, the meteorologist, or the businessman. In particular, political man is not one whose paid job it is to handle political affairs. There have always been governmental functionaries—lawmakers, diplomats, soldiers, administrative officials, judges—but these political man likes to denounce as politicians, or bureaucrats, or brass hats. Typically, he suspects the motives of any expert in politics and takes pride in his low opinion of the breed. Political man is political not by occupation, but because he lives under government.

Foundations of Political Organization. Society is formed and constantly reinforced by the social behavior of its members. In the same way, government, as the basic structure of authority within the social order, draws its vitality from the political initiative and response of the great mass of men. Consequently, since government is capable of touching him at any time and in a number of ways, each individual is a political being, at least in a passive sense. In order to be consciously effective as a political being, however, he must accept his part in the political process. As political man, he is called upon to assume the burdens of politically organized man.

In one sense, political man is organized man independent of personal civic effort on his part, by virtue of his status as a compulsory member of any particular nation-state. For the consequences of this status, it does not matter whether he happens to exercise the privileges of a free citizen or

whether he trudges along under the heavy load of duties assigned to a mere subject without effective rights. But in either case his national status is that of organized man, since for all practical purposes he is unable to strip it off.

Compulsion of National Status. Under the auspices of the modern state, the organizational implications of government for the life of everyone have steadily unfolded. At the same time, the condition of the intentionally or unintentionally stateless individual has been made ever more precarious. To a striking degree the state today has become what a philosopher of individualism once decried it as being, "an imposed fate." It is a fate that has engaged millions of common folk, eager to live in peace, in the cataclysmic wars of the twentieth century.

To most of us, the compulsory nature of the organization that goes with nationality is so obvious as to appear completely normal. It is true that if one starts with the premise of personal freedom, the exact opposite—mobility at pleasure—might more appropriately be considered normal. But how is any individual to engineer his escape from the state? Even though he were suited for a solitary existence, he still has only a small chance of remaining undisturbed in whatever backwoods he may retire to. However well-hidden his lair, he is likely to be tracked down by such agents of government as the tax collector, the sanitation officer, the draft board, the census taker, the security investigator, and the fire guard. This annoyance is yet little compared with the virtual impossibility of slipping out from under one sovereignty and quietly assuming allegiance to another. Passports and visas may be withheld in the exercise of discretionary power. Emigration and immigration proceed through barely opened doors and require elaborate certificates and permits, issued or refused by administrative agencies in the light of circumstances.

Conscious Self-Organization. If, on the other hand, the individual sees no reason to shun his community or to flee his government; if he is ready to meet at least his basic civic obligations; if he is even eager for an active part in political life—under these conditions, his first task is one of reflection. He must himself clearly recognize the full significance of his status as politically organized man. This he will be able to do only by seeking an understanding of the

essence of citizenship. Next he must adjust his political behavior to the rules of conduct emanating from such an understanding.³ In no other way can he organize himself for his role as political man. If he does not attain this understanding, if he does not undertake this self-organization, he cannot hope to make himself felt politically. On the contrary, he is likely to dissipate his civic efforts, to despair of his contribution as a member of the community, and to take eventual refuge in the wholly negative attitudes of the uncooperative grumbler.

But although political man is organized in either a passive or an active sense, even his most active political self-expression does not claim him fully. As a rule, he is organized politically only in part, and to varying degrees. Of course, as long as he fails to understand his civic role, he is always only partly organized; on each occasion on which the necessity arises, he has to be talked into filling his place in the ranks or into taking on particular chores.

Interfering Factors. But political man appears only partly organized for still other reasons. Even when he consciously accepts his role in the community, he repeatedly breaks with his organized self—in most instances when irresistibly driven by the irrational forces within himself. Prejudice, fear, hatred, or mere inertia sometimes overwhelm his reason; his emotional response sweeps him along, away from such standards of judgment as he would ordinarily respect in appraising political issues. To this extent, and for so long as such conditions exist, he may be said to disorganize himself as political man. Needless to say, the limits on his insight and his knowledge are bound to have the same effect.

No less important an interfering factor is the circumstance that political man is organized in more than one manner. The primary organization—that from which his status as a national is derived—competes with other organizations for his attention and cooperation. The latter organizations are nearly all inferior in power and size to the basic type provided by the nation-state, but they may have a primary appeal to the minds of their members. Political man thus finds himself torn between the conflicting claims of

3. For an outstanding exposition of this need, see JOHN DEWEY, *THE PUBLIC AND ITS PROBLEMS* (1927, reissued, 1946).

many organizations devoted to special causes and interests. His involvement in these is largely voluntary. He may choose to be a member of a labor union or of an employer association; he may belong to an organized farm group or be tied in with such other special interests as mining, shipping, or food distribution. He may think of himself primarily as a consumer and in consequence give most of his free time to a consumer organization. He may be principally active as a member of a church, a professional organization, or an association for the advancement or care of particular groups of the population.

Such activities may deepen political man's civic sense. All too often, however, they restrict his perspective and weaken his concern with the general interest.⁴

Effect of Personal Interests. Finally, man is a politically organized being in part only precisely because citizenship is not a gainful occupation. He must earn his living elsewhere. His full-time job is in the factory, on the farm, in the office, in the store. As a consequence, his activity as a citizen can be at best only a part-time business.

In addition, there is the matter of personal preference. In some ways, social man likes to be entirely nonpolitical; in some ways, entirely private. He has a family, friends, neighbors, and wider social circles devoted to fun and play or even to enlightenment. There are times when he doesn't care at all for public affairs; when his personal worries have a monopoly on his mind; or when his private affairs run along so splendidly that he is reluctant to do anything but enjoy himself. At such times, his part-time concern as a citizen may reach a completely inactive state.

Variables of Political Behavior. All these variables of motivation, interest, ability, and circumstance give man's political conduct characteristics of great diversity. For the political scientist, therefore, the propriety of generalization comes to depend upon imaginative and sophisticated analysis made simultaneously at many different points, inasmuch as individual governmental institutions as well as the entire

4. For a general introduction to the pattern of multiple allegiances arising from the structure of associations within contemporary society, see C. E. MERRIAM, *THE MAKING OF CITIZENS* (1931). This book provides a broad summary of findings arrived at in a series of studies dealing with training for citizenship in various countries.

political process are subject to many subtle changes that fail to strike the eye at first glance.

For example, although the constitutional allocation of power and the structure of government remain exactly the same, shifts in civic morale may produce a vastly different degree of political unity and public spirit. When large masses of people succumb to apathy or hopelessness, a corresponding change is felt in the pulse of politics. Conversely, when crisis shakes up a nation, the spreading awareness of peril and simultaneous evidence of leadership may combine to arouse political man to vigorous civic action. He may wholeheartedly subordinate his private interests to public needs. He may be eager to contribute his leisure hours to community service. He may even clamor for a chance to offer tangible sacrifices for the common good.⁵

Impact on Political Life. These variables of behavior—especially the fluctuations in the extent to which man makes himself felt as a politically organized being—introduce a considerable element of change into public life, national or local. Not surprisingly, the spirit of civic participation and the operative rhythm of government in the United States, for example, have been quite different at different times. They were of one kind in the gloom of economic disintegration in 1932; of quite another in the early glow of the New Deal in 1933. Again, they were of one kind at the height of the war effort in 1944, but of another in the postwar uncertainties of 1946. Or, to take an example in the municipal sphere: The temper of a local community may be one thing in the stagnant condition of boss rule, but quite another after a successful campaign for the council-manager plan has been undertaken.

On the same grounds, one can establish distinctions in the inner strength of any other country at different points in its history. Such a line of inquiry would go far to explain why France collapsed under Hitler's assault, while England stood up under an equally severe test. The historic fact that England did meet this test, however, says little about her capacity for living through a comparable ordeal some other day. No people is consistent with itself all the time. Each shows

5. Except in the *ILLIAD*, the interplay of motives under conditions of common strain has been depicted nowhere more memorably than in *LEO TOLSTOY'S WAR AND PEACE*.

measurable variations in its vital processes. Political man functions in constantly changing degrees of intensity or indifference.

Self-Organization and Political Theory. In the first and most necessary instance, political man organizes himself by gaining an understanding of his own role in the community. There are of course more formal methods of self-organization. For instance, the citizen registers for voting purposes; works as a member of a political party getting out the vote on election day; enrolls in a nonpartisan campaign to build support for a civic program. But none of these specific activities can mean much unless political man first succeeds in defining in his own mind what government is entitled to demand of him and what he may demand of government.

This matter is one of ideas, not of membership cards. In order to provide a framework within which man can find place both for the structure of authority and himself, such ideas must be capable of linking up with one another to form a working theory of government. Purely as an intellectual edifice, a theory of government has little general appeal. Typically, its architect is a political philosopher, whose blueprints are seldom widely read. But popular versions of his thought may gain sufficient circulation to be acted upon at a strategic moment. All government rests on theories. Even in its most erratic manifestations, political practice bears some relation to precepts of theory. Moreover, most men of practical affairs, though they sometimes like to affirm the opposite view, make a success of what they are doing only because they have a definite mental orientation toward their work—that is, are guided by a theory.

In the market place of public affairs, political ideas have currency mainly in the form of a crude type of shorthand; they are handed about as images, symbols, or slogans. However inadequate intellectually as a substitute for full-bodied ideas, the political images men carry in their heads, the symbols and slogans to which they respond, do exert a controlling influence over their actions. Political conduct is, therefore, in large part a reflection of political ideas. The latter aid man in visualizing the political structure and the political process; in determining his own share in affecting both; and in working out for himself a point of view and a

practical approach toward citizenship. In all these respects, he acts upon ideas about government, fragmentary or comprehensive, simple or elaborate. In organizing himself as a citizen, he relies heavily on those ideas he has learned to accept as basic in any explanation of what the relationship between man and authority ought to be.

IDEAS, INSTITUTIONS, AND REALITIES

Ideas as Institutional Supports. Ideas do not live in a vacuum. They express themselves through institutions. Ideas endow institutions with a purpose; generate an institutional will, as it were; and, by the directive force of this institutional will, govern the general operation of the institution. Ideas equip institutions with defensive armor, keeping intact the institutional rationale; or, conversely, they spearhead the attack of change on institutional purpose. But in all the instances in which they play an active role in relation to the institutional structure, social, economic, or political, ideas have to contend with what man accepts as the given realities of his condition.

Thus, a selective process is at work whose outcome determines the survival of particular ideas. Some ideas may soar to lofty heights but never find a place in man's mind because they fail to tally with the fundamental facts of his experience. Although experience is not stationary, it refers our sense of reality to the familiar and rejects the unfamiliar. It follows that ideas in harmony with a *status quo* usually have wider appeal than ideas running counter to it—unless the *status quo* is disintegrating. For example, a property system based on individual gain will keep itself surrounded by a cluster of ideas arguing the benefits of the system, but will at the same time supply an inhospitable soil for the growth of ideas stressing the collective use of property. Conversely, ideas about personal liberty, even when officially promoted, may never take hold if the government at the same time contradicts its words about individual freedom by its practice.

In brief, a close relationship exists between ideas, institutions, and realities. The relationship is so intimate that it seems foolish to raise the question once asked of the late philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, "What is more im-

portant, ideas or things?" His answer was very much to the point—"Why, I should imagine ideas *about* things." Perhaps one might amplify the answer by giving first place to ideas about things that relate to man's experience.

Ideas as Unified Frame of Reference. It is significant that the most enduring ideas about the place of man under government have been those of comprehensive sweep, of bold vision, of inner coherence. Political ideas likely to impress themselves upon man's mind are ideas integrated in a system, ideas that make sense in relation to one another. The need for system in political theory can probably be best appreciated when one considers the all-pervasive effects of the structure of political authority. Living under this structure is man, who is at once parent, worker, neighbor, and citizen, all in the same frame of ideas. This frame of ideas must show a high degree of unity if it is to serve him adequately.

Political theory may confine itself to an explanation of the organization and uses of power in a particular setting. Or it may set out on the more ambitious undertaking of demonstrating generally the essential features of the best kind of government as the ideal type. In either case, an integrated body of ideas is alone adequate for the purpose. The point of departure, of course, is man—man wanting to be himself individually as well as socially. In order to be himself, he needs safeguards against intrusions on his peace, freedom for his self-development, and justice to prevent abuse. Government, which extends these guaranties to him, is therefore a principal factor in his scheme of values, and consequently becomes part of the ordered universe in which man seeks his own purpose. His concern with a purposeful universe, as it is carried over into politics, leads him to look for a broadly inclusive system of political values.

Ideas as Moral Law. Concern with values is the core of all political theory. The logic of human action centers upon this core. Because man, as a political being, sooner or later learns that he gets nowhere by aimlessly pushing or being pushed about, he seeks a working formula of politics by which to go. Because such a working formula is apt to let him down if it is just a jumbled assortment of unrelated particulars, he gropes for some systematic theory of govern-

ment. But in formulating such a theory, he needs a guide, not only to what is, but also to what ought to be.

Merely to know politics in an empirical way is not sufficient. Any definition of citizenship, for example, implies that there is in general reasonable certainty about what a good citizen should and should not do. In other words, the question of the moral law in politics is broached. In order to answer it, political theory must commit itself on its order of values, on things good and things evil.

In formulating its system of values, political theory is bound to encounter other systems. To begin with the most obvious, there is the system of values put forth by religious faith, usually the most highly developed. But primitive superstition, too, boasts some system of values; and any body of personal ethics autonomously conceived, even that of the agnostic or the atheist, represents a value system. This coexistence of different systems of values raises important questions of interrelation.

Interrelations of Value Systems. Acknowledgment of God's order as the order of the universe reduces any system of political values to a subordinate place. No system of political values, on this basis, could be thought of as departing from the harmony inherent in God's order. On the contrary, political values could be only an elaboration of religious values. Of course, on the premise of compatibility, religion may take a relatively neutral attitude toward the value system of politics; this situation is particularly likely to occur when religion is no longer a strongly effective force in society. But even under such conditions, the air of neutrality could not be maintained if the value order of politics appeared to challenge the religious system of values in any significant respect.

If fundamental breaks occur between the religious and the political system of values, continuous conflict is inevitable. Such conflict would tear into the very heart of man's basic allegiance.⁶ If he follows the voice of religion, he must sharply reject the irreconcilable counterclaims of politics. If

6. The position of a leader of Protestant theology is set forth with great distinction in REINHOLD NIEBUER, *NATURE AND DESTINY OF MAN* (1941); that of an equally outstanding Catholic philosopher in JACQUES MARITAIN, *SCHOLASTICISM AND POLITICS* (Mortimer Adler ed. 1940) and *CHRISTIANITY AND DEMOCRACY* (Anson's trans. 1944).

he takes the opposite side, he will come to turn away either from religion or from those who speak for it. The attitude of the Holy See toward Marxist communism is a clear illustration of the fundamental conflict that may rise between a religious and a political value system.

The same alternative is offered when the place of the value system of religion is taken by one of personal ethics independent of religious faith. But a greater risk is faced by the rebel who, for reasons springing from his personal ethics, defies the prevailing system of political values. He usually must meet the consequences of such defiance without the comfort of institutional support.

Another condition results from the revolutionary or evolutionary ascendancy of systems of political values in periods of declining religious vigor or progressive moral confusion. Such tendencies have long been in evidence. As man's moral vision of a divine order has grown dim, the waning strength of religion has left him either to flounder unsupported or to put his faith in various secular prescriptions. One such prescription is a naïve pseudo-religion of science claiming cultish deference for every scientific finding, a position that is anathema to true science, as leaders of science have pointed out frequently. At another extreme, unchallenged primacy has been claimed for a system of political values consolidated into an all-embracing ideology.

In this last case, political theory in actual fact transforms itself into a secular religion. It will insist upon settling all issues of right or wrong on its own terms. It will present itself as the sole foundation of all morality, arguing that all morality at its source is identical with political morality. Indeed, on this premise, a political ideology may be able to ally itself with a dependent religion, as the relationship between the Kremlin and the Russian Orthodox Church indicates. It is evident that the rank claimed for political theory among the systems of values that influence man's choice is a fundamental factor in distinguishing among different systems of government.

Harmony of Political Values. A political system, then, though presenting itself in a set of institutions, is at bottom an enactment of values and ideas. It is truly a political system in exact proportion to the support it commands from a systematic body of ideas grounded in an order of values.

This does not mean that either the body of ideas or the underlying value system must be original or pure, underived or unmixed. It does mean that both the ideas, however extensively blended, and the values, however heterogeneous by pedigree, must be integrated. They must form, or be susceptible of being considered to form, a harmonious whole.

For example: The value of individual liberty cannot be reconciled with the diametrically opposite value of unconditional obedience demanded in the interest of maximum political strength. Personal freedom can be reconciled, however, with the different value of the general welfare. The value of liberty, in turn, correlates with maxims of political theory. One such maxim is that authority must always be held in check. This maxim cannot, of course, be applied in conjunction with the opposite maxim that the ordained supreme leader is always right. But the maxim that authority must always be kept in check does not conflict with the different maxim that lawful acts of authority warrant compliance. Furthermore, the value of freedom and the maxim of checked authority jointly affect the practical alternatives on the level of institutional arrangements. Both value and maxim jointly sustain a division of authority into separate branches, legislative, executive, and judicial. Both reject as incompatible a structure of authority combining these three powers into one political organ. On the other hand, the institutional arrangement of divided powers may be combined with arrangements for needed cooperation between the different political organs.

Role of Ideology. The interrelated values and maxims of political theory lend a strong weight of justification and propriety to the political institutions they support. Political institutions so supported acquire self-evident merit in the eyes of those who are consciously or unconsciously permeated by those same underlying values and maxims. Simultaneously, however, political theory also provides standards of general accountability for institutional performance. For example, an American newspaper editorial, say, may blast a legislature for giving consideration to an undemocratic measure. Even if practicable in a narrow sense, the measure would still be open to attack as being in conflict with democratic political theory. In the British phrase, such a proposal is something that politically "isn't done." Conversely,

criticism may be aimed at the failure of a governmental agency to do what on grounds of ideology it is under an obligation to do. A constitution, or its integral political institutions, may become lifeless unless constantly animated by its spirit—the ideas that gave it rise and give it meaning.

It is thus only too plain that no political system can afford to be indifferent toward its own ideology. Nor can it safely be casual about emerging challenges, whether these challenges come to the fore in the guise of ideas or of realities. Yet ideologies differ in their methods of meeting such challenges. An ideology that is in effect a secular religion will claim the right to respond with repressive countermeasures. This claim may go so far as to entail a police system of thought control. Another ideology will accept the challenge and gain from it an incentive to increase the effectiveness of institutional performance.

Ideological Deception. Of course, one must not leave out of account man's innate capacity for illusion. Political theory may hand him rose-colored glasses, and he may grow so fond of the pretty picture they present that he forgets the lessons of his drab day-by-day experience.

An ideology may, for example, promote the belief that anyone through just hard work can reach the highest rungs of the social ladder, thus assigning to government a generally passive role. The illusion of unobstructed opportunity is not necessarily harmed by dry statistics to the contrary. Yet there is such a thing as a law of diminishing ideological returns—at least in the longer run.

In the longer run, disparity between the assertion and the reality is likely to cast doubts upon the ideology itself. Advocates of political change have therefore always faced an ugly dilemma. If they boldly conjured up an idealized goal, its inspirational appeal might provide a powerful initial boost, but the discrepancy between it and hard facts would later cause trouble. On the other hand, a sober statement of realistically defined objectives, though more easily attainable in the light of experience, would fail to stir up mass emotion. The art of statesmanship consists in striking the best balance possible between the two.

Adaptation of Ideology. All ideology has its own propaganda, acknowledged or unacknowledged. The basic political values are deliberately taught—in the schools, in the press,

over the radio, in youth organizations, in political parties—by all forms of government. At the same time, such changes as stem from the dynamics of social or economic development have continuously to be accommodated in the given ideological framework. Ability to accomplish such accommodation is perhaps the cardinal test in the survival of an ideology.

This last point brings up the question of who is to function as the caretaker of the ideology. One could think of different possibilities—a designated body, a recognized elite, a formal majority, a continuing consensus freely sought. Once more, in the choice among these alternatives, one is made aware of a sharp distinction between systems of government. Democratic government would reject as incompatible with itself any form of minority control over its ideology. It would hesitate to take too great stock in a formal majority—except in an exceedingly stable one. Democratic government would accomplish ideological adaptation in the gradual consolidation of a popular consensus. In direct contrast, totalitarianism settles such problems by pronouncement of the leader.

THE VALUE OF COMPARISON

This antithesis of approach indicates the advisability of scrutinizing the terrain of politics from as many different vantage points as are accessible, and one of the best vantage points is that gained in comparative study. If, by comparative study, we place side by side different systems of government or, as integral parts of such systems, different institutions that serve the same political purpose, we do much to extend and round out our knowledge of politics. Comparative study of government is nothing new. It had its first boom many centuries ago. Aristotle, considered by many the father of political science, gave the comparative approach a central place in his methodology. Dissatisfied with Plato's freely roaming speculative reasoning, he instructed the students gathered about him in the Lyceum in the discipline of empirical research. This discipline brought forth a substantial collection of case studies dealing with the political organization of individual Greek city-states, exemplified by the surviving *Constitution of Athens*.

Such investigation of comparable institutions and dis-

passionate comparison of findings widened the field of intellectual vision, made established facts more meaningful, encouraged a systematic grouping of all that was known, and so made possible a theory of government subject to the test of observation. Since Aristotle's day these advantages have been sufficiently obvious to commend the comparative method to students of government, not excepting those who were unable or were disinclined to equal Aristotle's scientific zeal. In his *Prince*, Machiavelli bolstered shrewd advice to Italy's statesmen with telling references to the wisdom and folly of rulers in other times and places. Harrington reinforced the tenor of his *Oceana* with evidence drawn from the political practices of various nations, ancient and contemporary. Montesquieu derived some of the most influential ideas in his *Spirit of the Laws*, especially that of the separation of powers, from the comparison of different political systems. Rarely affected by the feuds between different schools of thought, comparative study of government has outlived passing methodological fashions.

Extension of Comparability. When most of the world moves in the same general direction, especially in economic development, comparative study of politics extends its area. An isolated social system may present particular lessons—for example, the tribal way of life of the Hopi Indian could teach metropolitan man much about the avoidance of conflict. But Hopi governance offers few significant parallels to the manner in which the political institutions of a progressively urbanized society function. This society is primarily industrial. The industrial revolution has been a great equalizer of continents and regions; together with the drive for foreign markets, the sweeping advances of a scientific and technological character made during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have fostered the establishment of a world-wide minimum standard of existence. This standard is acknowledged in every part of the globe, if only for the purpose of measuring relative local inadequacies.

Notwithstanding differences in national economic levels, large masses of people in many different countries live in about the same way, share about the same material values, and enjoy about the same basic amenities of life; were it not for the destructions of World War II, these masses would be even larger than they are. Productive resources in most of the world are harnessed in approximately the same technical manner and under similar legal forms. Where the

economy has remained predominantly agrarian, pressure for native industries has been rising: the equalizer continues to be active. In the twentieth century, more human beings go through their day in roughly the same way than at any time since man left the cave.

These uniformities in the general mode of living have been multiplied by wider contact, which, in turn, is the result of the rapid shrinkage of distance. In 1790, it took six wearying days to travel, by stagecoach, from Boston to New York. In less time, the modern traveler, whether or not he gains anything by the rush, can comfortably circle the globe by plane; and we are far from having reached the practical limits of speed in ordinary air transport. When Karl Marx wrote his *Capital*, the prognostications he made had immediate meaning only for a few industrial countries. One century later, the problems of industrial society are written all over the political structure and processes of the modern nation-state.

Common Features of Government. The common impact of these problems becomes evident as soon as one considers some of the most characteristic features of contemporary government. In little more than two generations, all the highly developed countries have witnessed an extraordinary growth in government functions, especially in such critical fields as those of economic regulation, employer-employee relations, and public welfare or social insurance. Progressive extension of governmental responsibility has carried with it a corresponding expansion and increase in the number of administrative agencies. Because governmental machinery for the handling of administrative business has become so much larger, proportionately greater political importance has accrued to the executive branch. The increasing importance of the latter derives essentially from its power of control over administrative operations coupled with its competence for policy coordination: thus can be met the problem of incorporating far-flung regulatory and service operations into coherent programs related to the needs of the economy. To attend to these needs is not usurpation; hence, the recent spread in the relative ascendancy of the executive branch has not ushered in any general decline of legislative control. Rather, legislative determination has been raised to a higher and more consequential plane. Yet it is clear that a common feature of government today is the administrative nature of the quantitative bulk of government.

In the economic sphere, the sensitivity of industrial production to fluctuations in markets and purchasing power has made unemployment a terrifying prospect to large portions of mankind. They therefore yearn for "full employment." This widespread yearning has drawn forth equally widespread governmental commitments to counter depressions through appropriate action based on constant and continuing economic diagnosis.

Still larger portions of mankind have faced, more than once during their lives, the horror of war. Their anxious quest for security against aggression has translated itself not only into heavy defense budgets but also into public obligations of military training and service, as well as into a noteworthy range of governmental restraints upon private action for security reasons.

Finally, government everywhere has come to take a much greater interest in both the formation and the expression of public opinion, a development that has led to differing degrees of governmental influence in the operation of various means of communication, such as broadcasting. It has also led to technical arrangements by which chief executives and other political leaders are enabled to reach national audiences of record size. Another result has been a proliferation of informational services rendered by government departments. Within proper restraining limits, government comes closer to the people by playing an active rather than a passive part in the crystallization of public opinion. In its extreme form, such activity has encompassed an integrated system of propaganda directed by political officers.

Comparison and Imitation. Perhaps it should be emphasized that comparative study of politics has only one legitimate goal—to advance knowledge. Its ability to attain this goal is due to the fact that what is treated as commonplace or is habitually confined to a particular meaning in the governmental experience of one country usually has a deeper significance when looked at afresh against the background of political institutions in other countries. Such fresh examination in a wider frame of reference is always a broadening influence. It guards against the errors of near-sightedness. It extends the range of observation by adding another dimension, as it were.⁷

7. This point is well illustrated by such a broadly conceived comparative treatise as that of C. J. FRIEDRICH, *CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRACY* (1941).

Comparative analysis, on the other hand, does not have as its guiding principle the assumption that there is one best way of government, which when discovered, is to be adopted everywhere. Advocates of wholesale imitation would find little comfort in comparative study, for one point it makes plain is the limited practicability of transferring the fruits of political ingenuity from one country to another. But one country's example of success or failure may provide others with welcome experience or specific pointers to be applied discriminately to their own affairs. These are the very grounds on which Mr. Justice Brandeis rested his praise of the experimental potentialities of federalism.

Current Benefits of Comparative Analysis. Moreover, in an era in which the decisive influence of the United States in world affairs has become a momentous fact, it should be easy for Americans to see the larger practical value of comparative politics. It is now a matter of grave importance that we raise our eyes from the domestic scene long enough to learn as much as we can about the political characteristics and tendencies of other countries. Only such knowledge can bring into being the kind of informed public opinion that is needed to make possible and to maintain a wisely conceived American foreign policy.

Most of the factors that exert a controlling influence on international affairs are factors arising from national need or national self-interest, real or imagined. The individual's response to either is affected by the political ways and governmental traditions of his nation. In turn, however, the individual affects these national ways and traditions. Here, once more, we come face to face with vast throngs of human beings—contented, miserable, boastful, desperate, callous, frenzied. They crowd the stage of politics, milling about legislatures, executive offices, and courts of law. The more prominence comparative study succeeds in giving to the human element, the less danger there is that it will end up in a meaningless comparison of empty form and ossified ritual. Like all social sciences, political science can be truly scientific only to the degree in which it contributes to creation of a science of *man*.⁸

8. An indication of the extent to which this point of view is becoming common may be found in some of the more recent general treatments of political science, especially C. E. MERRIAM, *SYSTEMATIC POLITICS* (1945).