TEXTBOOKS IN AMERICAN POLITICAL THEORY*

A History of American Political Thought. By A. J. Beitzinger. (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1972). Pp. xii, 628. $10.95.

In Quest of Freedom.: American Political Thought and Practice. By Alpheus Thomas Mason and Richard H. Leach. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972). Second Edition. Pp. xiii, 418. $11.95.

The central feature of the two leading textbooks in American political theory is that they fall short of what should be their overarching purpose: to cultivate a reflective understanding of politics in America. The goal should be to provide alternative conceptual models, and if possible one conceptual model, grounded in those opinions and events of the past which encourage both the teacher and the student to focus on what makes the American polity tick.

To be sure, this shortcoming is in large part due to the nature of the medium and the character of current education. The comprehensive secondary textbook has replaced the selective original text in contemporary American education. With this substitution has come an education which emphasizes' access to factual information in a "wholly objective way" rather than an education which emphasizes a rigorous treatment and interpretation of alternative opinions concerning what is fitting and proper.

The notion that a textbook can be, or even should be, "wholly objective," to borrow David Fellman's assessment of Professor A. J. Beitzinger's work in the Editor's Introduction to the book, is at best an illusion and at worst a delusion. Neither Beitzinger nor Professors Mason and Leach are "wholly objective" in their selection of material and in their evaluation of the material covered. This is to be expected. The test should be whether or not their coverage cultivates a reflective understanding of politics in America.

That the all-purpose, objective textbook should play such a prominent part in an educational system which, in turn, values efficiency and ultility over excellence and curiosity is itself an interesting

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commentary on the nature of the political regime in which we live. Commercial profit and academic quality do not necessarily go hand in hand.

It is not my intention to trivialize or to minimize the difficulties which must be overcome by textbook writers. The writers of textbooks in American political theory, however, have the opportunity to modify what is at best an inadequate mode of education. They will, of course, still have to satisfy the diverse interests of publishers, teachers, and students in translating their ideas into practice. And certain topics will have to be covered because the producers and the consumers of textbooks demand that they be covered. But unlike other fields in political science, the field of American political theory is by nature concerned with an investigation of the whole rather than with the articulation of a part of the whole. Professor Beitzinger and Professors Mason and Leach recognize that American political theory is grounded in philosophy and history rather than the how and now. But they do not effectively translate this recognition into a strong analytical framework for understanding what is permanent and what is transitory in American politics. As a consequence the possibilities for even a partially integrated education offered by American political theory are not fully utilized.

The way to go with the architechtonic grain is *not* to produce a dull and lengthy encyclopedic description of political thought in America from the Puritans to the present within an unexamined pre-arranged developmental framework as do Beitzinger and Mason-Leach. We have all had sufficient experience with the educational process, both as students and as teachers, to realize that it does not take very long for students to forget most of the detailed information they were once supposed to know. Both textbooks, particularly the Beitzinger text, are long on detail and short on focus. They do not provide the reader with a way of discriminating between what is vital and what is not vital.

The encyclopedic format, in short, fails to engage students in an exploration of alternative answers to fundamental moral and political questions. The writer has an obligation to guide the teacher and the student to what is critical and what is peripheral and to offer an opinion as to why the writer thinks this way. It is no small accomplishment to have provided a map by means of which American politics can be better understood. Unfortunately neither of the two textbooks provides a map which truly illuminates the American way. The writer of an American political theory textbook should be selec-

tive and rigorous in analysis. The criterion for selection should be in terms of the contribution of the selection to a reflective understanding of politics in America. Are there architechtonic pieces the careful consideration of which illuminates why and how Americans do what they do politically? Is there an American way of politics which is different from the politics of other countries? To what can the differences be attributed? Can we tell when the American political system is in crisis? These are the kinds of questions which teachers and students should be encouraged to think about. These texts do not encourage such questions. For example, they were written during the critical Vietnam period and prior to the Watergate crisis but the reader is not provided with a perspective for understanding these crises.

One of the most important reasons for studying American political theory is to see whether or not the questions posed in former times are similar to the questions which we today are posing and whether or not the alternative solutions suggested in the past are still appropriate for today. Why is a study of the past important? Because we want to learn whether or not the old questions are also the right questions and the old answers are also the right answers. But the developmental framework implicitly suggests that the opinions expressed in the past are of limited value for understanding our current situation and for guiding us through whatever difficulties we may be facing as a nation. Such a view of the past may be a true and valuable insight into how American politics works or should work. But such a view should be the result of an analysis and evaluation of American politics rather than forming an undergirding assumption on which the text is based. Contrary to the highest intentions of our authors the developmental framework tends to reduce the opinions and events of the past to merely historical opinions and events. Beitzinger's "conviction that American political thought is best studied and understood in terms of its historical development" is simply not good enough (p. ix).

Mason-Leach are better than Beitzinger as far as design and focus are concerned. They make the persuasive argument that political thought in America is closely related to political events. Thus the most important political thinking has been done by statesmen in response to particular crises. To understand American politics, therefore, is to understand the debates which have occurred during important crises. In their preface they even go so far as to assert that a universal question runs through the several events:

> Lincoln caught the central theme of American political conflict when he asked, "Must a government of necessity be too strong for the liberties of its people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?" (p. xii.)

Had Mason-Leach given serious treatment to this central theme in the critical periods of American politics they would have provided the reader with a very good architechtonic model. Unfortunately they fall short of their high intentions. Lincoln's central theme is not the central theme of the Mason-Leach text. Their theme is human rights versus property rights, freedom versus authoritarianism, democracy versus totalitarianism, progressivism versus retrogression, the good guys versus the bad guys. In short, contemporary liberalism versus contemporary conservatism. The Mason-Leach story of America is the story of "how each generation made its own peculiar contribution in the unending quest for freedom" (p. xii). No intergenerational evaluation is made and each generation receives pretty much equal treatment. Mason-Leach do not really study the opinions and the events of the past. Rather they touch down gently at certain opportune points, pick up information, and move swiftly on their optimistic, progressive, yet tortuous, journey.

The criti'cism here is not that their view is biased towards what might loosely be called a liberal interpretation of politics in America. Rather the criticism is that what could be a serious and scholarly study on what kinds of things could tear the American political community apart and what should be done about them is trivialized and socialized. The study of American political theory is seen as an "endless adventure" which above all else reminds us of the "unrelenting demands of democratic citizenship" (p. xii). Mason-Leach are as interested in promoting "good citizenship" as they are interested in promoting "good scholarship."

Beitzinger too recognizes the strong relationship between political thought and particular events in America. Instead of using this relationship as a focus for his book, however, Beitzinger uses this relationship apparently to justify a lack of focus. In other words, because American political thought "has been, in good part, unsystematic and responsive to particular events and problems" the book "is concerned with all serious and important reflections and observations regarding political man and government" (p. ix). This approach results in a book which is unwieldy and a book which fails to demonstrate and develop the intricate relationship between thought and action in America.

Whatever focus the book does possess is related to two "personal views" which he expresses in the Preface. These two views are that "there is an objective order of truth and morality which is discernible by man, and, as such, both limits and guides him" and that with respect to the practice of politics "the cultivation of prudential judgment is paramount, a virtue which cannot be acquired apart from experience" (p. ix). Although these personal views about the nature of theory and practice influence Beitzinger's selection and evaluation of material they are not used as an integrative model for illuminating the character of American politics. Beitzinger's greatest strength is his willingness and ability to handle difficult theoretical questions. He has what Mason-Leach lack-a sound grasp of and a sensitive feel for political philosophy. But Mason-Leach have what Beitzinger lacks-a solid recognition that by studying crises the character of American politics is revealed. The great strength of Mason-Leach is their ability to deal with the concrete and the practical. Beitzinger's treatment of the practical is in terms of his views of prudence. Beitzinger's view of prudence plays an important part in his attempt to educate the contemporary American student. Beitzinger, like Mason-Leach, is very interested in promoting "good citizenship."

I

To treat the subject matter of American political theory in a chronological fashion is not the same as treating the subject matter in a developmental fashion. The former conforms to common sense; the latter needs scholarly justification. Although it is reasonable to give a chronological account, it is more difficult to decide where and how to begin and to end the account. With respect to these questions people differ. A good textbook should explain how people differ and why these differences are important. Unfortunately neither textbook investigates these vital questions. The different opinions about the origin and end are important because they are integrally related to different interpretations about the purpose of the American regime, what constitutes the most important dangers to the future of the regime, and whether or not the regime is in sound health or ill health.

With respect to the question of where to begin the key issue is how much attention should be given to the period prior to 1776-the date which has widespread acceptance as the birth of the nation. Should 1776 be read as a part, albeit an important part, of a long

established philosophic, religious, legal, and political tradition? Or should 1776 be read as blazing new trial in each of these areas? Should 1776 be understood in evolutionary or in revolutionary terms?

Beitzinger devotes over twenty five percent of his book to the period prior to 1776. He gives a very thoughtful treatment to the differences between ancient thought and modern thought. But Beitzinger's method is to describe the range of previous philosophical, legal, and political thought available to the early Americans rather than to place America within one of the two traditions. Does this mean that what is essential to understand about America is that it draws on two previously antagonistic traditions? Has the reconciliation been successful or are there tensions in American politics due to the battle of the two traditions? Was the battle more like a feud than a war? Beitzinger's does not provide an adequate answer. My own personal view is that the battle was more like a war than a feud and that America consciously opted for the modern alternative of avoiding the *summum malum* of misery and poverty rather than aiming for the *summum bonum* of excellence and virtue. To this end, the Founders built the American regime on the assumption that "every man must be supposed to be a knave." The point here, however, is that Beitzinger gives the reader access to the battle between the ancients and the moderns but does not engage them in the battle. The reader is left with the clear impression, however, that the early Americans worked within the framework of a long established tradition.

The principal emphasis, however, is on religious thought in early America which, in turn, is the unique feature of his book. David Fellman, in the Editor's Introduction, describes the unique feature in the following way:

> Recognizing the powerful influence of religion, particularly in the earlier years of American history, the author seeks to give religious thought the attention it must have if we are to understand the essential elements of the country's political thought.

Beitzinger does indeed give a very thorough treatment to every major religious thinker in early America. He does an outstanding job of demonstrating the subtle differences between the various kinds of religious thought. While he clearly shows that religion had a powerful influence in early American life he fails to show why such close attention helps us to understand the essential elements of American political thought. Can the essentials of American political life be

understood as a sort of footnote to the early religious period? Do we have in early America an architechtonic model for understanding the permanent questions and for evaluating political behavior? The criticism here is not that his extensive coverage is superficial but that his serious and detailed coverage doesn't go anywhere.

Beitzinger does not justify the attention which he gives to the early religious thinkers with the argument that these thinkers direct us to the essential questions in American life. Rather the justification is that these thinkers planted the "seeds" for the Declaration of Independence and for American constitutional democratic thought. The pre-1776 coverage is justified, therefore, in terms of its contribution to the main event. In which case this a very long Preface indeed.

Beitzinger concludes his study of the early religious thinkers with the following remarks:

> Given the development of modern science and the growth of commerce with their great impact on the minds of man, it is difficult to say whether Wise, Mayhew, and Chauncey did more than merely reflect the transformation to rationalism. But it can be stated with assurance that after them theology took a back seat to politics as the integrative force in American social life and thought. The lawyer came to the fore to replace the divine; the pulpit gave way to the courtroom, assembly room and platform. (p. 112)

This is a very perceptive description of the fundamentally modern and revolutionary character of the American regime, a character which has remained basically the same since the late eighteenth century. The description is all the more interesting in the light of Beitzinger's extensive treatment of the period prior to 1776. Should America now be understood to be essentially a reaction to a long tradition instead of being a part of a long tradition? Exactly what is the character of the religious influence on American political thought if it took a back seat in the late eighteenth century? We know from his Preface that Beitzinger, personally, thinks a concern for an objective moral order is important. Does the conclusion quoted above imply that America took a turn for the worse in 1776?

What kinds of conceptual models can be generated from this early period which might assist us to understand the character of American politics? Beitzinger fails to develop comprehensive models from the period. One of the more interesting concepts which Beitzinger refers to both. here, and elsewhere, is the Anglo-Saxon myth. Myths and symbols are an important part of the tradition of

each nation. They are looked to for the formation of opinion and for the rationalization of particular positions. A more elaborate treatment of the Anglo-Saxon myth might prove to be of considerable value. Has this myth been transformed through the ages? If so in what way and with what consequences? If not, why not, and with what consequences? The messianic view of purging the rest of the world and the isolationist view of avoiding the rest of the world are certainly two other models which are grounded in this period and which are very valuable for understanding subsequent political thought and practice. Although Beitzinger's coverage of the period prior to 1776 is extensive it is not instructive.

In contrast to Beitzinger, Mason-Leach devote just over ten percent of their book to the period prior to 1776. Although the amount of coverage is probably just about right, the content of the coverage is very simplistic. They are apparently unfamiliar with the important battle between the Ancients and the Moderns and the importance of this battle for understanding American politics. Neither do they give a rigorous account of the various kinds of religious thought in early America. And, unlike Beitzinger, they rely very heavily on secondary commentators for their coverage of America prior to 1776. Mason-Leach do not really relinquish this reliance on secondary sources until they deal with constitutional and social issues. Interestingly Beitzinger's reliance on secondary sources increases as he deals with constitutional and social issues. Mason-Leach's real strength and interest is with constitutional and social issues while Beitzinger's real strength and interest is with theories of human nature and the moral order of the universe.

Mason-Leach discover the "taproots of freedom" in seventeenth century England. The Putney debate of 1647 and John Locke's *Second Treatise* constitute the important building blocks for freedom. But the presence of previous political thought is actually of secondary importance for Mason-Leach's understanding of politics in America. What is important is that "the development of a distinctively American political thought began almost as soon as the first settlers arrived in the New World" (p. 21). Their coverage of early religious thought is in terms of a struggle between libertarian protestantism and authoritarian Protestantism. Happily the good guys carried the day and the tree of liberty began to flower. Unlike Beitzinger, Mason-Leach emphasize the uniqueness of America and the libertarian spirit.

II

America has been fortunate to have had a history of few crises. There have, however, been four clearly recognizable severe crises: the Founding Era (1776-1789), the Civil War, the Great Depression, and the 1960's. The nation debated the most serious questions of political philosophy: what kind of people are we? Where have we come from and where are we heading? Should the established system be overthrown, reformed, or ignored? These periods were critical because of the serious differences of opinion which prevailed over the theory and practice of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution. The great divisions have centered on the meaning of one or more of the following concepts which appear either explicitly or implicitly in the Declaration of Independence or the Preamble to the Constitution: equality, liberty, consent, democracy, union, common defense, domestic tranquility, general welfare, justice, and commercialism. It would not be an exaggeration to say that a reflective study of these four critical periods would reveal the essential characteristics of the American regime. And that after all should be the primary purpose of a textbook in American political theory.

In this regard the Founding Era not only constitutes the origin of the American System but also the architechtonic era of American political history because the main battles in American politics have been fought over the meaning of 1776 and 1787. There are at least four conceptual models which flow naturally out of this period and which go a long way to providing an enlightened view of the whole. In addition to the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble, *Federalist 9,* 10, and 51, as well as several phrases in the Constitution, contain concepts which form political opinion, which legitimize political positions and public policy, and which set the tone of and lay the ground rules for the serious debates which have taken place in the course of American political history.

The distinctive quality of these four models in that they are all grounded in "documents." America is a nation of documents. But not all documents have equal meaning and value. Some are merely descriptive of the time in which they were written and are not meant to be read with an eye to deriving an ultimate teaching. Other documents, however, are understood to have an enduring quality. Americans understand the critical events and the reflective thought of our past through authoritative documents and statements associated

with those documents. And in critical times Americans, unlike any other people, seek the guidance of those who wrote the documents, particularly' the founding documents.

Whether we like it or not our quest for meaning and value is heavily guided by the hand of the Founders. America is unusual in this regard because America is one of the few countries which was created by a conscious act of founding. For theoretical as well as practical purposes the origin of the American track can, therefore, be assumed to begin in 1776. The thinkers, issues, and events prior to 1776 have never really had a central impact on the conduct of American politics. To say that America is in crisis means, in effect, that the principles of 1776 and 1787 are in danger or that these principles or institutions are somehow inappropriate for the contemporary situation.

The vast bulk of American politics subsequent to the Founding Era has been in terms of a defense of, an extension of, or even a reaction to the Founding principles and institutions. Perhaps the single most important lesson to be learned about American politics is the incredible impact which the Founding has had on subsequent generations. If the Founding .period is done properly the rest of American political thought and practice falls into place and it becomes neither necessary nor appropriate to devote considerable time and space to subsequent thought and practice.

The coverage of the Founding Era by both Beitzinger and Mason -Leach is, on the whole, adequate with respect to both the amount and the quality of coverage. Each devotes about twenty five percent of their text to the period and its immediate extension. They each cover the major thinkers-Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, James Wilson and John Marshall-as well as some of the lesser known Federalist and Republican thinkers. They also cover the major events-the Revolution, the Confederation, the Philadelphia Convention, the ratification of the Constitution, the Banking and Funding controversies, the Alien and Sedition Acts, the election of 1800, the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, and the decisions of the Marshall Court-as well as some of the lesser known events. Finally they both cover the main issues-the nature of the union, the character of society, the structure of the new government, the powers of the branches, the mode of representation, the position,of the new nation *vis-a-vis* foreign powers, and the meaning of equality and liberty-as well as some of the lesser known issues. In short, they each give the

reader access to the major thinkers, events, and issues of the Founding Era and its immediate extension. Despite the efforts of our authors to be rigorous and to bring the period alive, their coverage, once again, falls short of encouraging a reflective understanding of politics in America. There is so much that can be done with this period that they simply fail to do.

In the process of their coverage, however, a number of interesting observations are made. We learn from Beitzinger's treatment of the Philadelphia Convention that the office of the American Presidency "represents the greatest of all American contributions to political science" (p. 211). This may indeed be the case, but Beitzinger does not justify why he thinks so highly of the American Presidency. Moreover, there. is very little in his coverage of the ideas and events subsequent to the Founding about the American Presidency. His opinion about the importance of the office could have provided a valuable focus for analyzing and evaluating post World War II thought and practice. So much of the politics of the last thirty years have centered on the nature of the office and the character of the men who have held it. Unfortunately Beitzinger does not develop this theme.

We also learn from Beitzinger that the points of difference between the Anti-Federalists and the Federalists "mainly concerns means and not ends" (p. 214). Now that certainly was not the perspective that those who participated in the debate had. They thought that they were engaged in high or critical politics rather than low or usual politics. That the differences in American politics, on the whole, have been and continue to be "differences of hue" rather than "differences of kind" is of fundamental importance. This is due in large measure to the overwhelming influence of *Federalist 10* on our political thought and practice. But there have been critical differences over ends in American politics, and if the Founding period was not a critical period then can any period in American political history be considered to be critical?

Beitzinger's treatment of John Taylor of Caroline is instructive because it marks the beginning of a decline in Beitzinger's quality of coverage. For the first half of the book, Beitzinger follows the sound principles of serious political philosophy: opinion and thought ought to be treated on their merit rather than simply a reflection and a rationalization of deeper psychological or other motives. But Beitzinger rejects Taylor's thought as an "ideology-the rationalization of the economic interest of a section and the ascend-

ancy therein of the gentleman-planter" (p. 304). Taylor's view that American society is composed of two basic interests, the few and the many, and that the basic battle is over property is dismissed by Beitzinger as unrealistic and simplistic in comparison with "the Madisonian multi-interests and group conflict analysis" (p. 303). That Madison wanted a multiplicity of interests in order to moderate and transform the character of the property battle between the few and the many is lost on Beitzinger when he treats John Taylor. Moreover Beitzinger sees Taylor as imprudent because he was "unable to accommodate the elements of time and change to his thought" (p. 304). Despite Beitzinger's theoretical objections to contemporary behavioral political science, which he expresses with considerable competence, he is not beyond using the standards and assumptions of contemporary science in order to dismiss Taylor. Beitzinger reserves his harshest judgment for those people who do not work within the system.

One of the strongest parts of the Mason-Leach text is their coverage of the Founding Era. They are at their best when describing, analyzing, and evaluating interpretations of the Constitution. This period offers them ample material for description, analysis, and evaluation. Their treatment of the incorporation of the principles of nationalism and federalism in the constitution, for example, is really good. To see that the differences in American politics can and do emerge from a tension within respected documents is a valuable insight into American politics. Their coverage of Hamilton and Marshall is marred only by their strange view of statesmanship. Hamilton and Marshall are deemed to be statesmen not so much because of the quality of their utterances but because their utterances were "ahead of their their time." Their ideas were "vindicated" by history because their ideas became an accepted part of the American mainstream. In establishing them as statesmen, however, Mason-Leach want it both ways. If Hamilton and Marshall were ahead of their time, then John Taylor represents what was mainstream for the time. But Taylor is also seen as "behind the time" which, in turn, is sufficient to dismiss him as a "disruptive influence" in American politics.

Another reason why the coverage of the Founding Era is a strong part of the Mason-Leach text is that this is one of the few times when their people versus property theme takes a back seat to the more illuminating liberty versus energy theme. The reader is surprisingly spared the torture of being faced with a silly version of the model which pits a progressive democratic Declaration against

a reactionary aristocratic Constitution. The tension between liberty and power is used with considerable effectiveness to describe the battle between the Anti-Federalists and Federalists and also the later battle between Jefferson and Taylor on the one hand and Hamilton and Marshall on the other hand. This tension could be used with considerable effectiveness throughout the history of American politics to better understand the conditions under which the nation is in crisis. Perhaps we could say that the nation is in crisis when the tension is great and not in crisis when the tension is small. But Mason-Leach do not permit the tension to step beyond the boundaries of the Founding Era. Their developmental model can't seem to stand unresolved tension. Thus we learn that the "seemingly antagonistic ... philosophies of Hamilton and Jefferson have been fused in the mainstream of American political thought, furnishing both the essence and the enduring strenth or free government." (p. 150). The fusion might be good for their developmental approach, and it might be good for their objective of promoting good citizenship. But the fusion is not necessarily good for a reflective understanding of politics in America.

That the Declaration and the Constitution are in potential, if not actual, conflict has been a prevalent theme in American political thought and practice. Certainly Anti-Federalist and early Republican thought and practice as well the thought and practice surrounding the crises of the 1860's, 1930's, and the 1960's can be interpreted from such a perspective. That the Declaration provided the impulse for social reform and government action and the Constitution the impulse for political constraint and limited government is a major theme in the Mason-Leach coverage of the politics in the first third of the twentieth century. This view of disharmony has also been a major feature of post World War II political science as well as recent American conservative and liberal practice.

But there are some people who argue that the Declaration and the Constitution are in basic harmony. And an examination of this possibility enhances even further the objective of a reflective understanding of American politics. Both Beitzinger and Mason-Leach, for example, operate within a framework which emphasizes the basic harmony between the Declaration and the Constitution in their treatment of the Founding Era. To be sure, each recognizes the possibility of conflict-Beitzinger's possibility is in terms of a difference between a "radical democratic tendency" and a "classical republican tendency" and Mason-Leach's possibility is in terms of a battle be-

tween people and property. But these possibilities are in the background.

Beitzinger argues that those who wrote the Declaration "were less concerned with man as man than with man as heir to the Anglo-Saxon legal and political tradition" (p. 168). Moreover the Declaration requires that prudence be followed and revolution be justified. In short, Beitzinger sees the Declaration and, consequently, the American political tradition as firmly grounded in a larger Western tradition. His view of the Constitution is the same:

> The Constitution of 1787 was the culmination of an experimental process of development beginning in the colonial past, reaching a point of definition in the period just preceeding the Revolution, and coming first to fruition in the state constitutions (p. 213).

The effect of Beitzinger's treatment of the Declaration and its relationship to the Constitution is to understate the unique and revolutionary character of the American regime.

Beitzinger's interpretation of the Declaration has considerable merit. One oEthe fascinating aspects of the Declaration is the extent to which it has generated a variety of political opinions and positions. "The all men are created equal" phrase, for example, has fueled activism by blacks, women, and youth. "The consent of the governed" phrase has fueled reform movements throughout American political history. And the fact that the right to alter government appears'before the right to abolish government in the Declaration has had a considerable conservative impact on American politics. One of the massive features of the American political regime is that there are so many avenues and devices available for alteration or for "working within the system" that it is very difficult to justify revolution. The point here is not to demonstrate that Beitzinger's interpretation of the Declaration and its relationship to the Constitution is necessarily wrong. Rather the point is to demonstrate that his interpretation is a partial understanding.

Mason-Leach's coverage of the self-evident truths phrase of the Declaration also deserves comment. With respect to this phrase they say:

> While the Declaration states certain self-evident truths, it does not prove them, nor could they have been proved. Some of the verities were being falsified even as they were pronounced. Among man's God-given rights were life, liberty and equality. Yet the newspapers of the day carried copies of the Declaration along with

> advertisements of slaves and indentured servants, giving brand-marks on the necks of human beings as identification. The principle that just governments derive their powers from the consent of the governed had yet to be realized (p. 53).

One of the most difficult things for students, as well as teachers, to understand is this central concept of self-evident truths. For Mason-Leach the truth of an idea is to be tested by whether or not the idea becomes actualized in historical practice or reality. Thus the truths of the Declaration are not really truths at all but goals, aims, or ideals. Several important consequences, both theoretical and practical, follow from a perspective such as Mason-Leach's. One consequence is that the study of American politics is placed within a framework of alternative modes of realization and various rates of actualization rather than a study of opinion about the good. Procedure rather than opinion becomes important. Another consequence is that the potentially intolerant and belligerent character of the American regime is understated.

Beitzinger, on the other hand, is well grounded in political philosophy and is at ease discussing the nature of an objective moral order. All the more surprising then when Beitzinger too treats the truths as ideals in subsequent chapters. With respect to the natural order on which the truths are based, however, Beitzinger is strangely silent. He prefers to interpret the meaning of self-evident truths as the norms of a received Anglo-Saxon tradition. Does this mean that Roger Taney's interpretation of the "all men are created equal" phrase is correct and that Abraham Lincoln's interpretation that the Founders intended to include under that phrase all men and not simply White British Colonials is wrong? Beitzinger does not give sufficient attention to this problem.

The main point here is that neither textbook provides an adequate coverage of the problematic character of the Declaration and how that problematic character has generated an incredible diversity of political opinion and practice. The core of the problem concerns the meaning of the "all men are created equal" phrase. The idea of a self-evident truth has been difficult for the people of each generation to understand and to apply. It is certainly one of the most difficult of all the concepts for students to understand. It should not be surprising, therefore, that differences of opinion should arise concerning the meaning of the phrase and whether or not America is living in accordance with the fundamental creed. Both Beitzinger and Mason-Leach do a good job of showing how both sides in the

Civil War differed significantly in their interpretation of this basic document. Beitzinger, unfortunately, suggests that the opposing views can, therefore, be understood as "a function of the sectional interest involved" (p. 375). Why couldn't one, or even both sides, be correct in their interpretation of the document? That is the stuff of which crises are made. Although Beitzinger and Mason-Leach demonstrate that each generation has produced its intellectual and political dissenters they fail to demonstrate the extent to which this dissent is both formed, and rationalized, in terms of a particular interpretation of the American creed. To be sure, they give as full a coverage as possible to the views of such people as Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Henry James, John Dewey, and Henry L. Mencken but they treat these people in isolation rather than in terms of a tradition of dissent grounded in the Declaration itself. And they do not really analyze and evaluate these views as reflective opinions about the moral health of the republic. Rather they either simply describe these views or give the impression that the presence of these views is an example of America's dedication to toleration and to freedom.

Most important political controversies in America are intended to be resolved by consulting the Declaration and the Constitution. And, in turn, the Declaration and the Constitution determines the character which political controversies take. The language of these two documents, therefore, becomes a focal point of both abstract and political controversy. To interpret these documents means, in effect, to construe the language of the Declaration and the Constitution in a certain way, and it is by focusing on the alternative ways that the language of the Declaration and the Constitution has been construed that we begin to see both the unity and the diversity in the American political tradition.

What does "equality," "liberty," and "consent of the governed" mean? What does "general welfare and common defense," "liberty and justice," "union and domestic tranquility" mean? The answer, of course, is that different people have interpreted the concepts differently at different times. Even if there were unanimity concerning meaning there would be disagreement over mode of application and disagreement over which concept or end should be prior in either thought or practice. To discover that people disagree over such ends, means or priorities, is to discover the character of American politics.

Sometimes, of course, the disagreements are of little consequence. But at other times *e.g.* the Civil War, the Great Depression, and the 1960's, the disagreements are of considerable consequence and rock the foundations. The Anti-Federalists and the Federalists differed on the nature of the union. They also differed about the meaning of liberty and the relation of liberty to the general welfare and to domestic tranquility. Lincoln and his opponents also differed over the nature of the union. And they differed over the meaning of equality and the relation of equality to liberty and to justice. Roosevelt and his opponents differed over the meaning of the general welfare. And they differed over the meaning of liberty and the relation of liberty to equality and to the nature of the Union. And in the 1960's people differed over the meaning of justice and its relation to liberty and to equality and they differed over the meaning of common defense and its relation to liberty and to domestic tranquility.

Both Beitzinger and Mason-Leach give the reader access to the major interpretations of the Constitution in American political history. Mason-Leach, in particular, do a very good job of describing the changing views on judicial activism and judicial restraint, loose construction and strict construction, and procedural as well as substantive due process and equal protection. They obviously have considerable affection for the judicial branch and their affection turns to pride in their coverage of the Warren Court. The Supreme Court under Warren, as it was in the pre-Warren eras, was at the "storm center" of political controversy because important political questions became constitutional questions. But for Mason-Leach the Supreme Court was on the wrong side of the Civil War and the Great Depression crises. Under the Warren Court, however, the Supreme Court was on the right side of the continuing battle between people and property. And both texts give the reader access to the thought of statesmen and intellectuals and to the practice of politicians both regular and reformists. But once again our authors fall short of placing their coverage in a challenging and interpretive perspective.

III

To give a full analysis of *Federalist 10* and its two companion pieces, *Federalist* 9 and 51, is beyond the scope of this article.* Suf-

" The *Federalist Papers* (New York: The New American Library, 1961). All references will be from this edition.

fice it to note here that these numbers of the *Federalist,* especially *Federalist* 10, come very close to providing *the* architechtonic model by means of which a reflective understanding of politics in America is possible. Unfortunately both Beitzinger and Mason-Leach seem more concerned with articulating the tension between Hamilton and Madison in *The Federalist* than with the democratic tension which is central to the American experience and which they were trying to solve. A brief analysis of these three numbers of *The Federalist* can serve two useful purposes: to demonstrate the advantages of using a comprehensive model for understanding politics in America and to provide a framework for discussing the post Founding period by Beitzinger and Mason-Leach.

A reflective understanding of politics in America requires an investigation of the relationship between economics and politics. James Madison, America's founder-statesman, addressed himself to the relationship between economics and politics. Madison was the person most responsible for laying the foundation of our massively successful extended commercial republic and capitalistic way of life. *Federalist 9,* 10 and 51 contain the essential teaching on the American Founding, a teaching which has made America what it is today.

Federalist 9 argues that America is an experiment in popular government. Five improvements in the science of politics have been made which will permit the first enlighted defense ever of a regime dedicated to liberty. No political philosopher of stature, prior to Locke anyway, had considered popular government to be ultimately defensible. The classical view was that there are higher ends than individual liberty and a government grounded in the consent of the people is a government grounded in the rule of the many who are unwise. Moreover, to parody Karl Marx and Thomas Hobbes, the history of all hitherto existing popular governments had been poor, nasty, brutish, and short. Unfortunately neither Beitzinger nor Mason-Leach really capture the experimental nature of the Founding or the importance and the uniqueness of the claim which the Founders made.

These five improvements which "were either not known at all, or imperfectly known to the Ancients" (p. 72) are divided into two parts. There are four institutional or "gadgetry" improvements-the separation of powers, legislative checks and balances, an independent judiciary, and elected representatives. These are powerful republican means "by which the excellencies of republican government may be retained and its imperfections lessened or avoided."

Each of these powerful means or "auxiliary precautions" receives elaborate treatment by both Beitzinger and Mason-Leach in their coverage of American political thought and practice subsequent to the Founding period. They give a thorough account of the way each element has formed opinion and been used by political participants. They also show how the various elements have sometimes been in harmony and sometimes been in disharmony.

Particularly interesting and impressive is Beitzinger's coverage of the emergence of the behavioral science of politics and the pragmatic approach to jurisprudence as well as the revival of interest in the higher law by conservatives after the second world war. He also does an effective job of showing the disparity between Darwinian naturalism and natural rights as, well as the impact of the former on economic and political thought and practice in America. Despite his elaborate and incisive treatment of the essential aridity of the empirical approach he is willing, in the final analysis, to collapse these theoretical differences and put them to one side. The last page of his book is actually the most interesting page because he finally discusses the issue of danger and crisis. He argues that "the Anglo-Saxon higher law, commonsense, empirical, pragmatic tradition" is in danger from "the mystical cultists of revolution (who) talk in abstract and therefore irresponsible terms." Marcuse and New Left "irrationalism" is antagonistic to "the cause of pacific institutional adjustment of conflict" (p. 596). Beitzinger belittles the reflective side of Herbert Marcuse and exaggerates the impact of New Left thought on the young. He is apparently more interested in encouraging an education in citizenship than he is in encouraging an education in scholarship. And to see Marcuse as dangerous indicates a short sighted view of the strength of *Federalist* 10 to protect the Republic from revolutionary thought and practice.

To this list of four institutional improvements *Federalist 9* adds an improvement which is wholly novel and for which the authors of the Constitution deserve their peculiar claim to fame or infamy. This improvement is the "ENLARGEMENT of the ORBIT within which such (popular) systems are to revolve" (p. 73). The contrary and dominant opinion was that large republics would have to be tyrannically governed in order to be effectively governed. The "small republican" opinion, articulated at the Founding by the Anti-Federalists, saw tyranny at the hands of the few who are wealthy and powerful as the chief danger to liberty. Madison thought otherwise. He argued that majority tyranny was the danger to be avoided and

that an extension of the orbit was the most powerful of the republican means yet devised for the preservation of popular government. The contrary opinion was removed from a position of dominance. But the vision of the small republic has played an important part in American political thought and practice. That this vision has been embraced by people of various political persuasions throughout the course of American political history is adequately demonstrated by both textbooks. The view that the problem of democracy is to be found in the tyranny of the minority and the solution to the problem is, therefore, more democracy has also retained its strength in American political thought and practice.

The extension of the political orbit, of course, is the necessary condition for the extension of the economic market. As Adam Smith had taught, such extension is the critical variable for the development of the division of labor which, in turn, is critical for the advancement of capitalism. The acceptance of inferior motives is the sufficient condition for the capitalistic way of life. Madison put it bluntly in *Federalist* 51: "If men were angels no government would be necessary." Government is a necessary evil. Since men will be men "ambition must be made to counteract ambition." It is this "policy ,of supplying, by opposite and rival interests, *the defect of better motives"* (p. 322) which constitutes the core of Madison's solution to the problem of faction, the mortal disease of popular government. And it is this low but sure solution which has outraged people, right wing and left wing, throughout the course of American political history. Madison's solution is also very hard on those people who do not have the desire and/or the opportunity to be ambitious. *Federalist 10* contains the seeds for intellectual dissent and for political reform.

Federalist 10 presents the philosophic case for the extended commercial republic and *Federalist* 51 summarizes the case on behalf of a policy dedicated to the ends of economics. Madison argues that the chief danger to liberty and order was faction-a group of people whose motivation and activity was adverse to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community and to the rights of other individuals. In short, a group who attempted to preserve themselves at the expense of others. The solution was to either eliminate the cause of faction or control its effects, to go to the root of the problem or adopt a policy of containment. Madison states that the former solution is unwise and impractical because the nation is dedicated to liberty and the "causes of faction are ... sown in the nature of man."

Many an important debate in American politics has turned on whether or not Madison is correct about the lack of wisdom and practicality involved in eliminating factions. For Madison, the real problem of faction is majority faction and this requires a solution which managed or regulated the effects of bad majority rule while still permitting the majority to rule. In Madison's words:

> To secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and form of popular government, is then the great object to which our inquiries are directed (p. 80).

In *Federalist* 10 Madison lists several causes of faction which can tear a political community apart and blow up the experiment in popular government:

> A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government . . . an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power; or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions (p. 79).

To this list is added the most common and durable source of faction:

> Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors, and those who are debtors, fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interested, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide themselves into different classes activated by different sentiments and views (p. 79).

Madison's message is clear: liberty and order requires that major divisions be controlled and high causes be shunned. America must avoid the situation where the community is seriously divided along religious, ideological, ethnic, racial, age, and sexual lines. And most importantly, seriously divided between the few who are rich and the many who are poor. A satisfactory resolution of the property question is central to the success of the experiment in popular government. Since America is to be a civilized nation, and since the central characteristic of civilization is the multiplicity of commercial interests, the civilized solution to faction is to encourage commercial ambition and to provide genuine opportunities for widespread economic advancement and political participation. Thus the principal task of modern legislation is to regulate the opposite and rival interests

which grow up of necessity in civilized nations and which participate in the economic and political life of the nation.

The American way is to make the many well off with a multiplicity of ways to pursue happiness; the rich few in numbers and their wealth tied to the production of comfort for the many; the poor few in numbers and their expectations tied to entering the middle. Revolution, and overbearing activity by the many, will be virtually impossible if there is no proletariat with only their chains to lose. In America the bulk of the population either are or aspire to be bourgeois. The presence of a multiplicity of interests that must compromise and coalesce with other interests to form a political majority is the security Madison sought. In Madison's words:

> Extend the sphere and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests, you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength and to act in unison with each other (p.83).

Madison summarized the case for the extended commercial republic in *Federalist* 51:

> In the extended-republic of the United, and among the great variety of interests, parties, and sects which it embraces, a coalition of a majority of the whole society could seldom take place on any principles than those of justice and the general good (p. 325).

By the deliberate promotion of conflict over different kinds of property rather than conflict over different degrees of property, Madison encouraged a politics where the political differences are of degree rather than kind.

Madison thus made a radical departure from Aristotle and the classical tradition and provided an effective bulwark against subsequent revolution. The best way of life was the free life and the highest purpose of government is to protect the life, liberty, and happiness or property of the people. Freedom and comfort replace excellence and piety, the pursuit of happiness replaces happiness, natural rights replace natural obligations, the ten amendments replace the ten commandments, limited government replaces unlimited government, and extended commerce becomes the dominant way of life. Aristotle's legislators need to know what is good for the soul and what laws and mores would create a disposition toward

excellence and toward virtue. Madison's legislators need to know about the law and about commerce.

It is the very success of Madison's solution which chives Marxists as well as classicists up the wall. For Marx, faction is not sown in the nature of man but capitalistic man. Eliminate capitalism and the better motives of our nature will prevail, people will pursue noble ends via elevated means and live in harmony. The improved science of politics, however, aims at improvement not perfection and individual liberty not community virtue. Moreover, men will never become angels but they might become decent through the cultivation of such bourgeois virtues as "honesty is the best policy" and "to get ahead you must get along." Every time a new proletariat seems to emerge-blacks, youth, women-they are bought off by the call of *Federalist 10* to bourgeois comfort. The system is flexible enough to control sufficiently the most blatant forms of exclusion without going to the core of the problem. The deprived are placated and incorporated into the American economic and political mainstream much to the disgust of the revolutionary leaders and to the delight of the formerly poor and powerless.

IV

The coverage Beitzinger and Mason-Leach give to the period subsequent to the Founding era clearly reveals the relevance of a close understanding of *Federalist* 10 for a comprehensive view of the character of politics in America. The following examples are not intended as a criticism of the quality of the coverage. Rather the intent is to demonstrate the superiority of the Founding in general and *Federalist* 10 in particular as architechtonic models over against a developmental approach which relates the study of issues to discrete historical periods.

Beitzinger considers that the thought of Frederick Grimke (1791-1863) represents "all the elements predominant in American thought of the middle period-the free individual, the moral law, the mission of America, democracy and the idea of progress...." (p. 332). Each of these elements are fostered by *Federalist* 10. Beitzinger, unfortunately, does not recognize this because for Beitzinger *The Federalist is* seen as reflective of what he calls classical republican political science with its emphasis on wisdom and virtue rather than as encouraging a modern commercial republic.

After his discussion of the introduction and spread of the democratic spirit, a discussion which takes place in terms of a tension between the equalitarianism of the Declaration and the balancing of the Constitution, Beitzinger turns to a discussion of the critics of this new democracy. The friendly critics, like James Fenimore Cooper, wished to "synthesize the new truth of democracy with the received truth of classical republicanism" (p. 341). Cooper called for restraint on the darker side of democracy. This approach, of course, can be directly related to the "great object" of *Federalist 10.* The unfriendly critics, people like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, thought that the materialism of the age and the "crudities of mass democracy" were dangerous to the notion of man as a free moral individual. This criticism is, in effect, a criticism of the thought and practice encouraged *by Federalist* 10 and demonstrates the extent to which the ethos of *Federalist* 10 had already become a central characteristic of American life.

Beitzinger's treatment of Emerson and Thoreau is similar to his treatment of John Taylor: he criticizes them for their lack of realism and their assumption "that political questions are at base moral questions." This strikes me as strange objection for a person who has an abiding interest in an objective moral order. He does treat one unfriendly critic of democracy kindly: Orestes Brownson (1803-1876) who argued that "the infallible Roman Catholic Church alone can provide the moral basis upon which democracy can flourish" (p. 361). Beitzinger does not criticize Brownson's "reinterpretation" of the Declaration. On the other hand, Beitzinger criticizes Emerson and Thoreau for subordinating "prudence to natural right directly apprehended."

Mason-Leach do an excellent job of using *The Federalist* as a model by which to illuminate and to evaluate the conflicting views of the nature of the union from the Founding through the Civil War. They could also have used *The Federalist* to considerable advantage to illuminate and to evaluate the conflicting view of the nature of the society from the Founding through the Civil War. Mason-Leach attribute "the movement away from privileged orders and the dominance of the landed aristocracy" (p. 85) to the irresistable march of democracy aided by experience on the frontier. But this movement is also a massive requirement for the successful operation of *Federalist* 10. As a consequence an important addition can be made to the following perceptive observation by Mason-Leach:

> In economic terms the conflict represented a struggle between those who believed class war inevitable in an industrial society unless high constitutional fences were erected to protect the few against the many, and those who were confident that politics in America would follow a course altogether different from that of Europe. In a country like America, the Kent-Randolph notion of social stratification (which ironically anticipated Karl Marx) was altogether inapplicable. There would be no class struggle here, where all respected property and hoped to attain it (p. 187).

The important addition is that *Federalist* 10 presumed the possibility of class struggle and tried to encourage interest struggle instead. The greatest problem with Madison's proposed "multiplicity of interests" solution is that one or two of the interests might in time come to dominate the other interests and turn the battle back in the direction of a class struggle. The most obvious candidates are the manufacturing interests and the monied interests, the former because they are the most capital intensive of the interests and the latter because money joins all the interests together. The ability of a few interests to control the economics of the nation could mean the return of the rule of the few in politics. Minority tyranny rather than majority tyranny constituted the danger to liberty. This was the basic fear of John Taylor of Caroline, for example, in the 1790's and of several Jacksonians in the 1830's. What Mason-Leach attribute to Daniel Webster-an uncanny ability to "forecast the dynamics of American politics after 1870"-is actually a testimony to Webster's grasp of the intrinsic tensions within the regime created by the Founders.

The theme of Mason-Leach's coverage of Jacksonian Democracy is the theme of "the common man triumphant" and "the common man challenged." The triumph of the common man, in effect, was the triumph of the bourgeois man of Madison's commercial republic. The challenge to the common man, in effect, was a challenge to the type of political and economic life which follows the establishment of such a republic. While Mason-Leach are more sympathetic than is Beitzinger to the concerns of Emerson and Thoreau for the integrity of the individual they are as unsympathetic as is Beitzinger with respect to the objection of Emerson and Thoreau to participate in the American political system.

Both Beitzinger and Mason-Leach seem to be very interested in encouraging students to "work within the system." This would partly explain Beitzinger's critical treatment of Thoreau. Mason-Leach

are, in a sense, more "political" than Beitzinger. They know that students of contemporary America have an interest in Thoreau and so they "rescue" Thoreau from himself. They inform us that "in going to Walden (Thoreau) was not running away from society's problems; rather he was working, in his own way, toward their solution" (p. 218). They also suggest that in his *Journal* Thoreau demonstrates an awareness of social responsibility and that "this aspect of Thoreau's thought modifies his tendency toward anarchy, suggesting that had he lived beyond 1862, he might have emerged as a complete citizen" (p. 122). Neither Beitzinger nor Mason-Leach appear to understand that participation in Madison's capitalistic democracy can be harmful tothe human soul.

Theory and practice in the Civil War period is better understood in terms of alternative interpretations of the Declaration, the Preamble, and the Constitution than in the terms of *Federalist* 10. Nevertheless it is still instructive to apply the model of *Federalist 10* to this period. That model presumes the existence of wage-labor, rather than slave-labor, and the existence of a multiplicity of interests which can be -coalesced. These _conditions were not in operation in the South at the time. Moreover slavery is a very difficult issue about which decent compromise is possible. It is tempting to suggest that a compromise acceptable to the vast majority of Americans could have been found had not Lincoln, and others, pushed the issue of morality. It is to their credit, of course, that they had the courage to do so.

It is also instructive to apply the model of *Federalist 10* when considering the political thought of John Calhoun. His concurrent majority rule theory, as both Beitzinger and Mason-Leach recognize, is an alternative to the *Federalist* 10 solution to the problem of faction. There is an added attraction in Beitzinger's coverage of Calhoun. We learn that Calhoun:

> Was grappling with a problem which confounds us even today and which has only been approximately solved in a small minority of nations in the contemporary world-how to protect the vital interests of substantial minorities within an institutional framework which allows for peaceful progress in freedom (p. 385).

This is one of the first. as well as one of the few times in the entire book that Beitzinger suggests that there is a central problem to be grappled with. Unfortunately he makes this central problem very

difficult to understand. Is he talking about the majority rule-minority rights problem?

The relevance of *Federalist* 10 for an understanding of political thought and practice subsequent to the Civil War is equally evident. The "Gospel of Wealth" period represents an attempt to dislodge the political dimension of the commercial republic, and the Great Depression demonstrates the incredible importance of a healthy economy to the stability of the political order. The coverage of the depression period by Beitzinger is on the weak side both in terms of quantity and quality of coverage. We need simply to excuse Mason-Leach as they participate in their progressive fantasy and as they caricature the nature of the opposition to the New Deal. Instead we should concentrate on their perceptive insight that the New Deal was corrective rather than revolutionary in nature.

The New Deal, in effect, tried to remove the defects of capitalistic democracy while still adhering to capitalistic democracy. As a result of the success of the New Deal, both the virtues and the vices of the improved science of politics were bequeathed to subsequent generations not only intact but in stronger shape. This means that today we can and we do approach the question of crisis in terms of the improved science of politics. Do we have confidence in our institutions and is the economy producing comfort? Gone is the idea of the mixed regime, excellence, and virtue. Discouraged is the idea of contemporary idealism and brotherly love.

Madison's bourgeois democracy places a heavy tax on those who consider themselves to be serious and high minded. This is certainly the impact of Madison's republic on dissenters in the 1960's. It is tough to fight for important causes when you realize that the political system is rigged against important causes and that the return on your labor will be minimal. Fortunately for the stability of the American regime most people see marginal economic and political change as sufficient to be temporarily satisfied but insufficient to be permanently satisfied. Which fits in nicely with Beitzinger's view of prudence and Mason-Leach's view of progress. In the final analysis Madison's model is devised for the comfort of the ordinary citizen and the stability of the system, not for the pleasure of the few who aspire to purity of soul or for those who wish to see the end to all contradictions. And that is the unique and the enduring quality of the American experiment in popular government.

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