

THE END OF AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

by

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Years ago one could buy at the Rand McNally map store a curio called "The Histomap of History." Measuring about 12 inches wide and, when unfolded, about five feet long, it shows in bands of different colors and varying widths the concurrent rise and fall of empires and peoples over a period of 4000 years. It begins in 2000 B.C., when the Egyptians are the dominant people, flanked by the Aegeans, Hittites, Amorites, Iranians, Indians, Huns, and Chinese. By 1000 B.C., the Aegeans have disappeared; the Egyptians have been narrowed to a thin river; the Hittites, after a long period of expansion, are on the verge of extinction; the Assyrians, who begin in 1400 B.C., have begun to dominate the flow of time, widening by 800 B.C. to the major force on the world-chart. And so on, through the varying fates of the Greeks, the Romans, the Goths, the Huns. . . .

The marvel of the "Histomap" is that one can read across time at any single period, or down time, following the flowing bands of color like some rushing streams that expand into wild lakes or oceans and then contract and even disappear off the page to be replaced by bands representing some new peoples and new empires. By 1800, England begins to dominate the page, and finally the United States and Russia emerge as the two dominant powers, with bands of almost equal width in 1967, which is the last date entered on the map.

Few historians have the taste or the capacity for this kind of comprehensive view. It requires a great deal of detailed knowledge or the sweep will be superficial; or it smacks of a pretension to universal history, of seeing mankind as one, which was the mark of the UNESCO conferences (and their sponsored world history) of the 1950's. Most historians are content with the monographic concentration on a single period, a set of problems, or the history of their own nations; the cultural sweep of Geyl, Huizinga, Bloch, or Braudel is rare, though there have been recent synoptic efforts to deal with Western capitalism as a whole in the new Marxist ambitions of Perry Anderson or Immanuel Wallerstein, neither of whom, interestingly, is a historian.

The one American historian who ever made such a synoptic effort was the younger, crankier brother of Henry Adams, Brooks Adams, who had less literary power than his brother but is more interesting for our purposes precisely because he took as his tableau the entirety of world history. . . .

In 1902 Brooks Adams wrote *The New Empire*, one of four books about the character of social revolutions and the ways in which ruling elites came to supremacy and then lost the ability to maintain their rule.¹ The focus was less on the internal tensions within a society than on the contest *between* peoples, nations, and empires (the more usual concern of the 19th century), since for Adams

(as for Michelet, Taine, Ratzel, and others) history was seen as the interplay of race and economic geography.

The New Empire is itself a "histomap": A 23-page appendix lists the major points in history from 4000 B.C., when the Pharaoh conquered the Maghara copper mines, to 1897, when the economic supremacy of America is marked by the lead of Pittsburgh in the production of steel. Adams' detailed reconstruction of world economic history, through some beautiful maps, is intended to illustrate his major theme: that "during the last decade the world has traversed one of those periodic crises which attend an alteration in the social equilibrium. The seat of energy has migrated from Europe to America."

In a resonant peroration, he concludes:

... as the United States becomes an imperial market, she stretches out along the trade-routes which lead from foreign countries to her heart, as every empire has stretched out from the days of Sargon to our own. The West Indies drift toward us, the Republic of Mexico hardly longer has an independent life, and the city of Mexico is an American town. With the completion of the Panama Canal all Central America will become a part of our system. We have expanded into Asia, we have attracted the fragments of the Spanish dominions, and reaching out into China we have checked the advance of Russia and Germany, in territory which, until yesterday, had been supposed to be beyond our sphere. We are penetrating into Europe, and Great Britain especially is gradually assuming the position of a dependency, which must rely on us as the base from which she draws her food in peace and without which she could not stand in war.

Supposing the movement of the next 50 years only to equal that of the last, instead of undergoing a prodigious acceleration, the United States will outweigh any single empire, if not all empires combined. The whole world will pay her tribute. Commerce will flow to her from both east and west, and

the order which has existed from the dawn of time will be reversed.²

American Uniqueness

What is striking is not the force or even acuity of the statements of Brooks Adams but the fact that they cap what had for several hundred years been a well-nigh universal expectation that the United States would inherit the future. . . .

But there was also the thought that America was not just one more empire in the long chain of men's pursuit of domination, but a transforming presence whose emergence at the center of history had been made possible not only by the providential wealth of a virgin continent, but by the first successful application of a new principle in human affairs. Again, the theme was first expressed by Brooks Adams:

American supremacy has been made possible only through applied science. The labors of successive generations of scientific men have established a control over nature which has enabled the United States to construct a new industrial mechanism, with processes surpassingly perfect. Nothing has ever equaled in economy and energy the administration of the great American corporations. These are the offspring of scientific thought. On the other hand, wherever scientific criticism and scientific methods have not penetrated, the old processes prevail, and these show signs of decrepitude. The national government may be taken as an illustration.

And although a pedantic social scientist in the Great Exhibition Hall of History might seek to establish a morphology of societies by forms and types, the belief arose that the features of the United States were historically distinct and unrepeatable. This is the argument of Daniel Boorstin's celebrated book *The Genius of American Politics*, in which he writes:

The genius of American democracy comes not from any special virtue of the American

people but from the unprecedented opportunities of this continent and from a peculiar and unrepeatable combination of historical circumstances. . . . I argue, in a word, that American democracy is unique. It possesses a 'genius' all its own.

It was an expansion of Tocqueville's theme of American uniqueness, the sense, as Richard Hofstadter has put it, "of the ineluctable singularity of American development . . . the preformed character of our democratic institutions, the importance of the democratic revolution that never had to happen."³

All of this added up to the conception of "American exceptionalism," the idea that, having been "born free," America would, in the trials of history, get off "scot free." Having a common political faith from the start, it would escape the ideological vicissitudes and divisive passions of the European polity, and, being entirely a middle-class society, without aristocracy or *bohème*, it would not become "decadent," as had every other society in history. As a liberal society providing individual opportunity, safeguarding liberties, and expanding the standards of living, it would escape the disaffection of the intelligentsia, the resentment of the poor, the frustrations of the young—which, historically, had been the signs of disintegration, if not the beginning of revolution, in other societies. In this view, too, the United States, in becoming a world power, a paramount power, a hegemonic power, would, because it was democratic, be different in the exercise of that power than previous world empires.

Today, the belief in American exceptionalism has vanished with the end of empire, the weakening of power, the loss of faith in the nation's future. There are clear signs that America is being displaced as the paramount country, or that there will be the breakup, in the next few decades, of any single-power hegemony in the world. Internal tensions have multiplied and there are deep structural crises, political and cultural, that may prove more intractable to solution than the domestic economic problems.

What happened to the American dream? Are we now caught up in the *ricorsi* of history, so that in the "histomap" of the 21st century the span of American color will have thinned to the narrow stream of a vanquished nation, yet another illustration of the trajectory of human illusions? Simply to recollect all those minds who believed, often with enormous confidence, that they had the "master key" to the course of history should give pause to anyone today intent on making incautious generalizations. What I would rather do here is retrace the course of the American belief in exceptionalism and see where we stand as we approach the third American century and the second Western millennium.

MANIFEST DESTINY

A nation or a people is shaped by nature,

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religion, and history. Mountains or plains or seas influence the varieties of national character. Religion provides an anchorage, even when people are uprooted. History, bound by the principle of inheritance, provides a sense of distinction and of continuity, so that, as Burke put it, a society is a partnership of the living, the dead, and the unborn. In the history of different peoples it has usually been one or another of these fundamentals that was predominant in shaping the distinctive character of the race.

In the United States, nature and religion intertwined to form the character of the nation. There was the awesome expanse of the land with its extraordinary variety and fertility. Equally, at the start, there was a covenant—explicit with the Puritans, implicit in the deism of Jefferson—through which God’s providential design would be unfolded on this continent. There was no history but an act of will, and by that act a new people was created.

A people, as Herder defined it, is held together by the interwoven skein of language and culture in which the past is ennobled, through myth and story, to become history. In the early part of the 19th century, that extraordinary reactionary Joseph de Maistre predicted the failure of the United States because the country had no proper name, and therefore no collective identity. Yet as Orestes Brownson wrote in *The American Republic*, “The proper name of the country is America: that of the people is Americans. Speak of Americans simply, and nobody understands you to mean the people of Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, but everybody understands you to mean the people of the United States. The fact is significant and foretells for the people of the United States a continental destiny. . . .”

When the United States of America was proclaimed, the larger portions of the continent were held by France, Spain, and England, not by the new nation. (In 1789, Talleyrand referred to the Alleghenies as “the limits which nature seems to have traced” for the Americans.) But from the start there was a doctrine of geographical predestination, defined by either the needs of security, or

political necessity, or by the contours of nature itself. That argument lay behind the Louisiana Purchase and the acquisition of Florida, which, as one writer remarked, “physiographically belonged to the United States,” and, later, the annexation of Texas. It was concerning the latter that the most pregnant phrase for justifying the course of expansion was coined. The annexation of Texas, wrote John L. O’Sullivan in the *Democratic Review* in 1845, was “the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.”

Manifest Destiny was the civil religion of 19th-century America: not just the idea that a nation had the right to define its own fate, but the conviction of a special virtue of the American people different from anything known in Europe or even, hitherto, in the history of the world. The theme was first announced by Thomas Paine in *Common Sense*, in which he justified the American rebellion on the ground of a special American metaphysical destiny and mission. It received the endorsement of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote: “[America] is the country of the Future . . . it is a country of beginnings, of projects, of designs, of expectations. Gentlemen, there is a sublime and friendly destiny by which the human race is guided.” And it had its heraldic bard in Walt Whitman, who in millennial fashion saw America leading the human race to a new greatness. For this reason, Whitman claimed Mexican lands by “a law superior to parchments and dry diplomatic rules,” the law of beneficent territorial utilization. (And he added, “Yes, Mexico must be thoroughly chastised.”) In 1846, he demanded the retention of California on the ground that America’s territorial increase meant “the increase of human happiness and liberty,” and he further declared that while “it is impossible to say what the future will bring forth . . . ‘manifest destiny’ certainly points to the speedy annexation of Cuba by the United States.” And in his poem “Passage to India,” Whitman reached out to a vision of a superior civilization encircling the globe from

East to West under the auspices of America: Celebrating the completion of the transoceanic cable, Whitman envisaged the movement of civilization from its birth to its culmination in the West, crossing the Pacific to forge in a great circle of time a link with the ancient civilization of Asia. . . .⁴

The United States, though isolationist after World War I, could not retreat to an insular role in 1945. The scope of America's economic reach was now worldwide. And if political power did not necessarily follow the contours of the expanding economic influence, it had a trajectory of its own—to fill the power vacuums created by the withdrawal of the British and French from Asia, to defend Europe itself against the pressures of Russian expansion.

The 'American Century'

Yet it was not only sober considerations of world order or national interests that propelled the American destiny. There was—there almost had to be—the messianic language and the sense of mission that derived from the American character, and it is no accident that the attempt to define this role was made by Henry Luce, the son of a missionary and the proprietor of *Time*. . . . In February 1941, Luce wrote:

As America enters dynamically upon the world scene, we need most of all to seek and to bring forth a vision of America as a world power which is authentically American. . . . And as we come now to the great test, it may yet turn out that in all our trials and tribulations of spirit during the first part of this century we as a people have been painfully apprehending the meaning of our time . . . and there may come clear at last the vision which will guide us to the authentic creation of the 20th century—our Century.

America as the dynamic center of ever-widening spheres of enterprise, America as the training center of the skillful servants of mankind, America as the Good Samaritan, really believing again that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and America as the

powerhouse of the ideals of Freedom and Justice—out of these elements surely can be fashioned a vision of the 20th century. . . .

It is in this spirit that all of us are called, each to his own measure of capacity, and each in the widest horizon of his vision, to create the first great American Century.

. . . The American Century lasted scarcely 30 years. It foundered on the shoals of Vietnam. One can posit many explanations of the deepening American involvement there. Arthur Schlesinger has propounded the "quagmire" theory, whereby each step of aid sucked us further into the swamp and made it more difficult for us to extricate ourselves. There is the variant idea of the power vacuum: As the French were forced to withdraw we stepped in, lest the domino structure of client states collapse. And there is the conventional left-wing argument that Vietnam was an inevitable extension of American imperialism.⁵

Whatever the truth of the specific historical arguments, what is clear is that none of these explanations deals with the fundamental quality of national style and character which shaped the American actions—namely, the hubris, the "egoistic corruption" which expressed itself in the belief that America was now the guardian of world order and the United States as a matter of pride (tinged as always by moralism) had to take its "rightful" position as the leader of the free world. This was no less true of John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Speech than it was of Henry Luce's "triumphal purpose."

One can cast all this in a deterministic mold and say that the centrality of the American world role was an inevitable consequence of the weakness of other states, or the inevitable rivalry with the Soviet Union, or that the idea of Manifest Destiny and mission inevitably would carry the United States into the moralistic role of world policeman. Whatever the truth of these cases, the fact is that these molds have now been broken. There is no longer a Manifest Destiny or mission. We have not been immune to the corruption of power. We have not been the exception. To a surprising extent there is now a greater range

of choice available to the American polity. Our mortality now lies before us.

THE AMERICA WITHIN

In *The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended* (1758), Jonathan Edwards argued that depravity is inevitable because the identity of consciousness makes all men one with Adam. As we now see, History has traduced Manifest Destiny. The American Exceptionalism is the American Adam. Yet if destiny is no longer the sure ground of American exceptionalism, what of those domestic conditions of American life—religion and nature—that have shaped the American character and institutions? Can we escape the fate of internal discord and disintegration that have marked every other society in human history? What can we learn from the distinctive ideological and institutional patterns that have, so far, shaped a unique American society and given it distinctive continuity in 200 years of existence? Any specification of shaping patterns is bound to be incomplete. What I single out are those aspects which allow me to test, within the domestic order of the American polity, the fate of American exceptionalism in these two centuries: Americanism, the land, equality, cultural diversity, space and security, economic abundance, and the two-party system.

The Puritan covenant which defined the early New England settlement was a metaphysical passion which drew its fuel from a hostility to civilization, suppressing the springs of impulse, and drawing human will directly from God rather than from man-made institutions. Yet the very conditions of American life, the need for self-reliance and the evidence that one could change the world by one's own efforts, gradually eroded the otherworldly foundations of Puritan New England, and stressed the need to find one's self, one's achievements, one's salvation in the here and now. To make one's faith center on *this* world, to reject theology and dogma and the immemorial rituals of classical religions was, as Harold Laski has pointed out, the central principle of Emerson's

famous address to the Harvard Divinity School in 1838. The religion of America, whether we look to Emerson or Whitman, was *Americanism*.

"Americanism" meant that this was, as the Great Seal of the United States declared, a "new order of the ages," that here one could *make* one's self rather than simply continue the past or, if one came as an immigrant, *remake* one's self. It is striking that almost all of Marx's co-workers in the German Workers Club who came to the United States after 1848 (including the leader of the insurrectionary wing of the Socialist movement, August Willich, Marx's fiercest antagonist on "the left") abandoned socialism when they came to the United States. It was Hermann Kriege, a founder of the League of the Just, who declared that "Americanism" was a surrogate for his former socialism, and that free land and a homestead act would provide a permanent solution to any American social problem.⁶

Contrary to popular impression (largely created by a press looking for sensational stories), most immigrants were not radicals or agitators. As Marcus Lee Hansen pointed out many years ago, the overwhelming majority of immigrants were staunch supporters of the country and quickly became "conservative."

Americanism was a creed and a faith. As Leon Samson, a neglected socialist writer whose works have been resurrected by S. M. Lipset, wrote 40 years ago:

When we examine the meaning of Americanism, we discover that Americanism is to the American not a tradition or a territory, not what France is to a Frenchman or England to an Englishman, but a doctrine—what socialism is to a socialist. . . . Every concept of socialism has its substitutive counterconcept in Americanism, and that is why the socialist argument falls so fruitlessly on the American ear.⁷

The central doctrine was the idea of individual achievement free of class origins; of individual mobility, geographical and social; of equality of opportunity, and the

acceptance of the risks of failure. The central image was the idea of individual enterprise. These were possibilities drawn from the character of an open society, the world as pictured in the America of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Yet today all such ideas must have a different meaning in a world where such individual enterprise is no longer possible, a world of organizations where 85 percent of the labor force are wage and salary employees. To that extent there is always the problem of squaring a new reality with an old ideology, or of redefining or giving a different meaning to the idea of achievement (e.g. the hope of business corporations that its members will identify achievement with the *corporate* enterprise, not the individual—a corporate identity which does take place, say, in Cuba or China).

The larger question however is the absence of a faith or a creed. Do most Americans today believe in “Americanism”? Do people identify the doctrine of achievement and equality with pride in nation, or patriotism? It is an open question.

The Land

In the beginning was the land.⁸ It was this providential Eden “that God hath espied out . . . for Him” (as John Cotton put it) that made the first settlers create the great romance of the American wilderness. As Daniel Boorstin writes:

The magic of the land is a leitmotif throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We hear it, for example, in Jefferson’s ecstatic description of the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers; in Lewis and Clark’s account of the far west; in the vivid pages of Francis Parkman’s Oregon Trail; and in a thousand other places. It is echoed in the numberless travel-books and diaries of those men and women who left comfortable and dingy metropolises of the Atlantic seaboard to explore the Rocky Mountains, the prairies, or the deserts.

But the land was also a shaping element on

its own. As Frederick Jackson Turner wrote: “American democracy was born of no theorist’s dream. . . . It came out of the American forest and it gained strength each time it touched a new frontier.” Frontier democracy was natural. It evoked a “fierce love of freedom, the strength that came from hewing out a home, making a school and a church, and creating a higher future for his family.” This conception, he said in 1903, “has vitalized all American democracy and has brought it into sharp contrasts . . . with those modern efforts of Europe to create an artificial democracy by legislation.” In Turner’s view, therefore, democracy in America was naturally a condition of a mental climate born of the physical environment, whereas in Europe it was an artificial contrivance imposed on the environment and not implanted there by nature. As Turner concluded from this contrast: “Other nations have been rich and powerful, but the United States has believed that it had an original contribution to make to the history of society by the production of a self-determining, self-restrained, intelligent democracy. It is in the Middle West that society has formed on lines least like Europe. It is here, if anywhere, that American democracy will make a stand against a tendency to adjust to a European type.”

Like so many such visions, the “cosmology” is derived from an agrarian society. But in a world today where few people work “against” nature—on the land, in the forests, in the mines, or on the seas—where work, particularly in a post-industrial society, is largely a “game between persons,” in which nature and things are excluded from daily life, what is the meaning, or shaping character, of the land? The sense of “unspoiled grandeur” still gives passion to the drive of environmentalists to stay the destruction of forests and wetlands. And the land still retains a romance for those who want to “drop out” and live (for a few years) in the comparative isolation of Vermont or Maine. But the land, by and large, is an economic spoil, cut up, with few controls, into gridiron lots for suburban development or recreation retreats. And even where the awesome vistas remain (once one can get

away from thousands of cars piling into the national parks), it is now only "out there," a view to be admired, and no longer a shaping element of its own.

Equality and Cultural Diversity

The idea of equality in America has its roots in mythic soil. "Since becoming a Real American," roared Paul Bunyan, "I can look any man straight in the eye and tell him to go to hell! If I could meet a man of my own size, I'd prove this instantly. We may find such a man and celebrate our naturalization in a Real American manner. We shall see. Yay, Babe!" These were the sentiments of Paul and his pal as they stood before the Border, and then leaped over to become Real Americans.

They are also the observations of European travelers, applauding or appalled, as they observed the free-and-easy ways of Midwestern Americans, the unwillingness to "doff one's cap" or use the deferential "sir." It is the oldest cliché, and truth, about the American image, if not the actuality. For my colleague Samuel Huntington, the "challenge to authority" is the underlying factor of the problem of governability in democracy today. And its source is the recurrent populism, the frontier egalitarianism, which has been the demagogic appeal of American politics since the days of Andrew Jackson, and the Cider Barrel election of 1840. Yet that rough-and-ready egalitarianism has also gone hand in hand with another swaggering attitude in which the "top dog" is going to show the underling "who is boss." The idea of the "boss," whether on the job or in the political machine, has also been a staple of American life. The two ideas have not been contradictory because the emphasis remained on the individual.

Where there is a difference today, it is that authority in a technical and professional society is necessarily vested in *acquired competence* and *impersonal attributes*, not in the *personal qualities* of the individual. It is this erosion of the immediate, the personal, and the individual, and the rise of bureaucratic authority, which lead to so

much irritation and disquiet. In the United States, the tension between liberty and equality, which framed the great philosophical debates in Europe, was dissolved by an individualism which encompassed both. Equality meant a personal identity, free of arbitrary class distinctions. It is the loss of that sense of individuality, promised by equality, which gives rise to a very different populist reaction today, both among the "left" and the "right," than in the past.⁹

There is, equally, a disorientation because of the breakup of cultural diversity. The differences in America were regional and religious, differences of speech, custom, and manner summed up in such stereotypes as a New England Yankee, a Virginia gentleman, a Midwest farmer, a Texas rancher, or any other of a dozen images from the Frank Capra movies, the songs of Woody Guthrie, or the maunderings of Studs Terkel.

Here again, repetition has dulled our awareness of reality. People *were* different, their differences derived from cultural heritage, generations of immigration, the character of local communities, occupational habits, religious practices, and the like. The destiny of America, Harold Laski wrote in 1948, is still in the melting pot, the creation of a homogeneous people so that Americanism would mean the same to a sharecropper in Arkansas, a steelworker in Pittsburgh, and a farmer in Kansas.

But the melting pot has yielded its meld. America today is homogeneous: not in the superficial existence of a national popular culture created by television (*Gunsmoke* and its demise do make a common conversational gambit for persons in any and all parts of America), but in the very fact of a hedonism which is the common value—in the idea of consumption and of exhibition—that unites middle-class and youth cultures alike, and which irons out the differences in life-styles and habits in the country.

The resurgence of ethnicity, which has been so marked in recent years, is not a new concern with cultural diversity (the only example of cultural "differences" are ethnic food fads which are quickly absorbed into

middle-class homes) but a political strategy, a means whereby disadvantaged groups use the political process to claim a share of the goods that are created by the homogeneous hedonistic culture.

It is this very cultural homogeneity that marks a new crisis of consciousness, for we have become, for the first time, a common people in the hallmarks of culture. Even the old distinction of "highbrow" and "lowbrow," which Van Wyck Brooks installed 60 years ago and which was pursued so vigorously 20 years ago by Dwight Macdonald (who added the category of the "middlebrow"), has lost its meaning today. Are *M*A*S*H** and *Nashville* highbrow or lowbrow? In fact, neither: They are Middle America mocking itself in the accents of the highbrow and lowbrow. Yet despite a common culture, there is no common purpose, or common faith, only bewilderment.

Space and Security

The United States, unlike most major powers in the world, has enjoyed a unique freedom from both immediate military threats and the experience of invasion. Since the War of 1812, no foreign armies have fought on American soil. We have not had a large standing army or a military caste and, until World War II, no continuing draft of young men for extended service in the Army. Large geographical distances and the difficulties of long-distance logistics made space an effective factor in American security. As Robert Wiebe remarks: "Security relaxed the social fabric. Simply and profoundly, freedom from military imperatives meant freedom to go about one's affairs . . . Throughout its history, in other words, America had escaped a fundamental part of life almost everywhere else around the globe."

Yet there *was* internecine conflict. Apart from the Civil War, with its deep tear in the social fabric, the history of the country has been marked by an extraordinary amount of violence—frontier battles in the West, grave labor strife that raged for almost 75 years, and crime in the cities. Yet here too, space

placed invisible and real barriers between such violence and both the political life of the country and the daily lives of individuals. In the cities, crime was marked off geographically, being restricted largely to the port areas and the slums; in a curious sense, the "dangerous classes" knew their place and battered each other, leaving the segregated middle- and upper-class areas peaceful and calm. Frontier violence was pushed steadily westward, as the boundaries and marginal occupations moved across the country; and in the inevitable cycle of routinization, the small towns settled down to mundane economic life. And the remarkable fact about labor violence was that, while it was more explosive and intense (involving dynamiting, gun battles, and the use of troops and police) than in the ideology-riven countries of Europe, this violence (in the coal mines, the timber camps, the textile mills) took place largely at the "perimeters" of the country. It took a long while for these shock waves to reach the political center, and by that time their force had been dissipated. What saved this country from internal disorder was not so much the "lack of ideology" as the insulation of space.

The contemporary revolutions in communication and transportation—television and jet airplane—have meant, geographically, an "eclipse of distance." In 1963, when A. Philip Randolph and Martin Luther King planned for a March on Washington, within 48 hours almost 250,000 persons had flowed into the capital to stand on the Mall, within sight of the President's office, to voice their demands for civil rights legislation. During the Vietnam War, "marches" of up to 70,000 demonstrators repeatedly stormed into Washington. The last such mass protest, spurred by the "Mayday Tribe," resulted in a series of actions to blockade the bridges leading into Washington from Virginia—actions that were halted only by the wholesale arrest of more than 5000 persons, arrests which later prompted civil suits against the government and a judicial ruling that those arrested were entitled to pecuniary restitution from the government. (To that, at least, one can still say, "Only in America.")

The simple point is that God's gift of

insulated space has disappeared. The United States is no longer immune to the kind of "mobilization politics" that has been characteristic of Europe in the past and of almost every other country in the world today. Mobilization politics, by its very nature, organizes direct mass pressure on a political center. What made France a political hotbed was the concentration of power in Paris, surrounded by a "Red belt" of workers in such *banlieus* as Billancourt, Clichy, and Saint-Denis. (Or, as one historian speculated, would the French Revolution have occurred if the Constituent Assembly had met in Dijon—rather than in Versailles, less than 20 miles from Paris?)

With the disappearance of insulated space, violence has become an everyday reality. The ecological lines within the cities have been breached and crime has spilled over into every neighborhood. In the ordinary experiences of everyday life, a middle-class child today is no more safe from assault than a working-class child was 25 years ago. More important, given the turmoil that is likely to develop in the next 25 years, we may see Washington become a hotbed of overt, mobilized political conflict. The problem of security has become immediate to our lives.

What is true domestically is, of course, true in the international sphere as well. John von Neumann once remarked that World War II was the last war of the old geopolitical strategists, who could count on space as the critical variable. In World War II, Russia still had an effective land mass into which it could retreat, even when Moscow was threatened by foreign armies. Today, in an age of intercontinental ballistic missiles, there are no hiding spaces in any part of the globe. And with large aircraft, isolated cities like Berlin could be saved by airlifts; or, as in the cases of the Congo, the Middle East, and Vietnam, vast supplies and whole armies could be transported 10,000 miles in short spans of time. The first act in city planning, Aristotle remarks in the *Politics*, is the building of the city's walls, for a city without walls is an invitation to invasion. If space and security meant "freedom to go about one's affairs" and a relaxed social fabric, then the freedom

and relaxation that America has known for a hundred years may be at an end.

Economic Abundance

The United States, as the late David Potter remarked, was a "people of plenty." It was not just the fertile soil, the large forests, the vast seams of coal, the large veins of iron ore, and the lake-and-river system that could tie them together—though all of these were essential. America's primary bounty was the ingenuity, energy, and character of its people. Long before industrialization, in the 1840's, visitors to this country remarked on the kind of production and the modes of social organization that permitted the United States to take the lead in the manufacture of goods. There was, for example, Oliver Evans' continuous flour-milling system, which showed the way for the coordinated packing-house slaughter of animals and later for the assembly line of Henry Ford. They were symbolized by Eli Whitney's invention of simple templates, so that untutored mechanics could draw and cut a standardized part, which in time led to the mass production of cheap watches and hundreds of other consumer items.

Previously, as Brooks Adams observed, economic power had depended on access to metals and the strategic control of trade routes. But the United States had led the way to economic power through its supremacy in applied science and the new arts of management.

The central question is whether the United States can maintain, if it has not already lost, this supremacy. In a familiar principle of economic development, a nation arriving "later" not only has an advantage in being able to use the more advanced technology but also is not burdened by the huge depreciation costs of the older technology, and can thus leapfrog ahead of the initial innovators—a theme that Thorsten Veblen developed in his book *Imperial Germany*. There is a similar point in Raymond Vernon's thesis of the "product cycle": As a product becomes standardized in its use, other countries can reap production savings in labor and other

costs so that, as in textiles, typewriters, or radios, production moves from the more advanced to the less developed country. To this extent, the United States, like England at the turn of the century, is caught in the turn of the economic product cycle and is losing its initial gains. It has even been suggested by the economic historian Charles P. Kindleberger that the United States may now have reached its "economic climacteric."

The areas of American economic "advantage" today form an odd mixture: food, military weapons, aircraft, computers, and a broad area of highly advanced technology comprising "miniaturization" (i.e. such semi-conductors as transistors and micro-processing) and certain optical processes (e.g. lasers). Yet most of these advantages are highly contingent. The United States is now a major food-exporting country, but its continuing advantage rests on uncertain climatic and political factors, such as the future ability of the Soviet Union and the Southeast Asian countries to overcome their agricultural deficits. Large amounts of military weapons now go to client states, but this is primarily a political rather than an economic factor. Miniaturization and optical technology were quickly mastered by Japan, and it is questionable how long our consistent lead will be maintained. Only in computers and aircraft is there a stable lead.

Yet the crucial fact is not these particular advantages for the balance of trade and payments, but a major change in the character of corporate income. Though foreign trade, given the size of this country and the magnitude of its economic activity, is still under 10 percent of GNP, about 20 percent of all corporate earnings comes from overseas. In this respect, two issues will become enormously important in the next decade. One is the fact that such countries as Germany and Japan are beginning to approach the limit of their advantage in the product cycle and in the export of goods, and a massive restructuring of their economies is taking place, one in which "know-how" and capital, competitive with the United States, are becoming the largest exports. And the second fact is that the United States, with its

increasing dependence on overseas sales and investments for corporate earnings, becomes more and more dependent on the political conditions of those countries.

American economic abundance is now tied inextricably to the world economy, at a time when the United States is less able to enforce its economic or political will on other nations. Given the scale of American corporate investment abroad, the United States may in the next decade become a *rentier* economy, its margin of abundance dependent on the earnings of those overseas investments. And there is a major political question whether the less developed countries would allow such a *rentier* arrangement to remain.

To all this must be added the more familiar domestic problems of the growth of services and the rise of entitlements. If economic abundance begins to shrink, the main question is whether the majority of Americans will accept increased tax burdens and the reduction of private consumption as the price of economic and social redress. And if they do not, will the poor accept this extraordinary reversal? In the decade to come, this will be a potential source of serious discord in the country.

The Two-Party System

Richard Hofstadter has written, apropos of Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition*: "One misses . . . in a book that deals with what is uniquely American two of our vital unique characteristics: our peculiar variant of federalism and our two-party system. Without a focus on federalism, we are tempted to downgrade the inventiveness of the American political system—for we were the pioneers in the development of the modern popular party and of the system of two-party opposition—but we miss the chance to see how conflict was both channeled and blunted in American history." The party system in the United States—which many persons take to be a unique institution to constrain conflict—was unforeseen at the beginning of the Republic. There is no mention of parties in the Constitution. In

fact, to the degree that parties were discussed, their existence was deplored as partisan and as polarizing the society. In contrary fact, however, the American party system has limited the polarization of issues and forced the very compromises that are anathema to partisan politics. It is that fact which makes the present decomposition of the party system so troublesome when considering the future of American politics.

Politics in the United States has not been non-ideological. As many shades of ideology have been present in the United States as there are colors in the spectrum. What has been different in the United States is the fact that single ideological and class divisions, except for slavery, could not divide the polity along a single unyielding dimension. (And slavery could do so because it was concentrated in a single region.) In the nature of the multiple claims mediated by the political system, partisans of different ideologies had to compromise their demands or work only as single-issue groups within the larger framework. Thus when George Henry Evans sought to promote the Homestead Act in order to provide free land as a solution for labor ills, he did not, contrary to earlier impulses, start a new party, but worked within Congress to get the support of individuals from different parties on that issue alone. And when Samuel Gompers put the American Federation of Labor into politics in the 1890's, he angered the Socialists (who at that time had come close to capturing the leadership of that organization) by proclaiming the slogan, "Reward your friends, punish your enemies." How else, he explained, could one win remedial legislation, if one did not support those who had introduced and worked for that legislation? In the United States, because of the party system, ideology had shrunk to issues.

Along with the two-party system, different axes of social division weakened ideological politics in American life, and also the shifting emphases, at different historical periods, of different sociological divisions. Along one axis there have been economic and class issues which divided farmer and banker, worker and employer, and led to the

functional and interest-group conflicts that were especially sharp in the 1930's. Along a different axis were status-group conflicts—the politics of the 1920's, and to some extent those of the 1950's, with the rural small-town Protestant intent on defending his "traditionalist" values against the cosmopolitan, urban liberal seeking to install new "modern" values. The McCarthyism of the 1950's was an effort by traditionalist forces—Joseph McCarthy's strongest support came from small businessmen—to impose a uniform political morality on the society by conformity to a single definition of ideological Americanism. In contrary fashion, the McGovern campaign of 1972 was fueled largely by a "new politics" which represented the most radical tendencies of the modernists—women's lib, sexual non-conformists, and cultural radicals in an alliance, for the moment, with black and other ethnic minority groups.

The importance of these two axes is that divisions along economic lines have not been congruent with cultural divisions. The labor movement in the United States, which has been consistently Democratic, is actively hostile to cultural radicalism. Farmers and small businessmen, who are usually Republican, cross the party line in times of economic crisis. At different historical periods, the economic or the status issues have been salient, and thus it has been difficult to maintain the historical continuity of groups on ideological issues. The unique vitality of the American party system was to maintain a shifting balance between different social forces, and when there was too great a disequilibrium, realignments took place, as they have about five times in American political history.

Today it seems likely that the party system in the United States is in disarray, if not in complete deterioration.¹⁰ Walter Dean Burnham, an unusually keen analyst, has in fact argued as follows:

The American electorate is now deep into the most sweeping behavioral transformation since the Civil War. It is in the midst of a critical realignment of a radically different

kind from all others in American electoral history. This critical realignment, instead of being channeled through partisan voting behavior as in the past, is cutting across older partisan linkages between rulers and ruled. The direct consequence of this is an astonishingly rapid dissolution of the political party as an effective "guide" or intervenor between the voter and the objects of his vote at the polls. . . . This is a realignment whose essence is the end of two-party politics in the traditional understanding; in short, it is a *caesura* in American political evolution, a moment in time at which we close a very long volume of history and open a brand-new one.¹¹

The relevant evidence can be quickly summarized. First is the decline of party identification, and the rise of the politically independent voter. Second is the fact that the rise in independence is concentrated almost entirely among the young. Persons over 40 were virtually undisturbed in their political allegiances by the turmoil of the 1960's. But 26 percent of the voters who were in their 20's in the 1960's registered as independents, and contrary to previous experience, in which individuals identify with parties as they grow older, the proportion of independents in that age cohort had risen to 40 percent 10 years later. The major result of all this has been a startling rise in "ticket-splitting" between the presidential and congressional contests, from 11.2 percent in 1944 to 44.1 percent in 1972.

The party machines themselves have largely broken down. The rise of public welfare and the growth of public unionism had already substantially reduced the role of patronage in supporting the party machines. Now the revolution in political campaign techniques, primarily the emergence of television as the principal channel of communication between candidate and voter, has robbed the party of one of its basic functions—the organization and management of campaigns.¹²

Issue Politics

All this has gone hand in hand with a more

troubling change in American politics—the swift rise of single, salient issues which have tended to polarize the electorate sharply. As party identification has decreased, individuals have focused their political identities on specific issues which symbolize their grievances and concerns about the society. The various readings of the Michigan Survey Research Center show an increasing issue-consciousness and issue-intensity among the electorate in the 1960's. In that decade, this was centered, by and large, on three issues: Vietnam, "race," and a cluster of concerns that involved drugs, youth rebellion, street crime, "coddling" of criminals, "permissiveness," and the like, which can generally be labeled "cultural." On the whole, these were not economic-class issues, and as a result it was evident that the old liberal coalition that had been built by the New Deal was falling apart.

In the past, when such massive shifts have taken place, they have set the stage for a "critical realignment." The "present" party structure came into being in the 1930's, during the Depression, when millions of voters made a permanent change in party identification, the country's previous normal Republican majority having been established in the critical election of 1896. Another "critical realignment" has since been expected by both the "right" and the "left."

And yet it does not seem as if any "critical realignment" will actually take place. For one thing, the new economic issues of the 1970's cut sharply across the older social issues. There is the dual problem of inflation and unemployment. But what is the specific "conservative" or "liberal" response? What characterized the New Deal was the commitment to government activism and intervention, as against that of the older Republicans, who feared and fought *any* government policy. But *every* administration is "activist" today. Nixon wanted "market" solutions, but established wage-and-price controls. Ford wanted to reduce government spending but reversed himself to create the largest budget deficit in American economic history (as did Eisenhower in 1958, when unemployment began to rise). One has to

distinguish rhetoric from the political imperatives: The fact is that no administration today can escape the need for state management of the level of economic activity.

The more troublesome consideration is the increase in the general distrust by many individuals of the political system itself. In 1973, the loss of confidence in government and institutions reached majority proportions, according to the Louis Harris poll for a Senate committee. What is striking is how generalized and widespread this discontent has become. Almost all sociological analyses of politics start from standard demographic variables such as race, religion, region, income, education, and age, and relate political attitudes to social class clusters. It has been assumed that alienation fluctuates more in some demographic groups than in others. But some recent analyses of political alienation from 1952 to 1968 suggest a startling lack of correspondence between demographic status and ideological attitudes; the growing sense of alienation in this period would seem to be equal among all groups.¹³

In the past, most of the partisan issues in American life have been converted into interest-group issues, in which particular advantages could be specified, so that deals and trade-offs could mediate differences. But more of the issues today—especially the symbolic ones—resist such compromise: They tend to be all-or-nothing, rather than more-or-less. When such symbolic issues as Vietnam or race become salient, the intensity of partisan feelings grows, and individuals are more ready to resort to extra-parliamentary, extra-legal means, or street violence, to express their views. And when such issues multiply, the level of generalized distrust of the system rises, and individuals tend to support extremist leaders—who, in this country, are mainly on the right.

A democratic society has to provide a mode of consistent representation of relatively stable alignments, or modes of compromise, in its polity. The mechanism of the American polity has been the two-party system: If the party system, with its enforced mode of compromise, gives way, and "issue politics"

begins to polarize groups, we have then the classic recipe for what political scientists call "a crisis of the regime," if not a crisis of disintegration and revolution. Few would claim that this is an immediate possibility, but the point is that a structural strain has been introduced into the society and that a major element in the social stability of the country—the meaning of American exceptionalism—has been weakened. That is the danger before us.

CONSTITUTIONALISM AND COMITY

In any root discussion of American society, we have to return to political philosophy. The American political system at its founding was a philosophical response to (and, in turn, creatively shaped) the social structures of 18th- and 19th-century America. There were two distinguishing features: First, the American Revolution, unlike the French, was primarily a *political*, not a *social*, revolution. It sought to provide self-government and individual freedom and it assumed that any social changes would take place *outside* the political arena, by individuals freely shaping their own lives. It sought to emancipate civil society from the state. To that extent it was the classic *bourgeois* or liberal revolution, made easier by the absence of settled feudal institutions; what was overthrown was political authority 3000 miles away. Second, the Revolution established a *constitutional* structure of governance. A framework of powers was laid out whose scale and institutions derived from an agrarian and mercantile society, but whose principles were drawn from an older font of wisdom—the classical view of politics which knew the threat of tyranny that derives from the demagogic manipulation of the masses and the centralization of power in a single set of institutions. America was exceptional in being, perhaps, the only fully bourgeois-liberal polity. Its sociological foundation was the denial of the primacy of politics for everyday life.

Almost from the start, however, or at least from the 1830's and 1840's, the effort to create a *social* revolution began to transform

the political system. Government was to be used for social purposes, i.e. redistributive and redressive policies. The adaptive tasks of American society in the last 150 years have been the creation of new institutions to reconcile political power—its inherent corruption and misuse, and also its capability, through law or command, to mobilize resources for common ends—with the new demands created by economic development, changes in the occupational and class character of society, and the need for redress. In sequence, we have seen the assumption of judicial review of legislative and executive decisions, the creation of regulatory and administrative agencies, themselves possessed of quasi-judicial authority, and the establishment of a social welfare state. All of this took place within the commitment to constitutionalism.

The problem which the nation faces in the coming decades is how to maintain the framework of constitutionalism in mediating the multiple conflicting demands that are upon us now and that will multiply in the next decades—since the “social” and the “political” are now so inextricably joined. The liberal theory of society was that law should be formally rational, i.e. procedural and not substantive; that government was to be an umpire, or at worst a broker, and not an intervening force in its own right. Yet in every way the decisions of government today—from taxes to purchases, from regulation to subsidies, from transfer payments to services—are active forms of intervention whose consequence, if not direct intention, is redress: a set of actions that antagonizes the losers yet satisfies the gainers only grudgingly, since no one ever gets his full claims, nor acknowledges his gains as being enough. We have few principles in political philosophy and public law to justify a collective society or to establish a consistent principle of redress. We have few ideas—and this is the challenge to economists and social scientists—on how to use market and decentralized mechanisms for communal ends. Our resources, physical, financial, and intellectual, are strained.

If constitutionalism—the common respect

for the framework of law, and the acceptance of outcomes under due process—fails, or is rejected by significant sections of the society, then the entire framework of American society would collapse as well. It is in this sense that the last remaining “exceptionalism” must persist.

The Recognition of History

The shaping elements of any society, as I said earlier, are nature, religion, and history. The United States began with no “history,”—the first such experiment in political sociology—and for much of its existence as a society, its orientation was to the “future,” to its Manifest Destiny and mission. Today that sense of destiny has been shattered. Nature and religion have vanished as well. We are a nation like all other nations—Santayana once said that Americans were inexperienced in poisons, but we have acquired skill in that area as well—except that we have, *in looking back*, a unique history, a history of constitutionalism and comity.¹⁴ We have been a society that has, by and large, maintained a respect for individual rights and liberties: The idea of being a “free people” has not been traduced, the principles of due process and law have remained inviolate. For all the domestic ills or foreign “crimes” of the United States, its record as a civilized society commands respect—especially compared to the savageries of the Soviet Union or Germany, or the newer states of Rwanda, Burundi, or Uganda—and we need not be apologetic on that score.

It has been said that there is a decay of legitimacy in the country and that this is a source of the potential disintegration of the nation. But this observation fails to make a necessary distinction between a *regime* and a *society*. A government, as Edmund Burke insisted long ago, is a contrivance, an instrument to deal with wants. But a society is a people shaped by history and bound by comity. It is the rupture of comity, the play of ideological passions to their utmost extreme, that shreds the society and turns the city into a holocaust.

Some conditions that have constrained conflict—the character of the party system—have been weakened. The recent political history of the successive administrations has left the nation with much moral disrepute. All of this places a great responsibility on the leadership of the society. This necessitates the recreation of a moral credibility whose essential condition is simple honesty and openness. It means the conscious commitment in foreign policy to limit national power to purposes proportionate with national interests and to forego any hegemonic dream, even of being the moral policeman of the world. Domestically it means the renewed commitment to the policy of inclusion whereby disadvantaged groups have priority in social policy, both as an act of justice and to defuse social tensions that could explode. The act of “conscious will” has to replace the wavering supports of American exceptionalism as the means of holding the society together.

Of all the gifts bestowed on this country at its founding, the one that alone remains as the element of American exceptionalism is the constitutional system, with a comity that has been undergirded by history. And it is the recognition of history, now that the future has receded, which provides the meaning of becoming twice-born. America was the exemplary once-born nation, the land of sky-blue optimism in which the traditional ills of civilization were, as Emerson once said, merely the measles and whooping cough of growing up. The act of becoming twice-born, the entrance into maturity, is the recognition of the mortality of countries within the time scales of history.

History, as Richard Hofstadter observed eloquently in the concluding pages of the book which took the measure of the Progressive historians, provides “not only a keener sense of the structural complexity of our society in the past, but also a sense of the moral complexity of social action.” For this reason, history has always disturbed the radical activists, who fear that the sense of complexity leads to political immobility since, as Hofstadter remarks, “history does seem inconsistent with the coarser rallying cries of politics.”

And yet, history does provide us with a double consciousness of the need for reflection and also commitment. “As practiced by mature minds,” Hofstadter concludes, “history forces us to be aware not only of complexity but of defeat and failure: It tends to deny that high sense of expectation, that hope of ultimate and glorious triumph, that sustains good combatants. There may be comfort in it still. In an age when so much of our literature is infused with nihilism, and other social disciplines are driven toward narrow positivistic inquiry, history may yet remain the most humanizing among the arts.” And if the United States, as a polity, remains aware of the moral complexity of history, it may also remain humanized among the nations.

NOTES

1. The four are *The Law of Civilization and Decay* (1897), *America's Economic Supremacy* (1900), *The New Empire* (1902), and *The Theory of Social Revolutions* (1913). All were published by Macmillan, New York.

2. *The New Empire*, pp. 208-09.

3. Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 445.

4. The quotations from Whitman and many of the references in this section are taken from Albert K. Weinberg's *Manifest Destiny* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), the magisterial study of this idea in American life and thought.

5. Whatever the plausibility of imperialism as a component of America's economic interests, the example of Vietnam would make the least sense as an area where vital or basic American economic interests were at stake.

6. Marx's friend and co-worker Joseph Weydemeyer became a brigadier general in the Union Army in the American Civil War, as did August Willich. Weydemeyer remained a friend of Marx, but Willich and most of the other German socialists became Republicans and even held minor electoral posts, especially in Ohio, which had a German socialist concentration. For a discussion of this emigration, see Carl Witke, *Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1952) and R. Lawrence Moore, *European Socialists and the American Promised Land* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1970). The letter to Weydemeyer is cited in Moore, pp. 4-5.

7. “Americanism as Surrogate Socialism,” reprinted in *Failure of a Dream?* edited by John H. Laslett and S. M. Lipset (New York: Doubleday, 1974), p. 426. The essay appeared originally in the book *Toward a United Front* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1935).

8. I take this, and several other items in this inventory, from Robert Wiebe's *The Segmented Society* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), though at variance with his interpretation, and with different illustrations.

9. I leave aside the very different question of the conflict that has arisen between the principle of “equality of opportunity” and the desire for an “equality of results,” or the translation of the demands for equality into the claims of entitlement. I have discussed these questions in my essay, “The Public Household,” in *The Public Interest*, No. 37 (Fall 1974), 29-68.

10. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Democratic Distemper," *The Public Interest*, No. 41 (Fall 1975), 9-38. The special role of the American party system in moderating conflict is discussed in S. M. Lipset's article, "The Paradox of American Politics" in the same issue of *The Public Interest* (pp. 142-65).

11. Walter Dean Burnham, "American Politics in the 1970s: Beyond Party?" (Unpublished paper).

12. If one is to believe some recent arguments by political scientists, "Elections are now waged through the mass media which have supplanted political parties as the major intermediary between office seekers and the electorate. . . ." (Thomas E. Patterson and Ronald P. Abeles, "Mass Communication and the 1976 Presidential Election," *Items*, published by the Social Science Research Council, June 1975, p. 13.) This is a sweeping claim, indeed. The "received knowledge" in the field has been skeptical about the powers of the mass media. The standard work—*Personal Influence*, by Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld (Free Press of Glencoe, 1955)—argued that the mass media serve largely to reinforce existing attitudes or to give individuals a "language" to express ideas, whereas actual influence is a two-step process in which "gatekeepers" or "style leaders" shape the attitudes and tones of small groups of followers who take their cues from these "influentials." If in 20 years there has indeed been a change in the patterns of influence, it is a major change in behavioral patterns.

13. See James S. House and William M. Mason, "Political Alienation in America, 1952-1968," *American Sociological*

Review, 40 (April 1975), 123-47. Paul R. Abramson writes: "The persistent relationship of social class to partisan choice is one of the most extensively documented facts of American political life. . . . But the economic, social, and political changes of postwar America have eroded the relationship between social class and partisan choice" ("Generational Change in American Electoral Behavior," *American Political Science Review*, 68 [March 1974], 93-105).

14. The idea of "comity" comes from Richard Hofstadter, who, in the reflective, concluding sections of his *The Progressive Historians*, wrote:

Finally, there is a subtler, more intangible, but vital kind of moral consensus that I would call comity. Comity exists in a society to the degree that those enlisted in its contending interests have a basic minimal regard for each other: one party or interest seeks the defeat of an opposing interest on matters of policy, but at the same time seeks to avoid crushing the opposition, denying the legitimacy of its existence or its values, or inflicting upon it extreme and gratuitous humiliations beyond the substance of the gains that are being sought. The basic humanity is not forgotten; civility is not abandoned; the sense that a community life must be carried on after the acerbic issues of the moment have been fought over and won is seldom far out of mind; an awareness that the opposition will someday be the government is always present.

