

ELITISM

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ELITISM IS WRONG

DEMOCRACY AND ELITISM ARE NOT ANTITHETICAL

THE MONTHLY REVIEW PROMOTING POLYARCHY: GLOBALIZATION, U.S. INTERVENTION, AND HEGEMONY. (BOOK REVIEWS).

Adopting an elitist view that hearkened back to the work of such earlier proponents of "the theory of democratic elitism" as Alexis de Tocqueville and Gaetano Mosca Schumpeter indicated that the greatest danger to democracy was "the rabble" with its "criminality or stupidity," and that the democratic method was useful primarily if it were so curtailed that such extremes, which made democracy as an end in itself rather than simply a method, were restrained by the development of more limiting democratic institutions.

EGALITARIANISM IS DYING

BYFIELD, LINK, YES, THE EGALITARIAN IDEAL IS DYING; AND GOOD RIDDANCE, TOO., VOL. 22, ALBERTA REPORT / WESTERN REPORT, 02-20-1995, PP 2.

Though it is rarely put quite so frankly, it has been the animating idea of Canadian democracy and the welfare state for as long as I can remember. Egalitarianism inspired the "progressive" income tax, the multi-billion-dollar federal transfers to poorer provinces, subsidized university and "universal" entitlements such as old age security. Popular faith in the ideal is plainly vanishing, and I notice it has become a source of gloomy speculation among left-wing editorialists as to what will replace it.

ELITISM MAKES GOOD ECONOMIC SENSE

LIU, GUOLI, THE POLITICS OF MARKETIZATION: INEQUALITY VERSUS EFFICIENCY. (CHINA), VOL. 24, ASIAN AFFAIRS: AN AMERICAN REVIEW, 09-22-1997, PP 163(16).

The relationship between efficiency and equality is a central issue in marketization. Efficiency is mainly an economic problem; equality is a socioeconomic and political issue. Efficiency refers to the ratio of input to output; higher efficiency can be achieved if greater output is produced from a given input. The question of equality or inequality is more complicated and involves value judgments. Equality is a sociopolitical concept with multiple and conflicting implications. Egalitarianism is not equity (Young 1994): On the contrary, it is unfair for all workers to receive the same pay if they perform differently. Under the conditions of a market economy, efficiency is the result of economic competition; the winners profit, and the losers suffer reduced income or are even forced into bankruptcy. Thus, equal competition leads to unequal results.

ELITE CONTROL STOPS INDIVIDUAL GROWTH

DR. THOMAS DYE & DR. HARMON ZEIGLER, 1970, (PROFESSORS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, RESPECTIVELY), THE IRONY OF DEMOCRACY, 1970, PAGE 15

Of course, decision snaking by elite interaction, whether it succeeds in protecting the individual or not, fails to contribute to individual growth and development. In this regard, modern pluralism diverges sharply from classic democracy which, emphasizes as a primary value the development that would result from the opportunity of the individual to participate actively in decisions that significantly affect his life.

GOVERNMENT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE TO INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS

DR. THOMAS DYE & DR. HARMON ZEIGLER, 1970, (PROFESSORS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, RESPECTIVELY), THE IRONY OF DEMOCRACY. 1970, PAGE 15

Another central value of classical democratic politics is individual participation in decision making. In modern pluralism, however, individual participation has given way to interaction--bargaining, accommodation, and compromise--between leaders of institutions and organizations in society. Individuals are represented in the political system order insofar as they are members of institutions or organizations whose leaders participate in policy making. Government is held responsible not by individual citizens but by leaders of institutions, organized interest groups, and political parties. The principal actors are leaders of corporations and financial institutions, elected and appointed government officials, the top ranks of military and governmental bureaucracies, and leaders of large organizations in labor, agriculture, and the professions.

DECISION MAKING IS STILL DONE BY ELITES

DR. THOMAS DYE & DR. HARMON ZEIGLER, 1970, (PROFESSORS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, RESPECTIVELY), THE IRONY OF DEMOCRACY. 1970, PAGE 15

Pluralism stresses the fragmentation of power in society and the influence of public opinion and elections on the behavior of elites. But this fragmentation of power is not identical with the democratic ideal of political equality. Who rules in the pluralist view of America? According to political scientist Aaron Wildavsky, "different small groups of interested and active citizens in different issue areas with some overlap, if any, by public officials, and occasional intervention by a larger number of people at the polls." This is not government by the people. While citizen influence can be felt through leaders who anticipate the reaction of citizens, decision making is still in the hands of the leaders--the elites.

ELITISM LEADS EVENTUALLY TO LIMITATIONS ON PARTICIPATION

DR. THOMAS DYE & DR. HARMON ZEIGLER, 1970, (PROFESSORS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, RESPECTIVELY), THE IRONY OF DEMOCRACY. 1970, PAGE 15

There are several other problems in accepting pluralism as the legitimate heir to classical democratic theory. First of all, can pluralism assure that membership in organizations and institutions is really an affective form of individual participation in policy making? Robert Presthus argues that the organizations and institutions on which pluralists rely "become oligarchic and restrictive insofar as they monopolize access to government power and limit individual participation."

ELITISM HURTS PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ARTS

ASSOCIATED PRESS, "ELITISM HURTS PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ARTS -- STUDY," TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1997

A federal study concludes that art in America has grown faster than its financial support partly because artists and art groups have not cultivated a broad public, the New York Times reported Monday. The report, prepared by the National Endowment for the Arts, says many Americans do not recognize the relevance of art in their lives. Arts groups also often are elitist, racially segregated, class-based and isolated from the communities they claim to serve, but don't, it says. The report says artist and cultural groups have neglected "those aspects of participation, democratization and popularization that might have helped sustain the arts when the political climate turned sour."

ELITISM BEST PROTECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES

OTHER COUNTRIES ARE MORE ELITIST THAN AMERICA

WILLIAM A. HENRY III, BOOK EXCERPT: IN DEFENSE OF ELITISM., TIME, 08-29-1994, PP63.
For all the socialism of British or French public policy and for all the paternalism of the Japanese, those nations restrict university training to a much smaller percentage of their young, typically 10% to 15%. Moreover, they and other First World nations tend to carry the elitism over into judgments about precisely which institution one attends. They rank their universities, colleges and technical schools along a prestige hierarchy much more rigidly gradated -- and judged by standards much more widely accepted -- than we Americans ever impose on our jumble of public and private institutions.

ELITISM IS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH ONLY THE UPPER CLASSES

LEADING ARTICLE: LET'S START THE WEEK WITH SOME HEALTHY ELITISM.,
INDEPENDENT, 07-14-1997, PP 14.

But this is not just about preserving the elitist pleasures of the middle classes. The working classes, too, are quite capable of being elitist, and have just as much interest in defending intellectual, educational or artistic elitism.

JACKSONIAN DEMOCRACY IS ANTITHETICAL TO ELITISM

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The Jacksonians' basic policy thrust, both in Washington and in the states, was to rid government of class biases and dismantle the top-down, credit-driven engines of the market revolution. The war on the Second Bank of the United States and subsequent hard-money initiatives set the tone - an unyielding effort to remove the hands of a few wealthy, unelected private bankers from the levers of the nation's economy.

ACCOMMODATION, NOT COMPETITION, DESCRIBES ELITES

DR. THOMAS DYE & DR. HARMON ZEIGLER, 1970, (PROFESSORS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, RESPECTIVELY), THE IRONY OF DEMOCRACY. 1970, PAGE 15

Also, can pluralism really assume that the dignity of the individual is being protected by elite competition? Since pluralism contends that different groups of leaders make decisions in different issue areas, why should we assume that these leaders compete with each other? It seems more likely that each group of leaders would consent to allow other groups of leaders to govern their own spheres of influence without interference. Accommodation, rather than competition, may be the prevailing style of elite interaction.

MASSES MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO TOTALITARIANISM

DR. THOMAS DYE & DR. HARMON ZEIGLER, 1970, (PROFESSORS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, RESPECTIVELY), THE IRONY OF DEMOCRACY. 1970, PAGE 15

Historically, the masses and not elites were considered the guardians of liberty. For example, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the threat of tyranny arose from corrupt monarchies and decadent churches. But in the twentieth century, it has been the masses who have been most susceptible to the appeals of totalitarianism.

ELITES MOST COMMITTED TO DEMOCRATIC VALUES

DR. THOMAS DYE & DR. HARMON ZEIGLER, 1970, (PROFESSORS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, RESPECTIVELY), THE IRONY OF DEMOCRACY. 1970, PAGE 15

It is the irony of democracy' in America that elites, not masses, are most committed to democratic values. Despite a superficial commitment to the symbols of democracy, the American people have a surprisingly weak commitment to individual liberty, toleration of diversity, or freedom of expression for those who would challenge the existing order. Social science research reveals that the common man is not attached to the causes of liberty, fraternity, or equality. On the contrary, support for free speech and press, for freedom of dissent, and for equality of opportunity for all is associated with high educational levels, prestigious occupations, and high social status. Authoritarianism is stronger among the working classes in America than among the middle and upper classes. Democracy would not survive if it depended upon support for democratic values among the masses in America.

DEMOCRATIC VALUES SURVIVE BECAUSE OF ELITES

DR. THOMAS DYE & DR. HARMON ZEIGLER, 1970, (PROFESSORS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, RESPECTIVELY), THE IRONY OF DEMOCRACY. 1970, PAGE 15

Democratic values have survived because elites, not masses, govern. Elites in America--leaders in government, industry, education, and civic affairs; the well-educated, prestigiously employed, and politically active--with rare exception give greater support to basic democratic values and "rules of the game" than do the masses. And it is because masses in America respond to the ideas and actions of democratically minded elites that liberal values are preserved.

MASSES ARE NOT DEDICATED TO FREEDOM

DR. THOMAS DYE & DR. HARMON ZEIGLER, 1970, (PROFESSORS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, RESPECTIVELY), THE IRONY OF DEMOCRACY. 1970, PAGE 15

In summarizing the findings of social science research regarding mass behavior in American democracy, political scientist Peter Baccarat writes: "A widespread public commitment to the fundamental norms underlying the democratic process was regarded by classical democratic theorists as essential to the survival of democracy..." Today social scientists tend to reject this position. They do so not only because of their limited confidence in the commitment of non elites to freedom but also because of the growing awareness that non elites are, in large part, politically activated by elites.

MASSES ARE MOST SWAYED BY ANTI DEMOCRATIC IDEOLOGY

DR. THOMAS DYE & DR. HARMON ZEIGLER, 1970, (PROFESSORS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, RESPECTIVELY), THE IRONY OF DEMOCRACY. 1970, PAGE 15

In short, it is the common man, not the elite, who is most likely to be swayed by antidemocratic ideology; and it is the elite, not the common man, who is the chief guardian of democratic values. Elites must be insulated from the antidemocratic tendencies of the masses if they are to fulfill their role as guardians of liberty and property.

MASS INFLUENCE ON ELITES HARMS DEMOCRATIC VALUES

DR. THOMAS DYE & DR. HARMON ZEIGLER, 1970, (PROFESSORS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, RESPECTIVELY), THE IRONY OF DEMOCRACY. 1970, PAGE 15

Too much mass influence over elites threatens democratic values. Mass behavior is highly unstable. Usually, established elites can depend upon mass apathy; but, occasionally, mass

activism will replace apathy, and this activism will be extremist, unstable, and unpredictable. Mass activism is usually an expression of resentment against the established order and it usually occurs in times of crisis, when a counter-elite, or demagogue, emerges from the masses to mobilize them against the established elites.

NO CLEAR ELITES IN AMERICA

DR. ALAN STONE & DR. RICHARD BARKE, 1985, (BOTH ARE PROFESSORS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON), GOVERNING THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC, 1985 PAGE 103
According to Karl Marx, the ideas that control a society are the ideas of its dominant class. It is not clear whether the United States has had a dominant class, because different groups have found a variety of access points to the policy making institutions of government. Numerous examples can be found in American history of public decisions that recognize the demands and rights of various groups. Even among groups that could be designated as elite, there is often profound disagreement about public policies. There are wealthy liberals and wealthy conservatives. Some corporate leaders oppose any warming of relations with Communist countries, while other business executives see improved trade relations as a means for assuring international cooperation--and larger markets.