

## DOES THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ENJOY GREATER HUMAN FREEDOM AND FULFILLMENT THAN HIS FOREBEARS?

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"The most profound issue at stake in the world today is the issue of freedom and democracy. For all its errors the Western World has for centuries tried to evolve a society in which the individual has enough legal, social and political elbow room to be not the puppet of the community, but his own autonomous self."<sup>1</sup>

This is the way one of the most literate men of our generation has formulated what he believes to be the key problem of the times. Another very literate man one-hundred and thirty years ago raised the same problem, except, unlike Mr. Stevenson, he postulated a tension between democracy and freedom which threatened adverse consequences for democratic man. If equalitarian democracy is achieved, Alexis DeTocqueville said, freedom might be impaired.<sup>2</sup> Since his time equalitarianism has become more pervasive, and, if we are to judge by its modern critics, it has played midwife to a "mass society" with all of the accompanying mischievous effects on genuine individualism.

### Some Definitions and Assumptions

Are we less free today than were our forebears in the earlier span of American history? I shall support the contention that the modern American enjoys more liberty relative to his times than did his forebears. Whether, indeed, he is availing himself of this opportunity and developing that second type of freedom, "internal freedom" or "self-mastery" of which Sister Enid speaks in the reading assignment, is a related question, but one which because of space and time limitations I would defer to another day, if indeed, it can be answered. I define freedom for purposes of this paper as the absence of external restraints as well as the reasonable availability of means to pursue one's human development.

The real subject of freedom is man and no discussion of it can escape the inevitable question: "freedom for what?". Freedom is designed to allow the development of human beings; and therefore its nature depends greatly on what one thinks the content of "humanness" is.

If you hold to the Greek picture of man as semi-autonomous, capable of self-direction, perfectible, rational, social, you can logically support a democratic society. If you hold man as essentially corrupted by the Fall, intellectually handicapped for the virtuous life, you may support the strong prince as

Luther did. If you find man egoistic, anarchical, aggressive as Hobbes or Machiavelli saw him, you end up with the Leviathan State or the tyrant prince. If you find man rational and social, and basically good, but subject to emotional aberrations, you may end up with a democratic, constitutional republic, as in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Robert Hutchins laconically illustrates this point when he identifies constitutional government as that form which best fulfills the nature of man.

If "virtue" can be defended as an excellence or characteristic by which a thing (or being) does its proper work well; and if the nature of a thing determines what its proper work is, then certainly freedom can be conceived of as the milieu in which these excellencies (or human virtues) may be best developed; and so, Frank Meyer in a current book on freedom defines it as that situation which "gives men the best opportunity to practice virtue."<sup>4</sup> I concur and it shall be my model for weighing freedom in American history.

My picture of man for purposes of this paper approximates that of the Founding Fathers. I entertain Greek optimism tempered by the facts of historical experience. Man is rational and social over the long run with an innate capacity for cooperation, justice, and mercy. Over the short run, aggravated by unfavorable social conditions, these attributes may be punctuated by outbursts of temper and non-rational behavior. Like Edmund Burke, I value sub-societies and institutionalized devices such as families, voluntary associations, formal educational systems, and constitutions in repressing and cleansing such evidence of non-rationality together with certain social myths which appeal to the best that is in man, in an effort to make him socially responsible.

### The Social Critics

This picture of man, therefore, predisposes me against the more radical contentions of social critics such as Whyte (Organization Man); Riesman (Lonely Crowd); Ortega de Gasset (The Revolt of the Masses); C. Wright Mills, and others as to the vulnerability of the average citizen to social determinism.

Nevertheless, I would admit that over short periods historically it is possible that events may conspire to produce passivity, docility, or irrational aggressiveness in man. McCarthyism is not an isolated phenomenon in American history any more than the lynch mob psychology that has punctuated our history of race relations.

My thesis put positively is merely that the average American

today is potentially freer to develop his humanness than his forebears, and that the biggest impediment to this development lies in his own convictions about the nature of man and his capacity to create a free environment and benefit by it. We tend to act as we think (ideas have consequences) and to succumb to various theories of biological, psychological, economic, and social determinism will handicap the efforts of man on his own behalf and bring about that condition which some social critics are trying to describe.

### The "Never, Never" Land

If freedom, as Sister Enid develops it in the reference material, has two aspects, an external one of "no impediments" and an internal one of "self mastery", it is obvious that a society in which men suffer all the cross pressures that the aforementioned critics suggest (with the resultant decline of the autonomous personality) is scarcely a model of freedom. The fallacy may lie in believing that these pressures are enduring phenomenon and that they make of modern man something he never was in the past. There occurs in our enthusiasm for some of the trenchant insights imparted by these authors a tendency to sentimentalize the past, a form of "escapism". All of us seek the "lost horizon" where things are or were different. Unfortunately at times (or perhaps fortunately) that picture of the "lost horizon" is conjured up by imagination undisciplined by sense observation; and it is possible, therefore, to pour into it all of our unrealized (as well as unrealistic) expectations.

This type of romanticism is caricatured well by John Roche in a recent Reporter magazine piece:

Once upon a time, so the story runs, the United States was a land of militant, inner-directed non-conformists, men who were as sensitive to the rights of others as they were fierce in the defense of their own autonomy. Then slowly over this green and pleasant land crept the miasma of orthodoxy, an enervating spirit of conformity which left in its wake an atomized population of other-directed status seekers, gibbering the slogans of the moment, terrified of the FBI, and finding ultimate consolation in the narcosis of mass culture. A nation of Thoreaus has in some subtle fashion been transformed into an anomic mass of dying salesmen.<sup>5</sup>



There are some reasons why status and conformity again have become the major preoccupation of some intellectuals. One of them is the shift of intellectuals away from ideology towards sociology because of the loss of interest in political inquiry.<sup>6</sup> I say, "again" because there have been other periods in our history when the charges of conformism have been just as bitter, if somewhat less empirically based.

### The Golden Age of Non-Conformity

DeTocqueville, that prestigious social critic of the 1830's, could well have been a co-author of Riesman or Whyte had he lived later in American history. The power of the majority, he feared, in democratic states "is<sup>so</sup> absolute and irresistible that one must give up his rights as a citizen and almost abjure his qualities as a man, if he intends to stray from the track which it prescribes."<sup>7</sup>

Harriet Martineau, English critic of 1837, noted voluminously that "nowhere does there exist so much heart-eating care (about others' judgments), so much nervous anxiety, as among the dwellers in the towns of the northern states of America."<sup>8</sup> Americans, she said, "may travel over the world and find no society but their own which will submit (as much) to the restraints of perpetual caution and reference to the opinions of others."

Even Max Weber, the famed German sociologist, in visiting America in the early 1900's, noted the high degree of "submission to fashion in America, to a degree unknown in Germany."<sup>9</sup> He explained it as a natural attribute of a democratic society without inherited class status.<sup>10</sup>

The significance of these observations is that they were not leveled at recent generations, but those of our forebears. A good deal of the sentimentalized myth that at some undesignated time in the past there was in our country a golden age of individualism is traceable to the thesis of Historian Vernon Parrington which has been influential with one group in his discipline.<sup>11</sup> According to this school of thought American freedom hit its apogee with Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence and has been declining ever since.

Other historians, nationalists, have assigned extraordinary virtue to the Founding Fathers for their own reasons. We must remember that part of the cement which holds a society together is a common myth about the past; and some American historians, like nationalists of other countries, have not been averse to utilizing it for their own purposes. This subject of prostituting

historical studies for social purpose is a separate story that can perhaps be told some other time. Its existence, however, aggravates the problem of realistic interpretations of the past and suggests proper caution in elevating our forebears to the level of demi-gods.

### Mass Culture

One of the haunting fears of the intellectuals when confronted with the rise of modern democracies has been that they and the work they love would be crushed beneath the weight of an all pervasive mass society. Their thesis: increased access by the mass of population to the culture market necessarily means a limitation on cultural tastes as compared to a time in which culture is limited to the well-to-do and the well educated. This means simply that man thus limits himself in achieving the heights of intellectual and artistic development that might otherwise be possible.

DeTocqueville in Part Two, Book I, discusses the "Influence of Democracy upon the Action of the Intellect in the United States." He suggests that the democratic nations cultivate the arts which serve to render life easy, in preference to those whose object it is to adorn it. In Chapter 19, Book II, however, he leaves some hope for intellectual and artistic achievement in democratic nations when he entitles the chapter thusly: "The Example of the Americans Does Not Prove That a Democratic People Can Have No Aptitude and No Taste for Science, Literature, or Art", (!!!) Hardly a flattering reference to the cultural standing of our forebears!

DeTocqueville was making his commentary of a pioneer nation continuously opening up new frontiers for the first several hundred years of its existence. Under such circumstances it is not only natural that the utilitarian would be emphasized, but that the economic base might not support the leisure time required for all those things that help develop the artistic and intellectual. The Frenchman writing in 1964 might well pen a chapter entitled: "Why the American Democracy Proves that Given Sufficient Resources and Education a Large Democracy Can Achieve of Level of Intellectual and Artistic Achievement Not Possible in a Pioneering Nation."

There are other considerations to suggest that DeTocqueville could not with impunity make the same charges in 1964 that he made in 1836. One of them is the higher level of education which ought to improve cultural tastes. Seymour Lipset, utilizing empirical research, suggests such a correlation:

There is considerable evidence to suggest that higher education, greater economic security, and

higher standards of living strengthen the level of culture and democratic freedom. The market for good books, good paintings, and good music is at a high point in American history. More people are receiving a good education in America today than ever before, and regardless of the many weaknesses of that education it is still true that the more of it one has, the better one's value and consumption patterns from the point of view of the liberal and culturally concerned intellectual.<sup>12</sup>

Considerable stimulus is also given the arts and sciences by both private and public policies now as contrasted with earlier times. In the private sphere many hundreds of foundations now support many different types of creative effort designed to upgrade accomplishment in education, art, and literature. (Tri-College is one of them). Paradoxically, the very mass market which is supposed to degrade genuine creativity has created fortunes which are helping to shore it up.

Publicly, the national government in the interests of "general welfare" has in a multitude of ways in recent years given a genuine impetus to scholarly research and creative productivity. International exchange of scholars and artists through a number of different programs including the Fulbright have supplemented more conventional enterprises such as the Library of Congress; the National Science Foundation, the National Observatory, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Archives, and the National Art Gallery. Millions of GI's and civilian tourists have at least been exposed to the Louvre and the Vatican Galleries.

A respectable case can be made for the contention that despite the furor of the 1950's when McCarthyism was in vogue, the intellectual seems to have higher status today than at any time in our history. There are in absolute as well as proportionate terms, as Lipset points out, more intellectuals in America and they are more widely dispersed geographically than in any other country. "There are more than 1800 colleges and universities in this country while Great Britain has about 15, West Germany less than 20, Norway one, Denmark two, and Sweden four. No urban center in the democratic world approaches New York City in the number of intellectuals employed in universities, magazines, publishing houses, and other intellectual industries."<sup>13</sup>

This is, admittedly a quantitative rather than a qualitative barometer, but it does underline the possibilities of education for those who desire it, and on the whole, a rather pervasive respect for education.

Even the intellectuals themselves who probably overreacted to the McCarthy debacle had just prior to that episode and in a more deliberative and temperate mood bestowed their benignant smile if not benediction on the cultural health of the nation. In 1952 the editors of the Partisan Review, a highly regarded organ of the intellectual community, devoted several issues to a symposium entitled: "Our Country and Our Culture".

American intellectuals, they explained, 'now regard America and its institutions in a new way..for better or for worse most writers no longer accept alienation as the artist's fate in America...' It was not only the intellectuals who had changed; the country had changed, too, and for the better. It had matured culturally and no longer stood in tutelage to Europe.. America had become a reasonably gratifying place in which to carry on intellectual artistic work and one in which such pursuits were well rewarded.<sup>14</sup>

This is a refreshing reaction on the part of the American intellectuals for they have been super-sensitive to their status in American society. This might be because they are familiar with the literature of the past which derided the cultural levels in America and they have not updated the evidence. Or it might be traceable to traumatic experiences in grade and high school, as David Riesman suggests, which because of cruel ridicule by classmates created an inferiority complex in the budding intellectuals.<sup>15</sup>

But whatever the reasons may be for this sensitivity, optimism for the future of the American intellectual is warranted, and this augurs well for the cultural level of the entire community. Plato and Aristotle stress strongly the importance of the "regime" in setting the ethical and cultural tone of the state. The "regime" for them is the leadership group whose attitudes and values are emulated by the masses. It is partially on the basis of this rationale that the Parrington historians laud the era of the Founding Fathers. Certainly one clue to a nation's values or at least its aspirations is the type of hero it chooses to applaud. In the past we have heralded the military conqueror, the industrial empire builder, the minister, the social reformer, the pioneer.

Today our attention is turning elsewhere. David Riesman argues that "in the much more fluid and amorphous America of our times, the writer, the artist, the scientist have become figures of glamour, if not of power."<sup>16</sup> The late president and his First Lady epitomized for an appreciative world the image of the cultured family. The White House became a center for cultural events and a cross roads of the creative geniuses of our time; Frost, Casals,



and others. Richard Hofstadter captures this flavor in a short passage in his current book on American intellectual life:

Today it is possible to look at the political culture of the 1950's with some detachment. If there was then a tendency to see in McCarthyism and even in the Eisenhower administration some apocalypse for intellectuals in public life, it is no longer possible now that Washington has again become so hospitable to Harvard professors and ex-Rhodes scholars. If there was a suspicion that intellect had become a hopeless obstacle to success in politics or administration, it must surely have been put to rest by the new president's obvious interest in ideas and respect for intellectuals, his ceremonial gestures to make that respect manifest in affairs of state, his pleasure in the company and advice of men of intellectual power and above all by the long, careful search for distinguished talents with which his administration began.<sup>17</sup>

Nor should it go unnoted that Adlai Stevenson, generally regarded as an egg-head candidate, in losing to the most popular military hero of the Twentieth Century, still received more votes than any previous winning president except Roosevelt in 1936. A 1958 survey of the United States Senate showed there were fourteen former college professors in office and more than half of the remaining senators had earned advanced degrees.<sup>18</sup> What does this prove? At the most that what a culture admires, it applauds. At the least, that anti-intellectualism is not strong enough to bar the cultured from office.

I hesitate to suggest that we are in a renaissance of culture or that a cultural utopia lies just ahead. I think there is evidence to suggest that DeTocqueville could hardly make of this generation the comments he made of his generation. If this is correct it is unnecessary to prove what I also think to be true, that the critics of our "mass culture" have closed their eyes to a number of promising developments.

#### Human Development and Power

Two events which DeTocqueville predicted would ultimately threaten freedom were the rise of a new industrial aristocracy that would impoverish and debase men working under it; and the rise of a centralized state to anaesthetize them. Of the latter prospect he wrote:



Above...stands an immense and tutelary power which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident, and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent...but it seeks to keep them in perpetual childhood... For their happiness such a government willingly labors, but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of that happiness... The will of man is not shattered but softened, bent, and guided. Such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes, and stupefies a people till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals of which the government is the shepherd.<sup>19</sup>

Here is a description of the "welfare" state that might just as well have been paraphrased from a speech by Barry Goldwater or Senator Byrd of Virginia.

To begin with, DeTocqueville was familiar with the European centralized states of his day which in the absence of well developed systems of administration were inefficient and arbitrary. Modern administrative tools such as IBM equipment, the income tax, civil service, organizations and procedures analysis, and modern accounting and budgeting had not been invented.<sup>20</sup> In terms of efficiency the thesis may be advanced that government today in modern, democratic states of the West compares very favorably with the best private corporations.

In the hands of tyrants, of course, such efficiency makes life only more miserable. In the hands of the modern democratic state it makes government less arbitrary and more capable of promoting a richer, fuller life for the people.

In the Western democracies unlike the Peoples' Republics minimum levels of human welfare have been developed within a genuinely democratic framework and without political deprivation. In the United States political inventiveness has resulted in partnership arrangements with local governments in carrying out programs--"cooperative federalism". Provisions for court review, congressional oversight, bills of rights, public discussion, media scrutiny, regularized procedures, and ultimately the checks and balances of a two party system have served to keep the policies and the bureaucracy that carries them out subservient to public

interest rather than contemptuous of it. The dichotomy between the people and the State which DeTocqueville postulates in his statement (above) is not an accurate one. Modern inventiveness has served to close this gap and create responsible and responsive government.

In fact, an argument can be made that the existence of the bureaucracies that have developed along with welfare state may actually provide new sources of continued freedom and more opportunity to innovate. Bureaucratization means among other things a decline of the arbitrary power of those in authority, and therefore, by reducing the unlimited power possessed by a few, bureaucracy may mean less rather than more need to conform to superiors.

Impersonality in the administration of human affairs means more coldness, but also more equity; the hugeness of organizations means more anonymity for the individual, but also more privacy. The introduction of sharply defined responsibilities, impersonal standards, merit systems, and definite tests of capacity has accelerated the decline of class and family prerogatives and opened up new chances for individuals to compete on their own merits.<sup>21</sup>

Secondly, if the welfare benefits have anaesthetized some it has revitalized others. The real objective of the democratic welfare state is to unleash human potential rather than to crush it; to develop human virtue rather than to repress it. Its main objectives are based on the assumption that every member of the community is a human being different in kind from other animals and entitled to live at levels that reflect that difference.

The close relationship between social environment and individual development was a postulate of the Greek philosophers. They were not reluctant to leave a role for the state in shaping this environment and their idea received respectable support from succeeding observers such as Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Moore, Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton. I suspect that DeTocqueville may have been more familiar with the early laissez faire theorists rather than the above men, a factor which helped to shape his philosophy of government. Occasionally, he comes close to confusing freedom with anarchy.

At any rate, if DeTocqueville had been as familiar empirically with the eroding effects of poverty, joblessness, or poor education as modern psychologists and sociologists, he might have been less critical of the dangers of the welfare state on human development.

For there are some obvious and outstanding evils like widespread unemployment, as Lindsay points out in his classic Modern Democratic State (266), which can so poison the life of a community that they make equality and liberty and true democratic life impossible. As it was, gratuitous observations from a nobleman who had never felt the shoe pinch and who therefore could really never appreciate at first hand the enslaving effects of poverty came a bit too easily to be convincing.

DeTocqueville's other fear, that of a powerful industrial aristocracy, did become a grave threat to human virtue for three-quarters of a century in the United States, a threat that can be documented more persuasively than that from government. Ironically, it was finally allayed by the intervention of government on behalf of humanity, but without denuding the aristocracy of their properties as DeTocqueville's fellow critic, one Karl Marx, predicted would happen. Thereafter, intelligent government action not only assured the dignity of man as worker, but through judicious application of Keynesian economics (also a social invention unknown to DeTocqueville) managed to undergird the free enterprise system so as to temper the violent swings of the business cycle that threatened to destroy it. Property was chastized, but kept alive. In the contest of Keynes versus Marx, the New Deal sided with Keynes and sent Marx tumbling down, as Mario Einaudi, in reflecting on De Tocqueville's fears, has suggested:

What we have witnessed since 1932...has been the recovery and use of power by democratic leaders who, without rigid ideology and tyranny, yet with a broad conception of the needs of the times, have succeeded in renovating the historical heritage of the United States while maintaining freedom.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, a very good case can be made, counter to DeTocqueville, that the appearance of the modern, democratic state wielding controlled power, has increased freedom rather than threatened it. In the words of Lord Radcliffe, "liberty looked upon as the right to find and to try to realize the best that is in one's self is not something to which power is necessarily hostile...that indeed ...such liberty may even need the active intervention of authority to make it possible."<sup>23</sup>

Certainly, the Negro would not regard Washington as a tyrant. The United States courts have refurbished the Bill of Rights and acted to protect rights of individuals and minorities from militant local majorities. It is the government and

specifically the Federal government that has spearheaded civil rights, school desegregation, reapportionment, right of voluntary association, limitations on search and seizure and police brutality. It is the Federal government that has held out the best example of high standards in administration, statesmanship, and efficiency to the state and local governments.

If we are to take as representative of intellectual thought an evaluation of the effect of the welfare state on freedom made at a world conference of intellectuals at Milan in September of 1955 we might rest more easily. The conference was attended by 150 intellectuals and politicians from many democratic countries and of many shades of opinion. Its subject: "The Future of Freedom". In effect, all agreed that the increase in state control which had taken place in various countries would not result in a decline in democratic freedom.<sup>24</sup>

No sane man will deny that the potential threats to freedom from possible state action are greater than they were in the days of our forebears. The type of government they erected for a rural nation was intended to be checked and balanced because the circumstances called for it to do little. The expectations of the founding fathers for the future development of the human person were necessarily limited by the technology of the times, and in their experience the chief threat to liberty was government, not their fellow man. But the history, in the United States at least, has been that the usual source of arbitrary power has not been the central government which DeTocqueville feared, but man individually or in voluntary associations. And when governmental power has been misused it has most of the time been state or local government as any history of public administration or political parties will amply testify.<sup>25</sup>

#### Freedom and Economic Abundance

Finally, the appearance of an economic surplus has opened up for the modern American the very opportunities for self-development that Aristotle and Plato sought through their defense of a slave system for Greece.<sup>26</sup> They recognized that poverty is one of the most enslaving of external circumstances and this relationship between minimum economic levels and the "good life" has been recognized by many since then. Low economic levels while not a certain bar to freedom and democratic government present a highly problematical atmosphere for its fruition.

Aristotle refers to the instability of government in states where property extremes are great. Jefferson refers to the need



for a propertied farmer class as a buffer against radical social change. Marx holds that poverty leads to revolution. The themes of Belloc, Hayek, Adler-Kelso, Potter, and others suggests similar intimate correlation between flourishing societies and minimum economic standards.

The rationale is simple. One would not reasonably expect much virtue or justice of men who live habitually in such a condition of extreme poverty that they must fight with one another constantly for the sake of mere survival. It is not accidental, as Leo Strauss points out, that the theological conception of a more perfect, pre-fallen man has its setting in a "Garden of Eden".<sup>27</sup> A reasonably high level of economic abundance therefore, obviates one need for a regimented state; it provides a surplus to support the arts and sciences; and it nourishes the physical frame within which the sparks of humanness are carried.

When one digs into the workaday world of our forebears something less than an Eden-like life unfolds itself. The life of the noble savage of Rousseau (read "early American") takes on more the coloration of Hobbes's description as "poor, nasty, brutish, and short".

The average life expectancy, for instance, today is something over 67; in 1850 it was under 40. A health report published in Boston in 1850 disclosed that the average age of all who died in the city was 21 years, and that among the Catholic immigrants from Ireland it was less than 14 years. Sanitation facilities were far poorer than in ancient Athens.<sup>28</sup>

Today the 35 hour week is a not too-distant probability. One hundred years ago the work day for girl operatives in the cotton mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, was from twelve to thirteen hours --on the job at five o'clock; out at seven p.m.; with thirty minutes off for dinner. It was not until 1879 that an enforceable law limiting the hours of labor for women existed in the United States.<sup>29</sup> Women's wages averaged 37 cents per DAY and were 25 per cent of men's earnings for similar work.

This was the industrialized East. For those who would prefer the frontier life for women, Hamlin Garland's tales of a much later stage in history will demonstrate the colorless, frustrating, subservient life facing the female in a man's world. Child bearing was a constant hazard not only for the infant but for the mother and the mortality rates must have approximated those of the under-developed nations of today.

In New York the first move to protect children from the vice and disease of the slums came from the president of the society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.<sup>30</sup> Youngsters were mercilessly exploited and when the first child labor law was passed in Massachusetts, it provided that no child under fifteen should be employed in any factory unless he had attended school for at least three months in the preceding year! Even by 1900 less than one child out of ten was actually in high school compared with nine out of ten today. In 1842 both Massachusetts and Connecticut limited the workday for children under twelve years of age to ten hours!<sup>31</sup>

Men fared no better. In 1832 the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and other Working Men reported that two-fifths of all employees in New England factories were between the ages of seven and sixteen years. The hours of labor ranged from ten to fifteen or more.<sup>32</sup> At the turn of the century, a period of relative prosperity, the mass of unskilled workers were receiving less than \$460 a year in the North and less than \$300 in the South. Andrew Carnegie's personal share of the profits of his steel company was a little over \$5 million in 1898; a little over \$12 million in 1899; and more than \$23 million in 1900--with no income taxes to pay whatsoever.<sup>33</sup> A titan like Marshal Field made \$500 to \$700 dollars an hour; his nonexecutive employees were paid twelve dollars a week or less for a fifty nine hour week.<sup>34</sup>

But what about the ebullient and progressive Frontier life that Frederick Jackson Turner has paid so much tribute to for its contribution to American democracy? Were these pioneers of a different, more hardy, self-determined type? Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College, writing of them in 1821-1822, said they are a class of people who:

"cannot live in regular society. They are too idle, too talkative, too passionate, too prodigal, and too shiftless to acquire either property or character. They are impatient of the restraints of law, religion and morality, and grumble about the taxes by which Rulers, Ministers, and Schoolmasters are supported...After exposing the injustices of the community in neglecting to invest persons of such superior merit in public offices...and finding all their efforts vain, they become at length discouraged, and under the pressure of poverty, the fear of the gaol and the consciousness of public contempt, leave their native place and betake themselves to the wilderness."<sup>35</sup>

One does not have to stretch the imagination too far to see the impediments presented to the development of intellectual and moral virtue in this type of social milieu. Culture and education were for the elite--it could not be otherwise. The vast bulk of citizenry could be only ignorant or at best interested spectators of the opportunities of the few for self enrichment.

Fortunately the present generation has effected a revolutionary breakthrough from this strangle hold of scarcity. As Lord Hailsham points out "both the requirements of technological society and the potentialities of modern production virtually drive society forwards towards a fully educated citizenry in which the contrast between the masses and the elite has virtually disappeared; not because men will have necessarily moved any closer to equality of achievement, but because quantitative production has provided the means, and the requirements of technology the necessity, to train or educate every human being without regard to wealth, birth, skin, religion, or race, to the limit to which he is capable."<sup>36</sup>

Affluence, of course, is not an unmixed blessing, and the kind of education or training that the masses get does not guarantee the development of human virtue. But the right appetites, if awakened, will have available for their satisfaction more means than any elite has had available in world history.

The principal although not the only charges that are brought frequently against the "freedom" of the modern American, I have dealt with as well as I could, given the limitations of this paper. The tyranny of the majority which is supposed to reduce the creativity of the individual and debase his tastes is an awesome threat in theory. Practically, this potential threat has been offset by other developments--increased education, economic affluence, and a rising status for the educated and cultured. The "welfare" state which is supposed to extirpate individualism has succeeded in unleashing human energies that hitherto in the history of the world have been harnessed by servile status, poverty, illness, and ignorance. Along with the "welfare state" in Western democracies has gone a strengthening of basic freedoms through firm judicial precedents on civil rights and resourceful inventiveness to contain government and bind it to the service of man rather than to his exploitation. Additionally, the growth of an economic surplus has made the individual freer from the tyranny of local majorities, from the calculus of employers, and from the many limitations of poverty than most of the "elites" in previous societies.

This is not to say that we have removed all the cancerous growths of history from the tissue of our society. But DeTocqueville's fears have not yet been realized despite a further political leveling since his time. It is true that the way of life which supported the ideals of freedom held by some of the Founding Fathers has disappeared. It was an agrarian way of life which assumed a bare minimum of government. The American of today works in factories or offices; he is hemmed in by laws and administrative regulations of countless bureaucrats. He faces annually the inevitable tax bill from several layers of government.

In exchange, his life is longer, fuller, and easier. He is literate and if he avails himself of the opportunity, he may know the pleasures of good books, fine music, and cultivated drama. He has leisure time for self-improvement, physical recreation, and participation in community activities. His children go to schools instead of factories and their future life in terms of education, travel, and artistic growth seems almost utopian.

If he is an eccentric, strongly opinionated, or a social reformer, he has an immunity that the eighteenth century village would not have tolerated. Standing alone still takes courage; usually it takes money; always it involves social reactions. But, as Charles Frankel points out in a recent book, The Democratic Prospect, on page 72:

in all these respects modern liberal democracy, despite all the complaints about conformity, has made it easier for the ordinary, unprivileged man to stand alone if he has the will to do so than any other kind of society known in history.... Assuming that the members of a democratic society have minimal economic securities, there is a flexibility in their situation which not many ordinary men have enjoyed in the past. If they fall out of favor with one set of authorities, they have a chance to turn around and look elsewhere.

It is possible, of course, that despite this maximization of external liberty in the pursuit of the "good life" man's mastery over himself may deteriorate. Education, material abundance, a milieu of liberty all may be misused. Aristotle points this out very clearly in a much quoted passage:

For man when perfected is the best of animals, but when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all; since armed injustice is the most dangerous; and he is equipped at birth with



arms, meant to be used by intelligence and virtue which he may use for the worst ends. Wherefore, if he have not virtue, he is the most unholy and the most savage of animals, and the most full of lust and gluttony. But justice is the bond of men in states, for the administration of justice, which the determination of what is just, is the principle of order in political society.<sup>37</sup>

Liberty may be confused with anarchy and freedom with licentiousness if man does not have a clear conception of his ends and the proper use of means to achieve them. Because ideas have the power to organize human behavior and internal values, their efficacy can be radical. As Walter Lippman points out so well, the image of what a man should be governs the formation of his character and prints a lasting design on his behavior pattern.<sup>38</sup> This image transmitted and shaped by family, school, church and community teach men what they ought to desire and ought to be. Outer force is replaced by the inner compulsion of their own character, as Erich Fromm says.<sup>39</sup>

We want the self directed man, but we want himself directed for the good of himself and society--directed towards desirable goals. In the West we have termed it "the good life". This life, as Viscount Hailsham, one of Britain's most distinguished statesmen has said, is founded "on a living and centuries old tradition underlying which were certain dynamic ideas regarding law, justice, and morality, and regarding the nature of man; a nature sometimes seriously discounted, but one that I believe no human society, least of all, a democracy can seriously discount if they wish to progress."<sup>40</sup>

These ideas concerning law, justice, and morality ought to be among the most momentous topics of our age. The discussions by some of the most knowledgeable men of our times at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions presuppose their relevance to freedom and the democratic society. I have restricted my own focus to the external conditions of liberty which are more subject to empirical study and more congenial to my own training. From this point of view I have concluded that the contemporary American enjoys much greater human freedom and fulfillment than his forebears.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Adlai Stevenson, "The Prospects for Democracy Around the World", Center for Study of Democratic Institutions, 1963.

<sup>2</sup>Alexis DeTocqueville, Democracy in America, (New York, Mentor, New American Library, 1956).

<sup>3</sup>For the significance of the picture of man in American political institutions, see "The Federalist on the Nature of Man", Ethics (January, 1949).

<sup>4</sup>Frank S. Meyer, In Defense of Freedom: A Conservative Credo (N.Y., Regnery, 1963).

<sup>5</sup>John P. Roche, "The Curbing of the Militant Majority", The Reporter, July 18, 1963, p. 34.

<sup>6</sup>See Seymour Lipset, Political Man, Chapter 13, "The End of Ideology", where he says politics which formerly occupied the attention of the intellectuals has become "boring" since the differences between left and right are no longer profound and the fundamental problems of the industrial revolution have been solved. The triumph of the democratic revolution in the West has ended domestic politics for the intellectuals who need ideologies or utopias to motivate them to action.

<sup>7</sup>DeTocqueville, op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>8</sup>Harriet Martineau, Society in America, Vol. II, (New York, Saunders and Oatley, 1837) p. 158-59.

<sup>9</sup>Max Weber, Essays in Sociology, (N.Y. Oxford University Press, 1946) p. 188.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>11</sup>Vernon Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, I-III, (N.Y., Harcourt Brace, 1930).

<sup>12</sup>Seymour Lipset, Political Man, (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday Anchor, 1963) p. 451. See also: Daniel Bell, "The Theory of Mass Society", Commentary (22) 1956 p. 82; and Clyde Kluckhohn, "Shifts in American Values", World Politics (11) 1959, pp. 250-261.

<sup>13</sup>Lipset, op. cit., p. 356.

<sup>14</sup>Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life, (New York, Alfred Knopf, 1963) pp. 394-395.

<sup>15</sup>David Riesman, "Some Observations on Intellectual Freedom", American Scholar (23) (1953-54) p. 14.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Hofstadter, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>18</sup>New York Times, Nov. 9, 1959, p. 65.

<sup>19</sup>DeTocqueville, op. cit., pp. 303-304.

<sup>20</sup>These are social inventions which serve the needs of man just as surely as innovations in engineering or science. Except for such inventions society could not be doing many of the things it is today. A reasonable case can be presented that man has been as inventive socially as technically. The United Nations is an example.

<sup>21</sup>Charles Frankel, The Democratic Prospect (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) p. 103.

<sup>22</sup>Mario Einaudi, The Roosevelt Revolution. (New York, Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., 1959).

<sup>23</sup>As quoted in The Elite and the Electorate, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1963, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup>Lipset, op. cit., pp. 439-440.

<sup>25</sup>Senator Joseph Clark, an experienced politician at all levels of government, sustains this point of view well in his remarks reprinted in the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions pamphlet entitled: Technology and Democratic Institutions. (1963)

<sup>26</sup>Lord Hailsham, British minister for Science focused the significance of this consideration for the modern democratic state in a paper delivered at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions this past year:

The traditional objection to democracy both in theory and practice, ever since Plato and Thucydide began to notice its defects in the fifth century B.C., has been exactly the contrast between the elite and electorate, the classes and the masses as they used to be called. The contradiction has been that the complexities of administration and maintenance of adequate civilized and cultural standards demand the existence of a class of man enjoying amenities and leisure and education up to age twenty-four or above, whereas the facts of life have been that the means of production are only adequate to support such a class on a limited scale, and thus in a state of privilege over the majority. The mere existence of such a class thus presupposes a contrast between rich and poor, between elite and electorate, between those who actually carry the responsibility of government and administration of all sorts and those who are governed, a contrast which it is said a democracy will never continue to tolerate for long. (The Elite and the Electorate, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1963) p. 18.

<sup>27</sup>Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History, (University of Chicago Press, 1953) p. 150.

<sup>28</sup>Frederick Lewis Allen, "The Big Change", Harper's Magazine August, 1950) pp. 245-260.

<sup>29</sup>W. W. Jennings, History of Economic Progress in the United States (New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1926) p. 300.

<sup>30</sup>Eric Goldman, Rendezvous With Destiny (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1961) p. 29.

<sup>31</sup>A. G. Taylor, Labor Problems and Labor Law (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1944) p. 407.

<sup>32</sup>Taylor, Ibid., p. 387.



<sup>33</sup>Allen, op. cit.

<sup>34</sup>Goldman, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>35</sup>Timothy Dwight, Travels in New England and New York (New Haven: 1821-22).

<sup>36</sup>Lord Hailsham, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>37</sup>Richard McKeon, edit., The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York: Random House, 1941) p. 1130.

<sup>38</sup>Walter Lippman makes this point in a number of his writings, but especially in The Public Philosophy (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1955) p. 94.

<sup>39</sup>Erich Fromm, "Individual and Social Origin of Neurosis," American Sociological Review, Vol. 9, (1944) pp. 380-384.

<sup>40</sup>Lord Hailsham, chairman of the Conservative Party in Britain from 1957-59 and British administrator for many years, as cited in Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions release: Technology and Democratic Institutions (1963).