

REPRESENTATION, an arrangement of government producing conformance between the actions of an office holder and the desires of the members of the community who are affected by his actions. There are many ways of accomplishing representation, such as the use of the majority principle for making decisions, proportional representation, and the system of upper and lower chambers of the legislature. Each device is calculated to reduce or expand the voice and participation of certain elements of the community. Since a person may feel represented even without the right to vote, to remove or influence officials, some writers, particularly during the late Medieval period and the age of monarchies, have regarded representation as a condition possible under any system of government which is benevolent and responsive in spirit. However, most writers have considered representation to exist only when some deliberate means are provided for the expression or realization of popular desires.

Early Greek and Roman city-states often employed popular government, but it was government by the direct participation of the citizens. Delegates were not chosen to legislate, and elections were reserved for executive officers. When the cities combined into leagues (e.g., the **AMPHICTYONIC COUNCIL**) for cooperation in war or trade, their representatives were mere delegates without authority to make important decisions on their own volition. The Roman Empire was centralized and paternalistic. It did not depend upon elections, although the representative principle of electing members to provincial assemblies was used in Macedonia, Gaul, and Spain. The assemblies lacked final powers of importance.

Medieval and Early Modern Representation. The origins of representative government as we know it today are buried in the beginnings of modern history. Three factors of crucial importance are known, however. One is that the early modern kings, engaged in consolidating their power and bringing widely differing parts of the land under their rule of law, found it useful to call for representatives of the neighborhoods to come to the royal courts to report on conditions in their areas and to declare on oath what the law of their locality consisted of, since written codes were not available. The beginnings of the famous English inquest jury are found here associated with the beginnings of representation of the counties. The second factor is the growth of town life after its submergence in the invasion period. Again the towns sent representatives to report to the king and to hear and accept terms of taxation and donation for the support of the central government. The third factor was the development of a system of representation inside the various orders of the Catholic church, the most famous of which was the Dominican.

By the beginning of the 13th century, assemblies existed in Spain, Sicily, and France, possessed of considerable powers and prestige. In them, the three great Medieval estates were represented—the nobility, the clergy, and the commons—and already among the latter were numbered the delegates from the growing towns. In 1265 Simon de Montfort called the famous Model Parliament which brought the knights and burgesses into session with the high nobility and clergy for the first time in England. By the writ of 1295, the choice of delegates was by election. Thus began the long process by which the trading and middle classes came into political power.

By the 15th century in England, we find statutes regulating the franchise and qualifications of members of **PARLIAMENT**, and governing the conduct of elections. Boroughs were tendered the right of sending members to Parliament in their charters. Contrary to common impression, the franchise was widely held in English boroughs and counties. Cases are on record of Parliamentary powers extending to outright refusals to grant sums required by the monarch. Local control over representatives was tight and the delegates were bound commonly to vote only as instructed by their constituencies. As befitted the nations which were just emerging from a feudal state wherein the ownership of land brought the highest social status, the country representatives dominated the parliaments and the town representatives played only a modest role. Not until the time of Henry VIII was a burgess elected speaker of the House of Commons.

Beginning in the 15th century and extending over a period of about a century and a half, a period of parliamentary decline set in, both in Europe and in England. The monarchies became absolute. Though the reasons are not fully known, it is probable that the original system of parliamentary representation was dependent on contractual feudalism and localism to an extent not generally appreciated, and the decline of local leadership, the growth of town wealth, the decline of Church power in the face of monarchical power, and the great enclosure movement in England all contributed to the decline of the system of estates representation. Parliamentary power was not now to revive until converted into a revolutionary movement of the commercial middle classes.

17th and 18th Century Revolutions. When the 17th century opened in England, the representative system was hopelessly changed from its original constitution. The powers of the constituency over their representatives had declined. Landed and commercial proprietors had assumed control of most of the seats in Parliament, and the system of borough representation was distorted from its original purpose by the presence of many "rotten boroughs," almost wholly lacking in population but yet sending regularly two representatives to Parliament. The throne engaged industriously in electioneering, buying votes and boroughs in competition with the party of Parliamentary supremacy.

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The foolish maneuvers of CHARLES precipitated a revolution; but he was no match for the aggressive, rising middle class of Puritans and merchants and he was executed. The Commonwealth period brought the supremacy of Parliament, followed shortly by the dictatorship of Cromwell, and afterward by the Restoration. It was not until 1689 that Parliament was finally restored to power in England.

Meanwhile, an abortive movement known as the LEVELLERS, whose ideas of representation included annual elections, universal manhood suffrage, and strict control of representatives by constituents arose in the Commonwealth army and was finally disbanded by Cromwell and the Independent leaders. The Levellers, however, advocated reforms which were strikingly similar to those of the early 19th century American Jeffersonians and Jacksonians which produced the system of representation characterizing America today. The settlement of America was beginning at this time and Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island and the father of religious tolerance in America, was Leveller in sympathies.

The Glorious Revolution of 1789 which insured Parliamentary supremacy over the Crown, introduced party government in England, and during the succeeding century English politics were characterized by battles for place and privilege between Whigs and Tories but by little fundamental disagreement over matters of suffrage, equal representation and a reform of the dilapidated electoral machinery. The prevailing theory of representation in the 18th century was that of "virtual representation" as set forth by the great historical and traditional politician, Edmund Burke, who wrote (1797): "Virtual representation is that in which there is a communion of interests, and a sympathy in feelings and desires, between those who act in the name of any description of people, and the people in whose name they act, though the trustees are not actually chosen by them." Burke and most British leaders believed that only a small amount of popular participation in elections was best.

But simultaneously in the American colonies, in France, and in England, a vigorous individualistic school arose, asserting the now universal principle of "one man, one vote" and demanding widespread reforms to extend the franchise, cut down the power of wealth and nobility in representation, and institute mathematical apportionment of electoral districts. The whole impact of the increasingly popular movement was to break the grip of the parliamentary oligarchy and establish direct controls over representatives and legislation by the people in mass alone. The French Revolutionary leader, Mirabeau, declared that the national assembly should be like a geographic map of the nation, an exact but reduced reproduction of the original.

The succession of changes in representative institutions that now began occupied over a century, in fact until World War II began. The GREAT REFORM BILL of 1832 in England, which eliminated the rotten boroughs and extended the suffrage, was followed by further extensions of the suffrage in 1867, 1884, 1918, 1927, and 1945. The Revolution of 1789 gave France manhood suffrage which despite the fluctuations of the 19th century was basically maintained and finally increased when the women were granted the vote in 1945. Throughout the world, repercussions were felt and in most countries assemblies or parliaments were created in the pattern of the ~~American, English, or French models~~. Their powers varied widely, some of them being merely façades cloaking the changelessness of autocratic interiors.

The United States. The American colonists adopted many practices of representation from English law and developed several additional ones. Cheap land, absence of a nobility, and differences in religion were important influences. While the electoral law of England was taken over wholesale (not without strong opposition in New England), suffrage qualifications based on land meant little where land ownership was soon widespread. Early in the 17th century, provincial assemblies were established in New England and Virginia. Residence requirements for candidates, unobserved in English practice, were stricter in the colonies. Instructions to representatives were common; constituency control was greater, the influence of wealth less, and that of nobility almost lacking.

New practices sprang up: the use of the written **BALLOT** (Salem, 1629), proxy voting for those unable to attend meetings, a formalized nominating procedure, and the **INITIATIVE** and referendum. In Massachusetts, Winthrop and other conservative leaders espoused a paternalistic, theocratic theory of government. They united political and religious leadership and claimed the veto over popular representatives, stating that they could often better define what were the "true desires" of the people than the popular deputies. Under the free and rapidly-changing colonial conditions, their theory of representation lost its force.

The growing commercial class fought for representation under the slogan "no taxation without representation" and employed the colonial assemblies to defeat executive power. It is important to note that while they led the fight against Imperial control, once colonial freedom was established they also led the effort to create the Federal union. But the rural areas who had joined in the first struggle, were most reluctant to approve the **CONSTITUTION** because they felt they could control their state governments fairly well and could not keep a central government from falling into the hands of the commercial class.

The Constitution brought two kinds of representation: one was Federal, as seen in the Senate where representatives were in large part the ambassadors of the sovereign states; the second was national, as seen in the House of Representatives where the people were directly represented. The presidency combined both in the **ELECTORAL COLLEGE** system of indirect election. Hamilton, Madison, and John Adams considered representation to be composed best of checks and balances to keep any single group from gaining control. Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and Luther Martin thought, on the contrary, that representation should be the direct participation of the mass of people in the actions of governing so far as possible.

The Jeffersonian theory prevailed and under Jackson swept the nation as it had been conquering the state governments. Suffrage was given to all white males, most offices were made elective. The Electoral College developed into a popular choice, and rotation in office became a general practice. The culmination of this movement came with the granting of Negro suffrage (15th Amend.), women's suffrage (19th Amend.), the popular election of Senators (17th Amend.), the many devices introduced into the party system (conventions, direct primaries, open primaries), and the initiative, referendum, and recall movement (c. 1880-1925).

Two great problems seemed insoluble despite all that the Jeffersonian theory could provide,—the growth and influence of lobbies and the control of politics by party machines dominated by a few professional politicians. New ideas were necessary but came very slowly. One was functional representation; another was proportional representation. See **LOBBY**.

Recent Proposals. Functional representation is the creation of constituencies along the lines of occupation and business interests, rather than along geographical lines. It relies on the observation that what is everybody's business is nobody's business and therefore wishes to give certain limited powers of legislation to those directly concerned. Examples are the Medieval guilds which regulated their own standards, prices, membership, and activities, the medical and legal professions, the undeveloped corporate system of former Fascist Italy, and the Russian system of soviets (workers' and peasants' councils).

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Examples in American history are found in the former National Industrial Recovery Administration which allowed industries to write their own codes of production, prices, and conditions under the supervision of the government, the Securities and Exchange Commission which gives the exchanges legal powers over its activities, and the AAA which gives farmers power to vote for or against production controls. The real difficulties of functional representation are the problems of determining how much power the constituencies shall have and how the representatives should be selected to represent them (i.e., through election, *ex-officio*, or appointment by government).

Proportional representation was first devised by De Bora (1770), by Thomas Gilpin, an American (1844), by Andrae (1855) and popularized by Hare and J. S. Mill (1857 seq.). Its basic idea is to give any substantial minority representation in the legislature on the theory that legislation is best if all sides can consult on it in the legislature. This is accomplished generally by increasing the number of members to be elected in a district and then limiting the number any voter can vote for.

Thus, a minority may organize and elect their candidate if they collect enough votes to fill their quota, which, under the most popular Hare scheme with the Droop modification, is arrived at by dividing the number of votes cast by the number of candidates to be elected plus one. So as not to waste votes and to insure election of all necessary representatives, the "transferrable vote" is used; the voter indicates his first choice, his second, and so on. If his favorite has already too many or too few votes to be considered, his second choice receives a vote, and so forth.

Proportional representation is found in France (List system), Italy, Sweden, Belgium and other nations. It is found in many American cities, including New York. In recent years it has been attacked because of its reputed tendency to increase the number of parties having representatives in the legislature, with the result that the government is rendered ineffective for lack of an operating majority. Its opponents defend the majority-vote, single-member district now almost universal in America, which, they say, brings about a more unified and smoothly operating government. Instead of compromises being made by representatives who are under pledges to their constituents not to compromise, they say that the majority system makes its compromises during the election campaign by watering down issues to where a position is adopted by the candidate which is in conformance with the desires of most voters. See AUTHORITARIAN STATE; COMMUNISM; CONSTITUTION; DEMOCRACY; ELECTION; ELECTORATE; FASCISM; GOVERNMENT; LOCAL GOVERNMENT; NATIONAL SOCIALISM; PARTY, POLITICAL; SOVEREIGNTY; STATE; SUFFRAGE; VOTING; POLITICAL MACHINE. ALFRED DE GRAZIA

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REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT