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Kerim papers

Forms and Functions of Contemporary Representation

(For German Radio, August, 1964)

For a hundred and fifty years, roughly from the French Revolution to the Great Depression of 1929, it appeared that representative government would ~~be the~~ ~~present~~ the formula for ~~governing~~ the state ~~and in the~~ all over the world ~~to be~~ found in government. The reasons why its success seemed assured are clear now in retrospect.

- 1.) Representative government more reliable and rational than monarchical rule. It ~~seemed to~~ ^{dispensed} with the superstitious magic of monarchy.
- 2.) The problems of man seemed amenable to ~~scientific~~ objective solution or calm compromise.
- 3.) The ~~best~~ ^{representative} nations that were ~~represented~~ ^{in spirit} by their ideas, were ~~represented~~ ^{in form} by England, France, and the United States.

- 5.) A social class system that ~~united~~ ^{united} wealth, ~~education, prestige and power~~ ^{new ~~values~~ of democracy promised?} ~~that~~ ^{whatsoever they} ~~representatives~~ ^{representatives} could be trusted to represent ~~some~~ ^{some} out fear that they might ~~or~~ ^{or} ~~represent~~ ^{represent} ~~ideologically~~ ^{ideologically} different ~~ideology~~ ^{ideology} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~period~~ ^{period} ~~of time~~ ^{of time}.

basically different

In the course of that period of time, however, two things happened. On the one side, the 'mechanistic' devotion to the service of present & future government proceeded vigorously, one is tempted to say obsessively, until throughout the world, ~~and~~ including the Soviet Union, there was an amazing ~~young apparatus~~ of representative institutions. At the same time, on the other hand, the ~~basic~~ foundations of representative government were rotting away. By 1914 were disturbing signs that the idea of representative institutions

1.) There were disturbing signs that the idea of "the people" could promote as much superstition as the idea of monarchy.

- 2.) Bitter wars and class conflicts erupted. Parties were formed whose ~~interest~~ success was predicated upon the downfall of parliamentary regimes.
- 3.) Dozens of nations seized upon the forms of representative government but rejected the operational ~~intensity~~ test of the forms.
- 4.) Land ^{tenure} became only one factor among several in the political power complex, ^{while} industrial development proceeded, ~~and monetary~~ world markets opened up, and ^{the} monetary standard of values ~~was~~ adopted everywhere.
- 5.) A separation grew up between those who possessed prestige in a society -- often concentrated in the old feudal groups --, those who had acquired the new wealth, and those ~~also~~ professionals who managed and served political power. Social solidarity ~~was~~ ^{was often} lost.

The results ~~have~~ are plain to those who read history with a sober mind. By the beginning of World War II, ~~and~~ several important representative regimes had come crashing down -- Russia (and the early Soviet regime), Italy, and Germany. At the height of Fascist success, early in World War II, almost no ~~country~~ representative government

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existed in the world: The Allied governments were placed in the hands of the executive branch of government with the intention of expediting the war effort. To be sure, ~~the~~ ~~act~~ this condition was partly temporary; once the war was over, free elections were held in many places and ~~the~~ representative systems reestablished.

However, a description of the condition of representative government in the world today must admit to the following enclosures:

1. The legislature, which was to be the great engine of the modern government, is now ~~a weak, hatched to the superior engine of the~~ ~~by other forces~~ the executive and bureaucracy. ~~personified~~ has become ~~the great popular institution~~ ~~and communist or nationalist~~ ~~system exists~~.
2. The executive, wherever a presidential executive, the bureaucracy, has become strong everywhere, but is particularly dominant where a weak ~~personal~~ executive exists, as in France prior to De Gaulle's latest accession to power.
3. The social ~~structure~~ ~~structure~~ of the territorial legislators has ~~largely~~ greatly weakened, and it is difficult to invent new devices of representation to buttress it.
4. All societies in the modern world, whether developed or ~~underdeveloped~~ underdeveloped, are in process of rapid change. In America, at one extreme, the rural areas are emptying into the cities and the ~~city~~ city people are changing from one job to

another as ~~the~~ automation and
 invention occur. In the ~~poor~~ underdeveloped
 lands, the rural poor flock to the cities,
 there to constitute great lumps of ~~unemployed~~
 humanity, indigestible to the economy ~~and~~ now
 and for into the future.

5. In the ^{higher} developed areas of the world
 the social struggle has abated. In the United
 States and West Germany, the Communists are few.
 In Italy and France, the Communists are
 numerous but the leaderships dare not
~~quite~~ upstate too vigorously for fear of losing their
 followings. In the ^{developed} Communist ~~the~~ countries,
~~totalitarian~~ rule based upon ^{brute} force is subsiding
 in favor of an ~~type~~ administrative ~~rule~~
 along the lines of ancient oriental despotisms.
 Only in the ^{most} underdeveloped lands -- and it must
 be ~~practical~~ ^{practical} that they ~~are~~ count a majority of
 heads in the world -- ~~has~~ the social struggle
 carry fire. But there, so few were the so-called
 exploiting classes, ~~but~~ few social enemies remain
 except those who are in fact rival groups
 within the same social and ~~structural~~ ideological
 framework. ~~By one name develop~~

6. ~~Yet~~ everywhere in the world the forms of
 representative government have triumphed.
 Everyone admits to the need for elected ~~roughly~~
 legislatures, appointed ^{usually according to territorial units of equal} ~~roughly~~ ^{populations}
 Yet this legislature contains very little of the total
 power of the ~~land~~ country. The balance of
 power is distributed among the personified
 entities, the bureaucratic officials (including the
 military), the party leaders (often a single-party

system now), and a small number of interest-group leaders. All of them operate in the name of the people. That is, in the world of the moment, the legitimacy of rule must reside in the people, no matter how ~~devouringly~~ ^{devouringly} the rule operates to give power to ~~nonselected~~ ^{selected} persons. A century ago, republicans would ask themselves how they might rule in the name of a ~~sovereign~~ ^{king} and yet hold actual power. Today they ask themselves how they can rule in the name of the people and hold real power. "Cambria il maestro della cappella, ma la musica è sempre quella", goes the Italian saying: the choir master may change, but the music stays ^{always} the same.

Still, from all of this kaleidoscopic movement, must there not be some verities? Formal or at least fairly constant verities of representation and representative government? Must one say with Vilfredo Pareto: "Let us not dwell upon the idea of representation: sparrycock gives us no floor."?

There are several principles of human life in society which are best served by representative government -- if not the representative government that is known today, then one which is practically conceivable for the future.

1. A Representative government based upon some mode of collecting opinion and wills from diverse parts of a ~~diverse~~ population is a bulwark against excessive centralization of power and administration.
2. A Representative government is most likely to be friendly to free and local economic enterprises.
3. A Representative government is best likely to destroy individual liberties, even though there will be ~~continuous~~ ^{constant} ~~opposition~~ ^{agitation} to always some voices ~~bring~~ ^{bring} out against each and every liberty.
4. A Representative government is more likely than monarchical, totalitarian, communist, or bureaucratic governments to promote equal opportunity among the ~~poor~~ people and restrain the growth of fixed privileges.
5. Representative government ~~emerge~~ ^{and character} from people at the point in their ~~life~~ ^{where} they are most likely to be ~~free~~ ^{true to themselves} and know what they are doing.

If such are the human services performed by representative government, what reforms of ~~the~~ contemporary world political systems are needed to permit

representative government to flourish? These reforms
 and possibly to flourish? These reforms
~~They~~ are not easy to visualize, because
 the visions of ^{most} men today are focussed upon
 organizations of astronomical size and
 leaders whose characters and achievements
 are greatly magnified by the mass media.
 For the same reason and others, even if
 conceived, ~~such~~ reforms would be difficult
 to accomplish. ~~modern man for example,~~
 can raze buildings and ~~set up new ones~~ build
 new ones, and does so abundantly and
 every day. But he cannot tear down
 useless social structures and put new ones
 in their place. If he achieves the degree of
 hostility and aggressiveness to ~~pull~~ ^{pull} down the
 old institution, he is usually too exhausted
 and full of conflicts to rebuild, but goes
 off like a savage abandoning ~~his old~~ his
 burnt-out campfire. Perhaps the
 only method that will not cause more
 social destruction than reconstruction is
 a selective ^{method}, which would ~~not~~ change
 critical features of the social landscape,
 letting much else change by itself later
 on. For instance, it is easier to get
 more local news reporting and local initiatives
 into the press than it is to change the
~~type of~~ type of ballot used for voting in
 provincial elections. Yet the former is
 more effective than the latter in creating
 the proper social atmosphere in which

Representative government can survive.

1. In the first place, The reform of representative government requires ~~the~~ a new ~~study of the~~ ^{applied} science of administration whose principles will give men rules by which decentralization ~~can~~ and local consultation can occur regularly and seriously.

2. Second, ~~representative~~ ^{administrative} all officials ~~of the~~ highest level should be regarded frankly as ~~the~~ legislators and a system should be devised to test their "promeness to representation." Their contacts with the legislature and their elected representatives should be formally provided for.

3. In some countries, a division of the central personnel executive into a relatively weak officer, usually called a president or king, ~~and~~ and a stronger officer, usually termed the ~~prime minister~~ premier, occurs. The first provides expressive representation, the second ~~efficient~~ ^{efficient} representation. In other countries, such as the United States of America, the two offices are joined into one office and there is a permanent danger under modern conditions of declining localism that the president, who gives the masses both expressive and efficient representation, will cause or consummate a

~~Constitution~~ constitutional revolution, putting the seal of doom upon the weakened institutions of representative government -- the legislature, the provincial bodies, the congeries of local, ~~and~~ federalized and unintegrated national interests of the country. Worst of all is the effect that an uncontrolled chief executive will have upon the dignity ~~and~~ characters and mind of the common man and child. They will be relapse into that primitive submissive, and worshipful, and imitative condition from which they first began the long rise towards self-reliance and independent intelligence. Therefore, ~~representative~~ machinery to control the central executive needs constant care and invention.

4. In every country, a reappraisal of the legislative branch of government is required, with a thorough overhauling in mind. On the agenda of ~~urgent~~ for redesign are the ~~national~~ ~~representative~~ ~~franchise~~ personnel, the development of intelligence ~~and~~ about social conditions, and the processes of decision. Means must be found to admit to the legislature more of the force of the communities of the nation than are provided by the simple system of letting anybody be a candidate, letting everyone vote for him, counting the

ballots and opening the doors of parliament to the winner. Modern industry does not even hire a clerk in that fashion. If it is true that democracy demands that the ~~people~~ ^{responsibilities} be assigned by the people, it need not be conceded that all efforts to improve their quality have to be abandoned.

Nor do contemporary legislatures go far in the direction of improved procedures for ~~improving the~~ understanding their work. ~~However~~ The solicitous ~~and~~ partnership before and under,

Of the ~~personified executive~~ and the heads of government high bureaucracy lets them believe that all the ^{information} intelligence required for legislation is contained in the packages handed to them. Of parliaments permitted themselves the luxury of Research and Development, the so-called R & D, which modern industry employs, sometimes to the extent of 10% of its total ~~total~~ expenditures, they would be more than a match for Presidents and Bureaucracy.

Similar reforms might prove beneficial in the area of decision-making. In legislating, legislatures are placed often in verrorem because of the threats and blandishments of the executive branch and the press. Since everything done in the legislature is publicized, a great virtue becomes a vice. Forgetting that knowledge of what is happening in government is a hard-won

achievement, one of the greatest ^{in our}
all of history, The public, press, ^{and}
^{many} career officials often denounce
the only institution where true publicity
of differences and operations in government
exists, on grounds that it shows up
the faults of a country and its government.
We are like hearing out the oil filter of a
car engine, on grounds that it is unpleasant
to contemplate the impurities of the ^{fuel} system.
Indeed, the reforms of the legislative process
should extend to making ~~more like~~ other
areas of government and private industrial
educational, and associational decision making more like that of the
legislature.

In a world that ~~does~~ admirals' recommendations may appear

Decision
Legislature.

In a world that ~~admirer's~~ admirer's
expertness, These recommendations may appear
retrograde, but they are not in fact. Expertness
is fine in its place. However, expertness is
without motive and without links to the
community. As a result, extremes of expertness
cause massive popular nausea ~~and~~ in the end.
The people cannot get what they want by
themselves -- it is for this that we have
representative government -- but the people
can overturn regimes and become passive
and ~~very~~ lazy and commit many another
~~offense~~ offense against the bureaucratic state that
defies its theoretical high efficiency. In the
end, the representative government, ramified in
spirit and institutions throughout a great
community, can produce a far ~~more~~ more
productive and ~~rich~~ rich society and kind of man.