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Congress has dealt a blow to the republican form of government by authorizing political contributions through income tax payments, Professor Alfred de Grazia of New York University charged last night.

Addressing the Rational Debate seminar of the American Enterprise Institute, the New York University professor of Social Theory in Government, said this type of funding would put too much power into the hands of the two centralized political parties.

"The party has to remain decentralized or it falls into the hands of the presidential faction," de Grazia said. "Encourage the public to contribute its dollars to the national committee of the political party for expenditure in presidential campaigns under the dictates of the presidential candidate and a blow against the republican system has been struck."

De Grazia said we can only hope "that people will be too apathetic to give a dollar, or that a party and its candidate will denounce the law and refuse to accept its terms."

"Better a rich man's party than a tight national machine, if that must be the choice," he said.

Dr. de Grazia is also editor of the American Behavioral Scientist. He addressed the second in a series of Rational Debate seminars on "Congress and the Presidency: Their Role in Modern Times" sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute, a non-partisan research organization. Dr. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., former special assistant to President Kennedy and President Johnson, spoke at the first session last week. All meetings are held in the Board of Trustees Room of George Washington University. Admission is by invitation only.

Both Dr. Schlesinger and Dr. de Grazia will appear together in the third seminar next Wednesday, December 14.

Dr. de Grazia criticized the American practice of exalting the President in a manner that "begins to satisfy the divine aspects of the Roman Emperor."

"And the presidency, which no democratic movement in history has ever considered to be good in theory -- whether the Roman populists, the medieval Conciliarists, the English Levellers, the French Revolutionaries, or the constitutional founding fathers -- this presidency is ever prone to the depreciation of human diversity and self-respect, and to the cult of personality," de Grazia declared.

" . . . the system whereby an independent public, speaking through a ramified set of institutions, governs a democratic people is being displaced by a system wherein a divinely endowed personage is offered an ever richer diet of functions and authorities that he hands back to an ever-swelling administrative establishment. The democratic public is being displaced, engorged, and absorbed into the national executive force."

De Grazia also proposed a second Congressional finger on the nuclear trigger to whittle down Presidential authority.

"His (the president's) war powers should be modified. He should share the power to retaliate against foreign aggression with a congressman who would be elected by the whole congress for this assignment" de Grazia said. "His power to commit troops to combat should be limited by standing legislation, in lieu of a declaration of war, whichever he may prefer to employ or seek."

De Grazia suggested several executive authorities might be better than one.

"Congress should consider whether the presidency forms a better topping off of the administrative pyramid of government than some new kind of organizational concept," he declared. "It is not at all certain for example, that the Committees of Congress should abstain from direct policy-making as a matter of right and efficiency -- something that many tend to engage in anyhow actually."

The New York University professor said it was a myth to call the presidency a source of good administration in government, or that he can handle an unlimited number of activities, both ceremonial and executive, or that he has a monopoly of the public interest.

"It is mainly a fiction that one man, the president, is the only person suited in law, in administration, or even in psychology, to run the vast federal empire," he asserted. "This fiction should be replaced by a doctrine that would give the president an eminently respectable role to play but would engage congress and other groups, commission and agency leaders in prominent roles as well."

Dr. de Grazia urged that the presidency be limited to one six-year term, which would give him enough time "to plan and execute a series of schemes, and will dampen the continuous electioneering that goes on at present."