
THEME

NOTE

The fear of too much citizen participation expressed by the authors of *The Federalist* papers has become liberal dogma in this century. From Walter Lippmann's often stated conviction that the people can barely keep the details of their own lives under control and therefore cannot be trusted to form intelligent judgments about political affairs to Samuel P. Huntington's diagnosis of the American malady as too much democracy, the assumption that leaders are qualified to lead and followers only to follow has been taken to represent deep thinking and wisdom. On a more practical level, the dogma has once again been enshrined in the statutes of the Democratic Party, which, professing to have learned its lesson from the elections of 1972 and 1980, has returned the party to its bosses for safekeeping.

But if the contemporary loathing of participation marks a continuity in attitude on the part of the political elite, it is framed within a fundamentally altered institutional setting. Of the Federalists, Hamilton alone foresaw the rise of the American state with its vast bureaucracy and accretion of power. This state, which only fully came into being in the twentieth century, is very different from the nation that preceded it. Domestically, the new state moved to the center of the American political economy as regulator, protector, and customer in a new corporate order. But the state really came into its own by doing what states do best: preparing for and making war. America's entry into the Great War was an entrance onto the stage of international affairs, and as such it was a watershed in the creation of the American state. When Randolph Bourne, a dissenter from that war, wrote that "war is the health of the State," he explained that "the ideal of the State is that within its territory its power and influence should be universal." Diversity, dissent, and autonomy, the prerequisites of democracy, are the enemies of the state, and in war the state comes closest to stamping them out.

The unanimity required for war finds a more latently belligerent expression in foreign policy, and writers like Lippmann have been particularly concerned to justify the exclusion of popular participation from that realm of governmental action. The supposed complexities of foreign policy that require the ruminations of experts and singularity of voice expressing the national interest in the dialogue between the states work together to exclude popular involvement in its formulation and execution.

As an international power and as national economic sovereign, the state and the corporate power it consolidates require the same sort of citizen. Lipp-

mann, in *The Public Philosophy* (1954), summed up the state's view that "the people are able to give and to withhold their consent to being governed—their consent to what the government asks of them, proposes to them, and has done in the conduct of their affairs. They can elect the government. They can remove it. They can approve or disapprove its performance. But they cannot administer the government. They cannot themselves perform. . . . A mass cannot govern." The state's citizenry is a passive mass: now the consenting constituent at the ballot box, now the consumer voting his preference in the marketplace, now the hostage cannon-fodder playing its passive role in the great power game.

As the state has grown in strength and size, the citizenry has grown in width, taking in more and more of the population, but it has diminished in depth, losing more and more of its active power until it has become merely a registrar of consent. But there is also a second type of citizen, the citizen whose loyalty is not to the state but to the locality, whose milieu is not the mass but identifiable groups—neighbors, coworkers, friends. While the state's citizens have grown so passive that few of them show up at the polls when their consent is requested, the growth in participation in grassroots and citizen action groups indicates that a new, active, national citizenry is in the process of reestablishing itself, and that democratic citizen is bad news for the state.

Democracy, the union of "the people" with "power," is an inherently radical standard against which our political life must be judged. Charles Douglas Lummis argues that the political virtue required for a democratic system to really work can only come from the working of democracy itself; that "the only real education system for democracy is democracy." As Sheldon S. Wolin shows, the democratic citizen is an activist, not a passive bearer of rights, and the essence of democratic citizenship is the capacity to create, generate, and share power. But power entails conflict, and Peter Bachrach argues that the conflict between classes, rather than its sublimation into corporatist schemes of power sharing, can be beneficial to democracy's development. Hanna Fenichel Pitkin and Sara M. Shumer explore a different kind of conflict—the variety of experiences, judgments, and interests that come together within participatory democratic movements and keep them vital. And Sara M. Evans and Harry C. Boyte, using the development of the feminist movement as an example, show how citizenship can be learned in the communal world of daily activity.

-N.X.