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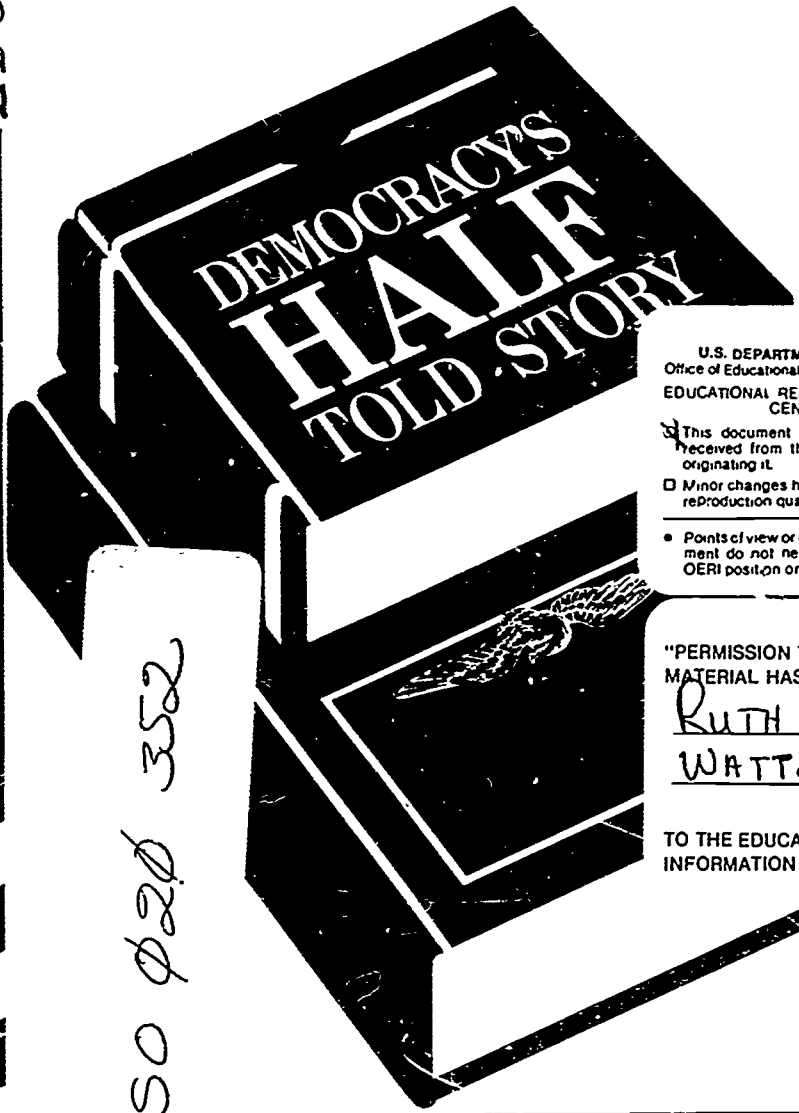
ABSTRACT

The first purpose of a high school course in U.S. history must be to help students understand the essence of democracy and those events, institutions, and forces that have either promoted or obstructed it. This review examines five textbooks and analyzes how useful they are in aiding that process, and how they might be made more helpful. The five texts are: (1) "A History of the United States" (D. Boorstin; B. Kelley); (2) "History of a Free People" (H. Bragdon; S. McCutchen); (3) "The United States: A History of the Republic" (J. Davidson; M. Lytle); (4) "People and Our Country" (N. Risjord; T. Haywoode); (5) "Triumph of the American Nation" (L. Todd; M. Curti). The texts are reviewed using topic divisions such as: "History's Role in Civic Education"; "Old World Backgrounds"; "Civil War and Emancipation"; "Change and Reform Before World War I"; and "Depression, New Deal, and War Again." The textbooks under review are at one and the same time over-detailed and under-detailed: the first, because they try to mention something about everything; the second, because they fail to develop major themes in depth. They labor too hard to balance affirmation and negation of U.S. history, and the result is a detached neutrality, passionless about both the ugly and the beautiful moments in that history. The texts should convey the complication, drama, suspense, and the paradox of comedy and tragedy found in history. The Education for Democracy Project's Statement of Principles and its signatories are given in the appendix. (PPB)

BY PAUL GAGNON

A Publication of the
Education for
Democracy Project



What American History Textbooks Should Add

DEMOCRACY'S HALF-TOLD STORY

What American History Textbooks Should Add

BY PAUL GAGNON

A Publication of the
Education for Democracy Project

Published by
the American Federation of Teachers

Will democracy survive through the ages if we do not purposefully transmit to successive generations the values that underlie it?

We believe the answer is no. We believe that our children must learn—and we must teach them—the knowledge, values, and habits that will best protect and extend our precious inheritance.

To help schools and teachers strengthen their teaching of democratic values, the American Federation of Teachers, the Educational Excellence Network and Freedom House have jointly launched The Education for Democracy Project, *which is the sponsor of this book.*

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY is a joint project of the American Federation of Teachers, the Educational Excellence Network and Freedom House.

The American Federation of Teachers is a union with a membership of 700,000—most of whom are classroom teachers, higher education faculty, and other school employees. The AFT is committed to helping its members bring excellence to America's classrooms and full professional status to their work.

The Educational Excellence Network—a project of Vanderbilt University's Institute for Public Policy Studies—is an information exchange and clearinghouse serving hundreds of educators, policymakers, journalists, and citizens who are committed to the improvement of elementary and secondary education.

Freedom House is a national organization that monitors political rights and civil liberties around the world and that has spent forty years educating the public about the nature and needs of democracy and the threats to it.

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Democracy's Half-Told Story: What American History Textbooks Should Add may be ordered by writing *Democracy's Half-Told Story* at the American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. For pricing information and an order form, see page 179.

Paul Gagnon is professor of history at University of Massachusetts, Boston and a member of the Paideia Group. He is the author of *Democracy's Untold Story: What World History ' :tbooks Neglect,* a previous publication of the Education for Democracy Proje:t, and has served as an advisor to the Project since its founding. Mr. Gagnon was the principal investigator of the Bradley Commission on History in Schools, and now serves as consultant to the National Center for History in the Schools based at the University of California, Los Angeles and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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The following people assisted and advised Mr. Gagnon by reading and commenting on early drafts of *Democracy's Untold Story: What World History Textbooks Neglect* and *Democracy's Half-Told Story: What American History Textbooks Should Add.* Titles are those held by members at the time of their selection.

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FOREWORD

In 1987, the Education for Democracy Project issued a *Statement of Principles* signed by 150 American leaders ranging politically from William Bennett to Barbara Jordan. In the Statement, we argued that one central goal of schooling must be to provide to students the learning necessary for a "reasoned allegiance" to the institutions, values, and circumstances that underlie democratic society and that offer promise to non-democratic countries the world over.

This obligation to impart a commitment to democracy falls on all educators, but especially on those in social studies education. It's in the classes of these teachers that students can and should consider such questions as. What forces have sustained and strengthened democracy and which have weakened it? What are the tradeoffs between liberty and equality? Between majority rule and minority rights? What events are most likely to challenge our commitment to various democratic rights? And, what is life like in that part of the world where democracy does not reign?

To aid social studies educators (and textbook publishers!) in raising such questions, the Project asked historian Paul Gagnon, in 1987, to assess high school *world* history texts against this *Education for Democracy* standard. In *Democracy's Untold Story*, he judged those texts and found them significantly wanting. Now, in *Democracy's Half Told Story*, he assesses *American* history texts and finds them lacking as well.

In his review, Mr. Gagnon proposes a set of issues, events, and developments the understanding of which is essential to a student's democratic literacy. Not everyone will agree that his list of topics is *the* crucial list. Nor will all agree with his interpretation of how particular events and ideas worked to promote or undermine democracy. Such interpretations, especially when they have to do with recent and still controversial history, will always be debatable. What is critical, though, is that students should examine history through this lens of democracy—they should ask of each event and idea they study, "What was its impact on democratic life here and elsewhere?"

Just what do our students need to learn about democratic principles, institutions, and history? On behalf of the American Federation of Teachers and the Education for Democracy Project, we are delighted to sponsor this book in which Mr. Gagnon takes us such a long way toward answering this question.

Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers *August 11, 1989*

INTRODUCTION

Like its companion volume, *Democracy's Untold Story: What World History Textbooks Neglect*, this is an extended conversation with my colleagues—teachers of history and social studies—and with any others whose concern for the education of citizens prompts them to listen in. It is not a comprehensive review of textbook format, writing style, or scholarship, but simply my own response to two questions:

1) How helpful are high school history textbooks in teaching the history of democracy, its ideas, values, and institutions, and its advances and retreats in the United States?

2) How might they be made more helpful? What could they add?

To those of us who see education for democracy as a chief aim of schooling, no questions are more significant. The high school course in United States history is required for graduation in most of our 50 states. It is by far the most commonly required, and enrolled, course of all history and social studies courses in our schools. And in many localities, and in most curricula, it is the only course in the student's entire school experience in which the meaning and the adventures of democracy are, or can be, seriously explored.

As was the case in my discussion of world history books, I do not claim to offer a fully-rounded prescription for teaching the American history course, but merely my own version of how to deal with one of the themes around which that course should be

The course's first purpose must be to help students understand the essence of democracy.

organized. Other themes, chosen by teachers themselves, are clearly necessary. But given its unique role in the curriculum, I argue that the course's first purpose must be to help students understand the essence of democracy and those events, institutions and forces that have either promoted or obstructed it in our country.

This review will necessarily take a different form from that of the world history textbooks in *Democracy's Untold Story*. Covering only 400 years and centered on North America, the five texts examined here are much more detailed. A close comparative analysis, chapter by chapter, would be overwhelming in its recital of facts and concepts included, or left out, or floating free of theme and context. The look at topics and turning-points must be highly selective, directly relevant to the study of democracy and its experiences. For many of the more general questions posed about textbooks—their style, their clarity of organization, their candor and balance—we must be content with general answers, illustrated from one or another of the texts under review.

It cannot be said too often that what follows is not an alternative American history text. Readers expecting a full and balanced treatment of each successive topic will not find it here. On many subjects, the textbooks do quite well indeed and I do not often pause to repeat what they say. For example, the history and contributions of American Indians are usually well-presented, from the innovative political practices of the Iroquois Federation, through the Trail of Tears, to their final subjugation and contemporary problems. Likewise, I stress military history in the Civil War and First World War, but say little of it in the Revolution and the Second World War because the texts treat it adequately in the latter two cases. I mention but do not dwell upon the great inventiveness and creative power of American capitalism after the Civil War because the textbooks are eloquent on these central aspects of our economic life, just as they are on Westward expansion and the importance of the frontier and the newer Western states on democratic life and expectations.

Other critical studies of U.S. history texts have appeared in the past decade, which suggest some of the problems teachers may keep in mind as they examine textbooks for adoption and from which we may draw a few general observations to serve as a backdrop here. In 1979, Frances Fitzgerald's *America Revised* reviewed U.S. history books for all grade levels and faulted most of them for their blandness, avoidance of conflict, and their failure to probe for the sources of the "problems" they merely listed:

To the extent that young people actually believe them, these bland fictions, propagated for the purpose of creating good citizens, may actually achieve the opposite; they give young people no warning of the real dangers ahead, and later they may well make these young people feel that their own experience of conflict and suffering is unique in history and perhaps un-American.

She found that although more recent texts made more of multiculturalism, and the problems of minorities and the poor were fully admitted, the causes of their problems were still not probed. Instead, Fitzgerald found, their problems appeared as "diseases," which everyone deplored but for which no cure had as yet been discovered. There seemed to be no such thing as conflicts of interest among classes or between regions of the country. Trouble was the product of disembodied forces unrelated to human agency or to any deliberate decision by those with power to choose. Any suggestion of ignorance or wrongdoing on anyone's part—strong or weak, rich or poor, minority or majority—was eschewed as though it constituted bias, even if plainly true. As a result, textbooks repeatedly needed to resort to in Fitzgerald's words, "abstractions and passive verbs."

The same evasions characterized the textbooks' treatment of American relations with the rest of the world, Fitzgerald said. Most texts portrayed the world as a mass of "crisis areas with foreigners making trouble for us." American economic, political and military needs and interests (even the most legitimate), and their impact on other countries, were not explained. And there was no attention to the perspectives, or needs, of other peoples and governments, even of our closest allies.

Fitzgerald also found U.S. history texts failing to present the importance of individual character and intellect. As texts make more and more of the "concepts" and abstractions of the social sciences, "the characters of American history have grown small and pale in the shadow of institutions and forces." Where there used to be heroes and villains, "gentlemen, shysters, hotheads, statesmen and fools," there are now "only cipher people, who say very little and think nothing—who have no passions and no logic." They "face problems" and "make judgments." Substantive biographical sketches are rare.

Worst of all, Fitzgerald said, and most responsible for the dullness of U.S. history texts, was the absence of ideas, of intellectual history. Were foreigners to read these books, they would have to conclude that American political life was wholly mindless. That the Founding Fathers were intellectuals was "a well-kept secret":

Even Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton are insubstantial, their ideas on government reduced to little more than a difference of the merits of a national bank. As for the Puritans, the texts manage to describe that most ideological of communities without ever saying what they believed in.

To leave out the ideas and visions of great Americans, she concluded, is "to drain the soul out of American history."

Two more recent critics of American textbooks largely agree with her. Gilbert T. Sewall, in *American History Textbooks: An Assessment of Quality* (1987), and Harriet Tyson-Bernstein, in *A Conspiracy of Good Intentions: America's Textbook Fiasco* (1988), stress the critical role of textbooks in students' learning. Although it is true that students may encounter added materials and innovative classroom techniques, and although there is anecdotal evidence that U.S. history teachers are readier to depart from the text than are teachers of world or European history, the textbooks remain, in Sewall's words, "the official portraits of the past that adults hand to the next generation":

To many teachers and almost all students, the textbook is taken to be a well of truthful and expert information. The examples, episodes, anecdotes, viewpoints, information, and data that a textbook contains will constitute the essential corpus of American history in the classroom where it is used.

Working with an advisory panel of school and university historians, journalists and editors, Sewall concentrated upon the literary quality of the texts and their clarity of organization. He and his colleagues confirmed many of the judgments in *America Revised:*

Like Fitzgerald, an increasing number of critics note the disappearance of controversies, conflicts, colorful characters, glories, and tragedies—in short, a national history of passion and voice....In a dubious quest for readability, many textbooks simplify style, mechanics, and vocabulary to produce flat and unmemorable prose without zest or elegance.

One consequence, Sewall says, is that students find history and social studies dull and, worse, unrelated to their lives. To the extent that textbooks are responsible for student indifference, they contribute to "a wholesale loss of national heritage," preparing the day when we may resemble "a ship of fools, without anchor or compass."

Harriet Tyson-Bernstein agrees about the books' dullness and lack of clear organizing themes. From their point of view, textbook

publishers can claim, with some justice, she says, that their books are "what the market wants," or "what teachers want."

> *But this claim calls forth the image of eight people at a restaurant who order eight different kinds of soup. The waiter mixes all the soups together and gives each customer a bowlful. The amalgamated soup may be nutritious, but it is themeless and confusing. Nobody, willingly, would eat such a concoction.*

How far do the critiques by Fitzgerald, Sewall and Tyson-Bernstein apply to the most widely-adopted United States history books for the 11th grade high school course? More directly, how do they apply to the effectiveness of textbooks in teaching about democracy? We examine five books which are leaders in the number of district and state adoption lists on which they appear:

Boorstin, Daniel J. and Brooks M. Kelley, *A History of the United States*, Ginn and Company, 1986.

Bragdon, Henry W. and Samuel P. McCutchen, *History of a Free People*, Macmillan, 1981.

Davidson, James West and Mark H. Lytle, *The United States: A History of the Republic*, Prentice-Hall, 1981.

Risjord, Norman K. and Terry L. Haywoode, *People and Our Country*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982.

Todd, Lewis Paul and Merle Curti, *Triumph of the American Nation*, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1986.

Of these five, Sewall and company briefly review four: Todd, Davidson, Bragdon and Boorstin. All four fare better than the elementary and middle school textbooks reviewed by the Sewall group. The reviewers found the 11th grade texts markedly better written, more candid, and sometimes quite strong in their thematic organization. However, all four were deemed too long and overloaded with "mentioning."

Two—Todd and Davidson—were found to be so cluttered with graphics, vignettes and special features ("short takes," Sewall calls them) as to distract the student from the prose narrative. The two are also rated low on writing style, though better than most of the books for earlier grades. On the other hand, Todd wins praise for the effectiveness of some of its "short takes": capsule biographies, original documents, sections on study skills, and its "elegant and original ways" of linking economic and geographic topics to the narrative. Davidson is admired for its emphasis on the contemporary period and its final unit "The United States in a Changing World," which sketches current American politics, economics and culture "with balance and taste."

The other two texts fare even better in the Sewall review. Boorstin and Bragdon are called markedly less cluttered with interruptive features and graphics. Students can more easily focus on the written narrative, which Sewall and his colleagues praise very highly in both books. They call Boorstin's "the most literate and effective narrative" of the eleventh grade books surveyed, and say Bragdon's prose has "horsepower" and "a flair for the illuminating example and the no-nonsense explanation."

These general judgments are borne out by my own reading of the four books. The fifth, Risjord, is less well-written than Boorstin and Bragdon. It is shorter than both Todd and Davidson but nearly as burdened with distracting features. Its advantages, like those of the other texts, will emerge as this review proceeds. One of them is that it has a good number of biographical sketches of political leaders and their beliefs, always useful to the theme of democracy's evolution in America.

I am indebted to the Education for Democracy project, co-sponsored by the American Federation of Teachers, the Educational Excellence Network, and Freedom House, for the opportunity to pursue this review, which has also been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

It would be impossible for me to mention all of the colleagues and students at the University of Massachusetts, at Amherst and Boston, from whose insights I have learned so much over the years. But nowhere did I learn more about the Republic's meaning and promise than in the high school literature classes of the late Ted Pease of Ashfield. Member of the Yale Class of 1914, veteran of the First World War, classical scholar, political iconoclast, and devotee of Lincoln, he taught generations of students the tragedy, the complexity, the humor, heroism, and beauty in American history and writing.

In producing this work I could not have done without the criticism and encouragement offered by members of the Textbook Advisory Committee, chaired by Diane Ravitch. Among those with especially valuable insights on civic education was the late Hazel Hertzberg. I extend to all of them my thanks, together with my regrets for whatever errors I persist in. And I offer my very special thanks to Ruth Wattenberg, director of the Education for Democracy project at the American Federation of Teachers. Without her, this work would not have been launched or completed; I have found her editorship to be invariably helpful and indispensable.

Paul Gagnon *Cambridge, Massachusetts* *June 1989*

I. HISTORY'S ROLE IN CIVIC EDUCATION: THE PRECONDITION FOR POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE

Why do students need to know the past? What does it have to do with citizenship, or anything else in their lives? Why is the civics course not enough, or the American government course? Why claim that in most schools the 11th grade course in American history is the only place where the meaning and requirements of democracy can be seriously explored? What are students expected to learn and why do we want them to learn it?

Like most history textbooks for schools and colleges, these five books on United States history begin badly by failing to hear or to respond to these good questions. None provides an introductory discussion. None says what history is, or suggests the many forms it may take, or tells how it relates to students' lives and to their other studies. On history as part of civic education, only one text, Davidson, has a single line: "As you study the nation's past, you will begin to better understand the challenges of the present and the major issues of the future."

The absence of ideas is evident from the start. Presumably, the authors do believe that what appears in their 800 or more pages will make some imprint on the readers' intellect, and perhaps on emotions too. But what it may be, and why students should bother, they do not say. It is disappointing to find the historian-teachers who write these books so insensitive to pedagogical questions and to the case for history as the best source of

political sophistication. Why not leap at Jefferson's argument that the "general education" of citizens should be "chiefly historical"?

> *History, by apprising them of the past, will enable them to judge of the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men; it will enable them to know ambition under every disguise it may assume; and knowing it, to defeat its views.*

Why is it that democracy can be seriously explored only by historical study? The first answer must be that no system, religious, political, economic or educational, can be understood without knowing its adventures—its origins and their circumstances, the ideas and forces that propelled or obstructed it, its successes and failures, its changing role in the larger world of other systems.

Civics and government courses are undeniably useful, but only when added to the student's confrontation of reality: What has happened to people, how and why? Historical knowledge is the precondition for political intelligence. In a proper curriculum, as described in "Education for Democracy," (Appendix) such knowledge would proceed not only from the American history course, but from required courses in the history of Western civilization and of the world.

Why is it that democracy can be seriously explored only by historical study?

These three courses, or three blocks of time however tailored into courses, are needed to project the three kinds of reality a modern civic education requires: United States history, to learn who we are, how we got this way, and who we are becoming; the history of Western civilization, to learn the origins and evolution of democracy and its moral bases—our common political heritage as Americans, however diverse our cultural heritages may be; and third, world history, to learn about the other nations and peoples with whom we share, like it or not, a common global destiny.

To leave out or minimize any of these realities is to leave citizens civically ill-educated, unfree to make informed choices about public life, no matter how well-drilled they may be in the principles, the written law, or inner workings of American political institutions. In most American schools the curriculum in history—and in its sister subjects, geography, biography and literature—is plainly inadequate for the preparation of free citizens. The 11th grade American history course is no longer universally required, the 8th grade American history is optional in many districts, and more than half of all American high school students take no world or Western history whatsoever.

In response to this situation, the Bradley Commission on History in Schools, made up of seventeen distinguished historians and classroom teachers, has recently published a powerful argu-

ment for history as essential to civic education. It argues that history and geography should be restored as the continuing core of social studies, from kindergarten through the 12th grade:

> *History belongs in the school programs of all students, regardless of their academic standing and preparation, of their curricular track, or of their plans for the future. It is vital for all citizens in a democracy, because it provides the only avenue we have to reach an understanding of ourselves and of our society, in relation to the human condition over time.*

This plea that history be universally required because of its unique power to educate citizens has an honorable ancestry. Nearly a century ago an illustrious group of scholars and teachers, Woodrow Wilson among them, was charged with reviewing the American high school curriculum. The 1892 report of the Committees of Ten declared that democratic schooling called for common, substantial requirements in historical and political studies for all students, whether or not they were college-bound (and especially if they were not). The Committee argued that such studies prepared the student to exert a "salutary influence" on the affairs of his country:

> *History and its allied branches are better adapted than any other studies to promote the invaluable mental power which we call judgment.*

To ensure that students would have enough chance to develop such power of judgment, the Committee of Ten prescribed eight years of history, starting with mythology and biography for the 5th and 6th grades, American history and government for the 7th grade, Greek and Roman history for the 8th, European history in the 9th, English history in the 10th, American history in the 11th, and a selected historical topic, studied in depth, in the 12th grade. In 1899, the Committee of Seven, appointed by the American Historical Association, prescribed a similar four year curricular pattern for high schools: ancient history in the first year, medieval and modern Europe in the second, English history in the third, and American history and government in the senior year. These demanding, egalitarian versions of civic education did not survive the 1920s except in certain preparatory schools and college-preparatory tracks, where they were, of course, no longer egalitarian. As time passed, even those courses were watered-down, and today, even college preparatory programs seldom require half the time for history or geography that the Ten and Seven believed to be necessary. This, despite the fact that we must now recognize a whole new dimension: the en-

tire non-European world that the Committees of Ten and Seven had left largely to geography.

What happened to history? In the name of "social efficiency" professional educators, who had steadily gained influence over the schools since the turn of the century, played down those studies they regarded as lacking immediate utility, or interest, for the mass of students not going on to college. History (what use is it? what job can it get you?) was a casualty. A differentiated, tracked curriculum called "progressive" soon became segregated by class, race, ethnic background—and by the self-fulfilling prophecies of economic occupation and social destiny. On the one hand, academic substance, including history (though less and less of it), was taught to the few college-bound students. On the other hand, vocational subjects and a social studies program aiming at socialization (later to be called "Life Adjustment") were taught to the many, substituting for history an array of courses, deemed to be practical, in applied social sciences.

The good intentions behind the progressive education movement—including an understandable concern for the "holding power" of the schools—did not make up for its undemocratic consequences in regard to civic education. Certain progressives were not in fact democrats themselves but believed in a top-down social engineering of the good society by the enlightened few, who would remain few. Nor should the progressives be given too much credit for advocating innovative teaching methods and "active learning." The Committee of Ten was much concerned with both in 1892, urging that students be encouraged to exercise independent judgment: They should read at least two differing accounts of events; they should study by asking questions, by discriminating among authorities and between original sources and secondary works, they should debate in "mock legislatures, parliaments and congresses"; they should be given responsibility for teaching classes themselves.

> *[W]e have to suggest only the use of the methods which, in good schools, are now accustoming pupils to think for themselves, to put together their own materials, to state their results, to compare one series of events with another series and the history of one country with that of another.*

Now, a century later, our concern about education for democracy leads us back to the ideas of the Committees of Ten and Seven, those "elite" few with faith in the ability of all students to profit from an education both substantial and universal, both "elitist" and egalitarian. The Bradley Commission urges state and local school districts to adopt a history and geography-centered

social studies program for the early grades, full of lively, engaging readings from history, mythology, biography, legend and literature, and a commonly required program of no fewer than two full years of American history and two years of world (or Western and world) history, in the span from grade 7 through grade 12. It urges the closest possible attention to imaginative materials and methods, and it argues for the teacher's authority to decide on when and how to present materials.

Just as the Committee of Ten spoke of "the invaluable mental power which we call judgment," the Bradley report says that the aim of historical study is to promote certain "habits of the mind." Students, as future citizens, should develop a sense of "shared humanity." They need to understand themselves and others by learning how they resemble and how they differ from other people, over time and space; to question stereotypes of others (and of themselves); to discern the difference between fact and conjecture, between evidence and mere assertion; to grasp the complexity of historical cause; to distrust the simple answer and dismissive explanation; to respect particularity and avoid false analogy; to recognize the abuse of historical "lessons" for partisan advantage; to consider that ignorance of the past may make us prisoners of it; to realize that not all problems have solutions, but that amelioration has been won by patient effort; to be prepared for the irrational and the accidental in human affairs; to grasp the power of ideas, values, and individual character in history. In such qualities of mind, well beyond the usual meaning of "critical thinking," lies true civic education, and only the study of history can develop them.

In such qualities of mind, well beyond the usual meaning of "critical thinking," lies true civic education, and only the study of history can develop them.

Why, then, have educators decided that civic education can do without history, or with only a small portion here and there? One reason relevant here is that some social studies specialists have believed that good citizenship can be taught in the abstract, that proper values and right attitudes can be inculcated through object lessons or case studies out of the social sciences. They assume "morals" can be drawn out of historical vignettes cut away from the long and messy chronological narrative and nicely trimmed to make a point.

Moreover, and to their credit, educators want very much to believe that civics can attract and engage all students, but they find that history is difficult to teach well. Indeed, one reason for its decline was that it was, and is, so often taught badly, failing to attract and engage even the most willing students. But instead of working to teach history more effectively, as the Committee of Ten

had urged, the schools turned to what seemed to be easier, more enticing ways to develop the power called "judgment."

The solution has not worked. Student polls repeatedly place social studies last in interest and relevance among their high school subjects and tests reveal wide ignorance of facts, ideas and institutions central to the workings of a democratic system. It is time to admit that there is no painless remedy. Genuine civic education is neither easier nor more attractive than other fields of study. It cannot be easy because it deals with politics—the most difficult of all the human arts. Nor is it automatically attractive to students, particularly when it is well and seriously taught with the historical detail necessary for genuine understanding of concepts, issues, and choices.

Seasoned history and social studies teachers have known all along that teaching the art of democratic politics is extraordinarily difficult, demanding more of learners than other subjects do, not only as they study, but as they conduct their lives afterward. One reason is that the aims of education for democratic citizenship are by their nature contradictory, or at least sharply different in style and in the modes of teaching they require. We seek to develop at one and the same time a taste for teamwork and a taste for critical, thorny individualism, at once the readiness to serve and the readiness to resist, for no one can foretell which way the "good" citizen ought to turn in future crises. Classroom work must range from systematic, disciplined study of history, politics and ideas all the way to skeptical, free-swinging debate on public issues past and present. Neither socialization nor consciousness-raising will do. Both are, or seem, too easy. Each alone is wretched preparation for the subtleties of judgment free citizens must exercise.

Democratic people cherish both liberty and equality, both personal freedom and social justice. There is no recipe for just the right blend in any given situation.

Another reason for the difficulty of civic education, as Alexis de Tocqueville explained in *Democracy in America*, is that most of the important problems for democratic politics are not solvable in any neat or final way. To take his foremost example, democratic people cherish both liberty and equality, both personal freedom and social justice. There is no recipe for just the right blend in any given situation of liberty and equality. The two impulses inevitably collide, yet each is indispensable to the preservation of a bearable level of the other. Civic education teaches the young why this is so not by some "concept" to be memorized but by the memorable, sometimes deeply disturbing historical experiences that have convinced us of it. Students need to see that such conflict is natural and to be expected, not some "failure" of a system that should run itself and leave them alone.

Civic education asks people to accept the burdens of living with tentative answers and with unfinished and often dangerous business. It asks them to accept costs and compromises, to take on responsibilities as eagerly as they claim their rights, to honor the interests of others while pursuing their own, to respect the needs of future generations, and to speak the truth and to do the right thing, when lying and doing the wrong thing would be more profitable. Generally it asks them to restrain their appetites and expectations. Civic education asks all this, and that citizens inform themselves on the multiple problems and choices their elected servants confront.

It is easy enough to lay out these "values" and wholesome attitudes in classroom lessons, followed by quizzes and papers wherein the students repeat the phrases and swear devotion to them. And it is not so hard even to practice them on the playground and in the school, provided a certain level of morale exists. There is no trick to virtuous behavior when things are going well. Most people will hold right attitudes, without much formal instruction, when they feel themselves free, secure, and justly treated.

The tough part of civic education is to prepare people for bad times. The question is not whether they will remember the right phrases, but whether they will put them into practice when they feel wrongly treated, in fear for their freedom and security. Or when authorities and the well-placed, public or private, appear to flout every value and priority taught in school. The chances for democratic principles to surmount crises depend upon the number of citizens who know how free societies, their own and others, have responded to crises of the past, how they acted to defend themselves, and how they survived. Why did some societies fall and others stand? Citizens need to tell each other, before it is too late, what struggles had to be accepted, what sacrifices borne and comforts given up, to preserve freedom and justice.

The chances for democratic principles to surmount crises depend upon the number of citizens who know how free societies, their own and others, have responded to crises of the past.

It would be unreasonable to expect all students to thrill to history and civic education, any more than all thrill to geometry or physics. The deep, discriminating historical knowledge required to ward off panic, self-pity and resignation is not always fun to acquire. We would not think of dumbing-down math or science for the professions requiring them; we would end with incompetent bridge-builders and physicians. However vexing they may find it, students accept the need to master facts and concepts necessary in such professions. But what of the profession of citizen, which nobody can escape? We can be sure that by dumbing-down civic education, we shall end with incompetent citizens,

because democratic values must be rooted in the kind of political and historical wisdom that nourishes them no matter how bad the weather.

When students ask why they need to know the past, and what it has to do with citizenship, they are entitled to some such answer as this. They have the right to be told about our purposes, why we ask so much of them, and why we have no choice but to do so, in all fairness to them and to the larger society.

II. THEMES AND QUESTIONS FOR UNITED STATES HISTORY: WHAT IS MOST WORTH STUDYING?

Like the Committee of Ten before it, the Bradley Commission declares that the study of history "must reach well beyond the acquisition of useful information":

> *To develop judgment and perspective, historical study must often focus upon broad, significant themes and questions, rather than short-lived memorization of fact without context. In doing so historical study should provide context for facts and training in critical judgment based upon evidence, including original sources, and should cultivate the perspective arising from a chronological view of the past down to the present day.*

What are those "broad, significant" questions and themes, to be pursued from the beginning "down to the present day" in the history of the United States that would bring life and meaning to the facts, and promote wisdom about ourselves and our place in the world? Three of the books under review—Davidson and Lytle, Boorstin and Kelly, Bragdon and McCutchen—have prologues of a sort, which state or imply questions they consider important. (Risjord and Haywoode start right out with the Pueblo Indians; Todd and Curti begin with migrations from Asia in the age of the glaciers).

The Davidson text addresses a single paragraph "To the student":

> *Through a study of the history of the United States, you will become familiar with the common experiences that bring*

Americans together as well as the diverse experiences that make American life rich and varied. You will learn about the development of a national spirit and the preservation of local traditions. As you study the nation's past, you will begin to better understand the challenges of the present and the major issues of the future.

Boorstin sets the purpose as understanding how "people from everywhere" joined the American family and how they came to discover that they "really were Americans":

What does it mean to be an American? To answer that question we must shake hands with our earlier selves and try to become acquainted. We must discover what puzzled and interested and troubled earlier Americans. What has been especially American about our ways of living and earning a living? Our ways of making war and making peace? Our ways of thinking and hoping and fearing, of worshiping God and fighting the Devil? Our ways of traveling and politicking, of importing people, of building houses and cities? These are some of the questions we try to answer in this book. Discovering America is a way of discovering ourselves. This is a book about us.

Bragdon's prologue, called "The American Experiment," starts with a potentially challenging question: "What ideals has this country preached and tried to practice?" But it then turns immediately to list ten wholly positive, and apparently settled, answers: economic opportunity (with wealth "widely shared"); wide participation in politics; belief in reform rather than revolution ("only one major armed conflict within the country"); a mobile population ("not fixed in one social class or occupation"); relatively high position and freedom for women; belief in education and widespread educational opportunity; concern for the welfare of others (Red Cross, United Fund, Marshall Plan and Peace Corps are cited); toleration of differences; respect for the rights and abilities of the individual ("an equal start in the race of life"); worldwide responsibility.

Each of these "outstanding characteristics of the American way of life" is followed by a paragraph of upbeat explication, with no suggestion that there have been limits, reversals, or dark sides--or that there have been complicated forces at work to forward or to obstruct these good things, here and in other countries. So the impression is left that we have achieved all this because we have ideals that most others do not have, that our success is unconnected to historical or geographical conditions, or to hard work and sacrifice, but is rooted in a "distinct national character and a general perspective unique to the American people."

Bragdon unhappily offers here an instant illustration of Fitzgerald's complaint about bland fictions that prepare the way to cynicism and, perhaps, to outright denial even of the healthy portion of truth there really is in our claims to success! This sort of boosterism addressed to young people who daily observe otherwise may undermine a teacher's whole effort to establish trust. There could hardly be a worse start on historical and political perspective. And in fact it is so uncharacteristic of the rest of the Bragdon book that it appears to have been tacked on by more recent editors.

The questions posed by these prologues are either general and benign, requiring students only to fill in the blanks, or they are not questions at all but merely declarations. The authors lose the chance to suggest that they and teachers and students are engaged in pursuit of answers to questions that are truly significant and still debated. Three questions, for example, are central to civic education and today's politics: What conditions—geopolitical, military, economic, social, technological—have been, are now, supportive of democratic society, and what happens when they change? Second, what ideas and values, cultural and educational forces, have promoted freedom and justice for us in the past, and can we take them for granted? Third, what have Americans in each generation actually done to defend or extend the promise of democracy, and what needs doing still? Such questions, which have no final, agreed-upon answers, demand exploration if students are to be prepared for citizenship.

What have Americans in each generation actually done to defend or extend the promise of democracy, and what needs doing still?

As suggested above, we cannot count on unbroken success, continued prosperity, world primacy, competent leadership, or even well-defined enemies, to nourish our morale. Civic education needs to help people to hang on to democracy under adverse conditions, when another way will seem easier, more quickly gratifying. Citizens, we hope, will cherish liberty and justice for their own worth, not because they guarantee "success" or are practical and efficient according to short-run cost-benefit analysis. They are rarely so. But only historical perspective can explain why, and why efficiency and the quick return are treacherous guides in human affairs.

Another question, which is increasingly critical and daily pressing for so many students and their parents, is that of unity versus diversity. Is it possible for a more and more diverse people, of many racial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural heritages, to live together in mutual respect under a single political heritage that has sprung mainly from Western civilization? What does our own history tell us about our chances to preserve our liberal values

under pressure? For example, Americans have long assumed that they were a "people of plenty", with more than enough to go around. It was not necessary to expect serious clashes of economic interest among regions or classes, among ethnic, racial, or generational, groups.

But recently numbers of Americans of all classes have come to believe that life will be less materially comfortable for them than it was for their parents. Whatever our chances for solving our economic problems, at home and abroad, some economists tell us that we shall probably have to accept changes in how we work and are rewarded. They warn that we may have to learn to get along together while expecti..g fewer material goods than any of us would desire. What does our own history tell us about our resiliency, about our ability to exercise our ideals, our respect for others, or enlightened self-interest, at moments of crisis?

The omission of significant questions may make it easier to write textbooks, of course, and to avoid as well the suspicions and unpleasant counter-questions of adoption committees. ("Who says we won't always be Number One?"!) But it is bad pedagogy. Seasoned teachers may step into the breach and pose guiding questions for the term's study. But how much more helpful if textbook authors themselves would enter the classroom and confess what they believed to be worth exploring, rather than merely narrating, and what they saw as worth worrying about, rather than merely affirming. By the 11th grade, students can well be introduced to the notion that texts vary a good deal, that they are written by ordinary human beings, and, like the students' own work, they will have strengths and weaknesses. When textbook authors remove themselves from the outset to magisterial heights, little chance remains to suggest that there is, or ought to be, some interplay between the student's mind and theirs.

In a single year's course, purporting to cover everything from the Mayans to moon landings, the choice of a few, selected major continuing themes is imperative. Without them, the history of the United States, like that of Western civilization or of the world, remains a jumbled rush, frustrating and unmemorable for teacher and student. Which themes are worth pursuing in depth, over the entire year? Ultimately, that should be for the teacher to decide, together with the choice of texts and other materials.

The argument here, of course, is that the story of American democracy should be a primary theme from beginning to end. This means political history, broadly defined. Not a recital of successive presidential administrations, names, dates, laws and elec-

tions, but the slow, unsteady journey of liberty and justice, together with the economic, social, religious and other forces that barred or smoothed the way, careful evaluations of advances and retreats, and of the distance yet to be covered.

Together with the evolution of democratic ideas and practices, other big stories suggest themselves. One is the gathering of the many and diverse groups of people, the many cultures, that have made up, and are still changing, our society. Who are we, and who are we becoming? The story runs from the earliest native Americans to explorers and early settlers, to the slave trade, through the successive waves of immigration, down to tomorrow's arrivals. A second obvious theme is the economic transformation of America from the pre-industrial society of the colonies to contemporary technological, post-industrial society. The social, political, intellectual, cultural—and educational—impact of economic change, and the impact of these other realms upon the economy, are critical for citizens to understand. No less so is a third major theme, the evolution of our role in the world, from a cluster of small, quarrelsome colonies in revolution in the 1770s through to the superpower of the 20th century.

Each of these, of course, is related to all of the others and each directly affects the development and problems of democracy here, as elsewhere in the world. Each produces tensions for all the others. This, too, needs to be made explicit as the course goes on, until it becomes obvious to students that most questions worth asking have no final answers, and that no themes worth examining have endings, happy or otherwise. In sum, that the adventure of democracy, the struggle for liberty, equality and human dignity, is a way of living, not a settled destination. There can be no such thing, despite Todd's book title, as the final "triumph" of the American nation. Our triumph occurs, or does not, in the daily routines of how we do what needs to be done, and how we treat each other and the rest of humankind. To paraphrase Boorstin, any good United States history course is about us.

The adventure of democracy, the struggle for liberty, equality and human dignity, is a way of living, not a settled destination.

Teachers will find other themes, other ways of organizing their courses. Whatever themes and questions are chosen should allow plenty of time for reflection on how events in the American past have already shaped students' lives and their range of choices, whether in public or private matters. The still unrolling consequences of slavery, of immigration, of mass production, of our system of public education, of our failure, along with Britain and France, to prevent World War II, of our aid in rebuilding Europe and Japan, of the Cold War and consequent tax burdens,

are only a few of the obvious examples of history's living hand upon us.

None of this should be taken to imply, however, that teachers ought to be expected to "cover" all of the topics and issues suggested here or in the usual textbook. To the teacher's question "Where can I find the time?" the only answer is that wherever the entire sweep of United States history is packed into a single year's course, there is no choice but to leave out a great deal. If important themes and questions are to be pursued with care and the student engagement needed to render them memorable, it is obvious that much material has to be sacrificed, both from the texts themselves and from whatever I and other critics would add to the texts. The ultimate answer is a different curricular pattern allowing teachers more time. Meanwhile, what follows must be taken as suggestion, not prescription. And I do not argue for leaving out particular topics, because that must remain the teacher's own business.

In choosing themes and questions, teachers may be helped by keeping certain criteria in mind. Will their choices help to explain the aims and structure of the course to students? To answer students' question "What should I be getting out of this?" Can the chosen topics be dealt with thoughtfully in the course time available? Failure to reach the present day disappoints students badly, especially those who are most engaged, and it surely clouds the relation of history to their daily lives. Have the main topics been chosen with the notion in mind that "less is more," that engaging students in vital questions takes time, so that many subjects "covered" by textbooks will have to be left out? Will the chosen themes help the teacher to explain what is being left out, and why—an instructive exercise in itself? Do the selected topics lend themselves to developing critical judgment, and those "habits of the mind" that history can promote? Do they, at least some of the time, touch upon feelings as well as reason, engage the heart as well as the mind? And do they help the students comprehend the relations of historical study to their other studies in the social sciences, geography, biography, literature and the arts?

Teachers should not be surprised if textbooks are of rather little help in the choice of organizing themes that provide synthesis and continuity. Although they could do more, as we shall see, they could not treat all plausible major themes in satisfactory depth, and also "cover" and "mention" everything demanded of them, short of several thousand pages. They could fairly be expected, perhaps, to choose a few major stories to follow and leave the rest to lean connective narrative. Their failure to do so reflects

not only on the textbook industry and the pressures it faces to mention everything, but on the historical profession in general. Not many historians devote themselves to wide sweeps of history, working at big themes around which to build synthesis of the new scholarship that keeps piling up. The pressure to specialize in narrow periods or techniques is formidable, both from the profession and from the character of universities and their personnel policies.

One result is the shortage of imaginative books of synthesis, from which better textbooks could draw inspiration. Another is that survey courses at the college level—precisely those courses that could be of most help to future teachers—are neglected, casually constructed, often understaffed, or left to part-time faculty and graduate teaching assistants. Beyond the survey courses, the pattern and requirements of the history major programs are frequently ill-designed for the preparation of teachers. And at the graduate level, where academic historians are trained, very rare are the courses dealing with synthesis and interpretative themes. The Bradley Commission asks how school courses and textbooks can be expected to improve unless historians bring themselves to focus on broad, significant questions that will engage the student, and it calls upon college and university history departments to "reorder their priorities":

> *All members should be active in the design and teaching of broad and lively survey courses in United States history, the history of Western civilization, and world history. The last, which requires the most ingenuity of all, is also the most scarce. We recommend the establishment of special chairs for distinguished professors of survey history. We cannot over-emphasize our belief that history departments fail their students—whether as citizens or as prospective teachers, or both—and they fail themselves no less when they neglect wide-ranging interpretative courses, when they do not concern themselves with the quality of school books and materials, and when they isolate themselves from the teachers and the very schools from which they must draw their future students.*

There is a good deal of encouraging evidence that the isolation is breaking down. The American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians and the National Council for the Social Studies have for several years sponsored the History Teaching Alliance, which brings university and school teachers of history together in a wide range of collaborative projects. The National Endowment for the Humanities has funded the National Center for History in the Schools based at the University of California at Los Angeles. Project Clio, at the University of California at

Berkeley, has carried on three-cornered collaboration among the School of Education, the Department of History and teachers in the schools. The Bradley Commission itself was, of course, a collaborative enterprise by university historians and classroom teachers from elementary and secondary schools.

All of this is to say that textbooks are only part of a many-sided problem with teaching history in the schools. However critical some of the following comments may be, the authors of these books deserve a good deal of sympathy. It must be said that the prevailing high school curriculum severely circumscribes what the American history course can accomplish. The nature of the course, in turn, deeply affects what the text can be—a point not nearly enough stressed by textbook critics. Because the 11th grade course is the only history required in all but a handful of states, authors can assume very little prior knowledge among their readers. And they know too well that the United States history course—and their own books—may be the last exposure to history most students get. Even the college-bound are unlikely to find history required for their general education, so shapeless have university core curricula become, and remain, despite scattered gestures to the contrary.

However critical some of the following comments may be, the authors of these books deserve a good deal of sympathy.

The authors' responses have been similar to those of their counterparts in world history. The texts are overloaded. Unable to count upon any prior historical, cultural, or political literacy in readers, authors omit ideas and analyses, or pitch them to a low common denominator. To avoid offense to vocal interests, and to include sympathetic references to them, authors render their texts inconsistent, even schizophrenic, in dealing with controversial subjects—bland, evasive or pious on some, overly-critical on others. The same text that denounces past abuses and enslavement is likely to fall silent on current issues such as the "underclass." "Candid" and judgmental about the dead, it will be evasive about the living. As Sewall remarks, only "accredited victim groups suffer, and then they suffer absolutely."

Since the course must serve the dual purpose of historical study and the shaping of approved civic attitudes, texts fall into "presentism," in which people and actions of the past are judged by today's fashions rather than by the circumstances and prevailing ideas of their time. Needless to say, this makes very bad history. It distorts reality, swapping truth and fairness for a temporary glow of moral superiority. Worse, it deprives students of perspective on themselves. By ignoring the reality of change from the past, it ignores as well the change that will surely continue after us,

producing still different fashions of thought—by which we should not necessarily wish to be judged.

Limited in their conceptions of time and the perspectives to be gained by reflecting on the interplay between change and continuity, textbooks are also constrained to be parochial about space as well. Already overloaded with more material than could possibly be understood over the course of a school year, textbooks are hard put to place the United States in its global setting, present or past. Yet at the onset of the 21st century, they must try. What has been our impact on other societies, and theirs on us? What effect have we had on global developments and on the shaping of choices now faced by all mankind?

However banal the phrase has become, "global consciousness" is imperative in textbooks designed for the U.S. history course. Again, most students take no other history courses, either European or world. And those who do rarely find in them much attention given to the United States. It is precisely in studying our own history that we must be aware of our place on earth, whether in 1620, 1776, 1865, 1914, 1945 or today. What have other, older societies given to us, and we to them? In the most fundamental sense, self-understanding requires global understanding.

This is nothing new, suddenly true because we find ourselves interdependent with the rest of a globe shrunken by the technologies of travel, communications, economic production and exchange, and weapons systems. John Donne's admonition has always held, particularly for us Americans who have so often tried to ignore it in our flight from the "old world" and troublesome foreigners, in clinging to faith in our exceptionalism. His words belong in every history book:

> *No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main: if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.*

The American history course should make plain that the bell tolled for us when the Portuguese began slave-trading in 1433.

Events early and elsewhere have directed our national life. The American history course should make plain that the bell tolled for us when the Portuguese began slave-trading in 1433, when the French bombarded Saigon in 1859, when the Japanese humiliated Nicholas II in 1905 and Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in 1914, when the Weimar Republic fell in 1933 and Mao took the Long March to Shensi the year after. And now it daily tolls for us in the investment banks of Tokyo, the sweatshops of Seoul and Hong

Kong, the drug depots of Colombia. The killing grounds of the Middle East. To know and to understand all this is both the birthright and the duty of citizens, but it is an enormous burden for a single course, and its textbooks, to bear.

OLD WORLD BACKGROUNDS: AMERICA'S LONGER PAST

III.

At one point toward the end of his review of textbooks, Gilbert Sewall says that the sobriety of the books reflects the declining power of our nation's history to "inflame the imagination and capture the awe" of citizens. This decline, he says,

> *may be explained by the sheer narcissism of a culture ignorant of the fact that it stands on the shoulders of giants—of civilizations long past—that have shed much blood and spilled much ink to help create the generally salutary ideas, institutions, and conditions of the American present.*

He is probably right. Certainly our textbook authors present almost nothing of the Old World backgrounds of United States history. And they are not alone in their myopic view of the American past. A few years ago, David Donald, professor of American history at Harvard, stirred a mini-storm on the Op-Ed page of The New York Times by publicly agonizing over whether his courses were still worth teaching. His students expected to learn how their past related to the present and to the future. But, said Donald, we had arrived at an era of dwindling resources, and the lessons of "incurable optimism" that students took from the American past were "not merely irrelevant but dangerous." Was it not his first duty to stop misleading them, to "disenthrall them from the spell" of history, to help them see the irrelevance of the past?"

Professor Donald was worried for the wrong reasons. American history is not misleading merely because it is optimis-

tic, though one wonders how to manage a sunny view of the slave trade, the Civil War, the Depression, or Vietnam. It is misleading because it is drastically insufficient on its own. We have taken to teaching it by itself, as though it were rooted nowhere, as though the "American past," by which David Donald's students hoped to understand themselves, reached back only to Columbus, rather than to Noah and before.

The plain fact is that United States history is not intelligible, and we are not intelligible to ourselves, without a grasp of the life and ideas of the ancient world, of Judaism and Christianity, of Islam and Christendom in the Middle Ages, of feudalism, of the Renaissance and Reformation, of the English Revolution and the Enlightenment. The first settlers did not sail into view out of a void, their minds as blank as the Atlantic sky, ready to build a new world out of nothing but whatever they could find lying about the ground in Massachusetts and Virginia. They were shaped and scarred by tens of centuries of religious, social, literary and political experience.

To understand them, and through them ourselves, American history is not nearly enough. Their ideas of God and history, of human equality and dignity, of individual moral responsibility, came from the ancient texts of Judaism and Christianity, as did their debates over individualism versus collectivism, over reformism versus resignation, over the spiritual versus the material. Their vision of just communities, where even prices and profits would be fixed by moral standards, came from medieval Christendom. Their theology and ethics, their notions of justice and service, arose in part from the Calvinist mode of Protestantism. So too, historians argue, did the American notion of exceptionalism, that we were a "chosen people," set apart from the ordinary human condition. In matters of politics, they were well versed in the glories and follies of Athenian democracy, as they were in the constitutions of Rome, and in the political theorists of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and Reformation. Their practice of limited constitutional government dated from the feudal era, evolving through the English Revolution of the 17th century. From the Old World, with each wave of settlers down to our own revolution, came arguments for civil rights, religious tolerance, economic and social justice, for free enterprise and cultural innovation, academic freedom, for science, reason and progress. Their notions of honor and heroism were learned from Greco-Roman myth and history, from the Bible and the saints of the church, knights and crusaders, explorers and sea dogs of the Renaissance, soldiers and martyrs of the wars of religion. Those

who sailed westward to America did not in fact come to build a new world, but to bring to life in a new setting what they treasured most from their old world.

In this perspective, ours is one of the great, multifarious adventures of human history. Boring? Dull? It can fascinate the young, who need to find themselves in time and place, to see where their life histories join the history of the race. Our students' "American past"? Their blood ran in men and women work the soil of Burgundy and the Ukraine, of China and Africa, before the Normans set out on their conquests. Our ideas of good, evil, honor and shame weighed upon Jews and Greeks and Christians centuries before Rome fell. But we do not like to look back. We prefer the myth of the New World, innocent of the sins of the old. It has been our own special sin of pride, shutting out the possibility of knowing ourselves, much less of understanding others. Its educational consequence has been the shrinking of American history to mean only United States history (we also prefer not to look below the Rio Grande), and the near-abandonment of Ancient, European and British history, of that Western civilization whose ever-changing works and ideas, both beneficent and destructive, have shaped most of our history and the modern world's. Ignoring Tocqueville's pleas not to forget our heritage, we leave the young to a kind of amnesia.

Our ideas of good, evil, honor and shame weighed upon Jews and Greeks and Christians centuries before Rome fell.

The U.S. history textbooks under review leave out or "dumb down" the Old World background as though it were of little importance. It is hard to tell whether the authors assume that students already know it all, or know nothing, or, at seventeen, are incapable of comprehension above a grade-school level. Most of the books preserve the old-fashioned, cliche-ridden, Protestant progressive tone of the early 1900s. The Middle Ages, when they are mentioned at all, are dark and stagnant, without ideas or curiosity, their people interested only in life after the grave. Their "religious ideas," Davidson says, left them "resigned to a world of suffering and sadness." There is no merit to the era, for even the happy results of the Crusades ("new products" and "new ideas") were unintended. Then, suddenly, the Renaissance pops forth as "Europe Awakens." People began to think for themselves and seek "new horizons." Hence the explorers, and the discovery of America.

In this kind of pop history, there is no room for nuance, for mixes of continuity and change, nothing on the accomplishments of our medieval ancestors or on the dark underside of the Renaissance. All is darkness and light, and America is born of the light. The only legacy to us from medieval times is their disappearance.

There is nothing in these texts of their art and architecture, their philosophy, their universities, their guilds, their aspirations to moral communities where all aspects of life—and particularly economic exchange—would be governed by rules insuring justice to all classes. Nothing of the charities and hospitals that disappeared in more "enterprising" periods, or of the shattered dream of European peace and unity under international law. And for the story of democracy, there is nothing on the feudal system as the true source of constitutional government. On the contrary. In speaking of the 17th century, Boorstin says of the English people that they were "moving from the medieval world of monarchy into a modern world of representative government," obliterating 400 years of evolution from Magna Carta and the medieval proliferation of parliaments all over Europe.

Strong monarchy—against which the struggle for free self-government would be so long and bitter—was a product not of the Middle Ages but of the Renaissance and what followed. Here is a good point at which to introduce students to the notion that good and bad, progressive and regressive, very often co-exist, in history, as in their daily lives. Since they already suspect so, it might raise their confidence in us if we made clear that we know it, too. The Renaissance was not progressive for many people. On their "new horizons" were smashed guilds, lower wages, the end of manorial contracts and titles to their land, local town government replaced by despots or oligarchy, unlimited taxation, mercenary armies of foreigners, corruption and profiteering in both business and the church, and the flaunting of a new, secularized culture of the flesh and earthly pleasures.

If this underside of the Renaissance and early modern Europe is not made clear, students will not understand that the Protestant Revolution was in large part a rebellion against the "new," and an attempt to return to what many saw as an earlier age of faith and spirituality, purity and simplicity, under the old medieval church, before it was corrupted by worldly innovators in the Renaissance Papacy. And they will miss the larger, vital point that in every revolution there is powerful longing for the good old days, a nostalgia for some golden age whose virtues have been betrayed by more recent evildoers.

There is no understanding the fervor of the Puritans without this background and without a clear account of the other causes of the Protestant Reformation, and of the forces breaking up Christendom in the 16th century. Our textbooks do not provide that account though they could do it briefly. Nor do they explain the basic ideas of Luther and Calvin, so the beliefs of the Puritans, as

Fitzgerald noted, are not explained. Even the texts that do give space to the Protestant movement fail to deal with ideas. Risjord illustrates the textbook penchant for mentioning without explaining:

> *Luther especially wanted to discuss the church's position on the forgiveness of sins and the link between one's faith in God and one's doing of good works in the world.*

There were "countless debates all over Germany and then throughout Europe," Risjord says, but describes neither side's ideas or positions on anything. Two later paragraphs on Calvin have nothing on his view of human nature and on the consequent duties of Christians in private and public life. Davidson and Todd offer only mention of Calvin's name; in Boorstin and Bragdon he is not even mentioned.

The Puritans remain a mystery. Although Boorstin remarks that their religion was "admirably suited for settling the wilderness," he refers only to the Puritan confidence that God was on their side. This does not explain their yearning for a just and holy community, and their vigilance against forces that would undermine it, including their own weaknesses. Boorstin quotes from John Winthrop's famous speech without noting its essentially religious impulse:

> *We shall be as a City upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with our god in this work we have undertaken and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word throughout the world.*

The story of the Puritans is part of the human quest for freedom.

The story of the Puritans is part of the human quest for freedom. What they sought was not freedom from restraint, but freedom to institutionalize the kind of restraints, and public mores, they saw as properly human, befitting God's wishes for the good community of Christians freed from sin. By failing to clarify their faith and aspirations, the texts leave the impression that they were hypocrites—or more hypocrites than we are—for wanting "freedom" for themselves but banishing those who questioned their theology and church authority. The texts do not explain why they believed they had compelling reason to abhor unorthodox religious doctrine as we, say, abhor unorthodox economic and political doctrines.

Todd for example reveals the Puritans' religious notions mainly in their chasing of Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson and in a boxed account of the Salem witch trials, comparing them to McCarthyism and ending with the moral that "Salem still symbolizes

the difficulty of making moral choices in the face of community pressures." The other texts take the same line in their easy approval of Williams and Hutchinson and disapproval of their treatment. Davidson, Bragdon and Risjord have boxed accounts of Anne Hutchinson's role, the last remarking that she was "a victim of the times and the society in which she lived." All is pictured as melodrama, where students could much better be introduced to tragedy—the clash of two right impulses.

Students are left with the impression that toleration is the only "religious" idea worth remembering. It is, without question, a much-to-be-sought attitude in a democratic society. But its real meaning, its real complexity and high cost, in those religious days is incomprehensible without a solid grounding in matters of faith. Modern readers, always ready to mistake their own indifference to religion for the virtue of toleration, could profit from better perspective. Granted, it is not easy for historians to put students back into the shoes of people who believed in eternal Heaven so surely that they would shed blood to attain it and to ensure that others would attain it as well. Perhaps we could remind students that many people today are equally ready to shed blood, or even to blow up much of the earth, to preserve their material or political way of life. The teaching of toleration, as with any other democratic virtue, must be done in relation to matters we feel strongly about. And the understanding of "otherness" requires that we take the trouble to understand what they felt strongly about, in their own time and place.

Students are left with the impression that toleration is the only "religious" idea worth remembering.

The textbooks find it easier to deal with political developments, though in general the authors limit their discussion of the Old World background to the direct English legacy to the colonists. Teachers wishing to focus upon the evolution of democracy will find most of the accounts brief and unexciting. Bragdon begins well. In a prologue to Chapter 1 ("The Heritage of the Colonial Period") he notes that the first eight amendments to the Constitution are rights for which we fought the Revolutionary War:

> *But every one of these was previously one of the "rights of Englishmen" whose every phrase was hammered out in nearly five hundred years of struggle between the British people and their monarchs.*

The point is made, but the uniqueness of the English experience, and the conditions for Parliament's triumph over royal power, are not set forth. Indeed, Bragdon writes nothing at all about the English Revolution or what prepared its way.

Boorstin devotes several paragraphs to the English Civil War and Glorious Revolution, but only to explain why the American colonists were left alone for a time. The meaning of the English Revolution is barely noted, in terms too brief and sweeping to be accurate:

> *When William and Mary came to the throne in 1689, they opened a new era of representative government. Parliament had shown that it was supreme. The monarch owed power to the people's representatives in the House of Commons.*

Todd divides its recital of the English Revolution into two paragraphs ten pages apart, without analysis or background, and related only to affairs on this side of the water. Under a box called "Sources" are a few items from the English Bill of Rights of 1689, left unexplained. Eighteen pages earlier appears a "Sources" box of three randomly chosen, unexplained items from Magna Carta *without* the key point on new taxation! No doubt these are counted as "features" by textbook adoption committees but they will add nothing to the student's understanding.

Davidson offers but one line on the Glorious Revolution, to explain why James II's attempt to revoke colonial charters was foiled.

> *In 1688, the English deposed James II in a revolt called the Glorious Revolution. The New England colonists promptly reinstated the representative assemblies, showing England and the world that, in America at least, representative government would endure.*

These words appear ten pages after, and are unrelated to, a brief account of the evolution of English parliamentary government from Magna Carta onward, as background for the Virginia House of Burgesses, established in 1619. Risjord offers a few short lines on the English Revolution, scattered over sixteen pages, without analysis of the events themselves, but only as relevant, decade by decade, to colonial affairs.

In sum, the textbook authors offer no systematic background on the English legacy of representative government, how and why it began, survived and finally triumphed—and what great significance it had for us and, later, for many Europeans as well. Since they do not explicitly follow the theme of democracy and its development, it does not seem to occur to them that the dramatic struggles undergone in England (Bragdon's "five hundred years") would make an exciting and instructive prelude to events over here, up to and including our own revolution, so rich in comparisons and contrasts with the English. In this perspective the defeat of the Spanish Armada was a tremendous event in the evolu-

tion of free government, since it determined British supremacy in North America. It is typical of these texts that they all mention it, and several provide breathless battle details, but only Bragdon and Todd remark that it opened the way for England to plant colonies, and then only in a word or two, without reference to the fundamental political difference it was to make in the history of the United States.

It is not lack of space, but failure to analyze, to make connections along the lines of major themes and questions, that reduces the interest and effectiveness of these books. Bragdon is the most analytical of them, and it is also the shortest. For example, it is the only text to pause for an explanation of England's relatively greater success in colonization than that attained by other European states. It cites England's island position, her fisheries and trade encouraging seafaring, her prosperity and capital to invest, and relative social mobility. These are all factors in Parliament's advantages over absolutism as well, though Bragdon does not say so. Also, and in direct contrast to the French, the English colonies, says Bragdon, were more often founded by private enterprise than by government and the English allowed religious dissenters to settle in their colonies. Finally, Bragdon stresses the importance of England's allowing her colonies a large measure of self-government:

> *The English settlers enjoyed personal freedom and rights of self-government unknown in other colonies. Ever since Magna Carta in 1215, the idea had been developing that there were certain "rights of Englishmen" which even the king was bound to respect.*

Very little is said about the ideas, customs, and values brought from Europe by succeeding generations of immigrants from Plymouth Rock to Ellis Island.

As we shall see, Bragdon is the most analytic of the five texts under review, but as noted above, it too fails to weave the English Revolution helpfully into the background.

In general, the Old World sources of the American mind and institutions are only sketchily reviewed. Throughout these texts, very little is said about the ideas, customs, and values brought from Europe by succeeding generations of immigrants from Plymouth Rock to Ellis Island. There is nothing explicit saying that the colonists were steeped in ancient Jewish and Christian religious codes, and that the better educated among them also carried around in their heads substantial knowledge of Greece, Rome, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance and Reformation. The new stress on global consciousness in American schools calls for more attention to such matters. For example, some texts say and others imply that such large ideas as religious toleration and the importance of education were born here and were unheard of

in England or Europe, not to mention in older or non-Western civilizations. Where they should be global they remain parochial and misleading to students searching for their pasts.

All of this would be less serious if the curriculum insured a prior course in Western civilization. United States history texts could then assume prior knowledge. Texts could refer then to prior developments at higher conceptual levels and build upon them with some confidence of being understood. But the American high school curriculum does not yet allow them this luxury. Either these authors are insufficiently aware of the curricular problems they must live with for now, or they are too willing to give up on the possibility of compensating for their students' lack of background. In any case, their histories of the United States, if not exactly springing from nowhere, are not well-rooted in our own longer past.

IV. REVOLUTION AND THE CONSTITUTION

Students must see, as the late education historian Hazel Hertzberg said, that democracy did not just happen, it had to be fought for, over and over: "The legacy our students have today is the result of the blood, toil, tears and sweat of many generations." There is no better place to begin that lesson than with the American Revolution and the subsequent creation of a new instrument of government for a new nation. And a secondary lesson should be added: Such great works as the overthrow of an old order and the founding—and running—of a new government require enormous toil from many, often very different, kinds of people. Some must plan and others must write, talk, and prepare people's minds. Many must fight, ready to shed blood and tears and give up life, as they did in Valley Forge and as did the Freedom Riders two centuries later. Others must codify the vision and toil at applying it to the daily trials of ordinary times. The personalities who prove best at each kind of duty are often sharply different and may well dislike, or envy, or fear each other. Here is the deeper, political, meaning of "it takes all kinds," a historical lesson which no democratic people can afford to forget as they go about choosing their elected servants.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

As might be expected, our United States history texts are generally full and clear on the major events of the Revolution and its antecedents. The writing, Boorstin's especially, with Bragdon

close behind, is often quite stirring. On the crisis of December, 1776, when Washington's army was about to "fade away," Boorstin writes:

> *Washington had fewer than 8000 men. Nevertheless, he decided he must attack while he still had some soldiers. So on the night of December 25, John Glover and the Marbleheadmen ferried Washington and 2400 of his troops across the ice-filled Delaware River in a driving sleet storm. On the next day, they struck Trenton, where Hessian mercenaries were sleeping off their holiday celebrations. The surprise was complete. With a loss of only four men, the Americans took 900 prisoners....Washington had saved the cause of independence, American morale shot up, enlistments increased, the war would go on.*

Both Boorstin and Bragdon point out, in character sketches of Washington, that he was one of those few people who are able both to fight and to govern as well as to express and exemplify the ideals of a new nation. Bragdon calls him "perhaps the only indispensable man in the history of the United States." None of the other texts provides a well-rounded evaluation of Washington, though space is hardly lacking and the three books abound with sketches of dozens of other figures. To take an example, Risjord provides, in the first 200 pages, boxed mini-biographies of Cabeza de Vaca, Cotton Mather, Anne Hutchinson, Blackbeard the Pirate, John Peter Zenger, Samuel Adams, Nathan Hale, Benedict Arnold, Abigail Adams, Noah Webster, Dr. Benjamin Rush and Tecumseh.

In Todd's first 300 pages we find "profiles" on Nampeyo, Benjamin Franklin (though nothing on his ideas), Eliza Lucas, Phillis Wheatley, Crispus Attucks, James Armistead, Abigail Adams, John Fitch, George Bingham, John Jay, Tecumseh, Benjamin Banneker and John Chapman. Davidson offers a similar array, adding "Fatt Hing: A Chinese Pioneer." Meanwhile, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, and even the news-worthy Franklin all fail to earn adequate descriptions of their ideas, intellect, character or work. Again, it is not for lack of space. Boorstin and Bragdon, too, offer items on most of the supporting actors noted in the other three. But they clearly take more seriously the minds and personalities of those who were given, and who took on, the heaviest responsibility for action that would profoundly affect the people at large. In this respect their books are markedly more useful to the political education of students.

In exploring the causes of revolution all of the texts provide the usual array of factors. They differ only in their coherence and

their ability to be analytical. Bragdon begins his chapter "Road to Revolution" with the telling epigraph from John Adams:

> *The Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people.*

He turns directly to the question of why the "freest colonies of any European nation were the first to rebel,"—what had happened to change people's minds in those few years before the Revolution. His chapter is clear on British errors and American obstinacy (not to say greed) and Bragdon also stresses the main principle at issue, "no taxation without representation":

> *Great Britain, they said, had no right to tax the colonies, since the Americans elected no members to the British Parliament. The colonists could be rightfully taxed only by their own legislators....The colonists revealed extraordinary awareness of the tradition of English liberties as embodied in such documents as Magna Carta (1215) and the Bill of Rights (1689).*

And he adds a boxed account on Sam Adams and the importance at such moments of men with "a genius for agitation," who can keep tempers high in the lull between storms. Adams "believed in liberty," says Bragdon, but also notes that Adams's family's fortune had been ruined by an act of Parliament:

> *This seemed to flavor Sam's entire career, for, as Machiavelli wrote, "It is better to kill a man's father than to destroy his inheritance."*

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Such history-writing respects the minds of teachers and students and offers them much to think and talk about.

Boorstin's account of the coming of the Revolution is longer and more detailed but it lacks analysis, failing to stress, as Bragdon does, for example, that the defeat of the French freed the Americans from dependence on British soldiers and sailors for their security.

In a section called "Coming of the Revolution, 1763-1770," Risjord begins by noting the double effect of Britain's conquest of French Canada:

> *With the French threat gone, the colonies had less need for protection. And with the war over, Britain no longer had to make any concessions to win colonial cooperation.*

But the narrative that follows reverts to routine, featuring an uncritical tribute to Sam Adams in a "Sidenote to History," and a pious version of the Boston Massacre wherein "some boys" hurl snowballs and stones at British soldiers.

In contrast, Davidson's account of the Boston Massacre is full and fair, teaching the valuable lesson that John Adams himself hoped would emerge as he defended the British soldiers in court,

> *in the belief that British soldiers as well as American colonists had the right to a legal defense. Just as crucial was his feeling that the American cause would lose its moral advantage if the soldiers could not get a fair trial in Boston.*

Davidson's narrative of events leading to the Revolution is well-organized, if over-detailed, and especially helpful on the Committees of Correspondence and the failure of the moderates at the First Continental Congress. The principle of "no taxation without representation" is repeatedly illustrated, from the Sugar Act on.

Todd provides a long and bewildering march of detail, with few clear lines of thematic development and a narrative constantly interrupted—as Sewall's study found—by out-of-order "Sources," "Study Skills," photos, "Section Reviews," "Decisive Moments," maps and "Profiles." Buried in the chapter "Moving Toward Independence" are good points: Vergennes's prediction that the colonies, no longer in need of England's protection, would revolt; the principle that no taxation without representation was a violation of "the great British tradition"; a balanced account of the Boston Massacre; and the Committees of Correspondence. But what could be a clear narrative is lost, so busy is the detail. Still, an adequate lesson on the causes of the American Revolution could be built on the materials in any one of these texts, provided some clear questions are posed by the teacher and pursued.

All of the texts, however, are relatively weak on two counts already noted: They do little with intellectual history, and they pay almost no attention to the outside world. On the latter point, they have not caught up to the idea of the "Atlantic Revolution," so they ignore the reform movement in England directed against the king and Parliament at the same time as our own. There, too, people complained of being taxed without representation. All of the texts cite the power and effect of Tom Paine's Common Sense of January, 1776, but none note his anti-governmental agitation in England both before and after his sojourn in America. Another lapse of global perspective occurs in regard to the magnitude and significance of French aid to the colonies during the Revolutionary War. Only Bragdon lists it in comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the two sides. Boorstin remarks that with the French alliance the "Revolution could hardly fail," but does not return to it in his later explanation of why the British lost. The others say even less, so that the resent-

ment of the French over our separate peace with England seems quite inexplicable.

Most curiously, the textbooks do not stress nearly enough the worldwide impact of the American Revolution. The great expectations launched across the globe for national freedom and political self-government by our victory over George III are all but left aside. Once again, Bragdon is the exception, with an eloquent page headed "Wide Influence of the American Revolution":

Most curiously, the textbooks do not stress nearly enough the worldwide impact of the American Revolution.

> *The success of the United States promoted ideas of freedom and equality. It gave new hope to the friends of the oppressed in Europe, and endangered the old system of monarchy and a privileged upper class. France was the country most immediately affected.... The example of America was a trump card in the hands of those who planned revolution in both society and government.*

Emerson did not exaggerate, Bragdon concludes, when he said that the shot fired by the Minutemen on April 19, 1775, was "heard round the world."

What the world heard from us, textbooks could add, was that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." To the traditional rights of Englishmen, dating from feudal days, Americans added the universal rights of all men, derived both from the natural rights doctrine of the Enlightenment and from the moral imperatives of Judaism and Christianity. The American Revolution taught that the ideas of the Enlightenment could be put into practice, not top-down by despots or despotic factions crushing local authorities and traditions, but by free self-governing people in a federal system, keeping central and local power in balance.

Though suffrage was still limited, it was more widespread in most American states than elsewhere in the world, and popularly-elected legislators represented roughly equal numbers of people. The United States promised democracy and progress, but under limited government, written constitutions, and bills of rights. And it was unique as well in honoring the role of religion while insisting on the separation of church and state and equal standing for all denominations. The American promise of fair treatment for European immigrants and religious minorities lit a beacon of hope long before the Statue of Liberty arrived in New York harbor.

These gifts to the world constituted one of America's greatest moments in history—perhaps the single greatest—and were to be of tremendous importance to the struggles for national inde-

pendence and democracy everywhere. Textbooks could say much more to help students understand why Lincoln later could call us the best hope of the earth, and why so many Americans have ever since pleaded that we live up to our proclaimed ideals at home and abroad. Boorstin does remark on the inspiration afforded to others by the Declaration of Independence, our "birth certificate" as a nation, as do, more briefly, Todd and Davidson. But the chance to put American events and innovations in a world perspective is largely lost.

The intellectual background of the Revolution—and of later constitution-making—is also weakly drawn in all the texts. There is no systematic treatment of the 17th and 18th century climate of thought known as the Enlightenment, with which American leaders were wholly familiar. Only in Bragdon does the word Enlightenment appear in the index. And only in Bragdon and Risjord are there substantive comments on the Newtonian universe of natural laws and the confidence it inspired among thinkers and reformers. Though Risjord over-simplifies, the passage is helpful:

> *Newton's conclusions started a revolution in human thought. Gone, suddenly, was the world of the Middle Ages, full of mysteries, wonders, and miracles. In its place was Newton's universe, a simple, uniform world, governed by law and capable of being understood by the human mind. After Newton conducted his experiments, reason was seen as the key to the universe....The political philosopher John Locke tried to arrive at the principles of government in the same way that Newton had arrived at the laws of physics.*

Risjord goes on to describe Jefferson's use of Locke's ideas in the Declaration of Independence. Unhappily, these good passages occur 40 pages before the narrative reaches 1776.

Bragdon saves his review of Enlightenment ideas for the section on the Constitutional Convention:

> *As good children of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, the convention members believed that there were "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" that governed human beings, akin to those that governed the physical universe.*

Bragdon and Davidson also explain the ideas of Montesquieu on the separation of powers in government, though they say nothing on his more fundamental plea for balances of power in society at large.

Otherwise, John Locke is the only "outside" thinker noted. Todd, Davidson and Boorstin properly cite him as one source for Jefferson's prose in the Declaration. The Boorstin text explains

that Jefferson was not trying to be original, but only to "state clearly what everybody already believed." But it does not say where such beliefs came from.

In certain cases, intellectual history is badly mauled. General ideas of the Enlightenment are ascribed to Americans alone, as when Davidson says that "during the eighteenth century, many Americans came to believe that society could be improved by human effort." In listing the objects of 18th century humanitarianism, Davidson ignores its contemporary British and European counterparts and its even longer history in the traditional Judaic-Christian devotion to social amelioration. That ideas have a history is left unsaid. Somehow, Americans "came to believe" such things; they just popped into mind.

As Fitzgerald charged, it would be difficult for readers of these texts to realize that the founders of the republic were intellectuals. Even the better biographical sketches do not reveal their education, reading, religious or philosophical stances, their regard for the ancients, their respect for posterity, or their places in the Enlightenment and their cosmopolitanism. At most they appear as versatile, energetic tinkerers with everything from lightning rods to constitutions. There is no way for students to reflect on the intellectual ingredients of democratic statesmanship.

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The vogue of social history creates an imbalance here. The texts include dozens of pages on the social lives of blacks, Indians, women, and what authors call "ordinary people." Admittedly, political history and the doings of elites were overstressed in older books (though not intellectual or comparative history), and superficial political detail is still too heavy if we may judge, say, by the volume of ink given to Jackson and the Bank. But political history thoughtfully done is indispensable to educating citizens. What is democracy but that remarkable system in which "ordinary people" are expected to comprehend, and to decide upon, the choices made by their "elites"? They can do neither without comparative study of political leadership in the past.

Students cannot be expected to grasp the significance of social history when it remains unconnected to political structures and turning-points. Nor can they come to understand other people in their own society as long as the process of infusing new materials on women and minorities remains at the awkward stage found in these books. Many passages on "new people" are gratuitously squeezed in, out of place and out of proportion. Pictures and boxed features are more often than not unrelated to the neighboring narrative, and many are so patently condescending as to embarrass the reader. Just as world history texts take a pious, un-

critical approach to things non-Western, so these United States history texts treat women, minorities and "ordinary people" much as Parson Weems treated George Washington. They can do it wrong. As ordinary people themselves, students know better. Authors will need to move up to a fuller, more honest integration of "new history" and "new people," just as they will need to include more ideas and a wider world perspective.

MAKING THE CONSTITUTION

On the framing of the Constitution, the texts are generous with space and effective in presenting the main lines of debate and compromise. They all reprint the Constitution, with commentary, either in the body of the text or in appendices. They all argue persuasively the greatness of the framers' accomplishment and explicate the Constitution's virtues as an instrument of government that has lasted through unpredictable transformations of American society. But they are less helpful in explaining how the framers managed it. Such an explanation would permit students to appreciate the many special conditions that allow for successful democratic politics of the long run, as opposed to merely popular politics of the moment.

One approach, which no text employs, could be to compare and contrast the men and conditions of the French and American revolutions and constitution-making. The French Revolution quickly turned more radical, more violent, more divisive than our own. Constitutions came and went as war, civil war, terror and military dictatorship gripped the country for a quarter century. Early attempts at a federal system and limited government were swept away, and extreme centralization in a unitary system has characterized French government down to the present day. What made the difference? Students could be reminded of circumstances helping the United States to an earlier, more moderate settlement of constitutional questions.

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Ours was a revolution largely free of class hatred. We had not suffered the privileged clergy and aristocracy of the Old Regime, or the manifest injustice of its legal system and taxes. Gaps between rich and poor were less extreme, class relations were less strained. The French Revolution was attacked both by powerful factions from within and by several foreign powers from without. Moderation was stifled by fear and passion. Our political leaders had enjoyed long prior experience in the workings of representative government; theirs had very little. Religious issues were not sharply contested in America, in part because so many different religious groups had already lived together in relative peace. In

France, the quarrel over the Catholic church's proper place tore the nation apart. In addition, economic conditions were worse in France: prolonged depression, unemployment, inflation, food shortages and actual instances of famine. All of these factors hobbled French attempts to establish a moderate constitutional regime, just as similar problems hamper fledgling democracies in the world today.

Another approach to our constitution-making would be, as suggested above, to better describe the framers themselves—their educations, personal characters, and experience, as well as their political philosophies and interests. What shaped *them* before they shaped the system? Todd says they "were learned in history and political philosophy," but offers no specifics. What did they read? What did they know and believe? Bragdon says that "their study of Greek and Latin had familiarized them with the political writings of Aristotle and Cicero," but adds nothing on what Aristotle and Cicero had to say or why their ideas could be helpful in Philadelphia. Boorstin points out how important it was, given the need to compromise, that "the convention members were wise enough to distrust their own wisdom." Earlier, Boorstin had cited Jefferson's "uncanny foresight" in planning for Westward expansion. Jefferson, then Ambassador to France, was not among the framers of the Constitution, but neither the sources of his foresight nor of the others' wisdom are explored. Who or what had taught them?

All of the texts mention the critical role of *The Federalist* in the campaign for ratification. Todd applauds the "brilliant essays." Bragdon finds in them "much political wisdom." Boorstin describes them as the "classic statement of why freedom-loving people need a strong central government." But none of the texts reprint anything of their content and political philosophy, their views of human nature and the resulting political necessities. Students of high school age are ready and eager to argue about human nature and its consequences. If not exactly born liberal or conservative, as the Gilbert and Sullivan song had it, they soon lean to one or the other on at least some issues that can be related to constitution-making. Or, perhaps more easily, to questions raised by the Bill of Rights. Here the texts do not always make clear that some of the amendments were designed to let people say and do things that the majority, and its elected officials, might well deplore. How, then, is the Bill of Rights consistent with majority rule? To argue this question alone would elucidate several of the basic needs—and apparent paradox—of liberal democracy. Better, it would bring students to an early awareness of

their own political tendencies of the moment, a step toward active engagement in learning.

Another lively issue could be the restrictions on the right to vote in the new republic. The texts make clear that the framers did not create what we now accept as democracy. But instead of merely noting—usually with some embarrassment—that slaves, women and poor men were excluded, textbooks might venture to explain why these groups could be considered, even by the best-intentioned of the "elites," to lack certain qualifications for self-government. What could these be, and how do they bear on various notions of human nature and of education? Thus it would be possible to place American political thought in relation to the major political currents in Britain and Europe of the time, especially to the debate between bourgeois Liberals and the "radical" republicans who demanded universal suffrage (and for whom, except for our strong presidency and the shame of slavery, the United States soon would stand as the model).

From such discussions it would be easier to make clear to students the significance of current disputes over public education and education's role in preparing citizens for active public life. The texts are not explicit on these points. Nor do they ever pause to describe the content of the American curriculum over the years. Doing so—from the list of books Jefferson recommended to his nephew Peter Carr (in a letter from Paris in 1785) down to curricular debates of the present—could well make students conscious that schooling is something more than just a time they must endure before real life begins.

As noted above, these texts do well at explicating the current issues and outcome of the constitutional convention. But they do not step back to generalize on the fundamental notion that a constitution, if genuine, is a contract among several free, competing groups or authorities, each holding its own tangible power. As a contract it allocates obligations and rights, limiting the potential influence of each power-holder but also protecting its security. This most basic axiom—that free politics and the rule of law proceed from actual balances of power within a society—should be explicit throughout. The facts are there, in the arguments of the states and interests represented at Philadelphia. It would take little added space to illuminate the principle of the balance of power, which in turn would reveal how much we owe to the past, from much-maligned "feudalism," through the party system, to the final triumph of the Parliament. And it would challenge students to search out the sources, and balances, of power among classes, interests and regions in the United States today—and

This most basic axiom—that free politics and the rule of law proceed from actual balances of power within a society—should be explicit throughout.

then to speculate on the likely outcome of a new constitutional convention that would reflect the balances of our time.

Would modern delegates, in what we are repeatedly told is "a dangerous world," create a government as free, as open and as limited as the delegates did in the 1780s?

What kind of convention would it be and what kind of document would emerge? What sort of people would be chosen as delegates and would they dare proceed in secrecy? If not, could the necessary compromises be struck? The Philadelphia convention was not a media event. The delegates knew well how difficult it would be to arrive at agreement on a government that would be both strong and limited. They knew that compromise is a building process, in which no single block can be to everybody's liking, that it requires time and privacy and cannot be subject to excited public objection, point by point. Would such deliberation be possible today on issues as inflammatory now as slavery was then? Would modern delegates, in what we are repeatedly told is "a dangerous world," create a government as free, as open and as limited as the delegates did in the 1780s? And yet, was the world not more dangerous then for a small, struggling nation with potential enemies to the north and south and the vast power of Britain threatening on sea and land? Would we be as brave?

Asking such questions could help students comprehend what was at stake and how important the framers' qualities of mind and character were to their accomplishment. We do not have to worship the Constitution as flawless to acknowledge, as Gilbert Sewall said, that we stand on the shoulders of giants and that they in turn drew strength from the work and ideas of countless generations before them. At stake was the survival of a free republic, and what emerged from the Constitutional Convention was both triumph and the makings of tragedy—not for the first or last time in history. Students could consider the limits of choice that even giants confront. The Union had to be made, but circumstances—the balances of power in society—determined that it would not be made without the fateful compromise over slavery. Should the compromise have been refused and the Union not made? It is not a question to be settled by instant moralizing or by easy judgment of the framers. Many of them hoped, of course, that the new government would manage to reduce, and ultimately to abolish, slavery. Their higher hopes were vain. The tragedy wrapped inside the triumph would be played out, for generations to come, down to the present. The Constitution itself was nonetheless a triumph and has survived as the instrument by which we continue to build the democracy envisioned in the words of the Declaration of Independence.

DEMOCRACY AND REFORM BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

V.

TOCQUEVILLE'S *DEMOCRACY*

Alexis de Tocqueville, author of *Democracy in America*, arrived in New York in May, 1831, halfway through the first administration of Andrew Jackson. What American historians call Jacksonian Democracy was in full swing, reaching its symbolic apogee in the President's attack on the Bank of the United States the following year. Tocqueville and his friend Beaumont had ostensibly come to study the prison system in America. Their real purpose was to study democracy in action and to report to their countrymen on the form it was taking in the New World. By so doing, Tocqueville hoped to instruct the French on how best to manage the transition from a society still aristocratic, but in decay, to the democratic form he regarded as inevitable:

> *The first of the duties that are at this time imposed upon those who direct our affairs is to educate democracy, to reawaken, if possible, its religious beliefs; to purify its morals; to mold its actions; to substitute a knowledge of statecraft for its inexperience, and an awareness of its true interest for its blind instincts....*

What had he seen in America that would stir him to address these words to the French, to Americans, and to any others who would read? The answer is in two volumes of a brilliant, often difficult book, hardly practicable as supplementary material for a high school course. But textbook authors might well devote a few

lines to Tocqueville's main questions about democracy as foils to their narrative of the democratic politics of the ante-bellum period in the United States. In our search for a broader world view, it is useful to look at what intelligent, well-disposed foreign visitors have had to say about us and to let students weigh the justice of their comments.

Tocqueville's aim was not to catalog in detail the workings of the American government and society but to set forth the general characteristics of democracy with which he believed all societies, from his day forward, must contend. Several of his fears sprang not from his American sojourn, but from his experience of the radical republicans, the "democrats" in France. He had just observed the Revolution of 1830 at home, which followed less than two decades after a quarter-century of civil and foreign war, revolution, terror and dictatorship. He was in anguish over his own country's chaotic and bloody passage from the old society to the new:

> *Has man always inhabited a world like the present, where all things are not in their proper relationship, where virtue is without genius, and genius without honor?*

Tocqueville turned to America in hope, because he assumed that here people already saw the need for universal education; here, he believed, religion was stronger and morals purer than in his old world where "religionists are the enemies of liberty, and the friends of liberty attack religion."

In America, Tocqueville said, noting the Puritans' law of 1647 requiring every Massachusetts town to support a school, "religion is the road to knowledge, and the observance of the divine law leads man to civil freedom." Still, precious as they were, religion and morality were not enough to preserve democracy. Self-restraint from doing wrong and the will to do right would be small help (and in France had done great harm) without wisdom concerning public affairs. Apart from what they had to believe, what did a democratic people have to know? Tocqueville answered that they required nothing less than a new political science: the study of human nature and human needs as revealed by philosophy and history. General ideals of society, upon which a democratic people must agree, had to be based in factual knowledge. "It goes without saying," he told Beaumont in 1828, "we must study the history of man, and above all that of our immediate ancestors." For Americans, he said in the first volume of *Democracy in America*, the most necessary thing was "not to forget" their heritage from England and Europe.

If democracy was to fulfill its promise it would be necessary to educate not only the governing few but to prepare everyone to

comprehend the issues of public life. The greatest of these issues would be the continuing threats to democracy arising from the nature of democracy itself, as Tocqueville saw them in France and America. These would never be finally removed, but could be reduced by people educated to the task and with the will to persevere.

Tocqueville saw grave danger of four kinds. First, the tyranny of the majority would discourage independent thought and be hostile to contrary or complicating ideas. Second, and closely related, egalitarian envy—the very engine of democracy, Tocqueville called it—would hurry to support mass opinion. Rather than allowing some people the liberty of being different, envy would choose equality "in servitude" over inequality in freedom. Third, rising economic opportunity, indisputably desirable in itself, would stir an appetite for personal gain in the short run, tempting men to forget the ideals of the past, to ignore the needs of the future, and to withdraw from public affairs to their own private spheres. Lastly, while evading the chores of politics, men would seek the aid of government in their own private interests, thus encouraging both the expansion and corruption of political power.

To ward off these destructive forces, democracy needed two counter-forces. First, it needed a new sort of aristocracy, a moral, cultural and political leadership of such integrity that it would lift society by its own example, whose role it would be to stand apart from the fashions of the hour and to offer competing views and values. Second, it needed an able public willing to listen to such leaders and ready to take its own part in political life. Whence such ability and readiness? Here Tocqueville named several vital educative forces, all of which he saw at work in the America of Jackson's day. Elementary education was needed as a base for the daily work of life and for the political education that should be continued by at least seven other means: First, constant participation in local government, where men would learn to enjoy and use their liberty. Second, service in the jury system. Third, working on party affairs, on issues and candidacies beyond the local level. Fourth, active membership in private and civic associations of all kinds which Tocqueville's admired predecessor Montesquieu had called essential to a balance of power in society, offering shelter and choice to the individual. Fifth, a free press, which of course required in turn a literate and discriminating public. Sixth, the right to property and its use. And finally, the free exercise of religion.

First, the tyranny of the majority would discourage independent thought and be hostile to contrary or complicating ideas.

Tocqueville saw these educative forces as insufficient or wholly lacking in France but flourishing in the United States. Without pretending to come to final judgment, textbook authors might examine Jacksonian Democracy along some of these lines. In effect, there is in each text a pretty fair balance of material that supports Tocqueville's fear of democratic threats to democracy—and material that supports his hope in the countervailing educative forces. Bragdon opens his Chapter 10, "Jacksonian Democracy" with an epigraph quoting Tocqueville on the two sides of the democratic coin. On one side, the "surprising liberty and pervasive political activity of Americans"; on the other, "a thousand simultaneous voices demand the satisfaction of their social wants." Bragdon clearly holds that the uncommon man of the old style, John Quincy Adams ("No American public man has served his country with more devotion"), was done in by the demagoguery and egalitarianism of Andrew Jackson and his supporters. Adams' proposals for a national university and scientific research were ridiculed, his "logical appointment" of Henry Clay as Secretary of State subjected to "smear" as a "corrupt bargain" betraying the "will of the people."

Bragdon pictures the 1828 campaign, in which Jackson swamped Adams, as the first of a new style—barren of issues, full of mudslinging and gimmicks, a chase for spoils:

> *The hero of New Orleans especially attracted the rising class of professional politicians who were interested less in issues than in simply getting and holding office. Unlike Clay and Adams, the general had not made enemies by taking a strong stand on major issues. Democratic newspapers hammered on one theme above all: Andrew Jackson is the candidate of the people.... "Old Hickory" was the first presidential candidate with a popular nickname. Hickory poles and brooms were tied on houses, steamboats and church steeples.*

A "trivial and disgraceful campaign," Bragdon concludes, but Jackson was "more truly the choice of the people than had been any previous President."

Like all the other texts, Bragdon describes the riotous inaugural party at the White House as symbolic of the new democratic age. And all texts go on to decry the spoils system. Although Bragdon allows Jackson credit for believing in Jefferson's principle of rotation in office and thinking that special training was not needed for the civil service ("the duties of public officers are so plain and simple"), Bragdon ends critically:

While the extent of Jackson's removal of men from office has been exaggerated, and while some of his removals were justified, his actions set a bad precedent. The spoils system lowered the efficiency and honesty of the federal government. A contemporary observer not unfriendly to Jackson noted that "office-seeking and office-getting was becoming a regular business, where impudence triumphed over worth."

Boorstin points out that the spoils system was not new in state governments such as New York's, and Jackson removed not many more officials than other presidents had:

But Jackson and his political friends actually boasted of these removals as if they were a new kind of public service. The Jacksonian motto (borrowed from the battlefield)—"to the victors belong the spoils"—became the guiding principle of the national political parties.

While mentioning the system's drawbacks, other authors are readier to accept its "democratic" aspects. Risjord notes that Adams appointed "only the rich and well-born" and that Jefferson "insisted on education and training." Jackson believed he was giving more people more chances: "The new system seemed somehow more democratic than the old." Under a heading, "The people take a more active part in government," Todd professes to see progress:

Jackson's policies brought politics into the range of the ordinary white male citizen. Even a poor man could risk devoting his time to political activities if he could hope for a job as a reward for faithful service.

For some historians, the implications of Jacksonian democracy (and Tocqueville's fears) were most vividly drawn in the mindless presidential campaign of 1840 between General William Henry Harrison and Martin Van Buren. It was, says Boorstin, "the first rip-snorting modern presidential campaign." The Whigs passed over the real architect of their most-cherished policies, Henry Clay, for the old Indian-fighter, Harrison, and in order to pick up southern votes they nominated for vice-president a man who actually opposed their policies, John Tyler of Virginia.

This presidential campaign, like many to follow, did not center on key national issues, but resounded with empty slogans and name-calling.

Boorstin does not explicitly state that these new tactics, forced by the openness of the political process, were rewarded by

Harrison's death a month after inauguration and the advent of a President who obstructed Whig programs at every turn. Nor does Bragdon, though he succinctly sums up the new "pure ballyhoo":

> *Against Van Buren, [the Whigs] used the very methods the Jacksonians had used against Adams in 1828. Harrison (born to wealth and social position) was pictured as a rude frontiersman, while Van Buren (born in humble circumstances) was portrayed as a champagne-drinking aristocrat.*

Todd simply describes the campaign as "boisterous," replete with log cabins and hard cider for the crowds. For Davidson, the campaign was "colorful," "spirited and exciting," and the Whigs discussed no issues and made sure Harrison said nothing. The strategy worked, says Risjord:

> *But the triumph was really Andrew Jackson's, for the Whigs had won only by imitating Jacksonian methods. Jackson had opened the government to the common people. His Presidency had been the symbol of promise and opportunity—to get ahead in the world, to go from rags to riches, from log cabin to White House.*

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How much symbol and how much reality there was for "common people" in Jacksonian democracy is not much explored by these texts. Risjord begins its section headed "The Meaning of Jacksonian Democracy" by noting that nearly universal white male suffrage had been established by state action before the election of 1828. They assert that Jackson's contribution was "to make those who could vote actually want to vote or to hold office." Habits changed, if nothing else:

> *Enlarging voter turnout is not a matter of changing laws. It is a matter of changing habits and attitudes. In some way Jackson managed to persuade the common people that the political system worked for them and that it was responsive to their needs.*

Other texts add lists of changes contributing to democratization. Davidson cites direct voter choice of presidential electors and the advent of national nominating conventions. Like Davidson, Todd notes the gradual spread upward, from county and state conventions, of more open nominating methods. Otherwise they settle for the generalization that democratic forces were "advancing."

> *For one thing, political power was now more evenly divided between well-to-do people and average people. The average people no longer stood in awe of leaders who, it had been supposed, were especially qualified by birth and education to lead the nation.*

Bragdon offers a provocative comparison between Jacksonian and Jeffersonian democracy. Both men "professed belief in the goodness and wisdom of the people"; both stood for limited federal action (though hardly a weak presidency or a weak union); both extolled agriculture as the source of national greatness. But Jeffersonian democracy had been *for* the people and not *by* them, Bragdon argues. By Jackson's time, voters came to expect their direct demands to be satisfied. Many more state and local offices were made subject to election, and terms were shortened so that the voice of the people could be frequently heard. And it was in the name of "the people" that Jackson increased the power of the presidency, defying the Supreme Court over the Bank and the Cherokee lands, and appealing to the people over Congress in his adroitly-crafted veto messages.

Boorstin offers the most extensive analysis of "the new politics." To all of the points addressed by the other authors, he adds that it was the new western states that first granted the vote to almost all white adults:

> *The democratic influence of the frontier was echoed in the East by politicians looking for voters, by middle-class reformers, and by spokesmen for the propertyless worker.*

Written ballots made voting easier; party newspapers and rallies stirred participation, and the many conventions were "great fun." But at the end of his chapter on the Jacksonian era, Boorstin worries over the outcome of the 1840 fiasco:

> *As the Jacksonian era drew to a close, the nation was beginning to come apart at the seams. The country needed strong, farsighted leadership. The issues could not be washed away in hard cider. It would take more than songs and slogans to hold the young nation together.*

But Boorstin no more than the others addresses head-on the tough questions Tocqueville posed about democracy. Which would prove stronger? Envy or education? Greed or civic responsibility? Short-term gain or regard for the future? Even if "strong, farsighted leadership" were at hand, would the parties dare offer it, or the people elect it?

PRE-CIVIL WAR REFORMISM

One of the greatest virtues attributed to democracy since its Greek origins has been its ability to reform itself, to correct abuses before they grow so large as to undermine the social order. To this hopeful view, Americans in the early Republic believed they would add a new dimension. Not only would democracy correct abuse,

it would satisfy the ever-higher expectations of its citizens on a rising spiral of progress toward societal perfection. Was America not free of the Old World's ancient corruption? Were Americans not doubly equipped, by religion and reason, to do greater things than any other people? Davidson opens its Chapter 16, "A Land of Idealism," by explaining the impulse to reform:

> *Although agitation for reform was especially strong in the period between the war of 1812 and the Civil War, the idea of remaking society had strong roots in political and religious heritage of the nation.*

Steeped in the principles of liberty and equality expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, reformers believed, Davidson says, that they had a mission to apply and fulfill John Winthrop's vision of "a city on a hill," a godly community serving as an example to the world.

As the vast resources of the continent promised material plenty, Americans came to believe that democracy could reform and perfect itself without imposing unreasonable loss to any group or interest, and without violating any of its own political and constitutional principles in the process of change. As Mo a Harrington argues in *The Dream of Deliverance in American Politics*, the confidence that "deliverance from evil" is not only possible but naturally to be expected—and without much pain—has been the most pervasive assumption of American p litical life. Again and again Americans have launched campaigns for reform, "conservative" as well as "liberal." Their optimism has rebounded from repeated instances of failure, of negative outcomes not foreseen, and of relapse and reversals of initial success. As we shall see, American optimism, and confidence in democratic forms, survived not only the several failures of pre-Civil War reformers but also the great tragedy of the war itself.

Textbooks do not make this over-arching theme of democratic reform explicit.

Textbooks do not make this over-arching theme of democratic reform explicit. Nor do they explain the continuities and the comparisons to be made between one period or generation and the next. Given their limitations, how well do they present the several strains of reformism before the Civil War? In general, all are adequate in their facts, offering enough information for teachers to rearrange into effective lessons. All but Boorstin devote a separate chapter to pre-1860 reform attempts. All describe the campaigns for women's rights, temperance, better treatment of prisoners and the mentally ill, public education, better conditions for industrial workers, and the abolition of slavery.

In presenting an extremely complicated period, it is perhaps not surprising that the one text whose original authors were both secondary school teachers—Bragdon and McCutchen—is the clearest and best organized. Were they more alert to students' needs for simpler lines of interpretation, sharper assertions of connections and results? Less afraid to be outgrown, or to be accused by university colleagues of insufficient nuance and qualification? Whatever the reason, their Chapter 11, "The Spirit of Reform," is something of a model. In addition to the clarity of purpose and structure so important to survey texts and courses, it is also the strongest on ideas and their roots, on outcomes and significance, and on an international perspective.

Alone among the five texts, Bragdon includes the struggle for labor reform in the same chapter, thus bringing together all of the people except Indians who were most hurting in American society. The chapter begins with Emerson's remark that there was in his day a keener scrutiny of institutions and of domestic life than any we had yet known. Bragdon says that this spirit was rooted in the Declaration of Independence, which proclaimed as equal man's right to pursue happiness and his duty to oppose tyranny and to correct wrongs. The impulse was democratic, and so were the methods:

> *Once launched, reform movements in the United States owed much of their effectiveness to the fact that Americans understood the techniques of democracy. They knew how to run meetings, select slates of officers, draw up programs, and get publicity. Reform groups often imitated the political parties and held national conventions.*

"Once launched, reform movements in the United States owed much of their effectiveness to the fact that Americans understood the techniques of democracy."

The other impulse to reform was religious. Bragdon (alone of all the texts) quotes Tocqueville on the influence of religion in America and on its utilitarian bent. American ministers of all faiths did not, said Tocqueville, "attempt to draw or fix all the thoughts of man upon the life to come." In Bragdon's words:

> *Life on earth was no longer a mere preparation for the hereafter; instead, people had the capacity and the duty to improve the environment in which God had placed them. Thus the new religious spirit was often intimately tied to the spirit of reform. Indeed most of the reform movements described in this chapter were promoted by religious groups.*

Although other texts mention religious influence, only Bragdon and Davidson give it space and assign it this full measure of importance.

Of all the textbooks, only Bragdon places American events in a global context. It is worth reproducing the chapter's closing words:

> *The movements here described were by no means limited to the United States. There was constant influence back and forth between Europe and the United States. The antislavery movement, for instance, had achieved great strength in Great Britain before it had gone far in America. In 1833, at a time when the United States Congress would not even debate the slavery question, British abolitionists succeeded in persuading Parliament to buy out the slaveowners in the British colonies and free the slaves. The Prussian system of public schools provided Horace Mann with several of the ideas which he put into effect in Massachusetts. . . . In the other direction, the pressure of American reform on Europe, an outstanding example was Dorothea Dix. She was only one of many American reformers who had wide contacts and wide influence on both sides of the Atlantic.*

In the case of Dorothea Dix, Bragdon remarks on "the extraordinary influence a simple determined person may exert," an important lesson in tracing the adventures of democracy. And the book follows with sketches of other vital individual accomplishments by Horace Mann, Elizabeth Peabody and Noah Webster. More directly than the other authors, Bragdon describes education as indispensable to political democracy as well as to the equal opportunity that democracy promises. But it also admits the refusal of many localities to pay teachers decently and acknowledges the anti-intellectualism that accompanied Jacksonian democracy. "A dead Indian is much more to the point than a dead language," it quotes an Indiana newspaper as saying:

> *Did Tippecanoe Harrison graduate from a seminary? Did Old Hickory Jackson know any Latin or Greek when he swung the British agents in Florida higher than Haman?*

(Still, the Hoosier editor knew something of the Old Testament.)

Other texts are stronger on particular points, but none is so well-rounded as Bragdon. Risjord's Chapter 10, "People of Conscience," offers a march through briefly-summarized facts about each aspect of reform, with little reference to religion as the source of "conscience"except for brief notes on Unitarianism and the spellbinding evangelism of Charles Grandison Finney. Risjord has no summary of the reform movements, but properly assesses the limited results of, particularly, the women's movement, the labor movement and the antislavery crusade. Davidson's treatment of the early labor movement (in a previous chapter) is the fullest and

best-organized of the five texts. It is candid on hours and working conditions, on the crippling effect of the Panic of 1837, and on the exploitation of free blacks and new immigrants from Europe and the British Isles. The hostility of white native-born workers toward blacks and immigrants, always worsened by economic downturns, is well explained, allowing students to make connections to the present.

Davidson's solid account of educational reform will also remind students of present-day debates: the democratic argument for universal free schooling; the strong opposition of childless taxpayers and of parents of private school children; the lesser, segregated schooling of blacks; poor teacher pay and overloaded classes. Davidson's section "The Battle Against Slavery" is also well-detailed and instructive on such matters as the bitter quarrels among abolitionists, and the vigorous opposition to abolitionism in the North. In a previous chapter, Davidson provides a striking account of economic and social life in the South, including the lives of slaves.

Like Davidson and the others, Boorstin says that the invention of the cotton gin was a great force in preserving slavery, though no text pauses to point out the general lesson of the recurring impact of new technology on economic, social and political history. The Todd text is effective on the institution of slavery and on abolitionism and its opponents, North and South. Its detail on the women's movement includes a boxed excerpt from the Seneca Falls Declaration. It also has especially lively sketches on Thoreau, Emerson and Whitman as "powerful voices in praise of freedom and democracy," who attempted to apply Jefferson's Declaration to their own time. But Todd does not assign religion a sufficient place in explaining the reform impulse and, in its chapter summary, the rhetoric outruns the facts:

> *The American people plunged enthusiastically into the job of building the nation, spurred by new ideas and by the desire to make democracy work. This faith in democracy stimulated wave after wave of reform movements.*

In actuality, except for the extension of white male suffrage and of public schooling in certain localities, mainly in the Northeast, democracy made relatively few gains in those matters closest to the reformers' hearts. Wherever reformism clashed with important economic interests, it failed. The union movement and its drive for higher wages, shorter hours and safe working conditions collapsed in the face of employer resistance, political and judicial hostility, and economic depression. Abolitionists, South or North, ...rate or radical, could not shake the conviction of dominant

Southerners that slavery was critical to their economic welfare, a conviction shared by many Northern business men and workers. The women's movement was brushed aside by the power of entrenched cultural as well as economic interests, expressed through the male-dominated world of press, politics and education.

None of the texts, again with the exception of Bragdon, pulls the various strands of reform together at the end to answer the student-citizen's most obvious questions: What did it all add up to? Was it worth the trouble? The busy summaries and chapter reviews do not do what one would hope. The frequently grandiose chapter titles ("A Land of Idealism," "People of Conscience") are left hanging. The authors should have been explicit on one of history's dual lessons for citizens. on the one hand, the everlasting hardness of most human enterprise; on the other, the ever-recurring chance to make certain things better—just enough to impose the duty to persevere, to reject both optimism and pessimism, and to look at realities with neither illusion nor resignation.

Bragdon comes closest to an overall assessment that the reform movements did leave certain achievements behind:

> *Their influence was seen especially in state legislation dealing with such problems as prisons. the insane, child labor, liquor, mechanics' lien laws and public schools. This illustrates one of the virtues of the federal system: it allows for vigorous action at the local level.*
>
> *Some movements which had relatively little success at first, such as the feminists, formed permanent organizations which continued their agitation even into the twentieth century. The essential demands of the abolitionists, the feminists, the educational reformers, and the labor unions were all eventually fulfilled.*

The full application of our political and religious ideals to each of these human problems still awaits our doing.

On this last point, Bragdon is too sweeping, as many students will instantly recognize. It would have been better to have said that brave—and costly—beginnings were made, leaving models and inspiration for later reformers who would win substantial improvements. The full application of our political and religious ideals to each of these human problems still awaits our doing.

Boorstin's chapter is called "Reforming and Expanding." The much greater space that the book devotes to the latter reflects the reality of the time. There was more expanding than reforming going on. Tremendous energies were absorbed by the push westward to Texas, New Mexico, Utah, California and Oregon, Boorstin makes clear in his narrative. There was also the divisive issue of war with Mexico. And, most divisive and absorbing of all,

there was the struggle over slavery in the new lands. What Emerson and so many others feared--the "poison" of those lands—overcame all attempts at compromise. The nation came apart. Even churches divided. Boorstin foreshadows the crisis most graphically: "The word of God could no longer hold Americans together." Nor could the words of the Constitution. Democracy was not to reform itself peacefully nor was it to escape the consequences of slavery's poison, introduced more than two centuries earlier.

VI. CIVIL WAR AND EMANCIPATION

Nothing is more vital to the historical and political maturation of Americans than the study of their Civil War. History's law of consequences was dreadfully borne out: whatever is done in error or injustice, or not done to correct them, will have its price and will be paid for, perhaps twice over, perhaps a thousandfold, by somebody (usually innocent and uncomprehending) sooner or later. In 1619, slavery was introduced into Virginia. So was the principle of free government in the founding of the House of Burgesses that same year. For the fulfillment of the latter, and the reversal of the former, the price for the generation of the 1860s was to be 600,000 lives, and the unmeasurable suffering of millions maimed, bereft, and impoverished. There was to be no deliverance from evil at "reasonable cost." There never had been, nor ever will be, as anyone who understands history has always known.

Apart from the law of consequences, what is there about the Civil War that textbooks might stress to further the education of modern democratic citizens? To begin with, the reality and depth of the tragedy. Second, the longer consequences for society not only of war in general but of how wars are fought. Third, the difference leadership can make to lessen tragedy—or to explain it, which itself is of vital importance to a self-governing people. Finally, the texts could use comparative history to provoke interest and help students to achieve perspective.

The portrayal of the Civil War years in each of these texts is generally competent, and often quite moving—as it should be, for emotions are rightly aroused by those years. But the books could do more. First, they could teach the difference between tragedy and the melodrama typical of television mini-series. Both sides equally believed in the rightness of their course. Neither understood the other's fierce faith. Only one text, Davidson, reprints an eyewitness account of hospital wards from the diary of a Confederate nurse who portrays not only physical suffering but the tragedy of incomprehension:

> *Gray-haired men—men in the pride of manhood—beardless boys—Federals and all, mutilated in every imaginable way, lying on the floor, just as they were taken from the battlefield, so close together that it was almost impossible to walk without stepping on them.... What can be in the minds of our enemies, who are now arrayed against us, who have never harmed them in any way, but simply claim our own, and nothing more!*

Only one, Bragdon, makes the point that by 1860 reason had fled; fury, pride and misconception of the other had taken over. There was, as ever in history, a universal inability to look ahead and to comprehend the possible costs:

> *If the North had realized that it was going to cost the lives of 360,000 of their young men to subdue the Confederacy....If the leaders of the Confederacy had foreseen that the war would bring utter defeat, devastation, and destruction of their entire social system....*

The texts could also do more to present the sheer magnitude of the tragedy. Since our current population is about eight times that of 1861, a comparable conflict with proportionate losses would mean the killing of almost 5,000,000 men. Let students reflect on such trauma. No European war since the Thirty Years' War was so bloody in relation to the populations involved. All of the 19th century revolutions of Europe put together were dwarfed by the cost of preserving the American Union. Yet somehow we manage to congratulate ourselves on two centuries' constitutional stability and even "peaceful evolution" in favorable contrast to other nations. Why did the Civil War not continue long afterward to haunt the American consciousness? One answer is that it did, for the defeated, devastated South. But American consciousness, in literary, historical and political utterance, was to be shaped much more commonly by Northerners. Perhaps more important, the massive growth of population, the westward push, and the enormous activity and mobility that accompanied post-Civil

War industrialization rendered our scars less prominent than those self-inflicted by smaller, static European societies. For the millions of immigrants arriving after 1865, the Civil War had not been their war, but something memorialized (as I remember from my own childhood) by others, those "old Yankees" with "American names."

In reality, a great many non-Anglo-Americans died for the Union, including blacks, who fought bravely in increasing numbers and in deadly assaults. The textbooks are clear in that regard, a benefit of the new pluralist consciousness. But none puts the war's trauma in large enough perspective. Some do not record the numbers of killed and wounded at all. And only Boorstin and Davidson try to explain why losses were so high. The latter emphasizes the primitive medical practices of the era:

> *Sanitation was poor, and water was often contaminated. Doctors were in short supply. Antiseptics were unknown, so wounds and incisions often became infected. Painkillers were neither easy to come by nor particularly effective. One Confederate officer wrote that his men had as much to fear from their own doctors as they did from Union troops.*

Only Boorstin takes seriously the analysis of military history.

Only Boorstin takes seriously the analysis of military history. Losses soared, he says, partly because officers on both sides clung to the doctrine, taught by out-of-date textbooks at West Point, that the attackers always had the advantage. But with the much more accurate and longer-range rifle having replaced the musket, defenders now had the advantage, especially when they also took care to dig in. "This was the start of trench warfare," says Boorstin. "The spade was now as important as the gun." No quick victory was likely.

The war soon became a war of exhaustion, the Northern blockade "slowly taking away everything that the South needed." But generals in the field continued to hope for the decisive battle or the decisive capture of the enemy's capital. Boorstin recounts the "final, brutal, bloody battles of exhaustion" in 1864-65:

> *Grant's forces suffered enormous losses, but he knew that he could afford them while Lee could not....The carnage of those days was beyond belief. Grant lost 55,000 dead and wounded to Lee's 30,000. But these losses weakened the Confederacy far more than the Union.*

Earlier, Boorstin provides the best analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of both sides. The North seemed bound to win. But nothing is sure amid the confusions of war, Boorstin observes, and actually the Union victory "was a very near thing." The South

was close to winning often enough to justify the confidence of Confederate leaders.

Military history has been out of favor for quite some time and there is relatively little of it in modern textbooks. But events on the battlefield have profound and fateful effects on entire societies and surely democratic peoples need to know more of military matters than others do if they are to exercise proper oversight of their experts. It is a commonplace that most of the truly innovative methods and strategies in the World War of 1914-18, for example, sprang from civilians and the lower ranks, while the generals—having failed to learn the lessons of our Civil War—persisted in their murderous obsession with frontal assaults. The fact that both wars dragged through four years of slaughter determined much of what followed in peacetime society. Citizens need to know why and how even the best of military plans and preparations are almost always undone by the "fog of war," the pressures and confusions of combat. And they need to learn that defeat may well be a step to victory, as Boorstin shrewdly observes of the first battle at Bull Run in July, 1861:

> *In the long run the South was actually hurt by this first victory. Now the Southerners made the mistake of believing that it would be easy to defeat the North. For the North, on the other hand, the defeat at Bull Run made people realize that the war could not be won in a few days. And they steeled themselves for the hard years ahead.*

Events on the battlefield have profound and fateful effects on entire societies and surely democratic peoples need to know more of military matters than others do.

Perhaps the most surprising feature of these textbooks is their failure to provide a substantial biographical sketch of Abraham Lincoln. As with military affairs—or any other affairs, for that matter—democratic citizens need to know more about political leadership than other peoples do. Although textbooks sometimes suggest the importance of individual character in politics, they rarely pause to draw one in full dimension. No man deserves it more than Lincoln. And none could be more instructive to students looking for the traits one hopes to find in democratic leaders, especially those destined to confront great crises. Granted, even full biographies may miss the ultimate reasons for greatness in men or women and may fail to find the source for genius of any kind. But certain important characteristics deserve mention. In Lincoln's case texts should relate his formative experiences, what he read, some of what he knew and believed, the sources of his language and eloquence, his temperament, his humor and his mourning, his handling of affairs under the awful pressures of war. Like the reformers of the pre-war era, his convictions were rooted in the oldest American political an

religious traditions, absorbed from his reading of history, law and Scripture. His ideals were bonded to reality by his hard life and work on the frontier, and by law practice and his politicking among the people of Illinois, both the ordinary and the powerful.

Textbooks should pause to tell this in ways that students will remember. But none does. Given the pages upon pages devoted to other "features," it is an astonishing lapse. Bragdon has no well-rounded sketch of Lincoln as a man or as a wartime leader. Boorstin's six paragraphs constitute the longest portrait of all the texts, but do not reach Lincoln's beliefs or depth of his character. Like others, Boorstin writes about Lincoln's political acumen, as in the debates with Douglas and in his widely different tactics in saving Maryland, Missouri and Kentucky for the Union. Davidson comments on Lincoln's "political skills," but says nothing about where he might have learned them. In the chapters on the Civil War, the Davidson text finds room for at least seven pages' worth of maps and special features, not counting pictures, but no biography of Lincoln. Risjord devotes twenty pages out of forty-three to pictures, maps and special features, but no Lincoln sketch. Todd uses twenty-three of fifty pages for such items, including study skills, review questions, summaries, a profile of John C. Fremont and, inexplicably, a two-page spread on regulating water rights today in the western states. But it has no analysis of Lincoln.

Most texts do reprint the Gettysburg Address and Davidson also offers an excerpt from Lincoln's second inaugural address. Surely all texts should reprint the latter in its entirety. It may be the greatest political utterance in American life, certainly superior to any other in its combination of moral power and historical realism. The closing passage, "With malice toward none, with charity for all..." is often quoted as testimony to Lincoln's far-sighted generosity. But for teachers of history, who strive to portray historical tragedy and the unyielding interrelatedness of events and generations, the preceding section, with its Biblical recital of the law of consequences, is most revealing of Lincoln's capacity of mind. It expresses the central truth about the war that he hoped Americans would comprehend:

> *Neither party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the* cause *of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from*

the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" If we shall suppose that American Slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South, this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether."

Finally, the ultimate tragedy of the Civil War looms all the more bitter for its having failed to remove so much of the oppressions of the slave system, despite its formal legal repudiation. These textbooks do explain, of course, the shortcomings of legal emancipation without the lasting, and constantly enforced, state and local political guarantees—including education for both races—that would have been required to bring black people to something like emancipation in fact. The authors make clear that the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution, together with the accompanying laws and regulations imposed on the Southern states by Congress, represented an enormous advance in the evolution of American democracy. Had law been enforced, the ex-slaves might have used their political and civil rights to win progress—as other newly-enfranchised people have in democratic societies—in their economic and social status. When their rights were lost, so too were most of their chances for other gains. A great moment of opportunity faded with the failure of the moderate Republicans' program for Reconstruction, a moment that re-emerged only a century later.

When their rights were lost, so too were most of their chances for other gains.

Although the textbooks make clear how fundamental the political, legal, and educational progress for the blacks was—the 14th amendment most of all, as 20th century events were to prove—they do not sufficiently stress the changes in economic conditions that would have been needed to make emancipation real at the time. It is as if the authors share the view

(still current in American politics) that political and civil rights alone, coupled with a certain amount of education, would make everything else come out all right, a notion sometimes applied to certain underdeveloped countries in our own day. The South in 1865 was not only underdeveloped but devastated, which the text authors do readily recognize. Todd quotes a citizen of Mississippi:

> *Our fields everywhere lie untilled. Naked chimneys and charred ruins all over the land mark the spots where happy homes once stood. Their former inhabitants wander in poverty and exile, wherever chance or charity affords them shelter or food.*

The "beggared and hopeless" were everywhere, and the plight of three-and-a-half million freed slaves, says Todd, was far worse:

> *The former slaves were at last free, at least in name, but free to do what? Most of them had never been given an opportunity to learn how to read and write. None had owned land. Few knew what it was like to work for their own wages. Nor could most of their former owners pay them wages, for Confederate money was worthless and United States currency was scarcely to be found in the South. The land itself remained, but seeds and farm tools had almost disappeared.*

Todd, like the other texts, then turns to recount the attempts at short-term relief, especially of hunger and disease, undertaken by private societies and the Freedmen's Bureau. It cites the cruel rumor in the summer and fall of 1865 that every former slave would get "forty acres and a mule" for Christmas from the government in Washington. But that is the last one reads of economic matters. The purely political program of the Radical Republicans is then described, without comment on its inadequacy. Risjord follows the same pattern, beginning with a vivid description of the South's economic devastation. But then the entire Reconstruction period is narrated without substantial discussion of the former slaves' economic plight. In a "Sidenote" on Thaddeus Stevens, Risjord says that Stevens sought to break up the plantations and give each family "forty acres and a hut" but that most Northerners thought him "a sour, old man." And the Radical Republicans finally deserve credit for aiming at "social revolution," the term Risjord allows them, while saying that it was a program designed so that the South "would look like the North and would vote Republican."

Davidson mentions the total lack of economic security suffered by the ex-slaves and later describes the hopelessness of

sharecropping, but otherwise concentrates on legal and political problems. Boorstin is generally light on economic issues in th period, but does note Stevens' idea of forty acres and a hut:

> *But at this Congress balked. Unfortunately, few former slaves ever received any property after the war. Most remained dependent on white property owners for jobs and pay.*

The ex-slaves' economic problems are not mentioned in Boorstin's conclusion, "The Reconstruction Scorecard," whic! speaks only of starts on education and of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments, but which nonetheless contends that the Radical Republicans "had attempted to deal with the question of the place of blacks in the Southern states."

Bragdon, as so often, is more analytical, starting with the observation that the term "Reconstruction" might lead one to believe that the main efforts would deal with economic issues,

> *...with such southern problems as war damage, lack of credit, and the changeover from slave labor to free. In the years 1865 to 1877, however, reconstruction referred principally to two political problems: on what terms should the southern states be readmitted to the Union, and what should be the political rights of the newly freed Negroes?*

Bragdon concludes that the central aim of the Radicals' reconstruction policies was to keep their own control of the national government and draws a harsh balance sheet at the end:

> *Radical reconstruction was of only temporary help to the Negroes whose rights it professed to defend. Abolitionist idealism waned, and too many professed Radicals were more interested in Negro votes than in the welfare of the freed people themselves. The Radicals took no long-range steps to provide what the freed people needed most—education and the opportunity to acquire propert.*

Other texts also note the waning of Northern idealism. Risjord observes that "the spirit of reform began to evaporate" after passage of the constitutional amendments:

> *Many people in the North had never cared much about the fate of the freed Blacks. Although Republicans had often attacked slavery, their stress on individual rights had not included massive government aid to Black people. In 1869, the Freedmen's Bureau, the only government agency devoted to Black welfare, quietly went out of business. Blacks, it seemed, would have to fend for themselves.*

And Davidson concludes that many Northerners, business leaders in particular, urged that old quarrels be forgotten and Southerners be allowed to run their own affairs, "even if that meant Blacks might lose the rights they had so recently gained."

On the economic plight of the ex-slaves, texts could offer students a look at the Russian counterpart of American emancipation, the Czar Alexander II's freeing of the serfs in 1861. Comparative history is very useful in survey courses—at all school levels, including the university—to capture student interest and to open up wider perspectives. In the case of the two contemporary efforts at emancipation, the contrasts are striking. The Czarist program followed long planning and it centered upon the allocation of lands to the serfs. Although not enough, and often not the best, land went to the ex-serfs, the Russian approach appears as a model of social responsibility in contrast to the American government's lack of planning and utter failure to act on evident economic need

What would an exercise in this instance of comparative history illuminate? First, there is the contrast between the European, monarchist, Czarist ideology of conservative paternalism, which assumed the right of government to intervene in economic and social matters, and the duty to regulate them for the general welfare, and the 19th-century version of European and American liberalism, which insisted on governmental *laissez-faire* (except when taking action that would directly benefit dominant business enterprise). Second, as a contrasting point, was that distribution of land to the serfs was always assumed to be necessary. There was an obvious need to provide subsistence for the 40,000,000 ex-serfs who were numerous everywhere in Russia. It seemed far less urgent to the American Northerners who ran the federal government to think about 3,500,000 ex-slaves who were mostly out of their sight. Third, in the (relative) calm of peace in Russia, planning was to be expected, because the serf-owners were not only the allies but the very pillars of Czardom. In the heat of war the Union government was not likely to take the long view of any issue, least of all a massive economic intervention contrary to its own ideology. But most significant for the long run, was the racial contrast. Russian ex-serfs, however they might be despised, were mainly white and accepted as wholly Russian. The black ex-slaves were a people apart, regarded by many, North and South, as not wholly human.

Tocqueville's grim prophecy of thirty years before was borne out. Slavery might recede, he had said, but "the prejudice to which it has given birth is immovable."

Tocqueville's grim prophecy of thirty years before was borne out. Slavery might recede, he had said, but "the prejudice to which it has given birth is immovable":

If I were called upon to predict the future, I should say that the abolition of slavery in the South will, in the common course of things, increase the repugnance of the white population for the blacks.

The terrible sacrifices of the war brought little improvement for the daily lives of blacks. In the short run it brought greatly added suffering and, not long after, the scourges of the Ku Klux Klan and Jim Crow. The North spent 350,000 lives, but the Union was not truly made as the federal government turned its back on the South. The consequences of 1619 rolled on through the rest of the 19th century, and through the 20th century as well. The ostensible aims of Reconstruction in legal, political and educational affairs were partially achieved only a hundred years after the Civil War, and equality of the races, in fact or attitude, has yet to be won. Textbooks designed for educating citizens should place the Civil War, and the Emancipation, in this long perspective. It is more than an old fight among "those others," fixed in Brady's photographs, but in every sense a deeply tragic chapter in the common and unfinished business for all Americans.

VII. ECONOMIC GROWTH AND THE UNION MOVEMENT

ECONOMIC EXPANSION IN THE POST-CIVIL WAR ERA

Many historians have observed that one of the most favorable conditions for the evolution and acceptance of political democracy in the United States has been the country's wealth and its relatively widespread distribution. As in other parts of the world, democracy has been more secure because so many people could believe there was enough to go around, or there soon would be. Land and resources were plentiful. The industrialization of the 19th and 20th centuries created unprecedented levels of affluence and the promise of an ever-rising standard of living. A central theme of the five United States history texts under review is the explosive growth of industry, commerce and finance, moving us from a "developing nation" before the Civil War to a commanding position in the world' economy by 1914. Their narratives are breathless and full of wonderment at the energy and ingenuity of American entrepreneurs, and rightly so. But the texts underplay other great advantages our enterprises enjoyed. And by leaving out the concurrent, and earlier, economic development of England and Western Europe, they create the impression that modern industrialization was mainly an American product and that we did it all by ourselves.

The image of our peculiar American genius, self-sufficiency and unaided industrialization is still invoked by public speakers, either as an example for others in developing nations to follow or as a satisfying contrast for us to draw to other societies, past and present. Whatever its elements of truth, it is a simplification of history and as such it is dangerous to our hold on reality. It is particularly misleading when invoked as a "lesson of history" to guide us in economic policy-making at home or abroad. When textbooks fail to complicate such matters they spawn economic illiteracy at a moment when a realistic view of economics is more important than ever to democratic citizens. We struggle with agricultural and industrial dislocation, with corporate mismanagement and faltering productivity, with the flight of capital and jobs, overseas competition (some foreign, some from American-owned facilities), and the entire range of issues posed by poverty and underdevelopment in the Third World. At the very least, textbooks should explain the many special, favorable conditions for the rapid advances of the American economy in the 19th century so that we do not deceive ourselves over how it happened or how it might be replicated, here or elsewhere.

In many respects, the new American nation and the Industrial Revolution were made for each other, children of the same generation. In contrast to European conditions, the machine in America found *tabula rasa*; the organizers of industry had a free hand on uncharted ground. Earlier development of commerce and industry in England and Europe had created reserves of capital ready for investment in the New World. Along with capital, technical assistance flowed to us from James Watt, Samuel Slater and Henry Bessemer, and, it should be said, flowed swiftly back in the other direction as America's own inventions proliferated. Encouraging the swift introduction of machines was the westward movement of population, and the immense inner market free of barriers, yearly adding a broad new margin of consumers. In such conditions, building big was not so much a risk as a necessity. The frontier allowed the United States to escape the worst consequences of labor surplus, while immigration was insurance against labor shortage. Steam navigation, cheaper passages, famine in Ireland, aborted revolution in Germany, pogroms in Russia—the timely events of history helped to swell the stream of immigrants drawn to a new society.

A later French observer recited the advantages of America as against the disadvantages of Europe:

For them, no burdens of historical tradition, no domestic quarrels [sic], no envious or covetous neighbors, no militarism, no anti-clericalism, no communism.

In America, he said, economic conditions and opportunities came first. All else—political and military affairs, imperialism and isolationism, culture and ideas—was built around them. This was in striking contrast to European societies where the order was inverted and modern economic developments had to make their way painfully through old superstructures that were long established and inflexible.

How many of these circumstances do our textbooks describe and how sharply do they portray their importance? The answer is disappointing. Most of the texts are satisfied to relate the parade of (American) inventions, the building of railroads and industry, the growth of cities, and the rise of the great corporations and their magnates, who are depicted as colorful "Go-Getters," in Boorstin's oft-repeated words. In every text, the careers, methods, and aspirations of Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller are given much more space than is Abraham Lincoln. The implicit message is that they were more important to what is essential, or special, about the United States. And, by failing to analyze the broader setting in which these men operated, the textbooks overplay their individual roles, portraying them as giants pulling themselves up by their giant bootstraps.

In every text, the careers, methods, and aspirations of Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller are given much more space than is Abraham Lincoln.

Bragdon alone devotes a separate section for analysis entitled "Causes of Rapid Industrial Growth." Having already cited the protective tariffs installed before the Civil War, Bragdon lists the other advantages enjoyed by American entrepreneurs in the second half of the 19th century: a "flood" of inventions boosting productive capacity; natural resources in "fantastic abundance", the unique scale of railroad building, for a nationwide market; abundant capital (it is the *only* text to stress the importance of British and European capital, citing "billions" from abroad), an ample, mobile labor supply; governmental policies highly favorable to American capitalists; and, finally, a set of peculiarly American "attitudes." Helping to create those attitudes, Bragdon notes, were the absence of familial traditions of hand craftsmanship that in Europe discouraged new techniques; the widespread faith of American workers that hard work would bring rewards to them and to their children; and the readiness of American businessmen to regard money-making as an end it itself, as opposed to European businessmens' habit of retiring early from business to country estates, complete with horses and chateau, in mimicry of the old aristocracy.

In detailing active governmental support to industrial expansion, Bragdon is best at helping to fix main points in students' minds. In forbidding state tariffs, the Constitution had created "the largest free trade area in the world," in sharp contrast to Western Europe where "nearly twenty nations were levying tariffs on each others' goods." American capitalists "demanded and received" special favors from Congress:

A high protective tariff encouraged "infant industries" and raised manufacturers' profits by keeping out foreign goods. Liberal immigration laws insured a steady supply of cheap labor. The federal government bore about a third of the cost of building the western railroads and sold public lands containing vast mineral wealth for a small proportion of their true value.

Bragdon alone clearly quantifies the public subsidy of railroads: $700 million in grants, and acreage equal to the size of Texas. Public aid came from states and municipalities as well. British investors held $2-1/2 billion of railroad securities by 1900.

In the other texts, the active, supportive role of government and of foreign capital is either absent or so underplayed as to appear negligible. The legend of "bootstrap" success is perpetuated. Boorstin, for example, offers only brief, scattered comments on the advantages enjoyed by American capitalism. His most detailed analysis runs as follows:

The United States, which only a century before was mostly an unsettled wilderness, surprised the world. Suddenly this nation became a strong competitor in the industrial marketplace. The country was lucky in its virgin forests, fertile fields and untapped minerals. A stable government favored industry. The growing population was becoming ever more varied. People from everywhere who were persecuted, restless, or dissatisfied made the United States their mecca. They were enterprising and industrious, and they made the country stronger....In Europe, national borders and jealous governments stopped the free flow of goods ... of people over the land. But not here. The Founding Fathers had designed a great federal nation.

All of this is both true and important but Boorstin offers no further analysis, has nothing to say about British and European technology and capital. The role of protective tariffs is not mentioned. The land grants to the railroads are at one point called "generous" but thereafter described as "worth little or nothing" at the time they were given, as though they did not make the difference between building the railroads and not building them. The loans and grants from state and federal governments are not noted. And later Boorstin plays down more than does any of the

other texts the repeated intervention of state and federal governments and courts on the side of employers against labor.

Overall, Boorstin's is the most admiring of the accounts of economic expansion. It cites a people "eager to learn," creating a system of production that would build an "American Standard of Living," run by "Go-Getters":

> *A peculiarly American breed were the Go-Getters. These were men and women of all races and from all nations. The Go-Getters found new opportunities here, saw new ways to make a living for themselves, and at the same time helped build a better life for others.*

There is much truth here, as Tocqueville also observed, but students will learn very little c ·ity economic history from Boorstin, whose text concludes v .he misleading declaration that American Go-Getters have alway- been "makers of something out of nothing."

Todd and Davidson provide long and detailed factual narrative, but without even the casual analysis that Boorstin offers of the rapid American industrialization. There is no mention of European capital or of comparative European conditions. Risjord mentions the high tariff but does not explain either its benefit to business or its cost to consumers. In these three texts, growth somehow occurs on its own. Risjord notes, misleadingly, that government was inactive in the process (forgetting the text's own earlier points on tariff and railroad subsidies):

> *The government did not serve as referee. Government remained what it was before the war, small and weak, seemingly content to let the people care for themselves.*

The people, perhaps, but not favored business interests, upon whose behalf the government repeatedly intervened.

Only two of the texts, Risjord and Davidson, explain the notion of Social Darwinism, relate it to *laissez-faire,* and say that business leaders seized upon them both to justify aggressive business tactics and to ward off unwanted government regulation. But they do not go on to explain why the one-sided, pro-business application of *laissez-faire* in the 19th century was not what Adam Smith had in mind. The ideas of Adam Smith, Malthus and Ricardo are missing in all these books, so students are not introduced to the 19th-century ideologies of Liberalism and classical economics and how they were used and misused in debates over the role of government. Once more the texts remain both parochial and feeble in ideas.

The texts also miss the chance to instruct students in practical economics. Although Bragdon provides the most analysis, it does not say outright what is obvious: American economic expansion was heavily subsidized by American consumers, taxpayers, and workers, as well as by slave labor in the South and by the labor of an earlier generation of British and European workers, whose labor produced investment capital. The texts could better help students see who, under each policy and in each era, was subsidizing whom and whether the gains and losses were fairly distributed. Subsidy remains a bad word in the American lexicon, yet it is axiomatic that all enterprise must in some way be subsidized to some degree or other. Capital goods must be paid for by somebody, whether the economy is capitalist, communist or somewhere between. Texts could say that there is nothing wrong with subsidy as such, provided that the gains and losses are reasonably distributed. It is just another name for common effort for the general good.

In stressing the individualistic, risk-taking side of entrepreneurship—a vital lesson that each American generation needs to learn afresh—the texts ignore another lesson in practical economics: the importance to free enterprise of a generous measure of predictability. It was to minimize risk and to ensure predictability that Rockefeller built Standard Oil. He did so by systematically destroying the predictability of his competitors' business conditions. The drive to business concentration, to trusts horizontal and vertical, was then, and still is, a drive to escape the risks of a "free-market economy." As the texts point out, many risk-takers failed. Most of those who succeeded did so by eliminating any risk that could be decisive. This side of free enterprise, so vital these days to developing countries—predictability of prices, of labor costs, of access to markets and credit—is left out, even though the more successful 19th-century businessmen enjoyed them all. The texts are needlessly weak on economic lessons.

A healthy balance of societal power depended upon a large "middle" class with secure and modest property.

They do very little better on the connection between economic expansion and politics. Bragdon notes the growth of great cities because of industrialization and calls it "the day dreaded by Thomas Jefferson." But there follows no explanation of Jefferson's fear of the distortion of political life that the centralization of economic power would bring. His idea was as old as Aristotle's: that the greatest danger to self-governing polity would be the emergence of a few wealthy people on the one hand and masses of poor and propertyless people on the other. A healthy balance of societal power depended upon a large "middle" class with secure and modest property. Such balance would be destroyed with the

disappearance of small business and small farms. The texts all remark that many Americans of the late 19th century feared the looming concentration of corporate and banking power and its outsized influence on government at every level. But they do not make the point that the balance of economic power in society is a fundamental condition for liberal democracy.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

There were at the time two possible sources of countervailing power to big business—farmers and industrial labor organizations. The failure of the farmers and their village allies to capture a decisive share of political power is part of a later story. The failure of labor unions to achieve their aims is described by all of these texts in sections directly following upon their accounts of industrial development in the post-Civil War era. It is (or should be) axiomatic by now that a free, strong labor union movement is one of the indispensable supports of political democracy in the industrial age. The history of most of the world's democratic societies reveals that effective labor unions gave workers some assurance that economic justice could be won by peaceful, gradual means within representative institutions. Where trade unionism was weak or oppressed, political democracy remained unstable or nonexistent and extremist movements tended to prosper. None of the texts makes such connections, so that the most one hopes for is a clear and balanced narrative of labor's struggles from the Civil War onward. In general the facts are provided, though why they are significant to the health of democracy is not clear. Teachers must add the point themselves.

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Once again, Bragdon is the most analytical of the texts, explaining the difficulties of the labor movement under five general headings. First, American industrial labor was uniquely mobile and diverse, coming from (and sometimes returning to) several farming areas and foreign countries. Second, there was a confusion of aims within the labor movement itself, between skilled and unskilled, between moderates and radicals. Third, employers enjoyed unlimited power to crush unions and their efforts by blacklists, lockouts and scabs. Fourth was the antipathy of "public opinion" towards unions it pictured (or had pictured for it) as radical and greedy. Fifth was the nearly total unanimity of the courts in taking the side of employers, particularly in the quick issuance of injunctions at the request of employers and local officials.

Todd stresses the allied power of employers and government as the main reason for labor's defeats. Employers' advantages

were numerous: They could afford the best lawyers and lobbyists; they could buy favorable publicity; and they could hire strikebreakers, private detectives, spies inside the unions, and *agents provocateurs* to stir up violence, which dependent newspaper editors could then blame on unions. State militia and federal troops were ready at the call of friendly and also dependent, politicians. "Most Americans," Todd says, blamed the entire labor problem, as well as industrial conflict itself, on "power-hungry" labor leaders and usually supported businessman.

What "most Americans" thought is, of course, unknowable. One can hardly judge by the newspapers of the time. And David Davidson joins Todd in saying so:

> *The press in many local communities sided with the employer during labor-management disputes. Newspaper publishers, who depended on local businesses for advertising revenue and who were employers themselves, often editorialized against what they saw as the unjustified demands of labor.*

With the exception of Boorstin, the textbooks are generally quite clear about the problems of working people and about the vastly uneven struggle they were forced to wage with employers. Boorstin takes a relatively remote and sunny view of the worker's life, starting with his defense of northern factory owners who were accused by Southerners of discarding "worn-out workers just like worn-out machines":

> *The Southerners failed to note that, if northern workers lacked security, they were free to move. If they could save their money, they could go west to open land. Free American workers could change jobs and learn new jobs.*

That many workers had no choice but to stay and wear themselves out to keep their families alive is left unsaid. Of workers' complaints in the post-Civil War era, Boorstin cites only long hours, layoffs, and strikebreakers, and quickly adds that American workers were "better off than those abroad and had more hopes of rising in the world." Under a heading "Labor strife," Boorstin remarks that for labor to gain its aims, "peaceful means were sometimes not enough." Since the employers' union-breaking tactics are not described, the impression is left with students that workers were always the aggressors.

Boorstin devotes only one paragraph to the great railway strike of 1877 and two lines to the Haymarket riot of 1886. On the Pullman strike of 1894, the two sentences are misleading:

The Pullman Strike in 1894 again tied up the railroads. In the Middle West, American troops, trying to keep the trains moving, were actually fighting American workers.

There is nothing about the causes of the strike, the desperation of the workers caught in the Depression of 1893, Pullman's behavior toward them, Eugene V. Debs' American Railway Union and its offer to keep the trains moving, nothing on Governor Altgeld of Illinois, who saw no need for federal troops. There is no mention that the mails were in fact kept moving, that President Cleveland and his Attorney-General sent the soldiers on a pretext, and there is nothing on Debs' jailing, the abuse of injunction and the subsequent ruin of Altgeld's career.

On the other hand, Bragdon, Risjord, and Todd all provide satisfactory accounts of this classic confrontation, which epitomized the helplessness of labor at the time, and of those who dared to side with it. Only Davidson ignores the event, preferring instead to detail the bloody strike at the Homestead steel plant of 1892. All four texts are more informative than Boorstin on the workers' plight. Risjord sets forth their pervading insecurity: no support or health care if injured at work (there were few safety standards and many accidents); no income once disabled or retired; no pensions for survivors of workers killed. long periods of layoff without warning or compensation; reduced wages in recessions; fear of replacement by cheaper black or immigrant labor; and frequent indebtedness to company stores and towns. The others provide comparable accounts, buttressed with statistics on unemployment. Though lacking specifics, Boorstin too concludes that labor "had a long way to go" and that unions would remain weak until the coming of the New Deal and World War II.

Students could better grasp the drama of industrialization and the plight of labor if the American story were placed in the larger context of the Western world.

As in so many other cases, students could better grasp the drama of industrialization and the plight of labor if the American story were placed in the larger context of the Western world. Except for Bragdon's comparisons noted above, the very few references to Europe are as often confusing as they are helpful. Since "foreigners" were blamed for some of America's labor conflict, the impression is left that foreign labor unionism was in fact markedly more radical or revolutionary. Boorstin, for example, says:

> *In those years many workers in Europe were organizing to make revolutions. Over there, desperate workers were trying to abolish capitalism and take over the factories themselves. But Gompers was no revolutionary. A hardheaded, practical man, he believed that in the long run American workers would be better off if they organized swiftly for a larger share of the profits.*

The facts do not bear this out. Most European labor in Gompers's day was also taking an evolutionary approach to change. In Scandinavia, Great Britain, the Low Countries, Germany and even in France most unions took the "bread and butter" line and their allied (often socialist) political parties pressed for economic and social legislation in parliamentary fashion.

Of the all, only France was as far behind as the United States was in 1914 in providing protection for injured, disabled, unemployed and retired workers, and largely for the same reasons: Industrial labor did not yet constitute a large proportion of the overall population. Moreover, in both nations, the countryside and small cities and towns still dominated national politics (most directly through the two upper houses, the Senates). It was easy for employers to have their way in clashes with their workers, and easy to defeat social legislation on grounds of its cost for other segments of the population. Thus, both here and in France, leaders elected as "liberals"—Cleveland and Clemenceau—did not hesitate to send troops against the strikers. Sheer numbers are, after all, important in democratic societies. Beyond all the other reasons for its weakness, labor did not have great numbers, and it lacked allies as well. The balance of power was against any reform that would accomplish much for workers and their families, and it remained so until the era of the New Deal.

VIII. CHANGE AND REFORM BEFORE WORLD WAR I

From the end of the Civil War to the present the theme of American democracy may well be taught as a single, suspenseful story: the struggle to apply the political vision of an earlier, simpler age to a modern industrial society bigger and more complex than Locke, Montesquieu, Jefferson or Madison ever dreamed of. By 1900 transformations in science, technology, commerce and industry were challenging the principles of political democracy conceived in a pre-industrial age. Not only in the United States but in every modern society the question was, and still is, inescapable. Can free, open, limited government under law, directed by the people, cope with the problems posed by the industrial and technological revolutions? The question was first addressed by American reformers of the early 1900s.

The period from 18[illegible] to 1917 is critical for all of the major themes in the American history course. In foreign affairs, the United States joined the imperial powers of the earth, intervened decisively in a general European war, and became the world's creditor nation. In the gathering of our people, some 25 million new immigrants arrived; millions of Americans, old and new, moved westward over the land; and hundreds of thousands of blacks moved out of the old Confederacy to the north and west. In economic matters, the explosive growth of American capitalism created great new wealth, a new working class, and new gaps between rich and poor. In politics, those worried about democracy's future saw the unprecedented concentration of privately-held

economic power in railroads, banking, commerce, and manufacturing threatening to hold millions in peonage as surely as history's political tyrants had ever done. Would the ancient curse of plutocracy and pauperism destroy the middle ground and send modern democracy the way of Rome?

It was a common question, and it was posed in every European nation aspiring to democracy, as well as in the United States. But the prevailing mood was not one of despair. In most Western countries, the years before 1914 saw impressive advances and the promise of greater advancement in the extension of political democracy and in economic and social legislation designed to improve the lot of farmers, workers, and the poor. What happened and did not happen in the United States could be much more easily grasped if taught in a wider comparative setting, and would be of considerably sharper interest to students. And such historical study can be especially engaging if explored through social and family history.

In the years before the First World War the lives of most people of all classes were shorter and harder than they are now, but hope in the future was high. In measuring their lives against those of their parents and grandparents, even poor men and women saw evidence of progress in many spheres of their lives and greater promise for their children, as public education became more widely available. Advances in sanitation, medicine and surgery were especially striking when measured against the memories of their elders. Science, in those days, appeared to be cleaning up the world. Invention and engineering offered comforts and novelties apparently unending: automobiles, airplanes, ocean liners, streetcars, electrically-lighted streets and parks, telephones, phonographs, radio, and moving pictures.

The puzzle was how to bring the gigantic forces of the modern age under democratic guidance without slowing their parade of benefits.

The same technology that challenged political democracy also produced a higher standard of living for most people in food, clothing, shelter, housewares, and recreation. The puzzle was how to bring the gigantic forces of the modern age under democratic guidance without slowing their parade of benefits. We are still working at it. In all probability, we shall be working at it forever, but our first attempts were Populism, Progressivism, Theodore Roosevelt's Square Deal and Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom.

For greater drama, textbooks should deal with these four attempts at reform all at once, uninterrupted by other matters. How was each connected with the others? What were the ideas and interests behind each? Which of their goals were achieved and which not? What forces helped, hurt, or altered their work? What societal problems were ignored? And, most important, what did

the period overall demonstrate about democracy's capacity to reform itself, to respond to change, and to preserve and to extend itself under pressure?

Unfortunately, no textbook pursues this central question explicitly, none places prewar reform movements in this larger context. A drama vitally relevant to our own day is reduced to a recital of facts about the past. Still, teachers will find substance enough in any one of these books upon which to build memorable lessons—provided they manage to add good supplementary readings. Two examples may make the point. One, an instance of success of the reform movements, is the vast expansion of public schooling. The other, the greatest failure, is the neglect of the rights and well-being of black Americans.

To take the latter first, "failure" is hardly the word since no significant reform was tried. It was, as Bragdon says, on the contrary: During the Progressive era, from the 1890s onward, the outrages of Jim Crow and white supremacy reached their peak. Blacks were denied their rights to vote, to hold office, and to sit on juries. Segregation, exclusion, violence, and humiliation were the daily lot of men, women and children in every aspect of life from schools to work to prisons and, in Bragdon's words, was

> *...enforced not only by law, but by intimidation, which took its most extreme form in lynching and other forms of mob violence.*

Davidson notes that 200 people a year were lynched throughout the 1890s, most of them black and in the South.

The other texts also relate these facts, though they soften the impact by doing so earlier, in their sections on the Civil War and Reconstruction. However, no textbook can convey the depths of the black experience in an otherwise progressive era nearly so graphically as can memoirs, court records, and passages from literature. If they were to read passages from Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, no students would be likely to forget that at the turn of the 20th century and long after blacks remained a people apart, subject to unanswerable violence to body and spirit. Democracy for blacks was far removed, further than it had been in the deceptive years of early Reconstruction.

The positive side of the era is just as difficult to dramatize in the necessary brevity of textbook accounts. The sharp rise in the availability of education (even for blacks in some places) remains flat and dry in the pages of the textbooks. Wholly absent is the wonder and sense of hope public schooling inspired in so many parents of poor and immigrant children before the First World War. Curiously, the educators who write these books are

uninspired and uncritical when they deal with schools. They fail to remind students that the 18th-century founders believed an educated citizenry to be the first need of self-government. They are silent on the debates over curricular content and common requirements that changed the face of American public education between 1890 and 1920. Here, too, they say nothing about what citizens need to know of history, nothing about the still fought-over issues of subject matter, tracking, standards and expectations that might stir their student-readers to examine their own schooling.

Without exception the textbook authors are content to repeat other people's cliches about the natural superiority of "progressive" over "traditional" education, as though either term ever described the realities of the classroom. None remarks, for example, that the "traditional" and common curriculum prescribed for all students by the Committee of Ten (mostly historians) in 1892 was in fact democratic. In contrast, the "progressive" notions that later won the day were, in effect, elitist by their advocacy of tracking students into widely-differing curricula according to their supposed abilities and their economic and social prospects.

For the reform era as a whole students will find the Bragdon book briefer, better organized, more understandable, and thereby marginally more useful than the others. But each of the five texts has its own superior passages and features, some of which are noted below. Nowhere, however, is it clearer than in the Populist-Progressive era that relentless mentioning—without central questions of drama and significance—is confusing and soporific. Item after item appears; names, dates, laws, and elections pass in review, often well presented in themselves. But larger contexts are missing, as are the ideas, the contrasts, and comparisons that might awaken students and help them grasp the issues involved.

To take one of those issues, still clouded by our political rhetoric, each text refers in one way or another to the debate between *laissez-faire* doctrine and government intervention in the economy. But none is clear on the question, and some actively confuse it. Bragdon, for example, leaves it a mystery as to why liberal reformers of the prewar years should "abandon" the principle of their great predecessor, Thomas Jefferson, that "government is best that governs least." Yet the reformers saw no mystery. Times had changed. In earlier days, when private enterprise was less concentrated and less powerful than government, *laissez-faire* was in the interest of the many. Government interference could

well hamstring the individual farmer or entrepreneur, and government activism would raise his taxes.

Later, as the economy spawned giants of business and industry whose power to destroy or to exploit the free enterprise of others was greater than that of government, *laissez-faire* simply gave license to predators to pillage the majority. Government needed to set rules of the game, reformers believed, precisely to preserve free enterprise, private initiative, and the principle of a fair return for one's labor or investment. In sum, regulation was needed to save a free economy. As Bragdon notes, Theodore Roosevelt warned that capitalism had to be reformed or it would end by destroying itself.

By treating the prewar era within a narrow American frame, these books lose the chance to put the matter of government regulation into perspective. They leave students with the impression that governmental responsibility for protecting the public welfare was a novel idea on earth. They do not explain the economic and social legislation of European nations at the time. Nor do they remind students that government action against price-gouging, cornering, false weights, adulteration of food, shoddy goods, monopoly, usury, and exploitation of labor dated back to medieval and ancient societies the world over, and was called for by the tenets of every major religion and ethical system. In a well-ordered social studies curriculum, centered on history, students would already have encountered such realities.

They leave students with the impression that governmental responsibility for protecting the public welfare was a novel idea on earth.

Although larger ideas and comparative settings are missing, all of these textbooks nonetheless provide a factual basis for the study of Populism, Progressivism, and the Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson years. Each text describes the widespread suffering of farmers between the Civil War and 1900. They differ only in the degree to which they blame the active greed of banks, railroads and middlemen, on the one hand, and broader, impersonal forces such as the worldwide instability of food prices or the coming of drought, on the other. All texts discuss the protective tariffs that drove up the prices of the manufactured goods that farmers needed. By understanding the lethargy of the two major parties in dealing with these forces, students may readily grasp the need for a third party, the Populists, at this time. Risjord most clearly points up the importance of third parties as illustrated by the Populist era:

> *Radical though it seemed in its day, the Populist platform was a comprehensive response to the problems created by the growth of industry and the mechanization of farming. Marking an end to the sterile politics of the Gilded Age, the Populists proposed a genuine effort to bring the nation's political thought in tune*

with its economic might. Moreover, nearly every Populist proposal—except for free silver and government ownership of rails and utilities—was enacted over the next 25 years.

All texts repeat Bryan's great plea for national attention to farms instead of city interests:

Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms, and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country.

The appeal of populism is clear enough, but no text makes the connection between the various forms and attractions of populism then to today. Nor does any text clarify the two-sided nature of the populist impulse, then and since: its ardor to protect vulnerable local interests and people on the one hand, and on the other hand its often blatant racism and bigotry, its paranoid view of the outside world (including regions of the United States), and its tendency to find villains among the "others." Unhappily, the negative side of the populist impulse has been more evident in recent times, as the world and our society have grown more complex.

With few exceptions these textbooks describe the better side of Populist and Progressive movements well and even colorfully, as they deserve. The abuses they sought to remedy are clearly presented, as are their programs of reform. The books' main failing is to underplay the importance of the churches and of religious convictions in developing the Progressives' fervor. Bragdon alludes briefly to the "religious conviction and desire to serve humanity" that motivated the establishment of many settlement houses and to the popularity of the "Social Gospel" among priests, rabbis and ministers at the turn of the century. Risjord is the only text devoting several pages to the role of religion in the Progressive movement, calling it a "political revival" and reflecting the Social Gospel's "new concern for the evils of this world and a new determination to correct them."

The books' main failing is to underplay the importance of the churches and of religious convictions in developing the Progressives' fervor.

In their generous coverage of Progressivism, the texts offer clear lessons to students on the importance of the individual activist and of the printed word to the achievement of reform in a democratic society, though again the moral is not spelled out. The work of the muckrakers in rousing public opinion, beginning with Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives*, in 1890, is set forth in lively passages (and photographs). Each text mentions Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* as responsible—via Theodore Roosevelt's personal outrage—for legislation controlling the meatpacking industry. Boorstin notes the "media power" of the muckrakers, although he also suggests that when "they couldn't find a crime they

might invent one." Davidson praises the muckrakers as "voices for change" and says that Riis created a "public force" by himself. But all the texts take freedom of the press for granted, as though it has always been easy for critics and whistle-blowers to find dependable channels of communication and to express themselves with impunity. A few opposing examples, from our own society and others, would bring the issue alive.

The role of individual reformers outside of politics is typified in all of the texts by the career of Jane Addams. In each her biography is sketched, and most texts emphasize the work of women in the burgeoning reform movement—Florence Kelley and Lillian Wald, among others. Davidson and Boorstin applaud these dedicated reformers who, in Boorstin's words, "helped make America the promised land" for many poor and immigrant families. But both texts also emphasize the era's need for government action. Boorstin says social workers knew that for decisive changes they would have to move beyond private charity and use the power of the state. Davidson quotes Jane Addams: "Private beneficence is totally inadequate to deal with the vast numbers of the city's disinherited."

All the texts take freedom of the press for granted.

In Bragdon's words, even the employed were in peril: "millions of American laborers were underpaid and overworked" and also repeatedly laid off, without support for their families.

> *The accident rate in factories and on railroads was appalling, and there was no provision for compensating the men, women and children who were injured. According to an estimate made in 1904, 10 million people were "underfed, underclothed, and poorly housed...." At every level—federal, state and municipal—could be seen what the Kansas editor, William Allen White, called "the alliance between government and business to the benefit of business."*

Although Progressive leaders varied from rural Populists to labor leaders, from writers and social workers to naturalists and civil service reformers, from politicians to enlightened businessmen, Bragdon sees a common denominator:

> *In general, progressivism, like the earlier Jeffersonian and Jacksonian agitation, was inspired by the basic principle of the Declaration of Independence: the preservation or creation of equal opportunity. The progressives aimed to destroy privilege, by which they were apt to mean the corrupt partnership of private interests and political bosses.*

The texts are agreed on the many reforms accomplished in certain states, and all feature Robert M. La Follette and the "Wis-

consin Idea." Risjord observes that many municipal reforms, however, were failures, often blocked or overturned by corrupt or hostile state officials. This is a helpful lesson in political reality for students, but the larger issue— whether extensive state reform could be sustained without supportive action by all branches of the federal government—is not posed by these textbooks, although all have earlier noted that state laws, and the Interstate Commerce Commission itself, were repeatedly thwarted by decisions of federal courts.

The texts do not make clear that for all of the interest in state reform—new forms of taxation, control of utilities, child labor laws, limitations of work hours, women's suffrage, and much else—the major gains of the Progressive Era had to be won at the national level. The leading actors were to be Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. In their cases, unlike Lincoln's and the earlier founders', the textbooks find more room for biographical sketches. But the result is often no better. Little is said about the deeper reaches of character in Roosevelt and Wilson, on the religious and political principles they held, or on the substance of their reading and education. What, in effect, made them unusually productive leaders of reform for a democratic society?

Not very much is explained by mentioning, as the texts all do, Roosevelt's ferocious energy or Wilson's great determination. Some of the most dreadful figures in all history had the same traits. Only Bragdon probes beneath the surface and the amusing details (though these, too, are present and fitting) of Roosevelt's life to focus upon his childhood, his reading and writing of history, his eagerness to encounter new experiences and know all kinds of people, his several offices demanding several sorts of talent, his ethical code, and—despite his flamboyance—his keen sense of the possible in political reform. After a recital of Roosevelt's initiatives in office, Bragdon sums up.

> *Although Roosevelt accomplished less than he seemed to promise, he restored the people's faith in the power of the federal government to serve their interests.... Above all, he created a demand for reform.*

Little is said about the deeper reaches of character in Roosevelt and Wilson, on the religious and political principles they held, or on the substance of their reading and education.

Other texts conclude similarly about Roosevelt, after devoting ample space to Roosevelt's record on conservation, on public health, and business regulation. Todd calls his unprecedented action against the coal operators in 1902 "a landmark in the history of organized labor." Risjord, more restrained, notes only that it was the first time a president had intervened in a strike without suppressing it. It is the consensus of these textbooks that Roosevelt's greatest contribution was his outspoken assault on

privilege and his setting of an agenda for desirable change, most particularly in the Progressive, third party platform of 1912.

Davidson quotes his famous response to conservatives who blamed his "anti-business" attitude for the slump of 1907:

> *.Roosevelt denounced the "malefactors [evildoers] of great wealth" and promised to continue his campaign against "speculation, corruption, and fraud." Executives of large companies, he said, had opposed "every measure for honesty in business that has been passed during the last six years."*

But Davidson is, like the other texts, erratic in its coverage of party platforms for the several presidential elections. Closer detail on each could aid students to follow the lines of party debate and party evolution, or lack thereof. But too often the texts highlight only the tactics and personalities of politicians, much as the media do in our day. The Bull Moose platform of 1912 is an exception. Although the texts fail to note Roosevelt's apparent abandonment of the politics of the possible, they do list the remarkably progressive measures he espoused, including women's suffrage, minimum wage, and unemployment insurance. Implementation of that platform would have put the United States in the forefront of reform democracies on earth. Instead, of course, Roosevelt's defeat handed the Republican party over to its most conservative wing, and Woodrow Wilson, more conservative and cautious than Roosevelt, became president of the United States.

In its sketch of Woodrow Wilson, Risjord stresses his religious convictions as the son of a Presbyterian minister. "From his youth," it says, "he carried the religious person's urge to serve the world," not as a minister but through law, teaching and politics. Bragdon fills in the sources of his political skills and philosophy. He had "devoted much of his life" to studying political leadership.

> *A longtime admirer of the British government, he developed the theory that the President, like the British prime minister, should take the initiative in guiding and promoting legislation. The President alone, in his opinion, stood for the interests of the whole nation.*

Wilson's mastery of the English language emerged in his first inaugural address, which Bragdon is the only text to quote extensively.

> *We have been proud of our industrial achievement, but we have not hitherto stopped thoughtfully to count the human cost, the cost of lives snuffed out, of energies overtaxed and broken, the fearful physical and spiritual cost to the men and women and*

children on whom the dead weight and burden of it all has fallen pitilessly....

Despite the populist tone of the message, Wilson at first concentrated on matters of tariff, banking, and, in the Clayton Act of 1914, unfair business practices. The broad social program of the Bull Moose platform was not yet for him. As the texts make clear, Wilson only later evolved toward direct government intervention in economic and social matters (always with the exception of blacks, whose interests were ignored by Wilson), but the moment was lost after 1912. America's entrance into the First World War closed the era of reform, reopened only after the Great Depression. When that time came, the Progressive platform of 1912 was revived and much of it became law.

The texts are not explicit on the critical need of gifted leadership for democratic reform. Nor do they remind students that both Roosevelt and Wilson arrived at the White House by chance—the assassination of McKinley and the Republican party split of 1912. Would either of these men, outstanding in the parade of presidents from Lincoln to FDR, have reached the White House under usual party practices? Texts do not suggest the necessary concatenation of circumstances, ideas, and leadership —sometimes accidental—that democracy requires to survive and grow.

The texts are not explicit on the critical need of gifted leadership for democratic reform.

How successful was American democracy in applying the precepts of liberty, equality, justice, and limited government to the economic and social forces of that time. Teachers and students may draw a balance sheet from the narrative in these texts. The books themselves do not, or do so only in the most general terms. Davidson is typical of the best:

During this period, reformers had struggled to make politics less corrupt and more democratic. They had sought economic justice for workers, farmers, consumers, and owners of small businesses. Congress had accumulated an impressive record of legislation and the Constitution had been changed in important ways. But by 1917, war loomed and Americans turned away from reform and paid closer attention to foreign affairs.

On the last point, Risjord's blunt language is preferable: "The death knell of Progressivism sounded in 1917 with America's entry into World War I." Only the 19th Amendment, granting women's suffrage, followed in 1919 20 as the last act of the reform era, largely because of women's contribution to the war effort.

It is easy for historians to minimize the significance of the Progressives. Many reforms were short-lived, others mostly benefited business, the middle class and skilled workers rather than

the masses. Immigrants remained under suspicion. Progressive battled to destroy the big-city political machines which performed real services to the newcomers and undoubtedly speeded their participation in the democratic political process. Mixed with the Progressives' impulse to reform, best expressed in campaigns for public education, was also an impulse to exclude and to engineer change from above by the enlightened few. They often prized efficiency over equity. Regulatory agencies were frequently ignored or bypassed without much outcry from them. Black Americans found no rescue from the federal government in this period. Why, then, do Bragdon and others say the movement restored faith in the processes of democracy? The best answer, which none of the texts explores, begins with the general historical lesson that any program of reform against established power is always extraordinarily hard to accomplish peacefully. What is most impressive about the Progressives, and their legacy to the future, was their expressed ideals and the number of reforms they were able to achieve (not least the income tax, which all the texts curiously underplay) against the circumstances of their day, against the balance of power in American society at the time, which was still decidedly conservative—as the ensuing decade of the 1920s was to prove.

THE UNITED STATES BECOMES A NEW WORLD POWER

IX.

One of the indispensable themes for a high school course in American history is our changing role as a world power and how that role has affected, and been affected by, the character of American political democracy. It is as important in studying our foreign relations as it is in domestic affairs that our memories not be selective and that we not repress instances of error, failure, and those moments when we did not appear at our best, even to ourselves. Even less may we be parochial, leaving out what others have thought about our behavior and its effects on them.

Our defeat of Spain in the 1890s and our taking of colonies brought us suddenly to the world stage (for the first time, it may be argued, since the American Revolution, a rather different role). Our part in and after the World War of 1914-18, and the weakness of the European nations, put us squarely in the limelight. We were respected for our strength, envied for our wealth, admired for our ideals, and resented for our easy winnings and for not always living up to our ideals. We helped to win the war and to lose the peace. Thereafter we sought to avoid commitments, to avoid effort and expense, while seeking economic advantages from Europe's disarray. It is not the story we tell ourselves—or that the textbooks under review tell. But it is what much of the world believed of us from 1919 to Pearl Harbor. In presenting the record of the United States as a new world power, textbooks ought to make clear that [illegible]y foreign affairs without putting ourselves into other

people's shoes as well as our own is to deal in illusion, and to prepare for lifelong misunderstanding of our place in the world.

THE DEBATE OVER IMPERIALISM

Bragdon opens its Chapter 19, "Imperialism," with two epigraphs. One quotes Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana, a leading Progressive in domestic affairs, and a strong proponent of Manifest Destiny:

> *The Philippines are ours forever: "territory belonging to the United States," as the Constitution calls them. And just beyond the Philippines are China's illimitable markets. We will not retreat from either. We will not abandon our duty in the archipelago. We will not abandon our opportunity in the Orient. We will not renounce our part in the mission of our race, trustees under God of the civilization of the world.*

The other is a single sentence from Lincoln: "No man is good enough to govern another without that man's consent."

Thus the main lines of the debate over America's turn to imperialism are suggested from the start. A number of the pro-imperialists argued that their position was not in fact contrary to Lincoln's; that their prime object was to confer the gift of self-government upon peoples hitherto deprived of it. But Beveridge saw the American mission of "civilization" differently. Speaking on January 9, 1900, he said that the 19th century had been our time for "self-government and internal development" but that the new century would be marked by our "administration and development of other lands." He belittled those who would apply "any academic arrangement of self-government to these children" of the Philippines. They were not capable of self-government, he argued, not being of "a self-governing race."

The other is a single sentence from Lincoln: "No man is good enough to govern another without that man's consent."

Beveridge added that at best it would take a very long time to prepare "Orientals, Malays" who had been so much misprepared by the "weak, corrupt, cruel, and capricious rule of Spain." In the meantime, Americans would accept their God-given duty as "trustees of the world's progress, guardians of its righteous peace." And Beveridge added practical reasons, too, for taking and keeping the islands. They would secure trade routes to China, "our natural customer." Who controlled the Pacific would rule the world; the Philippines were a "dividend-paying fleet, permanently anchored at a spot selected by the strategy of Providence." Economic and military advantage thus joined the duty to take up the White Man's Burden.

The texts are disappointingly brief in their coverage of the public and congressional debate over annexing the Philippines. The matter of reconciling imperialism abroad with democracy at home is not systematically examined. Boorstin describes the anti-imperialists as including Democrats and Republicans of all sections and classes—Samuel Gompers, Andrew Carnegie, Mark Twain, Jane Addams, William James, Presidents Eliot of Harvard and Jordan of Stanford, and William Jennings Bryan, once more the candidate of the Democrats in the presidential election of 1900. Boorstin says most people "wondered how the United States could uphold the Declaration of Independence if it became an empire," but the text does not cover the debate in Congress, where Beveridge shone. Though the Democrats tried to make imperialism the issue of 1900, McKinley was easily re-elected.

Todd describes "many Americans" as agreeing with McKinley on America's duty to "civilize" the Filipinos; "others" hoped to profit economically; still "others" wanted naval and military bases. Only one opponent is named, Carl Schurz, and "some blacks" who denounced the racist implications of ruling subject peoples. Todd summarizes the argument against imperialism in one line: "The United States was violating its own Declaration of Independence and the principle that people had the right to live under a government of their own choice."

Todd does not mention the issue in its discussion of the election of 1900. In 35 pages of narrating fact after fact (oddly interrupted by a "Profile" of novelist Pearl Buck, who was 8 years old in 1900, and by a half-page note on the Government Printing Office), there is nothing to help students reflect on the very good question Todd says "deeply troubled" Americans were asking themselves. "Was it wise and proper for the United States to join the European powers in the race for empire?"

There is nothing to help students reflect on the very good question Todd says "deeply troubled" Americans were asking themselves.

Risjord's brief chapter, "Making Headway in the World" (1890-1914), says nothing on the debate over imperialism or on American reaction to the United States Army's crushing of the Filipino independence movement. But the authors do note the irony of the outcome:

> *The United States spent 600 million dollars, used 70,000 troops, and lost 4,300 lives in subduing the Philippines. The war that had begun to end Spanish tyranny in Cuba ended, ironically, in the crushing of the Filipino effort to win independence.*

Davidson says only that McKinley came to believe in America's duty to "uplift and civilize" the Philippines and that most

Americans "probably shared" his view. The opposition is described as "some people" who thought that taking the Philippines "violated Americans' belief in liberty" that overseas empire would lead to war, and that the Constitution lacked provision for ruling colonies. The role of the press, Congress, or the campaign of 1900 is not mentioned.

Bragdon names Bryan and Grover Cleveland as opposed to annexations, together with President Eliot of Harvard, Andrew Carnegie, and several Republicans. The most notable of these was House Speaker Thomas B. Reed of Maine, whose strenuous campaign against empire would have served these texts well to give dramatic form to the debate. Bragdon does not talk about Reed's heroic struggle, but he does remark, at least, that the formerly all-powerful "Czar" Reed quit politics in disgust as American troops battled the Filipino independence forces led by Emilio Aguinaldo. The opposition called annexation a "violation of American tradition," Bragdon says, but "public opinion" was excited by the prospect of empire and patriots refused to contemplate allowing the seizure of the Philippines by Japan or Germany. Bragdon adds that certain business interests, at first opposed to the Spanish War, were won over by visions of new markets and places to invest.

The debate is worth recounting if students are to understand how people of intelligence and idealism could come to opposite conclusions.

The books are all too simple and uninstructive on the genuine dilemmas leaders faced. Both Japan and Germany were aggressively pursuing power in the western Pacific; if the United States withdrew, how long would the Filipinos live under a government of their own choice? To this, opponents answered that the preservation of the integrity of democracy at home should always come first, and that it was worth an abnegation of power thousands of miles away. The debate in Congress and in the press is very much worth recounting if students are to understand how people of intelligence and idealism could come to opposite conclusions.

Although brief on the debate itself, the texts generally suggest why the proponents of annexation had great advantages and why opponents were likely to lose. First of all, the issue of expansion came up suddenly. Most of the texts say that at the start of the Spanish-American War neither the public nor McKinley had any notion of taking territory. But the "War for Cuban Independence" was instantly complicated by Commodore Dewey's victory at Manila Bay. Boorstin quotes the *Washington Post*:

> *The guns of Dewey at Manila have changed the destiny of the United States. We are face to face with a strange destiny and must accept its responsibilities. An imperial policy!*

History repeatedly demonstrates that to relinquish something gained is repugnant to human nature. And in this case the zeal for war against Spanish "tyranny," and Dewey's stunning exploit, had stirred up waves of joyful patriotism, the best refuge of debaters. The books do not mention it, but Beveridge closed his famous speech for annexation with a sure-fire line: "How dare we delay when our soldiers' blood is flowing?"

Together with the element of surprise and a fevered press and public, the texts all cite the prior preparation of the ground by pro-imperialists such as Alfred Thayer Mahan, the advocate of global sea power, and the Reverend Josiah Strong's Social Darwinist argument that Christian Anglo-Saxons bore the duty to raise the "weaker races." Boorstin and Bragdon note that influential historians, political scientists, and politicians preached similar views, among them Henry Cabot Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt, who was Assistant Secretary of the Navy in McKinley's first term. All the texts reveal the great importance of Roosevelt's activism in foreign affairs, from the Spanish-American War to Panama: "I took the canal zone and let Congress debate." He was an elemental force; the anti-imperialists had nobody to match him.

About the only thing Roosevelt did not do himself was to start the Spanish-American War, though, as Boorstin points out, his order to Dewey actually preceded the outbreak by six weeks. In explaining the coming of war, these textbooks offer a useful political lesson on the power of a free press to manufacture public fury by irresponsible reporting. The "Yellow Press," says Boorstin, "was more interested in selling newspapers than in keeping peace." He relates how McKinley gave in to the outcry for war even after learning of Spain's offer to grant Cuban independence.

Risjord points out that the Spanish government had every reason not to blow up the *Maine*.

> *But the yellow press screamed for blood. A continuous barrage of atrocities in words and pictures greeted Americans at every newsstand. "The readers of the Journal," boasted Hearst's paper, "knew immediately after the destruction of the Maine that it had been blown up by a Spanish mine."*

Davidson repeats Hearst's jibe to a photographer bound for Cuba: "You supply the pictures, I'll supply the war." But Davidson also notes that "social reformers, labor leaders, and religious leaders favored war as a moral crusade." And all of the texts mention the importance of American sugar interests in Cuba, despite the opposition of many other businessmen and bankers to the war.

Three of the texts suggest that American imperialists were following an earlier, broader European movement to colonize the world. Bragdon, Risjord, and Todd all imply that the motives behind British, French, and German imperialism also operated here: the search for raw materials, new markets, and new fields for investment; national pride and patriotism; military strategy and the "balance of power" in trade routes, bases, and coaling stations; missionary and humanitarian zeal; and the ease of conquest afforded by superior weapons and ships.

Placing American history in a wider global setting is unusual in these textbooks, as is paying much attention to foreign views of us. But they do well on the latter point when it comes to describing the reasons for periodic anti-American sentiment in Central and South America from the 1890s onward, and the political power of our business interests there. Once more, most texts are not explicit on connections with the present, but students can hardly miss them.

On the positive side of American policy the authors, except for Davidson, are clear on our special treatment of the Philippines. The government in Washington did not, in fact, follow the hard imperialist line of Beveridge's early speeches. Although none of the authors draws an explicit contrast between the United States treatment of the Philippines and other nations' treatment of their colonies, they do include McKinley's promise to prepare the Filipinos for self-government, the work of American commissioners in the Philippines, the gradual development of elective institutions, and the final fulfillment of our promise on July 4, 1946, well before the general "decolonization" forced upon Europeans by their rebellious subject peoples after World War II. In the Philippine case, the violation of American tradition was followed up by its application. It is a point books should make to reveal the mixed nature of American imperialism, at once headstrong and hesitant, exploitative and generous, willful and self-questioning—in so many ways the extension of democracy's habits at home.

It is a point books should make to reveal the mixed nature of American imperialism.

WORLD WAR I AND THE LOST PEACE

Much is said lately about the need for global education, global consciousness, and global perspectives in American schools. The fashion is still at an early, hortatory stage, with emphasis on the appreciation of non-Western peoples and cultures. It is a good idea but not nearly enough to fix in students' minds the realities of the world and the impact of nations upon each other. Even world history texts remain weak on the interaction of global events, and American history texts have hardly begun to place our experien-

ces in a wider frame, either of the West (it, too, must be in our global consciousness) or of the world at large.

What are the bounds of American history? What has made us what we are? How much of it is our own doing and how much the work of others we rarely read about in our textbooks? For example, did a single pistol shot in Sarajevo shape the American century, giving it birth and darkening it with war, depression, more war and threats of war? It can be argued so.

Certainly the funeral bell tolled for much of the world when the Austrian Archduke was killed on June 28, 1914. What started as a local conflict between Serbia and the Hapsburg Empire became a general European war, and finally a world war, pulling Africans, Asians and Americans to its killing fields. In its wake 10 million young men lay dead and many more were left disabled, blind or mad. In its wake arose Bolshevism, Fascism and Nazism, the world Depression, the Second World War and half a century of superpower rivalry, bloody, indecisive wars, an unrelenting arms race, and a nation feeling itself—rightly or wrongly—under siege.

The proud, euphoric editorial predictions of American newspapers on January 1, 1900, so sure that America's destiny in the new century lay in American hands, were plain wrong. No event more sharply reveals the vulnerability of all nations to outside forces than the war of 1914-18 and its consequences. Its causes should be at least as prominent in our history books as details of the progressive legislation of those years.

For the education of citizens, the months of June, July and August of 1914 carry vital historical lessons on the complexity of cause: the importance of the accidental and irrational in history; the particularity of events (the "lessons" of 1914 were wrong for the 1930s); the terrible consequences of earlier, seemingly minor events and decisions; the importance of individual character; the role of armaments and military plans, of the daily press, of missed communications and mutual misunderstandings, the impotence of august personages and seasoned diplomats trapped in webs woven years before; and the dubious worth of secret intelligence (good information was often ignored; false was taken as vital, provided it fit the policy already chosen).

One feature of the time, not noted by textbooks, was that autocratic governments in Vienna, Berlin and St. Petersburg were adrift and torn by distrust and insubordination. By contrast, the liberal, representative governments of Britain and France kept their staffs and policies in control, maintained clear lines of civilian authority over the military, and made better use of the intelligence

at hand. The belief that democracies were less prone than autocracies to rush to war was based on fact in 1914. But their entanglement with Russia was not to be escaped and France and Britain fell into the abyss. That memory was still fresh twenty years later and it played its part in the Allies' failure to deter Hitler's aggression. American students need to know what was going on in Europe and to reflect on what American journalists were choosing instead as the big news of July 1914. European journalists, awash in the doings of high society in the glorious summer season of that year, were not much more prescient. History has a way of hiding behind the headlines, on the inside pages. It is a shame to find it hidden, or ineffectively presented, in textbooks.

To add to the student-citizen's political acumen, the war's effects must be related to its military character—the stalemate of trench warfare, the repeated and futile frontal assaults, the deaths by the million—which resulted from the failure of the German victory plan of 1914. Barbara Tuchman rightly calls the indecisive battle of the Marne the turning-point of the 20th century. In the first six weeks, in the war of movement, one side or the other might have won and cut the slaughter short. Neither could do so. The greater tragedy ensued, sowing revolutions and wars to come. In this light, the battle of the Marne is more important to American history than all the battles later fought by our soldiers in France. Because the length and losses of the war rendered the world far less safe for democracy than it had been in 1914, its military history is crucial. But as in the case of our Civil War, the textbooks largely ignore the import of military plans and their outcomes for postwar society, particularly for democracy.

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What European diplomats failed to do in 1914, what the Big Three failed to do at Paris, shaped the lives of every one of us.

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Finally, textbooks ought to devote careful analysis to the Paris peace conference and to the role of the United States in its ultimate failure. They do neither. Space is not short but the story of attempted peacemaking by the major democratic allies is very badly told. It is as parochial and insensitive to other nations as these textbooks ever get.

Some may object that it is unreasonable to expect United States history textbooks to include so much of the history of other nations and events. But American history is what has happened to us and why, no matter where it happened. The European causes of the war are primary; our reasons for joining it are secondary. The battle of the Marne is more important than those of the Argonne. What European diplomats failed to do in 1914, what the Big Three failed to do at Paris, shaped the lives of every one of us, more directly than a great many of the people and events taking

up space in our history books as they are. If we are to comprehend American history, we must learn it differently.

At first, it appears that Bragdon will once more prove an exception to the generalization that United States history textbooks fail to present larger perspectives. Its epigraph to Chapter 23, "The First World War," is from Winston Churchill's postwar book *The World Crisis*, eloquent and mournful:

> *Governments and individuals conformed to the rhythm of the tragedy, swayed and staggered forward in helpless violence, slaughtering and squandering on ever-increasing scales, till injuries were wrought to the structure of human society which a century will not efface, and which may conceivably prove fatal to the present civilization.*

But Bragdon does not follow through on the actual scale of slaughter and its effect on European societies, preparing the way for Bolshevism and Nazism alike, and rendering a lasting peace settlement close to impossible. Only Boorstin has a section called "War on the western front" which describes the senseless horrors of the war of attrition.

Most texts list the general forces of nationalism and imperialism, the Balkan tangle and the role of the alliance system. Bragdon adds the effect of the arms race and intricate military planning,

> *...a situation in which the military leaders, who thought in terms of how best to fight a war, tended to take over from the diplomats, who generally hoped to prevent it.*

This extremely vital point loses some of its edge by Bragdon's failure to distinguish between Britain and France on the one hand and the autocracies on the other. And students could much better see the distinction if the crisis of July 1914 were better explained. But no text tells the fatal story in nearly enough detail to reveal the complexity of cause that student-citizens ought to comprehend.

As could be expected, the books are generally adequate on the reasons for America's entry in 1917 and on the subsequent crusading spirit stirred by Wilson's call to protect small nations and make the world "safe for democracy." Together with the immediate causes for American intervention—the German submarine campaign and the Zimmermann cable—the books are also clear on the generally pro-Allied (and anti-Kaiser) sentiment of the American press and public, German- and Irish-Americans excepted.

Boorstin speaks of the "ties that bind":

Most Americans, including the President, were drawn by powerful unseen forces toward the British cause. We spoke the English language and read the English classics. Our laws and customs were built on English foundations. We had fought an American Revolution to preserve our rights as Englishmen.

And Boorstin stresses the importance of our "enormous" trade with England and the Allies, more than $3 billion by 1916, and of the $2 billion in loans made by American banks. We were, says Risjord an "arsenal for the allies," feeding war profits into a booming economy. A new munitions industry sprang up overnight, Davidson adds, and Allied orders spurred a great increase in American production of steel, oil and foodstuffs.

The low point of the textbooks' performance on the First World War is reached in their accounts of the Paris peace conference, the American role in it, and the failure of the Versailles Treaty. To be fair, it must be said that college and university-level textbooks, whether of world or American history, do no better, and even professional scholarship on the subject remains relatively weak. In any case, these textbooks blame the lost peace almost exclusively on the Old World's greed and vengeful nationalism defeating the disinterested idealism of Wilson and the Americans—as though we were free of nationalism and interests of our own. Readers are given melodrama when tragedy is in order. It was not "nationalism" itself that afflicted the conference but the largely justified, reasonable, and quite predictable national interests of allies who found themselves in conflict once the war was over.

Readers are given melodrama when tragedy is in order.

Each people's interest followed upon who and where they were (texts could point up here the importance of geography), and what had recently happened to them. Except for Wilson and a few others, Anglo-Saxons felt safe across the Channel and the Atlantic; they were wrong about the German problem. The French lived next to Germany and they were right about it. Here is a lesson in the irony of history's lessons. The British and Americans believed that 1914 had taught a rule: commitments on the continent led to war. They did not see until 1939 that refusing commitment could also lead to war. It required a second war, from which we learned another lesson about the complexity of things, and we may still have only scratched the surface.

In addition to discussing Wilson's idealism, texts could add that he came to understand the French point of view, unlike most Americans (or British) of the time. No text does, and none points out that Wilson and Clemenceau came to agree on the need for a League of Nations with inspection and enforcement powers and

for an Anglo-American-French agreement to hold the balance of power against Germany. Nor do they say that Lloyd George, together with the British and American mainstream, looked only for ways to avoid all commitments of any kind.

In vain did Wilson, Clemenceau and Foch predict a second war within a generation if the Allies failed to hold together, whether in alliance or in a powerful League. Such points are directly relevant to the coming of the Second World War and our abiding concern with collective security and they belong in United States history books. They make clear the tragedy of Wilson's failure, and that it was also Clemenceau's. No one has since improved on Wilson's vision of democratically governed, self-determined nations, bound together in a league to keep the peace. But Wilson did not speak for the mainstream of American politics and business, whose notions of the world and of America's interests in it were not his own. Wilson was undone more by narrow nationalism at home and by the abiding power of the American impulse to isolationism than by the villains of old Europe. The European nations, after all, set up his League, and it might have worked had the United States honored Wilson's pledge to join.

If the textbooks included these facts students might understand why many Europeans in the 1920s and 1930s believed we had not done very much to make the world safe for democracy, after profiting so much from a war whose ghastly burdens they had borne, burdens we had not shared or understood. Texts could say, for example, that the French alone had 1,350,000 young men killed from a population of 40,000,000 and then point out that from our present population a comparable loss would be over 8,000,000 dead. This would help explain why the French felt betrayed when Wilson's promised—and signed—treaty of alliance with them was not even submitted to the Senate for ratification. The texts say nothing of this promise and repudiation, so students have no way of seeing how other people saw us between the wars.

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Instead of these realities the textbooks offer brief, simplified accounts that are misleading and downright counter-productive to students' understanding of our role as a new world power, and why a satisfactory peace would have been difficult to make under the most prescient leadership. Risjord much overplays the "secret treaties" which "hoodwinked" Americans and by which the Allies were "dividing up the world." "Militant imperialism" raged in France as well as in Germany, says Risjord, and the French wanted both reparations and "a slice of German territory." Under the heading "Viewpoints of History," Risjord offers a paragraph from

each of four authors—Keynes, Birdsall, Hofstadter and Shannon—that would be utterly unintelligible to students without a prior treatment of each nation's basic needs and interests in detail.

Boorstin says the Allied leaders with whom Wilson had to bargain were "clever and tough" and they "wanted to get as much as possible in lands and wealth and power" for their countries. Todd says that Clemenceau wanted only to "crush Germany." Wilson wanted a "just peace" but the other three "had very different aims," and faced him with "united opposition." Davidson says that France "acquired" the province of Alsace-Lorraine from Germany, but does not refer to Germany's seizure of it in 1871. And no text recalls that when Germany seized Alsace-Lorraine, it forced France to pay huge reparations even though no French soldier had stepped on German soil. In sum, the needs and problems and memories of other nations are not admitted into these accounts. There is hardly a worse way to deal with democracy's foreign affairs.

The texts are much more informative on Wilson's failure to win approval in the Congress for the Treaty of Versailles and America's membership in the League. Here the books emphasize his errors of political judgment, starting with the 1918 congressional election when his party lost both houses after he had, needlessly, made his peace program a partisan issue. He took no prominent Republican with him to Paris. He refused to compromise over "reservations" to the treaty that friends of the League in his own party saw as necessary. Bragdon pictures the plight of a democratic leader caught in terrible pressures from foreign and domestic problems at once, and tragically over-reaching himself:

> *Instead of compromising with his critics, as he had compromised with representatives of other nations at Paris, Wilson insisted on unconditional ratification of the treaty. Convinced that he could overwhelm the opposition by enlisting public opinion, he resolved to make a direct appeal to the people.*

The effort broke his health and sealed the treaty's doom.

The texts agree that had Wilson accepted compromise—a recurring cost of free self-government, though the authors do not say so—the United States would have joined the League.

The texts agree that had Wilson accepted compromise—a recurring cost of free self-government, though the authors do not say so—the United States would have joined the League. None, however, suggests what an astonishing reversal of our historic isolationism this would have been. The implication is that things would thereby have been different for the world, and that the Second World War might have been averted. No one can know this. The League might have been no stronger for the American presence, given the resumption of the old Anglo-American avoidance of foreign entanglements from the Armistice onward.

Had they been following the theme of democracy, the textbooks could refer more directly to the terrible fact that the war's sacrifices had made the world far less safe for democracy than it had been in 1914. One brief statement on the war's effects in Russia, Eastern Europe, Italy, and Germany would suffice to clarify the meaning of the Churchill epigraph in Bragdon. On the war's effects on democracy at home in the United States, they are generally satisfactory, but as always they are not explicit on the theme. It is once again up to teachers to draw relevant items out of the narrative to build their own lessons.

During the war government propaganda reached absurd levels, stirring rabid xenophobia. The texts describe attacks on German-Americans and their shops, the purging of German composers from concert programs, the burning of German books, the barring of German language in the schools. They might have posed the question of how much worse it might have been if there had been any actual danger of German attack. That would help students to gain some perspective on the feelings of the invaded and occupied Europeans.

Textbooks could also suggest that the experience of the First World War and its aftermath shows that democracy, by resorting to official lies and the firing up of passion, doubly injured itself—first, in the excesses these produced at the time; second, in the subsequent public disregard of official truth and the mildest call to patriotism. It is a lesson nations find hard to learn. The texts are effective in portraying wartime attacks on civil rights under the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918 that, Boorstin observes, "went even further than the infamous Sedition Act of 1798 against which Jefferson and Madison had protested." Boorstin cites the internment of strikers, the jailing of Eugene Debs, and the hounding and harassment of American "who disagreed":

> *This was a strange way to fight a war for freedom and democracy. How could the nation improve its war effort if citizens were not allowed to criticize the government or the armed forces? In fact, opposition to the war was slight....But the mania of these times would last even after the war. The virus of witch-hunting and super-patriotism was not easy to cure.*

The textbooks make clear that wartime xenophobia and vigilantism were transferred to the postwar Red Scare, when illusory dangers from the Bolshevik Revolution were invoked to smear political opponents and justify attacks on labor and labor unions under the banners of "normalcy" and "100 percent Americanism." Immigration was severely restricted. The

reaction spread to racism, rioting and violence against blacks who had migrated northward for wartime jobs. The Ku Klux Klan enjoyed a burst of strength; in the early 1920s it gathered 40,000 for a march down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington.

Finally, the texts describe the economic dislocations caused by war—the postwar depression in agriculture after the over-expansion of wartime production; the unemployment facing many returning veterans; and widespread labor problems, brought about by soaring prices and the abrupt end of the War Labor Board, which had promoted fair wages, the 8-hour day, and labor's right to organize. Wartime gains were reversed, strikes failed in coal and steel, and organized labor declined under a renewed barrage of injunctions and hostile court decisions.

The texts do not, however, explain the worldwide effects of tumbling food prices and the low demand for manufactured goods. War-ravaged Europe had been forced to turn to America and other sources to feed and equip itself for four years. Now it resumed its own production of agricultural and industrial goods. War had spurred over-production on American farms, in coal mines, steel plants, and many other industries; it had boosted farmers' income-s and workers' wages. War's end reversed the process and world trade was further slowed by the massive debts of European nations, unable to buy even when they wanted to. The textbooks do not make these broader factors plain enough. Nor do they clearly connect the economic downturn and social fears with the ugly, anti-democratic passions of the postwar era. Most seriously, they do not draw the unbroken line of cause and effect between the war's impact on the world economy and the coming of the Great Depression ten years later. The war's effect on American democracy at home was deep and harmful, and for a time in the 1930s its effects in Europe threatened to put democracy in danger of extinction throughout the Western world.

DEPRESSION, NEW DEAL, AND WAR AGAIN

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The Great Depression, born of the economic imbalances created by World War I and by the failure of governments to recognize and deal with them, fell with full force on the industrialized nations in 1929. The personal and social disasters it brought about raised the gravest challenge in history to the institutions of political democracy, graver than the agony of the war itself. In Germany, the Weimar Republic was unable to withstand the strain and Adolph Hitler strode to power. The depression divided and demoralized the French Third Republic, sapping its military and diplomatic prowess. It distracted the British and ourselves from pursuing consistent policies to meet Japanese, Italian, and German aggression. No one can know, of course, whether any policy, however consistent, would have sufficed to prevent the Second World War. But the failure of the United States, Britain, and France to cooperate either on economic or diplomatic matters, served both to prolong the depression and to render a second world war very likely.

At home, the American, British and French democracies managed to survive (the French Republic expiring only after the military debacle of 1940). They fought off extremist groups which arose in unprecedented variety, drawing unprecedented numbers of followers. On the right and left, demagogues extolled the Fascist and Soviet systems, agreeing only on the coming collapse of "decadent" liberal democracy. In the nations of continental Eu- unprotected by the English Channel or the Atlantic Ocean,

many people who would ordinarily have shunned both left and right became convinced that the center would not hold and prepared to make peace with one or the other extreme as the lesser evil.

Nor were Britons and Americans immune to such temptations. Some of the ideological vendettas still gripping American intellectuals have their roots in those days, when the angry and fearful looked for the "wave of the future" anywhere but in democracy. Many Americans spoke seriously of the possibility of revolution as the depression deepened into the election year of 1932. Some feared, and some welcomed, Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal precisely because they expected a dictatorial regime offering salvation by decree outside of constitutional procedures. Instead, the ensuing years saw American democracy in lawful action to meet the economic and social crisis—until war broke out again and the nation's problems took on new and different forms.

In following the theme of democracy's vicissitudes, what should the student-citizen be able to reflect upon in the American experience of the decades between the wars? Of first importance are the origins of the Great Depression, which shook public confidence in the viability of the democratic and free enterprise system. Second, the responses of democratically elected leaders to the economic collapse and the human suffering it brought. What did they try to do and how significant were their accomplishments to economic, social, and political life? Finally, how did the Second World War affect the process of economic and social reform at home, and what does its occurrence tell us about the special nature of foreign policy-making in the democracies?

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The depression following 1929 was one of the great shaping experiences of American history, molding three generations with memories and values never to be erased, and altering some of our central political, economic and social institutions and their ways of operating. As such it ranks with the Revolution, the Civil War and the Second World War. This ought to be said to students at the outset. And the history of the depression should be written about and taught primarily as a human experience of daily, inescapable feelings mixed of despair and hope, deprivation, fear and anger, of struggle and of dreams for change. Much is said of history's use as a way to teach young people their shared humanity with others across time and place. In this case, the personal recollections of older friends and family members could be invaluable,

together with biographies and literature, film and drama, what was seen and felt by men, women, and children in those years.

The textbooks under review are limited in this mode of social history by their very nature. But some do better than others in furnishing memorable excerpts and photographs. Davidson, for example, includes several photos of the unemployed, bread lines, the Bonus Army, and a full page of photos of rural poverty taken for the Farm Security Administration. It includes Dorothea Lange's famous photograph of the migrant mother and her children, and her description of the scene:

> *I saw and approached the hungry and desperate mother as if drawn by a magnet....She said they had been living on frozen vegetables from the surrounding fields and birds that the children had killed. She had just sold the tires from the car to buy food.*

Davidson also cites the words and pictures of John Steinbeck, Margaret Bourke-White, James Agee, and Walker Evans.

The Todd text, usually replete with photos, has only one illustration, a Soyer painting of hungry men at a mission. And its reference to Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, the one example it gives of a social novel, is buried in a review of literature from the 1920s and 1930s from T.S. Eliot through Hemingway. Two pages on oral history skills, however, include three telling excerpts from Studs Terkel's collection of interviews in *Hard Times*.

All fail to explain adequately the economic effects of the First World War.

Boorstin, like Davidson, is generous with photos, including Lange's picture on a full page of examples from the Farm Security Administration project. The apple sellers, the unemployed, and an Okie family living in a car are also here, as are black slums and sit-down strikers. No excerpts from other authors appear, but Boorstin offers graphic descriptions of the bonus marchers and the Dust Bowl. Risjord, too, offers striking photos of breadlines, the Dust Bowl, and the migrant mother of Lange's collection. But it has no literary excerpts or references to novels or memoirs. Bragdon, which does describe the works of Thomas Wolfe, Steinbeck, Thornton Wilder and Clifford Odets, is short on photographs and has no excerpts from literature or reportage. As aids to learning social history, Boorstin and Davidson are the strongest for the depression era.

For the sake of students' economic literacy the causes of this social catastrophe must be explored in detail. These books are most uneven in this regard. But, as noted above, all fail to explain adequately the economic effects of the First World War and their connections with the economic collapse following 1929. Such a failure obscures the vital connections between one generation and

another and between the decisions made during and after the war and their consequences. It also prevents textbooks from drawing highly instructive contrasts in American economic policies following the First and Second World Wars. Vital historical lessons were indeed learned and applied after 1945 to minimize the economic effects of war—especially the depression on the farms, where more than a quarter of the American people then still lived—which had disrupted American life after 1918 and had prepared the general depression of the 1930s.

Of the five texts, Bragdon is most explicit on the direct and indirect effects of the First World War, noting the enormous wartime debts that pushed debtor nations to impose tariffs and import quotas which, in turn, clogged international trade. When American loans abroad ceased being profitable, they were cut off and American exports plummeted. In an earlier chapter, Bragdon said that American farmers borrowed heavily to expand their acreage during the war, but the text does not link such decisions directly to the war's heavy demands and the inflated prices for food that disappeared with peace. Bragdon stresses as one of the depression's key causes the prolonged slump in farmers' purchasing power, "a cancer sapping the economic life of the entire country."

On other general causes of the depression, Bragdon provides, as so often, a crisp and analytical separate section. In addition to decreasing exports and related farm problems, the text says, there was a general pattern in the American economy of the 1920s of overproduction and underconsumption. Modern machines swelled industrial output but wages were insufficient to buy its products, once installment buying had run its course in the late 1920s. Tax cuts for the wealthy, ostensibly to release capital for productive investment, instead fueled excessive speculation on Wall Street. Securities sold, Bragdon says, "for fifty times their earning power" and paper profits soared.

Finally, Bragdon sums up the missteps and failures of the Harding and Coolidge administrations: their prohibitively high tariffs and their insistence that stricken countries pay their war debts "destroyed" farmers' markets abroad; Mellon's tax system favoring the rich and Coolidge's refusal to help the farmers made for maldistribution of wealth and weak mass purchasing power. The failure to halt abuses in the stock market, banking and business made the crash more severe than it might have been and added to public disillusion with the system. The text concludes that revelations of tax evasion and insider profiteering ended the nation's love affair with business leaders, who now appeared cor-

rupt as well as incompetent in their management of the nation's economy.

Bragdon is acerbic on Calvin Coolidge's refusal to sign the McNary-Haugen farm bills, which would have supported farm prices the way high tariffs supported industrial prices. Coolidge denounced them as favoring "special interests," and Bragdon comments:

> *The counter-argument that the protective tariff and Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon's tax policies also favored special interests did not sway the man who believed that the business of America was business.*

Only Risjord is as caustic, calling Coolidge's reasoning "curious" in view of the benefits heaped on business. The 1920s saw "the triumph of laissez-faire," says Risjord. Progressivism was dead; the government ignored antitrust laws.

> *The machinery created by the Progressives fell under the control of the interests it was supposed to regulate. Railroads dominated the Interstate Commerce Commission. Utilities ran the Federal Power Commission. In 1925 the head of the Federal Trade Commission announced that there was no need for his agency.*

Davidson is also critical of the Harding-Coolidge economic policies. On Coolidge's packing the regulatory agencies with their enemies, Davidson quotes George Norris, a Progressive Senator from Nebraska:

> *The effect of these appointments is to set the country back more than twenty-five years. It is an indirect but positive repeal of congressional enactments, which no administration, however powerful, would dare to bring about by any direct means. It is the nullification of federal law by a process of boring from within.*

Todd, the longest of the texts and jammed with detail, is also the most bland and detached in its treatment of the depression's causes. Coolidge's vetoes of the veterans' bonus and farm bills are explained only by a heading "Thrift in Government." Todd says "some critics" thought Mellon's tax program was unfair, but quickly declares that "most Americans approved of economy in government spending and of the reduction of the national debt." The text paints a glowing picture of the "Golden Twenties," when "millions of workers received high wages and many businesses earned large profits." Those who did not share in the prosperity were Indians, Hispanics, blacks and workers displaced by machines ("blacksmiths and harness-makers"), so "few

Americans" other than farmers and those "at the bottom of the economic ladder" were worried about the economy.

In analyzing the causes for the depression, Todd falls back on citing the opinions expressed by economists. "Many" agreed with Hoover that the war's destruction and its dislocation of trade was to blame. "Other economists" blamed high American tariffs. Still others blamed excessive borrowing for stock purchases, for installment plans, and for business expansion. "These critics also claimed" that the government failed to regulate banks and stock sales. Some economists saw both prosperity and depression as inevitable in the "business cycle":

> *Finally, some economists have traced the Great Depression to uneven distribution of income. These economists have argued that if farmers had received better prices for their products and if workers had received higher wages, the American people would have been able to buy a larger proportion of the surplus goods.*

The job of historians, it seems, is simply to list other people's opinions; Todd does not even suggest the possibility that many causes operated at once, much less suggesting some order of importance.

Todd does not even suggest the possibility that many causes operated at once.

Boorstin takes a middle ground between the bland evasions of Todd and the other texts' criticisms of the Harding-Mellon-Coolidge policies. Mellon's tax cuts are passed off with a joke: "Someone observed that Mellon would receive a larger personal reduction than all the taxpayers in the state of Nebraska put together." Coolidge, Boorstin says without comment, "still shared Thomas Jefferson's belief that the government is best which governs least," and Coolidge's veto of the farm bills is explained only in Coolidge's words, "Farmers have never made money." Though Boorstin describes the takeover of regulatory agencies and the brushing aside of antitrust laws by the Supreme Court, the text's only comments are "the country prospered" and "most Americans were doing better." No text observes that flouting of law by any branch of government may undermine the democratic system itself.

Boorstin is less casual when explaining the depression's sources. Wages had lagged behind productivity and "profits and the incomes of the wealthy had shot up":

> *In 1929, the 36,000 wealthiest families in America had a combined income equal to that of the nearly 12 million families with incomes of less than $1500 per year. Yet the cost of necessities for a family was $2000 per year.*

Many of the poorest were farmers who had not shared, Boorstin notes, in the prosperity of the 1920s. Our tariff walls blocked international trade. And the worst problem in the economy of the late 1920s was "the stock market itself":

> *It provided a gambling arena where whims, unfounded fears, and unjustified hopes could trigger disaster.*

But readers get no hint from Boorstin that these problems had their causes in the policies of government and business.

The economic calamity fell upon Herbert Hoover who had entered the White House only a few months before Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929. Historians have been kinder to Hoover than the public and politicians could bring themselves to be at the time. He was, of course, caught in overpowering tides. But as president of the United States he was somehow expected to reverse great historical forces by himself. It was not the first time, nor would it be the last, that press and public opinion focused their fears and discontent on one man. Does the habit stem from our general ignorance of history or from the overselling of the office itself in words so high flown that they cloud our common sense? Either way, it is a senseless and dangerous impulse for democratic citizens to allow themselves, and textbooks could say so.

The five textbooks generally agree with Bragdon's view that Hoover deserves credit for doing "more to try to stem a depression than any previous chief executive," and for anticipating several New Deal measures. All mention the Farm Board's attempt to shore up agricultural prices, appropriations for roads and dams, the Federal Home Loan Banks to revive the housing industry, and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) for loans to banks, business and local governments. But Hoover would not take the next step of direct federal relief for farmers and the nearly 12,000,000 unemployed in 1932. In the spring of the election year he used federal troops to disperse the bonus marchers by tear gas and bayonets.

As the depression deepened into the presidential election year, fear of revolution became real. Only Bragdon sets the crisis in the larger perspective of democracy's problems. Lloyd's of London wrote riot insurance policies, armed bands of farmers prevented foreclosures, unemployed people broke into food stores, and the wealthy felt the hostility of city streets and bought safe havens in the country. Prophets of direct action such as Huey Long arose and the Communist Party saw hope for a revolutionary end to the capitalist system. Blind to "the terrible price in human suffering" extracted by the Soviet regime, Bragdon says, well-meaning intellectuals and literary figures joined the

American Communist party. But those who feared or hoped for revolution were mistaken. Bragdon quotes *Time* magazine on its view of the main reason:

> *Doubtless the most important factor in keeping the country steady and avoiding even the threat of an armed uprising has been the certainty—such as exists in no other large country—that November, 1932, would in due constitutional order bring a presidential and congressional election.*

THE NEW DEAL

In 1932, moderation prevailed, though none of the texts puts it this way. Bragdon comes closest, quoting William Allen White on the voters' desire "to use government as an agency for human welfare." The Republican party, refusing to do so, lost decisively. On the other hand, the combined vote of the Socialist and Communist parties was only 2% of the total. The election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt by a landslide said that voters wanted government to act vigorously but inside the system as it was. Bragdon crisply summarizes:

> *His purpose throughout his entire presidency was to save the capitalist system. The difference from the previous administration was in the magnitude and variety of legislation and in a much greater willingness to call on the full powers of the federal government. Although opponents charged that the New Deal was inspired by alien "isms," its origins were mostly to be found in earlier American protest movements, such as those of the Populists and the progressives.*

No other text says clearly that the general thrust of the New Deal was toward a middle way between socialism and *laissez-faire*. Students are thus denied an overall perspective, as they are the notion of a "mixed economy" as a conscious choice made for perfectly evident reasons. Todd offers the familiar notion, always useful but short on perspective, that the New Deal had three aims:

> *Relief was aimed at those who were in economic distress. Recovery was timed to spur the economy to action. Reform was intended to prevent the ills that had caused the Depression.*

In this longest and most detailed of texts, these are the only words on the purposes and overall character of the New Deal. And at the end of two narrative chapters of 50 pages, the only conclusions are contained in two sentences:

> *The New Deal, born with the inauguration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in March 1933, brought new hope to suf-*

fering Americans. In the following years, it brought growing relief from the heaviest burdens of unemployment and poverty.

Nothing is said, pro or con, on the New Deal's larger significance to the story of democracy, or to the balance of economic power in American society, or to the sharply increased power of the executive branch preceding the Second World War.

Just as it leaves the causes of the depression to lists of others' opinions, Todd takes the same approach to each major initiative of Roosevelt's, merely listing what critics said and what advocates said without providing students any help in distinguishing the important from the unimportant, the relevant from the irrelevant. The book offers no perspective or judgments of its own and gives students no particular reason to plow through and memorize its copious detail, no way to connect issues then to issues now. And a special page on "Relating Economics to History" is counter-productive by failing to place "American economic philosophies" in relation to a wider spectrum from socialism to *laissez-faire*. American economic notions, says Todd, fall into three categories:

...conservative, progressive, or somewhere in between. Conservative economic philosophy calls for little government intervention in the economy. Progressive economic philosophy is highlighted by increased government interaction with the economy.

Coolidge, it seems, "falls somewhere between" because his view that "government should encourage, but not regulate, business" implies "some" government intervention! Had Todd said nothing it would have better served the cause of economic literacy.

On the aims, character, and significance of the New Deal, the other texts say more than Todd and less than Bragdon. Risjord notes the continuing benefits of the FDIC, the TVA, Social Security, the Fair Labor Standards Act, farm programs and securities reform.

On a page entitled "Viewpoints of History," Risjord offers four opinions of the New Deal's overall meaning, ranging from one calling it "communistic" to another calling it conservative. Students could not usefully sort these opinions out unless they had much added material and the time to debate its meaning. Risjord is helpful, however, in making more connections to the earlier Progressive movement than the other texts. It shows that Franklin Roosevelt followed Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson on such matters as securities reform, antitrust action and freer trade. More could have been made, both of specific issues—conserva-

tion, labor legislation, tax reform—and of the general spirit of reform and democratic activism afoot. But at least students will see connections between one era and another (only two decades apart, after all) and break down their habit of regarding each chapter of the text as merely a chore unto itself, studied for the quiz and then forgotten.

Davidson makes a similar reference to the earlier Progressives. Many New Deal aims were not new: conservation, anti-monopoly policies, business regulation, and better working conditions all reflected progressive concerns. "Like the progressives, the architects of the New Deal wanted to preserve democracy and the free enterprise system," Davidson says. It also declares that despite the persistence of unemployment through the late 1930s, the New Deal had fulfilled its major aims:

> *Franklin Roosevelt had shown Americans that a democratic republic could survive a severe crisis without becoming a dictatorship. Through the New Deal, the government had taken a moderate course. It had preserved the free enterprise system by reforming it.*

Students are not given the background with which to judge either of these randomly offered points.

But only two pages later, Davidson scurries back to the device of merely listing "defenders" and "critics." As a result, the closing paragraphs on the New Deal will offend no one very much. "Defenders" are said to "argue" that people never before had security against old age and unemployment, "critics" charge that American values and traditions of individual initiative and free enterprise were undermined. Students are not given the background with which to judge either of these randomly offered points.

Boorstin starts with a meaningful one-liner about Roosevelt: "The majority of voters never lost their faith in him or in their democracy." Roosevelt, he implies, wished to change the balance of power in America's economy, but as a "conservative":

> *He did not want to change all the rules of the American game. Instead he would try to use the government to deal out the cards so that everybody would have a better chance to win a good life.*

In its conclusion, Boorstin describes Roosevelt's "middle course":

> *Rejecting the dogmas of socialism, he yet increased government control over the economy—over banking, agriculture, and public utilities. The federal government played a new role in setting standards for wages and hours of work and in providing income support for farmers, the aged, and the unemployed.*

Roosevelt, Boorstin says, "had magically lifted the nation's spirit." Boorstin's excellent biographical sketch of Roosevelt explains much better than do the other texts how much his jaunty, "heroic" character and personal experience—especially his battles with polio—contributed to his inspiration of confidence in others. He had, Boorstin says, "all the human qualities" the nation needed in dangerous times.

> *Americans discovered new strength....had survived their worst peacetime disaster—without spreading hate, without inciting civil war or abridging liberties. And they had not been seduced by a dictator.*

Unlike Todd and Davidson, the Boorstin text does not avoid judgments of its own. Although it fairly notes the objections of critics, it declares that the TVA was a success, "an inspiring example of how imagination and government resources could improve people's lives and help them earn their own living." In Social Security, the United States had been "far behind the industrial nations of Europe." Now the New Deal's program "meant that millions of people would not have to live in fear of starving." Bragdon also makes positive judgments. The FDIC, which the bankers fought, saved the banking system. Despite the shortcomings of the farm programs, "hundreds of thousands of families were saved from bleak poverty and despair." The CCC conserved natural resources but its most important work "was to check human erosion in unemployed youth." The TVA was called "communist," but was no more so, says Bragdon, than the Erie Canal.

In summing up the New Deal, Bragdon returns to the theme of the middle way:

> *It was damned with equal fervor by laissez-faire economists and by socialists....something in between traditional capitalism and socialism had emerged, combining features of both.*

Bragdon quotes Mario Enaudi, the Italian economist, who observed that the New Deal proved, contrary to Marxist doctrine, that private property could be made responsible, it "could be chastised but left alive." Above all, Bragdon says, the Roosevelt administration "preserved faith in democratic processes at a time when democracy in the western world was on the defensive or in retreat." Bragdon quotes Roosevelt's own words of 1936:

> *In this world of ours in other lands, there are some people, who, in times past, have lived and fought for freedom, and seem to have grown too weary to carry on the fight. They have sold their heritage of freedom for the illusion of a living. They have yielded their democracy. I believe in my heart that only our success can*

stir their ancient hope. They begin to know that here in America we are waging a great and successful war. It is not alone a war against want and destitution and economic demoralization. It is more than that; it is a war for the survival of democracy. We are fighting to save a great and precious form of government for ourselves and for the world.

Boorstin and Bragdon do not play down the failures and deficiencies of the New Deal, among them the NRA and contradictory farm policies, the growth of the bureaucracy and government spending, nor do the other texts. And they all narrate the more controversial aspects of the New Deal, particularly Roosevelt's attempt to pack the Supreme Court. Each text concludes with the stark fact that the New Deal did not, after all, pull the country out of depression until the advent of the Second World War. But only Boorstin and Bragdon put its significance to political democracy in some perspective. Both could do better. They are not explicit on the larger conditions that allowed our democratic system to reform itself in the 1930s. True, they mention our luck with leadership; few historical figures have better fit their moment than Franklin D. Roosevelt did. Weimar had no such luck, nor did Britain and France. But students should never be allowed to forget the advantages the United States has enjoyed during its greatest crises.

They are not explicit on the larger conditions that allowed our democratic system to reform itself in the 1930s.

Americans have been relatively free from fear of conquest or domination from the outside. They have enjoyed geographic security freedom of enterprise, abundant resources at home, free public education, a large middle class, common memories and values, a common political vision, and a widespread faith that even the worst times will pass. All these have sustained our morale when other nations, lacking one or all of these advantages, have fallen to disorder or authoritarianism. The history of the United States in the 1920s and 1930s should be taught against this background. And students should ponder the consequences of losing—or the fear of losing—these historical advantages as the 21st century looms ahead.

More specifically on the New Deal and its works, textbooks could be much clearer on how tax reforms, labor legislation, union rights, and regulation of business worked to shift the balance of economic power in American society from overwhelming domination by capital to something resembling a fairer deal of the cards. The shift was only moderate, as subsequent events have shown, and the New Deal can hardly be called a "middle way" in European terms. In Europe even conservative governments sponsor nation-

al health care, own and manage transport, communications and utilities, and engage in investment planning for their economies.

The texts could also add that the Second World War may well have saved American capitalism from greater shifts in the balance of power and a further turn to the middle way of a mixed economy as the world outside our textbooks generally defines it. The New Deal's failure to achieve recovery and reasonably full employment, its failure to raise blacks, migrant workers, the rural poor and many farmers above the po[illegible] level suggests that economic problems somewhat analogous to those we now call "structural" were at work even then. Had the war not intervened to hide them, it is at least possible that a "Third New Deal" might have emerged in response to continuing economic crisis, perhaps extending to measures few politicians would suggest even now—investment planning. Instead, the Second World War and o[illegible] domination of a world economy largely free of competitors until the mid-1960s allowed us to postpone discussion of fundamental economic issues, which in the last two decades have taken on new and unforeseen forms.

In coming years the study of the New Deal may hold greater interest for students. Although current political rhetoric in both major parties decries any return to the "old" solutions of the 1930s, the force of reality may call for government actions that not only revive certain aspects of the New Deal—conservation, securities regulation and the rebuilding of our neglected infrastructure for example—but reach beyond it, as all of our major world competitors from Germany to Japan have done, to substantial restructuring of their economies and of government's role in them. In the new fashion of global consciousness, textbooks should be posing such questions. Students will hear them anyway, and it would be better to have them considered in historical perspective, with all their pros and cons. To be fair, however, textbooks would need to explain the many connections between the basic philosophical debates that raged in the 1930s and those that continue today over the proper mix of governmental initiatives and intervention on the one hand and the autonomy of the individual and of enterprise on the other, and to survey in greater detail the actual results of major economic policies, whether undertaken by government or by business itself.

WAR AGAIN

"*This* generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny." The words of FDR, in that vibrant, patrician voice recorded in 1936, still lift and shiver the hearts of a generation, now mostly

of grandparent age, who were fated to undergo both depression and world war, just as their parents had. Destiny it was, but not benign. Nor was it the destiny of that generation alone to be shaped by World War II. That is no doubt the first thing students should learn—that their lives, their world, and their choices have also been circumscribed by the great war of 1939-45. To nurture the political sophistication of young citizens, textbooks should begin by dramatizing the war's continuing significance for all Americans.

To begin with, students should be helped to imagine the probable consequences of a Nazi victory. What kind of world would Hitler have made, even if his dominion had extended only over Europe and the Soviet Union? If the war had started later, or lasted longer, or ended in stalemate, would German science not have further perfected supersonic missiles and, not long after, nuclear warheads to match? Nobody can know the answers, but such questions must repeatedly be asked if students are to develop historical imagination and grasp the importance of what did, in fact, happen.

To begin with, students should be helped to imagine the probable consequences of a Nazi victory.

Secondly, students need to know the actual consequences to us of fighting war on such a scale and of achieving total victory over the Axis powers. What were the war's effects on the home front, particularly its effect on democratic practices and institutions? What were victory's effects on the world at large? What new forces were unleashed and old forces reduced? Students should understand what history teaches, that victory is just another name for the start of new trials to come.

Thirdly, textbooks need to clarify the causes of the Second World War, which means exploring the reasons for the rise of aggressive factions in Japan, Italy, and Germany and the inability of democratic or parliamentary institutions to withstand them. Pivotal to American destiny was the collapse of the Weimar Republic. Once Hitler and the Nazi vision of the world came to power, war was already probable. It is unlikely that either Italy or Japan would have risked general war in the absence of German might.

The other side of responsibility for the war's outbreak was the failure of the Western democracies to contain Axis aggression. Their policies have been called appeasement and regarded as foolish ever since. Texts need to pay equal attention to reasons for American isolationism and British and French passivity. The latter is more critical to us since the issue of war or peace was in their hands, not in ours. Appeasement must be revisited because American foreign policy since 1945 has been ruled by the assumption that it was the prime cause of the Second World War and that the

eternal lesson to be drawn from it is beyond questioning: stand up with military strength to every sign of aggression, never "appease" and peace will be secure. The lesson has much to be said for it and it has frequently worked for us. But its applicability to particular instances can be fairly judged by citizens only if they grasp the reasons, and limits, of appeasement in the 1930s.

Finally, texts should dwell on appeasement because it provides insight into the difficulties of making foreign policy in democratic societies. Why, if the question seems so simple now, if appeasement was so obviously wrong, was it embraced by so many people at the time? We had better ask, because we have no assurance that under comparable circumstances we would be any wiser. If they could so badly err in one direction, why might we not do the same, in one direction or another.

In popular imagination, Winston Churchill stands forth as the principal opponent of appeasement, as the advocate of arms and containment. But at the time of Munich he did not view the choice as easy in the light of history's lessons. No case, he wrote in *The Gathering Storm*, can be judged apart from its circumstances.

> *Those who are prone by temperament and character to seek sharp and clear-cut solutions of difficult and obscure problems, who are ready to fight whenever some challenge comes from a foreign Power, have not always been right. On the other hand, those whose inclination is to bow their heads, to seek patiently and faithfully for peaceful compromise, are not always wrong. On the contrary, in the majority of instances they may be right, not only morally but from a practical standpoint. How many wars have been averted by patience and persisting good will!...How many wars have been precipitated by firebrands!*

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Reflecting on the Munich crisis, Churchill said that the one helpful guide pointing to defiance of Hitler was that an honorable nation should keep its word to its allies. However, honor itself could lead to "vain and unreasonable deeds."

The textbooks are not strong on imagining the consequences of a Nazi victory or the survival of a Nazi Germany. Admittedly, it is not the work of already over-burdened texts to dally with "What if." But some are better than others at describing the aims and works of Nazism, from which students could imagine their own scenarios. Bragdon devotes a page to fascism and Axis aggression, stressing Nazi race doctrine and Nazi plans to establish a thousand-year empire where "lesser breeds" would be serfs or slaves. A preview of the Holocaust closes the section:

> *The Nazis revealed new dimensions of the human capacity for [illegible] in their treatment of Jews. Years later, the horrors of con-*

centration camps, and their infamous gas chambers, continued to shock the world....six million Jews perished in 1939-1945.

Boorstin has by far the fullest, most harrowing account of the Nazis' grotesque plans for the "Master Race," their exaltation of violence, torture and genocide. Boorstin includes a picture of death-camp survivors and a summary paragraph on the Holocaust. Davidson has nothing on Nazi ideology or plans and provides only a paragraph and a photo on the death camps. Risjord has a line on Hitler's "ruthless fanaticism" and his use of Jews as scapegoats, followed by a paragraph on "The Master Race" which the Nazis claimed were "destined to rule" the "biologically inferior." Risjord closes with a full page of notes and sketches from a Holocaust survivor, Alfred Kantor. Todd stresses the dictator's contempt for democracy and individual rights and saves a section, "Revelations of Nazi Horrors" for the post-surrender discoveries of the Holocaust and its "indescribable" slaughter.

Each of the texts offers full detailed narrative on the impact of total war on the American home front—the vast expansion of government, war's effects on the economy and society in general, and on women, blacks, Mexican-Americans, and American Indians. Each text has a section on the internment of Japanese-Americans and their loss of homes and businesses. Todd calls it a "tragic exception" to the broader tolerance toward minorities and hyphenated Americans that marked the Second World War in contrast to the xenophobia of the first. Bragdon agrees, conscientious objectors were treated less harshly than in 1917-18. But the herding of Japanese-Americans into detention camps was a violation of citizens' rights "on a scale never before seen," Bragdon says. Boorstin calls the internment "disgraceful," saying that FDR "gave in" to "Western politicians and frightened military men." Davidson describes the panic on the West Coast following Pearl Harbor and military leaders' fear of sabotage. Risjord adds racial bias to fear as a motive for treating the Japanese-Americans like "jailed convicts." The texts are vague and inconsistent on what amounted to government-sanctioned theft of Japanese-American property.

The texts are vague and inconsistent on what amounted to government-sanctioned theft of Japanese-American property.

The texts are less satisfactory on the broader impact of the Second World War on American life and institutions. They note that the war pulled us out of depression but not that it vastly distorted the economy, nor that we have yet to find a way to keep employment up without enormous expenditures on weapons. They do not explain that the war's destruction allowed us a 20-year hegemony of world trade, further delaying our attention to the needs of normal competitiveness for markets, both abroad and at

home. Finally, no text says that some of the costs of waging total war are that military men, weapons makers and military experts gain power, and that the public learns to accept the use of violence without public or congressional discussion. The moral issues of the Second World War were unusually clear; it is understandable that few questions were asked about the means employed to extirpate evil. But the habits of hot war carried over into cold war and lay at the roots of what would later be called "the imperial presidency" and secret government.

Americans, General George C. Marshall said at the end of the Second World War, should read Thucydides in order to learn the danger of pride that accompanies victory, the *hubris* that led the Athenians, leaders of the victorious alliance over the Persians, to believe that they could do anything they chose with impunity. The Athenians overextended themselves, with tragic results. Marshall was warning about a postwar world in which it would be very difficult for Americans not to overextend themselves, for good reasons as well as bad.

The Second World War brought the United States and the Soviet Union face to face as the only two remaining major powers of the globe. Soviet conquest and rule of Eastern and Central Europe launched the Cold War, with all of its own effects on the domestic and foreign burdens that still weigh upon all Americans of any age. And greatly complicating the global struggle between the superpowers were the almost universally successful revolutions of the colonial peoples of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia against their British and European masters. On all of these issues the texts are adequate, and from them students should grasp how a war begun over Danzig in 1939 came to determine the kind of world they now live in.

To return to the war's origins, most of the texts effectively explain the roots of American isolationism in the 1930s, and the American stance of "neutralism" between their old democratic allies on one hand and the fascist states on the other. Boorstin describes the general revulsion against war, the spread of pacifism, and the Senate hearings that "seemed to show that arms manufacturers and bankers had led us into war for their own profit." Bragdon makes the same points. Todd adds disillusion over the League of Nations, tariff wars, preoccupation with the depression, and the feeling of safety provided by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Risjord explains isolationism by the disappointment that the First World War had failed to bring peace, democracy, or disarmament and the findings of the Nye Committee on the supposed influence of the Morgan loans. No text

remarks, however, that all of these were "lessons of history" that people believed should be applied regardless of a much-changed situation. And no text remarks that in a democracy political leaders have a hard choice: either they follow public opinion of the moment, or they risk their careers in taking unpopular stands, which may appear to defy history's "lessons."

A closer look at British and French appeasement would have made this problem plainer. The texts are not very helpful in explaining the passivity of Britain and France or their inability to coordinate their policies against Hitler. Bragdon, usually the readiest with analysis of foreign events affecting us, writes only of pacifism born of the first war's suffering and disillusion with its results. Davidson mentions "appeasement" but says only that the British and French wanted to avoid war, believing that sooner or later "Hitler would gain enough and end his conquests." Todd, the most complete on American isolationism, offers nothing on European appeasement, even at Munich. Boorstin says flatly that had Chamberlain and Daladier resisted at Munich, German generals "were planning to remove Hitler," but has no explanation for appeasement, leaving students with the impression that there is no explanation for this "failure." Risjord offers nothing more, so students will find in none of these texts the factual grounds for understanding the complexities of appeasement. The texts could at least have noted that appeasement had one important, positive effect. It cleared the consciences of the Western democracies, who entered "the good war" knowing that everything possible had been done to satisfy Germany's demands. It was no small luxury to believe one's cause to be just.

What could these authors have added to explain appeasement and to demonstrate the difficulty of democratic foreign policy making? They could have listed some of the putative "lessons" learned from the First World War: War caused inflation and depression; rearmament would thwart attempts at economic recovery; money should go to needy people at home, not to arms makers; Germany had been wronged by the Treaty of Versailles and the former Allies had no moral ground on which to deny Hitler's demands for its revision; Hitler could not possibly accept another slaughter so soon, he was arming as a bluff to provide full employment at home; the Americans would not come to the rescue this time, should Britain and France risk war; and besides, Britain was safe behind the Channel and France behind the Maginot Line. Pacifists argued that nothing could be worse than the war still so fresh in people's memories; British conservatives opposed international commitments of any kind, especially to

France and Russia, both of them "radical" and both responsible for dragging Britain to war in 1914. They further argued that Communism was the greater menace and that Hitler would stand guard against the Soviets. And all across the whole spectrum of political opinion was the conviction that ending the depression was of first importance. Joining this formidable array of popular beliefs was a general ignorance of the new totalitarianism and the possibilities it held for unreason and bestiality.

Most of these prevailing opinions were predictable responses to earlier events and the simpler explanations of them current in schoolbooks and the press. American high school texts should suggest that this is one lesson to be drawn from the experiences of the 1930s. Further, they should say that political leaders will very often make the choices that are easiest to explain, given the prevailing notions of their day. To do otherwise is to risk attack from simplifiers who have the public with them. Finally, they should point out that leaders will take such risks only with some assurance that the public's level of historical and political sophistication permits it to listen patiently to unfashionable and unpleasant ideas.

The level of sophistication required of the public is sure to be high, for it is usually necessary in foreign affairs to keep several, and very often paradoxical, ideas in mind at once. It may well be that a country should appease and arm itself against a potential enemy at the same time, even at some costs in pride, taxes, and even resources or territory. In the 1930s appeasement was probably a precondition for the democratic peoples to fight determinedly and in good conscience. However inconvenient it may seem to some, this insistence that democracy's cause be just is not detachable from the democratic vision of honesty and honor in politics.

We need to know the past well enough to avoid the error of believing that it offers us ready answers.

Churchill's plea in the 1930s was not for arms and defiance alone, but for "arms and the covenant"—a plea for his people to bear the costs of keeping a military balance and the costs of negotiation and compromise as well. It follows that a final lesson may be that an effective democratic foreign policy is very likely to be expensive, and to require a great deal of explaining to citizens, in the hope that they understand the complexity of political history. For history suggests that nothing is likely to be more expensive than the consequences of meeting crisis with a single response: appeasement without arms, or arms without compromise. Perhaps the biggest "lesson of history" ends in paradox: We need to know the past well enough to avoid the error of believing that it offers us ready answers.

XI. THE UNITED STATES SINCE VICTORY

If the study of history is to contribute all it can to the civic education of students, it needs pursuing down to the present day. But because recent history in most textbooks is recounted so blandly, and in such bewildering detail, a clear focus on only three or four selected themes is all the more important. Teachers will not find these textbooks very helpful. Broad unifying themes are even less apparent after 1945 than before. To be sure, professional historians have themselves produced little interpretive writing on the period. Consensus is missing even on such general labels as the Gilded Age or the Progressive Era. So text authors revert, on topic after topic, to journalistic summaries, sometimes garnished with tags for decades: the complacent fifties, the radical sixties.

Teachers who wish to pursue the ups and downs of political democracy will have to provide their own framework. Among the many possible stopping-places, I would suggest six topics. First, American democracy's solutions to war-related economic problems at home and abroad; second, the strains on democracy produced by the Cold War and the necessities of response to the threat of Soviet power; third, the tragedy of the Vietnam War and the decline of faith in authority and institutions; fourth, the problem of the "imperial presidency" and secret government; fifth, the new waves of immigration and the dramatic advances achieved by women and minorities in civil rights and in their political and social roles; and sixth, the emergence of new economic, moral, cul-

tural and environmental issues as they may affect a democratic society in the technological age. On each of these topics, it should be possible to help students discover the influence of history on their own lives and those of their families. History is no longer about "others back then" but about themselves and now.

To begin with, the response of American democracy to the economic and political problems erupting from World War II is one of modern history's great success stories. American life (not to speak of European—and Japanese) down to the present could have been markedly less comfortable if our government had failed as badly in the 1940s as it had in the 1920s to face economic realities. World economic dislocation was worse in 1945 than in 1918. Destruction in all theaters of war was on a vaster scale, and had been inflicted on economies that had never recovered from the Great Depression. Government debts were astronomical. Inflation and unemployment, shortages of housing, fuel and medical care ravaged family life. International trade had collapsed and the same forces that had clogged it in the 1920s loomed stronger than ever. Would American agriculture and export industries once again be forced to an abrupt contraction, just as millions of discharged veterans looked for work?

Happily, American democratic leaders proved that they could learn from history. They chose action over inaction and reversed several of the policies that had so aggravated the economic and social problems of the 1920s, leading to depression. Overseas relief aid continued, keeping farm exports and prices up. Instead of insisting on the collection of war debts that could not be paid and leaving loans to the short-term considerations of private banking, the United States offered the Marshall Plan to help the economic rebuilding of Europe. At home, the "bonus" was not delayed; the G.I. bill spurred the growth of the housing industry, helped farms and small business, and sent millions of veterans to school and out of jobless lines.

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The textbooks deal fairly well with the domestic policies to promote prosperity under the Truman presidency, but none makes the full, explicit contrast to the first postwar era of Harding-Mellon-Coolidge. Only Risjord points out some of the commonalities between the 1920s' rush back to "normalcy" and the Republican 80th Congress, led by Senator Robert A. Taft, who, as Boorstin says it, wanted to "turn back the clock to the simpler days before World War II," to reverse much of the New Deal and cut government spending. The Congress, says Boorstin, lowered taxes for the wealthy, refused aid to farmers, to public housing and to education. But teachers will have to make their own connec-

tions back to the 1920s. The reaction was stemmed by Truman's unexpected victory in the 1948 election, after which a Democratic Congress passed at least some of his "Fair Deal" program: a higher minimum wage, slum-clearance and housing, farm price supports, rural electrification, and extension of Social Security.

All of the texts refer in one way or other to the postwar era of prosperity, marked by only slight recessions, but Bragdon alone remarks that much of the postwar stability had already been built in by New Deal reforms of the 1930s—price supports for agriculture, social security, unemployment insurance, minimum wage, and the readiness to launch public works—all of them aimed to maintain mass purchasing power whose weakness was a central problem of the 1920s. Yet Bragdon fails to press the connection back to those pre-depression years, so that readers once again are left with no reason to see history as a continuing story, with people sometimes learning, sometimes not, from past experience. In economic matters, students, like the general public, are likely to take for granted underlying structures put in place at earlier times, and forget earlier lessons learned, that current political debate (and media fixed on the moment) mainly ignore.

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On American economic policy abroad, namely the Marshall Plan, the texts are clear on its major role in containing Communist power in Europe, but they are weak on its importance to our own economic health at home, and on the striking contrast to our foreign economic policies of the 1920s. Todd says nothing on either count. Risjord only later cites the importance of foreign trade in sustaining American prosperity. Bragdon also saves its comments for a later explanation of the continuing boom after World War II. "The Marshall Plan restored European markets for American goods." Boorstin mentions "new markets" as an argument used for the European Recovery Program, and adds that it worked: "As European nations became more prosperous, they could buy more of our goods." But no text says outright that the flow of aid itself, more than $12 billion, directly subsidized our exports from 1948 onward, to the great benefit of American companies and workers.

Unprecedented, a great and generous gift to Europeans (Churchill called it the most "unsordid" act in history), it was also an act of enlightened self-interest that citizens must comprehend if their leaders are to enjoy the support they need to propose analogous measures in the future. The Marshall Plan was an investment by American taxpayers to preserve exports and employment in the short run, to safeguard troubled democracies abroad, and to prepare healthy trading partners in

the long run for the sake of the next generation. It was costly and was denounced as a "giveaway" by partisan opponents who could not, or would not, look beyond the quarterly balance sheet. Texts should meet such arguments straight on, for political sophistication requires a high tolerance for the long-range view that is the essence of enlightened self-interest.

Intelligent citizens also know that governments, like individuals, often do the right thing for another reason, and how fortunate this has been for human history. In this case, it is all but certain that the Marshall Plan would not have been adopted if had not been for the Communist threat to Western Europe. The massive presence of the Red Army in Eastern and Central Europe and the unprecedented activism of internal Communist parties in Western Europe demanded a decisive response. In their own self-interest, the United States and its democratic allies were helped by having the Soviet Union to worry about in the 1940s. In contrast to the 1920s, when the British and Americans could suppose they were safe, the Cold War forced them to take a much more serious approach to economic problems, to the German question, and to the needs of collective security. Our minds, as Samuel Johnson might have said, were concentrated wonderfully. Although the textbooks do not allow themselves such reflections, the teacher may.

On the origins and course of the Cold War, these American history textbooks are generally clear and unobjectionable. None takes the revisionist view that the United States was more to blame than the Soviets. On the other hand, none accuses FDR at Yalta of "giving away" Eastern Europe. With Soviet armies on the spot, with "unrivaled power in Eastern Europe," as Boorstin says, Stalin was determined to rule the area, contrary to his promises of free elections. Risjord cites the Russian halt of August 1944, allowing the Nazis to crush the Polish uprising as an early, unmistakable sign of Russian intentions. Both Roosevelt and Truman were bitterly resentful. Each crisis thereafter, Risjord says, "gradually shaped the American response." The Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the Berlin airlift, and NATO are described in order by each text as logical American actions to construct and to safeguard a new balance of power in Europe, a conscious reversal of prewar isolationism and appeasement.

What Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Wilson had failed to do after the First World War to ward off a resurgence of German power was now done to contain Soviet power. As in the case of the Marshall Plan, the clear Soviet threat to Western Europe and the

character of Stalinist totalitarianism overcame the remnants of isolationist sentiment in the United States. Moderate and liberal Democrats and Republicans united to defeat opponents on the left who persisted in denying the danger to Western democracy, and opponents on the right who resisted both the idea and the expense of commitments abroad. To forestall the possibility of Russian miscalculation, American forces have been stationed in Europe ever since. Reinforced by containment, and by what Churchill called the nuclear "balance of terror," peace has reigned in Europe for nearly half a century. Textbooks could be more explicit on the success of the allied Western democracies since 1945 in contrast to their post-1918 disarray, for citizens may need reminding of what it has cost to preserve security, and what it is likely to keep costing.

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If a new world-consciousness and far-sighted diplomatic, military, and economic policies abroad were to the Cold War's credit, no such silver lining appeared at home. The Communist threat became the staple of many politicians and pundits making careers for themselves by pushing what Boorstin and Risjord both call "the second red scare." On the good reasons for anti-Communist vigilance in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the texts are fairly clear—Soviet tyranny at home and in Eastern Europe, Soviet development of the atom bomb, the atomic spy cases, the "loss" of China to the Communists, and the outbreak of the Korean War. The rise, power, and fall of Senator Joseph McCarthy are narrated more or less fully, as is the turn in some quarters from vigilance to hysteria. But the texts divide rather sharply on the larger significance of McCarthyism for American democracy in the postwar years.

Three texts—Boorstin, Bragdon and Risjord—say plainly that the fears raised and accusations made by McCarthy and his allies were largely groundless, and that the damage done, both to individuals and to the quality of public debate, was deplorable. The briefest account is Bragdon's, which makes the point that the respected Senator Robert Taft anticipated McCarthy by his own charges that the State Department was riddled with subversives who had "surrendered to every demand of Russia...and promoted at every opportunity the Communist cause in China." McCarthy followed with his fulminations against "twenty years of treason," and cowed the Senate when some of his opponents failed to win re-election. McCarthyism, Bragdon says, did "great harm" to America's image in the free world.

Risjord says that McCarthy was supported by Republicans opposing the Truman administration on other grounds, but adds that

there "was more to McCarthyism than politics." It is the only text to describe, without using the word, a "populist" force behind him, hostile to the "eastern establishment" represented by Acheson and State Department experts. So much had gone wrong, and "McCarthy's charges seemed to unravel a lot of mysteries." The country paid "a considerable price," says Risjord, for Eisenhower's refusal to attack McCarthy directly, preferring instead to give him time to "hang himself":

> *In the interim McCarthy had held the country in an intellectual stranglehold. Because criticism was so easily branded subversive, it was virtually impossible to question America's policies or to suggest alternatives.*

Boorstin is the most detailed and most vigorous in condemning the entire phenomenon, beginning with Truman's Executive Order of 1947 for FBI checks on all federal employees, who were "made miserable" by the sweeping implication of disloyalty. As the world situation worsened, says Boorstin, the "clever and unscrupulous" McCarthy played on American anxiety and gathered such power that "even Presidents feared to cross him." Members of Congress seemed panicked by the internal threat "for which there was so little proof." After 1952, Eisenhower "did not show his usual courage" in dealing with McCarthy, and issued his own security order, on which Boorstin is caustic:

> *If any charge—no matter how foolish or unsupported by facts—was brought against a government employee, he or she would be suspended until proved innocent. This reversed the American tradition that in a free country a person is presumed to be innocent until proved guilty. Government officials were no longer treated with the respect shown to other citizens. The morale in the government service sank to the lowest point in history. The administration actually boasted that a thousand "security risks" had been fired.*

In the end, television "exposed and defeated McCarthy," Boorstin says, "though his fellow senators could not and the President would not."

Boorstin is the only text to suggest that, at least in hindsight, the realities of the Communist threat were not so severe as the McCarthyites feared:

> *Communism was not a single, solid force. It was found in many nations, and everywhere was the declared enemy of democracy. But each country had its own history. People had their patriotism as well as their communism. Where the Soviets ruled nations from the outside, they had trouble keeping their forced*

allies under control. The secretive, insecure Soviets were at least as afraid of the United States as Americans were of them.

Boorstin is the last to make light of Soviet power, expansionism and ruthlessness, so these words will remind students that over-reaction, even to a wholly genuine threat, may itself be as ill-considered as were the passivity and wishful thinking of the 1930s.

Had texts explicitly followed the theme of democracy and its requirements, they could have noted that the essence of free politics is open debate, and that the anti-Communist mode of political argument sometimes amounted to censorship of alternative views—a form of political bullying not much different from that practiced by leftist activists in later decades. The epithet "soft on Communism" forestalled searching discussion of policies toward our allies, toward the Third World and "neutralist" nations (few recalled our own neutrality in the 1930s) and toward China. It was invoked by some to turn gestures of compromise into suspicion of treason, and raised its twin epithet, "appeasement," to treason itself. Invoking the lessons of the Munich era, the strategy of containment was extended to every corner of the world and neutralism was condemned out of hand. Those who were not with us were against us. Only Risjord suggests the degree to which McCarthyism shut off needed exploration of foreign complexities. But it does not, nor does any text, go on to note that the rush to find scapegoats at home for the fall of China to Maoist totalitarianism only obscured the real issues of containment in Asia.

Assuring security in Western Europe involved massive economic aid and American troops on the scene in support of old, experienced democratic governments. A similar effort in Asia would probably have required the equivalent of several Marshall Plans, and the enormously demanding task of supporting—or often of creating—a middle ground of democratic politics where the practice of self-government was very new, or non-existent. No administration in Washington, Democratic or Republican, proposed such an effort nor did any of the vocal anti-Communists in Congress. But neither did anyone dare propose that the rest of Asia be left open to Soviet or Chinese power, given the nature of those regimes. The only choice left was to draw lines and to threaten a military response to their violations. Seemingly less costly and less complicated than European-style containment, the policy was broadly acceptable, until the Vietnam War demonstrated that cheaper, easier answers might not work.

In general, these textbooks provide enough material for the teacher to demonstrate (because the books do not do so explicitly) that our entrance into the Vietnam tragedy and the excesses of secret government were brought about by a mix of forces: the reality of dangers to democracy in the world posed by a movement decidedly more resourceful and sophisticated than fascism; the uncertainties and confusions attendant upon reacting to novel crises whose particular settings were not sufficiently understood; and the overheated polemic of politicians who demanded quick, forcible, final answers. The textbooks do not make clear that the threats faced by Western democracies were unprecedented and that political leaders were forced to contrive policies that would take their governments and people into new, unaccustomed directions. It is not surprising that after underreacting to the Nazi threat of the 1930s and the ensuing catastrophe, they would tend to overreact in some instances to the Communist threat since 1945, with or without Senator McCarthy and the domestic commotion to which he gave his name. But before examining what the textbooks say about Vietnam and the negative side of executive power, it may help to review what they say about the 1950s, the years of confidence before the shocks of disillusion.

How much do they help the student discern, beneath the placid surface of the Eisenhower years, the signs of problems ahead? One mark of political sophistication is to see that trouble's roots run deep beneath the headlines. The textbooks differ widely on their readiness to teach that lesson. As they come down to the present day, Todd becomes less and less analytical, providing mainly surface detail. After a standard treatment of the Korean War—which is dealt with by all the texts in generally balanced terms—Todd reviews the Eisenhower foreign policy without mentioning the CIA-managed overthrow of Mossadegh and his replacement by the Shah in Iran, the overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala, or the President's own farewell warning of the dangers to democracy from the "military industrial complex." The only implied criticism is of John Foster Dulles, who "supported anticommunist, reactionary leaders in Southeast Asia and Latin America," and developed the "frightening" policy of brinkmanship.

One mark of political sophistication is to see that trouble's roots run deep beneath the headlines.

Boorstin cites Dulles' "grandiose visions" of transforming mere containment into rollback freeing the "captive peoples" under Soviet rule, unleashing Chiang to attack Red China. Dulles gave them up, Boorstin says, when he "saw the facts of life" but does not add, nor do other texts, that such talk, along with "brinkmanship," moved the debate on foreign policy to the right, further

dampening interest in economic and technical aid, and in political reform and institution-building in Asian and other societies under threat. Boorstin describes the Eisenhower-Dulles commitment to South Vietnam after the French defeat to prevent a takeover by the Communist North Vietnamese under Ho Chi Minh; the CIA toppling of Mossadegh in Iran, who appeared set on nationalizing foreign oil companies; and the CIA's overthrow of a government that "seemed too friendly to the Communists" in Guatemala. In the latter case, Boorstin states the growing problem:

> *We often ended up helping repressive governments. We found ourselves bolstering dictatorships—merely because they were anti-Communist. This lost us friends among freedom-loving people. In many parts of the world, where free institutions were weak, we had no easy choice.*

Boorstin ends by quoting Eisenhower's caution against the "military-industrial complex" influencing "every city, every state house, every office of our federal government." Here was potential, says Boorstin, for the "disastrous rise of misplaced power." Bragdon too closes the Eisenhower chapter with excerpts from this solemn address:

> *We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.*

Bragdon also describes the CIA-sponsored coup in Guatemala, and the widespread resentment of Latin Americans toward the United States. It is not said in any of these texts that the Eisenhower years, placid on the surface, saw the origins of several major crises that were to explode only later. The most devastating was, of course, to be Vietnam, but in Iran, in Central America, in Cuba and in Lebanon, the United States was to find that initiatives easily taken at the time were to raise enormous difficulties later on. At home, the import of Eisenhower's warning on the military-industrial complex has become increasingly evident. Democratic government faces the problem of keeping a huge defense bureaucracy relatively efficient and under control, and of making sure that weapons and military policies respond to real needs and are not skewed by the weight of special interests. At the same time, economic policy-makers, both governmental and private, must confront the disadvantages of over-reliance on making and selling arms to support full employment and purchasing power.

The Vietnam War and the domestic opposition to it are generally well-narrated in these textbooks, all of which set forth the scope of the disaster and its divisive effects on society at home. Even the often bland Todd book opens on the critical question of the over-extension of American power:

> *Had the United States assumed more responsibilities around the world than it could possibly meet, even with all its wealth and power?*

Although the text does not answer directly, it lays out clearly enough the cost to Americans of the Vietnam War, in the dead and disabled. Inflation and the cut-back of domestic programs ensued, and ugly conflicts between opponents and supporters. And it describes the scale of human and physical destruction in Southeast Asia itself from a war without a front, devastating to civilians in its combination of guerilla terror and saturation bombing. Todd estimates more than a million civilians dead and six million refugees (Risjord is the only other text counting the cost to the native populations).

Todd is also quite candid on the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution:

> *The President did not tell the nation that the American ships had been assisting South Vietnamese gun-boats that were making raids on North Vietnam's coast. He also did not inform the nation that there was some doubt whether there had been any attack on the American ships at all.*

The authors do not comment on this manipulation of Congress and its implications for constitutional government or the people's trust. Nor do the other texts put the episode in any larger perspective. Boorstin, however, devotes a later section headed "Widening the 'credibility gap'" to Johnson's several secret acts and evasions until "The American people began to doubt what Johnson told them about Vietnam—or anything else." Boorstin later describes Nixon's secret bombing of Cambodia, unknown even by his own Secretary of the Air Force, and the secret "incursion" of American troops, the reaction to which led Congress to repeal the Tonkin Gulf Resolution in June of 1970.

Risjord dwells on the "credibility gap" created by "government falsehoods" on enemy casualties and, together with all the other texts, cites the Tet offensive's proof of the Viet Cong's enduring power (and local support, even in Saigon itself), contrary to assurances out of Washington. General Westmoreland's claim of "victory" was coupled with a request for 200,000 more men. All the texts agree that Tet was the turning point for American public opinion (January 1968).

On American reasons for getting into Vietnam and staying so long at such cost, Todd goes back to Eisenhower's domino analogy and to Kennedy's agreement on the need for "a strong and free Vietnamese nation." No text says so outright, but Kennedy and Johnson, as Democrats, were especially sensitive to cries of softness toward Communism that seemed to have hurt their party after the "loss" of China and the Korean stalemate. Saying so would help students see the weight of political polemic and its lasting influence. Two texts—Boorstin and Risjord—draw the other side of the lesson, pointing out that Nixon's long career as an outspoken anti-Communist enabled him to restore relations with Red China without stirring an outcry from conservatives.

In general, the textbooks treat the Vietnam War as ultimately a mistake, but they credit policymakers with good reasons for their early belief in its necessity, given the situation in Southeast Asia after the French withdrawal. The domino theory, Boorstin says, was one version of the anti-appeasement lesson from the 1930s: "American military leaders remembered how Europe had fallen to the Nazis because Britain and France had not acted soon enough." Then there was our "credibility" as the leader of the worldwide anti-Communist effort. And finally Boorstin quotes a State Department official as saying we had to stay in "to avoid humiliation." This reason was "not inspiring" says Boorstin, but he offers no further explanation of his own. Risjord dates our commitment back to Dulles's conception of containment and Kennedy's aim to forestall other guerrilla wars of liberation. Johnson's televised explanation to the public, says Risjord, raised the lesson of the 1930s again: "we learned from Hitler at Munich that success only feeds the appetite for aggression."

The authors thus miss the chance to underline the importance of careful prior study of an area's geography, economy, culture and history.

Bragdon agrees that American officials assumed at the time that all of Southeast Asia could fall to the Communists, then adds a vital point made by no other text. American military experts thought it would be easy to win; they "grossly underestimated the will and the ability of the Viet Cong to continue fighting." The Bragdon text does not follow up the point, and none of the texts comments on the American government's decision to put aside the warnings of those authorities and allies knowledgeable about Southeast Asia who repeatedly questioned the possibility of victory by Western-style forces in a countrywide guerrilla insurgency with no fixed front and few promising targets for bombardment. The authors thus miss the chance to underline the importance of careful prior study of an area's geography, economy, culture and history before undertaking major actions. It was the very first caution Machiavelli urged upon his Prince, and ought to be among

the first to be urged upon modern students and citizens—especially by historians who write textbooks. Nor do the textbooks comment on another unanticipated factor, one that may again haunt democracies: the great difficulty of sustaining public support for a long, bloody war that is conducted in the open, on the nightly news.

The postwar years also saw tremendous further growth of presidential power, particularly in foreign, military and intelligence affairs. But none examines its full implications for a democratic system. Bragdon and Risjord and Haywoode devote somewhat more space to the issue than the others do. The former text has a section titled "The Imperial Presidency," calling it "a product of World War II and the Cold War." The text lists the violent actions launched by presidents without congressional authority: Roosevelt against Nazi submarines, Truman in Korea, Eisenhower in Guatemala, Kennedy at the Bay of Pigs, Johnson in Vietnam. Bragdon notes the "preponderant voice" of the military and Defense Department on the National Security Council, which became the President's main advisory body, rather than the Cabinet or the State Department, on foreign and military affairs.

Before turning to the Watergate story, Bragdon says that Nixon did not himself create the imperial presidency but "added new dimensions." He centralized power in the White House, attacked the press and TV networks, used the FBI and the IRS to harass critics, and tried to circumvent Congress by refusing to spend appropriated funds. He seemed likely to have his way, says Bragdon, but the Watergate affair surfaced and brought him down. Risjord, too, prefaces its account of Watergate by a review of the growth of presidential power since World War II: "The Cold War had made the American President all-powerful" and secrecy had become a "way of life for the government." Johnson and Nixon exercised it in Vietnam, and made false reports to the public; the Air Force forged flight plans to cover its attacks on Cambodia. Watergate was to be expected in such an environment, Risjord says.

The other textbooks focus on the Watergate story itself and all of them, including the two above, tell it much the same way. They all conclude that it was yet another trauma for American democracy—after a decade of assassinations, riots, war and protest—but that it also proved, as Risjord puts it, that the system of checks and balances created by Madison and the other makers of the Constitution "worked to perfection." Boorstin sums it up:

The ordeal of the nation was without precedent. But it also offered a unique opportunity for the representatives of a free people to show that the President was not above the law.

Davidson ends with similar language: the crisis demonstrated the strength of the system, and the enduring lesson of Watergate is that "no President can ignore the laws of the United States."

There are, however, other problems with secret government that no text confronts. In the name of national security, violent covert action abroad has been carried on, contrary to international law and to other countries' statutes, without the public or congressional discussion to be expected in a free society. Opponents of secret action offer the practical argument that so many covert operations have failed or backfired, either in the short run or in the long run, precisely because they cannot by their nature be subject to enough disinterested discussion beforehand. Second is the larger political question. The essence of democracy under the Constitution is open government and public discussion of political problems and the alternative choices available, together with their likely costs. How to deal with Mossadegh in Iran, with Castro in Cuba, were public questions, not matters for secret shortcuts that ultimately evolved into problems far greater—the fundamentalist Iranian revolution and the Cuban missile crisis—than those Eisenhower and Kennedy believed they had found quick answers for. Students know that this is often the way with shortcuts. Texts could say such commonsensical things wherever they apply. Few people would question the need for undercover intelligence-gathering nor would most oppose undercover support for democratic forces, such as free unions. But violence against foreign persons, parties and governments outside of wartime is a different matter, despite the persistent coupling of the two functions by defenders of covert action.

There are, however, other problems with secret government that no text confronts.

The third issue is moral. When the Kennedy administration authorized assassination plots against Castro, it was, technically, not acting "above the law." But students could debate whether murder is the business of a democratic government proclaiming the rule of law and its own defense of moral principle. CIA-sponsored booklets of advice on political tactics that suggest the murder of friends, in order to blacken enemies, in Central America are shameful and cast our republic—Lincoln's "last best hope of the earth"—into the company of Borgia poisoners. Since students read about such matters in the newspapers, textbooks need to acknowledge them and try to explain how things came to this point. The issue goes to the heart of the democratic polity and its moral foundation.

On the other hand, it also goes to the problems all nations face in a dangerous world. The texts are equally silent on this opposite side of the debate. The counter argument, in favor of covert operations that go beyond espionage and nonviolent support of democratic groups, justifies them on grounds of national security. In a world that is dangerous, how should we conduct ourselves? How should we set lawful limits on our responses to the lawless acts of others, including terrorists? And what controls should we put on those to whom we entrust such decisions? Texts could raise such questions in the context of a democratic nation's need of security for itself and its interests abroad, as well as the difficulties and the costs of alternative strategies.

There are, happily, other sides to democracy's American adventures since 1945. One has been the influx of new peoples, many of them leaving poorer lands, many of them refugees from the tyranny of Communist or rightwing military dictatorships. As before the First World War, they have chosen to stake their children's future upon the American vision of freedom and justice. The textbooks deal fairly well with the new immigration, pointing to the problems and tensions newcomers face, and create, in their adopted communities, but also to their success stories and their contributions to an increasingly multi-cultural American society. Textbooks fall short only in making too little of the comparisons with the great earlier waves of immigration, and of the United States' undimmed attraction for people seeking new hope and a second chance.

In a world that is dangerous, how should we conduct ourselves? How should we set lawful limits on our responses to the lawless acts of others, including terrorists?

Another great advance for American democracy since 1945 has been the civil rights movement and the accompanying progress toward wider opportunities for blacks, for other minorities and recent immigrants, and for women. In the last 25 years American political democracy has been legally extended to all our people. A second Reconstruction, this time enforced by the Union, has been largely accepted by all segments of the population North, South, East, and West. One purpose of the Civil War is fulfilled a century afterward. The textbooks relate the tragedies and triumphs of the struggle for civil rights in livelier fashion than they do other parts of their narrative. The authors seem genuinely engaged by the spectacle of democracy reforming itself—or, rather, being reformed by the work and sacrifices of those who cared. And students, too, are likely to be engaged by a story full of heroes and heroines, as well as many ordinary people of all races who were simply doing what was right.

What students should carry away from these accounts is a lively appreciation of the several ingredients needed to bring

about change in our democratic system. The ground must be prepared by vigorous enunciation of ideals and purposes; individuals and groups must be willing and able to take action and great risks on their own; at some point, governmental authority, especially that of federal agencies and courts, must be exercised and continued for as long as it takes to insure compliance. For the last to happen, it seems necessary that national public opinion be brought to bear, and kept alert. Television unquestionably played an important part in winning national support for the Kennedy and Johnson interventions in Mississippi and Alabama, and for the civil rights laws of the mid-1960s. Boorstin is the clearest on its effects, citing it again and again, notably in covering Martin Luther King's voter registration drive in Selma:

The ground must be prepared by vigorous enunciation of ideals and purposes.

> *Once again black Americans were clubbed, shocked with electric prods, and arrested—only for trying to exercise their rights. The horrified nation saw it all on TV screens in their living rooms....For the first time in history all American citizens at the same time could see their fellow citizens in another part of the country demanding their rights. No wonder, then, that Congress now passed the Voting Rights Act.*

Boorstin's account of the long battle for blacks' rights is the fullest and most vividly narrated, with solid background reaching back to *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and forward through the efforts of the NAACP and the gradual desegregation of the Armed Forces under Roosevelt and Truman executive orders. Pictures, and portraits in words, of events and personalities succeed each other dramatically: Little Rock, Rosa Parks, the Freedom Riders, James Meredith, the murder of Medgar Evers, the March on Washington, King's eloquence at the Lincoln Memorial, the bombings of children in their church, the civil rights martyrs, the work of Lyndon Johnson, the developing black power revolt, King's assassination, and the riots of 1968.

With the exception of Bragdon, whose account is overbrief, the other texts also furnish much of what a teacher could want to develop lessons on the struggle for equal rights. Each has special features of its own. Risjord reprints, for example, a page of Martin Luther King's speech at the Lincoln Memorial and tells the story of Branch Rickey and Jackie Robinson. And all the texts recite the impressive gains made in the number of black voters, elected officials, appointed judges, cabinet members and other administrative officeholders. The texts make clear that a great new page was turned in the story of American democracy.

There are more pages to turn; the adventure continues. In the past, both in the United States and in other self-governing societies, newly-enfranchised people have used their power as citizens to improve their lives in other respects. The next task on the American agenda, as the textbooks suggest, is to achieve the economic and educational progress needed to preserve the gains in civil and political rights, and to turn the letter of the laws into equal opportunity. Risjord puts the matter succinctly in describing the Civil Rights Act of 1968:

> *The act of 1968 prohibited discrimination in the renting and selling of houses and apartments. It did not, of course, end residential segregation. Only higher wages, better education, and time could accomplish that.*

It is not a question for blacks alone. The texts also portray the advances made in equal rights for women, Hispanics, Native Americans, immigrants, and the handicapped. Boorstin devotes a whole chapter, "A New World of Competition," to the gains made and the difficulties remaining. Some of the difficulties arise from the conflict between the "twin ideals" of equality and freedom, says Boorstin:

> *Equality meant the right to be treated as an equal in the courts and by the law, and the right to vote. Freedom meant the right to have your say, to believe and worship as you pleased, to grow and be educated according to your talents, to choose your job, and to compete for the best things in life....Equality meant opportunity, freedom meant competition.*

Boorstin then goes on to attribute much of the backlash against integration, anti-discrimination laws, and affirmative action to resentment over "special help" in a society so much based on equality. People perceived unequal competition:

> *The fact that the purpose of the help was to make up for past wrongs did not make them feel any better. Their own education and their own jobs were at stake.*

But Boorstin does not take the next step, nor does any other text, to say outright that the gains won, on paper and in actuality, may not be held, much less extended, unless the economy allows more people, regardless of sex, race, or background, to feel fairly confident about achieving decent lives for themselves and their children. The textbooks are not explicit on the degree to which good feeling among all the groups and regions of America depend on such confidence, as does the health of democracy itself. One sign of the authors' weakness here is their failure to include blue-collar workers in their lists of people feeling left out and to note

the hostility they expressed toward liberal programs that appeared to help others at their expense. No author mentions their s .ing to Ronald Reagan in 1980 and 1984—or to Nixon over McGovern in 1972—as resulting at least in part from resentments that could become more divisive if the economy does not grow at an encouraging rate.

The textbooks devote many of their closing pages to economic problems, to economic change, and to concerns over resources and the environment, but none links them directly to the health of democracy itself, either in general or in regard to those races, classes, and women who up to now have failed to share enough in the vision of prosperity they glimpse each evening on American television. No text clearly tackles the problem of structural changes in the economy—brought about by new technologies, foreign competition, agribusiness, the failure and emigration of industries—and how these problems need to be addressed. No text raises the specter of a permanent "underclass," unemployable by the economy that may now be developing. None forthrightly considers the nation's aging, decaying infrastructure or the immensely complicated relations between the economic and environmental choices before us. None raises the moral and ethical problems posed by the hedonism of our amusement industries, by the media's promotion of instant gratification, by the secularization of society and culture—all of them forces that the Founders would surely have regarded as inimical to responsible citizenship in a self-governing republic. It is not a matter of "deciding" such questions or of predicting outcomes, but of underlining their centrality to our hopes for a society that offers to every citizen both liberty and the equal chance to pursue a fulfilling life, all the while respecting the needs of posterity. The lively students we most want to engage in the study of history and politics are perfectly well aware of most of these problems. To have textbooks end without treating them seriously is to leave such students with the idea that books and schooling have little to do with the realities they and their families confront in daily life, and thus little to do with preparing themselves for active citizenship.

None raises the moral and ethical problems posed by the hedonism of our amusement industries, by the media's promotion of instant gratification, by the secularization of society and culture.

CONCLUSION XII.

What should a high school textbook for United States history contribute to its readers' education for citizenship? *Education for Democracy: A Statement of Principles* (see Appendix, p. 159), released by the Education for Democracy Project in 1987, sets a high standard for authors to meet. The textbook, like the course, should help students to understand democratic ideas and to acquire historical perspective and political acumen about what it takes to preserve and practice those ideas among ourselves and in our relations with others. *Education for Democracy* asks for "an informed, reasoned allegiance to the ideals of a free society" and a "mature political judgment." It asks that students recognize "democracy's capacity to respond to problems and to reform" and grasp the necessity of nourishing democracy in the world. It asks for candor and self-scrutiny:

> *We do not need a bodyguard of lies. We can afford to present ourselves in the totality of our acts. And we can tell the truth about others, even when it favors them, and complicates that which indoctrination would keep simple and comforting.*

History is, above all, a good story and the truth is always the best story to tell ourselves.

For teaching about the United States, *Education for Democracy* stresses the political vision of the eighteenth-century founders, "the vision that holds us together as one people of many diverse origins and cultures." How did the vision arise? What were the sources and the implications of the Declaration of Indepen-

dence, the Constitution, the Federalist papers, the Bill of Rights? And what were the Old World backgrounds of democratic thought, from the ancient Jews, Greeks and Christians through the English Revolution to the Enlightenment?

What historical circumstances were hospitable, and encouraged people to think such things? What circumstances were hostile?

Students need to comprehend the forces—economic, social, cultural, religious, military—that have furthered or obstructed democratic practice in the past. And in our own day, they need to understand the condition of democracy at home and abroad and how it got that way.

In all this, textbooks should help students to focus upon what is important, not merely to memorize facts and formulas. Without preaching or indoctrination, texts need to demonstrate, for example, that ideals and values are important.

The basic ideas of liberty, equality, and justice, of civil, political, and economic rights and obligations are all assertions of right and wrong, of moral values. Such principles impel the citizen to make moral choices, repeatedly to decide between right and wrong or, just as often, between one right and another.

As Tocqueville insisted, citizens must exercise both morality and intelligence. Neither alone will suffice, and either exercised alone can be destructive.

Substantial biographical sketches of key figures can reveal this drama of human choice and its consequences for good or ill—drama, often heroic and villainous, that students will remember.

In sum, the good textbook should make clear to students the importance to democratic society of both civic virtue and political sophistication. As Tocqueville insisted, citizens must exercise both morality and intelligence. Neither alone will suffice, and either exercised alone can be destructive. Textbook authors could openly argue that history has the virtue of teaching both by example, without resorting to sermons or propaganda. And that by its very nature history provides the nuance and complexity necessary for sensible judgments.

Given these fundamental aims of instruction in history, how well do our chosen textbooks perform? Overall, the United States history books do better than those for world history. One reason is that their task of coverage is not wholly impossible, but only almost so. When the American school curriculum is properly redesigned to allow more time for history, textbooks will in their turn be allowed to become very good indeed. But, like the world history texts, better books for American history will have to focus on a few, selected, continuing major themes. To present these effectively, they will have to make conscious choices on what to leave out and what to leave to narrative summaries and connective tis-

sue. And they will need to be less cluttered with interruptive "features" and let readers concentrate on a richer narrative.

The five textbooks under review are at one and the same time over-detailed and under-detailed: the first, because they try to mention something about everything; the second, because they fail to develop major themes in depth. The four basic themes suggested above are all essential to a well-rounded civic education: the coming together of our many peoples and cultures; the economic transformation and consequent social changes of American life; the evolution of our role in the world; the saga of democratic ideas and practices. But none is explicitly, steadily pursued so that students can see it whole, or keep it in mind. It follows that none of these themes—or any other that could have been chosen—is summed up in the closing chapters. There are scattered references to current problems related to each theme, but no final inventory or judgment of where we have come to in the 1980s, where we seem to be headed and where the most difficult choices may lie as we confront rising multiculturalism, structural change in our economy, a crisis-ridden globe, and the application of democratic principles of self-government.

Before relating how our texts do conclude their stories of the United States, we must ask how they have told the stories themselves, from the beginnings to our time. Is it fair to apply the general complaints of Fitzgerald, Sewall, and Tyson-Bernstein to these five texts in particular? Only in part, and only in regard to certain subjects. They are, as Sewall has noted, markedly better than texts designed for the earlier grades. None is so evasive of controversial issues and social conflict as Fitzgerald earlier found of American history texts in general. They are not short on problems, past or present. But neither do they indulge the "myth of shame" that C. Vann Woodward once said was about to replace the "myth of innocence" in American historiography. If anything, they labor too hard to balance affirmation and negation, and the result is a detached neutrality, passionless about both the ugly and the beautiful moments in our history. Do they think readers incapable of keeping the two in mind at once? Unable to feel either pride or dismay, however justified each may be from time to time? Whatever the case, the picture drawn for students is often colorless, without point or interest.

The five textbooks under review are at one and the same time over-detailed and under-detailed.

Apart from these textbooks' primary failing—the absence of strong organizing themes—their faults include some of those Fitzgerald mentioned. They are weak on economic and intellectual history, on our place in the larger world, and on the importance of individual actions and character. Thus, the texts

do not relate the Old World background of ideas and institutions necessary to situate the American experience in the longer stream of time. They explore neither the sources nor the substance of the colonists' religious ideas, and are sketchy on the political heritage of the English parliamentary tradition. Lacking a global perspective, our authors (Bragdon excepted) reduce the American Revolution to its own narrowest frame. Critical biographies are missing. The moral and intellectual formation of the republic's founders is not described, and their place in the wider world of the 18th-century Enlightenment is only briefly mentioned, if at all. Although the books are generous with space for the Constitution and adequate on its formation and mechanics, they leave out the basic notion of contractual government as reflecting balances of tangible power in society, and the vital role of multiple intermediate bodies—so dear to Montesquieu and Tocqueville— which shelter individual freedom by limiting and screening central power.

The authors narrate the rough frolic of Jacksonian democracy entirely on its own, so they miss the chance to place American political change in the wider Western strains of conservatism, liberalism and radical republicanism—all of whose basic notions still have direct relevance to political and economic debates of our own day. Nor do the texts place American currents of reform before the Civil War in the broader world setting, except for Bragdon. This exception has been made again and again throughout this study, for that book is markedly better than its four competitors. It has its faults; it is not explicit on carrying through a set of central questions and it is inconsistent on biographical sketches. But on other counts—writing style, clarity of chapter organization, analysis of cause, thoughtful remarks on economic, intellectual and world perspectives—it is superior and uncluttered, strong in narrative, respectful of the teacher's and student's minds. On style and organization, Boorstin follows closely behind. As Sewall remarks, its written narrative is unusually vigorous. It is also less cluttered than the other three, but no less massive, for it very often goes on too long with story-telling and is not so analytical as Bragdon. The crowded nature of the other texts, their attempts to cover everything and to parade the endless features complained of by Sewall and Tyson-Bernstein, manage to pale down and flatten out even the tragedy of the Civil War. Except for Boorstin the texts are weak on military history, which democratic citizens ignore at their peril. They are weak on the ingredients of leadership. The absence of crucial biographies is most deplorable in the case of Abraham Lincoln. All the texts fail here.

Among the most striking instances of narrative without analysis is the story of American industrialization after the Civil War. Unless they read Bragdon, students could not begin to grasp the forces behind this great economic expansion—and it follows that they could not sensibly reflect on the problems of economic development in the world tod The 19th-century labor movement is narrated rather fla[illegible] :out reference to the importance of unions to the bai[illegible] n modern industrial society, and labor's weakness v[illegible] l and government is not explained. Generally, the refc [illegible]npted, and partly won, before American entrance into Wo[illegible] War I are adequately treated. But the texts do not measure their larger economic and social significance, or their relations to party platforms and campaigns. Aping the modern media, textbooks often fall into treating elections as political games of tactics and images. It is hard to tell what parties even claimed to stand for, much less what they and their candidates actually sought. Nor are the parties often connected to classes or interests in conflict. Who voted for whom and why? Fitzgerald's complaint that textbooks gloss over genuine social and regional struggles is increasingly borne out as the authors approach the present day. The adventure and significance of democratic politics are often drained away.

Aping the modern media, textbooks often fall into treating elections as political games of tactics and images. It is hard to tell what parties even claimed to stand for.

Like the world history texts reviewed in *Democracy's Untold Story*, these books do not graphically explain the causes or the enormous consequences of World War I for the United States and the rest of the 20th-century world. Their account of the Paris peace conference is kept in the most parochial American perspective. Although no doubt unintentional, it is closer to outright falsification than anything else in these texts and is counterproductive to students' understanding of their country's role in world affairs over the first half of the century. As in the case of American economic growth before the first war, the coming of the Great Depression is merely narrated. Its causes—especially the effects of the war itself—are not helpfully explained. With the New Deal our texts enter that stage of American history in which judgments and evaluations are generally dropped in favor of a headline-news approach. Policies and events are mentioned; "some people" think X about them, "others" think something else. Historical comparisons and references to other countries, not frequent earlier, all but disappear. Yet certain contrasts to European ideologies and regimes could offer students valuable perspective, without the necessity for texts to "take sides" in home politics.

Candor comes easier on the subject of Nazism and our entrance into World War II. But textbook explanation of United

States isolationism and its relations to Anglo-French appeasement in the 1930s is minimal, again of little help to students' grasp of foreign affairs—or of how the "lessons" of history can be misleading, or actively abused. Narrative on the post-war world is adequate, usually well-enough balanced. The coming of the Cold War, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, NATO, Korea and Vietnam, problems in the Middle East and in Central and South America are described but are rarely analyzed or inter-connected. Our weight and choices, for good and ill, in the world, are rarely made explicit. Nor are the interactive forces between foreign and domestic matters.

Still, with enough time and added readings, teachers could build effective lessons on the facts of recent history presented in these texts. This would be equally true of strictly domestic affairs, even though these are often compressed or flattened out under the two all-purpose words, "progress" and "change." Once more, economic matters are least well explicated. There are few reasons offered for our global economic dominance until the 1960s or for our relative decline afterward—both of them fruits of our victory in World War II. There is little on the structural changes in the American economy or on their social and political consequences.

In their concluding pages, the five texts vary in their views of the main problems and trends in American society at the hour of publication. And they vary as well in their parting messages to students, in the tone they take about our future prospects. Bragdon is subdued and measured, opening its final chapter "Years of Crisis and Challenge" with a quotation from President Carter:

> *We have learned that "more" is not necessarily "better," that even our great nation has its recognizable limits, and that we can neither answer all questions nor solve all problems.*

Many Americans wondered whether their government was capable of meeting real challenge, says Bragdon. Their "anti-government" mood (Bragdon ends with the election of 1980) was, however, contradicted by the insistence of each interest group that the government meet its needs. Belief in the "free lunch" persisted, in simultaneous demands for lower taxes, more services, and balanced budgets. Bragdon ends abruptly, without the rhetoric of futurism. In the 1980 election:

> *Facing grave economic and international problems, the voters turned to new leadership. And they handed Ronald Reagan, the former actor, the most difficult role of his career.*

The Risjord edition under review also ends with the 1980 election. Its closing chapter, "From Passion to Peace," begin with the

end of the Vietnam war and covers the Nixon, Ford and Carter administrations. Much of it is devoted to the growth of secret government and the "imperial presidency," which Risjord traces from the Korean War to Watergate. The "normalcy" of the Ford and Carter years was a "welcome change," though the rest of the 1970s had their own problems which were, as always, says Risjord, blamed on the incumbents. This, together with a "conservative mood," resulted in the Reagan victory of 1980. After a closing review of problems—unemployment, the status of minorities and women, the aged, and environmental questions requiring "world solutions," Risjord is content to conclude on a noncommittal note:

> *These, then, are some of the problems and opportunities facing the American people in the 1980s. One thing the past has taught us is that the future will be full of surprises.*

The other three texts, more recently published, close on determinedly positive notes. Davidson's end chapter, called "The United States, Today and Tomorrow," begins rather vaguely:

> *Over the course of the nation's history, an increasing proportion of Americans have gained access to political rights and economic opportunities. The history of United States relations with other nations has been one of growing involvement. At home and abroad, economic, social, and political changes will continue to challenge American ingenuity.*

Davidson goes on to catalog advances in science, medicine and technology, mainly positive; then worries over the loss of traditional values, but finds no answer:

> *There must be some common agreement on right and wrong behavior for a society to function effectively. On the other hand, conflicts over values cause tension within the society. Conflict occurs when people feel that government action interferes with their personal values. Solving this conflict without limiting freedom of belief is a challenge that will face the nation in years to come.*

Davidson's treatment of most current issues follows this cool, detached approach. "Challenges" abound—in education, in the drug crisis, the cost of government, special interest groups, the role of minorities in politics, the "growing" but troubled economy, unemployment, the "farmer's dilemma," the environment—these all "cause concern" but solutions are somehow inevitable and on the way. The chapter closes on foreign affairs, also full of "concern," but ending happily in a section called "A Tradition of Generosity" which "wins friends for the United States and creates a better world for all people to live in." In this long march of

earnest, mind-numbing prose there is no hint of hard and costly choices, real sacrifices that underlie success, or possible failures to solve particular problems. The closing "Skill Lesson" asks students to forecast "alternative futures" by spotting "trends" and consulting newspapers, magazines and books for likely outcomes.

Todd closes with Chapter 43, "Into the Future," which rather closely resembles Davidson's catalog of problems and crises in its tripartite approach: first, challenge; second, concern; third, vague, uncritical allusions to solutions on the way.

> *In 1983, the standardized test scores rose for the first time in 16 years. In many concerned people, a cautious hope rose that the better test scores marked the beginning of a return to academic excellence.*

A four-page review of energy problems, some of it quite trenchant, ends even more lamely: "It appears that the United States has become, and will remain, an energy-conscious society." On the environment, we have had a "concerned awakening:"

> *Urgent though the challenges of preserving the environment are, the American people have reason to move into the future with confidence. The same scientific genius and engineering talents that unknowingly created many of the as yet unresolved problems remain available to solve them.*

Except for a closing "Summary," which assures students that Americans "only need the will and the commitment to meet the new challenges of the future," the book ends here.

Boorstin provides the most optimistic conclusion of all. Following a closing chapter called "New Directions," generally supportive of the Reagan administration, they offer an "Epilogue: The Mysterious Future:"

> *From American history we can learn that the future is always full of surprising secrets. This New World has been such an exciting place because it has been so new. The great achievements of America are mostly things that never before seemed possible.*

They begin with "happy surprises:"

> *Which signers of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 could have imagined that their feeble little confederation, in two centuries, would be the world's greatest democracy—a continent-nation of more than 200 million people, the refuge of the world, the strongest nation on earth?*
>
> *Which of the men at Philadelphia in 1787 would have believed they were creating "the longest-lived written constitution in history?" Who would have expected so many people of different*

races, religions and traditions to "adopt one language, and become loyal builders of one new nation?" Who could have foreseen boundless vistas of modern science or the landing on the moon?

Next come the other surprises, says Boorstin, "not quite so happy:" superhighways defaced by billboards and trash, traffic jams and auto fatalities, pollution of air, lakes and rivers, the shattering noise and crowded conditions of urban life, new forms of racism, violence, fears of energy shortage. But, after all, "Americans have always faced hard problems" and "even more than other people, love the adventure of the unexpected." Boorstin concludes:

Americans have been planters in this faraway land, builders of cities in the wilderness, Go-Getters. Americans—makers of something out of nothing—have delivered a new way of life to far corners of the world. If the future is a mystery story, then, that does not frighten Americans. For we Americans have always lived in the world's greatest treasure house of the unexpected.

It is not surprising that texts should close on differing notes, from Bragdon's sobriety to Boorstin's hearty optimism, for there are good historical reasons to take either position, and any stopping point between. What more should we ask? What would we wish these authors to add to their concluding chapters, to make their texts more effective tools of education for democracy? For one thing, as noted above, some explicit reflection on history's lesson that hard work, high costs and genuine sacrifice—blood, sweat, tears, toil and taxes—were required to produce our "happy surprises," and will surely be required again and again. For another, some suggestion, however phrased, that students and citizens be wary of those who promise deliverance without pain. As Bernard Baruch observed at the dawn of the atomic age, we are in a race between the quick and the dead. Democracy's fate may hinge, as it has before and elsewhere, on the level of debate we manage to reach. It is not encouraging that government spokesmen and candidates for public office so often talk as though assuming their audience to be morally irresponsible, politically obtuse, ignorant of the past and heedless of the future.

Democracy's fate may hinge, as it has before and elsewhere, on the level of debate we manage to reach.

Should the historian-educators who write these books not say something about the critical need for civic education and history's importance to it? But these authors, who have not addressed the student's mind directly at the start, also fail to speak directly at the end. Where better than in history textbooks should they reveal the problems of the American education system,

and the needed directions for reform? Yet their scattered references to education, from colonial times onward, remain brief and superficial—as though it were a minor issue for a democratic society, and had little to do with them or with their profession as American historians! Beyond observing that history is sobering or surprising, they make no argument for its uses in confronting problems. They are well aware that Americans have for too long argued over public choices as though nothing had ever happened before, as though the past had left behind neither lessons for our choices, nor limits to them. They could say so, particularly in regard to current issues with historical precedents: immigration, tax reform, arms control and defense systems, secret government, conservation, farm policy, social welfare, health care, speculation and corporate concentration, investment and productivity, regulation and deregulation.

Textbooks would not need to be partisan in order to point out the danger of partisan skewing of public issues. Left and Right so often prefer to cry wolf, or conspiracy, when dull fact says otherwise. And it is not only in children's stories that when the facts justify alarm they are not heeded for having been so often abused. The quality of public debate is not helped by the Left's reluctance to find problems with Soviet power and dictatorships of the Left, with Third-World debt, moral and cultural relativism, or the general secularization and levelling of society. It is not helped by the Right's reluctance to find problems with dictatorships of the Right, with secret government and covert violence, with environmental destruction, the arms race, corporate power, union-breaking, or extreme disparities of wealth. Nor is it helped by the failure of both extremes, each for its own reasons, to acknowledge the consequences, in foreign as well as domestic affairs, of a weak or divided federal government. If the Center is to hold, as the Founders held out in Philadelphia against the simple-minded of their day, we shall need—as Tocqueville said—an audience ready to listen to complications.

If the Center is to hold, as the Founders held out in Philadelphia against the simple-minded of their day, we shall need—as Tocqueville said—an audience ready to listen to complications.

Texts could well conclude that the story of democracy in America is unfinished, as it always must be. For the more than two centuries of our national life, we have seen success and reversal, accomplishment and frustration. The forces and obstacles in the way of a free, just society have been many: slavery and civil war; race hatred and Jim Crow; plutocracy and political corruption; the pride of empire; disillusion and xenophobia following the First World War; depression; Red scares and hateful partisanship; pride and complacency of mid-century victories. All of these have blocked or diminished freedom and justice. Many have

been overcome, some tempered, and others remain with us, as difficult as always, whatever new guises they may assume. The vital point is that so many Americans, old settlers and newcomers, have never lost sight of the Founders' vision and have never ceased struggling to bring it to life. That struggle must be a central, continuing theme in American history courses and textbooks, lest students fail to grasp the meaning of their own citizenship, what they owe to the past and what they can give now.

Were texts better organized along the lines of a few central themes, they would much more easily impress students with complication, drama, and suspense. The threads of immigration and cultural diversity, of economic change of our role in the world, and of democracy s range and quality, are not snipped off and neatly tied. They are unfinished business, inextricably wound around each other and around every public question we debate. On the theme of democracy, a useful ending—teachers could also furnish it themselves—would be a review of the basic principles and expectations of American democracy to serve as criteria by which students might measure our present condition and prospects. They could well apply the Founders' standards not only to government but to the power, the behavior and civic morality of private interest groups and corporations. And finally to themselves, to the demanding balance of their own rights and obligations as citizens. The sweep of American history will have taught them, we hope, that there are no islands—public, private or individual—entire of themselves and nobody without responsibility for what happens next. And it will have helped them find the patience and courage and the taste for adventure, to meet it.

It takes a sense of the tragic and the comic to make a citizen of good judgment.

Civics and government courses simply cannot deliver this kind of civic education on their own. It takes a sense of the tragic and the comic to make a citizen of good judgment, as it does a bone-deep understanding of how hard it is to preserve civilization or to better human life, and of how it has nonetheless been done, more than once in the past. It takes a sense of paradox, not to be surprised when failure teaches us more than victory does, or when we slip from triumph to folly. And maybe most of all it takes a practiced eye for the beauty of work well done, in daily human acts of nurture.

Tragedy, comedy, paradox, and beauty—these are not the ordinary stuff of high school courses in civics, government or economics. But history and literature, provided they are well taught, cannot help but convey them. Admittedly, we should not expect history textbooks to do so all alone. They could, at least, point the way by arguing the need for such ways of understanding of human

life—by vivid narration, by offering passages from imaginative literature, by generous biographical sketches. Texts could help, and some do. But ultimately the promise of historical and literary study must rest in the hands of teachers who themselves have encountered the tragic and the comic, who grasp the uses of paradox, and who exult in the presence of beauty beneath the daily surface of things. It takes such citizens to nurture others, generation after generation.

APPENDIX

Why do we need better education for citizenship?

What do citizens need to know?

What curriculum, and what teaching conditions would help them learn it?

Nowhere are these questions better addressed than in *Education for Democracy: A Statement of Principles.* Issued in 1987, it is the guiding charter for the many-sided Education for Democracy project, sponsored by the American Federation of Teachers, the Educational Excellence Network and Freedom House. The statement is reprinted below in its entirety, together with the remarkable list of signers who approved its view of civic education for Americans:

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY: A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

As the bicentennial for our Constitution approaches, we call for a special effort to raise the level of education for democratic citizenship. Given the complexities of our own society, of the rest of the world, and of the choices we confront, the need is self-evident and improvement is long past due.

As the years pass, we become an increasingly diverse people, drawn from many racial, national, linguistic, and religious origins. Our cultural heritage as Americans is as diverse as we are, with multiple sources of vitality and pride. But our political heritage is one—the vision of a common life in liberty, justice, and equality as expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution two centuries ago.

To protect that vision, Thomas Jefferson prescribed a general education not just for the few but for all citizens, "to enable every man to judge for himself what will secure or endanger his freedom." A generation later, Alexis de Tocqueville reminded us that our duty was to "educate democracy." He believed that all politics were but the playing out of the "notions and sentiments dominant in people." These, he said, are the "real causes of all the rest." Ideas—good and bad—have their consequences in every sphere of a nation's life.

We cite Tocqueville's appeal with a sense of urgency, for we fear that many young Americans are growing up without the education needed to develop a solid commitment to those "notions

and sentiments" essential to a democratic form of government. Although all the institutions that shape our private and public lives—family, church, school, government, media—share the responsibility for encouraging democratic values in our children, our focus here is on the nation's schools and their teaching of the social studies and humanities.

In singling out the schools, we do not suggest that there was ever a golden age of education for citizenship, somehow lost in recent years. It is reported that in 1943—that patriotic era—fewer than half of surveyed college freshmen could name four points in the Bill of Rights. Our purpose here is not to argue over the past, but only to ask that everyone with a role in schooling now join to work for decisive improvement.

We believe that democracy is the worthiest form of human governance ever conceived.

Our call for schools to purposely impart to their students the learning necessary for an informed, reasoned allegiance to the ideals of a free society rests on three convictions:

First, that democracy is the worthiest form of human governance ever conceived.

Second, that we cannot take its survival or its spread—or its perfection in practice—for granted. Indeed, we believe that the great central drama of modern history has been and continues to be the struggle to establish, preserve, and extend democracy—at home and abroad. We know that very much still needs doing to achieve justice and civility in our own society. Abroad, we note that, according to the Freedom House survey of political rights and civil liberties, only one-third of the world's people live under conditions that can be described as free.

Third, we are convinced that democracy's survival depends upon our transmitting to each new generation the political vision of liberty and equality that unites us as Americans—and a deep loyalty to the political institutions our Founders put together to fulfill that vision. As Jack Beatty reminded us in a *New Republic* article one Fourth of July, ours is a patriotism "not of blood and soil but of values, and those values are liberal and humane."[1]

Such values are neither revealed truths nor natural habits. There is no evidence that we are born with them. Devotion to human dignity and freedom, to equal rights, to social and economic justice, to the rule of law, to civility and truth, to tolerance of diversity, to mutual assistance, to personal and civic responsibility, to self-restraint and self-respect—all these must be taught and learned and practiced. They cannot be taken for granted or regarded as merely one set of options against which any other may be accepted as equally worthy.

WHY WE ARE CONCERNED

■

...a majority of high school seniors do not know what the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education *decision was about. Nor could majorities identify Winston Churchill or Joseph Stalin.*

■

Are the ideas and institutions—and above all the worth—of democracy adequately conveyed in American schools? Do our graduates come out of school possessing the mature political judgment Jefferson hoped for, an ability to decide for themselves "what will secure or endanger" their freedom? Do they know of democracy's short and troubled tenure in human history? Do they comprehend its vulnerabilities? Do they recognize and accept their responsibility for preserving and extending their political inheritance?

No systematic study exists to answer these questions. We lack adequate information on students' knowledge, beliefs, and enthusiasms. There has been little examination of school textbooks and supplementary materials, of state and district requirements in history and social sciences, or of what it takes in everyday school practice. A study of how high school history and government textbooks convey the principles of democracy is underway, and we hope that several other studies will be launched soon.

Meanwhile, the evidence we do have—although fragmentary and often anecdotal—is not encouraging. We know, for instance, of the significant decline over several decades in the amount of time devoted to historical studies in American schools, even in the college preparatory track; fewer than twenty states require students to take more than a year of history in order to graduate. We know that, as a result, many students are unaware of prominent people and seminal ideas and events that have shaped our past and created our present. A recent study shows that a majority of high school seniors do not know what the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was about.[2] Nor could majorities identify Winston Churchill or Joseph Stalin. Without knowledge of our own struggle for civil rights, how much can students understand of democracy's needs at home—what it has taken and will still take to extend it. And what can they know of democracy's capacity to respond to problems and reform? In ignorance of the Second World War and its aftermath, how much can they grasp of the cost and necessity of defending democracy in the world? Having never debated and discussed how the world came to be as it is, the democratic citizen will not know what is worth defending, what should be changed, and which imposed orthodoxies must be resisted.

We are concerned also that among some educators (as among some in the country at large), there appears a certain lack of con-

fidence in our own liberal, democratic values, an unwillingness to draw normative distinctions between them and the ideas of non-democratic regimes. Any number of popular curriculum materials deprecate the open preference for liberal democratic values as "ethnocentric." One widely distributed teaching guide on human rights accords equal significance to freedom of speech, the right to vote, and the guarantee of due process on the one hand, with the "right" to take vacations the other.[3] In the rush to present all cultures in a positive light, the unpleasant realities of some regimes are ignored, as when this guide talks of the high value accorded the right to strike by governments in Eastern Europe (a notion that would surely be disputed by the supporters of Solidarnosc). Or as when another guide—financed by the U.S. Department of Education—lauds the Cuban government's commitment to women's rights, noting with approval that men who refuse to share equally in household responsibilities can be penalized with "re-education or assignment to farm work."

Some states that deny freedom of religion, speech, and conscience nonetheless define themselves as free. But we need not accept their Orwellian self-definitions as if words had no meaning.

This insistence upon maintaining neutrality among competing values, this tendency to present political systems as not better or worse but only different, is illustrated by this test question designed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress and administered in the 1981-82 school year to students aged nine, thirteen, and seventeen:

Maria and Ming are friends. Ming's parents were born in China and have lived in the United States for twenty years.

"People have no freedom in China," Maria insists. "There is only one party in the election and the newspapers are run by the government."

"People in China do have freedom," Ming insists. "No one goes hungry. Everyone has an opportunity to work and medical care is free. Can there be greater freedom than that?"

What is the best conclusion to draw from this debate?

A. Ming does not understand the meaning of freedom.
B. Maria and Ming differ in their opinions of the meaning of freedom.
C. There is freedom in the U.S. but not in China.
D. People have greater freedom in China than in the U.S.

According to NAEP, choice B—"Maria and Ming differ in their opinions of the meaning of freedom"—is correct. The test's framers explained in a 1983 report summarizing the survey's findings that students choosing answer B "correctly indicated that the concept of freedom can mean different things to different people in different circumstances." And, of course, in the most narrow, literal sense, B is correct.

Around the world, people and governments do apply different meanings to the word "freedom." Some states that deny freedom of religion, speech, and conscience nonetheless define themselves as free. But we need not accept their Orwellian self-definitions as if words had no meaning. Were we to use Ming's definition of freedom—a job, medical care, and ample food—many of history's slaves and today's prisoners would have to be called "free"! To offer such a definition, and to leave it at that, without elaboration—as NAEP has done—is grossly to mislead students about history, about politics, and above all, about human rights. In fact, the "rights" to food and work and medical care, when separated from the rights to free speech, a free press, and free elections, are not rights at all. They are rewards from the government that are easily bestowed and just as easily betrayed.

We are rightly accustomed to honest scrutiny of our own faults, and so it is all the more inexplicable when educational materials sidestep or whitewash violations of human rights and pervasive injustice in other lands. Students need an honest, rigorous education that allows them to penetrate Orwellian rhetoric and accurately compare the claims and realities of our own society and those of others. Such a goal is compromised when the drawing of normative distinctions and values is frowned upon as a failure of objectivity, on the premise that all values are arbitrary, arising from personal taste or conditioning, without cognitive or rational bases. They are not to be ranked or ordered, the argument runs, only "clarified"; so the teacher must strive to neutrality. It is hardly necessary to be neutral in regard to freedom over bondage, or the rule of law over the rule of the mob, or fair wages over exploitation, in order to describe objectively the differences among them, or among their human consequences.

What of Nazi values and their consequences? To grasp the human condition in the twentieth century objectively, we need to understand the problems of German society that pushed so many to join the Nazis and to acquiesce in their crimes. But to "understand" is not to forgive, or to trivialize, those crimes. Or to teach, in Richard Hunt's phrase, "no-fault, guilt-free history" where nobody is to blame for anything and fixing responsibility is disallowed.

Finally, no discussion of the discomfort that some feel in teaching children to cherish democracy can fail to mention that some may be indifferent, or even alienated from American democracy, out of disillusion over its failings in practice. The postwar confidence in the America.. way of life was undermined by the political upheavals of the 1960s and early 1970s. First, America

had its long-overdue reckoning with the historic national shame of racial discrimination. Then the country found itself mired in the Vietnam War, and was further shocked and disheartened by assassinations and the events of Watergate. As we struggled to confront our failings and correct our flaws, legitimate self-criticism turned at times into an industry of blame. The United States and its democratic allies were often presented as though we alone had failed, and as though our faults invalidated the very ideals that taught us how to recognize failure when we met it.

How can [students] be expected to value or defend freedom unless they have a clear grasp of the alternatives against which to measure it?

While the realities of our own society are daily evident, many students remain ignorant of other, quite different, worlds. How can they be expected to value or defend freedom unless they have a clear grasp of the alternatives against which to measure it? The systematic presentation of reality abroad must be an integral part of the curriculum. What are the political systems in competition with our own, and what is life like for the people who live under them? If students know only half the world, they will not know nearly enough. We cannot afford what one young writer recalled as a "gaping hole" in his prestigious, private high school's curriculum.[5] He and his classmates, he says, were "wonderfully instructed in America's problems . . ."

> *but we were at the same time being educated in splendid isolation from the notion that democratic societies have committed enemies; we learned next to nothing of the sorts of alternatives to bourgeois liberalism that the twentieth century had to offer...[We] learned nothing of what it meant to be a small farmer in Stalin's Russia or Ho Chi Minh's Vietnam. That it had been part of Communinst policy to "liquidate as a class" the "kulaks" was something we had never heard spoken of. It was perfectly possible to graduate from the Academy with honors and be altogether incapable of writing three factual paragraphs on the history of any Communist regime (or for that matter of any totalitarian regime whether of the Right or Left).*

WHAT THE CITIZEN NEEDS TO KNOW

What was, and is, lacking is a fullness of knowledge, an objective and balanced picture of world realities, historical and contemporary. We do not ask for propaganda, for crash courses in the right attitudes, or for knee-jerk patriotic drill. We do not want to capsulize democracy's argument into slogans, or pious texts, or bright debaters' points. The history and nature and needs of democracy are much too serious and subtle for that.

The kind of critical thinking we wish to encourage must rest on a solid base of factual knowledge.

Education for democracy is not indoctrination, which is the deliberate exclusion or distortion of studies in order to induce belief by irrational means. We do not propose to exclude the honest study of doctrines and systems of others. Or to censor history—our own or others'—as closed societies do, or to hide our flaws or explain them away. We do not need a bodyguard of lies. We can afford to present ourselves in the totality of our acts. And we can afford to tell the truth about others, even when it favors them, and complicates that which indoctrination would keep simple and comforting.

And then we leave it to our students to apply their knowledge, values, and experiences to the world they must create. We do not propose a "right" position on, say, American involvement in the Vietnam War; or on the type of nuclear weapons, if any, we should have; or on what our policy in Central America should be; or on whether the E.R.A. should be passed or hiring quotas supported. Good democrats can and do differ on these matters. On these and a host of other policy issues, there is no one "truth." Our task is more limited, and yet in its way much greater: to teach our children to cherish freedom and to accept responsibility for preserving and extending it, confident that they will find their own best ways of doing so, on the basis of free, uncoerced thought.

The kind of critical thinking we wish to encourage must rest on a solid base of factual knowledge. In this regard, we reject educational theory that considers any kind of curricular content to be as good as any other, claiming that all students need to know is "how to learn," that no particular body of knowledge is more worth noting than any other, that in an age of rapid change, all knowledge necessarily becomes "obsolete." We insist, on the contrary, that the central ideas, events, people, and works that have shaped our world, for good and ill, are not at all obsolete. Instead, the quicker the pace of change, the more critical it will be for us to remember them and understand them well. We insist that absent this knowledge, citizens remain helpless to make the wise judgments hoped for by Jefferson.

First, citizens must know the fundamental ideas central to the political vision of the eighteenth-century founders—the vision that holds us together as one people of many diverse origins and cultures. Not only the words—never only the words—but the sources, the meanings, and the implications of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Federalist Papers, the Bill of Rights.

To go deeper than the words, and truly to understand the ideas, students must know where and how they arose, in whose

minds, stirred by what ideas. What historical circumstances were hospitable, and encouraged people to think such things? What circumstances were hostile? What were the prevailing assumptions about human nature? About the relationship of God and themselves? About origins of human society and the meaning and direction of human history? To understand our ideas requires a knowledge of the whole sweep of Western civilization, from the ancient Jews and Christians—whose ethical beliefs gave rise to democratic thought—to the Greeks and Romans, through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Reformation, the English Revolution—so important to America—the eighteenth century Enlightenment, and the French Revolution, a violent cousin to our own. Such a curriculum is indispensable. Without it, our principles of government—and the debates over them ever since—are not fully comprehensible. They are mere words, floating in air without source, life, drama, or meaning.

How can we avoid making all of this into nothing more than just another...parade of facts?

Second, citizens must know how democratic ideas have been turned into institutions and practices—the history of the origins and growth and adventures of democratic societies on earth past and present. How have these societies fared? Who has defended them and why? Who has sought their undoing and why? What conditions—economic, social, cultural, religious, military—have helped to shape democratic practice? What conditions have made it difficult—sometimes even impossible—for such societies to take root? Again, it is indispensable to know the facts of modern history, dating back at least to the English Revolution, and forward to our own century's total wars: to the failure of the nascent liberal regimes of Russia, Italy, Germany, Spain, and Japan; to the totalitarianism, oppressions, and mass exterminations of our time. How has it all happened?

Third, citizens in our society need to understand the current condition of the world and how it got that way, and to be prepared to act upon the challenges to democracy in our own day. What are the roots of our present dangers and of the choices before us? For intelligent citizenship, we need a thorough grasp of the daily workings of our own society, as well as the societies of our friends, of our adversaries, and of the Third World, where so many live amid poverty and violence, with little freedom and little hope.

This is no small order. It requires systematic study of American government and society; of comparative ideologies and political, economic, and social systems; of the religious beliefs that have shaped our values and our cultures and those that have shaped others; and of physical and human geography. How can we avoid

making all of this into nothing more than just another, and perhaps longer, parade of facts, smothering the desire to learn? Apart from needed changes in materials and methods, in the structure of curricula and of the school day itself, we believe that one answer is to focus upon the fateful drama of the historical struggle for democracy. The fate of real men and women, here and abroad, who have worked to bring to life the ideas we began with deserves our whole attention and that of our students. It is a suspenseful, often tragic, drama that continues today, often amid poverty and social turmoil; advocates of democracy remain, as before, prey to extremists of Left and Right well-armed with force and simple answers. The ongoing, worldwide struggle for a free center of "broad, sunlit uplands," in Churchill's phrase, is the best hope of the earth, and we would make it the heart of a reordered curriculum for history and social studies.

The ongoing, worldwide struggle for a free center of "broad, sunlit uplands," in Churchill's phrase, is the best hope of the earth, and we would make it the heart of a reordered curriculum for history and social studies.

HISTORY AND THE HUMANITIES AS THE CORE OF DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

We regard the study of history as the chief subject in education for democracy, much as Jefferson and other founders of the United States did two centuries ago. In revamping the social studies curriculum, we should start with the obvious: History is not the enemy of the social sciences, but is instead their indispensable source of nourishment, order, and perspective. We aim at nothing less than helping the student to comprehend what is important, not merely to memorize fact and formula. But it is clearly impossible to reach genuine comprehension of economic, political, social, and cultural questions without examining them in their historic context. To pull "case studies" and "concepts" out of historical narrative, as so many social studies programs do, not only confuses students but is likely to distort the truth of the human condition.

Of all the subjects in the curriculum, history alone affords the perspective that students need to compare themselves realistically with others—in the past and elsewhere on earth—and to think critically, to look behind assertions and appearances, to ask for the "whole story," to judge meaning and value for themselves. History is also the integrative subject, upon which the coherence and usefulness of other subjects depend, especially the social sciences but also much of literature and the arts. Taught in historical context, the formulations and insights of the social sciences take on life, blood, drama, and significance. And, in turn, their organizing con-

cepts and questions can help rescue history from the dry recital of dates and acts so many students have rightly complained about.

We are pleased that several major reform proposals agree on the centrality of history. Theodore Sizer, in *Horace's Compromise*, makes the joint study of history and ideas one of the four required areas of learning throughout the secondary years. *The Paideia Proposal* puts narrative history and geography at the center of the social studies curriculum, during every grade beyond the elementary. Ernest Boyer's Carnegie Report, *High School*, asks for a year of the history of Western Civilization, a year of American history, another of American government, and a term's study of non-Western society. The Council for Basic Education sets an "irreducible minimum" of two years of American history, one year of European, and the study of at least one non-Western society in depth. The state of California now calls for at least two years of high school history.[6]

We also ask for wider reading and study in the humanities. For we are concerned, again, with values, with every citizen's capacity for judging the moral worth of things. In this, courses in "values clarification" do not get us very far. They either feign neutrality or descend to preachiness. Values and moral integrity are better discovered by students in their reading of history, of literature, of philosophy, and of biography. Values are not "taught," they are encountered, in school and life.

The humanities in our schools must not be limited, as they so often are now, to a few brief samples of Good Things, but should embrace as much as possible of the whole range of the best that has been thought and said and created, from the ancient to the most recent. Otherwise, students have little chance to confront the many varied attempts to answer the great questions of life—or even to be aware that such questions exist. The quest for worth and meaning is indispensable to the democratic citizen. The essence of democracy, its reason for being, is constant choice. We choose what the good life is, and how our society—including its schools—may order its priorities so that the good life is possible, according to what we ourselves value most. That is what Tocqueville meant by the "notions and sentiments" of a people.

Education for democracy, then, must extend to education in moral issues, which our eighteenth century founders took very seriously indeed. This is hardly surprising. The basic ideas of liberty, equality, and justice, of civil, political, and economic rights and obligations are all assertions of right and wrong, of moral values. Such principles impel the citizen to make moral choices, repeatedly to decide between right and wrong or, just as often, be

tween one right and another. The authors of the American testament had no trouble distinguishing moral education from religious instruction, and neither should we. The democratic state can take no part in deciding which, if any, church forms its citizen's consciences. But it is absurd to argue that the state, or its schools, cannot be concerned with citizens' ability to tell right from wrong, and to prefer one over the other in all matters that bear upon the common public life. This would be utterly to misunderstand the democratic vision, and the moral seriousness of the choices it demands of us.

But it is absurd to argue that the state, or its schools, cannot be concerned with citizens' ability to tell right from wrong.

CONCLUSIONS

In calling for a decisive improvement of education for democracy, we are well aware that this will require a sea-change in the typical curriculum. Specifically, we call for the following:

1. A more substantial, engaging, and demanding social studies curriculum for all of our children—one that helps students to comprehend what is important, not merely to memorize names, dates, and places. The required curriculum should include the history of the United States and of democratic civilization, the study of American government and world geography, and of at least one non-Western society in depth.

2. A reordering of the curriculum around a core of history and geography—with history providing the perspective for considered judgment and geography confronting students with the hard realities that shape so many political, economic, and social decisions. Around this core of history and geography, students should be introduced to the added perspectives offered by economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science.

3. More history, chronologically taught and taught in ways that capture the imagination of students. Historical biography, colorful historical narrative, and debate over the central ideas that have brought us here are all appealing to students. And we recommend that a central theme in the study of history be the dramatic struggles of people around the globe and across the centuries to win, preserve, and extend their freedom.

4. More attention to world studies, especially to the realistic and unsentimental study of other nations—both democratic and non-democratic. Comparative study of politics, ideology, economics, and culture, and especially the efforts of citizens to improve their lot through protest and reform, offers students a healthy perspective on our own problems and a needed window on problems elsewhere.

5. A broader, deeper learning in the humanities, particularly in literature, ideas, and biography, so that students may encounter and comprehend the values upon which democracy depends. Through such study, moral education—not religious education and not neutral values clarification—can be restored to high standing in our schools.

We understand that such a major reform of the curriculum will require more effective textbooks and auxiliary materials, aimed less at "coverage" than at comprehension of what is most worth learning. It will require continuing collaboration between faculty members from the schools and universities, where both work together as equals to clarify what is most worth teaching in their subjects and to devise ways to convey the material to diverse clienteles. And it requires new approaches to teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, to help teachers present the revamped and strengthened curriculum.

Our proposal asks for great intensity of teaching effort. Students will not reach genuine understanding of ideas, events, and institutions through rote learning from texts, classroom lecture, and recitation followed by short-answer quizzes. We ask for active learning on the part of students—ample time for class discussions, for coaching, for frequent seminars to explore ideas, and for regular writing assignments.

We know that teachers would like nothing better than to work in this way. We also know that they cannot be expected to do so when they are responsible for 150 or more students, coming at them in a kaleidoscopic, five-times-fifty minute daily lockstep, frequently requiring three or four different preparations. We thus ally ourselves with recent calls to dramatically restructure education. Over time, we must sharply alter the management, the schedules, and the staffing patterns of our schools to afford teachers more authority, a wider latitude of methods and materials, more time to devote to the intellectual lives of fewer students, and more time to devote to their own intellectual growth.

We understand that the dramatic changes we call for—in curriculum and structure—will not come easily. We know also that these changes can be made, and must be.

As citizens of a democratic republic, we are part of the noblest political effort in history. Our children must learn, and we must teach them, the knowledge, values, and habits that will best protect and extend this precious inheritance. Today we ask our schools to make a greater contribution to that effort and we ask all Americans to help them do it. ■

We also know that [teachers] cannot be expected to do so when they are responsible for 150 or more students, coming at them in a kaleidoscopic, five-times-fifty minute daily lockstep.

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