# REALISM IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the
University of Michigan
1960

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with a great sense of appreciation that I express my debt to Professor Arnold Kaufman for his inspiring teaching, for his encouragement, and for his suggestions and comments on this study, the several original drafts of which he read in full. Doctor Carl Cohen is due considerable acknowledgment and thanks for his careful reading and editing of the entire original draft, and for his helpful suggestions, many of which have been incorporated into the dissertation. Professor William K. Frankena, who initially served as chairman of my committee, read an early draft of Chapter V, and his comments have led to much improvement in its organization and clarity. In addition, I am indebted to Professor Frank Grace and Professor Charles L. Stevenson for their reading of the original draft.

To my wife, Mary, I owe more than I can convey for her tireless help in reading and editing, and for her typing of all of the drafts of this dissertation. I would also like to thank Mrs. Roberta Wedemeyer for her thoughtful and careful proof-reading of the final draft. Much credit is due to all those above for improvements in the presentation of this study; however, I, alone, am responsible for its final form.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The description and prescription of social behavior are two characteristically human activities. We describe social events and situations whenever we report the facts about them. We prescribe the behavior of others whenever we tell them what they ought to do. Ordinarily, we have no trouble in distinguishing between these activities. It is, however, quite possible to engage in them both at once.[1] The result is often an unfortunate confusion of one activity with the other. Such a confusion seems to occur rather easily at the theoretical level dealing with man's social and political arrangements. In this dissertation, a type of political theory will be investigated which thrives upon the confusion of descriptive and prescriptive activity.

It has been said that the "descriptive" and "prescriptive" constitute two main traditions in political theory. According to Thomas P. Jenkin, the prescriptive approach sees the task of political theory as providing moral prescriptions for the governance of men. It endeavors to formulate the optimum conditions of relationship among humans which will yield both individual satisfaction and

political stability. The basic assumption for this theoretical tradition, Jenkin says, is that the moral and logical formula which is developed constitutes a practical alternative open to people in political society, although, as an optimum condition it has in fact nowhere been realized.[2]

The descriptive approach, Jenkin notes, equates theory with conclusions drawn from the facts. The primary problem in this tradition is analysis of the fact of political life so that these may be classified and ordered into generalizations. Whether the facts concern social goods and purposes, or the means of accomplishing programs, the theories which develop are "delimited by the facts considered."[3]

There is a trend in contemporary political theory to favor descriptive theory over the prescriptive type. The disposition to stress science as opposed to morality seems to account for much of the emphasis on factual political studies being done within the realm of political theory. The most consistent and significant trend in American political science for the past two generations, says Dwight Waldo, has been toward "science". It has pursued a quest for the real because the methods of the more advanced sciences have become applicable to a study of political "reality". This trend toward realism in political science has greatly influenced political theory. Waldo points out that:

> The movement from idealism to realism has meant the abandonment of the mood of optimism, a new or keener appreciation of the role and scope of the material,

> surrender of the assumption of a natural harmony of interests at the international level, a new sensitivity to the existence of politics and power struggles, a determination to get beneath formal rules and institutions to the functional and dynamic, and a decision to pursue problems as far away from traditional interests as may be necessary to "get to the bottom of things".[4]

Waldo does not show in any detail the relationship between the trend toward science and the abandonment of the mood of optimism to which he refers. Nor does he make any distinction between "science" and "realism". However, a distinction can be made that will help us understand the connection between the trend toward science and an abandonment of optimism. For there is nothing inherent in science to justify such an abandonment. On the contrary, the development of science has long been associated with rising expectations for the improvement of man's condition. It has been taken as the backbone of "progress". Science has shown how to get things done more quickly and more efficiently. To equate a trend toward science, then, with a trend toward realism in a sense which entails the abandonment of optimism is somewhat misleading and confusing.

We should be clear about what is to be meant by "realism" in the political context, since the term can be used in different senses. There is one sense in which realism consists simply of a "quest for the real" for its own sake. This would involve the attempt to get beneath formal rules and institutions to the functional and dynamic aspects of human relations. In this sense, realism could be equated with science, but it would not then account for

a psychological change in attitude resulting in a loss of optimism.[5]

The sense of realism which comes closest to covering all of the features implicated in the trend Waldo describes is expressed by the remark, "let's be realistic about this." This expression usually implies, in context, that there are good reasons for doubting the success of some proposal or plan of action. It is a way of calling attention to certain facts which have not been provided for in the plan--facts which, if they were recognized, would cause one to reduce one's expectations for the success of the plan. In this sense of realism, the scientific investigation of the facts would be causally related to attitudes toward future events by altering expectations about them. This seems to be the sort of realism to which Waldo refers. As a trend, it may well account for a reduction in optimism about the achievement of political and social ideals.

Science in political theory, then, is not necessarily the same thing as political realism. In terms of Jenkin's distinction, political science, as such, consists primarily of descriptive theory. Realism goes beyond descriptive theory for its own sake in its effort to bring about a reduction in optimism. The relation of science to realism is basically a causal one. Realism involves either implicitly or explicitly an attempt to reduce optimistic expectations by calling attention to the results of scientific inquiry into various aspects of social and political behavior.

Developments in the application of the methods of the more advanced sciences to social and political phenomena have understandably resulted in increased research in those areas. More and more political theorists have become wholly engaged in formulating theories which are "delimited by the facts considered". Such activity is rightly called political science. Political scientists may not engage in prescriptive theorizing in any obvious way at all. However, since a realist can make an effective case against idealistic optimism simply by presenting certain facts in the proper context, it is easy to confuse realism with scientific or descriptive theory as such. Realism's close relationship to scientific inquiry tends to obscure its prescriptive implications with the result that misleading impressions are given of the moral values it involves.

The problem of identifying realism as a normative approach to political action is complicated by the insistence upon a sharp separation between prescriptive and descriptive political theory. Political scientists often press this separation to a point where they disclaim any responsibility, as political scientists, for concerning themselves with the merits of various moral prescriptions or values upon which their work may bear. They would like to have a division of labor recognized between those who prescribe and those who describe. What happens, however, is that the describers tend to become prescribers without accepting the responsibility of clarifying or justifying

their prescriptions. Political science thus becomes a haven for realists who would make their facts normatively effective in disillusioning optimistic idealists without being burdened with having to treat the moral problems at issue.

The need to clarify the realist position is illustrated by the argument of George Catlin.[6] Catlin offers the type of misleading defense which realists may hide behind to avoid direct involvement in the ethical problems of political theory. It begins with the perfectly correct assertion that what ought to be is limited by what can be. Catlin goes on to say that the impracticable ideal, when taken as a guide to action, is a false ideal. These two propositions are elaborated by the statement that:

> What ought to be depends not only upon guiding values, often themselves a matter of dispute, but also upon the conditions of the society of the time and place, and requires accurate study of the facts of these conditions.[7]

The implicit argument is something like this: what ought to be depends upon two things, values and facts. Values are a matter of dispute so nothing definite can be said about them except in so far as the facts bear on them. Facts bear on values by determining the limits of what can be. What can be is simply a question of the relevant facts. These facts are determined by a study of the conditions of the society of the time and place. Therefore, what ought to be is limited by the conditions of society. The implication is that ideals which do not correspond to the actual

conditions of society are impracticable and, thereby, false, for they cannot rightly be prescribed as obligating anyone.

It is correct to say that what ought to be is limited by what "can be" in the sense of what "is possible". We cannot rightly obligate anyone with respect to actions he cannot possibly perform. However, the possibilities inherent in human nature and human society are not determined simply by studying the existing conditions of society alone! Even more important are the potentialities within man and society for change and development. The limits to these factors have by no means been established.[8] A fully scientific study of the possibilities would involve experiments to discover what those potentialities were. Conducting social experiments and studying existing social conditions are two quite different things. Catlin's argument is typically misleading in suggesting that a study of existing conditions in a society is sufficient to establish theoretical limitations to what can properly be prescribed for that society. In effect, he moves from the proposition that "what ought to be is limited by what can be" to the similar but significantly different proposition that "what ought to be is limited by what is."

Instead of making his moral position clear, Catlin relegates questions of valuation to a realm apart from the study of political conditions. "Politics is concerned with means; Ethics with ends. Ethics has to itself the field of valuation. The province of Politics is a matter of science..."[9] To acquire immunity from the need to clarify his own moral

values, the realist tends to adopt Catlin's complete separation of politics and ethics. If the political scientist does not have to discuss the value questions involved in delimiting what ought to be, why should the realist? He need only concern himself with the theoretical formulation of factual conditions. The realist then takes advantage of this distinction between politics and ethics to involve himself implicitly in moral issues. Apparently he is doing nothing more than showing the factual limitations on what ought to be. But in describing these limits he implies that political action aimed at goals which exceed them ought not to be pursued. In this way, the realist's argument has a prescriptive effect by means of an essentially descriptive theory.

I shall argue that the implied prescriptions of the realist are not justified because the limits of possibility in all morally relevant respects are not actually shown. The realists show, at best, only what is probable; that is, what is likely to be accomplished with the existing practices and conditions they describe. This is not surprising when we consider that realism is primarily concerned with disillusioning the overly-optimistic pursuit of moral ideals. The misleading and confusing nature of the realist position is due, in part, to their making their case appear to be stronger than it is. All that the realist needs to show to obtain the effect he wants is that expectations of the completely successful achievement of certain ideals is

unjustified. To a large extent the realist does show that some expectations for the complete realization of moral ideals are unwarranted in the light of the facts he describes. However, it is only with respect to expectations for the complete fulfillment of ideals that the realist's argument is sound. Realism poses no serious objection to the adoption of moral goals and principles as guides to political action where completely successful achievement is not expected or demanded.

The deficiencies of the realist position stem from a failure to clarify and discuss moral values and the relevance of the facts to the broader possibilities of realizing them. By not making their own moral position clear realists give misleading impressions of the normative character of their claims. They also give a misleading impression of the moral issues involved in prescriptive political theory by making it seem as though prescriptive theory somehow requires the complete fulfillment of the ideals and principles it formulates.

Realists neglect one of the main points of normative political theory, which is to relate values in a systematic way so as to provide more consistent guides to the realization of diverse values. Men have long sought to construct a political system which would harmonize such fundamental human concerns as the desire for security, order, opportunity to develop one's capacities, freedom to express one's interests, and the right of each man to be respected as an indi-

vidual. The solutions which have been proposed are always tentative due to changing social circumstances. Problems encountered in realizing these basic values will arise again and again. But the concern for our values must not be restricted to determining ways of realizing them. The constant need is to reflect upon, and to reinterpret, the very meaning of these values. This can be done satisfactorily only with an open acknowledgment of one's presuppositions and an earnest attempt to discuss rationally what one feels ought to be done to meet the moral problems with which we are faced. The realists, with their insights into the morally relevant facts, are in a position to contribute a great deal to our better understanding of the relation of morality to politics. Too often, however, they refuse to accept their responsibility in this respect and, instead, hinder the process of moral clarification by the implications of their position.

It is important, therefore, to understand the nature of the realist's arguments in order to avoid being misled and confused. To that end, I shall analyze the pertinent arguments of four influential contemporary theorists; I shall show that they all can be classified as realists in the sense described above. The approaches of these theorists differ from one another in several respects. The first, James Burnham, for example, presents what is claimed to be a purely scientific theory of social change.[10] The second, Joseph Schumpeter, is

interested in formulating a "workable" conception of the democratic method.[11] The third, Robert Dahl, emphasizes the problem of arriving at empirically adequate political concepts.[12] And the fourth theorist, Hans Morgenthau, is concerned with the "rational" use of political power.[13] These variations are particularly valuable in showing the range of the forms which realism can take.

Each of these theorists is in effect saying, "let's be realistic" about some political enterprise or conception of political goals. While they do not all show equal evidence of the trend toward science, they do seem to discourage optimism about moral progress in the political realm. To be fair to their claims, a somewhat detailed treatment of their views will be necessary. However, no attempt will be made to give a complete account of their theoretical positions. Attention will be confined to only so much of their arguments as is necessary to illustrate the force and nature of their realism. I shall try to show in just what respects each suffers from an inadequate clarification of the relevance of the facts as they see them to the goals and principles to which their arguments either explicitly or implicitly refer. The underlying impression which they all give is that political theory, and therefore political activity, ought to be confined to the facts as they have described them. It is the purpose of this study to correct that impression.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. This has been amply demonstrated by Charles L. Stevenson, Ethics and Language (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944).

2. Thomas P. Jenkin, The Study of Political Theory (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1955), pp. 1-2.

3. Dwight Waldo, Political Science in the United States of America (Paris: UNESCO, 1956), p. 57. Cf. Arnold Brecht, Political Theory (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), pp. 4-20.

5. An important sense of "realism" which I shall not discuss, since it does not particularly pertain to the positions to be considered here, is metaphysical realism. Realism in this sense is primarily a way of conceiving the most general aspects of the universe, especially concerning the reality of universals, or abstract and general terms.

6. Geo. E. G. Catlin, The Science and Method of Politics (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1927).

7. Ibid., pp. 306-307.

8. Cf. Dwight Waldo, "'Values' in Political Science," Approaches to the Study of Politics, ed. Roland Young (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1958), p. 107.

9. Catlin, p. 310.

10. The Managerial Revolution (New York: John Day Co., 1941).

11. Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy (3d. ed.; New York: Harper Bros., 1950).

12. A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

13. Politics Among Nations (2d ed.; New York: Alfred Knopf, 1954).

## CHAPTER II

## JAMES BURNHAM AND THE MANAGERIAL REVOLUTION

Our first realist presents an essentially descriptive theory of social change which appears to have important implications for democracy. In his book, The Managerial Revolution, James Burnham sets forth what he considers to be a scientifically adequate theory of managerial revolution. He very pointedly asserts that it is not a theory of social reform. He does not intend to argue what ought to be the case. As he puts it himself, "I am concerned exclusively with the attempt to elaborate a descriptive theory able to explain the character of the present period of social transition and to predict at least in general, its outcome."[1] The present period of social transition is a period characterized by a "very rapid rate" of social change from one type of society--that which prevailed from roughly the fifteenth century to the early part of the twentieth--to a new and different type of society.[2] The type of society on the way out is the "capitalist" or "bourgeois" society. According to Burnham's theory, the transition is being made to a type of society which he calls "managerial". More specifically:

> What is occurring in this transition is a drive for social dominance, for power, and privilege, for the

> position of the ruling class, by the social group or class of the managers. This drive will be successful. At the conclusion of the transition period, the managers will, in fact, have achieved social dominance, will be the ruling class in society. This, moreover, is world-wide in extent, already well advanced in all nations, though at different levels of development in different nations.[3]

Burnham somewhat misleadingly states that he is concerned exclusively with description and explanation. His theory goes beyond the presentation of facts and the framing of an hypothesis. He recognizes that some of the consequences of the managerial revolution would be undesirable to his readers. He admits that his theory conflicts with his own hopes and moral views.[4] Yet, he does not make his moral views explicit. The implication is, however, that the managerial revolution threatens democracy. Burnham says that over-optimism about the future of democracy would be a mistake, but he also indicates that there are possibilities for preserving it.[5] It would seem to follow that something ought to be done to that end. Exactly what ought to be done he does not say.

Burnham's theory fairly well exemplifies the type of realism which he, himself, describes elsewhere as Machiavellian. He sums up this position as follows:

> A goal must be possible before there is any point in considering it desirable. It is not possible merely because it sounds pleasant or because men want it badly. Before asking, for instance, how democracy can be made to work, we must ask whether in fact it can work, or how far it can work. In general, Machiavellians are very careful to separate scientific questions concerning the truth about society from moral disputes over what type of society is most desirable.[6]

There is also another aspect of realism which Burnham's theory illustrates. It is the attempt to get behind the formal and legal relationships in society, to penetrate the facades of economic and political power and view the actual if less pleasant facts of the struggle for privilege and position. Burnham would not have us misled by the names and outward forms of social institutions--nor by myths, ideologies, or political rhetoric. In the democratic state, for example, it is not where political sovereignty is ultimately supposed to lie that matters. It is the actual "locus" of sovereignty, the really effective center of power, that counts. And we must not take the beliefs which people espouse, their ideologies, at face value. While ideologies are stated as though they were universally valid and expressed the interests of humanity as a whole, they actually serve and advance the interests of some particular social group or class.[7] Burnham also depends heavily upon the cogency of the notion of <u>de facto</u> ownership or control of the instruments of production, as opposed to formal or legal ownership.

Burnham's concern with what is possible and his concern with functional relationships are closely related. The implication of his theory of the managerial revolution is that what is possible in the political sphere depends upon the nature of the informal, functional relationships in society, as he describes them. Regardless of the formal arrangements for majority rule, for example, unless there

is some effective way in which the majority of the members of a society can exercise control over the making of political decisions, majority rule is impossible. If it were the case that there was no way in which the majority could function as rulers, then the Machiavellian would consider the desire for majority rule to be pointless. However, Burnham is not clear about what he considers to be impossible and what he considers to be merely difficult. As a consequence, one may get the impression that he considers certain prescriptions for political systems to be otiose, when actually he has quite a different view.

The most significant normative implications of the realism of Burnham's theory relate to democracy. The charge has been made by David Spitz that the theory is anti-democratic because it implies that democracy is impossible.[8] Since it is most important to be clear about the implications of Burnham's type of realism for democratic theory, I propose to investigate this charge carefully.

Burnham might be considered anti-democratic in the sense that by making democracy appear to be impossible he, in effect, discourages the pursuit of democratic ideals. He is not anti-democratic in the sense that he is <u>opposed</u> to democracy. Burnham does say:

> This much is clear: The democracy of capitalist society is on the way out; it is, in fact, just about gone and will not come back. The democracy of managerial society will be some while being born; and its birth pangs will include drastic convulsions.[9]

Thus, he distinguishes between two types of democracy which

are not only possible, but one of which has been in existence for some time. Both types of democracy depend upon there being some kind of institutionally based groups in society which are opposed to the rulers. Another type of democracy which on Burnham's analysis appears to be illusory is direct self-government by the people as a whole--democracy as Rousseau understood it. However, Burnham does not succeed in showing that self-government is impossible or that "capitalistic" democracy is on the way out.

Burnham says that his theory is scientific, not normative. The fact that he can be interpreted as discouraging the pursuit of democratic ideals illustrates the danger of the confusion which the realist can create by failing to make his normative position clear.

Spitz's criticisms of Burnham are an instance of this confusion. His claim that Burnham's theory is anti-democratic rests upon a misinterpretation of Burnham's basic assumptions and a misunderstanding of Burnham's conception of democracy. Spitz thinks that his conception of democracy is different from Burnham's. I shall argue that, actually, Burnham and Spitz have substantially the same conception of democracy but that each emphasizes different features of it. Burnham does not show democracy to be impossible in the sense of democracy which Spitz himself accepts. In the context of the democratic society in which he writes, Burnham's theory is more of a warning about what ought to be done to preserve democracy than either he or Spitz admits.

In order to avoid some of the confusions which can result, and have resulted in Spitz's case, in interpreting Burnham, we shall proceed as follows: first, we shall consider the main features of Burnham's theory of the managerial revolution; next, we shall make a close study of Spitz's interpretation and criticisms of Burnham's theory and evaluate the arguments of both theorists; finally, we shall weigh the implications of Burnham's position for democracy.

The theory of the managerial revolution predicts that the managers will become the ruling class in society. A key concept, therefore, is that of "the ruling class". By the term "ruling class", Burnham means a group of persons which by virtue of special socio-economic relations exercises a special degree of control over access to the instruments of production and receives preferential treatment in the distribution of the products of those instruments. He feels justified in calling such a group the ruling class because, "it is hard, indeed, to see what else could be mean by 'dominant' or 'ruling class'. Such a group has the power and privilege and wealth in the society as against the remainder of society."[10] Very little attempt is made to justify this basically Marxian claim, which seems to be regarded as obvious enough. It turns out further along in the argument that the stability in power of any given ruling class depends upon its control of the major ideologies of its society.[11] Its control in this respect seems to be independent of its

control over the instruments of production. For some reason not made clear, ideologies "wear out" and they are no longer believed in.[12] Although he says that the general acceptance of similar ideologies is essential to keep a society "cemented together", Burnham does not indicate whether their "wearing out" is a symptom or a cause of social change. If it is a cause of social change, then he should have included it among the causes of the transition he describes.

In any case, this notion of the "ruling class" can be misleading. By equating "rule" and "dominance" with the possession of power, privilege, and wealth, Burnham tends to assimilate three different features of such possession which ought to be distinguished. For purposes of strictly scientific measurement it would be convenient to confine the interpretation of "dominance" in terms of "possession" to proportionate quantities of power or wealth. Thus, for example, a greater amount of income would be taken as evidence of dominance. However, if dominance is taken in this sense alone, the fact of rule is not actually established in the usual sense of "control". The mere possession of a greater amount of power, privilege, and wealth is not necessarily the possession of functional control in a society.

Another feature of the possession of power, privilege, and wealth which is suggested by "dominance" is that these qualities are superior or more desirable than other qualities one might possess. One might, on the other hand, consider honor and prestige to be more important or valuable qualities

than power and wealth. In which case, dominance would be judged in quite different terms, with the possible result that some group other than the managers would be considered dominant. To assume that power and wealth are the most desirable things to be had would be to beg an important ethical question. By slipping this normative assumption in with his concept of dominance, Burnham implicitly indicates a bias of the sort from which he claimed his theory was free. While such a bias does not necessarily make his theory any the less scientific, it should be recognized so that we are clear about the value assumptions with which he works.

The third feature of the possession of power, privilege, and wealth which "dominance" indicates, and most strictly implies, is a causal connection between such possession and rule or control over the rest of society. Dominance in this sense of control seems to be what Burnham usually means by the term. However, when dominance is interpreted in this sense a further source of confusion arises. The type of control which Burnham specifically refers to the managers as having is control over access to the instruments of production. Now it is not at all obvious that this kind of control is what is usually meant by "rule" over a society. As such, "rule" in society more often means regulating matters of a political nature--especially the determination of political policies. It may be that, in fact, control over access to the instruments of production is causally related to control over political decisions, but these are two

different things.

Spitz seems to be confused by Burnham's argument in this connection. He interprets Burnham as follows:

> It is, then...the way in which society is organized, the structure of the economy, that determines who rules. This, and this alone, is where we are to look for the source and the explanation of power; for those who control the economic institutions of society control, ipso facto, the political institutions of the society.[13]

Burnham does not actually say that those who control the economic institutions of society control, ipso facto, the political institutions. The closest he comes to such a statement is his claim that, in practice, (not ipso facto) the bureaucrats can be assured of the resources they need for political control only through their collaborating with and, in the end, subordinating themselves to those who are actually directing the process of production.[14] We shall return to this problem in discussing how the managers become the ruling class.

Moreover, the sense in which the structure of the economy is the source and explanation of power is that, within certain limits, if we know whether the economy is structured along, say, agricultural, feudal, capitalist, or managerial lines, then we know which socio-economic group, landlords capitalists, or managers has the dominant power in that society. We do not know, thereby, how any particular person got to be a member of his group or class, nor of what other class he may become a member. Burnham is particularly careful to note that he is not talking about individuals and the explanation

of their power and position in society, but of classes whose memberships are variable, more or less so, depending upon the type of society.[15]

There is a further difficulty with Burnham's concept of dominance, in addition to the possible confusions mentioned above. Apparently, a class is dominant when it exercises some unspecified "special degree " of control. How is the "special degree" of dominance to which he refers to be measured? It is not at all clear how some degree of control "greater than" that exercised by the rest of society is to be determined. Nor does it help much to suggest, as Burnham does on occasion, that it is a degree of control sufficiently greater than the rest of society to resist attempts to restrict that control. We are still left with the problem of determining when that point is reached. This is an important matter for two reasons. For one, if Burnham does not specify how much control the managers must have before he will admit that the "revolution" has taken place, we have no way, in principle, of disconfirming his hypothesis. To the claim that his theory is false because the managers do not have enough control to be considered the ruling class, Burnham could always reply that they do not <u>yet</u> have the degree of control he had in mind, but eventually they will.

Even more important, if managerial rule is going to conflict with attempts of the rest of society to restrict its control, it would be most desirable to know where to draw the line to prevent the managers from attaining such a degree

of dominance. It is conceivable that by anticipating managerial dominance, instead of allowing things to go on as they have been going, steps could be taken to avert managerial rule. Of course, Burnham does not overtly consider this possibility because it would falsify his prediction if effective steps were to be taken. Yet, unless the managerial revolution is inevitable, which Burnham does not, in fact, claim (he claims only that it is probable), then there may be such possibilities. We shall return to this point, also. Suffice it for now to say that it is characteristic of the realists to minimize any possibilities which might exist for altering the facts as they see them.

This brings us to the bearing of the concept of the ruling class on the existence of democracy. Spitz interprets Burnham's position as implying that democracy is impossible. This view needs to be investigated in detail.

First, let us consider how Burnham's position might be construed to be incompatible with democracy. Suppose we assumed that Burnham was saying the following things: that in any society there is a group of persons, always a minority, who make the policy decisions of the society, and who make such decisions without regard for the rest of the society; that this same group of persons are those members of the society who are able to prevent their policy decisions from being reversed because of their functional role in the economic process, and that the members of this group have

some common economic characteristic not shared by other members of the society; and that this same group of persons does make the policy decisions of the society as long as, and only as long as, the existing economic relationsips that structure the society are maintained. Then it would follow that in no society could there be a group of persons constituting a majority of that society who could either make the policy decisions or reverse the policy decisions of the above specified minority, so long as the existing economic relationsips are maintained in that society. It would seem under these circumstances that democracy would be impossible. This is apparently Spitz's interpretation of Burnham's argument. At least he says that Burnham's argument rests on three assumptions and an inference very much like those above.

> The assumptions are, first, that there are permanent and inexorable laws of history and of politics and that the principle of oligarchy--a ruling class irresponsible to the ruled--is such a law; second, that the ruling class is an economic class, exercising supreme power through its functional role in the economic process; and third, that the ruling class rules by virtue of structural or organizational necessity, by the relationships that ensue from the imperatives of the economic order. If these assumptions are true, the inference that democracy is impossible is unavoidable.[16]

I shall try to show that Spitz's claims regarding these assumptions are not justified, and that his concluding inference does not necessarily follow. In the process, a clearer picture of Burnham's actual argument should emerge so that attention can be focused on its significant weaknesses.[17]

The first assumption, as Spitz has stated it, is that "there are permanent and inexorable laws of history",

and that the principle of the ruling class is such a law. Spitz recognizes that the assumption involves two features: one, the descriptive aspect, and the other, a "prognosis of the future". He admits that the descriptive part is generally valid. However, as it applies to the future, it is "most vulnerable". Spitz calls it a "monistic and mechanical theory of causation", a "single law to the exclusion of the element of chance". It assumes an inherent and invariable constancy in the order of nature which no number of past observations alone can prove; it ignores that history is not subject to "iron laws"; it cannot be proved; it cannot be refuted; it casts into the "dim recesses of insignificance man's intelligence and his aptitudes"; it is alien to all but the "dogmatic fatalist"; it is, at best, "an effort in clairvoyance"; and in asserting such a view, Burnham assumes the guise of a "prophet".[18]

There are several points to be made here. To quote Burnham, "no theory about what actually happens and will happen is ever 'certain'. It can never, whether in the field of physics or history or anything else, be anything except more or less probable on the evidence."[19] While any scientific theory about the future assumes a certain constancy in the order of nature, it does not necessarily assume an "invariable" constancy. Predictions can range in probability .50 to .99 and still not assume invariable constancy; although for <u>practical</u> purposes very high probabilities can be taken as certain. Sociological or historical "laws" based on

circumstances that have always been found to hold in a society (as Spitz admits is the case with the principle of the ruling class) have a sufficiently high degree of probability so that we can assume, for all practical purposes, that they will hold true in the future. Such hypotheses reflect no more on the limitations of the intelligence and aptitude of particular men, than do the general principles of psychology. But, of course, the principles of psychology do reflect on the intelligence and aptitudes of those individuals who exemplify them. That is, if we find that a particular individual scores low on an intelligence test, this reflects on his intelligence. It does not follow, however, that he is incapable of doing anything highly intelligent. Similarly, it does not follow from the principle of the ruling class that any specific individuals are not capable of either ruling or of losing power, as the case may be. It does tell us that no group of persons will have the dominant power at a given time if they constitute a majority of their society. It is not groups that have intelligence and aptitudes, but men as individuals. The only reflection on men as individuals here is that they probably would be unable to create a majority that rules. Accordingly, if this principle is true, then a political theory which requires that a majority rule is analogous to a moral principle that requires that everyone make only rational decisions. In either case, the fact that the norms cannot be completely satisfied need not be reason to reject them. Burnham does not claim that it is impossible for the majority to rule;

therefore, nothing follows as to whether or not it ought to rule. It might be a mistake to expect such a principle to be satisfied very often, but this would be a mistake of fact, not of prescription.

We cannot, then, say that Burnham is opposed to majority rule simply because he shows that it is rare. The point is, rather, that the uncertainty of what he would prescribe in the light of the facts leaves him open to misinterpretation. However, this is not Spitz's argument. Spitz himself has been misled.

It might be objected that Burnham is attempting to predict history, which cannot be done. Spitz, for example, says:

> Men have long sought to make history a science, even indeed an absolute science that would fix with mathematical certainty the path that human society has got to follow, but all attempts to realize this hope of predictability have up to now failed.[20]

There is an ambiguity in this as to whether he means that general sociological phenomena cannot be predicted over long periods of time, or simply that no one knows <u>exactly</u> what is going to happen next in the world. We must distinguish the different degrees of predictability which it is reasonable to expect of various phenomena. Unreasonably specific historical predictions are made at the risk of the predictor. Burnham, in fact, makes specific predictions which have turned out to be bad ones. Russia has not split apart into an eastern and western section, and Germany did not win World War II.[21] But these predictions are not of the sort involved

in the theory of the ruling class. There no names are named.

Spitz insists that chance is important in history in order to show the error of Burnham's historical determinism.[22] When it comes to specific individuals, or even nations, I would agree in the sense that there are too many unknown variables involved in any single instance to apply a general sociological principle without the chance that the instance in question will be an exception to the principle. The trouble with chance occurrences is just that they do not conform to expectations. If Spitz wants to rest his case on the unexpected, then there would hardly be any point in his defending a political theory that involved standards of how men ought to act. One of the points in having principles of conduct is to guide men in their actions. But if the actions of men are so much a matter of chance, how can they be guided by such principles? We must be able to foresee, to a significant extent, the consequences of our actions if morality is to serve as a helpful guide. The ability to predict human behavior is as essential to morality as it is to social science.[23]

To grant, as Spitz does, that the ruling class may be a tendency, is to raise the more serious question of how great a tendency it is. This he does not discuss except to say that Burnham exaggerates. There is, however, a considerable weakness in simply claiming the existence of a tendency. As Morris R. Cohen points out, in the social sciences, where single factors cannot be easily isolated and independently

measured, reliance on the notion of "tendency" produces an essential indeterminateness in discussion. Conflicting assertions of opposite tendencies may be supported by dismissing contrary instances as exceptions. As a result, diverse schools can set up diverse principles "all with the same show of truth."[24]

Spitz treats the principle of the ruling class as though Burnham were claiming it to be a law of history. Burnham's principle prediction is, actually, not that there will always be a ruling class, but the more limited prediction of a specific social change. He claims only that the current period of social change will end with the managers in the position of the ruling class, instead of the capitalists; and that society will take on the economic structure of the managerial economy, in place of that of the capitalist economy. The difficulties with this prediction are great. For one thing, the justification given for the prediction does not depend on the principle of the ruling class, nor on any <u>single</u> sociological principle, as Spitz suggests. What Burnham purports to explain is why one ruling class is to be replaced by another. His argument is that the capitalists are tending to give up direct control of the instruments of production to the managers. The "big bourgeoisie" are withdrawing from finance to a life of luxury and entertainment.[25] Accordingly, the managers assume more and more of the prerogatives of control over the instruments of production. But the real crux of the matter is that the capitalist

will be removed from even their indirect control when the state takes over de facto "ownership" of the instruments of production by regulating access and preferential treatment. Until this happens, the capitalists are still the rulers. The puzzle is how the state is able to take over de facto control of the instruments of production. As Burnham conceives it, at first the capitalists oppose the extension of government ownership. Even though the government bureaus and agencies are set up and functioning, the capitalists try to keep control of their activities in order to benefit themselves. At some point, however, the balance swings so that the greater amount of economic life becomes subject to the bureaus' control. This undermines the capitalists' vantage point, and the managers, through the bureaus, swing into dominance.[26] What is not explained is why, in spite of the opposition of the ruling class, government control is allowed to extend so far. Here Burnham falls back on the "full historical implications of the process".[27] What has been taking place is increased governmental ownership and control, he points out. "All the evidence at our disposal indicates that the development will continue, will in fact proceed at a rate much speedier in the future than that of the past; and that the transition will be completed."[28] The difficulty is that this is little more than a restatement of the theory. The evidence to support it is not supplied by Burnham, except to cite as examples Russia and Germany who were supposedly in the advanced stages of the managerial revolution.[29]

Neither Russia nor Germany is a satisfactory example of Burnham's theory, however. Russia never had a strong capitalist ruling class, and was not a fully developed capitalist society when the 1917 revolution took place. Germany was and still is a highly developed capitalist society. Nor was the period of Hitler's dictatorship one of managerial rule, but chiefly of military rule. Even so, as Burnham suggests, "the theory of the managerial revolution will not be disproved merely by showing, as it can be shown, that difficulties confront it; it will have also to be shown that fewer difficulties confront some alternative hypotheses..."[30] There are, however, alternative hypotheses, which, it seems to me, he fails to show to be less adequate than his own.[31]

The next two assumptions which Spitz attacks bear on the nature of the ruling class and its rule. The first of these, that the ruling class is solely an economic class, Spitz holds, depends on three propositions. One, that economic power is always concentrated in the hands of a particular economic group. Two, that this economic or managerial group is a socially integrated class resting on a community of economic function. Three, that control of economic power by this social class (the managers) ipso facto gives them control of political power.[32]

Spitz has two general points to make against the first proposition. The first is that reference to a particular economic group like the "managers" and its "control" oversimplifies matters because "management" and "control"

are "web-like complexities" that cannot intelligibly be reduced to a simply monistic analysis. His second point is that different groups may control different aspects of the social mechanism so that one group which controls one aspect may block the dominance of those who control another aspect.[33] In other words, there is a kind of "balance of power" among these different groups.

On the first point, Spitz seems to forget that Burnham is careful to specify what he means by the "managers", and what their "control" involves.[34] We can hardly say that he has oversimplified a concept which he himself defines for his own purposes. There is nothing illegitimate about Burnham's procedure. The reader, however, must not be misled by taking these terms in their ordinary sense. The real danger lies in the temptation on the part of the theorist to make his argument appear stronger than it actually is by equivocating with the two senses of his key terms. In fact, Burnham does succumb to this temptation, as I shall point out.

On Spitz's second point, we have an example of the kind of issue which can arise over tendencies. Burnham can say that Spitz is thinking of the exceptional cases where labor or government has blocked managerial power.[35] He can say two things about taking exceptions as the basis for the assertion that managers do not always rule. For one, it is not altogether to the point, as he is not claiming that the managers always rule, but that there will be a time when they do so. Secondly, Spitz implicitly acknowledges that some

group usually does have dominant or ruling control because his examples are exceptions.

Furthermore, the idea of a balance of power in society is questionable in itself. The fact that there are different groups which control different aspects of the social mechanism does not assure their independence. As C. Wright Mills points out:

> The major vested interests often compete less with one another in their efforts to promote their several interests than they coincide on many points of interest and, indeed, come together under the umbrella of government.[36]

Of course, it will be difficult to say, at times, where the dominant power lies, since we are in a period of transition. The problem here is one of determining when the tendency of the managers to increase their control reaches a point where we can say without question that they have the ruling power. Burnham does not give us a yard stick except for the obvious times when the ruling class exercises totalitarian control. Even this basis for judging may not apply to the United States, for example; as it is possible, according to Burnham, that the United States could accomplish the transition to managerial society in a "comparatively democratic fashion".[37] Thus, while Spitz's points are not particularly damaging, Burnham's defense is not particularly forceful.

The next proposition to consider is that the economic or managerial group is a socially integrated class resting on a community of economic function. Spitz's objection to

this is that "men do not simply fall into a logically prescribed homogeneous class according to some particular deterministic scheme."[35] Class, Spitz feels, involves more than just function. "It involves, in addition, a socio-psychological feeling of loyalty or allegiance from the standpoint of the one classified." He points out that if we take economic function, we get one set of classes; whereas, if we take economic status or attitude we get another set. In addition, function cannot by itself adequately explain the nature of economic or social power.[39]

There is some sort of confusion here. Spitz says that men do not simply fall into a "logically prescribed" class. Then, he seems to contradict himself in saying that they can be classified by economic function, or economic status, or religious belief, etc. For all the other classifications he mentions are equally "logically prescribed", it seems to me. What Spitz must mean is that if one uses the term "class" in a social or political context, one ought to use it in a certain way. One ought to use it so as to include not only those who logically fall into the class by the classifier's specifications, but also those who have feelings of allegiance to it, even though they may not come up to specifications in other respects. Spitz is not criticizing Burnham for being inconsistent, but for being wrong in his notion of class. It is a wrong notion because it results in class inclusions which are homogeneous in one respect only. It fails to consider the attitudes of the

ones classified. But there are any number of characteristics one might take as necessary for class membership.

The objection should be, not that Burnham has picked the wrong feature to define his class, but that the feature he has taken is rather arbitrary. That is, Burnham's theory, in effect, shows only that if we make a characteristic like economic control fundamental to our theory and explain everything else in terms of it, other characteristics such as feelings of allegiance may appear to be independent variables. Whereas, if we were to take feelings of allegiance as basic to our theory, it might turn out that economic control would appear to be an independent variable. Which characteristic we take as fundamental depends upon our interest, and the resulting theory will explain things relative to those interests.[40]

If, on the other hand, Burnham is taken as assuming that economic function alone is relevant to determining who rules in a society, that is another matter. Perhaps what Spitz wants to say is that <u>in fact</u>, not in principle, the managerial function by which Burnham defines the managerial class is not suited to his concept of the ruling class. It puts people together in the ruling class who may be opposed to each other's decisions at times regardless of the function they all perform. Therefore, it could not be said that they constitute a single ruling class. The situation is more like several ruling classes jockeying for position. However, it seems to me that whether or not we regard a number of persons

or groups involved in making the important decisions in a society to be a single class depends, again, upon what our interests are. If we are interested in seeing to what extent the decisions made are, on the whole, harmonious, whatever their frame of reference, then we will not be too concerned with how many different groups participate in their making. But if we are interested in the making of strictly political, as opposed to economic decisions, we may be inclined to see significant differences among those who "rule". Differences of interest or allegiance within a functionally prescribed group does not mean that such a group cannot act as a homogeneous unit. Consider, for example, the United States Supreme Court. Here is a class of persons performing a ruling function. Their decisions are among the most coherent and harmonious that are made in policy matters in this country. Yet, there is no doubt that each member has feelings of allegiance that strongly influence his decision, and that there are many occasions when the court is quite divided. Citizens are often unhappy about widely split decisions and seem to think such decisions have less validity than others. However, it is the final Court decision that rules, and for all practical purposes the members of the Court can be taken as a homogeneous unit.

Spitz's confusion over the relation between the managerial function and class rule does point to something about which Burnham is not clear. Burnham defines the managers as the functional class of persons who are "actually managing

on its technical side, the actual process of production."[41] The ruling class, it may be recalled, is defined as that group which exercises a special degree of control over access to the instruments of production and receives preferential treatment in the distribution of the products thereof. So it is that, "those who control the State, those whose interests are primarily served by the State are the ruling class under the structure of state-owned economy."[42] In managerial society, there is supposedly no sharp separation between political officials and "captains of industry". "The captain of industry is, by virtue of his function, at the same time a state official."[43] This seems to imply that the managers are state officials in the sense that they simply act to carry out state regulations regarding the instruments of production over which they have <u>direct</u> control. If this is what Burnham means, then it is hardly appropriate to consider the managers the ruling class when they exercise control only on the authority and decision of the bureaucrats. This is not the way he looks at it, however. The political bureaucrats are limited in two respects. They must secure some measure of acceptance from a considerable portion of the masses, and they have a need for enormous resources for wars, etc., which will make them subordinate to those actually directing the processes of production. "The managers are, then, to be the ruling class."[44] This line of reasoning is somewhat dubious, especially in the case of the Soviet Union. From the first Five-Year-Plan in 1928, to March, 1957, Soviet

industry was under highly centralized bureaucratic control. Yet, the inefficiency of this control did not seem to be a sufficiently decisive factor to make the managers of the industrial plants the ruling class, in Burnham's sense. "Soviet bureaucrats in Moscow would send equipment they controlled from one end of the country to the other rather than allow local managers to get supplies from nearby plants run by rival ministries."[45] Granted, things are being changed. With the new decentralization program the managers may come to exert some influence. As Gunther puts it, "The new managerial class, with substantial local authority, is almost bound in time to exert a loosening political influence throughout the country."[46] This is still a long way from their being the dominant power.

Another consideration which counts against the managers' becoming the dominant power is the acceptance by the "masses" which the ruling class must have in a state-owned economy. The masses, Burnham says, are a social force tending against oppression and class rule of any kind.[47] That makes the position of the managers very awkward. Forced labor, Burnham claims, will be a feature of managerial economy and is an important reason why this economy will replace that of the capitalists.[48] If the masses oppose such oppression, how can the managers gain their acceptance? "The masses will be curbed partly by armed suppression, partly through the consolidation of the managerial institutions and ideologies..."[49] One of the inconsistencies in Burnham's case, then, is that in order to secure dominance over society the managers must

create a managerial economy which depends on the use of forced labor. At the same time, they cannot acquire dominance without the acceptance of the masses. But the masses will be opposed to forced labor, and they will be opposed to armed suppression. Without these methods, the managers cannot rule, on Burnham's thesis. With the opposition of both the masses and the capitalists it is particularly perplexing how a purely functional group like the managers will acquire social dominance when they are not even, for the most part, pushing consciously to become the ruling class.[50] I must agree with Spitz in that the functional nature of the managerial class certainly does not explain how the managers will acquire their economic or social power. Nor does Burnham explain it satisfactorily in any other way.

Spitz makes two final points under his general criticism of Burnham's idea of the ruling class as an <u>economic</u> class. One point is that economic power is not sufficient to rule, and the other is that it cannot be dominant if other factors are also necessary. Both these points rest on confusions.

As to the first point, Spitz argues that Burnham, in effect, admits what he denies in allowing that control of economic power is necessary but not sufficient if one is to rule. Political power must be had too.[51] The economic power Spitz refers to is that of control of the instruments of production. For Burnham, control of the instruments of production amounts to <u>de facto</u> ownership or control of the

major instruments of production. Thus, economic power is to be exercised through political power in the hands of the bureaucrats. There is no inconsistency here. Where Burnham falls down is in sharply distinguishing direct technical control of industry from the indirect bureaucratic control and placing emphasis on the former. What is at issue in Spitz's formulation is whether de facto control of production is the dominant means of control of society, including bureaucratic power, or whether bureaucratic power or legislative power is the dominant means and controls the powers of ownership. So far as Burnham's prediction goes, it is hardly meaningful to ask this since all these powers will be in the hands of the bureaucrats. When it comes to his description of capitalist society, then we can ask this question. He clearly maintains that private ownership by the capitalists gives them dominant power over that of the politicians in capitalist society.[52] Spitz's examples of contrary instances are the effect of the Napoleonic code on the economic system of France, the effect of the Labour Government in England, and state regulation of cartels in Germany in 1923 and 1930. These appear to be specific exceptions, however, and not statistically significant enough to make the case that the capitalists did not have the dominant power. It may be that capitalists have been able to take advantage of such efforts at regulation so as to strengthen their position.

Spitz goes on to make a more fundamental confusion in his second point. After indicating that many factors enter

into social power--personality, tradition, military, etc.--Spitz concludes that since these are all necessary, therefore it cannot be claimed that any one is the primary or dominant one.[53] Where two or more factors are both necessary in the causal nexus, he argues, no one factor is sufficient, no one is more fundamental, no one "controls". The confusion here is cleared up, I think, when we consider the following analogy. A human being must have a voluntary nervous system to control his behavior; he must also have muscles to exercise that control. Neither alone is sufficient to do the job. Yet, if we were to be asked which of these two factors exercises the dominant control, we would have to reply, the voluntary nervous system. It makes perfectly good sense to say that although neither of these factors is sufficient by itself, one of them is clearly dominant over the other in the control exercised over behavior. Accordingly, it is quite sensible to hold that the economic factor is the dominant factor in social control. The difficulty is not that no one factor can be dominant if several are necessary, but rather in determining which of the several necessary factors is the dominant one. In the case of nerves and muscles, there is a definite causal sequence involved.

When it comes to the causal relationship between the many factors which enter into social power, it is not so obvious whether changes in the economic factor precede or follow from changes in the other factors. Actually Burnham does not take the economic factor to be one giving dominant

control. The economic factor is rather a criterion for determining which group has the dominant control, as we shall see.

The last of Burnham's assumptions which Spitz takes up is that of rule by organizational necessity. The objection here is similar to that regarding the ruling class as an historical law.

> Granted the imperatives of social organization, granted even the anti-democratic tendencies inherent in our present industrial structure, there is yet a wide field in which man himself can move to select from among several alternatives that which he deems most useful or valuable to himself. Man is not merely the servant, he is also the master of organizational imperatives.[54]

This is noble sentiment. Surely, as Spitz suggests, men have caused technological and economic change. Surely, men do choose from among several alternatives according to their goals and purposes. But all this is beside the point.

The choices men make as individuals are not denied. Some men <u>are</u> able to master organizational necessities. Some of them will become rulers; some, simply avoid being ruled. To master the organizational imperatives does not mean, however, that one has made them his slave. What is implied is that by understanding how they work one is able to utilize those imperatives to his own advantage. Just as one can master the game of chess so as to make winning decisions, one can master the principle of the ruling class to make equally effective decisions. If the theory of rule by organizational necessity is true, then what one cannot do is to enable a majority to rule <u>in a way that violates that</u>

necessity. It just would not work. To assert this is no more "fatalistic" than to assert that the average man will not live past the age of seventy. It says nothing about any particular man, but refers to large numbers over long periods of time. As particular men are not the matter of dispute, let us move on to the final and major topic to be discussed.

We come now to the question of the impossibility of democracy. Our discussion up to this point has been primarily concerned with straightening out possible confusions, as illustrated by Spitz's criticisms, in interpreting Burnham's basic position regarding the managerial revolution. Spitz has claimed that if the assumptions which he attributes to Burnham are correct, then the inference that democracy is impossible is unavoidable. Spitz has tried to show that the assumptions are not correct, and that, therefore, the inference does not in fact follow. But as we have seen, Spitz either misinterprets Burnham, or fails to establish the invalidity of his assumptions. Therefore, it may still be that the inference must be drawn that democracy is impossible. Since Spitz does not rest his case on his arguments against the preceding assumptions, it is fitting to study his remarks on this final point in detail.

Spitz regards Burnham's theory to be "anti-democratic". In his introductory remarks, Spitz says that Burnham does not make his position clear as to whether democracy is impossible or merely difficult. Even so, Spitz thinks that it

would appear from Burnham's argument that democracy is, in fact, a principle incapable of realization, for it is in conflict with the existence of a ruling class.[55] This, however, is Spitz's conclusion, not Burnham's. Burnham says that the existence of a ruling class is in no way incompatible with democracy.[56] Spitz apparently feels that Burnham's attempt to show that the "principle of democracy" is in practice incapable of realization, amounts to arguing that we ought not to espouse the democratic principle nor attempt to maximize it. This line of reasoning is unsound on its own grounds, but Burnham's argument may well have this prescriptive effect. While it is unfair to call Burnham "anti-democratic", suggesting that he is opposed to democracy, Burnham's realism makes his position quite susceptible to Spitz's interpretation. In his discussion of the functional relationships in society, Burnham seems to raise serious obstacles to democracy. By emphasizing the obstacles rather than the aids to democracy which he also mentions, Burnham causes Spitz to ignore those aspects of his theory favorable to democracy. Spitz's mistaken impression of Burnham's normative views are not altogether unjustified. If Burnham were simply interested in giving a scientific account of his hypothesis of social change, he would not have needed to stress the difficulties facing democracy. The fact that he stresses difficulties rather than advantages does indicate something about Burnham's normative views, but not necessarily what Spitz thinks it does.

Difficulties can be warnings and challenges, as well as discouragements. Whether Burnham's theory challenges or discourages depends a great deal upon one's concept of democracy. It is Spitz's unclarity about Burnham's conception of democracy that causes him to find Burnham discouraging. In order to see that this is the case, let us consider what both he and Burnham mean by "democracy".

The central question is, as Spitz says: What is democracy? According to Burnham:

> Democracy is a political system where policy is decided, directly, or indirectly, by a majority, and where minorities, differing in their opinion from the majority, have the right of political expression and the opportunity, thereby, of becoming a majority.[57]

Spitz accepts this definition but wants to place emphasis on somewhat different implications of it than does Burnham. What bothers Spitz is Burnham's stress on minority rights. He does not question that minority opposition is essential. But it is only the negative aspect of the positive principle of the right of the majority to have its way. It is the right of the majority, Spitz asserts, that Burnham categorically and absolutely denies.[58] To justify this contention, Spitz points out two things. One is that Burnham insists that in all societies the minority, not the majority, determines public policy. The other point is that the crucial right of minority opposition is restricted to a section of the ruling class, itself a section of the elite.

The first point can be disposed of as a simple confusion by Spitz of the right of the majority with the actual

practice of the majority. Burnham never "categorically and absolutely" denies any right of the majority. When he says that the majority does not in fact determine public policy, he is not denying their right to do so. By asserting that less than half the eligible voters in this country determine who gets elected to office, we do not thereby deny that the majority of voters has the right to elect.

The second of Spitz's points is more interesting. If the right of minority opposition is no more than the right of a minority within the elite, then this is clearly not the minority opposition democracy requires, he claims. What kind of minority opposition is it then that democracy does require? "The essence of democracy is... the determination of public policy through the free play of conflicting opinions."[59] Here Spitz suggests that minority opposition must give rise to conflicting opinions that are allowed free expression if it is to be significant. He does Burnham an injustice in leaving us with the impression that no group within the elite can provide significant opposition to the ruling minority. Burnham goes on to say that the effect of such opposition, even though by a group within the elite, is to enable the masses to limit and control, indirectly, the power of their rulers. Furthermore, oppositions which do not express genuine social forces are as trivial as the "old court jesters".

> It is only when there are several different major social forces, not wholly subordinated to any one social force, that there can be any assurance of liberty, since only then is there the mutual check and balance that is able to chain power.[60]

What is required for Burnham is some sort of independent institutional base in society so that opposition groups can put up meaningful resistance without being wiped out "at an official's casual nod."[61] There is no argument here, however, because Spitz quite agrees with the necessity of this structural decentralization for democracy.[62]

We have not yet put our finger on what troubles him. Perhaps it is this:

> It is crucial to democracy that no one class or caste should permanently possess political control...If the majority is compelled to move within the contours of policy set for it by a ruling class, the majority cannot be said to rule; and democracy, at the same time that it insists on minority opposition, insists also on majority rule.[63]

To see what Spitz is doing here we must refer back to his discussion about Burnham's concept of class. There, Spitz made it plain that he did not agree with Burnham's notion of class because it neglected the attitudes and allegiances of the classified. He criticized it for being purely functional. However, in this statement, Spitz places "class" in disjunction with "caste", as though Burnham were talking about a closed group defined, not only by allegiances and attitudes, but by birth and tradition. Burnham's classes are essentially functional, and are not, by any means, necessarily closed. In his discussion of the current social transition, Burnham is clearly thinking of his classes as being open to anyone regardless of race, color, or creed, provided only that they meet the functional specifications for membership. The open quality of the ruling class, while not that of "ideal democ-

racy", at least should be acknowledged for what it is. It is the main point of Burnham's thesis that, not only will the individual members of the ruling class change, but the very socio-economic character of the membership as a whole will change. It is the changing features of the ruling class that bears the uncomfortable implications for democracy, not its permanent features. The danger is just that the ruling class will come to consist of the same persons who function as state officials. (This would be the danger, that is, if Burnham were consistent.) When ownership of the instruments of production is taken over by the state, then the power and privilege vested in ownership that defines the ruling class, shifts from the capitalists to the managerial class. In answer to Spitz, we can say, therefore, that no one class does permanently possess political control, because that political control is now changing hands.

The confusion is over whether the ruling class is a political class, defined as the class which makes the policy decisions of a society, or whether it is an economic class, defined as the class which owns the major instruments of production. At times, when Spitz talks about a "ruling class", he seems to be thinking of a class that determines policy decisions directly. Burnham's argument is that the economic class of owners, functional de facto owners or controllers, rules in the sense of being socially dominant. The emphasis is on social dominance, not political dominance. In his discussion of capitalist society, he recognizes that the

capitalists do not directly make political policy decisions. "The rulers of capitalist society, as in every society, were those who ruled the economy; and these were not the persons who held the offices of political administration."[64] He even calls the capitalist state a "limited" state. Spitz's criticism misses Burnham's argument because he approaches it on a different plane. What Burnham is primarily concerned with as his criterion of rule is who gets the economic or material benefits and privileges in the end. When he is pressed hard enough he will say that any group which has any special advantage in control over the instruments of production will be the more favored group in society and, therefore, a privileged or ruling class.[65] This is not the sort of thing that bothers Spitz at all. His main concern is that democracy not be identified with any politically privileged class.[66] His criterion for determining who rules is who makes the act of "final" decision in matters of political policy, and not who benefits materially by it. But the act of final decision could be made by a majority at the suggestion of a demagogue, so that "free play of conflicting opinions" is out of the question. Spitz realizes this. He goes so far as to say, "Clearly, then, simple and absolute majority rule is not the hallmark of democracy."[67] What we must further distinguish, he assures us, is the difference between the way the majority or the average man functions in the determination of policy, and the way the leaders function in that determination.

> The average man in exercising the sufferage does not himself as average man assume the reins of government; he merely decides who among the limited numbers of candidates shall be given those reins...It is not the average man who decides all issues of state; it is the leaders who so decide. And this is as it should be.[68]

We might well ask, "who are the leaders if not a ruling class?" In the end it looks like Spitz's whole argument has been over the use of terms! We ought not to call those who receive economic privileges the ruling class, he seems to say, because they do not necessarily have political privileges. It is only political privileges that make a group a ruling class. But, of course, we ought not to call the political leaders a ruling class because their political privileges depend upon some sort of majority "final" decision, such as election or public opinion. However, we ought not to take majority determination of policy too seriously because it is really the leaders who decide the issues of state.

This difference in emphasis comes out most clearly in Spitz's presentation of Burnham's prediction of a shift in the locus of sovereignty. Burnham's pointing out that the locus of sovereignty in the modern state is shifting from parliaments to administrative bureaus, is taken by Spitz to be tantamount to his asserting a refutation of the democratic theory.[69] In his attempt to show that Burnham is mistaken in thinking there is any refutation of the democratic theory involved and that Burnham has a false hypothesis about sovereignty, Spitz proceeds to discuss the meaning of "sovereignty" and the "principle of democracy". Here, again,

he accuses Burnham of mistakes, not because Burnham's facts are wrong, but because he uses terms in a way he ought not to. The trouble is, as I see it, that Spitz does not even criticize the use that Burnham actually makes of his terms. For example, Spitz says:

> In assuming that sovereignty is simply the fact of power, Burnham has failed to note a distinction fundamental to politics--the distinction between final and incidental decision, between supreme and derivative power.[70]

However, in his discussion of the locus of sovereignty Burnham states:

> We are not asking here who or what in some ultimate sense "runs things" in a society...Often in a society where sovereignty is localized in a parliament, the decisions later adopted by parliament are actually made by some institution of a firm majority party. Nevertheless, the phenomenon which I have called the "localization of sovereignty" is understood within a society, even if not by that name.[71]

The problem is not really that Burnham does not use the term "sovereignty" properly. Spitz is disturbed by Burnham's neglect of those who "run things" in some ultimate sense. It is not the mere act of decision, not the fact of power that is important, but the fact of supreme or ultimate power in the sense of <u>final</u> decision.[72] Furthermore, it is not particular institutions that are important to democracy, it is the <u>principle</u> that is important. The principle shows that the problem for democracy is that of "responsibility"--which means : "To ensure that the institutional forms respond to the public opinion which sustains them."[73]

Spitz is right in emphasizing the importance of the

principle of democracy, as he understands it. However, he confronts us here with two different considerations, the relative importance of which is not made clear. It is one thing to say that it is the final decision that counts in determining where the ultimate power lies, and quite another to say that in principle it is response to public opinion that ought to be taken most seriously. Which of these is more important? It would be a simple matter to say that when leaders are responsive to public opinion, then the public makes the final decision and therefore holds the ultimate power. But the notion of "responsibility" is ambiguous. Instead of simply meaning that leaders ought to be uncritically responsive to public opinion, it could mean that they ought to be "responsive" to the "public interest", or to their office, or to some other duty which may well conflict with an uncritical response to public opinion. In the latter sense of "responsible", leaders ought to make their decisions on the "merits of the case", as it were. If this principle were carried out it would not be true that the public made the final decision. In principle, ultimate power would have to be said to lie in the hands of the "responsible" leaders. This conception of democracy will be treated in the next chapter.

On the other hand, it might be argued that elections are an institutional form which makes leaders responsive to the public. In that case, if we took the "final decision" to rest with the voters who, at election time, are able to

exchange leaders so that the policies of an unresponsive administration can be reversed by the succeeding administration, then, the de facto ultimate power would lie in the hands of the politically active minority of voters who actually determine who shall hold office. We shall consider this view in Chapter IV.

Now, if it is not so important where the ultimate power is said to lie, so long as leaders are in some way responsive to the public, then Burnham shows as much concern for the principle of democracy as does Spitz. For this is also Burnham's chief concern when it comes to democracy. This is why he stresses the right and assurance of minority oppositions to the ruling class. Only the existence of oppositions can make leaders responsive to the people.[74] It is in this sense that Burnham thinks that democracy is not only possible but has existed in some capitalist societies and will exist in the managerial society. What is necessary is for some kind of institutional base for opposition groups to be established. It is not necessary that they be economic. Even though the economic structure of managerial society seems to raise obstacles to democracy, it is likely, Burnham argues, that democracy will develop in managerial society along other lines.[75]

The only explanation I can find for Spitz's interpreting Burnham as holding that there is no democracy and never can be, is that on Burnham's argument the ideal of democracy as self-government by the people is an illusion.

By emphasizing facts which show the ideal to be an illusion, Burnham must be against the very principle of democracy. It should be evident, as I have said, that this does not follow. Burnham's statements show concern for the principle of democracy, even in Spitz's sense. His predictions should have the effect of waking us up to the fact that even the principle of democracy will become trivial if there is no concrete way to insure its maximization--and he indicates that there are such ways.

While Burnham purports to have given a scientific theory only, we have seen that it has definite normative implications for those interested in preserving democracy. The facts by themselves are ambiguous. They can be interpreted as either favorable or unfavorable to some goal or other. Burnham seems to realize this, but he will not commit himself as to what ought to be done. Yet, considering that Burnham admits that there are possibilities for realizing democratic values, and considering that he assumes the reader will be unhappy about his predictions, the implication surely is that something ought to be done about them. Burnham is realistic. He wants us to face the facts. Concern for the principle of democracy would hardly justify us in ignoring the limitations which the facts place on it, if Burnham is right. Democracy continues to be possible. "It would, however, be an error," Burnham says, "for those who like democracy to be over-optimistic about it."[76] This is perhaps the clearest statement of Burnham's realism regarding the normative

implication of his theory. The inference which Spitz draws that Burnham is anti-democratic does not rest on an adequate interpretation of Burnham's theory.

What Burnham is actually against is too much optimism of the kind leading to the expectation of a democratic classless society--an expectation which he rejects in his attempt to refute socialism.[77] In addition, of course, he is against optimism about the persistence of capitalist democracy. However, the implications which the theory of the managerial revolution have for democracy in either of these senses hold only if the theory is sound. We have found a number of points on which to question its soundness. It is appropriate, therefore, to summarize our evaluation of it as a political theory.

"Democracy", Burnham says, "as a political system is in no way incompatible with class rule in society."[78] Yet, on the other hand, "democracy within a class society must be so limited as not to interfere with the basic social relations whereby the ruling class maintains its position of power and privilege."[79] The basic social relations that enable the ruling class to maintain its position of power and privilege are those of ownership control over the major instruments of production. In a state-owned economy, then, as Burnham predicts the managerial economy will be, it is control of the state that enables the ruling class to maintain its position. As I have argued earlier, Burnham fails to show that the managers would control the state in a state-owned economy. This leaves the bureaucrats in the position of the ruling

class. But the bureaucrats cannot be called a ruling class, according to Burnham, because they are limited in their control of the state by "the masses", if not by the managers. This is not convincing on Burnham's own grounds, as it is not a question of whether the ruling class is limited. The capitalist ruling class was limited in some respects. All that matters is that it have the dominant power in society. Nowhere does Burnham suggest that control by the masses ever amounts to a dominant power in society. If it should, then the masses would be the ruling class. But this hardly makes sense when the masses is just the undefined residue outside the ruling class. We are forced to the conclusion that if a state-owned economy does come about as Burnham predicts, then the bureaucrats will be the ruling class--but significantly limited by the masses so as to make their ruling position depend, not just upon the ownership functions they exercise, but also upon their response to the people who sustain them in office. The other alternative to Burnham's prediction is that the economy will not become sufficiently regulated by government to be functionally state-owned. The political implications of this would be that the capitalists remain the rulers and the state remains limited and highly democratic. It does not seem to me that Burnham has convincingly shown why or how the capitalists are going to lose their ruling position. To make his case he would have to give some of the statistics and reasons which he found so elusive.[80]

My conclusion is that Burnham's predictions are not sufficiently consistent, nor his reasoning convincing for there to be any particularly conclusive implications regarding capitalistic or managerial democracy to be drawn from them. Nor has Burnham shown that self-government in the sense of popular participation in the making of political decisions is impossible. He has largely ignored this question, restricting his political analysis to the "locus of sovereignty"--choosing not to discuss who "ultimately runs things". A more penetrating social study might show that participatory democracy is rare in a bureaucratic society, but Burnham has not attempted such a study.[81]

It is valuable to have predictions of social change such as Burnham's managerial revolution because they help us to anticipate what would happen if things continued to go as they are going. They serve to guide intelligent action. However, people differ in their reactions to predictions of undesirable consequences which may seem unavoidable. For some, such predictions would be a challenge to find ways to alter the course of events. For others, they would be a discouragement or excuse to simply accept what comes without making any effort to avoid the worst. The fact that it may be only natural for some people to be discouraged by dire predictions is no excuse for those who are aware of alternatives not to do all that they can to guide the others. By not offering such guidance on the excuse that people will probably do what they have done in the past, Burnham fails

in his responsibility to make clear what can be done. If the managerial revolution shows signs of frustrating democracy, Burnham should have been more specific than he has about how democracy could be preserved and how it ought to be preserved. It will not do to say that people are not likely to respond to such recommendations. The responsibility for the failure of people to respond to the challenges of their changing social and political conditions begins with those, like Burnham, who are in a position to make the intelligent suggestions and to point the way for others who have less insight into the possibilities.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. James Burnham, The Managerial Revolution (New York: John Day Co., 1941), p. 8. This work will be abbreviated hereafter as M. R..
2. Ibid., p. 6.
3. Ibid., pp. 71-72.
4. Ibid., p. 273.
5. Ibid., pp. 170-171.
6. James Burnham, The Machiavellians (New York: John Day Co., 1943), pp. 135-136.
7. Burnham, M.R., p. 25.
8. David Spitz, Patterns of Anti-Democratic Thought (New York: Macmillan Co., 1949).
9. Burnham, M.R., p. 171.
10. Ibid., p. 59.
11. Ibid., Chapter XIII.
12. Ibid., p. 190.
13. Spitz, p. 25.
14. Burnham, M.R., p. 158.
15. Ibid., p. 58.
16. Spitz, p. 26.
17. Spitz is too ready to read into Burnham's position the claims of other theorists such as Michels and Mosca (Spitz, pp. 18-23) who held views similar in some respects to Burnham's but with important differences. Granted that Burnham's ideas are derived from diverse sources, including Marx, knowledge of which gives insight into his assumptions, his argument should be weighed on its own merits. There is no point in being any more misled than we are already by the nature of the case.

18. Ibid., pp. 27-55.

19. Burnham, M.R., p. 274.

20. Spitz, p. 29.

21. Burnham, M.R., pp. 225-226.

22. Spitz, p. 30.

23. This issue is discussed more fully in Chapter V.

24. Morris R. Cohen, "Reason in Social Science," Readings in the Philosophy of Science, ed. Herbert Fiegl and May Brodbeck (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953), p. 673.

25. Burnham, M.R., pp. 100-101.

26. Ibid., p. 151.

27. Ibid., p. 117.

28. Ibid., p. 118.

29. Ibid., p. 152.

30. Ibid., p. 275.

31. Burnham considers two alternative hypotheses, capitalism and socialism, which he takes to be representative of all the relevant theories of history conflicting with his own (Ibid., pp. 29-57). It would be too much of a digression to attempt an adequate treatment of his analysis and criticism of these hypotheses here. In general, it can be said that what Burnham claims to have refuted are overly simplified formulations of the range of theories he purports to cover. The result is that his attempt to dismiss the alternative theories is not at all convincing.

32. Spitz, p. 30.

33. Ibid., p. 32.

34. Burnham, M.R., p. 272.

35. Spitz, p. 36.

36. C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 266-267. Mills also suggests that top levels of power may be obscured from observation by official or unofficial secrecy. (Ibid., p. 245.)

Robert Dahl, on the other hand, argues that the search for covert leaders behind the overt leaders of a community can lead to an infinite regress of explanations. He objects that a theory of this sort is quasi-metaphysical and not clearly subject to the test of empirical evidence. See Robert A. Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model," The American Political Science Review, LII, No. 2 (January, 1958), pp. 463-469.

37. Burnham, M.R., p. 272.

38. Spitz, p. 38.

39. Ibid., pp. 38-40.

40. See Ernest Nagel, "Some Issues in the Logic of Historical Analysis," Theories of History, ed. Patrick Gardiner (Glencoe: Free Press, 1959), pp. 373-385.

41. Burnham, M.R., p. 80.

42. Ibid., p. 122.

43. Ibid., pp. 156-157.

44. Ibid., p. 159.

45. Malcolm Muir, Newsweek (July 15, 1957), cited by John Gunther, Inside Russia Today (New York:Harper Bros., 1957), p. 365.

46. Gunther, p. 367.

47. Burnham, M.R., p. 166.

48. Ibid., pp. 130-133.

49. Ibid., pp. 166-167.

50. Ibid., pp. 73-74.

51. Spitz, p. 44.

52. Burnham, M.R., p. 61.

53. Spitz, p. 44.

54. Ibid., p. 48.

55. Ibid., p. 25.

56. Burnham, M.R., p. 113.

57. Ibid., p. 162.

58. Spitz, p. 51.

59. Ibid., p. 54.

60. Burnham, The Machiavellians, p. 249.

61. Burnham, M.R., p. 169.

62. Spitz, p. 55.

63. Ibid., p. 52.

64. Burnham, M.R., p. 156.

65. Ibid., p. 121.

66. Spitz, p. 52.

67. Ibid., p. 108.

68. Ibid., p. 109.

69. Ibid., p. 52.

70. Ibid., p. 53.

71. Ibid., p. 146.

72. Ibid., p. 53.

73. Ibid.

74. Burnham, The Machiavellians, pp. 246-248.

75. Burnham, M.R., p. 170.

76. Ibid., p. 171.

77. Ibid., pp. 38-57.

78. Ibid., p. 113.

79. Ibid., p. 168.

80. Ibid., p. 101, p. 116.

81. See Scott Greer, "Individual Participation in Mass Society," Approaches to the Study of Politics, ed. Roland Young (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1958), pp. 329-342. Greer concludes that "in a society with a democratic political structure and ideology democratic processes are relatively rare." (Ibid., pp. 340-341) He also hints, however, that steps might be taken to increase effective participation. (Ibid., p. 342.)

## CHAPTER III

## JOSEPH A. SCHUMPETER AND THE FACT OF LEADERSHIP

Instead of simply emphasizing certain features of democratic principles which seem most compatible with reality, as Burnham has done, the realist may attempt to reformulate democratic theory to make its principles correspond more closely to reality. This kind of reformulation differs significantly from a mere shift in emphasis. A theory which reformulates and redefines the democratic method makes a logical break with what had been prescribed. It changes the criteria for the realization of democracy. The realist, characteristically, attempts to justify his reformulation by reference to what he takes to be the facts of political life. He, therefore, makes the facts, or "reality", both the object and justification of his theory. Joseph Schumpeter's theory of the democratic method is a good example.[1]

Schumpeter's argument is set forth in the context of the economic and social theory of capitalism and socialism, but it can be treated as a self-contained thesis. The questions I propose to discuss are: (1) how successful is his case for his reformulation of the democratic method? and (2) to what extent should the normative ideas of a political theory, specifically democratic theory, be made to correspond to the facts?

Democracy can be viewed in many different ways. It can be seen as the defender of the individual, of society, of a way of life, of truth, wisdom, or justice. Burnham emphasized minority rights in his conception of democracy, and he saw the problem of democracy to be the need to keep rulers responsive to the people by providing an institutional basis for opposition groups. Schumpeter proposes to treat democracy as a political method. It is, for him, "a certain type of institutional arrangement for arriving at political... decisions."[2] He stresses the idea that it is a method to make the point that "being a political method, democracy cannot, any more than any other method, be an end in itself."[3] Accordingly, two claims are made about it. Since democracy is not an end in itself, it would be appropriate to resist its use if it had highly undesirable consequences. This is so, even though it is logically possible to treat a method as an end. In addition, democracy is given unconditional support only when it is expected to serve certain interests or ideals. However, it cannot always serve such interests, and, therefore, its support actually presupposes certain conditions under which it can be expected to work in ways we approve.[4]

Schumpeter's characterization of democracy, then, depends upon a sharp distinction between the method and the ends that the method is intended to realize. The suggestion is that, as a method, democracy is not sacred, but subject to alteration or rejection in favor of some other method if

it fails to bring about the interests and values for which it is designed. Casting the issue in this way makes it seem to be simply a pragmatic matter of determining the most favorable relation of means to ends. The value of democracy can be determined simply in terms of its successful achievement of certain ends. What is totally disregarded is the conception of the principle of democracy, not as a method, but as the political expression of certain moral concepts. A principle which is conceived of as embodying fundamental rights of every man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is neither a method nor an end in itself. It is a basic prescription of how men ought to act toward each other. By refusing to see democracy in this light, Schumpeter badly misconceives what is involved in reevaluating the theory. However muddled past thinking may have been about natural rights, social contracts, etc., the moral issues involved are begged rather than answered when democracy is regarded as just an expedient for arriving at other values not essentially related to it. This, I shall argue, is the effect of Schumpeter's analysis.

Schumpeter proceeds to point out that, since democracy is a method of decision-making, we ought to be able to characterize it by indicating by whom and how the decisions are made in it.[5] The definition of democracy as Rule by the People is insufficiently precise, however, if "ruling" is equated to "making decisions". He says that both the concepts of the "people" and "to rule" have many meanings which are

involved in the argument about democracy.[6] We have already noticed this in Spitz's criticism of Burnham. As we shall see in the case of Dahl,[7] the more we press the demand for precision, the less satisfactory these concepts become. Schumpeter, however, is not much concerned with precision, and soon abandons it for equally vague concepts of another sort. In any case, he asks how it is technically possible for "people", however defined, to rule. He says that, except in the case of "direct democracy" of the town meeting type, the people, as such, can never actually rule or govern. He considers and rejects the possibility of substituting "government approved by the people" for "government by the people". The substitution is rejected on the grounds that there are too many instances of autocracies and oligarchies which have commanded the unquestioned allegiance of the vast majority of their people. Even though these forms of government might do very well in securing what we believe the democratic method should secure, to identify them with democracy would be to include under democracies too wide a class of political arrangements.[8]

Since there are many possible forms in which the "people" may partake in the business of ruling or influencing or controlling those who actually rule, just where we draw the line between the democratic and the non-democratic seems to Schumpeter to be rather arbitrary, depending upon how we define the term "to rule". In order to reconcile actual or ideal forms of government to the ideology of Rule by the

People, he says, seventeenth and eighteenth century theories of democracy introduced a number of constructs, such as fictitious contracts, which are utterly valueless for us today.[9] The resulting theories about the sovereignty of the people and about delegation and representation reflected a social philosophy which Schumpeter describes as fundamentally rationalistic, hedonistic, and individualistic.[10]

While later sociological, psychological, and economic analyses showed the inadequacy of this social philosophy, much of it has survived in official phraseology and the rhetoric of the politician, says Schumpeter.[11] As I understand him, much like Burnham, Schumpeter wants to do two things in his consideration of the democratic method: (1) to demolish the traditional social philosophy underlying classical democracy; and (2) to frame a theory of democracy which "takes account of all the realities of group-wise action and of the public mind."[12]

His own realistic social philosophy, however, makes his "improvements" in democratic theory of doubtful value. He so states the facts that the success of his version of the democratic method requires conditions almost as ideal as those required by the version he criticizes. Thus, his realism seems somewhat one-sided. He uses the facts to tear down one theory of democracy, but goes beyond them when it comes to his own. Specifically, Schumpeter uses a socio-psychological analysis of individual behavior in general to show why "classical" participatory democracy cannot work;

then, he argues that, given certain exceptional qualities in leaders, his conception of democracy will work. He can be regarded as making explicit for popular democracy some of the negative implications of Burnham's type of functional social analysis. Schumpeter stresses the functional role of leaders in organizing interest groups and making political decisions. Whereas Burnham defined rulers in terms of economic function, Schumpeter discusses leadership as an essentially political function. While it is possible to interpret Burnham as favoring a system of democracy which keeps rulers responsible to the people, Schumpeter leaves no doubt in our minds that he is opposed to this conception of democracy. The fact of leadership becomes for him a norm of the democratic method. That is, he contends that we ought to reduce the ideas in our political theory about popular control over leaders to the point where those ideas correspond to the reality of the competition among leaders for votes. Politicians should be seen as professionals whose performance of their job, the making of political decisions, should not be interfered with by the people. Unlike Dahl, whom we shall discuss in the next chapter, Schumpeter is unwilling to consider any possible alternative interpretations of democracy other than the two he discusses. It is not at all clear that the range of facts is so narrow as to justify limiting the principle of democracy as Schumpeter does. There is great unclarity in his understanding of the relevance of his facts to normative political theory.

Schumpeter states what he calls the classical doctrine of democracy as follows:

> The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will.[13]

This doctrine, he claims, makes or implies certain assumptions which, if accepted, leave no problem as to how democracy is to be brought about. Some of these assumptions are that: (1) there is a Common Good; (2) every normal person can be made to see the Common Good by means of rational argument; (3) since everyone must agree on the specific policies implied by the Common Good, there is a common will which corresponds to what is for the Common Good; and (4) every member of the community takes an active and responsible part in controlling public affairs.

Schumpeter goes on to say that these assumptions are "so many statements of fact, every one of which would have to be proved" if we are to conclude that democracy will work.[14] He thinks that they can be easily disproved. The reader is tempted to infer fallaciously that if these assumptions can be disproved, we must conclude that democracy will not work. Schumpeter's argument would hold only if we accepted his claim that these are the assumptions implied by the "classical doctrine". But it is very doubtful, on the face of it, that these are the assumptions implied. It is hardly necessary for the realization of a common good that everyone see what that good is, or that everyone agree on

the specific policies implied by it. Nor would it be essential that every member of the community in fact take an active part in controlling public affairs. It may be, then, that there is another set of assumptions which are true and on the basis of which it would follow that democracy will work. Schumpeter's procedure, however, is both to bring in a new set of assumptions, and to change the definition of democracy. He makes no attempt to find a set of facts which will support the "classical" concept of democracy.

There is no such thing, he says, as a uniquely determined common good that all people could agree on or be made to agree on by the force of rational argument. The primary reason for this, he feels, is that the common good is bound to mean different things to different individuals and groups. Whether there is a common good or not, the resulting disagreement would have the effect of fundamental differences about ends themselves. If the common good cannot be identified, or agreed upon, Schumpeter thinks it will not make much sense to speak of a "general will" which is directed toward it.

Schumpeter grants that there is a sense in which a common will or public opinion might be said to emerge from the complex of individual and group volitions. However, it would lack any rational unity or sanction. It would not be realistic, he thinks, to fall back on the independence and rationality of the individual will. For the will of the individual citizen, as such, to exist and be a political factor <u>entitled to respect</u>,

> everyone would have to know definitely what he wants to stand for... This definite will would have to be implemented by the ability to observe and interpret correctly the facts that are directly accessible to everyone and to sift critically the information about the facts that are not.[15]

In addition, this will would have to derive clear and prompt conclusions as to particular issues from the facts according to the rules of logical inference.

Schumpeter is not saying that individuals are not due respect as human beings. He is simply claiming that the individual's desires are not due respect as a political factor unless they satisfy this criterion. This is very close to the argument for aristocracy, for surely it would be a rare person who is able to satisfy this criterion of respect. The important thing to notice, however, is that a criterion or principle for determining when the wills of individuals or groups of individuals are to be respected politically is not a fact which can be either proved or disproved. It is a normative presupposition of what the facts ought to be. But it is Schumpeter's presupposition and not that of classical democracy. At least, it is most unlikely that any democratic theorist ever imagined that everyone would have to meet such a standard if democracy were to work. Locke's position, for example, was not that everyone had to exercise his basic rationality, but, on the contrary, that no one could be depended upon to do so any more than anyone else. It was the universal tendency to abuse the use of power about which he was most concerned.

Schumpeter's conclusion, that it is unrealistic to rely on the independence and rationality of the individual, while true enough, does not weigh particularly against democracy. It would apply to any form of government at all. For, as Locke argued against Hobbes's absolute monarch, government of whatever form consists of individuals subject to the same influences and irrational tendencies as anyone else. There is no guarantee that any individual or group of individuals will be so strong and good as to resist the temptations to which human nature is subject--especially in political office. Is it necessary, then, to set the standards for democracy so high? If not, what is the point of Schumpeter's remarks? His point seems to be that we must be realistic to avoid setting up standards which cannot possibly be met. For Schumpeter, being realistic is an essentially negative approach. It involves pointing out those qualities of human behavior which work against rationality, social order, and harmony of interests. It involves pointing to those facts which are detrimental to democracy, rather than to those which are favorable to it. It does not actually involve, therefore, an impartial assessment of all the facts relevant to the success of democracy, if that was what Schumpeter intended.

To show that the conditions, which are purported to be required to make classical democracy work, are not, in fact, fulfilled, Schumpeter turns to the evidence of "human nature in politics". As his two main sources of evidence

against the hypothesis of rationality, Schumpeter refers to Le Bon's crowd psychology, and the observations of economists that consumers "do not quite live up to the idea that the economic textbook used to convey." Le Bon's work indicates that under conditions of crowd psychology, which are not necessarily confined to a physical agglomeration of people, individuals experience a reduced sense of responsibility and an increased sensitiveness to non-logical influences. Studies of behavior in economic situations show that an individual's sense of responsibility and reality is generally confined to things which are familiar to him and which he can directly influence or manage. Even so, Schumpeter points out, definiteness and rationality are not guaranteed by such familiarity or by a sense of reality and responsibility.[16]

What this comes to at the level of national issues is that the voters react promptly and rationally primarily to issues involving their immediate and personal pecuniary profit. But Schumpeter does not think this is the kind of rationality the classical doctrine of democracy requires. Voters prove themselves bad and corrupt judges of issues involving personal profit, he says. "Often they even prove themselves bad judges of their own long-run interests, for it is only the short-run promise that tells politically and only short-run rationality that asserts itself effectively."[17]

The situation gets worse when we move away from the private concerns, to the remoter areas of national and international affairs. Then the reduced sense of reality accounts

not only for a reduced sense of responsibility but also for the absence of effective volition. These, in turn, says Schumpeter, explain the ordinary citizen's ignorance and lack of judgment in matters of domestic and foreign policy. The fact that information is available does not seem to make any difference. "Without the initiative that comes from immediate responsibility," Schumpeter concludes, "ignorance will persist in the face of masses of information however complete and correct."[18]

Schumpeter draws two significant consequences from this. One is that the typical citizen will tend to yield to extra-rational or irrational prejudices and impulses in political matters. He will relax his usual moral standards and give in to "dark urges". The second consequence is that groups with an ax to grind are able to fashion and, within very wide limits, even to create the will of the people. "What we are confronted with in the analysis of political processes is largely not a genuine but a manufactured will."[19] Thus, the information and arguments that actually make an impression on the individual are probably the servants of political intent, Schumpeter claims.

> Since the first thing a man will do for his ideal or interest is to lie, we shall expect, and as a matter of fact we find, that effective information is almost always adulterated or selective.[20]

It will not do, he thinks, to stress the idea that the people are wiser in the long-run than any single individual, because history consists of a succession of short-run

situations that may alter the course of events for good.

This is an important point, for I think it is true that democratic theorists have tended to assume that the people can learn to correct their own mistakes without taking into account the possibility that some mistakes may be decisive.[21] Decisions to consume scarce resources, to wage war, to use atomic weapons, etc., can be carried out irreversibly in a relatively short time. If the people let someone else make their decisions for them, no one may be in a position to correct them. There is perhaps no guaranteeing that the people will not make mistakes or be "fooled" in a crucial way. On the other hand, this is not a problem peculiar to the people in general. It holds true for anyone. No man is infallible. Even the wisest man may be forced to make a hasty crucial decision that turns out to be a mistake. Schumpeter might want to argue that a properly trained elite would be in a better position to make the best possible decision than the people as a whole could ever be. But who is to decide what constitutes a "properly" trained elite and the "best possible" type of decision? Unless these questions are to be begged, it would seem that the democratic solution would be that the people themselves should decide who are to make the crucial decisions. Since it is important that the right men make the crucial decisions, the decision as to who those men shall be itself becomes a crucial decision. If the people are apt to make mistakes about one set of crucial decisions, why would they not be just as apt to make

mistakes about the other? Even if an elite did exist, there would be no way of insuring that its members were actually the ones who made the crucial decisions to which Schumpeter refers. The problem of making correct decisions, therefore, is not solved by removing from the people responsibility for the decisions which affect them decisively.

No doubt we must admit that many of the tendencies which Schumpeter has pointed out are true. What, then, is the alternative? As Schumpeter sees it, the task is to reformulate the democratic method so as to be "truer to life" and at the same time retain much of what it really means to its sponsors. This brings us to the positive side of his argument.

On the classical theory the selection of representatives was made secondary to the purposes of the democratic arrangement of vesting the power of deciding political issues in the electorate. Schumpeter proposes to reverse the roles of these two elements and make the deciding of issues by the electorate secondary to the election of the men who are to do the deciding. Accordingly, he defines the democratic method as "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."[22]

Schumpeter claims that this is a great improvement in the theory of the democratic process. His reasons for thinking so are: (1) it provides a reasonably efficient

criterion by which to distinguish democratic governments from others in a way the classical theory does not; (2) it leaves all the room we may wish for a proper recognition of leadership; (3) it does not neglect genuine minority interest groups; (4) it provides for free competition for a free vote; (5) it provides that everyone is free to compete for political leadership; (6) it recognizes that electorates do not normally control their political leaders; and (7) it means that the reins of government should be handed to those who command more support than do any of the competing individuals or teams.[23]

Now these are not all "improvements" of the same type, and it is rather perplexing why some of them are considered improvements at all. Noticeably absent is any suggestion, at this point, that there would be any improvement in the quality of political decisions resulting from this way of looking at the democratic process.

The first improvement relates to classification. Schumpeter thinks that by stressing the actual procedure involved it will be easier to verify whether or not a country or institutional arrangement is democratic. That is, a specific procedure will be easier to verify than whether or not the will and the good of the people has been served. The will and good of the people might be served in some cases by a government which could not be described as democratic.

The concept of competition for votes is appealing in respect to its ease of verification because it seems

to be so much clearer a concept than "rule by the people". Yet, nothing would be more simple than for a determined group in control of a state to manifest all the appearances of the proper procedures when the spirit of those procedures was entirely lacking. Both Hitler and Stalin maintained the mechanism of parliamentary government without giving any ground to the purpose of that institution--which was not simply to give successful leaders the power to decide. How can we be sure that the competition for votes is genuine? A mere show of competition would be unacceptable to Schumpeter, I take it. What must be verified, then, is the fact of competition. What are the conditions of genuine competition? Once we start making qualification about the procedure in terms of the expression of genuine difference of interest or opposition to existing rulers, we may get a criterion as difficult to verify as the one Schumpeter rejects. Yet, it is only by introducing qualifications about living up to the spirit of democratic institutions that we avoid reducing the concept to a mechanical form which could easily be perverted. Therefore, the improvement may not be as great as one might at first suppose.

The second respect in which Schumpeter thinks his definition of the democratic method is an improvement shows his realism. His definition gives "proper recognition" to leadership. The classical theory attributed to the electorate an unrealistic degree of initiative. The fact is, Schumpeter points out, that collectives act almost exclusively by

accepting leadership. Therefore, he says, propositions about the working and results of the democratic method that take account of this are bound to be "infinitely more realistic" than propositions which do not.[24] The classical theory failed to take account of the way a people's will can be manufactured by leaders. For Schumpeter it is only realistic to recognize this by, in effect, incorporating it into the theory itself. Thus, we are to have no illusions about leaders "representing" any "general will". This point is reemphasized in his seventh improvement, wherein it is asserted that "the principle of democracy merely means that the reins of government should be handed to those who command more support than do any of the competing individuals or teams."[25] There is no problem about representation. It is simply a matter of which leaders have the greatest support. The giving of support is simply the acceptance of leadership.

It is important to be clear about what this implies for Schumpeter. As he says in discussing his sixth factor, the reader might have supposed that the electorate controls as well as installs political leaders. Schumpeter replies:

> But since electorates normally do not control their political leaders in any way except by refusing to reelect them or the parliamentary majorities that support them, it seems well to reduce our ideas about this control in the way indicated by our definitions.[26]

Whether or not we should reduce our ideas about this control is a question I shall return to later. Since the fact is, according to Schumpeter, that the electorates do not normally control their leaders, the inference seems to be that what

the electorates do is simply to accept their leaders by giving them support. The acceptance of leadership is, for Schumpeter, a fact of the "normal" political process. If we accept this fact, and the facts previously referred to about human nature in politics, we are faced with some further implications about the quality of the leadership accepted. For if the first thing a person will do for his interests is to lie, if people generally have a sense of reality and responsibility only about those matters which directly affect them, and if the political interests of the people are manufactured for them by those with an ax to grind; it must follow that leaders will tend to be corrupt, dishonest, and self-interested in their relations not only with each other, but with those who support them. It would seem to follow, further, that leaders will have a sense of reality and responsibility only about what affects them most directly--their power to make political decisions. But a sense of responsibility about their power is not necessarily a sense of responsibility about the interests of those who support them. Some qualifications are needed about the qualities of leaders if their power is to be exercised in any way compatible with democracy. Schumpeter recognizes this need when he discusses the conditions necessary for the success of democracy as he conceives it.

Schumpeter, of course, thinks that it would be unrealistic to exclude the possibility of "unfair" or "fraudulent" competition or restraint of competition.[27] He says that

between the ideal case which does not exist and the cases in which all competition with the established leader is prevented by force, there is a range within which the democratic method shades off into the autocratic one by imperceptible steps. The notion of there being a range between the ideal case and the unacceptable cases applies equally well to the principles of classical democracy so long as one does not insist upon a rigid interpretation of those principles.

If the quality of leadership is so doubtful, how is this recognition of leadership an improvement over the recognition of the sovereignty of the people? A large part of Schumpeter's answer would seem to be that what is improved is our <u>understanding</u> of the democratic process. He contrasts understanding something with philosophizing about it.[28] He seems to feel that the danger in simply "philosophizing" about politics is that we end up with a completely unrealistic ideal. The trouble with adherence to an ideal, as Schumpeter sees it, is that we become so attached to it that questions about the facts of politics become irrelevant to us. Consequently, it becomes possible to accept almost any amount of actual deviations from the ideal--deviations which even our own behavior or position may involve. "Mere distance from fact is no argument against an ethical maxim or a mystical hope."[29]

This typifies the attitude of the realist. He sees a great gulf between the ideal and the real with no way to bridge it. It is true that ideals are often upheld which

bear no relation to either existing practices or human possibilities. Ideals of universal love, peace, and happiness when pursued without qualification or exception are not only unrealistic, but can lead to the very hatred, war, and misery which they oppose. Such ideals can blind people to moderate and reasonable possibilities of reducing the evils they deplore. However, too ready an acceptance of existing practices and "facts" may have the same effect. A person can as easily blind himself to what can be done to improve the actual situation by confining his attention to what is done as by ignoring what is done.

That some desirable things are impossible is not to be denied. But between the impossible and the actual is a whole range of desirable possibilities which are not fully understood. The attempt to make a reality of the possiblities carries with it some risk of failure. Yet, unless this risk is taken there is nothing to be gained but the illusion of security. Understanding the nature of the facts may be a first step toward what is desirable; it is certainly not the last. To remain within the limits of what we know and can understand about actual human practices would be to leave a gap between reality and the ideal. If this is what the realist proposes, there is little to recommend it except stagnation and decay.

Where Schumpeter stands on this matter is not clear. His account of human nature has been about <u>tendencies</u>--which leaves open the possibility that under certain conditions

the undesirable tendencies might be checked sufficiently for some kind of democracy to work. He admits that competition for leadership may break down at times. Yet, he is not satisfied to leave things at that. He describes a set of conditions which are necessary if his concept of democratic government is to be a success. These conditions go far beyond his dark picture of reality. He implies that these conditions are possibilities. Are they realistic possibilities? He seems to think so. What, then, makes these conditions realistic and those necessary for classical democracy unrealistic? This is not clear. It is particularly unclear whether the conditions for classical democracy are supposed to be totally impossible, or simply not totally realizable. Perhaps the difference between the two sets of conditions is that one can barely possibly be met, while the other can quite probably be met. Certain expectations about what humans can do would be unrealistic, then, not because they are impossible, but because they are unlikely or improbable in view of what is generally done, in fact.

If this is Schumpeter's argument, he seems to be saying that it would be a mistake to prescribe a system in which people would have to behave in ways in which they do not usually behave. It would be foolish, for example, to insist that the people exercise control over their leaders when they do not usually do so. It does not follow, however, that because a standard is rarely met it should not be prescribed at all. Even if people do not exercise much control

over their leaders, there may be more to be gained by encouraging them to do so than by excusing them from this responsibility altogether. Certainly it would be a mistake to discourage people from exercising the control which they ought to be exercising over leaders. This, however, is the effect of Schumpeter's reformulation. Worse still, he makes a point of it as a condition for the success of his view of democracy![30] More about this shortly.

Schumpeter recognizes that democracy, as he defines it, depends upon certain conditions for its success. It will not be much of an improvement over classical democracy if these conditions do not hold. The conditions necessary for classical democracy to work are all contrary to fact, he has argued. In just what sense they are contrary to fact is not clear. As for his own concept of democracy, the conditions necessary for its success are said to apply only to societies where it is possible for democracy to work at all.[31] Now it may be that even though these conditions apply only where democracy is a possibility they are contrary to fact. That is, that they do not actually exist sufficiently for democracy to be a success. Much depends upon our criterion of success. By "success", Schumpeter says he means:

> no more than that the democratic process reproduce itself steadily without creating situations that enforce resort to non-democratic methods and that it cope with current problems in a way which all interests that count politically find acceptable in the long run.[32]

Notice that it is the long-run acceptability that counts, not the short-run. Notice, also, that it is only

the interests which count politically that are to be considered. Does not every individual's interest count politically? This is perhaps again a question of fact versus ideal. Apparently, for a realist like Schumpeter, an interest counts politically only if it is organized and put forward by a leader. What, then, are the conditions for the success of democracy, and how do they measure up?

The four conditions are these: (1) that the human material of politics should be of sufficiently high quality; (2) that the effective range of political decision should not be extended too far; (3) that there must be available, for all purposes the sphere of public activity is to include, the services of a well-trained bureaucracy of good standing and tradition, endowed with a strong sense of duty and esprit de corps; and (4) that there must be self-control on the part of electorates and parliaments.[33]

These conditions answer our earlier question about the quality of leadership. The fact is that the quality of leadership must be high enough for the method to be a success. It might not seem very realistic to expect this to be the case if human nature is as Schumpeter has pictured it. Yet, according to him, there is one country--England--in which this condition is completely fulfilled. What England has to guarantee high quality leaders is a social stratum, the product of a severely selective process, that takes to politics as a matter of course.[34]

If this is true, then it would seem that humans can

be made better suited to a responsible exercise of political power than they generally are. What is to prevent the development of a citizenry with sufficiently high qualities to exercise a more direct and responsible control over political leaders than they now tend to display? Schumpeter, like Burnham, is silent about such possibilities, or rather, he would prefer not to consider them. He says it might well be doubted whether there is any sense in asking how democracy would fare in other social patterns that lack these characteristics--or how people in those patterns would fare with it.[35] On the contrary, I think it might well be doubted what sense it makes to deny the significance of the question. Unless we are completely indifferent to democracy, unless it has no particular advantages over any other method of government, then it is of considerable interest to us to know the full range of conditions under which it can work successfully. This is particularly true if it would work under alternative sets of conditions which would vary in their effectiveness in realizing the values of the method. If, for example, democracy would work better in the United States with the electorate exercising more direct control over leaders than it would in England, this ought to be taken into account. Such possibilities can only be determined by a closer comparative study of various arrangements and their social conditions than Schumpeter seems to have made.[36]

Perhaps the most interesting condition which Schumpeter has set down is the one which he calls "democratic

self-control." This means more than just the acceptance of legislation as long as it is on the statute book. It means, he says, that electorates and parliaments must be able to resist the offerings of the crook and the crank. It means that politicians in parliament must resist the temptation to upset or embarrass the government each time they could do so. It also means that voters outside of parliament must respect the "division of labor" between themselves and the politicians they elect.[37]

All considered, these factors constitute an ideal comparable to those viewed with such scorn under the classical theory. Again, if people are capable of such virtues, why are they not also capable of others more conducive to public participation in political decision-making? Apparently, the reason that these virtues count more than others is that they involve the acceptance of leadership.

The last factor strikes at the heart of the matter. In it we see the full implication of the acceptance of leadership. Voters must not withdraw confidence too easily between elections, says Schumpeter. "They must understand that, once they have elected an individual, political action is his business and not theirs. This means that they must refrain from instructing him about what he is to do..."[38] What we have here--and Schumpeter is quick to point it out--is the abandonment of the principle of the classical doctrine of democracy. It is not simply a claim that people do not exercise control over their leaders, but rather a prescription that

they ought not to do so. He says, quite significantly, that if the people are to rule in the sense of deciding individual issues, what would be more natural for them to do than issue instructions to their representatives. What would be more natural! Would this be an exercise of control over leaders or not? If it is, then Schumpeter seems to be admitting that the people may in fact exercise a significant control over leaders. If not, then of what concern is it to the success of his theory?

It is difficult to see how this kind of acceptance of leadership can be justified as realistic, or in any other way. With Burnham there was at least the suggestion that it was desirable to keep rulers responsive to the people. Schumpeter does not even consider it desirable.[39] His defense is that successful democratic practice has invariably been hostile to political "back-seat driving".[40] This is not a very clear statement with which to support such a crucial requirement. It could mean that any leader would prefer to make decisions about public policy without being pressured by the interests and advice of those who will be affected by his decisions. While such an observation would be interesting, and no doubt true, it would hardly be relevant to determining how leaders ought to make their decisions or the kind of control the people ought to exercise. Leaders would probably also prefer not to have to compete for votes at all, or have any opposition to their proposals.

Another thing the statement could mean is that

expressions of interest and advice are distracting to leaders, interfering with their exercise of their own better judgment. This is suggested by the mention of a division of labor and the professional quality needed in politicians. Politicians, like doctors, it might be said, have a certain sensitive job to do for which they have certain qualifications. The interference of amateurs would only confuse matters. The people should really have sufficient confidence in those they elect to let them do their job properly.

The analogy between politicians and doctors has only limited validity. For one thing, the qualifications of the politicians are largely determined by the voters, whereas the qualifications of the doctor are determined by medical authorities. Moreover, as is often said, there are no experts in what is best for the people. But even in the case of the doctor, it is his patient who knows best where the pain is. We might even add that if leaders are men of the quality required to make a success of democracy, they will not be easily bribed or threatened by instructions from the people. They will exercise discerning judgment with a sense of reality and responsibility about their decisions and welcome any assistance which the people can offer in helping them do so.

Some people, in the form of pressure groups, could conceivably harass leaders so effectively as to give them a badly misleading picture of the public interests at stake on some issues. This would be, and I think is, a genuine problem for democracy. The solution, however, is not

necessarily the elimination of pressure groups. It can be argued that more participation of this sort is needed, rather than less. More interest groups ought to be organized and represented so that they become politically effective and not simply remain latent. One of the best checks against unwarranted pressure on legislators from any particular interest group, as Burnham suggests, is to multiply the number of interest groups which bring their views to bear. Dahl, as we shall see, even goes beyond Burnham to the extent of turning this concept into a definition of democracy as "rule by minorities".[41]

Schumpeter says that one of the indications of hostility to political back-seat driving is the resort to secret diplomacy and lying about intentions and commitments.[42] This shows that he is primarily concerned about non-interference on the part of the public with matters of national policy, especially foreign affairs. The problems in this realm, he might argue, concern the nation as a whole, and not just the present generations but those to come as well. The average man is interested only in his own immediate welfare and lacks a sense of reality about things remote in time and space. The politician, once he has been elected to office, is responsible for and in a better position to grasp the larger significance of policy issues that affect the public interest. In this sense, while there may not be a "common good" upon which all agree, there must at least be a common policy which all support. If secret diplomacy is resorted to, Schumpeter may be thinking, to avoid public interference with policies

which are apt to be misunderstood, the result will be that the people will find themselves committed to things without their knowledge or support.

It does not follow from this argument, however, that political action is none of the business of the people. What is implied, rather, is that there are some issues on which the people ought to exercise self-control in the realization that they are not in as good a position to judge as those who have the full information needed to make an adequate decision. Who, then, is to decide where to draw the line between what the people ought and ought not to participate in? Surely there are issues involving national security where full information cannot be released to the public. But the reason for this is not that the people ought not to know. The justification for such secrecy is that general awareness of the facts would be detrimental to the nation's security by giving aid and comfort to foreign powers who seek to profit by our own weaknesses. In any case, problems of national security can be debated in general, without going into the sensitive details, and here, as elsewhere, the public should be kept as well informed as prudence allows.

By way of rebuttal, Schumpeter might return to what he has said about the ordinary citizen's reduced sense of responsibility. On matters of domestic and foreign policy, he says, "information is plentiful and readily available."[43] The trouble is that this does not seem to make any difference. The average man does not take the trouble to pursue the long

and complicated arguments necessary to appreciate the relevance of the facts. He lacks the initiative that comes from immediate responsibility. As a result, his views are formed for him by those who have some special advantage to gain or cause to promote. The information he receives is almost always adulterated or selective. This is why it is pointless to talk about a common or even collective will. The wills of collectives become manufactured by the leaders. Even where there is a genuine interest group, Schumpeter points out, a political leader must call it to life before it can become a political factor.[44] Therefore, this would imply, the reason we ought to reduce our ideas about the kind of control the electorate should exercise over their leaders is essentially that to think of the people as having a right to rule only leads to illusions about a "general will" which is, in fact, a manufactured will. The rationale seems to be that acceptance of the idea of a "general will" is dangerous because it would give some leaders the apparent right to claim that they, and they alone, truly represent the general will. This could easily lead to an attempt to eliminate all competition for the right to make decisions on the grounds that only one view as to the nature of the general will can be correct.

Now it is one thing to avoid any illusions about the existence of a "general will" which some leaders might wrongly claim to represent. It is quite a different thing to deny that leaders should be kept responsive to any wills but their

own. Schumpeter claims that his reformulation of democracy does not neglect genuine interest groups. He says that we are able to insert them "in exactly the role they actually play." In that role, however, they remain latent for decades until some political leader happens to be interested in making them politically effective. This certainly constitutes neglect in one sense! Why should such groups remain latent? And when they are brought to life, must their political effectiveness depend solely upon the will of their leader? Schumpeter discourages the idea that those with genuine interests should assert themselves and express their own wills. Furthermore, he seems to consider genuine interest groups to be exceptions. His whole approach minimizes any idea that leaders ought to represent the interests of those who elect them. It does not seem to me that any of the considerations he has offered justify such an attitude so contrary to the usual interpretations of democracy. Even if leaders do, as a matter of fact, manufacture the interests of collectives, they are still obligated to represent those interests. The lack of initiative on the part of the ordinary man in thinking through the complex reasoning about national policy is certainly not going to be improved by removing him further from participation in policy decisions. It is, therefore, both right and beneficial to the people for them to at least make their preferences known to their leaders.

The two of Schumpeter's conditions for the success of democracy which I have not discussed are limitations on

the range of political decisions, and the availability of a well-trained bureaucracy. It does not seem to me that these conditions are particularly relevant to the success of democracy as such. They would apply to the success of any form of government. Nor do they necessarily conflict with the conditions essential for the classical theory to work. The existence of a bureaucracy would not conflict with democratic control over representatives so long as the role of bureaucracy is confined to giving expert advice and carrying out policy decisions once they are made. Bureaucracy can be considered a potential threat to democratic control, as Burnham shows. However, it is a threat in just that respect crucial to the success of competition for votes. That is, bureaucrats would seek to reduce the type of disrupting influence which political competition has upon their exercise of power. So, in effect, the problem of bureaucracy would not be unique to classical democracy.

The only one of Schumpeter's four conditions, then, which conflicts with classical democracy, as such, is that regarding the relation between the people and their leaders. He offers no concrete facts in support of this condition, which is not even clearly stated. The remaining conditions--especially the need for high qualities in the human material of politics--may actually be brought about by greater public participation than he thinks occurs. Furthermore, the supposed improvements which his reformulation has over the classical theory do not seem to be sufficient to call for such

an extensive reformulation. Of what value is Schumpeter's theory in the light of the facts?

The concept of the democratic method as competition for votes does draw attention to the fact of leadership. It also underscores certain political deficiencies in the ordinary citizen. It emphasizes the diversity of interests, values, and conceptions, of the proper ends of government to be found among the people. It frees us from illusions about a "general will". In addition, it suggests a criterion which can help distinguish democratic from autocratic forms of government. All of these features are of considerable heuristic value. They encourage us better to understand the realities of political behavior. None of them, it seems to me, justify making competition for votes the sole principle by which to define democracy.

What of the cases of genuine majority rule where the people in fact exercise a high degree of control over their leader's decisions? Would such forms of government be democratic or not? By Schumpeter's definition of democracy we would have to say that, since such rule does not fall within the democratic method as defined, it must, thereby, be non-democratic. But this would be absurd! By so confining the democratic method <u>in principle</u> to the realities of the political process, Schumpeter rules out the very essence of its ordinary meaning--direct majority rule. He admits that there are social patterns in which the classical doctrine will sufficiently fit the facts. Schumpeter's principle excludes

these cases, not because they do not exist, but because in such instances "there are no great decisions to be made." "Great decisions" apparently are those relating to problems such that the majority of people could not be expected to understand them or agree about them.[45] Does this mean, then, that democracy is to be taken seriously only when the majority cannot understand or agree about the problems which face them? If so, the result is not just a reformulation of democracy; it is a principle so limited that it hardly merits the name of democracy. What Schumpeter has done is like defining "honesty" as "telling the truth when it does one no harm." This would be a realistic definition, no doubt. However, painful honesty is still honesty, and only telling the truth when it does one no harm is hardly honesty at all. Schumpeter has simply misunderstood the point behind a principle like democracy. It is not to prescribe a system that will always work, or perpetuate itself. The object of the principle of democracy is to provide a guide as to how men ought to relate themselves politically. It sets a standard for political behavior to come up to. Of course it must be within the realm of possibility. That does not mean it must be limited to reality as Schumpeter understands it--as the least that can be expected of people. Democracy requires the most that can be expected. This is its great value. By increasing the need for rationality, initiative, and responsibility it fosters these very qualities. The qualities which Schumpeter makes prerequisite to the success of democ-

racy are, for the most part, qualities it should arrive at as objectives.

I do not mean to deny that the classical theory of democracy, as Schumpeter has formulated it, could stand some modification and improvement in the light of the facts. What I have principally sought to establish is that the facts do not justify going as far as he has gone; that there may be other alternatives which he has not explored which neither conflict with the facts nor conflict with the broader meaning of democracy as it is usually understood. My conclusion is, then, that Schumpeter's realism is inadequate as a basis for reformulating the concept of democracy. He encourages a misconception of the relevance of the facts to normative political theory. He does this in his reference to the acceptance of leadership by confusing an unwarranted reduction in our ideas about control over leaders with an intelligent seeking of the aid of leadership to assist in the effective expression of our interests. To reduce our ideals to fit the facts is not the way to discover the possibilities of furthering those ideals. The limits of political possibility have not been indicated by the notion of competition for votes.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. Joseph A. Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (3d. ed.; New York: Harper Bros., 1950), pp. 240-296.
2. Ibid., p. 242.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp. 242-243.
5. Ibid., p. 243.
6. Ibid.
7. Robert A. Dahl, A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).
8. Schumpeter, pp. 246-247.
9. Ibid., p. 247.
10. Ibid., p. 248.
11. Ibid., p. 249.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p. 250.
14. Ibid., p. 251.
15. Ibid., p. 253.
16. Ibid., p. 259.
17. Ibid., pp. 260-261.
18. Ibid., p. 262.
19. Ibid., p. 263.
20. Ibid., p. 264.
21. C. Wright Mills also makes this point quite forcefully. See The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 20-25.

22. Schumpeter, p. 269.

23. Ibid., pp. 269-273.

24. Ibid., p. 270.

25. Ibid., p. 273.

26. Ibid., p. 272.

27. Ibid., p. 271.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p. 266.

30. Ibid., pp. 294-295.

31. Ibid., p. 290.

32. Ibid., p. 290, n. #5.

33. Ibid., pp. 290-294.

34. Ibid., p. 291.

35. Ibid., p. 290.

36. See Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," The American Political Science Review, LIII, No. 1 (March, 1959), pp. 69-105.

37. Schumpeter, pp. 294-295.

38. Ibid., p. 295.

39. James Miesel points out that Schumpeter's reappraisal of democracy is essentially an integration of elitist elements into a democratic framework. The Myth of the Ruling Class (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1958 ), p. 353.

40. Schumpeter, p. 295.

41. Dahl is critical of Schumpeter's analysis of the importance of elections and interelection activity in determining policy. (Dahl, pp. 131, 11,12.) This lack of agreement as to the facts illustrates how essential it is not to be cowed by the realists' factual barrage.

42. Schumpeter, p. 295.

43. Ibid., p. 261. 44. Ibid., p. 270. 45. Ibid., p.263.

## CHAPTER IV

## ROBERT A. DAHL AND THE EMPIRICAL CRITERION

Schumpeter's discussion of democratic theory lacks the careful qualification and precision of statement which characterizes much of the most conceptually advanced work of political scientists today. While he is explicit about the need to reformulate democratic theory in the light of the "facts", he does not advance us very far in a clear understanding of what the facts are, or how they relate to an adequate theoretical reconstruction. It is conceivable that some of the outstanding deficiencies of Schumpeter's argument might be eliminated by more careful attention to the science of political behavior. What can be done by way of a scientific study of the facts of political life, however, depends largely upon the way in which the problems dealt with are formulated. This was evident from our study of Burnham's purportedly scientific theory of the managerial revolution. One of the difficulties there was that some of the crucial steps in the argument had not been formulated so as to be quantitatively measurable. The result was uncertainty as to how the hypothesis was to be verified. To some extent this shortcoming was inevitable due to the level of generality at which Burnham was working. It has seemed desirable to some political theorists to minimize vagueness and achieve a greater

degree of precision in their grasp of the facts than is perhaps possible with the type of concepts with which Burnham was concerned. Social scientists have long envied physical scientists in this respect. Recent developments in the application of mathematics to the social sciences, however, have encouraged political scientists to formulate theoretical problems which can be mathematically analyzed and investigated. As a result, increased attention has been given to those aspects of the political scene which can be quantitatively measured. A great deal of empirical research is being done, for example, on decision-making strategy and voting behavior.[1] The results of these efforts to treat political ideas with mathematical precision have indicated to some political scientists the need to test the more fundamental assumptions of traditional normative political theory by empirical analysis. Such a political scientist of this empirical school is Robert A. Dahl, who has presented a very carefully developed critique of democratic theory in his study, A Preface to Democratic Theory.[2]

Dahl's work represents an important advance in the attempt to clarify persistent issues over democracy as a decision-making process. He takes many of the points touched on by Schumpeter and treats them fairly rigorously. Instead of limiting his criticism to a single generalized conception of the "classical" democratic theory as Schumpeter has done, Dahl focuses his discussion on two "representative" democratic theories. His concern is, he says, to "raise questions that

would need to be answered by a satisfactory theory of democratic politics."[3] Although his approach is empirical, and he, like Burnham, claims to be saying nothing about the desirability of the political systems he discusses, Dahl considers democratic theory to be rather unsatisfactory, whether it is regarded as "essentially ethical in character or essentially an attempt to describe the world."[4] He recognizes that there are many different approaches that can be taken to political theory, and one of his objectives is to show that one's approach has a considerable effect on the adequacy of the theory that evolves.

Dahl can be considered a realist in one sense in that his primary criterion of the adequacy of a normative as well as descriptive theoretical scheme is our ability to make it empirically verifiable in the "real world". He gives the impression that ideals which cannot be formulated in terms observable in the "real world" cannot be rationally evaluated, let alone pursued. This is a radical departure from the approaches of Burnham and Schumpeter in one respect. Neither of them questioned the meaningfulness of the ideals with which their views conflicted. Schumpeter did not hesitate to argue that the assumptions underlying "classical" democracy were mistaken as <u>facts</u>. Dahl is also critical of the factual assumptions upon which the theories he discusses seem to be based, but his fundamental criticism has to do with their lack of empirical meaningfulness.

Dahl, along with Burnham and Schumpeter, is a realist

in suggesting that the "real world", as he sees it, is quite limited in the possibilities for fulfilling abstract ethical goals. The notion of the "real world" recurs throughout his study. Yet, it is never fully explained and at times takes on the air of a metaphysical postulate. It is fairly apparent, however, that the "real world" refers to that part of our social experience which can be described empirically in all its complexity and contrariness.

There is considerable value in this emphasis on reality. It forces a discipline on the theorist who would otherwise prefer to keep his analysis at a much higher level of abstractness and generality. It forces him to "come down to earth", and face the hard facts which any proposal for action must take into account. Dahl's careful weighing of alternatives does this in regard to democratic theory even more so than do the arguments of either Burnham or Schumpeter. For Dahl combines his realism with a high degree of logical and analytic rigor, so that a close study of his deceptively short book is very rewarding.

Again, there are dangers which must be pointed out. One of the chief dangers of Dahl's argument is the very intensity of his analysis. It tempts one to become involved in a multitude of logical details which are largely irrelevant to the fundamental questions at issue. Also, as with Burnham, the show of scientific unconcern for what is desirable can mislead us into supposing that no evaluations are implied. The absence of clear statements of the underlying values with

which the author works can obscure important implications about what ought to be done. A political theorist has a certain responsibility, it seems to me, for clarifying as best he can the central assumptions which guide his reasoning. He does not fulfill this responsibility simply by confronting us with the nature of the "real world" which we apparently have no alternative but to accept. Let us see, then, to what extent these considerations apply to Dahl.

The main body of his critique is concerned with developing a satisfactory democratic theory. His procedure is to point out certain technical, ethical, and empirical problems which such a theory must attempt to resolve. This is a matter of theoretical criticism and analysis. Closely related to this theoretical aspect of his work is his discussion of "real world" political systems. The main reason for Dahl's referring to "real world" political systems is to provide a basis for the formulation of an empirically satisfactory theory of democracy. It turns out, however, that the "normal" American system is the one which is most thoroughly described. This has the reciprocal effect, I shall contend, of not only providing the basis for a satisfactory theory, but also of evaluating the American system as itself relatively satisfactory. Where the effect of Schumpeter's analysis is to recommend the British system of government, the effect of Dahl's analysis is to recommend the American. Unless this implicit rating of the American system is made clear, Dahl's claim to have said nothing about the desirability of the American

system is misleading.[5] The danger in this is that if we missed this implicit rating we might accept it without realizing that we had accepted it, and thereby fail to question its validity. This will serve to illustrate my point about the responsibilities of the theorist for making his values clear.

An equally significant conclusion to be drawn from Dahl's discussion is that his empirical approach reveals its own limitations--especially when it comes to determining the ethical satisfactoriness of a political theory. When too much dependence is placed on what can be quantitatively measured in the construction of a political theory, we may find that important questions about what is worth having and doing are necessarily side-stepped. I propose to show that Dahl's position has this implication.

Dahl's theoretical analysis of democratic theory, in outline, is as follows. He grants at the outset that each chapter in his book is to some extent an essay in definition.[6] Rather than attempting to define "democracy" rigorously, he is interested, he says, in determining a range of characteristics of democracy upon the basis of which a complete theory of democracy can be constructed. "At a minimum", according to Dahl, "democratic theory is concerned with processes by which ordinary citizens exert a relatively high degree of control over leaders."[7] In saying this he is in agreement with Burnham, but differs significantly from Schumpeter. There are other characteristics which have been attributed

to democracy by various theorists, however, which he finds are in need of analysis to determine their adequacy. Many democratic theorists have acknowledged the right of the ordinary citizen to control political leaders, but they have also wanted to check the tendency of the majority to infringe upon the rights of the minority. James Madison was such a theorist. Dahl treats Madisonian democracy as an attempt to arrive at a compromise between the principle of political equality and the rights of minorities. The compromise is considered to be unsatisfactory, and another theory, "populistic" democracy, is discussed. "Populistic" democracy gives a justification of unlimited majority rule as the only method compatible with both popular sovereignty and political equality. This theory is found to be inadequate because it is not empirical. The principle of majority rule, however, is given empirical meaning in Dahl's own theory of "polyarchal" democracy. Polyarchal democracy establishes certain observable conditions which serve as norms against which to measure democracy in organizations in the "real world". As a political theory, polyarchal democracy, in turn, has its short-comings--one of which is its neglect of minority rights. Dahl suggests a way of handling the problem of minority rights which does not depend upon the constitutional checks of Madisonian democracy. He ends up with a description of the American system in the light of the theoretical considerations discussed.

It is impossible to do full justice to the close reasoning, the diversity, and the detail of all of Dahl's

arguments without giving a point by point critique that would go far beyond our purpose here. The relatively brief account to be given is simply intended to show enough of Dahl's approach to demonstrate his realism without too great a sacrifice of the richness of his thought.

Dahl begins with Madisonian democracy which in theory is an effort to bring off a compromise "between the political equality of all adult citizens on the one side, and the desire to limit their sovereignty on the other."[8] Since Madison did not always articulate his assumptions, Dahl finds it necessary to supply implied assumptions, and attempts to make Madison's position as orderly and coherent as possible. The resulting theory is not, strictly speaking, Madison's, but a more logical, consistent, and explicit interpretation of his "style of argument".[9]

The central proposition of the Madisonian theory, Dahl says, is the hypothesis that, "if unrestrained by external checks, any given individual or group of individuals will tyrannize over others."[10] Dahl takes an external check on an individual to consist of the application or expectation of rewards and penalties by some source external to the individual. "Tyranny" is any severe deprivation of a natural right. Dahl says, Madison reasoned that external checks on government would be eliminated if the legislative, executive, and judiciary power were all in the same hands. Since the elimination of external checks produces tyranny, tyranny would result if all these powers were in the same hands.

It was simply assumed by Madison that the tendency to tyrannize over other individuals would hold for a majority of individuals over a minority, as well as the other way around.[11]

If a "republic" is understood to be a representative form of government based on the sovereignty of the people, then, according to Dahl, the central ethical goal of the Madisonian system can be stated as the attainment of a non-tyrannical republic.[12] Two conditions are considered essential to the existence of a non-tyrannical republic: first, that the legislative, executive, and judiciary powers do not all fall into the same hands; and second, that factions are sufficiently controlled to prevent them from acting contrary to the rights of others or the interests of the community.[13]

Given this basic outline of the Madisonian position, Dahl has two sorts of criticisms of it. One is that the empirical arguments used to support it are very doubtful. The other is that Madison's central concepts, especially "tyranny" and "faction", are not operationally or empirically meaningful.

Dahl finds several empirical difficulties with Madison's view. Especially doubtful are the two conditions held necessary to the attainment of a non-tyrannical republic. Dahl argues that it is not really necessary in order to attain a non-tyrannical republic, to avoid accumulation of governmental powers in the same hands. Yet, there is no assurance that the "republican principle" will in all cases prevent the minority from inflicting severe depriyations

on the majority. The crucial factors in determining which individuals will seek to tyrannize over others, whether a majority or a minority, are the "internal checks", such as conscience and attitudes. Madison was not very clear as to how he thought the external checks of a constitutional division of powers would operate. Dahl says that possibly Madison thought there would be some kind of reciprocal control among leaders. But, Dahl points out, this would not require a constitutional separation of powers.[14] Madison underestimated the importance of social checks and balances inherent in pluralistic societies. They are at least necessary to prevent tyranny, and possibly they would be sufficient to do so, as well.

Social checks and balances emerge in Dahl's analysis as the really crucial factors for the preservation of democracy. One of his basic empirical claims, one in which he agrees with both Burnham and Schumpeter, is that formal constitutional rules and procedures are not the important determinants of the actual power relationships which affect political decisions. Here, again, the implication is that since the social determinants of power cannot be as easily changed as formal rules and procedures, it would be a mistake to be overly optimistic about the effect of constitutional reforms on the political process.

The more theoretically fundamental criticism which Dahl makes of Madisonian democracy, is his claim that certain of its key concepts are "operationally" meaningless. Dahl

argues, for example, that the concept of "tyranny" depends upon the concept of "natural rights". The problem is to specify a process by which particular natural rights can be defined in the context of some political society. If this cannot be done, the definition of tyranny is entirely empty, Dahl says. Since tyranny involves the severe deprivation of natural rights, the empirical cash-value of tyranny is the restraint of certain kinds of behavior. How, Dahl asks, can we specify in practice which kinds of behavior it is tyrannical to restrain? [15] The dilemma which faces us is that if unanimity were to be required as to what kinds of behavior ought not to be restrained, government would be impossible; but if we do not require unanimity, then either the majority or some other unspecified group must decide this question. Madison was primarily interested in preventing the majority from deciding such an issue. On the other hand, any group given the power to decide what actions deprived natural rights would be inclined, on Madison's central hypothesis, to favor itself and thus tyrannize over others. Dahl concludes that no one, in practice, could have the power to decide this question, and, therefore, the definition of tyranny has no operational meaning in the context of political decision-making.[16]

What Dahl actually shows is not that tyranny has no operational meaning, but that the procedures for checking it seem incompatible with the assumption which makes some such procedures essential. It is certainly possible to

designate some group to specify what actions are to be considered tyrannical--and to that extent the concept would be made meaningful. What is lacking is any guarantee that the designated group would not exempt its own actions from those specified as tyrannous. However, it would seem that if the designated group were not in a position to make political policy decisions, then it would not be able to take any positive action to tyrannize over others. It would, then, seem perfectly possible to make a group like the Supreme Court secure enough from political influence or interests so that its tendency to deprive others of their natural rights would not be as serious as the same tendency on the part of any other group of individuals in the society. Security and political inaction, in this case, would act as checks on tyrannical tendencies. There may be other empirical objections to such a scheme, as Dahl points out, but it is not for that reason operationally meaningless. The same can be said for the problem of determining what constitutes a "faction"--a problem which also hinges upon who is to decide the issue.

Substantially, what Dahl's criticism of Madisonian democracy comes to is that the theory attempts to reconcile two different goals in ways that cannot be made satisfactorily compatible. Madison wanted to protect the rights of certain minorities whose advantages of status, power, and wealth would probably suffer from an unchecked majority. At the same time, he accepted the ideal of equal rights, including the right to determine the general direction of government

policy.[17] The principle of majority rule, implicit in this last ideal, had somehow to be modified to prevent majority tyranny. Madison's solution was the provision of constitutionally devised checks and balances. But these, Dahl says, would not be adequate to prevent minority tyranny if social conditions did not already exist that created internal checks on the tendency of individuals to tyrannize over others. The protection to minorities which Madison wanted to secure against majority tyranny is actually provided, Dahl suggests, by the political ineffectiveness of unstable majorities in a large pluralistic society.[18] Dahl concludes that the Madisonian compromise between the two conflicting goals mentioned does not hold up under careful analysis.

In order to find a more acceptable theory of democracy two other alternatives are considered, each alternative centered on one of the two goals of the compromise.

> One possibility is to concentrate one's argument on Madison's worry that the majority will prevent the minority--or a particularly worthy minority--from achieving what it has a "right" to achieve, whether this be property, status, power, or the opportunity to save mankind.[19]

The trouble with this alternative, however, is that it would require setting up the goals of a particualr group of individuals as inherently right or good, and insuring that the decision-making process maximized these goals. At least, this is what Dahl claims. He feels that the logic of this position could lead one to its anti-democratic limit of totalitarianism. To extend the notion of democracy that far

would be "to eliminate some very useful distinctions among political systems."[20] Therefore, Dahl suggests that we cannot regard systems centered on the goal of avoiding majority control as democratic. He further implies that although it may be desirable for purposes of classification to limit the concept of democracy in this respect, to do so would not reflect upon the desirability of the political systems themselves which are thereby ruled non-democratic.

Dahl next considers the maximization of political equality as the alternative to making a goal of the attempt to avoid majority control. Throughout the history of democratic theories, Dahl finds, political equality has been identified with "democracy" in conjunction with popular sovereignty and majority rule.[21] Accordingly, he takes up the logical relations of these concepts by way of an argument which he says is sometimes used to derive the proposition that majorities should have unlimited sovereignty.

The theory which formulates the argument in question is called "populistic" democracy. On this theory, an organization is democratic if, and only if, government decisions are arrived at in a way compatible with both popular sovereignty and political equality. Popular sovereignty exists only so long as the policy choice enforced by government is the alternative "most preferred" by the members. Political equality, on the other hand, requires that the preference of each member be assigned an equal value in determining which alternative is to become government policy. Dahl shows that

the only rule compatible with these two conditions is the majority principle, which prescribes that the alternative preferred by the greater number is the one selected.[22]

Dahl gives little more consideration to what is meant historically by political equality and popular sovereignty than is contained in this extremely rigorous statement of the argument for majority rule. He plunges into objections to the populistic approach--the objections being classified as technical, ethical, and empirical.[23]

Dahl discusses several technical objections which do not seem very serious, but which do indicate that the majority rule principle presupposes certain unspecified empirical conditions. For example, the rule provides no solution for cases where each alternative is preferred by an equal number of persons. This is not a great difficulty if it is assumed that in reality such cases are not likely to arise.

Another technical objection, which Dahl dismisses, is that the populistic position assumes, contrary to fact, that everyone does have a preference. He simply answers that the argument only applies to those who do have preferences. However, this is not so small a point as Dahl makes it seem. For it develops that the expression of preference is to be taken as the means of protecting one's natural rights.[24] This raises a fundamental moral question as to whether or not the rights of those who are indifferent ought to be protected. This type of problem comes up again in relation to measuring the intensity of preference. Disregarding the rights of

anyone is a serious matter, and if populistic democracy does not cover the rights of those who are apathetic, that would be a major defect.

The most interesting objections are the ethical. They are aimed at the possible defenses which Dahl thinks might be given for the desirability of political equality and popular sovereignty. Without attempting an exhaustive inquiry into the ethical issues involved, Dahl says that it would, nevertheless, be desirable to outline a critique.[25] He considers two kinds of arguments for political equality and popular sovereignty. One is the historical attempt to deduce them from belief in natural rights. The other consists of instrumentalist "proofs". The attempt to deduce political equality and popular sovereignty from natural rights is dismissed because, says Dahl, in modern times the assumptions that make the idea of natural rights intellectually defensible have "tended to dissolve".[26]

The most important of the instrumentalist "proofs" is the argument that the probability of maximizing a variety of one's highly ranked goals is higher in a populistic democracy than in any other system. Dahl observes regarding this position that, logically, one's commitment to populistic democracy is contingent upon achieving certain results. This leaves open the possibility that one's goals might actually be maximized in some other system, say Madisonian democracy. The fundamental defect of the theory of populistic democracy now comes to light.

> We cannot sensibly decide whether we prefer populistic to Madisonian democracy without estimating the probable consequences of each alternative if applied at some given time to some given group in the real world.[27]

But the relations between popular sovereignty, political equality, and the principle of majority rule which constitute the basis for populistic democracy are all purely logical relations; "they tell us nothing about the real world."[28] Consequently, we cannot make any predictions at all about the results of populistic democracy, and so we would be unable to make the decision between it and Madisonian democracy.

Dahl quite rightly anticipates that the philosopher will object to the attempt to prove the desirability (or undesirability) of majority rule entirely from empirical propositions, on the grounds that some basic ethical assumptions must be made. "Nevertheless," he says, "we shall not pursue the ultimate ethics of political equality and popular sovereignty any further."[29]

Yet, Dahl does consider a further ethical objection to maximizing these two goals of the populistic theory. No one would sensibly want to maximize two goals at the expense of all others, he says.[30] However, we cannot tell to what extent the attainment of popular sovereignty and political equality would be achieved at the expense of other highly valued goals such as stability, income, security, progress, and status. The reason for this is, again, that the theory is not an empirical system. It gives no indication of probable costs or gains, and is, therefore, too incomplete to

help much in the real world.[31]

While the theory of populistic democracy sets forth certain goals to be maximized, all it tells us, Dahl says, is that the perfect attainment of the goals would require us to pursue the principle of majority rule. It does not tell us how to approximate or maximize these goals in the real world.[32] One needs to know a great variety of empirical facts, he points out, before one can rationally decide on the kinds of political rule one wants to follow in the real world.[33]

The remaining objections to populistic democracy which Dahl discusses are empirical. The first objection rests on a point noted by Burnham and Schumpeter; namely, that majority rule, and the associated goals, are not intended to apply to everyone in the world. But the theory, as it stands, makes no provision for any selection of individuals to be included under the principle of majority rule. Why should one set of individuals be included rather than another? No democratic theorist seems to have provided any systematic answer.[34]

A second and more serious empirical objection is posed by Gaetano Mosca. It is one reflected in Burnham's theory of the managerial revolution. As Dahl puts it: "Every society develops a ruling class. Widespread popular control (certainly rule by a majority) is impossible."[35] Since the majority cannot rule, doctrines and constitutional procedures providing for such rule only have the effect of granting unlimited power to the ruling minority who claim to represent

the majority. This, it will be recalled, was one of Schumpeter's criticisms of the "classical" theory of democracy with its concept of a general will. To determine whether or not the objection is sound is another problem raising empirical questions for which the theory of populistic democracy provides no answer.[36]

In spite of these, and other objections, there is nothing, according to Dahl, inherent in the concept of political equality that makes it devoid of meaning in the real world.[37] Therefore, he proposes to try a more fruitful approach than the exercise in axiomatics which the theory of populistic democracy represents. First, it is necessary to reformulate the problem as follows: "What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for maximizing democracy in the real world?"[38] To determine what these conditions are, Dahl suggests that, in addition to the method of maximization, we must use what he calls the "descriptive method". The descriptive method is:

> to consider as a single class of phenomena all those nation states and social organizations that are commonly called democratic by political scientists, and by examining the members of this class to discover, first, the distinguishing characteristics they have in common, and, second, the necessary and sufficient conditions for social organizations possessing these characteristics."[39]

Although these are not mutually exclusive methods, the effect of Dahl's analysis is to emphasize the descriptive method. When he does use the descriptive method, he generally confines his considerations of democratic phenomena to the political system of the United States.

The problem of maximizing democracy in the real world can be defined in "operationally meaningful" terms, i.e. in terms of empirically observable specifications, Dahl holds, if we ignore the problem of different intensities of preference among individuals and simply assign the preference of each member an equal value. In addition, for the principle of majority rule to be observable a large number of decisions must be observable. We could not tell, for example, from any one majority decision, whether the decision was enforced because of the majority or because there happened to be in the majority a certain individual whose decision would be enforced even if he were in the minority.

Dahl distinguishes two stages at which an expression of preference can be given: the election stage, and the inter-election stage. This is an important distinction because it is far more difficult to determine preferences in the inter-election stage than in the election stage, but it may be just as essential to do so.

Preferences are probably most readily observable in the voting that takes place within the election stage. During this period, then, certain considerations can be specified which must be observed to determine if the majority principle is followed. Every member of the organization must vote or express a preference in some way. Equal weight must be assigned to each vote. And the alternative with the greatest number of votes must win.

Dahl recognizes that the problem remains as to what

we shall take as an expression of individual preference. He is in accord with Schumpeter in saying, "in a rough sense, the essence of all competitive politics is bribery of the electorate by politicians."[40] Instead of taking such bribery as implying that few preferences are genuine, Dahl argues that we must distinguish between different kinds of bribes. He says that if we do not make some distinction in this regard, then either we lose the distinction between totalitarian and democratic systems, or we shall not find any examples of democracies. Neither of these alternatives is satisfactory. He says, "We can hardly afford to read the human race out of democratic politics."[41]

This key distinction is made by way of the condition that anyone can write in his own preferred alternative among those already scheduled for voting.[42] What this condition does, however, is not to make a distinction between different kinds of bribes as much as between bribes, on the one hand, and forced options, on the other. Where a person has no choice but to take or leave the alternatives which he is given by someone else, he may be forced to give up his rights in the process. It would hardly be appropriate to call this sort of coercion bribery.

The condition which Dahl wants to have observed is an important one, but his reason for suggesting it misleads. The justification for requiring that anyone can introduce his own alternative for voting is not that we would read the human race out of democratic politics if we did not make some

such requirement. The justification is that a distinction must be made between voting procedures which violate a person's rights and those which do not.

By making the problem seem to be one of a distinction between bribes, Dahl suggests, as Schumpeter has, that we ought to reduce our ideas about the kind of control which the electorate ought to exercise over politicians and be willing to accept some existing practices as democratic.

Altogether, Dahl identifies eight conditions which would have to be observed to determine to what extent majority rule was being employed. Taking these eight conditions as ideal limits of scales, he proposes to call the "upper chunk" of organizations on the scales "polyarchies".[43] This upper chunk would not be a small number. He says that there are probably "well over a thousand" polyarchies. This number would include those organizations which Western political scientists ordinarily call democratic.[44]

Dahl, Burnham, and Schumpeter all agree that democracy, as they conceive it, is a matter of degree. Even so, it is still necessary for them to indicate at what point they would cease to call an organization democratic. Schumpeter, for instance, would cease to regard an organization as democratic if it failed to insure genuine competition for votes. He also went on to state certain conditions which would be necessary for his type of democracy to work. These were apparently minimum conditions, although they were fairly ideal in several respects.

Dahl does much the same sort of thing. However, instead of talking about conditions necessary for democracy to work, he asks: "What are the necessary and sufficient conditions in the real world for the existence of these eight conditions, to at least the minimum degree we have agreed to call polyarchy?"[45] To answer this question, he says, we must study many real world organizations. As a result, the method of description must be used to determine the minimum conditions which must exist in an organization for it to be called democratic.

Without his attempting to give a rigorous specification of what those conditions would be, Dahl does mention some relevant considerations. The existence of the eight norms or conditions to be measured is said to depend upon the extent to which they are accepted as desirable by the members of the organization. Dahl claims that the conditions of polyarchy increase with an increase in agreement or consensus on them.[46] Such consensus is held to be relative to the total social training in the norms.

Agreement on the polyarchal norms does not necessarily mean agreement on other values. Dahl is more careful than Schumpeter in making this distinction. If two groups disagree strongly about certain values or policies, then either they must remain independent of each other's control on those issues, or polyarchy will be undermined. Limited autonomy on matters of this kind can be achieved, as with religious beliefs, by removing them from political determination altogether.[47]

However, if the issues are perceived to be politically relevant, as with civil rights, disagreement can lead to a breakdown in the conditions necessary for polyarchy.

The suggested relationship between polyarchy and social conditions, such as consensus on values and social training, is stressed by Dahl for he feels that it is overlooked by Americans.

> Because we are taught to believe in the necessity of constitutional checks and balances, we place little faith in social checks and balances. We admire the efficacy of constitutional separation of powers in curbing majorities and minorities but we often ignore the importance of the restraints imposed by social separation of powers.[48]

The theory of polyarchy indicates that the crucial variables affecting tyranny are social and not constitutional, he says.

Although the theory of polyarchy is admittedly inadequate and incomplete, Dahl feels that it can help us order the "incredible and baffling array of events" of the real world in constructing a satisfactory theory about political equality.[49]

One matter of persistent concern which was ignored by the theory of polyarchy is the Madisonian problem of protecting the rights of minorities. Dahl notes that very few, if any, democratic theorists have not been concerned at least about restraints on majorities. "Is it possible," he asks, "to construct a system for arriving at decisions that is compatible with the idea of political equality and at the same time protects the rights of minorities?"[50]

Dahl thinks that the problem of natural rights can

be interpreted by a modern Madisonian as the problem of inhibiting "a relatively apathetic majority from cramming its policy down the throats of a relatively intense minority."[51] However, if some system is to be designed to protect a highly intense minority against an apathetic majority, we must first be able to determine when a minority prefers its alternative more than the majority prefers its own.

It is important to estimate intensities, Dahl thinks, for two reasons. The first reason is ethical. If we have two individuals who prefer different but mutually exclusive alternatives, all other things being the same, it would seem fair, according to Dahl to establish the rule that the individual with the more intense preference should get his way.[52] The second reason which he gives for comparing intensities of preferences is the desirability of predicting the stability of a democratic system and perhaps even of designing rules to guarantee its stability.[53]

These two reasons for comparing intensities are closely related to the problem of determining what the different intensities are. Dahl points out that if we mean by "intensity" the sensations of another person, we are defeated at the outset. He says that we can never directly observe the sensations of another person, so we cannot directly compare the sensate intensities of preference of different individuals.[54] This has a bearing on the ethical reason for considering an estimate of intensities desirable. Dahl takes it that the kind of intensity at stake, from the ethical point of

view, is sensate. "We cannot construct any method for measuring or comparing different intensities in this sense," he says. To deal with the problem at all we would have to agree to regard some observable behavior as equivalent to sensate intensity. But, as Dahl recognizes, for many people, this approach would only beg the question rather than solve the problem.[55]

While there may not be any wholly satisfactory solution to the intensity problem from the ethical point of view, it is a different matter with the question of predicting stability. The problem of stability is a problem of predicting how people are likely to act. "If we can predict how they are likely to act from observations of other overt behavior, then we do not need to worry ourselves with the question whether we really know how they feel"[56] Dahl thinks that this problem can be solved, at least in principle.

Dahl's conclusion seems to be that if we are going to do anything about intensities at all we might as well assume that we can derive a kind of "intensity scale" from overt behavior. He proceeds on this assumption with the problem of designing a set of rules which would restrain a nearly indifferent majority from imposing its preference on a highly intense minority.

Dahl considers two "neo-Madisonian" solutions. The first involves prescribing constitutional rules supplemented by other practices and procedures so that an influential minority may veto the alternative preferred by a majority at

any key stage in the decision process. The second solution proposes a social system of such diverse interests that instances of a relatively apathetic majority disagreeing with a highly intense minority (severe asymmetrical disagreement) are unlikely to arise.[57]

The difficulty with the first solution, as Dahl sees it, is to guarantee that the veto will be used only in cases of severe asymmetrical disagreement. To determine the possibilities here, he decides simply to investigate the set of constitutional and political procedures actually used in the United States.

The arguments in favor of the second proposed solution, as Dahl interprets them, boil down to assumptions about empirical conditions which can only be settled by examining the particular arrangements and the particular beneficiaries. Moreover, the implication of the arguments is that either the necessary social conditions will take care of themselves, or some rules and procedures will be needed, as in the first solution. Therefore, Dahl turns to the United States to see if there are any rules and procedures making up American politics which provide a solution.[58]

Three solutions are suggested by the overt American constitutional arrangements.

> The first is judicial review of legislation combined with a minority veto over constitutional amendments. The second is the structure of the Senate. The third consists of certain relations between the president, the two houses of Congress, and the electorate.[59]

The only explicit conclusion Dahl comes to is that the first

two will not work. He says that his analysis strongly suggests, although it does not prove, that "no solution to the intensity problem through constitutional or procedural rules is attainable."[60] But what about the third possibility? He has not discussed it up to this point. As far as I can see, he never gives any clear answer to this question. What he does instead is to discuss, in his final chapter, the development and general political characteristics of the American system. It is my contention that there he implicitly shows that the "normal" American system does provide something of a solution to the intensity problem as well as achieving fairly high rating on the scale of polyarchal democracy. The difficulty is that the normal American political system is probably "not for export to others".[61] This strongly suggests that the American system, while it may not be desirable in all respects, is an acceptable one in terms of the problems of constructing an adequate democratic organization, under the social conditions existing in this country.

Before entering into a general criticism of Dahl's argument, let us see what support can be given for this last point. It seems to me that Dahl does indicate, although not explicitly, that the American system solves the problem of severe asymmetrical disagreement. One of his concluding propositions is that a central guiding thread of American constitutional development has been the evolution of a political system in which all active and legitimate groups will be heard at some crucial stage in the decision-making process.[62]

In addition, he takes it to be a valid hypothesis that "political activity is to a significant extent a function of relative intensity."[63] Since, according to Dahl, the probable outcome of a policy decision is partly a function of the relative amount of political activity carried on for or against the alternatives, it would seem to follow that a form of veto will be exercised by a minority group over policy alternatives with which it intensely disagrees.[64] Therefore, it further follows that the American system does provide any intense minority with such a veto, because it provides that all active and legitimate groups will be heard "effectively".[65]

Moreover, there is no serious problem of protecting minorities against majorities in the American system, because majority rule is mostly a myth. Since majority rule is mostly a myth, majority tyranny is mostly a myth also, Dahl claims, because if the majority cannot rule, it cannot be tyrannical.[66]

Now it might seem that if majority rule is a myth, the democratic values which the conditions of polyarchy are designed to maximize cannot be realized to any significant extent. This, however, is not the case. Dahl asserts that elections and political competition greatly increase the size, number, and variety of minorities whose preferences must be taken into account by leaders in making policy decisions.[67] These factors, in turn, influence the kinds of leaders recruited, the types of political activity, the range and kinds of policies open to leaders, etc. "It is in these and other effects more than in the sovereignty of the majority that we

find the values of the democratic process."[68] So the absence of majority rule is, paradoxically, not a very great loss to democracy, it appears.

Consequently, the fact that the "normal" American system is a "decentralized bargaining bureaucracy" counts more in its favor than might otherwise be supposed. The decentralized bureaucracy feature actually provides a system of checks and balances with numerous groups of officials in competition and conflict with one another.[69] Furthermore, the possibility of making decisions by "endless" bargaining, presupposes and contributes to a high degree of consensus on the basic norms of polyarchal democracy. This conclusion is supported by Dahl's observation that constitutional rules are not crucial, independent factors for maintaining democracy. The rules are, rather, the functions of underlying non-constitutional factors.[70] Considering the course of United States history, if the conditions necessary to polyarchy had not existed, no consitution intended to limit the powers of leaders would have survived, Dahl says.[71] He finds it more plausible to suppose that the constitution has remained because our society is essentially democratic, rather than the other way around.

The evidence seems to be that the American system does have underlying it the necessary social conditions for the existence of polyarchy, and that it operates in such a way as to secure to a fairly high degree the protections to minorities which Dahl says most democratic theorists have

been concerned about. He concludes that:

> So long as the social prerequisites of democracy are substantially intact in this country, it appears to be a relatively efficient system for reenforcing agreement, encouraging moderation, and maintaining social peace in a restless and immoderate people operating a gigantic, powerful, diversified, and incredibly complex society.[72]

The defects which the American system is admitted to have are not necessarily peculiar to it, and, therefore, may well be balanced out by its unique advantages. The fact, for example, that it does not serve well as a means to highly integrated, consistent foreign policy decisions would hold for almost any democracy. All of which implies that such a system is a reasonably good thing, especially in light of all the difficulties facing the maximization of democratic values in the real world. By ending on this note, Dahl makes any further objections seem out of place. The system we have is apparently about the best that can be expected.

Now Dahl has not <u>said</u> that the American system is desirable. What he has shown is that to the extent that democracy is desirable, the American system can be rated fairly high up on the polyarchal scale. It seems reasonable to suppose that Dahl, like Burnham, is aware that most of his readers will consider democracy desirable. Consequently, if they accept his argument, they seem bound to infer that the American system is a desirable one--or at least acceptable.

The danger in this is that the reader will be misled by the realism of Dahl's argument into thinking that there

is not much reasonable hope for improving the American system as a democracy. It may be possible to improve it in many respects, one might feel, but not in ways relevant to its democratic character. That such a conclusion is not warranted by what Dahl has said can perhaps best be shown by reconsidering what he has been doing in his Preface.

First, there is the matter of defining democracy. When the meaning of a term like "democracy" becomes so uncertain and misused, there is a strong temptation to either throw it out altogether or insist on a precise definition as its "true" meaning. Realists like Schumpeter would have us reduce the concept of democracy to competition for votes. Dahl avoids such a gross over-simplification. He sees that such easy solutions will not do. Even so, he comes close to justifying his attempt to evaluate the definitions of democracy on much too simple grounds. As was noted, while he did not make much of a point of it, Dahl considered it best to limit the notion of democracy for purposes of classification.[73] Otherwise, he argued, we seem logically compelled to label as democracies systems which are generally acknowledged to be anti-democratic and totalitarian.

It is certainly important to have some basis for distinguishing democratic from other kinds of political systems. It is not sufficient, however, to make such a distinction simply on the grounds that for purposes of classification some distinction must be made. The business of defining democracy is not just a matter of making convenient

distinctions. The political scientist who adopts this attitude loses sight of the great emotive force of the term "democracy". Ordinarily, to say that a system is democratic is to commend it, not just to classify or describe it. In recognition of this, leaders of the Soviet Union freely refer to their system as "democratic". To preserve the intended commendatory force of the term we have made a practice of calling our system a "liberal democracy". When one of the principal purposes for making the kind of distinction to which Dahl refers is to indicate approval or disapproval of some feature of a political system, it would seem difficult to avoid the implication that systems which are refused the label "democracy" are undesirable in some respect. The problem of defining "democracy" is, in this respect, very much like the problem of defining "good". In attempting to give the concept more precision than it will bear, it becomes identified with certain selected properties at the expense of others with which it has been just as frequently associated. It may be that good reasons can be given for doing so in some cases. However, considering the number of distinctions that could be made in the case of the term "democracy", more justification must be given for the selection of some particular property than the need to make distinctions.[74]

The primary object of my critique of Dahl's study of democratic theory is to correct his emphasis on the need for empirical descriptions of existing political systems in developing an adequate theory of democracy. I shall make two

general points. One is that the empirical approach to political theory, as Dahl understands it, has important limitations both in its presuppositions and its capacity to answer some of the very questions Dahl raises. The second point is that Dahl, as a realist, tries, unsuccessfully, to avoid any obligation to clarify his own assumptions and preferences regarding the desirable features of a political system.

Dahl says that he is interested in determining a range of characteristics of democracy upon the basis of which a complete theory of democracy can be constructed. A complete theory of democracy, I take it, would be one which for Dahl was satisfactory both ethically and descriptively. At least, his complaint about democratic theories is that they are unsatisfactory in both respects.[75] He recognizes, thereby, that to say a theory is unsatisfactory presupposes some standard or criterion of satisfactoriness. His method or procedure is to raise some questions which he feels would need to be answered by a satisfactory theory of democratic politics.[76]

Now to raise questions of this sort is to take a normative stand. Dahl is saying, in effect, that there are some questions which a satisfactory theory <u>ought to answer</u>; these theories do not answer them; therefore, they are unsatisfactory as theories. This kind of normative stand is not necessarily a particular moral stand about what sort of political system is desirable. Even questions which could be raised about the ethical satisfactoriness of a theory do not necessarily commit one to one's own ethical views on the

matter. Nevertheless, one can express his preferences through the kinds of questions he raises, and in doing so obligate himself to defend those preferences as though he had plainly stated them.

Of all the questions he raises, Dahl stresses the descriptive unsatisfactoriness of the representative democratic theories of Madisonian and populistic democracy. He does this in two different ways. One way is to show that as the theories are formulated their postulates or rules are not operationally meaningful and cannot, therefore, be tested for their empirical consequences. The other way is to attempt to arrive at a satisfactory theory of democracy by use of the "descriptive method". I shall discuss each of these approaches in turn.

Knowledge of the probable consequences of the theory is important according to Dahl, for at least two reasons. If we do not know how a theory will work out in certain crucial situations in practice, we do not know whether or not it will achieve the goals it is designed to maximize. In addition, if we do not know its consequences, we cannot decide whether or not its results are more or less desirable than those of some alternative theory. For example, populistic democracy sets up the principle of majority rule as the means to maximizing the goals of political equality and popular sovereignty. The principle of majority rule, however, as a purely formal rule, predicts nothing, nor does it specify certain essential empirical prerequisites for its application. It is, therefore,

not operationally meaningful, and gives no indication of how it is to be acted upon in crucial cases. For this reason, we cannot decide whether acting on such a rule would conflict with other highly valued goals--goals which might be harmonized by some other method with the goals at which the majority principle aims. Thus, the question of satisfactory descriptive theory ties in with questions of an ethical nature. In order to know the ethical value of the theory we must have prior knowledge of its descriptive value, as it were.

Now the problem at this juncture is to improve the formulation of the goals, rules, and procedures of a theory, such as the populistic one, so that they are made operationally meaningful and empirically testable. The trouble with the populistic theory is that it is not empirical, Dahl says. It simply involves ethical postulates and their logical relationships to each other. In order to transform it into an empirical theory, Dahl treats the problem of populistic democracy as that of maximizing political equality and popular sovereignty in the real world. This radically alters the problem, he says, because of the need to consider the "real world".

What is the nature of the "real world" as Dahl understands it? Why does it so radically alter the problem? Part of the answer is, I think, that when we look at the real world we realize that the perfect attainment of ethical postulates or principles, as embodied in populistic democracy, is out of the question. We cannot hope to attain complete political equality or popular sovereignty. The real world

is full of compromises, exceptions, and conflicts. It is pointless, the implication seems to be, to try to construct a political system on the basis of principles which require that the world be categorically consistent and harmonious. When we try to imagine what the complete attainment of these goals would be like in the world as it is, we will understand the kind of problems which arise that make such attainment impossible. We will see that this whole approach to ideals is wrong. Instead of being satisfied with formulating ethical abstractions, we must reduce ideals to a set of conditions in the "real world" which we would want to see maximized. Our efforts should not be directed at the full attainment of the goals of populistic democracy, but at coming as close to them as we can, with things as they actually are.

The theory of polyarchal democracy is Dahl's suggested formulation of such a set of conditions. Yet, even it is incomplete and inadequate as a theory. Why? Largely, he suggests, because of the lack of necessary data to determine more specifically the nature and relationship of its conditions. What then makes the theory of polyarchy any more an empirical theory than the populistic theory? It is not that one has any more empirical evidence in support of it than the other. This is not the problem. These theories are not hypotheses to be proved, but conditions to be met by human beings. The only difference between the two theories is in the formulation of their conditions. In the theory of polyarchy the conditions which have been specified are empirical rather than ideal, to

be maximized rather than fulfilled completely.

The fault of the populistic theory is not just that it involved ethical postulates and their logical relations, because polyarchal theory also involves ethical postulates and their logical relations. Its fault was in taking its ethical postulates as goals to be completely fulfilled rather than maximized in the real world. The case against populistic democracy, then, depends largely upon interpreting its ethical postulates as categorical imperatives. Is this the only interpretation of its postulates that can be given? I think not. Instead of taking the postulates of populistic democracy to be categorical, we could regard them as simply prima facie imperatives to serve as guiding principles to be realized as fully as possible. Without his overly rigid interpretation, many of Dahl's objections would no longer hold. It is at this point, however, that Dahl's realism comes in. He does not discuss the possibilities, as such, but as conditions that would have to be fulfilled in the real world. How does the real world differ from what is empirically possible? The answer to this is not clear. Apparently, the real world is more the world of existing practices which can be empirically described than a world of possibilities to be worked toward. This is especially evident in Dahl's suggested use of the "descriptive method".

The descriptive method is to be used to arrive at a descriptive definition of democracy by noting the necessary and sufficient characteristics that make up those organizations

which political scientists call democratic. The descriptive method is quite different from the method of maximization which starts with certain goals which political theorists have taken as characteristic of democracy, and then tries to determine the real world conditions for maximizing them. The descriptive method starts with those organizations which are called democratic by political scientists. This limits the resulting definition of democracy to characteristics of existing organizations. If Dahl's analysis is correct the organizations which political scientists using the descriptive method will consider democratic will be characterized by the rule of minorities. Such a use of the descriptive method for arriving at a definition of democracy would encourage the idea that majority rule is out-moded as a form of democratic decision-making. Yet, there may still be good reasons for holding on to the principle of majority rule for the considerations it promotes even though it was not lived up to in practice.

While it is correct to hold that the perfect attainment of a purely formal political theory is unrealistic, it is also dangerously misleading to indicate that existing political institutions and practices are to be taken as the sole guide to an adequate political theory. The existing real world is not a fixed, static thing. It is constantly being changed and modified. The range of possibilities is far wider than anything which may actually exist. To limit ourselves to what exists is, therefore, to place ourselves under undue restrictions in the theoretical formulations of

our goals and their means.

As I have said, Dahl does not use the method of description at the exclusion of the method of maximization. However, the descriptive approach permeates his entire analysis to the extent that the method of maximization becomes subordinate to it. That is, even when he discusses the maximization of ideals, he only considers those possibilities which can be observed in existing organizations.

Something of the force of Dahl's demand for predictions of consequences and empirically testable hypotheses is lost when we face the fact that political science has hardly begun to grasp the full extent of empirical possibility in the realm of political systems. Not only are scientific capacities for gathering information constantly expanding, but the means of implementing new and improved practices are constantly increasing. The border between the possible and the impossible in human relations is neither clear-cut nor fixed. We must not, therefore, be too quick to assume that what is possible or workable is already observable in what exists in practice. One of the limitations of the empirical approach to political theory is the inherent incompleteness of information on the possibilities of the real world. It is misleading to suggest that a political theory can ever be any more complete in this respect, than in respect to its treatment of our ethical values.

It is important to notice that Dahl himself goes beyond the descriptive method in saying that rule by minor-

ities through elections and competition for office gives rise to certain characteristics of control over leaders, policies, and political activity which are more important effects in terms of the values of the democratic process than would be found in the sovereignty of the majority. This evaluation of the effects of existing institutions adds considerable weight to the impression that a system, such as the American political system, which has these effects is an acceptable one. What Dahl does not debate here is whether or not other possible effects of the sovereignty of the majority, such as a heightened sense of political responsibility and training, are not also quite valuable to the democratic process--whether or not these effects are diminished under a system of rule by minorities.

The acceptability of rule by minorities, however, derives from another feature of the descriptive approach. This feature is involved in the problem of the differentiation of intensities of preference for various policy alternatives as perceived by different groups. The question arose over the protection of minority rights. In discussing it, Dahl distinguished between the ethical problem and the problem of social order. He foundthat, so far as the ethical problem goes, it seemed that there was no satisfactory solution to the problem of intensities. He then went on to indicate that there did seem to be a solution to the problem of social order. If we treated empirically observable behavior as representative of intensities of preference, since activity

is all that counts in social order, they could be measured by the relative political activity of the groups in question. Rule by minorities gains some of its apparent acceptability, then, from the impression that the political activity of minorities satisfactorily reflects the intensity of their preferences. We must not forget, however, that this leaves entirely open the question of the ethical satisfactoriness of taking activity as an indication of intensity of preference.

Therein lies a further limitation of the descriptive method and, thus, the empirical approach which depends upon it. No doubt the problem of social order is important and the empirical approach to it very helpful in indicating a kind of solution in rule by minorities. However, social control is but one of the values with which democratic theorists have generally been concerned. The ethical issues involved in the nature of human dignity, happiness, and liberty have played at least as important a role in the thought of normative democratic theorists. To the extent that the empirical approach cannot handle such matters, it falls short of a satisfactory method for arriving at a complete democratic theory.

The empirical approach not only breaks down on the ethical problem of intensity, but also bypasses a whole area of problems not touched by Dahl under the heading of intensity of preference. Dahl has conveniently assumed that the problem of minority rights can be reduced to the problem of intensity. In doing so, he makes the same mistake Bentham made in

a similar effort to give a scientifically adequate account of morality by reducing all moral problems to quantitatively measurable characteristics of pleasure and pain. J.S. Mill's observation is relevant here that qualitative differences in pleasure must also be taken into account. It is not so obvious as Dahl seems to think that the problem of minority rights is just a problem of intensities. He holds that, all other things equal, we would consider it only fair that an individual with a greater intensity of preference should have his way over an individual with an opposing but less intense preference. What this ignores is the possibility that the quality of the preference is of greater moral significance than its intensity. The quality of the content of the preference is not the kind of thing which we can dismiss among the "other things" considered equal. It is doubtful that it makes sense to consider different qualities of preference as altogether comparable. Furthermore, it seems to me that the question of the intrinsic worth of a preference is much more fundamental than that of social order. This question is not nearly so readily solved as the question of the relative intensity of a preference, from whatever point of view it is considered.

The easy assumption that such fundamental values as intrinsic ends are personal and, therefore, not rationally debatable will not do. There is nothing so fixed and certain about intrinsic values that they cannot be modified or even rejected in the light of the full reasons for doing so.

Of course, one might hold to such values fixedly as a psychological disposition. To do so would be to cut them off from reasoned discourse. But then, we are no longer in the realm of rationality. However, there is no logical necessity for conserving values in this way. Since there is always the chance that rational debate may penetrate the psychological defenses against change in attitude, philosophical and ethical debate about values which Dahl has tried hard to avoid, is more than justified.

Dahl has avoided such debate, so he claims, for different reasons. In reply to a critic, he says that he is concerned only with the practical problem of intensity measurement, not the philosophical problem of how we can know that differences in intensity do exist.[77] His excuse for his neglect of this latter consideration is that one must stop somewhere short of a total system. Moreover, he suggests that such philosophical and ethical matters are logically independent of his essentially empirical endeavor.[78]

Now Dahl is correct in holding that the philosophical problem of how we can know that differences in intensity exist is logically distinct from the practical problem of intensity measurement. And certainly no one would insist that he completely follow out all the philosophical and ethical implications which his argument involves. But it is quite another thing to hold that his empirical approach is, in general, logically distinct from philosophical and ethical issues. There are other philosophical and ethical aspects of his position

which are logically related to the empirical problems he emphasizes.

Consider, for example, the principle of majority rule. If this principle is taken as an ethical postulate about how decisions ought to be arrived at, then if Dahl succeeds in showing, as he has attempted to show, that such a rule cannot be carried out as formulated under certain circumstances, it follows that the rule is defective to that extent. One cannot logically hold that the majority ought to rule under circumstances in which it cannot rule, or where the principle cannot be applied. If it is impossible for the majority to rule, then it has no obligation to do so. Dahl has also tried to show that other democratic principles, such as compromise and political equality, have certain defects when taken as ethical postulates. That is, they have defects from the empirical point of view. The logical relation between Dahl's empirical position and the ethical issues entailed by the theories he has been evaluating is that the "real world", as he sees it, sets up limiting conditions beyond which we cannot logically apply, or make sense of, the rules and principles which those issues presuppose. In addition, the whole question of the underlying assumptions and logical connections between the ethical postulates of these theories is a philosophical problem. While Dahl has emphasized the question of empirical applicability, he has by no means restricted himself to that consideration. His claim was that the Madisonian and populistic views were unsatisfactory

ethically, as well as descriptively, and he could have added, logically. The empirical criterion has been one, among others, which he has used, and is itself in need of philosophical justification, as I have indicated. Therefore, Dahl cannot be excused for failing to pursue philosophical and ethical issues further than he has on the grounds that they are logically independent of what he has been doing.

It might be argued that, granted philosophical and ethical matters are not logically independent of the empirical approach, Dahl is under no obligation to go into them any further than he has. Two things could be meant by this. It could mean that Dahl has no obligation to justify further or clarify his own philosophical or ethical assumptions. Or, it could mean that he has no obligation to discuss further or clarify the philosophical or ethical assumptions of the positions he is criticising. It is important to distinguish these two possibilities because they involve different lines of reasoning. Realists, such as Dahl and Burnham, seem to feel that they are not required to make their own preferences known with respect to the theories they discuss--except in terms of the technical criteria they have employed, especially those of empirical probability or feasibility. The assumption here seems to be that what they consider desirable in the way of a political system is irrelevant to the technical or scientific observations they have to make. It is especially convenient for the realist not to have to defend what he considers to be desirable because he sees how very

difficult this is to do in the light of reality. Instead of keeping his preferences out of the argument, however, he brings them in covertly so that they have their emotive effect without the need to justify them. How Burnham, Schumpeter, and Dahl treat the preferences of their opponents is another matter. In any event, there are reasons for claiming that each of these theorists, and especially Dahl, in this instance, ought to have done more than he has by way of clarifying his own and his opponent's fundamental value assumptions.

Let us first take the case for making their own preferences clear. As we saw with Burnham, unless the theorist makes his own preferences clear he is in danger of being misinterpreted as being for or against something which he is not. The realists who take a scientific stand seem to be raising obstacles to democracy as though they were against it, rather than simply trying to point out the dangers facing it. This is assuming that the realist is actually interested in expressing a preference, but without making it so obvious that it would distract his readers from the objectivity of his argument.

Is it possible for the political theorist to give a scientifically objective argument without interjecting his preferences into it in a prejudicial way? One school of thought, in answer to this question, emphasizes the determining influence which our moral views, social purposes, and historical times have on the selection and weighing of data in empirical social research. Karl Mannheim, for example,

says that no one denies that facts exist; the problem is to determine the nature of the facts.

> They [the facts] exist for the mind always in an intellectual and social context. That they can be understood and formulated implies already the existence of a conceptual apparatus...Our definition of concepts depends upon our position and point of view, which in turn, is influenced by a good many unconscious steps in our thinking.[79]

Along this same line, David Easton argues that "in actual research our moral frame of reference plays an influential and inextricable part in conditioning our observations and conclusions."[80] He concludes that the social scientist has an obligation to clarify his moral convictions to increase the reliability of his knowledge.[81]

It is no doubt true that the social scientist's social context and moral convictions can have determining influences on the reliability of his findings. It does not follow from this, however, that it is impossible for him to give a scientifically objective argument for his theoretical conclusions. Unless we are to give up the distinction between objectivity and bias altogether, some criteria of objectivity must be accepted. Two considerations which make scientific ideas objective are: (1) that they are the results of inter-subjective tests of public observations which others can perform; and (2) that they are the results of the process of the continuing correction of experience.[82] Ideas which meet the tests of scientific objectivity can be accepted as objective regardless of the moral preferences of their author. Clarity about his purposes and preferences may help the social scien-

tist avoid ideas which will not meet these tests; but such clarity is not necessary for his ideas to be objective or his knowledge reliable.

What it is possible for the political theorist as realist to do, and what he ought to do, are two different things. The reason that he ought to make his preferences clear is not that he cannot prevent them from affecting his conclusions--possibly he can--or, that it would be safer for him to do so to insure the reliability of his knowledge. The reason is, rather, that he has an obligation not to confuse and mislead others as to the implications of his argument. He has this obligation in the light of the purpose of his argument. Both the scientist and the realist are interested in the facts. But the realist differs from the "pure" scientist in one respect. Whereas the scientist is interested only in the facts and his primary purpose is to attain knowledge about them, the realist is interested in using the facts to advance a particular view about what ought or ought not to be done. <u>The purpose of the realist is not simply to seek knowledge, but to influence the decisions and behavior of others</u>. At least, a careful analysis of his work, as I have tried to show, seems to disclose such a purpose.

In Dahl's case, his views as to the desirability of the various democratic systems come through despite his protestations that he is making no pronouncement in that respect. His reference to the value which rule by minorities has in advancing the more significant democratic values is one

indication of his stand, and his implicit evaluation of the "normal" American system is another. His desire to distinguish between totalitarian and democratic systems is an indication of his disfavor of certain characteristics of totalitarianism. The apparent purpose, then, of his essay in definition is to encourage in his readers an acceptance and promotion of those features of a political system which he feels can justifiably be called democratic.

So much for his obligation to clarify his own assumptions and values. What about his obligation to discuss and clarify the philosophical and ethical assumptions of the positions he is criticising? Should Dahl have gone into them any further than he has? I believe he should have. In order to properly evaluate a political theory, more is involved than just taking its central ethical values as given, and then trying to determine whether or not they can be realized. We must first be clear as to the nature of those values. Dahl has made a stab at this by trying to get at some of the logic behind them, but he hardly does them justice. The danger is that a superficial interpretation of these central ethical values or postulates will result in a criticism of them which is largely irrelevant to what they mean to those who hold them. For example, Dahl defines political equality as follows:

> The condition of political equality is satisfied if and only if control over government decisions is so shared that, whenever policy alternatives are perceived to exist, in the choice of the alternatives to be enforced as governmental policy, the preference of each

member is assigned an equal value.[83]

Out of the context of the theory in which such a postulate is set forth, this seems like a very mechanical formulation. However, political equality has seldom been so mechanically proposed. Qualifications as to age, sex, intelligence, property, etc., are either explicitly made or implicitly indicated in the theories in question. Political equality may refer not only to equal weight in determining political decisions, but to equal treatment as a political subject--equality before the law, for instance. Difficulties which are pointed out when the usual qualifications and meanings are not taken into account, do not show much about such a postulate except that it needs qualification, as it stands--qualification which it generally has in context. Although this formulation may express a way of regarding political equality for deriving the principle of majority rule, as Dahl seems to think, it is not obviously the most significant way of regarding it. What is required here for clarity is not an over-simplified version of the principle, but a fuller discussion of what such a principle ought to mean and has meant or does mean to those who espouse it. We must give Dahl credit for at least referring us to sources where a more adequate discussion can be found.[84] Yet, the suspicion remains that he has forced the principle into a mold of such a logically barren form that no one would care to defend it. Unless the ethical issues involved are treated fairly, much of the succeeding argument will be irrelevant, and the reader will be given a distorted

impression of what has been proved.

Dahl, then, has not fulfilled his obligation to go into philosophical and ethical matters either in respect to his own views or those of the theorists he is criticising. Since these questions are not logically independent of the type of analysis and evaluation he has actually undertaken, he seems to have no excuse for not having fulfilled his obligations except the unreasonableness of expecting him to develop a complete philosophical and ethical theory. Possibly he could be excused on this ground. After all, his announced intention was simply to raise some questions that any satisfactory democratic theory should be able to answer. However, this only excuses him from not having given a complete theory. It does not excuse him for not having done more than he has. The important consideration is whether his questions and objections have been fairly raised as far as they have gone. Has he committed himself as to his preferences in ways he ought not to have, unless he was prepared to defend them further? Much of the effect of the argument of a realist like Dahl is achieved by seeming to leave it up to the reader to draw his own conclusion about what kind of system is worth working toward, when, actually, the suggestion is very strongly implied that there is only one conclusion that can be drawn. In this instance, the suggested conclusion is that the American system of democracy is about the best that can be expected under the circumstances. If the reader, then, does draw this conclusion, he does so without the benefit of the further

considerations which Dahl would be obliged to present if his avowed intention had been to warrant such a conclusion. Otherwise, his argument can be considered neither responsible debate of a political issue nor objective political science.

The application of quantitative standards to the evaluation of political theory can be a valuable aid in clarifying the problems of constructing a theory which will be effective as a guide to political action. It is no substitute, however, for continued debate about what is desirable, about what values ought to have priority over others, and about the full rational justification for the fundamental assumptions held. The realist who refuses to discuss these matters, by assuming a privileged position as a political scientist, simply fails to fulfill his moral and intellectual responsibilities to society. The realist who at least makes his position as clear as possible helps us to avoid the confusions and misunderstandings about what he is getting at. We can assess his arguments on the merits of the case he actually presents. If the realist refuses to commit himself on the moral issues of political theory because he is uncertain of the validity of his own stand, then perhaps he should first devote his efforts to the problems of morality.

In the next chapter we shall discuss the position of a political realist who is quite willing to express his views on the relation of morality to politics, but who is in need of a better understanding of the nature of morality than his views disclose.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. A major impetus to such research has been the work of J. von Neumann and O. Morgenstern, Theory of Games and Economic Behavior (Princeton University Press, 1944). Dahl's notational devices come from Kenneth Arrow's Social Choice and Individual Values (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1951). See also Readings in Game Theory and Political Behavior, ed. Martin Shubik (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1954). An extensive bibliography of recent work in this field is given by Richard C. Snyder, "A Decision-Making Approach to the Study of Political Phenomena", in Approaches to the Study of Politics, ed. Roland Young (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1958).

2. Robert A. Dahl, A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956). Another important work, one in which Dahl collaborated with Charles E. Lindblom, Politics, Economics, and Welfare (New York: Harper Bros., 1953), will not be treated here. It is subject to many of the same criticisms as Dahl's Preface, but it cannot be discussed adequately within the scope of this chapter.

3. Dahl, Preface..., p. 1.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 149.

6. Ibid., p. 2.

7. Ibid., p. 3.

8. Ibid., p. 4.

9. Ibid., p. 5.

10. Ibid., p. 6.

11. Ibid., p. 7.

12. Ibid., p. 10.

13. Ibid., p. 11.

14. Ibid., p. 21.

15. Ibid., p. 23.

16. Ibid., p. 24.
17. Ibid., p. 31.
18. Ibid., p. 30.
19. Ibid., p. 31.
20. Ibid., p. 32.
21. Ibid., p. 34.
22. Ibid., pp. 37-38.
23. Ibid., p. 38.
24. Ibid., p. 90.
25. Ibid., p. 45.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., p. 47.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., p. 48.
30. Ibid., p. 50.
31. Ibid., p. 51.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., p. 57.
34. Ibid., p. 53.
35. Ibid., p. 54.
36. Ibid., p. 55.
37. Ibid., p. 60.
38. Ibid., p. 64.
39. Ibid., p. 63.
40. Ibid., p. 68.
41. Ibid., p. 69.
42. Ibid., p. 70.
43. Ibid., pp. 73-74.
44. Ibid., p. 74.
45. Ibid., p. 75.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., p. 80.
48. Ibid., p. 83.
49. Ibid., p. 84.
50. Ibid., p. 90.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p. 92.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., p. 99.
55. Ibid., p. 102.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., p. 103.
58. Ibid., pp. 104-105.
59. Ibid., p. 105.
60. Ibid., p. 119.
61. Ibid., p. 151.
62. Ibid., p. 137.
63. Ibid., p. 134.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid., p. 145. Cf. David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1953), pp. 246-251. Riesman says that today small business, farm, labor, professional groups, the major ethnic and regional groups, have often been able to get into a position where they can neutralize those who might attack them. These veto groups are defense rather than leadership groups, he says, and have power by virtue of mutual tolerance (Ibid., pp 247-249). The significance of the political power of these groups is questioned, however, by C. Wright Mills, in The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

66. Dahl, Preface..., p. 133.

67. Ibid., p. 132.

68. Ibid., p. 134.

69. Ibid., p. 137.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid., p. 143.

72. Ibid., p. 151.

73. Ibid., p. 8.

74. See Charles L. Stevenson, Ethics and Language (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 71-76, on the relation between emotive and descriptive meaning.

75. Dahl, Preface..., p. 1.

76. Ibid.

77. See Douglas N. Morgan, "Postscript to Professor Dahl's Preface," The American Political Science Review, LI (December, 1957).

78. Robert A. Dahl, "A Rejoinder," American Political Science Review, LI (December, 1957), p. 1059.

79. Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, transl. Wirth and Shils (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1936), pp. 102-103.

80. David Easton, The Political System (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1953), p. 226.

81. Ibid., p. 228.

82. Charles Frankel, The Case for Modern Man (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), pp. 138-139.

83. Dahl, Preface..., p. 37.

84. Ibid., p. 36, n. #2.

## CHAPTER V

## HANS J. MORGENTHAU AND THE REALITY OF POWER

The three realists discussed thus far, Burnham, Schumpeter, and Dahl, form a fairly coherent group in that they all deal with democratic political theory. The ideals to which their theories relate are the familiar ones of democracy, majority rule, popular sovereignty, political equality, and the rights of individuals. We have seen that they are all reluctant to express their own moral view or to clarify the moral implications of the realities which they have emphasized in their treatments of democracy. They prefer to let the facts speak for themselves.

Perhaps the approach adopted by these theorists can be explained, in part, by the fact that, in the context of democratic theory in which they write, they can assume a high degree of consensus among their readers on the central moral values relevant to their arguments. However, when we move beyond the sphere of political systems within sovereign states to relations among nations, there is much less consensus as to what values are relevant. Consequently, the realist in international political theory is almost forced to state the moral import of his position, if it is to have the prescriptive effect he intends. Even then, the inherent defects of realism come through to obscure the relation

between his descriptions and his prescriptions.

Our study would be seriously incomplete if we ignored this form of realism, although it can be treated quite independently of democratic theory. Hans J. Morgenthau[1], the theorist of international politics to be discussed in this chapter, is a realist in the traditional sense of one who stresses the role of "power" in politics. He is primarily concerned with the politics of international relations, but his principles of politics are sufficiently generalized to apply to any form of political behavior. (References in this chapter to "statesmen" and "nations", unless otherwise qualified, will be substantially interchangeable with "political actors" and "political groups", respectively.) Unlike our previous three theorists, Morgenthau does not refuse to present his own view of morality. It might seem that he would thus escape much of the criticism made of realism up to this point. However, this is not the case, for, in spite of his references to morality, Morgenthau is no more clear about how moral principles relate to political action than are those who say nothing about the matter. He is just as apt to mislead his readers about the normative character of his political theory as is any other realist. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the hazards of the explicitly normative form of realism illustrated by Morgenthau's arguments.

The basically normative orientation of Morgenthau's position can be seen in his dividing political theories into

"Idealism" and "Realism", rather than into the prescriptive and the descriptive as we saw, in Chapter I, Jenkin had done. According to Morgenthau, the history of modern political thought is the story of a contest between two schools that differ basically in their conceptions of man, society, and politics.

> One believes that a rational and moral political order derived from universally valid abstract principles, can be achieved here and now. It assumes the essential goodness and infinite malleability of human nature, and blames the failure of the social order to measure up to the rational standards on lack of knowledge and understanding, obsolescent social institutions, or the depravity of certain isolated individuals or groups. It trusts in education, reform and the sporadic use of force to remedy these defects.[2]

This is "Idealism".

The other school, "Realism", says Morgenthau, believes that the world, imperfect as it is from the rational point of view, is the result of forces inherent in human nature. Improvements can be made in the world only by working with these forces, not against them.

> This being inherently a world of opposing interests and of conflicts among them, moral principles can never be fully realized, but must at least be approximated through the ever temporary balancing of interests and the ever precarious settlement of conflicts.[3]

In sum, this school aims at the realization of the lesser evil rather than of the absolute good.

Morgenthau's principal criticism of political Idealists is that they have insufficiently recognized the role of "power" in the achievement of political goals. As a result they have constantly suffered defeat in their effort to bring

the world up to the moral standards they hold. In spite of failure, they have persisted in the belief that they are bound to succeed, once "wicked enemies" are destroyed, and irrational procedures transformed into rational ones.[4] They have advocated the immediate complete realization of such ultimate ideal goals as collective security, universal democracy, and permanent and just peace without realizing that there is bound to be a permanent gap between these ideals and political reality.[5]

Morgenthau does not propose that the attempt to improve the world should be given up altogether. Nor does he object to "rational solutions", as such, to political problems. What he does advocate is that "power" be made central to the formulation of a "rational" political theory. Where the Idealists have emphasized the need for political action to conform with the principles of morality, Morgenthau stresses the need for political action to meet the standard of success in the struggle for power. His argument is forceful and appealing from an uncritical point of view in the light of the current power struggles on the international scene and the consequent threats to national security.

However, Morgenthau's conception of politics and morality and the relationship between them is confused and dangerously misleading. He seems to argue both that politics and morality are incompatible and that the principles of right political action are indeed moral principles. He wavers between describing the reality of politics and pre-

scribing a norm for politics. The result is that equally plausible but conflicting conclusions can be drawn from his argument. On one interpretation, the conclusion seems to be that in matters of political policy it is the responsibility of statesmen to pursue political power for their country regardless of whose moral rights or interests must be abused in the process. On another interpretation, the conclusion is that the use of political power must be guided by moral considerations which include respect for the rights and interests of others because political action is always subject to moral judgment. The underlying difficulty is the unclarity in Morgenthau's concepts of "power", "politics", and "morality". It is to these concepts and their relation to each other that our attention shall be devoted.

Morgenthau begins his argument with a very plausible justification for normative political theory. When one considers all the facts that are recorded and can be recorded about the political scene, one hardly knows where to begin to make sense out of them unless one has some idea of what one is looking for. For purposes of political theory, we cannot just examine the facts. Morgenthau says:

> To give meaning to the factual raw material, we must approach political reality with a kind of rational outline, a map that suggests to us the possible meanings of foreign policy...We ask ourselves what the rational alternatives are from which a statesman may choose who must meet this problem under these circumstances (presuming always that he acts in a rational manner) and which of these rational alternatives this particular statesman acting under these circumstances,

> is likely to choose. It is the testing of this rational hypothesis against the actual facts and their consequences that gives meaning to the facts of international politics and makes a theory of politics possible.[6]

If we are to construct a normative political theory which is to guide statesmen, as well as others in politics, we must at least assume they will be interested in the alternative courses of action for which good reasons can be given. It would be theoretically pointless for Morgenthau's purposes to observe that politicians are often guided by uncritical habits and intuitions, for these cannot serve as a basis of a systematic theory. In other words, as in chess, while the game may be played by intuition, as long as there are rules of the game and certain dependent variables, winning strategies can be worked out and recommended. To play by intuition would be to play without any strategy. With the object of the game clearly in mind, the moves of the opposition can be better anticipated and countered without all the risks of haphazard play.[7] (As for the Idealists, they do not quite understand what the game of politics is about.)

We must assume, then, that the statesman will be interested in the rational alternatives open to him. This is to assume, presumably, that the statesman will be interested in making his decisions by weighing known factors which have a high probability of affecting the outcome of his actions, and that he will choose that alternative which appears most likely to be effective for his purposes. That being the case, it would seem that we cannot specify which alternatives

are rational unless we already know the purposes of the statesman. For the nature of the statesman's purposes or goals will largely determine what will be an effective means to their attainment. Therefore, the Realist's theory must contain some conception of the goals of statesmen to which the rational alternatives are to refer.

Now there are three ways of conceiving political goals. One is in terms of what the statesman ideally ought to be aiming at. Another is in terms of what statesmen actually do aim at. A further possibility is to combine these two views and hold that what statesmen do aim at is also what they ought to aim at. It is not always clear which of these conceptions of political goals Morgenthau is adopting. He thinks that the most realistic assumption about statesmen is that they "think and act in terms of interest defined as power". The evidence of history, he says, bears that assumption out.[8] This is the assumption which is to give meaning to the factual raw material of politics for both the political theorist and statesman alike. But it is also to serve as the basis for a normative theory about how a statesman ought to act. For Morgenthau is not just presenting us with an "indiscriminate description" of political reality. He intends to offer a "rational" theory of international politics which may well depart from reality. To the extent that it does, he says, reality is deficient.[9] "Political realism presents the theoretical construct of a national foreign policy which experience can never completely achieve."[10] Rational policy

presents a norm for practice to aim at. It thereby indicates what ought to be done.

Thus, on the one hand, we have rational alternatives framed in terms of an assumption which purportedly describes how statesmen actually think and act, as born out by history. On the other hand, we have the suggestion that statesmen ought to think in terms of this assumption if they are interested in pursuing rational policy. Now it might seem pointless, if not inconsistent, to argue that statesmen ought to be doing something which it is assumed they in fact already do.[11] These positions can be made compatible, however, if certain distinctions are made in the following way. Morgenthau simply assumes that statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power. (Just what he means by this we shall see later.) Although they think and act in these terms, they do not necessarily see what the best alternatives are for power to be successfully exercised. Therefore, Morgenthau proposes to indicate which policies would be most effective, and thereby rational, in achieving the power in which statesmen are assumed to be interested. This does not necessarily mean that they <u>will</u> pursue these rational policies. The point is that statesmen ought to pursue them in the light of their own interests. Political power as actually pursued is not political power pursued as effectively as it can be. The general goal is power, but the particular ways of successfully achieving it constitute specific goals which may not be pursued. Specific policy goals which most effectively maximize

the general goal, are only rational ones. Thus, the Realist makes a realistic assumption about the general goal of political action, and then, interpreting the facts in the light of that assumption recommends the most rational alternative. These alternatives become norms for the successful achievement of power.

Morgenthau can be taken as saying merely that if one has power as his goal, then a theory can be constructed giving the rational alternatives to that goal. He also can be interpreted, however, as implying that power ought to be the goal of the statesman. This implication is a step which is not justified by his argument for rational political theory, as such. Since almost any goal one happened to be interested in pursuing could be used as the basis for "making sense" of political facts, any such goal could serve as the focal point of a rational political theory. The theory would be rational so long as it organized facts relative to some goal--not necessarily the goal of power. Even when Morgenthau says that a rational foreign policy is a good foreign policy because it "minimizes risks and maximizes benefits",[12] it still does not follow that the goal to which such policy refers must be power. The ideal goals of collective security, universal peace, and democracy could be pursued so as to minimize risks and maximize benefits in terms of those goals. Whether one's goal is power or peace may make a considerable difference in the kinds of risks and benefits involved. Therefore, something more must be said for adopting power as the goal

than that rational policies are desirable.

If it can be assumed that statesmen always think and act in terms of power, which is doubtful, then, certainly, power must somehow be taken into consideration in any rational political policy. It does not follow that power is or ought to be the goal that statesmen pursue. To elevate a factor which must be taken into consideration to the height of the goal of all political activity is to go far beyond the Realist's criticism of Idealists for neglecting power altogether. It is not necessary to go from one extreme to the other. The more sensible position may well lie somewhere in between. Morgenthau's views, although obscure, give the impression that there is no middle ground worth standing on.

Morgenthau's way of making his point about the role of power can be seen in an analogy he draws. He says, "The difference between international politics as it actually is and a rational theory derived from it is like the difference between a photograph and a painted portrait." The painted portrait, as opposed to the photograph, shows the one thing the naked eye cannot see: the human essence of the person portrayed.[13] This suggests that a rational theory, as such, is distinguished from others by showing the essence of its subject. It implies, misleadingly, that a theory which does not bring out the essence of its subject will not be rational. It also implies, in context, that power is the essence of international politics. As Morgenthau goes on to say, "The idea of interest is indeed the essence of politics, and it is

unaffected by the circumstances of time and place."[14]

Whatever Morgenthau means by "essence" and "interest defined as power", it is apparent that he is using the term "rational" in three different senses without clearly distinguishing them. In one sense, "rational" refers to a theory which makes facts meaningful by systematizing them relative to certain assumptions about behavior. In another sense, "rational" refers to any policy which minimizes risks and maximizes benefits. Finally, "rational" refers to a theory which deals with the essence of its subject-matter. While the first two senses of "rational" are distinct, they are at least acceptable. The third sense, however, is doubtful and seems to trade on the emotive force of the other two senses to encourage the idea that normative political theory ought to be formulated with a view to maximizing the power factor above all others. Even if power were the essence of politics in some sense, that would not make it unreasonable or irrational to concern oneself with other characteristics of politics or other goals to be maximized. One might do as Dahl has done--formulate a political theory designed to maximize political equality. Or, on the international scene, one might devise a theory which is rational in terms of the policies it recommends designed to maximize world economic prosperity. Such goals could be pursued in a rational way without making them subordinate to the struggle for power. And yet, this seems to be just what Morgenthau wants to deny.

Let us consider his concept of the "essence" of

politics. He says that the essence of politics is something which is unaffected by the circumstances of time and place. This essence is interest defined as power. Realism, Morgenthau says, does not give its key concept of interest defined as power a meaning that is fixed once and for all. Yet, power distinguishes politics regardless of time and place. What he means is that the content of interest is not fixed. The kind of interest which determines political action in any particular period of history depends upon the political and cultural context within which foreign policy is formulated. "The goals that might be pursued by nations in their foreign policy run the whole gamut of objectives any nation has ever pursued or might possibly pursue."[15] But, then, "Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim."[16]

What kind of a claim is this? In saying that the struggle for power is the essence of politics, that it is always the immediate aim, is Morgenthau making an empirical assertion or is he simply <u>defining</u> politics in terms of power? There is a certain ambiguity in the ordinary use of the term "essence" that makes this a significant question. Sometimes when we say that a certain feature is "of the essence" of a thing, we mean only that it is a very important feature. If a feature is simply an important characteristic of a thing, one among several, and logically independent of the thing's being what it is, then it would always be an empirical question as to whether that particular feature was, in fact, necessary

to the thing's existence. In this sense, whether or not power was an essential feature of politics may have to be determined by an empirical investigation of all kinds of political situations to see if the power factor was always involved. This might be what Morgenthau means. If so, he has not satisfactorily established the fact that power is a necessary feature of politics. We shall consider this interpretation shortly.

We also sometimes mean by "essence" that the feature in question is logically necessary to the existence of the thing. That is, it is a necessary but not sufficient feature --other features also being necessary. As applied to politics, to say that power was of its essence in this sense, would mean that there is no political action without power involved, but in addition to power, political action necessarily involves other features or goals, such as human rights, or the public interest. If this is what Morgenthau means by "essence", then he misleads his readers in suggesting that only a theory aimed at maximizing the power feature alone would be politically rational. Either it would be equally necessary to maximize the other features of politics to have a rational political theory, or, as has been mentioned, it would be equally rational to maximize any one of them--for example, the public interest.

Yet, there is a third sense of "essence" in which we do mean that a feature is both necessary and sufficient to the existence of the thing. In effect, we mean to define the

thing by this feature alone in calling it the "essence". In this sense, the struggle for power would be taken as the defining characteristic of political activity. There is political action if, and only if, a struggle for power is involved. This, too, could be what Morgenthau means by saying that power is the essence of politics. Such an interpretation is indicated by his remarks about the relation of nations to international politics. He says that not every action that a nation performs with respect to another is of a political nature. "Many such activities are normally undertaken without any consideration of power, nor do they normally affect the power of the nation undertaking them." Thus, he says, a nation is not engaged in international politics when it exchanges goods and services with other nations, or when it promotes the distribution of cultural achievements throughout the world, and so on with many other legal, economic, and humanitarian activities of this kind.[17]

It is important to be clear about what Morgenthau means by the essence of politics in order to understand the implications of his conception of the relationship between politics and morality. For he holds the surprising view that politics inevitably involves doing evil.[18] If Morgenthau means only that power is an important feature of politics, then it does not follow that politics inevitably involves doing evil because it involves power. For a political action may not involve power, and, therefore, not necessarily involve evil. While, if he means that power is a logically necessary

feature of politics, then it is only logically true that politics as he defines it inevitably involves evil. Moreover, this position would be pernicious, as it would seem to excuse the evil in politics on the grounds that its nature is to be evil. We shall return to Morgenthau's conception of the evil of politics after a discussion of his central idea of "power".

Before we proceed with the argument, we should have some idea of what Morgenthau means by power in the political context. He says that when he speaks of power he means man's control over the minds and actions of other men. "By political power we refer to the mutual relations of control among the holders of public authority and between the latter and the people at large."[19] He distinguishes political power from force in the sense of the actual exercise of physical violence on the grounds that when violence becomes actual we have something more like military power than political power. The use of physical violence substitutes a physical relation for a psychological one. "Political power is a psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised." It gives control over actions through influence over minds. The influence may be exerted through "orders, threats, persuasion, or a combination of any of these." Accordingly, not only does the President exert political power over the executive branch through his order, but an industrialist, labor leader, or lobbyist also has political power, in so far as his preferences influence the

actions of other men. In other words, "the statement that A has or wants political power over B signifies always that A is able, or wants to be able to control certain actions of B through influencing B's mind."[20] It should be added that either A or B must be a public authority.

As it stands, this is not a satisfactory definition of political power, because there are many non-political ways of influencing men's minds to control their actions. For example, a friend may tell a public offical of an entertaining book he has read with the object of getting the official to read it. The official may come to regard his friend's advice about books as a determining influence over what he reads. There is nothing obviously political about this kind of influence. A distinction is needed either in the intentions of the one exerting the influence, or in the type of action over which control is exercised, or both. It seems unlikely that Morgenthau would be willing to make a distinction in intentions. However, he is not very clear about this, as we shall see. He does make a distinction in the type of actions affected when he marks off political actions from other kinds. The only trouble with this is that political actions are apparently defined by power relations. Thus, there is a danger of circularity. He cannot both define political power by reference to political actions, and define political actions by reference to political power.

Since Morgenthau's views on intentions are involved in what appears to be an empirical case for making power

central to politics, let us take them up in that context. His key assumption for rational political theory is that statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power. He offers two reasons in support of this assumption neither one of which is conclusive. One reason is that history bears out the assumption. The other reason is that it helps us anticipate and understand better the thoughts and actions of a statesman.

As for the first point, to the extent that history is a record of the facts of the past, it has no more "meaning" than the facts of the present until those facts are selected and related in terms of our interests and purposes. To the extent that it is necessary to approach political reality with a kind of rational outline to give meaning to the factual raw material of history, Morgenthau has suggested that to construct some sort of rational outline to make facts meaningful, we must first make certain assumptions. His assumption is that statesmen think and act in a characteristic way. What assumption is it, then, that he begins with in order to make the facts of history meaningful? The assumption that statesmen think and act in terms of power. The very same assumption! The reason history seems to back up the assumption is that it is the basis for selecting and arranging the facts of history to make them meaningful. No doubt there are limits to what assumptions history may seem to back up. Even so, there does not seem to be any general agreement among historians as to exactly how history is to be interpreted,

or what, if any, meaning it has.[21] To say that history bears out any one assumption about how statesmen think and act is not to say anything very significant unless a contrast can be made with some other assumption which can be shown to be mistaken. If, for example, it would be just as true to say that statesmen think and act in terms of political ideals and moral principles, it would be rather arbitrary to make the assumption about power central to political theory. But Morgenthau does not deny that statesmen think in terms of justice and morality. Rather, he implies that examples of their doing so only represent superficialities. He says that those who seek power use ideologies to conceal their aims. It is necessary to pacify the resentment and opposition that arise when the drive for power is recognized for what it is. So there is an attempt to make what is actually aspiration for power appear to be something in harmony with the demands of reason, morality, and justice.[22] Burnham made a similar point about ruling classes. The argument as it stands is inconclusive. If to all appearances statesmen do think and act in ways consistent with reason, morality, and justice, why can we not assume that they are thinking and acting in these terms?

This question brings us to Morgenthau's second point in support of his assumption. He thinks that working on his assumption he and others can anticipate and understand better the thoughts and actions of statesmen. This is clearly a further empirical assumption that would have to be tested for

its truth if it is to have any weight in the argument. A relevant consideration in such a test would be the actual intentions of statesmen in proposing policies which they claim are meant to realize moral aspirations. If we know their intentions we at least know their reasons for acting as they do. But Morgenthau is not interested in intentions. A realistic theory, he holds, will guard against the popular fallacies of concern with motives and ideological preferences. Motives, he says, are the most illusive of psychological data distorted by interests and emotions of actor and observer alike. "Do we really know what our motives are? And what do we know of the motives of others?" he asks.[23]

It is not clear what kind of questions these are. The tell-tale phrase, "Do we <u>really</u> know...?" intimates that Morgenthau has been disturbed by a philosophical problem in theory of knowledge. The suggestion is that whatever we may suppose, we cannot really know our own minds, or the minds of others. When pressed in this way, however, the point is equally destructive of some of the realists' claims. Morgenthau, himself, has argued that the assumption of self-interest in terms of power will help anticipate and illuminate the <u>thoughts</u>, as well as actions, of statesmen. What is the point in trying to anticipate and understand thoughts of which we really can have no knowledge? We do not really know that statesmen think in terms of self-interest any more than in other terms. Are thoughts so different from motives that we can have knowledge of one and not the other? Perhaps

what Morgenthau has in mind is the distinction between our conscious and our unconscious motives. We must not take our conscious thoughts too seriously, because psychologists have discovered that we often act as we do for reasons of which we are unaware. It may seem to us that we act as we do for morally good reasons, but actually we are unconsciously motivated in even our most deliberate decisions to gain more — security and power. I suspect some such theory of psychology is behind this Realist position. The unconscious, self-interested motives are somehow more real because they are "below the surface". We tend to think that because we are unaware of them they are more compelling than the reasons for which we suppose we act. Does this mean, then, that the political theorist must address his rational alternatives to the unconscious mind of the statesman? Is he engaged in a form of subliminal persuasion? Or, is it that the political realist is a therapist who brings the disturbing but real reasons for political behavior to the surface? The Realists are the Freudians of politics with an analysis that reveals not sex but power to be the underlying force that explains all political actions. Otherwise, it would seem that the different reasons statesmen and politicians give for their behavior must be taken seriously for anticipating and understanding their thoughts and actions.

The Realist might retort that he is not interested in explaining all the thoughts and actions of the statesman, but only those features of his behavior which are politically

relevant--which distinguish him in his political role. In his political role the statesman pursues distinctly political activities or policies--foreign policies, in the case of international relations. The particular content of the policy the statesman pursues is irrelevant to his role as statesman. What is of interest for theoretical purposes is only the most general feature which characterizes the statesman's political policies. When a statesman represents his country in international politics his immediate aim is always to enhance the power of his country.[24]

This is a plausible position, until we take a further look at Morgenthau's concept of politics, specifically international politics. When we do so, it becomes apparent that Morgenthau's argument is a petitio principii.[25] The statesman thinks and acts in terms of power when he is engaged in international politics. However, he is engaged in international politics only when he does think and act in terms of power. This is implied when Morgenthau says that a nation is not engaged in international politics unless there is some consideration of power which enters into its activities.[26] He indicates, as I have pointed out, that a nation is not always engaged in international politics in its dealings with other countries. He says, for example, that it is necessary to distinguish between economic policies that are undertaken for their own sakes and economic policies that are the instruments of political policy--"a policy, that is, whose economic purpose is but the means to the end of controlling the policies

of another nation."[27] This statement can be made consistent with his assertion that the immediate aim of all politics is power, only if politics is defined as consisting of those activities of political actors which involve political power. Otherwise, he would be saying that some apparently political activities are pursued for their own sake and do not have power as their aim. The suspicion of a petitio is reenforced by another of Morgenthau's assertions. He says:

> An individual statesman may follow the dictates of his own conscience with regard to international affairs. If he does, it is to him as an individual that these moral convictions are attributed and not to the nation to which he belongs and in whose name he may even actually speak.[28]

The implication clearly is that the statesman is just not acting in his political role if he does not put power considerations first. It becomes clear that for Morgenthau the issue as to how statesmen think and act is not an empirical one at all; it is conceptual. That is, his argument about the relation of political power to politics hinges upon his conception of politics. Let us turn, then, to his conception of politics and its relation to morality.

According to Morgenthau, the political realist maintains that the sphere of politics is autonomous, as are the spheres of economics, law, and morality.[29] When the moralist asks: "Is this policy in accord with moral principles?", the political realist asks: "How does this policy effect the power of the nation?" Even though the political realist is aware of the relevance of other standards, he must subordinate

them to the political one.[30]

The autonomy of politics is defended by Morgenthau in two different ways. One claim, indicated above, is that in politics the principle of power takes precedence over all other considerations. The second is that the role of the public official or statesman places him under a set of obligations distinct from those he has as a private individual. There are important points in both of these considerations, but neither of them justifies an acceptance of the realists' conception of political autonomy.

Morgenthau attempts to illustrate the first claim by the "moralistic" approach to the question of the international status of Communist China. The moralist may judge that the policies of Communist China are not in accord with the principles of Western morality. It does not necessarily follow from this, Morgenthau suggests, that Western governments ought not to deal with the government of Communist China.[31] The latter is a political rather than a moral question, and involves the complicated test of interests and power. The implication is that it would be a mistake to arrive at the conclusion to an essentially political question such as this on the sole basis of moral quality of the policies of the country concerned.

Since it is granted that the same conclusion might be arrived at in this case whether the issue is decided by the application of a purely moral standard or the political one, this does not help much to show the significance of the autonomy of political principles. A better example would be

one involving collective security agreements. Morgenthau says that collective security is an ideal which cannot work.[32] He gives an example of a situation where, on the eve of the Crimean War, it was not in the national interests of Great Britain and France to keep their commitments to Turkey.[33] From the point of view of the political realist it would seem that Great Britain and France ought not to have kept their agreement to aid Turkey because it was not in their interest to do so. The moralist supposedly would say that they ought to have kept their agreement or promise regardless of the political consequences.

The trouble with leaving matters that way is that we are still not told what ought to be done. That is, if politics and morality are autonomous and each yields a different answer to the same question of policy, how are we to decide between them? Morgenthau never seems to face this issue squarely. His references to the autonomy of the political consideration of power within the political realm are ambiguous. The moralist, as moralist, and the political realist, as political realist, ask different questions about policy to which there may be different answers. Similarly with economists, lawyers, and military men. Each arrives at an evaluation of policy relative to his own point of view without letting his judgment be determined by standards or principles appropriate to a different perspective. It may be desirable at times to have a strictly legal or military appraisal of a policy without reference to economic or political consider-

ations. But there comes a point when a decision has to be made on the action to be taken. How is this to be determined if there are different recommendations from these different points of view as to what ought to be done? If the autonomy of realms simply means that we may get different answers, then there is still the need for a point of view which encompasses all the others. If all that the autonomy of politics comes to is a kind of technical specialization, it is a rather short-sighted conception of political problems, and it leaves the vital question of which view is to take precedence unanswered.

This may not be what Morgenthau means by autonomy. He may mean something like this: there are certain kinds of actions or policies which by their nature fall primarily within the purview of a certain subject. Whatever that subject may be, its principles and standards take precedence over all others in determining the correctness of the action in question. Thus, an action which involves political power, thereby, falls within the realm of politics. The political principle of prudence or success then takes precedence over all others, including "the moral law". The final answer to the question of what ought to be done would depend entirely upon the calculations of maximum power advantage. Whatever economic, military, or moral considerations are relevant would weigh in the balance only so far as they affect the power factor. Moral principles take precedence only when power is not at stake.

It is difficult to accept this interpretation of Morgenthau's meaning because of conflicting things he says about morality and its relation to politics. Two views he has expressed conflict with the idea that politics is autonomous in the above sense. On the one hand, he refers to the guiding principle of politics, prudence, as a moral principle, and on the other hand, he has said that all political actions are inevitably evil. If the guiding principle of politics is itself a moral principle, then politics falls within morality, not outside of it. And if it is appropriate to judge political actions as morally evil or wrong, then it must be that the moral and the political realms are not distinct or autonomous realms at all. These points can be brought out best after we have considered the second of the ways in which Morgenthau seems to defend the autonomy of politics.

A contrast is drawn between the moral role of the individual and the political role of the statesman, suggesting that these roles are distinct and that the spheres of morality and politics can be conceived as equally distinct. The individual, Morgenthau argues, may say for himself, let justice be done, even if the world perish, but the state has no right to say so in the name of those who are in its care .

> Both individual and state must judge political action by universal moral principles such as that of liberty. Yet, while the individual has a moral right to sacrifice himself in defense of such a moral principle, the state has no right to let its moral disapprobation of the infringement of liberty get in the way of successful political action, itself inspired by the moral principle of national survival.[34]

As an individual moral agent a person can abide by certain moral principles which he has no right to comply with as a statesman representing the interests of a state. The statesman and other public officials have certain responsibilities to their office, that is, in their political roles, which supersede their moral responsibilities as individuals.

There is an important truth in this observation, which is obscured by the way it is stated. It is true that the statesman or public official has a greater official responsibility than the private individual. It follows from this that it may be permissable, even obligatory, for the individual to take some risks in defense of a moral principle that a statesman would have no right to take in the name of his country. A private person with no public responsibilities but to himself, if one is ever in such a situation, may feel obligated to aid, say, a revolutionary movement in Latin America. He may have a perfect moral right to do so, whereas a statesman representing the United States would have no right to commit this country to aiding such a movement without first considering the responsibilities of his office. The reason for this is not that morality and politics are autonomous. As Morgenthau himself says, the principle of national survival which guides the statesman is a moral principle. Nor is this the only moral principle which <u>should</u> guide the statesman. A more fundamental consideration is that when the statesman makes a decision which involves the whole country which he represents the consequences of that decision are far greater

than when one person makes a decision that involves a risk only to himself. The statesman commits a million lives where the private individual commits only one. Thus, for the statesman, the morally relevant facts which must weigh in his decision are proportionately multiplied. National survival is one of these facts. Another vital fact is the desires of the people he represents. If the people of this country agree to commit themselves to the aid of another at the risk of their own survival, then our statesman may find successful political action inspired by a quite different principle than national survival. If it is ever right for one individual to sacrifice himself in defense of liberty, then it may be right for a nation to sacrifice itself in defense of liberty. Morgenthau seems to have ignored the possibility that the people of a nation as a whole may prefer death to dishonor. Perhaps that is unrealistic, but Morgenthau has posed the issue here as one of rights. He only obscures things by personifying the state as though it were an entity distinct from the individuals who compose it. What the state has a moral right to do depends upon what individuals have a moral right to do. The state has as much, and only as much, right to act as its members have collectively.

The moral obligations of a statesman as a private individual and his political obligations to his office may indeed conflict. The conflict would be between different sets of moral obligations, however, not between moral and non-moral ones. There is nc justification for claiming that

politics is autonomous on the basis of a difference in the moral role of the individual and the political role of the statesman. The political role of the statesman is but a higher moral role than that of the individual because of the broader moral considerations it represents.

Another possible source of Morgenthau's confusion about the relation between politics and morality is his conception of morality itself. He says that ethics in the abstract judges action by its conformity with the moral law; while political ethics judges action by its political consequences.[35] For some idea of what he might mean by "ethics in the abstract" and "the moral law" we must refer to his earlier writings.

In Scientific Man versus Power Politics, Morgenthau contends that politics is inevitably connected with doing evil. He does not dispute that statesmen have good intentions. He is more concerned about the consequences of their actions. He says that, although our intentions are generally good, the consequences of our actions are not. "The very act of acting destroys our moral integrity."[36] Ethics and politics are not to be distinguished in terms of a difference in the ethical principles which apply to private and political action, as we suggested above. The ethical standards which apply to behavior from the individual perspective, he says, apply equally well to behavior from the social or political perspective.

The evil that corrupts political action is the same

> evil that corrupts all action, but the corruption of political action is indeed the paradigm and the prototype of all possible corruption. The distinction between private and political action is not one between innocence and guilt, morality and immorality, goodness and evil, but lies in the degree alone in which the two types of action deviate from the ethical norm...From the fact that the political acts of a person differ from his private ones, it does not follow that he recognizes different moral precepts in the different spheres of action. There is not one kind of ethical precept applying to political action and another one to the private sphere, but one and the same ethical standard applies to both--observed and observable, however, by either with unequal compliance.[37]

From the ethical point of view, politics is at least as evil as any individual action which violates moral laws.

There are, however, different "tests" which apply to political action. The ethical or moral test is only one of them. There is also a distinct political test.

> The test of political success is the degree to which one is able to maintain, to increase, or to demonstrate one's power over others. The test of a morally good action is the degree to which it is capable of treating others not as a means to the actor's end but as ends in themselves.[38]

What we have, then, are two reasons for the inevitably evil character of political action. Political action is evil, for one reason, because no matter how good one's intentions, the consequences are bound to be bad. It also involves doing evil for the quite different reason that, as a matter of principle, politically right action is in direct conflict with morally right action. Upon inspection we find that these points are based on a certain arbitrariness and confusion which, when cleared up, reveal the assertion of the inevitable evil of politics to be quite senseless.

Morgenthau says that the consequences of political action are generally bad, so the very act of acting destroys the moral integrity of the actor. This view is puzzling because, supposedly, morality is not concerned with consequences but only with whether or not the action complies with the moral law. How can the nature of the consequences reflect on the integrity of the actor, especially when his intentions were good? Morgenthau's explanation does not completely dispel the confusion. He reasons as follows:

> First of all, because of its natural limitations, the human intellect is unable to calculate and to control completely the results of human action. Once the action is performed, it becomes an independent force creating changes, provoking actions, and colliding with other forces, which the actor may or may not have foreseen and which he can control but to a small degree. These factors, which, lying beyond human foresight and influence, we call "accidents", deflect the action from its intended goal and create evil results out of good intentions.[39]

Now certainly not everything we do turns out as we had intended. Our responsibility for our intentions can even be said to extend to the specific forms of human achievement between which our choices are made.[40] We can evaluate the moral integrity of an action in terms of the extent of the knowledge and ability of the actor. A generally good intention does not make an act right if the specific form it takes is an obviously poor choice of means to carry it out so that it has bad consequences which could reasonably have been avoided. This does not seem to be Morgenthau's point. For him, an action must be judged evil even if its bad consequences are the result of factors lying beyond human foresight

and influence. But in saying that such consequences reflect upon the moral integrity of the actor, he has simply confused two different senses of evil.

In one sense, an evil action is a sinful one--one which breaks a moral law. In another sense, an evil action is one which has bad consequences whether it breaks a moral law or not. If a man deliberately kills another without justification, that would be an evil, sinful act violating a moral rule. However, if a man, through no fault of his own, unintentionally causes the death of another when trying to do him a good turn, the consequence would be evil, but the original action would not be sinful. The accidental death in no way reflects upon the moral integrity of the one who caused it. Ordinarily, we do not blame someone for those consequences of his actions which are beyond his foresight and control. The moral integrity of an action is preserved so long as the actor's intentions are good and he acts in accordance with his knowledge and ability--even if he is a statesman. To say that the consequence of a person's action was an accident, contrary to reflecting on the integrity of the action, may serve as an excuse from moral responsibility.[41] There is also the consideration that in ascribing an action to someone the question of his responsibility only extends as far as what is referred to as "his action". At some point, the consequences of an act are no longer considered part of the action ascribed to the agent and, therefore, not relevant to his responsibility. It is just this sort of consequence

that Morgenthau appears to describe.[42]

Morgenthau's conception of morality could hardly serve as a guide to right conduct if it condemns actions as he says. If evil in the political realm is unavoidable for the sorts of reasons he gives, then it is unavoidable in <u>any</u> realm of action at all. Political action would not be distinguished by the fact of its evil connections. It might be argued that political action involves evil more often than does any other kind of action, but that would hardly justify saying that political ethics is <u>the</u> "ethics of doing evil".[43] Nothing is gained, then, by stressing the fact that so often bad consequences result from the best of intentions. It would be more helpful to conclude that in politics, as in any other activity, we must <u>use</u> foresight and intelligence in trying to achieve our goals in such a way as to maximize the probability that the consequences of our efforts will effect more good than harm.

Elsewhere, Morgenthau does say something to this effect. The political actor, he says, has, beyond the general moral duties, a special moral responsibility to act wisely.

> What is done in the political sphere, by its very nature concerns others who must suffer from unwise action. What is here done with good intentions, but unwisely, and hence, with disastrous results is morally defective, for it violates the ethics of responsibility to which all action affecting others, and hence political action par excellence, is subject.[44]

The point of this statement seems to be that it is not enough for the political actor to have good intentions. When the consequences of his actions are bad, the suffering which

results extends to others. Since one always has a moral responsibility to avoid causing unnecessary suffering to others, the political actor, by the nature of his actions, always has this moral responsibility, whatever other moral obligations he may have. The implication here is that the political actor can fulfill this responsibility by acting wisely. It would seem to follow, then, that if one does act wisely in political affairs, he cannot be said to have failed in his responsibility to avoid causing unnecessary suffering to others. But to act wisely is something one must intend to do. One does not act wisely just by chance. Now if wise action is required by the "ethics of responsibility", then the intention to act wisely is a "good intention". Therefore, it is a mistake to deny the significance of good intentions. Morgenthau's point about intentions should be that one must have all the good intentions guiding his action that the situation requires. In an important respect, our intentions determine our decisions--at least as far as our decisions are the result of deliberation. For the political realist to ignore the role of intentions in political action is as serious an error as it is for the moralist to ignore the role of power. Intentions must take account of whatever is morally relevant to right action if the good consequences of political acts are to be maximized. What is called for, then, is the <u>best</u> intentions of which an agent is capable. It is the responsibility of those who appoint statesmen and those who elect politicians to place men in office who are capable

of the best of intentions--including the intention to act wisely. People may often fail to fulfill this responsibility also, but neither that fact nor the badness of the consequences of political action warrants the claim that politics is inevitably evil.[45]

We now come to the second of Morgenthau's two reasons for regarding politics as involving doing evil. This is the argument that the test of political success is the degree to which one is able to maintain, to increase, and to demonstrate one's power over others, while the test of a morally good action is the degree to which it is capable of treating others as ends, rather than as means. The power relation, he says, is the very denial of the respect for man as an end in himself, "for it seeks to use man as a means to the end of another man."[46] There are difficulties with both of these tests. The political test is unclear, and the moral test is confused.

Morgenthau says that respect for man as an end in himself, which is the basis for the moral test, is the very core of Judeo-Christian morality.[47] There is no need to dispute that. It does not follow, however, that to use one man as the means to the end of another man is necessarily to deny the first man respect as an end in himself. For it is possible to treat a man both as an end in himself and as a means at the same time. To rule out this possibility would make an absurdity of "the moral law". As Morgenthau states the test of a morally good action, it would be equivalent to a

categorical imperative of the following form: So act as to treat others never as a means, but as ends in themselves, only. Although Morgenthau does not specifically refer to Kant, it should be clear that not even Kant held so extreme a categorical imperative. Kant's imperative was: "So act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other, never as a means only but in every case as an end also". W. D. Ross points out that Kant did not make the mistake of saying that we must never treat men as means. Whenever one man makes a bargain with another he is treating the other as a means to something he desires. "What Kant insists on is that in treating others as means we must also have regard to their rights and interests."[48] It is difficult to imagine how one could get about if he lived by a maxim which forbad treating others as a means at all. Think of all the services one would have to perform for oneself. Every man would have to be a jack-of-all-trades. All offers of assistance and cooperation would have to be rejected. It would be a rule fit only for a man on a deserted island (yet even Robinson Crusoe had his Friday)--not for men in Society.

If, on the other hand, Morgenthau does not intend to exclude the possibility of treating others as means, so long as their rights and interests are respected, then the political and moral tests of right action are not necessarily opposed. If these tests are not necessarily opposed, political action is not necessarily evil by reason of the difference in these tests. The exerting of an influence over someone

to control his actions may be quite compatible with treating him as an end even in the international sphere.

Mutual defense pacts, trade agreements, economic assistance are all ways in which nations seek to influence others which can serve the interests of both parties. Trade agreements and economic assistance may be more to the economic advantage of one country than another. However, it is still possible for both countries to gain relative to their original economic position simply due to the exchange of goods and capital which gives each country something it needs or wants. It might be difficult to judge the effect an economic exchange would have upon the power relations of the countries involved, but this is not a sufficient reason for excluding such transactions from considerations of political policy.

A more questionable type of influence and control is colonialism. Even then, it could be argued that colonial powers can treat their colonies with all due respect for the capacities of their colonial peoples to conduct their own affairs and to assist them to become self-governing, responsible nations of the world. In domestic politics, a politician uses voters who support him to get political power, but when he gets into power he can then exercise that power in the interest of those who supported him as well as in his own interest. Therefore, politically successful action need not be considered inconsistent with morally right action for the sole reason that political action, as such, involves treating others as means. As long as political power is not used

contrary to the rights and interests of others. In that case, politically successful action would always violate the moral law even in the Kantian sense. In order to be clear about this possibility we must first know what the test of political success requires. Two difficulties face us. The test actually seems to consist of three different tests each of which could have different conditions of fulfillment. Strictly speaking, so long as one test can be met without violating the moral law, then at least some successful political actions would not be evil in the sense Morgenthau claims. There is the further problem of the normative status of the political test. It is not always clear whether the political test is meant as a description of the test which is ordinarily used, or whether it is meant as the test Morgenthau himself proposes to use in his normative political theory.

According to Morgenthau's statement of the political test, there are three different ways it might be met. It may be met by maintaining power, by demonstrating one's power over others, and by increasing one's power. It would seem possible for one to maintain one's power without necessarily using others as means or mistreating them as ends. All that would be required would be to maintain one's capacity for influencing others and to resist attempts to weaken one's power. If this were done, we would have a case of successful and morally acceptable political action.

Yet, Morgenthau does not seem to want to allow the least possibility that power can be used without violating

the moral law. In one place he says:

> Actually there is no social action which would not contain at least a trace of this desire to make one's own person prevail against others. It is this ubiquity of the desire for power which, beside and beyond any particular selfishness or other evilness of purpose, constitutes the ubiquity of evil in human action.[49]

Here he seems to mean by power a desire to make one's own person prevail <u>against</u> others. It involves more than just attempting to control their actions. The control is to be used contrary to the interests and rights of those over whom it is exercised. In this sense of power, a political principle which calls for success in maintaining or increasing one's political power would violate Kant's categorical imperative.[50]

Our difficulty in knowing how to interpret the political test of success is due to the fact that, on the one hand, much of the time Morgenthau is simply describing how power is actually used; while on the other hand, he is also evaluating the way power is actually used, in order to establish some norms for its rational use. The normative aspect of his theory is further complicated by his referring to the political principles of prudence and national survival as moral principles. Does he mean to include in his norms for the rational and prudential use of power, the use of power in the sense of making one's own person (or nation) prevail against others? It may be that power is often used in this sense. But must it be used in this way if political action is to be considered successful? If statesmen can be guided by prudence, and if it is a moral principle by which they

should be guided, then why would actions in accordance with that principle be evil? Moreover, if prudence is a moral principle and at the same time the primary political principle, how is it appropriate to consider politics a distinct realm from morality? Morgenthau does not give us any satisfactory answer to these questions.

It is tempting to conclude that Morgenthau's point is that power ought to be used more successfully than it is used to improve one's power position. In discussing the idea of a balance of power among nations, he argues that no nation can be sure that its calculation of the distribution of power at any given time is correct. Therefore, he says, so as not to be put at a disadvantage in the contest for power, nations must try to have at least a margin of safety to allow for erroneous calculations and still maintain the balance of power. To insure a favorable balance of power they must actually aim at superiority of power in their own behalf. "And since no nation can foresee how large its miscalculations will turn out to be, all nations must ultimately seek the maximum of power obtainable under the circumstances."[51] This sounds very much like a prescription of what nations ought to do. It is sufficiently ambiguous, however, to be meant as the description of an actual tendency in international power relations, and nothing more.

If Morgenthau means to be giving a prescription of prudence in these passages, one wonders where prudence ends and abuse of power begins. Prudence could hardly be considered

a moral principle if it placed no limitations upon the use of power at all. Political theorists may not have agreed upon what the limitations on power ought to be (assuming they though of power in something like Morgenthau's sense), yet they have generally upheld the importance of having some limitations. Even Hobbes limited the power of his Sovereign to doing what was necessary to maintain the order and security of the commonwealth. This may not have been a very significant limitation, but the principle was there. What does Morgenthau have to say about the limits of power?

Morgenthau's main discussion of the limitations of power is historical and descriptive. That is, he acknowledges that historically there have been definite, effective moral limitations on the use of power. However, it turns out that these limitations depended upon a moral consensus and sanctions which no longer prevail on the international scene. They remain effective for the most part only in domestic politics.[52] Today only "shreds and fragments" of a system of supranational ethics have survived.[53]

A form of "nationalistic universalism" has arisen to take the place of the old system of supranational ethics. Nationalistic universalism, according to Morgenthau, is the result of each nation taking its national morality to be the one that all other nations ought to accept as their own.[54] Instead of placing any limitations on the struggle for power, the conflicts between national moralities have only intensified it on the international scene.[55] It is clear that

Morgenthau is dissatisfied with this outcome. He says that political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that "govern the universe". Such an identification, he thinks is both morally indefensible and politically pernicious.[56]

When Morgenthau does suggest that some kind of limitation ought to be placed on the use of power, he hesitates to commit himself to a principle of limitation that would be clearly consistent with morality. The concept of interest defined in terms of power, he says, saves us from moral excess and political folly. By regarding all nations as we regard our own, as political entities pursuing their respective interests defined in terms of power, we are able to do justice to them all.

> We are then capable of pursuing policies that respect the interests of other nations, while protecting and promoting those of our own. Moderation in policy cannot fail to reflect the moderation of moral judgment.[57]

Apparently nations are <u>capable</u> of respecting the interests of other nations when those interests are defined in terms of power. They are capable of moderation in policy. Does this mean, then, that they <u>ought</u> to respect the interests of other nations? If every nation is to regard every other nation as having the same kind of power interests which it has itself, the only nations which would have a moderate policy would be those with moderate power aspirations. However, in view of the difficulty in calculating the power aspirations of other countries, it might seem that the pru-

dent thing to do would be to try to maximize one's own power and to assume that everyone else is doing the same. How would such an approach lead to policies any more moderate than those of "nationalistic universalism"?

Morgenthau's clearest statement of how power ought to be used is given as a rule of diplomacy. We are told that nations must be willing to compromise on all issues that are not vital to them. This requires that the national interests of both sides be viewed with objectivity.

> A nation can only take a rational view of its national interests after it has parted company with the crusading spirit of a political creed. A nation is able to consider the national interests of the other side with objectivity only after it has become secure in what it considers its own national interests. Compromise on any issue, however minor, is impossible so long as both sides are not secure in their national interests.[58]

Compliance with this rule is required, Morgenthau asserts, by both morality and expediency.

Such a rule of diplomacy would place certain moral limitations on the use of political power. It implies that power is not rightly used at the expense of the national interests of others. One might even infer from it that power ought to be used to contribute to the security of other nations whenever possible. For that which advances the national security of other nations advances the possibility of compromise with them. This is a quite different conception of power than that suggested by Morgenthau's descriptive account of how power is actually used. The unqualified attempt to maximize one's power over others implied by the test of political

success would be inconsistent with the limitations on the proper use of power recommended here.

Thus, our quandary. If the principle of compromise is a genuine political principle, and if it does conflict with the test of political success, which of these principles, success or compromise, is to take precedence in guiding the statesman in determining what he ought to do? If the principle of compromise is to take precedence, then what basis is there for saying that political action inevitably conflicts with the moral principle of respect for others as ends in themselves? Morgenthau includes within the concept of national interest the integrity of a nation's institutions.[59] This makes it especially difficult to see how politics can be considered an autonomous realm. Almost any economic, military, or humanitarian policy would have some bearing on some aspect of a nation's institutions. Consider the effect economic and technical assistance can have on the long established customs and institutions of a country.[60] Even the dissemination of information on birth control to other countries can become a major political issue. Neither the idea of the autonomy of politics nor the assertion of the inevitable evil of political action could be justified if Morgenthau's principle of compromise were accepted as the highest political principle.

We cannot be certain, however, that Morgenthau does intend the principle of compromise as the highest political principle. It does not require that nations compromise on issues which are vital to them. This opens the way for the

precedence of national survival. Certainly everyone, nations included, has a prima facie right to self-defense. But the notions of self-defense and national survival are not unambiguous. It is quite conceivable that a nation might feel that its survival required agressive expansion of territory to insure an adequate zone of protection around the home country. The need might be felt for a world-wide system of foreign military bases that could cover any potential threat. The attempt to secure such territory and such bases may well conflict with the security and integrity of other nations. However, if all the nations involved viewed this matter as vital to their interests, nothing that Morgenthau has said indicates how the issue is to be resolved except in terms of a power struggle. This simply brings us back to the question of limitations on the use of power. As a consequence we must conclude that Morgenthau has failed to indicate unequivocally any morally adequate principle for the use of political power.

Morgenthau's claim that politics can be regarded as an autonomous realm which is both guided by moral principles and yet inevitably involves evil have not been substantiated. His arguments have rested on confused and misleading concepts of "power", "politics", and "morality". His own view of how power ought to be used is never clear, even though he purports to develop a normative political theory in which power is of central importance. At best, he seems to be saying that the use of political power is not incompatible with the moral

principle of respect for others, and that power is an important factor in politics which should not be neglected in the making of political decisions, whatever one's ultimate goal. For statesmen to pursue ideals without taking threats to national survival into consideration would be a violation of their moral responsibility for the consequences of their actions as well as a failing in their duty to their country.

At worst, Morgenthau can be interpreted as saying that power must be maximized in spite of its evil consequences in terms of the suffering to others and the infringement upon their rights and interests. Morality may conflict with political necessity, but that is never a sufficient reason for failing to take appropriate political action to insure success in the struggle for power. Whichever of these is Morgenthau's true view, he seriously misleads by also suggesting the other. Such a theory cannot be considered an adequate basis for the rational guidance of statesmen or anyone else. No doubt the sort of idealism and perfectionism to which Morgenthau refers can lead to worse situations than would be the case with a more prudential pursuit of political interests. However, this kind of realism is a poor alternative if it leaves the impression that power is rightly advanced for its own sake in the absence of any other principle supervening it. Such an impression is not easily avoided, and therein lies the danger.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1. Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations (2d ed.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954).
2. Ibid., p. 3.
3. Ibid., p. 4.
4. Ibid., p. 39.
5. Morgenthau, Scientific Man versus Power Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), pp. 72-73.
6. Morgenthau, Politics..., p. 5.
7. See, for example, Morgenthau's discussion of the game of balance of power. Ibid., pp. 171-172.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 7.
11. In a review of Morgenthau's, In Defense of the National Interest, Robert W. Tucker argues that Morgenthau supposedly gives us laws which determine the actual behavior of states, and at the same time seems to be saying that American foreign policy ought to follow these laws, apparently for the reason that it has not always done so in the past. "Professor Morgenthau's Theory of Political Realism," The American Political Science Review, XLVI, No. 1 (March, 1952), p. 216. The result is that Morgenthau "oscillates between what states are doing and what he thinks they ought to do, without striking a satisfactory balance." Ibid., p. 217.
12. Morgenthau, Politics..., p. 7.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 8.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., p. 25.

17. Ibid., p. 26.

18. Morgenthau presented the view that politics is inevitably evil most explicitly in his book Scientific Man... and his article, "The Evil of Politics and the Ethics of Evil," Ethics, LV, No. 1 (October, 1945), p. 1. He has recently reaffirmed it in Dilemmas of Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), Chapter 13. Although Morgenthau's views about the evil of politics are very similar to those of Reinhold Niebuhr, he rarely mentions Niebuhr in this respect. One writer has claimed that Morgenthau's Scientific Man...bears the imprint of Niebuhr's influence more than that of any other American scholar. See Kenneth W. Thompson, "Beyond National Interest: A Critical Evaluation of Reinhold Niebuhr's Theory of International Politics," The Review of Politics, XVII, No. 2. (April, 1955), p. 168.

19. Morgenthau, Politics..., p. 26.

20. Ibid., p. 27.

21. See W. H. Walsh, "Can History Be Objective," Introduction to Philosophy of History (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951), pp. 100-111.

22. Morgenthau, Scientific Man..., p. 205.

23. Morgenthau, Politics..., p. 5.

24. Ibid., p. 25.

25. A petitio principii is a fallacy which involves a claim to have proved a proposition which has been previously introduced into the premises of the argument.

26. Morgenthau, Politics..., p. 26.

27. Ibid., p. 28.

28. Ibid., p. 225.

29. Ibid., p. 10.

30. Ibid., p. 11.

31. Ibid., p. 12.

32. Ibid., pp. 391-392.

33. Ibid., p. 531.

34. Ibid., p. 11.

35. Ibid., p. 9.

36. Morgenthau, Scientific Man...,p. 189.

37. Ibid., pp. 195-196.

38. Ibid., p. 196.

39. Ibid., p. 189.

40. Stuart Hampshire, Thought and Action (London: Chatto & Windus, 1959), p. 269.

41. Morgenthau puts "accident" in quotes, possibly to suggest that the term is inappropriate under the circumstances referred to; but the term's use as indicated is what gives it its meaning.

42. Cf. H. L. A. Hart, "The Ascription of Responsibility and Rights," Logic and Language, ed. A. Flew (1st series; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), pp. 145-166.

43. Morgenthau, Scientific Man..., p. 202.

44. Morgenthau, Ethics, LV, No. 1.(October, 1945), p. 10.

45. Morgenthau's contrast between good intentions and the "ethics of responsibility" closely parallels Max Weber's contrast between the "ethics of responsibility" and the "ethic of ultimate ends"; "Politics as a Vocation," Essays in Sociology, trans. and ed. H.H. Gerth and C.Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958). Weber has in mind the difference between accepting responsibility for the results of one's actions as far as one is able to foresee them and accepting responsibility only for maintaining the purity of one's intentions. He thinks that, although these notions are opposed, they can be made to supplement each other by the mature man of politics. (Ibid., pp. 119-127).

    Weber's tendency to identify the "ethic of ultimate ends" with the Christian ethic is objected to by F. H. Hermens in "Ethics, Politics, and Power: Christian Realism and Manichean Dualism," Ethics, LXVIII, No. 4 (July, 1958); Hermens translates "ethic of ultimate ends" as "ethic of intention" (from the German Gesinnungsethik). Hermens points out that the Christian ethic loses the Utopian character attributed to it if we distinguish between the "precepts", which everyone must follow, and the "counsels of perfection", which one may or may not follow. This distinction, he says, is to be found in the New Testament and is accepted by all Catholics and some Protestants. (Ibid., p. 247). This would at least narrow the field of those to whom Weber's dilemma applies.

46. Morgenthau, Dilemmas of Politics, p. 247.

47. Ibid.

48. Sir David Ross, Kant's Ethical Theory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 49.

49. Morgenthau, Ethics, LV, No. 1. (October, 1945), p. 14.

50. Morgenthau's concept of power is similar in some respects to that of Harold Lasswell. Lasswell says that power is differentiated from influence in general by the threat of sanctions. "Power is a special case of the exercise of influence: it is the process of affecting policies of others with the help of (actual or threatened) severe deprivations for non-conformity with the policies intended." Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 76. It remains an open question as to whether severe deprivations would be necessarily contrary to the rights and interests of those over whom power was exercised.

51. Morgenthau, Politics..., p. 189.

52. Ibid., p. 200; pp. 208-209.

53. Ibid., p. 233.

54. Ibid., p. 230.

55. Ibid., p. 233.

56. Ibid., p. 10.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid., p. 529.

59. Ibid., p. 528.

60. See Cultural Patterns and Technical Change, ed. Margaret Mead (New York: The New American Library, 1955).

# CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSIONS

The diversity of the ways in which the realist's position can be argued should now be apparent. It is certainly not obvious that Burnham, Schumpeter, Dahl, and Morgenthau are, in an important sense, all doing the same sort of thing. One is inclined to say that they do not represent any one school of thought, but that their views have something of a family resemblance. Despite many differences, overlapping similarities do seem to bind them together. Even with the uncertainty about Morgenthau's conception of the use of power, some generalizations are warranted. None of the four theorists leaves much room for optimism about the fulfillment of the political and moral ideals they discuss. They all stress the limitations which "reality", or the facts as they see them, place upon normative political theory. Their own theories function prescriptively or normatively to varying degrees through their use of certain facts to indicate explicitly or implicitly what ought or ought not be done in the political realm. In each case, "reality" is described, not for its own sake, not just to understand it, but to show what sort of goals, principles, or policies cannot be realized and therefore ought not to be pursued. They can practically all be said to subscribe to Burnham's maxim that a goal must be pos-

sible before there is any point in considering it desirable.[1] A possible exception to this is Dahl. Yet, he achieves the same effect by insisting that goals must be made operationally meaningful before they can be considered desirable. As with Morgenthau, they see a great gulf between the ideal and the real with no way to bridge it. When it comes down to cases, however, what they actually show is not where possibility ends and impossibility begins but only the extent of some past, present, or probable future tendencies in human nature and society. They have failed to show what the broader possibilities are, and in doing so they mislead by suggesting that political theory ought to be confined to the facts as they have described them.

Let us proceed, then, with a summary of the main similarities and relationships among our theorists. First, I shall summarize the various ways in which they present facts as limitations on normative political theory. Then, I shall summarize the normative and scientific features of their own theories. Following that, I shall elaborate the principle criticism of the realists made in this study.

Morgenthau's assumption that statesmen think and act in terms of power, and his definition of politics in terms of power limit political theory to considerations of political power. Humanitarian and other moral considerations must be subordinated to the demands of political prudence. To do otherwise would not be "rational". Schumpeter takes the fact

of leadership to be basic to political theory. He would have us reduce our ideas about the kind of control exercised by the people over leaders. Thus, in his reformulation of the democratic method, he holds that control over leaders ought to be realistically restricted to voting leaders in and out of political office. He discourages espousal of "classical" democracy because the conditions necessary for it to work are all contrary to fact.[2] Dahl's approach is the most extreme. He objects to the very formulation of political theory in terms of ethical ideals which cannot be made operationally or empirically meaningful. He holds that we cannot even appraise the significance of a theory without some predictions of the probable consequences of acting on the basis of its principles in the real world.[3] Normative political theory is thereby limited to propositions, the terms of which are operationally specifiable within actual social systems. Values or principles which are not obviously subject to quantitative scientific measurement are ruled out of consideration.

Even Burnham, who has the least to say about the normative implications of his theory, cannot resist showing his hand. He clearly realizes that his predictions of the managerial revolution will be disagreeable to his readers. To an imagined critic who charges that he neglects what most people want, feel, and hope for, Burnham answers that "a correct historical theory will take into account what people are probably going to wish and hope and desire."[4] This

implies that if all the facts have been properly accounted for any prescriptions which conflict with his theory will be pointless. And yet, he says that the theory of the managerial revolution does conflict with his own hopes, his own personal, material, and moral interests![5] He does not make any pointless prescriptions, but neither does he clarify the basis for his own hopes and interests. Instead, he leaves the impression that the possibilities for securing democracy are very limited.

While our realists all take the approach that the "real world" in some respect or other places limits on theories of social action, there is wide variation among them as to how sharply they distinguish between the scientific and the normative qualities of their theories. Burnham is at one extreme in claiming that his theory is free of moral considerations of any kind. At the other extreme is Morgenthau who is expressly concerned to develop a normative political theory on the basis of factual assumptions. In between are Dahl and Schumpeter. Their theories, essentially exercises in definition, are less obviously prescriptive than Morgenthau's. Whereas, they do discuss the relationship between what is desirable and what is politically feasible more extensively than does Burnham. But Dahl, like Burnham, claims not to have indicated what sort of political system he considers desirable.

Although Burnham and Dahl are both empirically oriented, their scientific approaches differ in quality. Burnham deals with very broad areas of social change having an historical

scope running from the middle ages into future decades. Yet, he also discusses fairly specific sorts of political, economic, and social relationships under his concepts of class rule, control of access to instruments of production, capitalists, bureaucrats, and managers. Many of his empirical claims about the social change supposedly taking place, the managerial revolution, are very general and vague, as he admits. They are not subject to precise quantitative measurement and depend in some instances upon rather arbitrary classifications. Much of his lack of precision is excusable due to the high level of generality at which he works and the undeveloped state of the social sciences in the historical field. While this gives Burnham some measure of protection against an easy refutation of his major prediction of class revolution, it also makes the verification of his hypothesis very difficult. That is to say, his major prediction that the managers will become the ruling class is sufficiently vague to make either its truth or falsity difficult to establish.

Of the four realists discussed, Dahl is the one most interested in quantitative precision in his political theory. His main criticisms of previous democratic theories are made in regard to their lack of "operational meaning". Unless the propositions of a theory can be translated into empirically verifiable hypotheses, Dahl feels we are not in a position to choose between it and some other theory with a different set of propositions. He finds it desirable, therefore, to formulate the conditions of democracy, or polyarchy, so that

fairly exact tests could be made to determine to what extent organizations and institutions in the "real world" meet the qualifications. Dahl also proposes the use of the method of descriptive definition whereby the characteristics of democracy are determined by a descriptive analysis of existing institutions or groups which are considered democratic by political scientists.

The result is that while Dahl and Burnham agree upon the importance of opposition groups to the existence of democracy, the difference in the temporal and spacial scope of their studies leads them to somewhat different conclusions about the problems facing democratic government. In the light of the conditions necessary for the new class of managers to become secure in their ruling position, Burnham shows some doubt about the persistence of the institutional basis for genuine opposition to that class. Dahl, on the other hand, looking primarily at the "normal" American system sees no reason for concern about the continued existence of numerous significant minorities which alternately rule and provide opposition to those who rule. Such a variation in concern about opposition groups could have important practical differences in the kinds of political policies one would be willing to propose or agree to. For example, one might feel much less reluctant to approve of increased federal regulation of the major instruments of production if he accepted Dahl's view that, in the American system, "all the active and legitimate groups in the population can make themselves heard at some

crucial stage in the process of decision,"[6] than if he accepted Burnham's view that within the structure of the managerial society which is coming about, "all major parts of the economy will be planned and controlled by a single integrated set of institutions which will be the managerial state."[7]

Psychological theories of human nature do not play nearly as prominent a part in the theories of Burnham and Dahl as they do in those of Schumpeter and Morgenthau. Burnham and Dahl are more interested in the behavior of social, economic, and political groups in their bearing on the democratic process than they are in the typical behavior of individuals as such. Whereas, Schumpeter and Morgenthau are quick to make the rather easy assumption that human beings are largely self-interested and most strongly motivated by what affects them directly. Schumpeter argues that men tend to have a sense of reality and are rational only about those things for which they have immediate responsibility. Morgenthau feels that the safest assumption to make about men in their political relationships is that their first interest is to influence others in order to control their actions. Schumpeter and Morgenthau seem to agree that political leaders will do anything they can prudently get away with to promote their own interests. And yet, they also agree that in so vital an area as foreign affairs leaders ought to be given a free hand in determining policy that will have important consequences affecting many nations if not the entire world. Of course, this is qualified by their further assumption that

statesmen can and should act rationally and responsibly in such matters, an assumption which they do not extend to the people as a whole.

Although Schumpeter stresses the fact of leadership and Morgenthau, the reality of power, their views are complementary. Leaders, by the fact of their controlling influence over their followers and others, have the kind of influence which constitutes political power, as Morgenthau defines it. It is reasonable to assume that politicians and statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power because they are the ones who have an interest in exercising power. They are leaders in the positions of power. Just as Schumpeter finds it realistic to assume that in a democracy leaders compete for the right to make the decisions, so Morgenthau considers it realistic to regard nations as competing for a favorable balance of power. Leaders who succeed in getting the votes can make decisions that affect the nation, and nations that succeed in getting a predominance of power can make decisions that affect the world.

Schumpeter and Morgenthau use scientific and factual data in a fairly loose way. Aside from their assumptions about human nature, the facts which they use are historical examples selected to illustrate their arguments. No attempts are made to give a careful statistical analysis of cases which support and cases which weigh against their positions. Rigorous scientific methods have not been used in the formulation of their hypotheses.[8] It is likely that one reason

they have avoided rigorous method is that it would be difficult for them to give a scientifically adequate justification for their own normative positions and factual assumptions. They are more interested in discrediting the ideals of opposing theories than they are in a purely scientific study of the facts. They clearly illustrate the need to distinguish between realism and science in political theory. They present enough facts to discourage optimism about the political ideals in question, but not enough for a balanced picture of the possibilities.

There remain two respects in which the positions of our four realists are quite similar. One is an anti-formalism and the other is an opposition to ethical absolutism in political theory. These two features are closely connected. Actually, the opposition to ethical absolutes or "abstractions" is one type of anti-formalism, but it is helpful to make a distinction in the present analysis.

The realists, in their efforts to get at reality, are unwilling to accept purely formal arrangements for the distribution of political power and authority at their face value. None of them puts much weight on constitutional or legal procedures, or on documented commitments in their assessment as to what kinds of political decisions will actually be made. In addition, Burnham, Schumpeter, and Morgenthau all take a very skeptical view of the statements of intentions and justifications which politicians and statesmen give regarding their actions. We might say that the emphasis is on

function rather than form. For Burnham, it is de facto ownership or control of the instruments of production that counts, not de jure ownership. Competition for votes, as Schumpeter sees it, is for the right to make decisions, not to represent the people. With the exception of the representation of genuine interest groups, the representative form of government, he would say, does not correspond to its function, which is to permit certain leaders to make the political policy decisions. Dahl argues that minorities protect their rights by the intensity of their political activity rather than by constitutional safeguards.[9]

This penetration of forms to discern functions leads three of our theorists, Burnham, Schumpeter, and Dahl to complete agreement about two aspects of democracy. All three agree that majority rule is a myth, and that the success of democracy, in the more restricted sense of opportunity for effective competition in determining political policy, depends upon the prior existence of certain social or institutional conditions. In regarding majority rule to be a myth, they imply that the democratic ideal of maximum participation of all citizens in the political decision-making process is unrealisitic. Although there is an increasing amount of empirical evidence to support the claim that individuals do not in fact participate very extensively in the making of political decisions, it does not follow that the principle of majority rule should be given up by democratic theorists. I shall return to this point in my general criticism of the realists'

position.[10]

In addition to this unwillingness to accept formal political arrangements for what they appear to be, the realists express dissatisfaction with ethical absolutes or abstractions as political guides. Burnham implies such a dissatisfaction with his pointed remarks about the difference between the desirable, as such, and the possible.[11] Schumpeter and Morgenthau are very critical of idealistic theories that take as political goals ethical values which bear little relation to concrete fact.[12] Dahl explicitly objects to the attempt to formulate political theory out of abstract ethical postulates and their logical relations. The reasons for the dissatisfaction with ethical abstractions vary. Burnham is least clear about his reasons, but one can infer that desires which surpass the possibilities will be fruitless. Dahl, as has been pointed out, considers propositions based on abstract ethical postulates to be empirically meaningless, and therefore unsatisfactory as political guides. With Schumpeter and Morgenthau the emphasis is on the harm done by the pursuit of impossible ideals. The danger, as Schumpeter sees it, is that he who ignores facts in pursuit of ideals will also ignore, if not accept, any amount of deviation from the ideal in the behavior both of others and himself.[13] On the international scene this ignoring of facts has the serious effect of jeopardizing national security, as Morgenthau is anxious to show.

There are, then, at least three features which are

common to the arguments of the realists we have discussed: (1) a more or less scientific concern for the functions of political arrangements and activities as opposed to their formal appearances; (2) a criticism of desires, ideals, and principles which cannot be completely fulfilled in political practice, or made empirically concrete; and (3) a strong emphasis on the limitations which reality places upon normative political theory. The impossibility of fulfilling ideals is indicated by descriptions and predictions of certain political functions and social conditions which in turn serve to delimit the normative political theories formulated. As a result, it is made to appear that the range of morally relevant possibilities falls within the facts as the realists have described them. The main deficiency of the realists' arguments as a whole is due to the misleading moral implications of this impression.[14]

The realists' contribution to political thought lies not in their having presented any new facts about politics. Rather, their service has been to reemphasize some old facts with new examples and illustrations which direct our attention to aspects of the political scene we might otherwise have missed. When the world's affairs become as complex and ever-changing as they have become, it is especially helpful to have the insights of theorists who can see where the key relationships lie. It is important to recognize the fact of leadership and the role of political power in determining the course of the political process. It is important to be aware of the

historical significance of certain types of decisions. And when it comes to proposing remedies for the world's ills, it is well to have a firm understanding of the realities with which one must deal. Prescriptions as to how humans ought to associate themselves must take into account the limitations of human nature. There are obvious dangers in perfectionism with its insistence upon the complete and immediate realization of abstract ideals. The realists are quite correct in stressing the need to modify methods and goals in the light of the consequences of pursuing them. Granted the value of all these points, to leave political theory where the realists leave it would be to neglect some equally, if not more important considerations about the relation of morality to politics.

Let us, then, take a more critical look at the chief observations of the realists. They have shown that the function of leadership cannot rightly be ignored. Leaders are necessary to articulate, coordinate, and direct the interests of diverse groups of individuals who lack the skill and energy to make their views politically effective. Through his abilities, the leader is able to exert a high degree of influence over the actions of other members of his group. As the leader demonstrates his competency in his role, his influence will increase. He may find the increased prestige that goes with increased influence personally rewarding. There is nothing wrong with this, for competent leadership deserves to be rewarded. The danger comes from leaders who assume that they

know what is best for their group without further consulting the members, and who identify their power and privileges of office with the interests of the group as a whole to the point of suppressing any dissent from within. When the leader comes to regard his power of position as some kind of inalienable right rather than as an honor and trust, then the members ought to assert themselves and exercise their responsibility for keeping leaders attentive to their interests. It would be a mistake for the members of a group to reduce their ideas about the kind of control they should exercise over their leader to the point of accepting his decisions as always representing their best interests. He may come to represent his own interests alone. Nothing could be more destructive of the independent critical judgment needed in every member of a group who wants to have its interests respected than for him to consider following the leader a privilege rather than a necessity. The power and prestige of leadership is the privilege, and it is justified only by the services rendered to those whom the leader guides and represents.

Closely connected with the fact of leadership is the fact that men in positions of great power are able to make decisions which are crucial to the course of political events. Such decisions can have serious consequences before the people are able to voice their opinion, or demonstrate either their support or rejection of them. An increasing number of decisions of this kind arise as modern governments grow in size, complexity, and resources. The average man is less and less

able to understand the implications of many economic, military, and political decisions which require expert knowledge and professional experience for their determination, until he is faced with the fact of their awesome consequences. Whether or not nuclear weapons should be further tested, whether or not economic or military aid should be given to neutral dictatorships, whether or not trade agreements should be made with threatening powers are all issues which tend to become decided for a nation by relatively few individuals who are in the position to know and understand all or most of the relevant facts. Consequently, circumstances force an enormous burden of responsibility upon such individuals. The people at large who are able to assess only the significance of the consequences begin to feel that their fate is being determined by persons and forces over which they have little or no control.

Such a reaction is only partially justified. Certainly we cannot all understand everything that is going on in the complex and confusing areas of national and international problems. However, there is much of importance which can be simplified in terms of relevant generalizations so that they can be stated and debated at a level of public understanding that makes them meaningful. In a democracy, the people have a right to be kept well-informed and to demand that, so far as possible, their problems be formulated in terms they can grasp. The more momentous the decision, the more necessary it is that every effort be made to communicate

the essentials to all those concerned.

Failure to see that momentous decisions are constantly being made by men in power, both with and without public authority, would be a serious mistake. The very complexity of the decision-making process may obscure for some people the fact that not everyone involved in that process makes decisions of equal weight. As. C. Wright Mills rightly argues:

> To pretend that "we" are all history-makers is politically irresponsible because it obfuscates any attempt to locate responsibility for the consequential decisions of men who do have access to the means of power.[15]

The realists have reminded us that those with power do not always use their power in a morally responsible way. They may well try to evade the responsibility that goes with the possession of power. They may not care to impress the public with the nature or importance of the decisions they make. So political scientists, sociologists, and others who have studied the dynamics of decision-making in and behind the political scene perform a great service in pointing out those who make the vital decisions and the kind of control they exercise. For these facts are not necessarily revealed by formal "chains of command", or by the existence of official positions which appear to locate the sources of responsibility. A political theory would be hardly adequate which did not take account of such centers of power and their bearing on the decision-making process. But, it must be emphasized that to take account of these facts is not necessarily to accept them

as they stand. If power is used irresponsibly to make vital decisions which are not publicly debated, then ways should be found for increasing the responsible use of power and for providing for as full a public discussion of the issues involved as possible.

The realists have two kinds of answers to recommendations of this sort which, although closely related, are best treated separately. They say that it is unrealistic to aim at goals which are so far from the facts. Political theory must stay within the bounds of what human nature is capable of achieving as indicated by their actual practices. But such a view misconceives both human nature and the function of normative political theory. This point will be shown in the context of democratic theory to which I shall confine my present remarks, although the same point applies to theory of international politics as well. In addition, realists say that ethical principles about how men ought ideally to conduct themselves are not good guides to successful political action because in politics compromises are required which are not in accord with the abstract prescriptions of morality. This view is faulty because it misconceives the nature of moral principles as they apply to political practice. This point, in turn, will be illustrated in the context of international politics, although it also applies to democratic government.

By emphasizing the limitations which certain facts about human nature place upon political theory, the realists

have demonstrated an inadequate understanding of both human nature and political theory. Normative political theory is intended to function as a guide to social and political action. It helps to harmonize diverse aims and to direct human activities in the realization of those aims. It attempts to clarify the relationship of our highest values to each other and formulates ways in which they can be made consistent through a systematic approach to political practice. Human nature is not so fixed that it is not amenable to intelligently considered proposals for improving existing human relationships. The aims and goals which are developed in a political theory serve not only to guide existing abilities but also to guide the growth of human capacities. Changing social and political conditions constantly challenge the human potential. The response to this challenge can be either irrational, uncoordinated, and fumbling or it can be intelligent, foresighted, and purposive. In apparently limiting theory to existing practices, the realists fail to provide guides to the growth of potentialities for which new situations create the opportunity. Perhaps their most serious error is to underestimate the role of aims in guiding conduct. They have not seen the great value of pursuing desires which extend beyond what is known or probable with respect to human possibilities.

There is no reason why desires or goals must be considered fixed, no more so than why human nature must be regarded as fixed. When they are seen as providing meaning and direction to present action, it becomes apparent that

their value lies not so much in their being perfectly consummated at some future time, as in the fruits of their guidance in the present.[16] This is not to deny that there are intrinsically valuable goals. It is to assert, rather, that in addition to the value of the goals in themselves, there is much to be gained in the process of realizing them whether they are ever actually achieved in full or not. Therefore, it is quite appropriate to modify goals in view of the present consequences of their pursuit. For this reason the aims of political action formulated in political theory can extend beyond reality as described by the realists without such theory taking on the nature of rigid prescriptions for the immediate and complete fulfillment of political or moral goals. The very distance between the "facts" and the goal better enables us to see the direction in which we should move. But that distance should not be so great as to discourage the kind of efforts to bring reality closer to the ideal which will have fruitful results. The modification of goals should itself be guided by an intelligent weighing of the relevant consequences.

Let us apply these points specifically to democratic theory. Three of our realists, Burnham, Schumpeter, and Dahl, came to the conclusion that the only workable notion of democracy is one based on the concept of minority opposition or competition for an effective voice in the crucial political decisions. They thereby exclude from democratic theory as unrealistic any serious consideration of majority rule or

participation in decision-making. In doing so, however, they ignore the value of the principle of democratic participation as a guide to improving the quality of the democratic process. The realists probably agree that for democracy to work well there must first exist certain conditions, such as high moral quality in leaders, and initiative and responsibility in the people. What they do not seem to have considered is how these qualities are to be acquired. Much of the time they talk as though a society either has them or it does not. This is simply to confuse two sorts of conditions underlying good government. There are certain constant conditions in the environment which are not readily alterable--especially climate, terrain, and natural resources. More alterable, but not altogether deliberately so, is the culture of a society. Beyond these there are many variable factors which bear on the quality of a people and its leaders which can be controlled by deliberate human action. Such variables are the forms of government, the laws of the land, the interpretation and application of laws, political procedures and practices, and the attitudes and beliefs of the people. The significance of the principle of full popular participation in the political process is that it is quite consistent with the variable factors in a society which can be changed so as to improve the qualities of a people, to promote their political growth, their initiative, and their sense of responsibility.

One of the clearest thinkers about democracy was John Stuart Mill. He very succinctly stated the case for

the ideal of popular democracy in the following way:

> The ideally best form of government, it is scarcely necessary to say, does not mean one which is practicable or eligible in all states of civilization, but one which, in the circumstances in which it is practicable and eligible, is attended with the greatest amount of beneficial consequences, immediate and prospective. A completely popular government is the only polity which can make out any claim to this character. It is preeminent in both the departments between which the excellence of a political constitution is divided. It is both more favorable to present good government, and promotes a better and higher form of national character, than any other polity whatsoever.[17]

The object of encouraging the average man to participate in the making of political decisions is not to arrive at decisions which are always efficient, wise, and correct. The point is that by participating in the decisions which affect him and others, the average man can better learn to share in the responsibility for those decisions, and will benefit his society and himself for having that responsibility more than if someone else always made his decisions for him.

> Whenever the sphere of action of human beings is artificially circumscribed, their sentiments are narrowed and dwarfed in the same proportion. The food of feeling is action... Let a person do nothing for his country and he will not care for it.[18]

It is for this reason, as Mill says, that every citizen not only should have a voice in the ultimate sovereignty of government, but should also, "at least occasionally, be called on to take an actual part in the government, by the personal discharge of some public function, local or general."[19]

The average man has only average abilities. It may be argued that more than average abilities are required to guide men most successfully in their efforts to live the good

life. However, granted that there are wide variations in human intelligence, aptitudes, and dispositions, there is no reason why the full range of these potentialities should not be developed as highly as possible. On the contrary, there is every reason why they should be so developed. To neglect the average range of capacities puts that much more of a burden of responsibility upon those with superior abilities who are under a corresponding temptation to abuse the power which their favored position gives them. When existing human limitations are recognized, as they are by the realists, that is an indication of the need to provide further opportunities, training, and education to develop that part of the human potential which, as yet, has been insufficiently exercised. It will not do to say that it is unlikely that much improvement can be made. For what is considered likely depends largely upon the kind of efforts made to date. What is required is a new effort which goes beyond the effort so far put forth.

The realists have argued that the pursuit of impossible goals is dangerous and leads only to defeat. It must be conceded that it would be foolish to require people to accomplish tasks for which they were wholly unprepared or incompetent. Certainly unintelligent attempts to realize impossible goals cannot be justified solely by the good intentions of those who pursue them. But what the realists have not shown is just where the possibilities end and the impossibilities begin. If there is a gap between ideals and reality, at least we do not know how wide a gap it is. If

we are to realize any further benefits from human resources, we must explore the possibilities and make them part of reality. Venturing into the unknown is always hazardous and should be undertaken with all the skill and intelligence we now possess. Yet, we will never discover what is impossible or impracticable if we remain satisfied with the limited habits and practices which have been retained from the past. Political theorists who do not take this fact into consideration are themselves being unrealistic in an important sense. It is unrealistic to ignore the challenge which man's creative endeavors in the physical realm present to his creative ability in the social and political realms. In a world in which the decision of a handful of irresponsible men could bring devastation to the whole human race, every man must be brought to the highest degree of responsibility of which he is capable for determining the course of the world's affairs.

A normative political theory formulates principles of right conduct as well as goals to be aimed at. The realists have argued that abstract ethical principles are not adequate guides to political action because such principles neither take account of consequences nor provide for the need to compromise, both of which are essential to successful political action. Morgenthau, in particular, holds this to be true of international political action where power dominates in the absence of effective moral sanctions. His understanding of morality has been shown to be faulty and confused.

It is therefore pertinent to discuss the nature of moral principles and their relation to politics in the context of international affairs.

The realist argument can be put in this way. Abstract ethical principles make no provision for the consequences of action. The consequences of political action must be taken into consideration in decisions of international policy because of their affect on national security. Above all, public officials are responsible for national security. Therefore, it is wrong for them to base international policy decisions primarily upon the prescriptions of abstract ethical principles.

There seems to be an assumption that every issue of international political policy is one of national security. The main defect in this argument is, however, the further assumption that abstract ethical principles make no provision for the consequences of action. Both of these points need to be cleared up before we can arrive at an adequate conception of the relation between politics and morality as applied to nations.

First, there is an important distinction between justifying policies on the grounds of self-interested power advantages and justifying them on the grounds of the need to survive. This distinction is not often made in the use of the concept of national security. The conditions of national survival may be fairly objectively determined. What constitutes national security, however, is largely a psychological

matter. It is all too easy for a nation to identify its power advantage with its survival under the overlapping notion of security. The right to survive gives the right to self-defense, but it does not give the right to political domination of others. A power advantage may go far beyond what is essential for survival. The same can be said for the idea of security. It is possible to get into the frame of mind where one does not feel secure until all opposition is crushed. An exaggerated demand for security can create policies just as unrealistic and irrational as result from an exaggerated demand to implement ideals. Failure to distinguish between survival and other aspects of self-interest can lend plausibility to such ridiculous claims of one nation over another as those made by the Nazis and Fascists over the countries they invaded. This consideration should make us mindful that the cry to be realistic may simply be a dodge to avoid the moral responsibility to respect the rights of others.

It has been argued that ideals and self-interest are compatible, and, indeed, that it is only expedient that they be combined. Robert E. Osgood, for example, claims that if security is not measured by ideal standards transcending national interest, it may take forms that undermine the moral basis of all social relations.[20] The appeal even here is to a realistic sense of political expediency, however. As Osgood goes on to say:

> No foreign program, least of all one of international benevolence, will survive long in a democracy if it is contrary to public opinion, and it would be extremely

> unrealistic to expect Americans to support such a program for its propagandistic worth if they did not also believe in its moral worth. It follows that a sincere and widespread devotion to positive ideals of human betterment is a prerequisite for effective propaganda for Americans cannot pretend to be idealists without being truly idealistic.[21]

To ignore ideals, then, would be self-defeating, and merely to put up a front of idealism would be ineffective.

Osgood finds it paradoxical that genuine conviction is necessary in order to sustain the appearance of idealism demanded by sheer national expediency. It is paradoxical because if one is genuinely convinced of the ideals, he will not be moved by considerations of expediency alone; whereas, if one is primarily moved by expediency, he can hardly be genuinely convinced of the ideals. The paradox exists, however, only for one holding expediency to be the supreme political principle on the grounds that it is expedient to do so. The convinced idealist is not faced with any such paradox for he does not have to give up his ideals in the first place. Actually, realists tend to argue the other way around. They say that ideals not subordinated to expediency are self-defeating, so if one wants to maximize his ideals, he must give them up in favor of expediency. These paradoxes can be resolved, if they need ever to arise, by a clearer understanding of the way moral principles function in practice.

The realists want the consequences of political action to be taken into consideration in arriving at political decisions. The application of moral principles to human conduct also requires that consequences be taken into consider-

ation. The reason for this is that moral principles often conflict in their indication of what should be done in a particular case. The conflict may result either from two different principles applying to the same situation, or from the same principle applying to conflicting points of view within the same situation. The first type can be illustrated by the conflict between one's obligation to be honest and one's obligation to avoid causing unnecessary suffering to others. Thus, in diplomatic relations, statesmen are obligated to be truthful about their intentions, but they are also obligated to avoid causing suffering which might result if their intentions were made known at the wrong time. The second type of conflict can be illustrated by the conflict between different applications of everyone's right to life. When a nation is attacked and everyone's life is threatened, that nation is obligated to defend the lives of all its members. At the same time, in order to fulfill this obligation, the nation is obligated to engage in activity that will result in the sacrifice of the lives of some. In regard to those whose lives must be sacrificed, there is a conflict between their right to life and everyone else's right to life. These are moral conflicts which happen to occur in situations involving the political issue of national interest. They are not peculiar to politics, however, for they occur in every-day social situations.

The resolution of such moral conflicts is itself a moral problem. In the political realm the resolution of moral

conflicts is immensely complicated by the extent and seriousness of the consequences. In private life a conflict between honesty and the rights of others can be weighed by anticipating the consequences to a relatively small number of individuals. In politics the consequences of crucial decisions may extend to all the members of the community, the nation, and even the world. The reason that it is wrong to think of politics as being guided primarily by interest defined in terms of power is that such a conception obscures the basic moral nature of political issues. National security is at bottom a moral principle because of the rights of those whom a nation protects. But the same moral principles involving the rights of others applies to all nations and peoples. It is only by weighing <u>all</u> of the morally relevant facts that a morally adequate solution can be arrived at.

The abstractness of moral principles is part of their utility because of the larger number of concrete cases which they cover. However, abstractness also allows for variations in interpretation. Many conflicts are the result of diverse interpretations of abstract principles. That the security of the United States ought to be protected is only one application and interpretation of the higher principle that everyone's rights and interests ought to be respected. The Soviet Union's right to security, among others, also follows from this higher principle. When the security of these two nations appears to conflict we have a moral conflict which should be resolved by a reevaluation of the principle of respect for

the rights of others. This may require some modification of the way in which the principle is applied to both nations. In any case, the ultimate consideration should be, not a rigid concept of national security, but an intelligent interpretation of the principle of respect for the rights of others. Considerations of power enter into a resolution of the issue only in so far as they are morally relevant. Power, by itself, is morally neutral. How it is used is what counts. And its use can only be ultimately justified on moral grounds.

A complete account of how moral conflicts can be resolved and how moral principles apply to conduct cannot be given within the limited scope of this study.[22] Nevertheless, it has at least been shown that the realists' conception of moral principles is deficient. In addition, it has been shown that they have failed to see the full value of moral ideals or aims which extend human effort beyond the known facts. In general, it can be said that, as normative political theorists, the realists have gone too far in subordinating morality to political reality as they view it. They have made political reality the stopping point of their theory. The result is an overly restricted conception of the possibilities of the moral improvement of political action. If they had been truly interested in maximizing moral ideals they would have searched much further than they have for ways in which the moral possibilities could be realized.

The realists' failure to exercise sufficient imagination regarding the possibilities is connected with their failure

to grasp the nature and function of moral aims and principles. They have apparently assumed that because moral values are often claimed to be self-evident, ultimate moral convictions cannot be treated in a rational manner. It is true that people do not agree upon exactly how abstract moral standards are to be applied in particular cases. It is true that the moral quality of political decisions is a debatable matter. But this is just the point! The question of how morality is to be realized in practice is debatable--and it should be debated. It is as appropriate and essential to bring reason to bear on moral problems as on any other kind. The main task of normative political theory is to attempt to work out reasonable, consistent ways of applying moral principles to organized human existence. Political theorists can best equip themselves for this task by first deliberating about the nature of moral values. They must discuss and clarify their own moral values in order to assist others to do the same. Their responsibility in this respect is not met by simply positing certain principles or goals and then making empirical investigations to see if such principles and goals are "realistic".

An intelligent investigation and anticipation of the facts of political experience is a necessary but not a sufficient approach to normative political theory. There remains the continuing problems of clarifying and modifying our conceptions of human rights and duties, and of harmonizing diverse human interests and values. The methods of science applied

to social behavior can greatly aid in carrying out the search for moral solutions. Descriptive science alone, however, cannot serve as a substitute for clear and consistent thinking about how we desire society to be. We must not become so distracted by a concern for the facts that we give up the ever unfinished struggle for the good and the right. Unless those who have investigated the facts and have a concern for what ought to be make their moral positions clear, the average man, without the means to articulate his ideas of right and justice, will have no other guide than the irrational appeals of the demagogue who has neither good intentions nor a sense of responsibility for the moral consequences of his actions.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1. p. 14 above.

2. Joseph A. Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy (3d. ed.; New York: Harper Bros., 1950), p. 272.

3. Robert A. Dahl, A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 51.

4. James Burnham, The Managerial Revolution (New York: John Day Co., 1941), p. 283.

5. Ibid., p. 273. Burnham's prediction, made in the face of strong feelings about the outcome, is just the kind of prediction that can change the outcome. Cases of this sort are so well known, it is plausible to suppose that Burnham intentionally predicted a distasteful revolution as the most effective means of getting his readers to do something to avoid it.

6. Dahl, pp.134-135.

7. Burnham, pp. 169-170.

8. Morgenthau, in fact, has been very critical of the kind of quantitative science in political theory upon which Dahl's position rests. See Morgenthau, "Power as a Political Concept," Approaches to the Study of Politics, ed. Roland Young (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1958), pp. 69-70.

9. Dahl, pp. 134-135.

10. p. 224 below.

11. Burnham, The Machiavellians (New York: John Day Co., 1943), pp. 135-136.

12. Morgenthau, of course, is not opposed to ethical absolutes as such. It is his adoption of an extreme categorical imperative that partly accounts for his claim that politics inevitably involves evil. (p.190 above).

13. Schumpeter, p. 266.

14. Generally speaking, the realists share their anti-formalism with pragmatists like John Dewey. See Morton White,

Social Thought in America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), especially Chapter XI, pp. 161-179. However, they differ from Dewey most strikingly in their conception of goals and the relation of goals to the facts as they have defined them. See John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct (New York: Modern Library, 1922).

15. C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 23.

16. This point has been forcefully argued by John Dewey in his Human Nature and Conduct, pp. 233-237.

17. John Stuart Mill, "Representative Government," Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government (London: Everyman's Library, 1910), p. 208.

18. Ibid., p. 204.

19. Ibid., p. 207.

20. Robert E. Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 443.

21. Ibid.

22. For some illuminating discussions of the nature of moral principles, see P. H. Nowell-Smith, Ethics (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1954); R. M. Hare, The Language of Morals (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952); S.E. Toulmin, The Place of Reason in Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950); Bernard Mayo, Ethics and the Moral Life (London: Macmillan Co., 1958).

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