

The French Revolution means the denial of all inspired groups: Jews, prophets, magicians, priests, the church, the sects; the only inspiration not barred from reality by the democratic dogma was, for the individual, genius, and for the group, election. The democratic dogma says literally: on election day, the majority is inspired. Outside the elections, nobody is inspired, except the scientist and the poet, may be. The difference between the two parts of the democratic dogma needs stressing, for, the inspiration on election day is made dependent on a clock-work of rhythm; the spirit befalls the masses every four years or every two years. This belief has all the rigidity of a zeppelin and it contradicts the one great fact in which the community must feel inspired lest it perish; war. A war cannot be fought without inspiration because we mean by spirit the belief of human souls in transference. The soldier believes that by his death he cements the future wall of his city. The countries of this world are all built on the peoples' lives who were inspired by the future of these countries. The sound instinct of a people at war always has been to concentrate on this inspiration because victory was impossible without it. If elections were something indifferent, or inasfar as elections are something indifferent, they may of course be held in war-time. But the democratic dogma does not allow elections to become indifferent; it insists that elections are inspired, for only in this manner was it justified to deny all previous inspirational orders. If elections are second-rate, as I think they are, then I must believe that the spirit has other communions at his disposal. The war in an election year is a democratic version of reality. Election in a war year is my version of reality. What does this mean? It means that American democracy believes that history is made in this election

year despite the war, and I believe that history is made in the war year despite the election. The event to which we add the tiny word 'year' gives the name to the period and therefore is called epoch-making. It seems so insignificant, and yet is so decisive that we should connect a moment in time and an act of man into a compound, but in this little process of nomination do we enter our nominations for the history of mankind. Names organise us, and they determine our lives, and to speak of 1944 as election year is one decision; and to speak of 1944 as a war year is another. To let both names race neck-te-neck is schizophrenic. It means that we do not feel inspired either by the war or by the election any longer because all inspiration has one undebateable quality: it is the thing that comes first; it is the unum necessarium. Mary, when she knelt down to pour the oil over the feet of her friend could not think at the same time that it was lunch-hour.

Now democracy knows quite well that the quadrennial rhythm of inspiration is rather arbitrary and therefore it has the back door through which genius may slip in any time. It is, however, obvious that French democracy and American democracy always assessed the frequency of genius in nearly opposite terms. The French elected rarely, but genius was served in Paris day after day in every salon and as the true native spice of life. In U.S. elections were much more frequent and infinitely universal or comprehensive, while genius was either pretty flashy or imported. The man from Missouri would not deny the existence in so many words, but that would be as far as he would go. Because when you give genius the famous answer: 'I must be shown,' all support is withdrawn from him. Paris was a nursery, a hot-bed for genius. Missouri is a quick-freezer, and only a full-fledged genius, usually imported, may survive this treatment at all.

Again the dilemma of 1944 becomes obvious. We have a scale of three: first, universal inspiration in war, second, rythmical inspiration in elections, third, specific surprise inspiration by genius. Neither one nor three have real power in U.S., which makes the second into a far too isolated model of all inspiration. I wouldn't deny that elections do constitute one form of inspiration, but I would emphatically hold that they must cease to be that when they are idolised and exalted into being the only channel through which God speaks. In 1776 no American denied, first, that God had to speak if the community should live, and second that he had spoken in many ways. In 1944, most people laugh when they hear us assume that God speaks. They also laugh when we hold that the Jews and the Church were inspired. All this notwithstanding, they ask us to believe in elections. Why any sane person should believe in elections with all their horrors, lies, corruptions, exclusion of whole classes of citizens or soldiers remains inexplicable as soon as the elections are cut off from the continuous stream in which God spoke to man and speaks to man through the ages. Brooks Adams, the brother of Henry Adams, called this the degradation of the democratic dogma. War and genius are the two channels which may purify democracy, because both may enlarge the concept of inspiration and make it again a truly believed reality while it is today merely ridiculous and unscientific.

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