



AMERICAN POLITICAL HERITAGE

Dr. Frank B. Freidel

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Reviewed by: Colonel J. H. M. Smith, 26 November 1962

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22 August 1962

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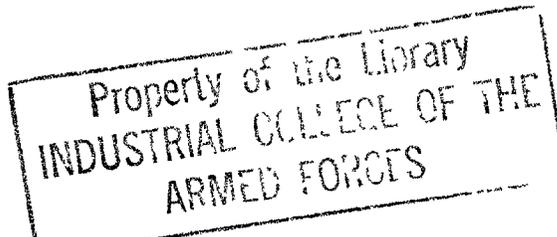
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COLONEL SMILEY: Many people with varied motives in representing many nationalities in a wide spectrum of intellectual conference and honesty have said many things on the subject of American political philosophy, our subject today.

One world figure, who history may record as being more proficient in pounding tables with his shoe than opposing the American system, has said, "We'll bury you." Preventing the occurrence of this unhappy event may not be certain. However, a thorough understanding of the American system, coupled with the ability to articulate it to others is certainly a powerful weapon in this struggle.

Here today to help us sharpen this weapon is a man from Harvard University who has devoted many years to the study of American history and political philosophy. It is my pleasure to welcome him to the Industrial College and to introduce him to the Class of 1963.

Gentlemen, Dr. Frank Freidel.

DR. FREIDEL: Gentlemen:

I must confess at the outset that if you see me sniffing some strange thing it is because I am a victim of a Washington virus, and it is not politics. I also want to apologize in advance for my ill fortune in following my colleague, Carl Freidrich. I am taking advantage of the fact that I am following Carl Freidrich and shall not spell out in detail some of the things that I think he may have said to

you this morning.

The significance of this subject, American Political Philosophy, is of course that it is very important, as Colonel Smiley has suggested, for us to know ourselves, and to know why we are as we are. Much of the answer for us, as for other nations, lies in our history. Primarily my approach to this subject this morning will be an historical approach. I think I can make clear to you rather easily why an historical approach can be of some consequence when I point out to you that as early as 1835 a young French aristocrat, Alexis de Tocqueville, was able to sense what we know all too well in the 1960's, the contrasting political philosophy of the United States and that of Russia. Mind you, it was in 1835, about, that Tocqueville wrote as follows:

"The Anglo-American relies upon personal interest to accomplish his ends and gives free scope to the unguided strength and common sense of the people; the Russian centers all the authority of society in a single arm. The principal instrument of the former is freedom; of the latter servitude. Their starting-point is different and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe."

At the time that Tocqueville visited America, during the presidency of Andrew Jackson, the American people were already not far from two-thirds of the way along the course of time that leads from Jamestown to the Cold War. American political institutions and American political philosophy were already remarkably well set, back in 1835.

Indeed, the more historians delve into the early Colonial period, the more

emphatic they become that many of the basic American political ideas were already well on the way to development before the end of the 17th century. Men, tough and hardy as they had to be to survive in the American wilderness, pragmatic as the conditions harsh/ of the new world forced them to be, already were molding and reshaping the English political thought and institutions to meet American exigencies. The present-day American political philosopher, Alpheus Mason of Princeton University, has said:

"American politics esteems aggressive, self-reliant individuals whose tireless energy and unfaltering faith supply the primary impetus to progress. Political doctrine evolved slowly in the United States and, quite naturally, took on empirical or pragmatic form. Philosophy has been subservient, the tool of statesmanship. The doers are also the political thinkers."

My approach this morning will be this: that philosophy has been the tool of statesmanship and that our approach has been, as I said a minute ago, basically a pragmatic approach. This has been true in every century of our political experience from the 17th century up into the 20th century. This emphasis upon the pragmatic is something rather new among historians of the colonial period in the American Revolution, and it comes in part as a product of the remarkable way in which leading historians have been revising their view of the colonial period and of the American Revolution.

Perhaps I can give you a better idea of the extent of the change if I remind you of what was the generally accepted view only 15 or 20 years ago, and what some of you may have been taught in university courses.

It ran, as Professor Bernard Bailyn has summed it up, somewhat as follows:

"Previous to the Revolution the political experience of the colonial Americans " (this is the old idea) "had been roughly analogous to that of the English. Control of public authority had been firmly held by a native aristocracy--merchants and landlords in the North, planters in the South--allied, commonly with British officialdom...But the control of this colonial counterpart of a traditional aristocracy, with its Old World ideas of privilege and hierarchy, orthodoxy in religious establishment, and economic inequality, was progressively threatened by the growing strength of a native, frontier-bred democracy that expressed itself most forcefully in the lower houses of the 'rising' provincial assemblies. A conflict between the two groups and ways of life was building up, and it broke out in fury after 1765."

The story goes on:

"The outbreak of the Revolution, the argument runs, fundamentally altered the old regime. The Revolution destroyed the power of this traditional aristocracy, for the movement of opposition to parliamentary taxation, 1760-1776, originally controlled by conservative elements, had been taken over by extremists nourished on enlightenment radicalism, and the once dominant conservative groups had gradually been alienated. The break with England over the question of home rule was part of a general struggle, as Carl Becker put it, over who shall rule at home. Independence gave control to the radicals, who, imposing their advanced doctrines on a traditional society, transformed a rebellious secession into a social revolution. They created a new regime, a reformed society, based on enlightened

political and social theory.

"But that is not the end of the story; the sequel is important. The success of the enlightened radicals during the early years of the Revolution was notable; but, the argument continues, it was not wholly unqualified. The remnants of the earlier aristocracy, though defeated, had not been eliminated; they were able to reassert themselves in the postwar years. In the 1780's they gradually regained power until, in what amounted to a counterrevolution, they impressed their views indelibly on history in the new federal Constitution, in the revocation of some of the more enthusiastic actions of the earlier revolutionary period, and in the Hamiltonian program for the new government. This was not, of course, merely the older regime resurrected. In a new age whose institutions and ideals had been born of revolutionary radicalism, the old conservative elements made adjustments and concessions by which to survive and periodically to flourish as a force in American life."

So it goes on. The reason I am giving you this old story and reminding you of it in some detail is twofold. For one thing, please notice that there is a certain emphasis in all of this on class struggle and economic determinism. This of course never was very popular with the DAR. But these historians, please note, who wrote this were not radicals. They were men like Charles A. Beard and Carl Becker, very respected men, who were ready in their time to bring in a new and important element into an examination of our political philosophy, that behind our political philosophy there had been certain economic drives. This is not necessarily a bad interpretation.

You see, what they did also was this: provide a key for understanding the entire course of American political philosophy. If you accept this you have a key which explains everything up through Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, and for that matter, if you want to, up to President John F. Kennedy and the New Frontier. You see, by the light of this, politics in America from the very beginning could be seen to have a sort of dialectical aspect to them, in which an aristocracy of wealth and power struggled with the people who, ordinarily ill-organized and inarticulate, rose upon provocation, armed with powerful institutional and ideological weapons to reform a periodically corrupt and oppressive conservative polity.

In all of this the underlying assumption was ^{the belief} that Enlightenment thought, reforming ideas of advanced thinkers of 18th century England and on the Continent, had been the effective lever by which native American radicals had turned a dispute on imperial relations into a sweeping reformation of public institutions and thereby laid the basis for American democracy.

Well, now, during the last 12 to 15 years, one or another of the good, younger colonial historians or historians of the Revolution or of the Constitutional Convention and of the Federalist period has upset just about everything that I have just been saying. Not all of these attacks may hold up in entirety, but in total they are impressive, in total a somewhat different picture. Here I shall lean again on Professor Bailyn, who has, I think, very well summed up what this new picture is. There are various points at which it has been underlined.

For one thing, the franchise, the right to vote, far from having been restricted in behalf of a limited aristocracy was widely available for popular use than we had

realized. As a matter of fact, the right to vote was more widely distributed than the desire to use it. This was true, by the way, not only in the colonial period but apparently also true in the Jacksonian period. Jacksonian democracy did not simply represent a whole sweeping rise of the common man based upon a great extension of the suffrage, although there was some extension of the suffrage at that time. And of course this fact that people often didn't bother to use the right to vote calls into question a whole range of traditional arguments and assumptions.

Second, of course, the economic struggle within the colonies, this question of the rich merchants and aristocracy versus the poor frontier people, turns out to have been relatively inconsequential.

This brings me to my third point, and that is that the Revolutionary War, as I would say you would now guess, was far less of a class struggle than many historians made it out to be. The familiar categorization, such as that of Carl Becker, of continuing "radical" and "conservative" groups, rather static groups which you can follow through the whole Revolutionary period as being either radical or conservative, has serious weaknesses in it.

Then, point 4, which may^{surprise} you, is that the Revolution achieved far less in terms of social reform than had been assumed--for reasons that we shall see rather shortly.

Then, fifth, and perhaps most startling of all, but I think most important, I would emphasize to you this morning that the old notion that the Founding Fathers in their Constitutional Convention perpetrated a counterrevolution--that the Constitution was a "conservative" document, the polar opposite of the Articles

of Confederation--all this, has been pretty well demolished. Historians have pretty well ripped to pieces Charles Beard's Economic Interpretation of the Constitution, a book that appeared in 1913. They have ripped it so that this whole notion has been demolished beyond repair.

I have gone through all of this fairly hastily. If to this extent the historians have undermined a good bit of the structure upon which we assumed American political philosophy was erected, what are we now to regard as having been fundamental? Here what I say may at first hearing appear to be somewhat paradoxical.

First of all, undeniably the colonial and revolutionary leaders took ideas seriously and tried during their long struggles with the British to reshape institutions in an American pattern. They were remarkably well versed in social and political theory. A great many of them were quite well acquainted with the radical non-conformist thought of the 17th century, the ideas of the Puritans, the followers of Oliver Cromwell of the Commonwealth period of England. They continued in the 18th century in the United States to follow the writings of a good many English religiously radical non-conformists--names that wouldn't be well known to you perhaps, many of them--a man named Burgh (not Edmund) and a man named Priestly, who is known to you as a chemist, probably, rather than as a political philosopher. These people were strong opponents of traditional authority, and there was not a provincial assembly in which a great many of the members were not well versed in the writings of various of these people and in the traditions of the Enlightenment. In addition to this, of course, they did also very well know the writings of those

men who are familiar to you--Voltaire, Montesquieu, and John Locke. This body of doctrine was important. It gave the revolutionary leaders a common vocabulary, it gave them a common pattern of thought and, when the time for action came, it gave them a common set of principles of political reform. The Americans were conscious of being innovators, of bringing mankind a long step forward and, may I say, by the way, they were greatly admired in Europe. They were setting an example in Europe, and informed thinkers in Europe thought very highly of them. So that there was a great deal of interaction across the Atlantic in the 18th century on the part of American political thinkers and European political thinkers.

"Thus it is," says Professor Bailyn, "that throughout the 18th century there were prominent, politically active Americans who were well aware of the development of European thinking, took ideas seriously, and during the Revolution deliberately used them in an effort to reform the institutional basis of society."

All this doesn't sound so much different from the old view. And here I come to the paradox, which is less obvious. It is equally true that many, indeed most, of what these leaders considered to be their greatest achievement during the Revolution, reforms that made America seem to half the world like the veritable heavenly city of the 18th century philosophers, had been matters of fact before they were matters of theory and of revolutionary doctrine. In other words, what I am driving at is that a great many of the social changes which we associate with the American Revolution actually had been pretty well established in the colonies quite a considerable time before the Revolution and that they came to be justified by theory. In other words, theory did not lead to the social change; the theory

grew out of the social change or was linked to the social change.

By these social changes I mean things which I won't bother to diagram to you now. You are familiar with most of them. They were primogeniture and the abolishing of primogeniture, and entail, for example, the getting rid of, in other words, hereditary large estates, the disestablishment of religion, the separation of church and state, the widespread right to vote, the normal and systematic representation in legislative bodies of an actual and direct sort, freedom from arbitrary executive power--all these were things that Americans for a long time had been fighting for and to a considerable degree had succeeded in winning well before the Revolution. They had been achieved, we now think, less in response to the doctrines of Locke and Montesquieu and the religious non-conformists than because of the practical exigencies in realistic politicking of Americans. The way had been paved for the repudiation of executive authority--arbitrary executive authority, I mean--and the transfer of power to popular legislatures, and it had been paved by 50 years of grinding battles going on in colonial assemblies.

Now, if all this is true, what then was the significance of all the familiar ideas of the Enlightenment, which Thomas Jefferson so eloquently distilled in the Declaration of Independence? The fact was that much of what had been gradually and in practice achieved had been regarded with suspicion or even fear by certain groups within the colonies, and had certainly not been achieved easily. The Revolution and the political philosophy of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights gave a legitimacy to what had been achieved slowly and piecemeal. In other words, it was a legitimizing process.

In behalf of Enlightenment liberalism the revolutionary leaders undertook to complete, formalize, systematize, and symbolize what previously had been only partially realized, what had been confused and seriously disputed matters of fact, and what the colonists had had trouble getting. But these Enlightenment ideas were not simply the body of thought of some radical groups in the colonies on the frontier, sons of liberty. These were the ideas also of aristocratic southern planters, of aristocratic merchants in the North, nor did they destroy a social order. They did not create new social and political forces in America, but they did release those that had long existed and vastly increased their power. This completion, this rationalization, this symbolization, this lifting into consciousness and endowing with high moral purpose of what had been rather confused or inchoate elements of social and political change, this was the American Revolution. This was also the development of a lasting, vital American political philosophy, a political philosophy which was not the property, I would repeat, of any one group but of all American groups. This was a political philosophy which was capable of change as the United States has turned from a thinly settled agricultural nation strung along the Eastern Seaboard into a great continental industrial power, the hope and the safeguard of half the globe.

There is no great inconsistency between the ideas that are to be found in the Declaration of Independence and those that are to be found in the Constitution of the United States. In terms of world political thought these are liberal documents, both of them. The important thing about them in many respects is that they did make possible a framework which was broad enough so that all parties within the

United States could operate within them, that although the Constitution as it was drawn up created certain doubts in the minds of a man like Thomas Jefferson, who at that moment was our Ambassador to France and was not in this Nation, so that Jefferson at first had the feeling that it might do for 20 years and not much more than that. The fact of the matter is that no element of any size in the American Nation in all of the decades since has seriously tried to overthrow this frame of government and establish a new one. May I anticipate some of you in the question period by adding instantly that this would include those who seceded to form the Confederate States of America. They merely wanted to get back to basic constitutional principles, to purify the document and the way in which it was being formed. There was no greater constitutionalist in the United States at the time than Jefferson Davis.

These principles likewise served as the basis for our legal system. These are the principles that had been drilled into that young revolutionary, John Marshall, a/remarkable codifier, really, than what was generally believed by the majority of Americans. John Marshall, who read law for only six weeks with George Wythe at William and Mary, was just getting out of uniform from the American Revolution and was eager to get his law practice established. He never really knew a great deal of the traditional English common law. John Marshall was able, incredibly, to set forth what to me seems to be a consensus of a young, busy, commercial as well as agrarian America well on its way to larger things. Consequently, I think this first body of American political thought is remarkably applicable to today in a great many respects. What, then, should one add in

talking about current trends in American political thought? Here we come to the critical problems that we face today. I think you will find at almost every point that we can deal with these problems in what has been our distinctively American way. At almost every point the political philosophy that was evolved by the colonial Americans and by the Founding Fathers is still pretty applicable. But of course I am talking now in rather broad terms.

Here again I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Alpheus Mason. He pretty well summed up these points in his notable history of American political philosophy, In Quest of Freedom, in which he winds up by enumerating what he considers to be some enduring principles of American politics down to the present day.

What I think needs to be said is this: The American political tradition supplies certain principles on the basis of which our national economy, our national security, and our civil rights all can exist together in comparative harmony and peace. Here to quote the present-day Supreme Court Justice, William O. Douglas, we all acknowledge the fact that man was born for freedom, not for slavery, that man cannot be standardized like automobiles or screws or nails, that God gave man the same amazing diversity that He gave the flowers in the mountain meadows. Certainly here, to go from Thomas Jefferson down to every present-day political writer or thinker, we would all agree that one of the things that make our American political philosophy so remarkable is that we recognize the sanctity of the individual and the right of the individual to a considerable degree of diversity so long as he does not seriously injure the rest of us. We do not put the state paramount and

trample on the rights of the individual.

Second, of course, which grows out of this, our political system takes cognizance of man's natural propensity for freedom and preserves channels for its expression, so that the people can assemble freely and speak their minds freely and criticize their Government freely. They do this, as Archibald MacLeish has said, not for the pleasure of the citizens but for the health of the state. It does create a healthy state.

Third, these basic freedoms are sanctified in formal declarations and in the Constitution of the United States itself. The Supreme Court of the United States in its decision of 1945, for example, asserted that the very purpose of the First Amendment was to foreclose public authority from assuming a guardianship of the public mind through regulating the press, speech, and religion. In this field every person must be his own watchman for truth, because the forefathers did not trust any government to separate the true from the false for us. This is the Supreme Court decision.

Fourth, as Mason points out, apart from our constitutional safeguards, we have further fortified our freedom by shying away from absolutes, from all predetermined ends. What distinguishes our political system in considerable part from totalitarian systems, whether they be the Nazi fascist systems of the thirties or the Communist systems of today, are the methods and the means followed, not the ends professed. The Communists profess a mobile set of ends, and then engage in to us the most despicable means, often, to reach those ends. The most distinctive asset of our society is the endless possibility inherent in the

procedures it requires government to follow. In fact we do have within our framework a lively and a healthy opposition, which is extremely needed. No opposition, someone has said, within a government, means no democracy.

From this follows the next point that, despite the freedom of the majority to choose a particular means, we preserve the right of the minority to suggest other means and to try to persuade the majority to adopt these other means--a healthy thing.

Sixth, we recognize that liberty has meaning. As Professor Carr, whom you have been reading, puts it, it has meaning only within an organized society in which law and order are maintained and the security of the group is safeguarded. Liberty does not mean license. In the interest of national security, we admit that some restrictions on liberty from time to time may be necessary. It does require a delicate balance. Here I will quote that Burke, with whom you are familiar, Edmund Burke, the great Englishman, said that liberty must be limited to be possessed. The degree of restraint it is impossible in any case to settle precisely. But it ought to be the constant aim of every wise public counsel to find out by cautious experiments, and rational, cool endeavours, with how little, not how much, of this restraint the community can subsist.

Now, seventh, what this can mean interpreted in the 1960's in terms of communism is this: While there is no doubt about the reality of the Communist menace to our external peace and security, by and large it is conceded that that threat can be taken care of within our existing legal framework. We do not need to resort to vigilantism, or illegal lynching of one sort or another. As J. Edgar

Hoover has pointed out, we can depend upon our legal framework to deal with the menace of communism.

Finally, since we live in an age of propaganda, subtle infiltration, and mass hypnosis, in which the Communists and other totalitarians have become expert in bewitching and confusing the minds of their victims, we must guard against the use of free institutions by those who are determined to subvert them. Liberty does not mean simply allowing the use of our free institutions to these people who would destroy them. This again is a very difficult line to draw. We must devise ways of restricting their use by these people who would be destructive and still leave these free institutions for the rest of us in society to use in a constructive fashion. I realize that here, of course, precise definitions are not easy to find. So the problem now, as always, is to combine individual freedom with social justice, to fuse that degree of initiative necessary for progress with the social cohesion needed for survival. To quote Professor Mason, "No adjustment will ever be perfectly and finally achieved. It is the tediousness of its method and the stress on human values rather than efficiency that place free government at a seeming disadvantage. So many minds have to be consulted, informed, and brought into agreement."

And yet I think we all of us in here agree, and may I say, all of my colleagues in departments of political science and history in our universities agree, that for all of the apparent fumbling which can take place in our American democratic process, not only do we have something rare and precious but we also, gentlemen, have something a great deal more efficient than a totalitarian system in which

criticism, minority opposition, and even minority delaying tactics, are not condoned.

I think it is beyond all question of fact that this curious, interesting emphasis that we place upon a balance between what is for the good of the individual and for the good of society, what is the right of the minority and what is the right of the majority, and all these things in our democratic political philosophy that are free government's strength and the only assurance that, whatever course it may have to take, freedom will survive.

Thank you.

COLONEL SMILEY: Questions?

QUESTION: Doctor, is our two-party system, in your opinion, an accident of history, or are there underlying factors involved in the fact that we have a two-party system? Are we likely to continue to have this ad infinitum?

DR. FREIDEL: That is about as tough a question as an unsuspecting person could get thrown at him. I wish I could give you a really good answer, but I don't honestly know. My impression is this: During the colonial period--
is
and this/part of the reason why so many historians who were as brilliant as Carl Becker and Charles Beard for so long were misled--normally we were following a two-party system in what became the United States. In other words, there were those usually who associated themselves with the Royal Governor and were likely to be concentrated in the colonial Governor's Council, and then there were those in the assembly who were trying to wrest the power away.

These were pretty nebulous groups. In England there were, of course, already the Whigs and the Tories, with practically no difference between them, may I add? not nearly the difference between them that English historians a generation ago thought there were. Whether these were parties in this country or in England, for that matter, also, or whether they were just factions, is hard to say. They were generally regarded as being factions. The fact is that the Founding Fathers in drawing up the Constitution did not want parties, because parties so often represented powerful families, like the Livingstons and the Schuylers in New York, making dirty deals--and they did make dirty deals. Therefore, they wanted a system in which there would be no parties. But, because there had been the ins and the outs, almost immediately within the new Congress, within a space of 2 to 3 years, these parties which came to be known as the Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans took shape.

Now the last part of your question I can answer very easily, and I think with considerable emphasis. Is this two-party system likely to survive? Yes, simply because we /so long have had a two-party system in the United States, and the parties function on a State level with the party apparatus within any State, outside, let's say, of the Republican Party machinery in a few States of the South, and the Democratic Party machinery in the State of Vermont, and these party machines are pretty valuable. This is the reason that so many Southerners will be thoroughly Republican in their outlook and yet remain within the Democratic Party--the Democratic machinery is so valuable to them that they won't give it up, let's say, to move over to the Republican Party. In some States gradually they will, but if they move

they are going to move to the Republican Party. The result is, of course, that we have these curious loose alliances within each party of very diverse elements.

If I may I'll go on and say a word more, although I am talking too long on this subject, but I know it's one of some interest to you. Abroad very often, particularly in Europe, Europeans will ask you--and I am sure many of you have been asked by Europeans--"Isn't this a pretty bad thing? Why can't we have a really good Liberal Party and a really good Conservative Party in the United States?" The answer to that, I think, is something like this--and I don't want to at every point give you the impression that I think we have the best of all possible systems and the best of all possible countries, but I lean that way--that, within Europe, where there will be 18 or 20 parties in some countries, after the election is over the alliances have to be made. The way in which the German government is functioning at the present time is not so different--I mean the German parliamentary government--from the way in which Congress here is functioning. Here, of course, the compromises and the arrangements have to be made before the election rather than after. In other words, the adjustments are made within the party.

I've thought a lot about this, and I can't think of any better way of maintaining, sort of, government by the majority with a considerable consideration for the rights of the minority, than by our system. As I say, I think there are certain things that need to be done.

I won't go further in answering one question than this, however. But I think that on the whole our two-party system is a good system. It is better than any

other system. I would deplore seeing parties along sharp ideological lines develop in the United States, even though at times I am very exasperated by the slowness with which certain things get done that I think ought to be done.

QUESTION: Dr. Freidel, what in your opinion is the impact upon American political philosophy of the current outthrust of communism? Is it making us more liberal, more conservative, or are we unaffected by it?

DR. FREIDEL: I tried to deal with this in the latter part of my talk in which I was taking up some of the points that Alpheus Mason has made and was commenting upon them. What I think it primarily does is this: I think it primarily creates for us a security problem of the sort we have never had before. What all of us face is this terrible question: How can we meet this outthrust of communism without ourselves be leaning toward totalitarianism? It requires a good deal sharper thinking on our part than we have had to engage in in the past in this area.

Obviously we cannot just simply start rounding up radicals and throwing them in jail. We do have to very seriously think in terms of that term of Justice Holmes in 1922 when he talked about a clear and present danger which would necessitate action against someone.

So that primarily I think it has been a civil liberties question. Now, of course, in terms of practical politics part of the problem is simply this, in terms of getting things through in the Capital, that almost anything today that is passed by Congress can be passed in terms of its bearing upon the cold war. We can do humanitarian things or we can engage in extensive scientific research, or we

can refrain from doing certain things, or in terms of various pleas which some of you again probably have made (I know I have) in the past in preparing your presentations for Congress, some years ago, you can put it in terms of how it would help us in the cold war, when actually you may feel that in addition it's a good thing and should have been done a long time ago.

QUESTION: Hasn't there been a very profound change in this present philosophy, however, which might be characterized by a change in our words, from "republic," in describing this Government, to "democracy?"

DR. FREIDEL: I don't think so, at all. I am familiar with particularly the doctrine which is being enunciated. I live in Belmont, Massachusetts, which is the home of Mr. Welch of the John Birch Society. I am familiar with the slogan: "This is a republic and not a democracy, and let us keep it that way." Certainly the intent of the Founding Fathers was not of establishing a government with a two-party system. It evolved that way. The Founding Fathers did not think in terms of virtually direct election of Presidents, and we have virtually--not exactly but virtually--direct election of Presidents. Our frame of government as it evolved is somewhat different. I don't think this is a basic matter of political philosophy, but I feel that getting away from this question of the frame of government and going back and examining the intent of the Founding Fathers, the political philosophy of the Founding Fathers, ^{you find that} what they had in mind was this: They took upon themselves at the Constitutional Convention one of the most difficult tasks that any brilliant, serious-minded group of patriotic men could undertake, namely, to put all power, all real sovereignty in the hands of the people, to have the sovereignty rest in the

hands of the people and yet not have a runaway majority trample down a minority. They were very realistic, as we are, about human nature-- I wouldn't say cynical, I would simply say realistic about human nature. They distrusted individual men, and yet they were determined to set up a government based upon the people. So what they did evolve was this intricate machinery of ours which created, may I say, a republic, but it also created--and this I think is implicit in my detailed remarks on the colonial period--and was based upon a working democracy which had been a working democracy in this country for a long time.

If I were to sum up in a sentence what the American Revolution was about, it would be this: that we had gradually evolved in the colonial period a democracy, a democratic form of government in almost every colony, with one or two exceptions, and we were fighting to preserve that democracy from serious threatened encroachment upon it from Great Britain.

The Founding Fathers had no intention whatever except to set up a democracy but a democracy which could not be turned quickly to totalitarian purposes, in which the majority could not simply run roughshod over the minority.

So I would say this is a democracy and has been a democracy, so let us keep it that way.

QUESTION: In your opinion, has there been any identifiable significant evolution of our political philosophy since the Revolution?

DR. FREIDEL: I don't feel so, in terms of our basic American political tradition. This is why in my talk I did not try to follow changes down through the 19th century. Of course I was taking this in very general terms, in terms of

specifics, in terms of machinery of government, in terms of very serious questions, such as the question of whether or not Negroes in the South might be held **as** slaves. There have been some real changes. Let us take this whole question of Negroes for example. Our political philosophy has been that of the Declaration of Independence. There were notable exceptions made in terms of Negroes at that time and to a certain degree in certain areas there still are exceptions made.

I don't think our basis political philosophy has changed. Now, this is arguable. Some of you may feel differently.

QUESTION: Could I ask you to further your comments on that point with respect to the trend that we see toward centralization of power in the Federal Government?

DR. FREIDEL: Well, I am not exactly sure what you mean, Captain. Do you want me to talk about it in terms of political philosophy?

STUDENT: Can you say whether this is the beginning or the middle of a change in our political philosophy?

DR. FREIDEL: Well, I presume what you mean is: Is the civil rights issue in the South part of an important trend toward serious centralization in our central Government? Yes, it is part of a trend which has been going on since the days of the Founding Fathers. Here I don't think the political philosophy has changed but certainly here we have moved steadily and historically away from states rights toward a more central form of government. The interesting thing is that every political party when in power has moved in this direction. In the 20th century notably the Republican Party brought about great centralization and did a good deal to

break down states rights. The Democrats until 1932 were a states-rights party and Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt was one of the most ardent states righters in the country while he was Governor. He was also a strong man. I could have brought you statements of his which you would have thought were perhaps the words of Harry Byrd. As a matter of fact, it was he who was responsible for Harry Byrd's coming into the Senate. And, of course, a powerful man like Franklin D. Roosevelt becoming President tended to act quite the reverse of this in the Presidency. He wanted to make use of the presidential power.

This is a trend that I in many respects do not like, although I will confess to you that I am a person who believes strongly in giving full protection of the laws and full civil rights to everyone in the United States regardless of race, color, or religion. I dislike seeing too great centralization. I don't think that this applies particularly to our political philosophy, which I don't think has been modified especially by it, but I am frightened, as you are frightened, and as I think everyone is frightened by the growing size of government.

The great problem, of course, is this: that certain needs need to be met, and the American citizens are gradually expecting more and more of their Government in terms of social welfare. If State governments do not provide these welfare measures they turn to the Federal Government for them. Sometimes the Federal Government carries them out quite well and sometimes of course it is quite unwieldy, and we have enormous bureaucratization.

These are the problems that grow out of the size and the industrialization of our Nation, and the fact that citizens cannot do for themselves a great deal that

they could do when we were an agrarian nation. It is not that all these new demands on the part of our citizens are necessarily wicked demands or that they indicate a lack of self-sufficiency. They simply mean that an industrial people need different things from a government than an agrarian people needed. Within the framework of our political philosophy, of course, the general welfare had to be taken care of. Much more is needed today than was needed then.

Here all we can hope for, I think, are wise techniques and brilliant administration on your part. So much of this really depends upon what I think you can do in government, and I know most of you probably feel very frustrated with particular tasks that you face from time to time.

QUESTION: In the part of your discussion you mentioned one of the characteristics of our philosophy as being the lack of absolutes and the absence of predetermined ends. Have not our major political parties historically taken onto themselves or identified themselves with goals with predetermined ends as a part of their party philosophy?

DR. FREIDEL: Well, the thing, of course, that makes my task as an American political historian so difficult is that these parties usually blur everything in terms of the compromise. This is what one gets in compromise. Primarily you see we have a government of checks and balances. We have a government of compromise. We have parties of compromise, and we have compromises between the two parties. I don't think we have any real absolutism. Sometimes we have some dandy slogans. I mean, we have a party of states rights a good deal of the time, depending upon which party is out of power. Then it is a party of states rights.

When it's in power it may mumble something about states rights. Of course now we have a party in which there are the most ardent states righters and the most ardent advocates of the central government doing more and more, both within the same party, which makes great fun.

I don't see any absolutes, nor I don't think you would, if you were to compare our political system with, let's say, the political system of Soviet Russia.

QUESTION: There has been some propoganda to the effect that there is a widespread conservative trend on the campus of the United States today. I wonder if from your point of view you could discuss it. Is it true at Harvard? And what else do you see in the academic community?

DR. FREIDEL: I can only talk about this in terms of Harvard. I have been interested and rather amused at the amount of attention that has been given to a supposedly conservative trend at Harvard. I think the change that has taken place at Harvard in the 6 or 7 years I have been there has been rather notable, and one that I think has been a good thing--a political awareness--whereas the generation of students right after the war rather shocked me by their lack of interest in things political, which I think is a very dangerous state of affairs--a political sort of view. In the last few years students have come to be excited and interested in politics, which I think is extremely good, because I think this can make for good government. I always urge my students to take some interest in politics if they can. The thing that interests me the least is whether they become Republicans or Democrats.

At Harvard the really right-wing young conservatives, as opposed to the young Republicans who are a pretty liberal Rockefeller group, are really a very small

group. They seem to have quite a bit of money and are pretty vociferous. One or two of them got into high places where they were able to give the impression that all of Harvard was moving into the direction of Goldwater and Senator Tower, when Harvard, on the contrary, in its straw polling, in 1960, went for John F. Kennedy by about 58 or 59 percent. The political awareness, I repeat, is rather great. My impression is that more of the students at the moment seem to be Democrats than Republicans.

QUESTION: You laid great stress, Doctor, in your early remarks about the efficiency of a democracy versus that of totalitarian governments. This is contrary to the frequent charge. Were you thinking in terms of efficiency in decision-making or efficiency in execution, or both? Will you illustrate?

DR. FREIDEL: Well, my illustrations will be historical. They will not concern Russia, because I don't have historical instances. Some of you probably could give a lot better illustrations than I would concerning Nazi Germany. You remember in the thirties we were all of the impression that our Government was functioning so badly and that we were making so many terrible errors, whereas these Nazis were so efficient. You remember then how when our teams went into Germany after the war and we began to interrogate various Germans and pick up documents that we discovered that what happened in totalitarianism was that the mistakes could be covered up. Some of the mistakes were grievous beyond all belief.

One I remember that I myself saw and read the documents on was concerning the use of the magnetic mine which could have done incredible damage to British

shipping if the Germans had produced tremendous quantities of them and then very quickly had mined all the waters around Great Britain. But as it was Hermann Goering managed to get hold of a few of them--he was one of the greatest generals that we had on our side, I think, during the last war--and he wanted to drop them by airplane. Within a few days they managed to drop one on the marshlands of the Thames, where it was picked up by the British, who took it apart and within several months had all their vessels degoussed before the Germans could go into large-scale production.

This is not just a single instance. This sort of thing went on and on and on and on. Now, we made some bloopers, too, which were honeys. But by and large in our democratic system the interesting thing was that the cover-up, thanks to the system, was a good deal more difficult. And we ironed out our mistakes a good deal more rapidly than the Nazis did.

This may not, as I say, be the best possible example. But by and large in a totalitarian system inefficiencies can survive for a long time. For example, there is the incredible way in which Khrushchev has been trying to make over agriculture in Russia, or the frightful way in which Mao has been trying to make it over in China. Nothing like that could happen in the United States even though we are engaged in a constant process of self-flagellation. It's going to be going on again today in a few minutes on the Hill concerning the inefficiencies of our farm program.

Our system both in terms of government and in terms of industrial production does manage somehow to function a great deal more efficiently because, I think, of balancing and counterbalancing, because everyone is able to criticize everyone

else, most of the time pretty openly, and we like to keep it that way.

QUESTION: William Lederer, in his book, The Nation of Sheep, makes the observation that we should keep our eye on the youth, that it is youth that changed the world and not the polished diplomat. He cites the student rebellion on Syngman Rhee in Korea as an example. Do you see any significant youth development in the United States that might wield or change our political philosophy in years to come?

DR. FREIDEL: No, I do not. I have been doing some research here in the summer and from time to time I run into Harvard students. One of them stopped me on the street last night. There are between 3,000 and 7,000 university students in Washington this summer on various internship programs. Some of you probably have met some of them. I understand there are a considerable number of them, 100 or so, from Harvard alone. These students are serious. They are interested in the way things are going. Some of them are finding jobs here in town very interesting and exciting. The man I ran into last night is working for one of the conservative Senators and having a magnificent time. It's a real eye-opener for him. He's very happy about it.

I heard some students talking yesterday who were doing some research job in the National Archives and they are very griped. They said, "This is an old work shop. We are shuffling papers and counting things." It's not at all what they expected to find in Washington.

But by and large these young people are not ready really completely to kick over the traces. They don't think that our system is perfect, but on the other hand they

don't think our system ought to be destroyed. They are not like young radicals of the 1930's who thought the economic system simply couldn't work because of the depression and were ready to propose simply collectivizing everything, and scrapping.

These young people on the whole I think are rather dedicated. They feel a challenge. The only problem I think they are going to run into is if they get put into spots in which the work is dull and routine and in which they are not going to see great results. They are going to be bored and then they may become simply apathetic.

Our problem I think mainly is to keep them interested. To talk about this as a beat generation, as was the fashion a short time ago, and to say that modern youth doesn't amount to anything, et cetera, I can tell you as a teacher just is not true. Those of you who have sons and daughters in secondary schools and in college--check on them. I think you'll be startled at how much harder they are having to work than we had to work. I know perfectly well that with the training I had in secondary school I could never get into a good university today. It's probably true of most of us in this room. I mean, we've been jacking up and jacking up and jacking up what we expect of these young people, and to a considerable degree they meet the expectations.

As for the other element, such as the criminal type or this other type, I think it's relatively minor. I have a very serious-minded youngster who is just back from behind the Iron Curtain. I sent ^{him} over there with a group this summer so that he could learn something about communism first-hand. One of the

interesting things he told me was this: He didn't like the Polish young people at all. Do you know why? He said, "They're frivolous, and silly. All they wanted was to learn how to do the twist. They didn't want to talk about serious things."

QUESTION: Speaking of the criminal element and serious things, to what do you attribute the success in your neighborhood of a man who has been convicted of larceny and is getting ready to run again for the State legislature, and all predictions are that he will be elected?

DR. FREIDEL: This sort of thing, of course, is one of the real excruciations on the American political system. The answer to it, of course, is that the people in my neighborhood and in other neighborhoods where this sort of thing goes on need ~~simply~~ to get into politics. I happen to live in a State in which a large number of people --and sometimes I am inclined to feel along with them--feel that politics are pretty futile. It's hard to get excited and it's hard to do something about it. Here, of course, one can only quote a very old mind that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. Cleaning up a dirty political situation does not suffice. One has to stay interested.

This is why I hope these good young people I have been talking about will stay interested in politics and will work within both parties and will stand for things that are clean and good. I think a good many of them will. I trust we are going to get some better politics in my State. Goodness knows we certainly need better politics, not just in my State but in most of them. None of us likes the fact that Congressmen to a considerable extent are ready to overlook serious delinquencies on the part of various other Congressmen. Courtesy there seems to go

away beyond patriotism at times. There have been historically some rather shocking examples.

But here again the great problem is for certain dedicated Congressmen to get through measures which will clean house so that higher ethical standards will be followed by Congressmen.

By and large I think politics in this country have improved. By and large we would not expect the United States Senator today to function as did Daniel Webster, who at one and the same time was fighting on the floor of the Senate for the recharter of the Bank of the United States and carrying around in his pocket a check book on the Bank of the United States writing checks on the bank when he didn't have any money deposited there, and the checks were honored. Literally Webster and Clay were receiving fees as attorneys for the Bank of the United States at the time that they were fighting for the bank's recharter in the Senate and felt there was nothing seriously wrong with it.

This, of course, is a part of our American political tradition about which none of us is really very happy. It calls for real vigilance.

COLONEL SMILEY: Dr. Freidel, on behalf of all us in the Industrial College may I express our appreciation for your very perceptive coverage of this very important subject. Thank you very much.

DR. FREIDEL: Thank you.