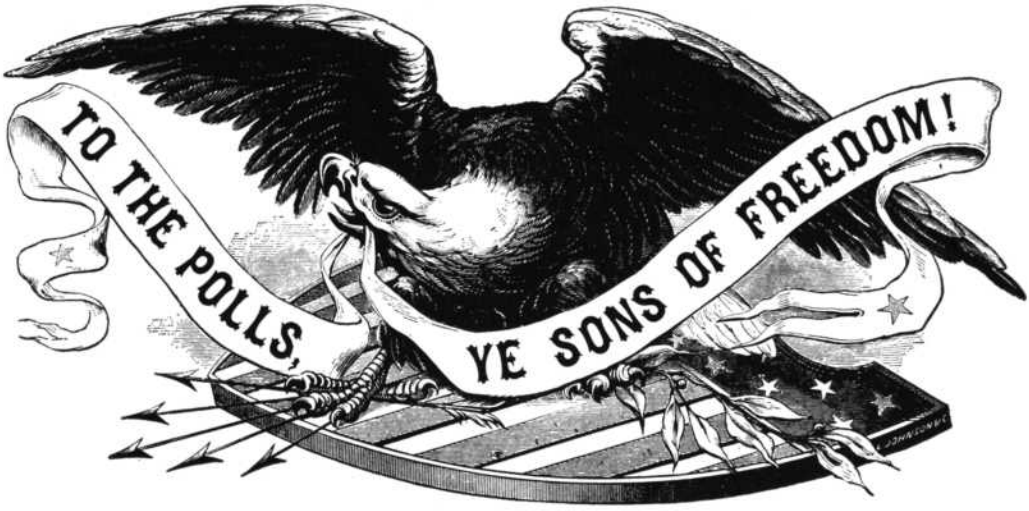
Epilogue



This study has aimed at introducing its readers to the American way of government, and at increasing their self-confidence in matters of state. It may thereby promote their personal civic participation.

There is a chronic shortage of players in the civic arena. Conditions are no better elsewhere in the world and may actually be much worse. Yet it is painful to reflect that there may be as many active criminals in America as there are active citizens. American government needs a larger public; the task of representative government would be greatly eased if just one additional person in a hundred were to accept a modest, disinterested, and general role in politics and civic affairs. All of the formal invitations are given an American at birth: they are the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the words of innumerable distinguished leaders. The knowledge gained even by this single course on American government is enough training in the rules, customs, and etiquette of the playing field.

The remaining question may well be: By which gate do I enter the field? The least crowded gate is the main gate—the entrance to the body of generally active citizens, the people who attend regularly to the full range of public affairs and encourage governmental action that takes into consideration the interests of all people. Almost everyone will concede that this sense of the commonweal and this activity directed at the commonweal creates the main force behind a stable and progressive nation—no matter what its form of government. The representative form of government is particularly

emphatic in demanding a large active public. Hence, whether it come through the medium of political parties, the printed word, or dedication to a range of civic obligations, this general public activity must be forthcoming.

Other gates open up to the practice of government, too. They are more specialized; some of them are more secure financially. They include teaching, the practice of law and public relations, the representation of special interests, government service, participation in various kinds of civic groups, business, party organization, and general or special programs and personalities. A paragraph or two on each of these fields of governmental practice will show how they supply necessary elements and energy to public affairs and public policy.

Several thousands of Americans teach political science in colleges and universities. Many more thousands teach American government in elementary schools and high schools, even though their work is not always labeled as such. In addition, a large part of all educators are concerned with the political and social problems of school systems. Indeed, as Plato pointed out over two thousand years ago, education is a rehearsal of statecraft. A society's government is mirrored in the curriculum and school environment of its children. Hence the affairs of government are inherent in school programs, and impinge upon the school systems from the outside in the form of laws, rules, controls, and plans.

A sizable fraction of the American public thus consists of teachers, educators, and professors. True, most of them tend to be specially concerned with the relations between education and politics, but a great many of them are also interested in politics generally, within the limits of their positions. Since educators often hold no public office, their influence is frequently underestimated. It can be very great. Take, for example, the case of an instructor of American government at a large State university in a State of a million people; he has for twenty-five years been lecturing to about three hundred students annually. About 7,500 adults, most of them now living in the State, have acquired information and insights into government from him. Those ex-students are likely to be much more active and influential than the average citizen. Therefore, his influence must be measured not only by the large number of students who have worked with him but also be weighed by the unusual activity and influence of those ex-students in the government of society. His ideas live on and spread far and wide. Few persons in the State and community can compete with the teacher's short- and long-term impact upon opinion and action. Also, should one examine the biographies contained in the Directory of the American Political Science Association, he would discover a hundred examples of direct academic action. The list of past presidents of the Association includes a President of the United States, diplomats, agency chiefs, and advisers of officials of all sorts from the highest to the most humble offices of the land.

The practice of law and public relations offers another entrance into the political life of the community. Among those who have achieved emi-

The Drive to Get Out the Vote. It is part of every American election campaign, as is attested by this striking emblem of a century ago.

nence in the specialized functions of the law in politics are many judges—such as Felix Frankfurter, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Louis Brandeis. Abraham Lincoln, John Foster Dulles, and Wendell Willkie are examples of lawyers engaging in politics of the broadest type. The lawyer, even if narrowly trained, has several distinct advantages in contributing his energy to public affairs; he is versed in the body of laws that govern human relations here and now; his vocational success requires clients, and political activity generates acquaintances who may directly or indirectly provide him with clients; he is more apt to be skilled at public speaking and bargaining than are members of other occupations; and he has an easier task than most people in adjusting his time schedule to the demands of politics. Hence, there is every reason to expect and encourage a full participation in public life among attorneys-at-law.

Public relations is a young and growing profession. Closely akin to advertising, it emphasizes individual contacts more than the advertising profession does. Its distinct advantages in providing ingress to politics and government lie in the skills of persuasion and promotion that it demands, and also in the flexible time schedules it allows. Examples of personal successes scored by public relations advisers in politics include William Benton, former Senator from Connecticut, and Chester Bowles, former Governor of Connecticut and former Ambassador to India.

More political campaigns today are being waged by public relations experts than ever before; this is partly due to the decline of political patronage and the consequent inability of candidates to depend upon professional party workers. One outstanding firm specializing in political campaigns is Whitaker and Baxter, the California husband-and-wife team that worked for Governor Earl Warren and many other California politicians. Political journalists should not be overlooked; they commonly hold important posts in politics and government; James Hagerty, Press Secretary to President Eisenhower, and Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., American delegate to the United Nations, came into politics through newspaper work.

Special interests abound in America and hundreds of men and women find their vocations or avocations in representing them before the legislatures or agencies of government. Some of such advocates acquire their influence by means that are not respected, but many of them display talents and energies that excite general admiration. Of course, the leaders of great interest groups, such as Walter Reuther of the CIO, or Walter White, former head of the NAACP, are important political leaders. But thousands of individuals of less fame represent professionally these groups and hundreds of others.

Frequently, special interest representatives move into their work from positions in the industry they will serve; others have backgrounds of government work, membership in legislatures, law, or public relations. But there is a special skill involved in such representation, and a number of men and women pursue lengthy careers at it. Occasionally, the chance is afforded and accepted to engage in general political activity after gaining experience in pressure group politics. For instance, the Democratic candidate for Gov-

ernor of California in 1954, Richard P. Graves, had many years of experience in representing the California cities' interests before the State legislature. Governor George Craig of Indiana was at one time head of the American Legion.

The civil service is, of course, a continual source of influence upon politics and public policy. Annually, thousands of American college graduates enter into careers with the national, State, and local governments. Indeed, public administration is the ultimate destination of more students who take graduate courses in political science than is any other occupation. The income, prestige, and security of civil service on all levels of government have been steadily increasing in the past two generations and now compare favorably in the large middle-level group with similar posts outside of government.

Responsibilities vary greatly, of course, with the tasks assigned one in the service, but the opportunities for leadership in an important special segment of American society and economy are numerous; furthermore, to an increasing extent, persons with successful backgrounds in government work are called upon for broader political tasks, such as assistants to leading political figures, standing for election to public office, or representing the Government in broad-gaged political negotiations with other nations or groups of domestic interests. Numerous ambassadors of the career service, such as George Kennan, come to mind, as do men like David Lilienthal, former head of the TVA, and even Dwight D. Eisenhower, career military officer.

Civic groups include organizations such as the League of Women Voters, the Community Chest, the Y.M.C.A., charitable groups, local improvement associations, and many other kinds of voluntary activities that are not tied directly to a person's economic interests but excite him and inspire him to realize his ideals regarding how the community should be designed and ordered. The chances for engaging in such groups or movements are many. Every locality includes a number of them. They invite recruits and have jobs for everyone who seeks to aid their efforts. They form a kind of civic action (which is often not called political) that is typically American. On many occasions they provide a training ground for persons who wish to engage in more general political activity, including running for office. They allow one the exercise of his skills at public speaking, organizing, managing finances, advertising, and promoting a cause among the public, and for acquiring civic judgment that is useful for making many kinds of public policy. The gratitude people have earned for their work in civic groups and the reputation for skill and judgment they have acquired in them, have often propelled them into the higher fields of general politics.

Formerly, it was commonly believed that business was quite separate from politics and that a dedication to one's productive interests forbade his concerning himself with the public good. However, business today is affected by politics in many ways. The public relations aspects of business have acquired greater importance, and despite certain difficulties and conflicts, an increasing number of businessmen have been openly concerned with governmental affairs in recent years. It is true that business has always

had an eye on public policy although in the past this interest was frequently in ill-repute, like that of the old-time lobby. Today, broader education is being offered in business training and, although the line between permissible "non-political" and non-permissible "political" activity still exists, the tendency in business is to promote participation of employees in civic affairs. Famous examples of businessmen lately active in politics and public affairs include Paul Hoffman, President of the Studebaker Corporation, Charles E. Wilson of General Electric Company, Charles E. Wilson of General Motors Corporation, Clint Murchison, Texas oil and industrial promoter, and Bernard Baruch, financier.

Unlike the law and some other vocations, business generally demands an everyday devotion to tasks; consequently, employees and even the heads of businesses cannot afford the easy scheduling of hours that would enable them to work most effectively in politics. Therefore, much of the participation of businessmen in politics is still carried on via the route of special business representation or the presentation of special grievances or requests to politicians. In any community, only a handful of men with long careers in established businesses engage in general political activities over a long period of time.

Work in party organizations used to be a common mode of expressing one's general political interests. James Farley in New York, Edward Kelly in Chicago, and many other leaders worked their way to general political influence through dedication to party tasks. Carmine De Sapio of New York is a current leader who has labored in the party organization to achieve general eminence. Also, of course, a great many leaders have lent part of their energies and resources to keeping their parties alive. Yet opportunities to be a professional politician have been severely limited by civil service laws that require political neutrality. Hence the number of positions available to people who desire to be professional politicians and who have to earn a living is numbered only in several thousands in the federal government and similarly small proportions in the many States and localities. Whereas at one time a person might make politics a career and a living, even though he might never hold elective office, today very few individuals can build a career in politics in the pay of a party or of the government. Some well-to-do men and women do, however, undertake civic and political work as a career.

Finally, in addition to the avenues of political participation already described, it cannot be gainsaid that participation, at least on a modest scale, is open to every American who has some spare time. The parties invite, and, where they do not invite, cannot withstand, the active desire of citizens of all walks of life to make their influence felt. Moreover, in fact, many distinguished careers in American politics are founded upon an early and intense desire to influence public affairs, notwithstanding the lack of any clear occupational avenue. Among such men would be included very different types: Franklin Roosevelt, Hubert Humphrey, Joseph McCarthy and Averell Harriman. A person with a mission or a calling to public affairs may well discard all the statements that are made to show the advantages of one or another avenue to political participation, for his or her great asset

is the will to participate. Such a will, conveyed by a set of ideals of a special or general kind, or by a personality that attracts support in its own right, may feed upon itself and require no security or inducements or ready-prepared stage and audience.

Therefore, the American public, although it needs many thousands of recruits, is accessible by more gates than the beginner may know. The idea that participation is restricted to a clique, a pressure group, or a type of character, is based upon false information. The gates to the public are wide open. Those who wish the practice of representative government to continue must enter and take part.