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“DANGEROUS” PEOPLE

MARCEL H. VAN HERPEN

*Director
The Cicero Foundation*

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Early Liberals and Universal Suffrage: Their Fear of Populists and “Dangerous” People

Marcel H. Van Herpen

Populism is a modern phenomenon. It is intricately linked to the development of modern parliamentary democracy. Parliamentary democracy started in some countries earlier than in other countries. In England it began in 1688 with the Glorious Revolution under the Dutch King William III. ‘Glorious’ it may have been, however, this revolution still lacked one important ingredient: universal suffrage. Only a small proportion of the population had the right to vote for Parliament. The introduction of universal suffrage was a slow and difficult process. It started with a movement to introduce universal male suffrage. Of course, from the point of view of gender equality universal suffrage should have included women’s suffrage from the beginning. However, in a patriarchal time, in which most women were dependent on their husbands and stayed at home as “housewives,” taking care of the household of the family, this was not considered necessary: the adult man, father and breadwinner, was the representative of the family. For this reason in most countries women’s suffrage was introduced many years later. (1)

RADICAL DEMOCRATS VERSUS CONSERVATIVE THINKERS

One of the first modern writers to argue in favor of democracy was the Dutch philosopher Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677). In his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* he wrote: “I believe it to be of all forms of government the most natural and the most consonant with individual liberty. In it no one transfers his natural right so absolutely that he has no further voice in affairs, he

only hands it over to the majority of a society, whereof he is a unit. Thus all men remain as they were in the state of nature, equals.” (2) Spinoza’s book was published anonymously in 1670 with the name of a nonexistent printer in Hamburg on the cover. Pleading for democracy was at that time, even in the tolerant Dutch Republic, an outrageous deed. The book immediately became the subject of controversy and in 1674 it was prohibited by the States General, the Dutch parliament. Even the Pope of Rome expressed his dissatisfaction and placed it on the Index of forbidden books. However, ideas cannot be vanquished by bans and interdictions. Soon another philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), took up the torch. He pleaded for a radical democracy, in which all adult citizens – men and women – would participate. Rousseau abhorred the absolutist regimes of his time, which, for him, were bastions of slavery and arbitrariness. In his famous book “The Social Contract,” published in 1762, he argued that the split between lawgiver and people should be abolished and the people should become their own lawgiver. In such a case, the laws which one obeys are no longer external rules, dictated from outside, but rules one has imposed on oneself: heteronomy makes place for autonomy, unfreedom is abolished to be replaced by political freedom. But can this political freedom be won, and if so, how? Rousseau gives a positive answer. A democratic state becomes a possibility when the citizens agree on a social contract which creates a sovereign power. The contract creates a *volonté générale* - a “general will” of the parties to the contract. This general will expresses the common interest. Rousseau’s proposals are rather radical: for the social contract to be valid *all* citizens, without exception, should participate in the vote. And also after the social contract is approved all the citizens should remain permanently engaged in the political decision-making process. Rousseau was, therefore, a fierce opponent of representative democracy.

“Sovereignty cannot be represented...,” he wrote. “It consists essentially of the general will, and the will cannot be represented ... The people’s deputies therefore neither are, nor can be its representatives, they are only their commissioners; they can decide nothing definitively. Every law that the people hasn’t ratified personally is void; it is not law. The English people think themselves to be free. They deceive themselves greatly,

they are only free during the election of the members of Parliament; as soon as they are elected, they are slaves, they are nothing.” (3)

Rousseau’s ideal state is not a representative, parliamentary democracy, but a radical form of direct democracy, in which the citizens continually participate in the lawmaking process. It is clear that this ideal is only feasible in small communities and city-states, such as his native town Geneva, which was one of the few republics of his time. (4) It is interesting that Rousseau’s ideal of a plebiscitary democracy finds a positive echo in modern populist movements. Rousseau’s thinking also had a great influence on the French Revolution.

“The *Social Contract* remains the great book of the political revolution,” writes Robert Palmer. “It appeared in no fewer than thirteen editions in the French language in 1762 and 1763. There were three editions in English and one in German in 1763 and 1764; it appeared also in Russian in 1763. Thereafter, except for a solitary French edition, it was not reissued until after the Revolution began in France. ... What is certain is that the greatest vogue of the book came after the fact of revolution. The book did not so much make revolution as it was made by it.” (5)

The revolutionaries asserted popular sovereignty as their founding principle. However, they didn’t follow Rousseau’s precepts to the letter. In 1792 the first French Republic introduced universal male suffrage. It was the first time that a big European country took such a radical step. But Rousseau’s plebiscitary democracy was a bridge too far. (6) The revolutionaries opted for a parliamentary system. In the 19th century the demand for the introduction of universal male suffrage would become the rallying cry of progressives all around Europe. But their demands were not everywhere greeted with enthusiasm. Already the philosopher Edmund Burke (1729-1797) had attacked the revolutionary principles in his book “Reflections on the Revolution in France” (1790). According to him, “A perfect democracy is ... the most shameless thing in the world.” (7) For Burke a democratic government was not less oppressive than an absolutist monarchy: “Of this I am certain, that in a democracy, the majority of the citizens is

capable of exercising the most cruel oppressions upon the minority...” (8) The German philosopher Hegel (1770-1831), was not more positive. He wrote in his *Philosophy of Right* (1820): “Popular sovereignty, taken as the opposite of the sovereignty of the monarch, is the usual way in which one has begun to talk about popular sovereignty – as such, popular sovereignty belongs to the confused ideas, which are based on the chaotic conception of people. The people, without its monarch ... is a formless mass ...” (9) Hegel was a conservative Prussian philosopher. It would be naïve to expect him to argue in favor of universal suffrage or popular sovereignty. The same is true of his contemporary, the French philosopher Joseph de Maistre ((1753-1821), a fierce critic of the French Revolution, who wrote in “*Les soirées de Saint Pétersbourg*” (1821): “How many arguments cannot be found to prove that sovereignty comes from the people. However, nothing is less true. Sovereignty is always *taken*, never *given* ...” (10) De Maistre shares Hegel’s contempt for the people. “The people,” he wrote, “...is always a child, always foolish, always absent.” (11) One could, therefore, only expect the worst: “To hear these defenders of democracy talk, one would think that the people deliberate like a committee of wise men, whereas in truth judicial murders, foolhardy undertakings, wild choices, and above all foolish and disastrous wars are eminently the prerogatives of this form of government.”(12)

In England, although a country often praised for its moderation and tolerance, the enthusiasm for universal suffrage was scarcely greater. “In England,” wrote Polanyi, “it became the unwritten law of the Constitution that the working class must be denied the vote. The Chartist leaders were jailed ... and the mere demand for the ballot was often treated as a criminal act by the authorities. Of the spirit of compromise allegedly characteristic of the British system – a later invention – there was no sign. Not before ... an upper layer of skilled workers had developed their unions and parted company with the dark mass of poverty-stricken laborers ... was their better-paid stratum allowed to participate in the nation’s councils. Inside and outside England ... there was not a militant liberal who did not express his conviction that popular democracy was a danger to capitalism.” (13) Not only was revolutionary communism a specter that haunted Europe, but so was the extension of suffrage to include the working classes. It was

one of the great battles of the 19th century. The propertied classes, which already disposed of the right to vote, looked on sadly as these “rude masses” demanded equal rights.

In his essay “Representative Government – What is it Good For?” (1857) the sociologist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) formulated very well the general feelings of the ‘sensible and right-minded’ English bourgeois, confronted with this threatening movement, writing: “And in the lower and larger class ... he will perceive an almost hopeless stupidity. Without going the length of Mr. Carlyle, and defining the people as “twenty-seven millions, mostly fools,” he will confess that they are but sparsely gifted with wisdom.” (14) Was this population, supposed to be composed of pure idiots, not prone to choose also idiots as their representatives? “Even were electors content to choose the man proved by general evidence to be the most far-seeing, and refrained from testing him by the coincidence of his views with their own, there would be small chance of their hitting on the best. But judging on him, as they do, by asking him whether he thinks this or that crudity which they think, it is manifest that they will fix on one far removed from the best. Their deputy will be truly representative; - a representative, that is, of the average stupidity.” (15) And Spencer continued: “Then, again, as to intelligence. Even supposing that the mass of electors have a sufficiently decided *will* to choose the best rulers, what evidence have we of their *ability*?” (16) This ability they seem to be completely lacking. And for this reason, he lamented: “The best men are generally not in the governing body.” (17) But then, suddenly, after having reproduced the well-known rant of his contemporaries against universal suffrage, Spencer changes his argumentation. Working class people may lack the necessary education to understand all the details and intricacies of government. However, this does not mean that they cannot make a sound judgment on the big picture:

“Though its mediocrity of intellect makes it incompetent to oversee and regulate the countless involved processes which make up the national life; it nevertheless has quite enough intellect to enact and enforce those simple principles of equity which underlie the right conduct of citizens to one another. These are such that the commonest minds can understand their chief applications. Stupid as may be the average elector, he can see the propriety of such regulations as shall prevent men from murdering and robbing;

he can understand the fitness of laws which enforce the payment of debts; he can perceive the need of measures to prevent the strong from tyrannizing the weak; and he can feel the rectitude of a judicial system that is the same for rich and poor.” (18) Therefore, he concludes: “By its origin, theory, and results, representative government is shown to be the best for securing justice between class and class, as well as between man and man.” (19)

JOHN STUART MILL ON UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE: THE NEED FOR EDUCATION

Spencer wrote these words in 1857. Four years later, in 1861, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) would publish his book “Considerations on Representative Government,” which would have a great influence on the discussion, not only in England, but also abroad. Although John Stuart Mill was a progressive liberal, he was less positive than Spencer on the consequences of universal male suffrage, writing: “The opinions and wishes of the poorest and rudest class of labourers may be very useful as one influence among others on the minds of the voters, as well on those of the Legislature; and yet it might be highly mischievous to give them the preponderant influence, by admitting them, in their present state of morals and intelligence, to the full exercise of the suffrage.” (20) Stuart Mill considered the lower classes not fit to vote, due to “their present state of morals and intelligence.” They were, according to him, morally and intellectually deficient and even not capable of understanding the “simple principles of equity” Spencer thought them able to grasp. In his *Autobiography* Mill wrote that “so long as education continues to be so wretchedly imperfect, we dreaded the ignorance and especially the selfishness and brutality of the mass ...” (21) Did this mean that for Stuart Mill universal suffrage remained a chimera and that the lower classes should forever be excluded? No, because he emphasizes that “no arrangement of the suffrage ... can be permanently satisfactory, in which any person or class is peremptorily excluded; in which the electoral privilege is not open to all persons of full age who desire to obtain it.” (22) However, for Mill this is a long-term goal. In order to reach this goal one has first to educate the ignorant class. “I regard it as wholly inadmissible,” wrote Mill, “that any person

should participate in the suffrage, without being able to read, write, and, I will add, perform the common operations of arithmetic. Justice demands, even when the suffrage does not depend on it, that the means of attaining these elementary acquirements should be within the reach of every person, either gratuitously, or at an expense not exceeding what the poorest, who can earn their own living, can afford.”(23) Mill’s remedy, therefore, is clear: “Universal teaching must precede universal enfranchisement.”(24) According to Crawford Macpherson John Stuart Mill “took the people not as they were but as he thought them capable of becoming.” (25) However, even this precondition seems not to reassure Mill completely, who emphasized, for instance, that an assembly, “which votes the taxes ... should be elected exclusively by those who pay something towards the taxes imposed.” (26) Because “those who pay no taxes, disposing by their votes of other people’s money, have every motive to be lavish, and none to economize.” (27) Giving the poor a vote on these financial matters “amounts to allowing them to put their hands into other people’s pockets.” (28) Mill’s reluctance towards the introduction of universal suffrage becomes clear also in his proposal to give more votes to persons “superior in knowledge and intelligence.” They could be entitled to a plurality of votes: two votes, or, maybe, even three. He refrains, however, from linking this proposal to property:

“I hasten, to say, that I consider it entirely inadmissible, unless as a temporary makeshift, that the superiority of influence should be conferred in consideration of property. I do not deny that property is a kind of test; education, in most countries, though anything but proportional to riches, is on the average better in the richer half of society than in the poorer. But the criterion is so imperfect; accident has so much more to do than merit with enabling men to rise in the world ...” (29)

John Stuart Mill could have added that material wealth in itself doesn’t foster the democratic spirit of the citizens, as has been observed by Otfried Höffe, who wrote: “Anyway economic improvements by themselves don’t promote democratic maturity. They can also increase only

the ability to consume and at the same time weaken the interest in the common good ... politically mature citizens don't need many material goods." (30)

DOUBTS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

John Stuart Mill is a progressive liberal, but he is a reluctant democrat. He acknowledges the legitimacy of universal suffrage, but is afraid of its unpredictable consequences. Liberals, although in favor of extending the franchise, were by no means unqualified supporters of universal suffrage. Because they were not only political liberals, but also *economic* liberals, who feared that universal suffrage could negatively impact the existing property rights and capitalist market economy. For them the central question was: "Would property be safe and government remain limited if political rights were extended to the whole population, including the propertiless masses? Few liberals thought so: somehow a line had to be drawn so that those who might threaten the property system were excluded." (31) An example is the liberal Whig Thomas Macaulay (1800-1859), who was in favor of extending suffrage in the reform of 1832, but opposed universal suffrage. According to him the poor were unfit to vote: "The poorer class of Englishmen, who are not and who cannot in the nature of things be, highly educated, to say that distress produces on them its natural effects ... that it blinds their judgment, that it inflames their passions, that it makes them prone to believe those who flatter them, and to distrust those who would serve them." (32) The real problem, according to Macaulay, was not only the common people's ignorance and manipulability, but also its *greed*. The working class could be expected to use its voting rights to plunder the rich. The results of this would be felt in the second generation when there would be a lack of accumulated capital. For this reason, according to Macaulay, "the higher and middling orders are the natural representatives of the human race. Their interest may be opposed in some things to that of their poorer contemporaries; but it is identical with that of the innumerable generations which are to follow." (33)

Given the fact that even progressive liberals had their reservations, it was clear that the fight for universal suffrage was far from being won. These doubts were also fed by events in France,

where, on March 5, 1848 - some weeks after the Revolution - universal male suffrage was introduced. This meant in fact the enfranchisement of the rural population, which in the presidential election voted massively for Napoleon's nephew Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte. The liberal bourgeoisie was outraged. The French republican politician Jules Ferry "spoke extremely bitter and contemptuous words on rural France ... depicting the farmer as a superstitious being, naïve and uncultivated, without any political comprehension, passively submissive." (34) Writers and artists also expressed their doubts, as, for instance, the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1908), who let the hero in the play "An Enemy of the People" (1882) cry out: "Who forms the majority in any country? I think we'd all have to agree that the fools are in a terrifying, overwhelming majority all over the world! But in the name of God it can't be right that the fools should rule the wise!" (35) The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was no more positive, writing, in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (1878): "The contempt, the decay, and the demise of the state ... is the consequence of the democratic concept of the state." (36) He repeated this eleven years later in *Götzendämmerung* (1889): "Democratism [sic] was always the form of decline of the organizing force: I have already characterized ... modern democracy as the form of decay of the state." (37) Nietzsche's opinion is interesting, because he was a citizen of Imperial Germany, a country, which, after its unification in 1871, had introduced universal male suffrage. (38) Nietzsche, therefore, knew the new system firsthand. However, this new German "parliamentary democracy" was a far cry from the liberal ideal. Bismarck had learned from the French experience in 1848 that universal suffrage, instead of being a danger, could rather be a support for the authorities, due to the conservative vote of the rural population. Opponents were ruthlessly repressed. In 1878 Bismarck had outlawed the SAP, the Socialist Workers Party, which was the main opposition party. Hundreds of workers' organizations were banned and thousands of activists were arrested or fled the country. Although most socialists were able to keep their parliamentary seats, due to the fact that these were not party seats, but individual mandates, their influence was restricted: the Emperor appointed the government and the parliament had only some elementary voting rights. Bismarck, who was himself responsible for the introduction of universal male suffrage in Germany, warned in his memoirs for the "social democratic follies ... the attraction of which lies

in the fact that the intelligence of the masses is so stupid and underdeveloped that - led by its own cupidity - it lets itself be fooled by the rhetoric of able and ambitious leaders. Its only counterweight is the influence of the educated class ..." (39) But Bismarck does not regret the introduction of universal male suffrage, explicitly stating: "Still today I consider universal suffrage not only in theory, but also in practice a justified principle, if only the secret ballot would be removed ..." (40) Bismarck's solution for the problem "that the intelligence of the masses is so stupid and underdeveloped" is not universal education, as was advocated by John Stuart Mill, but the abolition of the secret ballot. By abolishing the secret ballot workers would be "disciplined", making them vote more in line with "the educated" - which, in practice, would mean that the workers, knowing that their employers would be informed how they voted, would become more cautious and think twice before casting their ballot for a socialist.

Doubts, therefore, prevailed, even in those countries where the franchise had been extended, or - as in the case of Germany - where universal male suffrage had been introduced. One of the arguments against democracy was that it might be feasible in a small city-state, but not in a large country. Democracy, wrote De Maistre for instance, "is suitable only for very small nations." (41) "A great republic is impossible, since there has never been a great republic." (42) However, even as early as 1796, when he wrote this last sentence, there was a living example that a democracy was possible in a large state: the United States of America. De Maistre is not convinced: "America is often cited to us," he writes, "I know nothing so provoking as the praise showered on this babe-in-arms: let it grow." (43) For De Maistre the American experience of representative democracy is too short to be taken seriously. "In general, all democratic governments are only transitory meteors, whose brilliance excludes duration ...," (44) he writes. But the American experience with a democratic government (45) was far from a "transitory meteor." In the 19th century it became for European liberals a model to emulate. (46)

TOCQUEVILLE ON THE COMMON MAN'S JEALOUSY OF THE RULING CLASS

This was particularly true for Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), a French aristocrat and political philosopher who, in 1831, made a study tour through the United States. He published the results in two books, titled *On American Democracy*. It is interesting to read how Tocqueville describes his first impressions after his arrival:

“On my arrival in the United States I was surprised to discover how praiseworthy, in general, the citizens were, and how little this was the case for politicians. Today, in the United States remarkable men seldom occupy public office... One can cite different causes for this phenomenon ... to get an exact idea of the character of a single man ... the people never have the time ... they have to make their judgment in haste ... It is the reason that all kinds of charlatans know full well the secret of how to please, while, more often, the people's real friends don't succeed.” (47)

In the first place it strikes the reader that Tocqueville does not blame the ordinary citizen, whom he finds “praiseworthy.” It is the politicians, who attract his attention. Many of them are “charlatans,” who know “the secret of how to please.” How did they succeed in being elected? In Europe one would immediately have pointed at the intellectual deficiency of the popular electorate. But for Tocqueville it is not only a question of lack of education and time. He mentions another factor: feelings of “bitterness” and “jealousy” in the common people, because despite the official democratic ideology of equality, some are more successful than others. “In the United States,” writes Tocqueville, “the people don't hate the higher classes of society; but they feel little sympathy for them and keep them deliberately outside the power centers; they don't fear great talents, but they have little appreciation for them.” (48) This is quite an interesting observation and provides, maybe, a clue to a better understanding of modern populist movements. Because the fact that the best and the most brilliant are not elected to govern the country is not attributed here to the intellectual deficiency of the electorate, but to a quite different factor: jealousy. The popular voter can very well discern who

are the most capable, but he doesn't *want* them to rule the country. A similar observation has been made by Michael Walzer, who wrote that in the American democracy "a certain hostility to the claims of the educated classes has always been present." (49) This means that the populist temptation is an ever present latent phenomenon in American politics. But not only there. In Europe, Latin America, and the new democracies of Asia and Africa also, populist movements and upheavals have increasingly become the normal accompaniments to democratic and democratizing governments. And the "common man's "jealousy of the ruling class," observed by Tocqueville, is one of their driving forces. Not satisfied with the status quo these movements want "change" without having a clear idea what kind of change they want. According to Taguieff they are tempted by "a wild rush forward toward chaos ... revolts could sweep the European space expressing the resentment and the desire for vengeance of those people who feel abandoned, excluded and despised."(50)

Despite these criticisms universal suffrage has been introduced worldwide and one might think that today there is no one left, who dares to jeopardize the egalitarian principle of one man one vote. Is there really no one? In his book *Against Democracy*, Jason Brennan proposes to replace democracy by an "epistocracy." "When it comes to politics," he writes, "some people know a lot, most people know nothing, and many people know *less* than nothing." (51) The "know-nothings" should be prevented from voting. One solution, he writes, would be to introduce a "voter qualification exam." Such an exam, which the author compares with a driving licence, "would screen out citizens who are badly misinformed or ignorant about the election, or who lack basic scientific knowledge ... Alternatively, the test might be entirely nonideological. We might simply require potential voters to solve a number of logic and mathematics puzzles, or be able to identify 60 percent of the world's countries on a map." (52) Brennan proposes also other variants. One of these is a "plural voting system": "We might decide that everyone gets one vote at age sixteen, five more votes if they graduate high school, five more votes if they get a bachelor's degree, and five more for a graduate degree." (53) It is clear that Brennan's proposals, which undermine the fundamental equality of citizens, will bring us back to the 19th century, repeating the arguments of those who considered the poor masses too uneducated to

grant them the right to vote. Proposals to assign extra votes to the higher educated, instead of reducing populism, can be expected rather to enhance the problem, because these proposals not only undermine the principles of representative liberal democracy, but they equally ignore the societal roots of the present populist wave.

NOTES

- (1) In France as late as 1944, followed by Italy in 1946, and Greece in 1952.
- (2) Benedict de Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise*, in Benedict de Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise and A Political Treatise*, with an introduction by R. H. M. Elwes, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1951), p. 207.
- (3) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Du contrat social,” in *Œuvres Complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Tome III, (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), pp. 429-30.
- (4) Montesquieu shared Rousseau’s opinion that republics were only feasible in small territories. “It is characteristic for a republic,” he wrote in *De l’esprit des lois* (1748), “that it has only a small territory.” (Montesquieu, “De l’esprit des lois,” in Montesquieu, *Œuvres Complètes*, (Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1964), p. 575). Also Voltaire emphasized that republics could only be small: “Very few republics are to be found on earth. Men seldom deserve to govern themselves. This happiness seems to be the lot only of small nations hidden in islands, or between mountains, like rabbits who hide from the carnivorous animals; but in the end they are found and devoured.” (Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*, (London and New York: Penguin, 2004), p. 193). These authors wrote their works before the American Revolution, which would challenge this received wisdom by founding the world’s first democratic republic of continental size.
- (5) R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution – A Political History of Europe and America 1760-1800*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 119. Cf. also Jonathan I. Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment – Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750-1790*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 641-42:

"Among the most powerful and eloquent writers of his century, Rousseau re-emerged as a major rhetorical and intellectual force during the Revolution ... Rousseau, whether or not acknowledged by name, was the Revolution's most quoted, useful, and constantly fertile fund of slogans, phrases, and reform proposals of all kinds."

- (6) Cf. Israel, *op. cit.*, p. 644: "The whole principle of 'representatives' and representative democracy ... was incompatible with Rousseau and yet fundamental to the Revolution."
- (7) Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, (London: Dent, 1971), p. 90.
- (8) *Ibid.*, pp. 121-22.
- (9) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, (Helmut Reichelt, ed.), (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin and Vienna: Verlag Ullstein, 1972), Par. 279, p. 251.
- (10) Joseph de Maistre, "Les soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg," in Joseph de Maistre, *Œuvres*, (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2007), p. 705. (Emphasis in original, MHVH).
- (11) Joseph de Maistre, "Considerations on France," in Jack Lively (ed.), *The Works of Joseph de Maistre*, with a foreword by Robert Nisbet, (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 67.
- (12) Joseph de Maistre, "Study on Sovereignty," in Jack Lively (ed.), *The Works of Joseph de Maistre*, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
- (13) Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation – The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 226.
- (14) Herbert Spencer, "Representative Government – What is it Good For?" (1857) in Herbert Spencer, *The Man Versus the State, With Six Essays on Government, Society, and Freedom*, (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1981), p. 344.
- (15) *Ibid.*, p. 352.
- (16) *Ibid.*, p. 343.
- (17) *Ibid.*, p. 339.
- (18) *Ibid.*, p. 377.
- (19) *Ibid.*, p. 379. This same optimism we find in Montesquieu as regards the choice of the representative. Even if one is a complete layman in politics one can know

whether the representative one chooses is more enlightened than most others. (Cf. Montesquieu, "De l'esprit des lois," op. cit., pp. 587-88: "It was certainly a great defect in most ancient republics that the people had the right to take active measures, which had in some way to be executed, something of which they are totally incapable. The people should only participate in government by choosing the representatives, something of which they are completely capable. Because if only few people know how to assess exactly a man's capabilities, everyone is capable of knowing, in general, if the one he is choosing is more enlightened than most others.").

- (20) John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, Introduction by F. A. Hayek, (South Bend, IN: Gateway Editions, 1962), reprint of the original 1861 edition, p. 213.
- (21) John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*, with a preface by John Jacob Coss, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 162.
- (22) Ibid., p. 170.
- (23) Ibid.
- (24) Ibid., p. 171. Mill proposes a test for the voter who presents himself: "It would be easy to require from everyone who presented himself for registry, that he should, in the presence of the registrar, copy a sentence from an English book, and perform a sum in the rule of three; and to secure, by fixed rules and complete publicity, the honest application of so very simple a test. This condition, therefore, should in all cases accompany universal suffrage ..." (Ibid., p. 172). Herbert Spencer will criticize Mill's belief in popular education as a means to create a responsible electorate. "That popular education results in an extensive reading of publications which foster pleasant illusions rather than of those which insist on hard realities," he wrote, "is beyond question." (Herbert Spencer, *The Man Versus the State*, op. cit., p. 51).
- (25) C. B. Macpherson, *Democratic Theory – Essays in Retrieval*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 174. It is interesting that Tocqueville in 1835 in a letter to Stuart Mill is already expressing his agreement with the English step-by-step approach to extend the franchise. As concerns the English democrats, writes Tocqueville, "at least

their goal is the real goal which friends of democracy should choose. Their final goal seems to me letting the majority of the citizens govern and making them capable of governing. Faithful to their principles, they don't pretend to force the people to be happy in the way they judge most convenient, but they want it to be capable of discerning it, and by discerning it, to conform to it. I am myself a democrat in this sense. To bring modern societies gradually to this point seems to me the only way to save them from barbarism or slavery." (Letter to John Stuart Mill of June 13, 1835, in: Tocqueville, *Lettres choisies – Souvenirs 1814-1859*, Françoise Mélonio and Laurence Guellec (eds), (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), p. 331-32).

- (26) John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, op. cit., p. 172. Paying taxes and disposing of property was sometimes also considered as a guarantee of sufficient education. For instance, Walter Bagehot (1826-1877), saw in property a test of a citizen's fitness to vote: "Property is, indeed, a very imperfect test of intelligence, but it is some test. If it has been inherited, it guarantees education; if acquired, it guarantees ability. Either way it assures us of something." (Walter Bagehot, "Parliamentary Reform," in *The Collected Works of Walter Bagehot*, Vol. VI (London, 1974), 208-9).
- (27) John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, op. cit., p. 172.
- (28) Ibid.
- (29) Ibid., p. 178.
- (30) Otfried Höffe, *Demokratie im Zeitalter der Globalisierung*, (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1999), p. 119.
- (31) David Miller, "Democracy and Social Justice," in Pierre Birnbaum, Jack Lively, Geraint Parry (eds), *Democracy, Consensus, and Social Contract*, (London and Beverly Hills: Sage, 1978), p. 81. In fact, more than two thousand years earlier the same fear was expressed by Aristotle in his *Politics*, writing: "If the will of the numerical majority is to prevail, they will do injustice by confiscating the property of the rich minority." (Aristotle, *Politics*, with an English translation by H. Rackham (London and Cambridge, Mass.: William Heinemann Ltd and Harvard University Press, 1972), VI.I.12, p. 495).

- (32) T. B. Macaulay, *Speeches on Politics and Literature*, (London, n.d.), p. 3. Quoted in Miller, op. cit., p. 85.
- (33) T. B. Macaulay, op. cit., p. 430. Quoted in Miller, op. cit., p. 82.
- (34) Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le sacre du citoyen – Histoire du suffrage universel en France*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), p. 464.
- (35) Quoted by Albert O. Hirschman, “Reactionary Rhetoric,” in Albert O. Hirschman, *The Essential Hirschman*, Edited and with an Introduction by Jeremy Adelman, afterword by Emma Rothschild and Amartya Sen, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 299.
- (36) Friedrich Nietzsche, “Menschliches, Allzumenschliches,” in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in Drei Bänden*, Band I, (Munich: Hanser, 1977), p. 682.
- (37) Friedrich Nietzsche, “Götzendämmerung,” in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in Drei Bänden*, Band II, (Munich: Hanser, 1977), p. 1016.
- (38) Universal male suffrage was already introduced in 1867 by Bismarck, when he became chancellor of the North German Confederation (Norddeutscher Bund), the predecessor of the German Empire.
- (39) Otto Fürst von Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, 2. Band, (Stuttgart and Berlin: J. B. Cotta’sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1919), p. 67.
- (40) Ibid., p. 66.
- (41) Joseph de Maistre, “Study on Sovereignty,” in Joseph de Maistre, *The Works of Joseph de Maistre*, op. cit., p. 122.
- (42) Joseph de Maistre, “Considerations on France,” in Joseph de Maistre, *The Works of Joseph de Maistre*, op. cit., p. 66.
- (43) Ibid., p. 67.
- (44) Joseph de Maistre, “Study on Sovereignty,” in Joseph de Maistre, *The Works of Joseph de Maistre*, op. cit., p. 127.
- (45) However, we should not idealize this early American democracy, in which women and African Americans were excluded from voting.

- (46) This does not mean that the United States was a full-fledged democracy. According to Samuel Huntington, “the United States began the first wave of democratization roughly about 1828. The abolition of property qualifications in the older states and the admission of new states with universal manhood suffrage boosted to well over 50 percent the proportion of white males actually voting in the 1828 presidential election.” (Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave – Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), p. 16).
- (47) Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la Démocratie en Amérique*, Part I, (François Furet, ed.), (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1981), pp. 284-85.
- (48) *Ibid.*, p. 286.
- (49) Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin – Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*, (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1994), p. 59.
- (50) Pierre-André Taguieff, *Le nouveau national-populisme*, (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2012), p. 110.
- (51) Jason Brennan, *Against Democracy*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 24.
- (52) *Ibid.*, p. 212.
- (53) *Ibid.*, p. 213.

The Cicero Foundation

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Hondertmarck 45D

6211 MB MAASTRICHT

The Netherlands

Tel. +31 43 32 60 828

Tel. +33 1 41 29 09 30

Fax: +33 1 41 29 09 31

Email: info@cicerofoundation.org

Website: www.cicerofoundation.org

Registration No. Chamber of Commerce Maastricht 41078444