

INTERPRETATION

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PROGRESSIVISM AND POLITICAL SCIENCE:
THE CASE OF CHARLES E. MERRIAM

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I

An analysis of the state of political science in the United States and the route by which it was attained must include a discussion of the thought of Charles E. Merriam, for Merriam and his students helped significantly in the creation of the intellectual climate in which the behavioral revolution found success.¹ To some extent Merriam's views merely reflected the views of his time, but they also had a formative effect on behavioralism. Other factors contributed to the success of the behavioral revolution—dissatisfaction with what many felt to be the aridity of the historical, legal, and institutional analysis which formerly had predominated in the profession; the example of more scientifically oriented social sciences; developments in statistics and mathematics which invited application by political scientists; and the availability in logical empiricism of what Merriam himself lacked, a sophisticated philosophy of science. But behavioralism needed an ethos in order to succeed to the extent it did, and Merriam provided an influential formulation of this ethos. One or two others made some of the same points at the same time; but nobody else made so extensive a charge to the profession, in quite the same tone, as he. Today many behavioral political scientists lack the Merriam ethos. Moreover, a case can be made that both students and society suffer from the profession's failure to raise questions lying outside the sphere of behavioralism. But before the political-science community can raise other questions, it needs an understanding of how it arrived where it is, and in such an understanding Merriam's thought must be emphasized.

Until recently many political scientists shared Merriam's optimism about science and about democracy. They often failed to question the belief in the utility of science. But Merriam questioned and defended it. Today, when there is a growing awareness that some social problems can neither be understood nor dealt with by science, and that science may in some respects be counterproductive to the solution of these problems, Merriam's defense of science needs to be examined. Merriam believed that the utility of science lay partially in its benefits to democracy; for this reason, but also because similar assumptions underlay his faith in both science and democracy, his defense of democracy should also be studied. His assumptions were marked by an optimism that was related to his political progressivism;

indeed, his views on science and democracy can be called “progressive.” To understand Merriam’s views we must first understand the nature of progressivism.

II

Eric Voegelin has argued that progressivism is a gnostic ideology, and a word of explanation about gnosticism is in order. The term comes from the Greek *gnosis*, which means knowledge, and was originally applied by historians and philosophers of religion to an intellectual movement of late antiquity which infiltrated early Christianity, where it came to be considered heresy. Gnosticism denied the eschatology of orthodox Christianity, which sees the fulfillment of human existence in the resurrection of the dead and eternal life; instead, in its more radical forms it saw fulfillment in the release from the evils of the world, through mystical knowledge, of a divine element inherent in man, permitting it to attain a union with the divine being whence it was supposed originally to have come. Gnosticism saw the Christian eschaton as “immanentized”: the benefit of salvation was to be attained in the present world; and it was to be attained as a result of human knowledge, not of God’s free gift to the faithful.²

In the middle ages two developments occurred, both involving the redirection of the eschatological hope of orthodox Christianity toward the present world. The first was Joachim of Flores’ historicist categorization of world history into three realms—a pre-Christian realm of the Father, a present realm of the Son, and a soon-to-be-attained realm of the Holy Spirit, in which monkish contemplation and praise would replace priestly learning and discipline.³ Though Voegelin describes the Joachimite heresy as gnostic, Hans Urs von Balthasar describes it as chiliastic. Von Balthasar, on whom (along with Karl Löwith⁴) Voegelin may have relied for assistance in understanding the significance of Joachim’s thought, distinguishes Joachimite heresy from a medieval heresy which did not entail a philosophy of history, and which thought of human deliverance in ancient-gnostic fashion.⁵ This, von Balthasar terms gnostic. But in both instances formulae for immanent fulfillment were announced, and Voegelin seems to have been justified in describing the Joachimite heresy and subsequent historicist, immanentist movements as gnostic. In their modern, political form—now usually secular as well—these movements foresee and aim at the creation of a condition of moral perfection on earth.

Voegelin says that in trying to bring about moral perfection the movements seek to recreate human nature; the participants in them are thus engaged in sinful rebellion. Their sin is rooted in the anxiety which comes

from uncertainty about the impending course of history. Similarly, Reinhold Niebuhr, while not using the term *gnostic* to designate morally perfectionist political movements, sees them as both denying human sinfulness and committing the sin of pride through the attempt to do what human beings cannot do—to remake man.

There can be little doubt that progressivism was a gnostic movement in Voegelin's sense of the term. The fact becomes clear on a reading of Voegelin's list of six characteristics of the gnostic attitude:

1. It must first be pointed out that the gnostic is dissatisfied with his situation. This, in itself, is not especially surprising. We all have cause to be not completely satisfied with one aspect or another of the situation in which we find ourselves.

2. Not quite so understandable is the second aspect of the gnostic attitude: the belief that the drawbacks of the situation can be attributed to the fact that the world is intrinsically poorly organized. For it is likewise possible to assume that the order of being as it is given to us men (wherever its origin is to be sought) is good and that it is we human being who are inadequate. But gnostics are not inclined to discover that human beings in general and they themselves in particular are inadequate. If in a given situation something is not as it should be, then the fault is to be found in the wickedness of the world.

3. The third characteristic is the belief that salvation from the evil of the world is possible.

4. From this follows the belief that the order of being will have to be changed in an historical process. From a wretched world a good one must evolve historically. This assumption is not altogether self-evident, because the Christian solution might also be considered—namely, that the world throughout history will remain as it is and that man's salvational fulfillment is brought about through grace in death.

5. With this fifth point we come to the gnostic trait in the narrower sense—the belief that a change in the order of being lies in the realm of human action, that this salvational act is possible through man's own effort.

6. If it is possible, however, so to work a structural change in the given order of being that we can be satisfied with it as a perfect one, then it becomes the task of the gnostic to seek out the prescription for such a change. Knowledge—gnosis—of the method of altering being is the central concern of the gnostic. As the sixth feature of the gnostic attitude, therefore, we recognize the construction of a formula for self and world salvation, as well as the gnostic's readiness to come forward as a prophet who will proclaim his knowledge about the salvation of mankind.⁶

As for progressivism as manifested in America, it had two major political aims: to remove political power from the wealthy and powerful and place it in the hands of the people, and to eliminate dishonesty, favoritism, and inefficiency in government. Politics was to be popularized and purified.

More broadly speaking, Richard Hofstadter has described American progressivism as:

a rather widespread . . . effort of the greater part of society [after 1900] to achieve some not very clearly specified self-reformation. Its general theme was the effort to restore a type of economic individualism and political democracy that was widely believed to have existed earlier in America and to have been destroyed by the great corporation and the corrupt political machine and with that restoration to bring back a kind of morality and civic purity that was also believed to have been lost.⁷

It has been denied that American progressivism sought a state of perfection, on the grounds that it focused on specific practical reforms. But according to Voegelin there is a type of gnosticism in which the emphasis lies on movement toward a goal rather than on the precise nature of the state of perfection to be attained.⁸ One writer who denied the perfectionist character of progressivism said nonetheless that it wanted government to do everything it could “to make our country better, nobler, purer, and life more worth living.”⁹

It remains to inquire into the factors that gave rise to progressivism in America. Immanentist political ideologies of the secular kind had, of course, been a fact of Western life since the Enlightenment. In America, progressivism was strongest in the Middle West, and especially in those parts of it where the rather easy standards of 18th-century Anglo-American political morality had not taken firm cultural root, and where severe exploitation of natural resources by the wealthy and powerful had created a strong impetus toward reform. But progressivism was not a uniquely Middle Western phenomenon; and it occurred in both state and national politics. That it occurred throughout the land was due to the fact that it had roots in notions of historical destiny and moral perfection which had long been part of American culture. Early New England Calvinists, drawing on Old Testament symbolism, conceived of themselves as God’s chosen people, whose success in earthly enterprises depended on their keeping their covenant with Him; and a Jeffersonian poet drew on the New Testament in conceiving of America as “a new Jerusalem sent down from heaven.” In the 19th century this latter, or “millennialist,” strain of thought on the national destiny gained the ascendancy in American culture.¹⁰ Progressive moral perfectionism also derived from the fact that, as late as the 1920s and 1930s, the culturally formative Protestant denominations were all Calvinist in origin; and Calvinism, for all that it once shared the Lutheran stress on sin and the Lutheran conception of grace, had also emphasized a striving toward moral perfection. Calvin himself strongly encouraged the pursuit of godliness, a theme underscored in the New England Puritanism which ulti-

mately infused in varying degrees all American Protestantism.¹¹

III

Before proceeding to a discussion of Merriam's views on science and democracy, we should notice two facts about his life and thought. First, he was the son of Presbyterian parents, but was unable to accept their orthodoxy; he retained, however, much of the Presbyterian moral fervor, and as a Middle Westerner of small-town, Calvinist background, found progressivism an attractive political ideology. Second, there appear to have been no basic changes in his thought during the period in which the views to be considered here found expression. To be sure, he was disillusioned by the partial failure of early efforts by himself and others at municipal reform in America: in Chicago machine politics continued to exist, taking over the administrative agencies created by the reformers, and leading Merriam to see education in good citizenship as a key to political progress.¹² But by the early 1920s a view of political science which he apparently held for the rest of his life emerged in his thought; and he always believed in the desirability and viability of democracy, finally giving systematic expression to his views in the later 1930s, when democracy experienced a major challenge from dictatorship. Thus two books to be analyzed here can be considered representative of his mature thought—*New Aspects of Politics* (1925),¹³ his systematic plea for what would today be called a behavioral, though value-oriented, political science; and *The New Democracy and the New Despotism* (1939),¹⁴ his systematic defense of democracy. Though the focus will be on these two works, others will also be cited when they are relevant.

New Aspects of Politics is a plea for (1) greater care and organization in the collection of political data and (2) the incorporation of the methods and insights of the other social sciences, psychology, biology (especially eugenics), statistics, and engineering in analyzing the data and applying the findings. The result would be a "new politics" by which Merriam meant a new political science, one both scientifically oriented and concerned to apply its findings to the solution of practical problems. In his language:

[P]olitics would be new in that it utilized the new developments in modern science, social and physical—of psychology, of statistics, of biology, of ethnology, of geography, of engineering, and of other types of studies that may throw light upon the inner problems of political co-operation and control. The new politics would be a synthesis of significant factors in modern mental life, applied to the problems of government, released from traditional or authoritar-

ian conditions or precedents for the purpose of scientific experiment and the destination of the inner secrets of the political process.¹⁵

Merriam was duly appreciative of the governmental-research bureaus already established in an earlier phase of progressive reform. Now he argued for the mobilization of the resources of universities, government, and such endowments as might be drawn on, for a more basic and systematic analysis of political behaviour than had hitherto been attempted. His argument was in basically three parts, reflecting (1) a desire to produce better citizens through education, (2) a wish to provide governmental officials with data and advice in their attempt to deal with the problems of modern society, and (3) a belief in the ineluctable advance of science. Each part of the argument will be dealt with in turn.

In a paper published as early as 1921, Merriam wrote:

We have studied the urban problem in terms of "good" and "bad" government, of boss rule and reform, of innumerable mechanisms and contrivances ingeniously devised, but is it not possible to go more deeply into the basis of the city, scrutinize more accurately the social and political process of which the political is an integral part? Are the forces producing municipal misrule inherently recalcitrant and insuperably unruly, or do we not fully understand the political reactions in the given environment, and how they may best be educated and constructively adapted to new modes of life under the forms of the coöperative enterprise of democracy?¹⁶

It was unclear whether Merriam believed that educational reform should simply focus on citizens in general or should look toward training prospective leaders as well,¹⁷ but it was clear that better education was in order, and that political science could help define its content. In 1922 he elaborated on the contribution which the profession could make to civic education when he suggested that it inquire into the processes whereby political attitudes are acquired and can be modified; he also proposed an inquiry into the ways of reducing nonvoting.¹⁸ He was himself the coauthor of a study published in 1924 on the origins and extent of nonvoting in Chicago; despite its underlying value commitment—to getting out the vote—the study tried to be scientifically objective and to offer practical advice on those who would either increase or decrease voter turnout.¹⁹ Again in *New Aspects of Politics* Merriam argued the utility of political science to civic education;²⁰ but he also said that the profession should "use the mechanisms of [both] education and eugenics for political and social organization and control,"²¹ and that "with a genuine knowledge of political and social psychology, it will be possible to create customs in much shorter time than formerly."²² Here, while still dealing with education, Merriam entered the

area of public policy, fusing two reasons for the “new politics”—service to education and advice to the government—and creating an unpleasant specter which in his most realistic assessments of the human condition he tended to discount in the light of the possible advantages and inevitable advance of science.²³

“It is not important or desirable that the political scientists should govern the world,” Merriam said, “but it is fundamental that they be heard before decisions are made on broad issues, and that the scientific spirit be found in the governors and the governed as well.” The result would be the raising of “the level upon which political judgments are formed.”²⁴ In this language Merriam spoke, in *New Aspects of Politics*, of the role of the profession as adviser to government. His argument in terms of the inescapable advance of science was less clear. He said that, because science was advancing in other areas, the science of political behavior ought to proceed as well.²⁵ But it was unclear why it should proceed, unless the reason be to use the findings of political science to keep government from falling into the hands of those who would use other scientific knowledge for less than benign purposes. How else is one to interpret a passage like this:

The jungle will seize and use the laboratory, as in the last great war, when the propagandist conscripted the physicist; or the laboratory will master the jungle of human nature and turn its vast, teeming fertility to the higher uses of mankind.²⁶

On the other hand, one gets the impression at times that Merriam believed the development of a science of political behavior to be as inevitable as other scientific advances, and that, for him, this fact was sufficient reason why the American political scientists to whom he proffered advice should take part in the process.²⁷

Some of what Merriam has been quoted as saying may strike the reader as pragmatic common sense, some as naïve. The gnostic nature of his plea for a scientific political science becomes clear, however, when we analyze his underlying assumptions, his beliefs about the final results of the “new politics.” These assumptions are clearly conveyed by a passage from *New Aspects of Politics*:

If we knew more about the scientific adjustment of the political relations of mankind, men might live a happier and richer life than when chance and ignorance determined their lot. May not justice and liberty and law have a basis in reason as well as in force, superstition, or formula? Wrong, injustice, tyranny have flourished most rankly when and where the light could not penetrate, in the darker shades of deception, illusion, ignorance, and sham. The dreams of

men that they might be free, that they might be recognized as parts of the great political process, the common hopes of security, fairness, justice, recognition will not be less fully realized when truth is known than when its face is veiled. To mitigate the horrors of war, to avoid the destructiveness of revolution, to minimize the losses from costly group conflicts, to utilize the vast reserve of human co-operation and social constructiveness—this is not a task of soulless regimentation, but of inspiring release of human faculties, of elevation of mankind to higher levels of attainment and of well-being.²⁸

In *Civic Education in the United States*, published in 1934, the vision became more resplendent. Merriam wrote that, if “the devices of social invention” keep pace with man’s control of nature, “the new world may be a fairyland of human achievement.” Hunger, disease, toil, and fear may disappear, “the book of leisure may be opened, and treasures of human appreciation and enjoyment may be made available to the mass of mankind.” Moreover, applied social science will conquer the “jungles” of “the inner life of the personality, so long filled with vile broods of haunting fears and doubts and dreads,” and “open them to the sunlight of happiness.” In short, “science will bring life and light and healing on its wings.”²⁹ Merriam used much of the same language in *The New Democracy and the New Despotism*, where he also wrote: “the continuance of our ancient burdens can be avoided if the faculty of social and political contrivance is utilized as it might be by a generation prepared for entering into the kingdom.”³⁰

In *Systematic Politics*, published in 1945, Merriam described the “pet theme” of *Civic Education in the United States* in this way:

Wide ranges of trouble may be avoided with sounder systems of early training, preventing the growth of the large numbers of twisted and unhappy souls from whom are recruited the armies of crime, low and high, and of disorder and demagoguery, chicanery and chauvinism, low-level susceptibility to appeals of folly and hate.³¹

In the same volume Merriam said that “force, fraud, spoils, and corruption are passing phases of the growth of social and political organization and cannot live in the new day.”³² Similarly, “the prevention of war and unemployment, the greatest scourges of our time, is well within the known techniques of expert intelligence. . . .”³³ The belief in the conscious control of human evolution “opened the way to a new heaven and a new earth.”³⁴

On the possibility of changing human nature, Merriam appeared on the surface to be inconsistent. While asserting that “human nature may not change or may change only slowly,”³⁵ he nonetheless suggested that the forces of human nature could be harnessed in such a way as, in effect, to create new men. This latter suggestion is clearly made in *Civic Education*

in the United States. After raising the question whether human nature is changeable, Merriam answered:

Our educational system and our research activities are the vast symbol of [the] emerging power of man over nature, both human and non-human; of conscious creation of an environment instead of passive acceptance and adaptation; of the day when slaves become masters of their own destiny.³⁶

Moreover, in *The New Democracy and the New Despotism* Merriam appeared to assume a trend toward “the perfectibility of mankind.”³⁷ In any event, so radical an eradication of evil as he continually counseled and foretold would be tantamount to the changing of human nature. At least it would be so from the standpoint of those who recognize the reality and persistence, either of sin itself, or of its empirical manifestations.

The foregoing is not intended to deny that there are elements of realism in Merriam’s work. At times, especially during the 1930s, Merriam demonstrated an acute awareness of the dangers produced by modernity. But the answer was always more modernity—more science and more control—and the hope that it would be put to benign uses.³⁸ He insisted that his faith in science had to be instilled in the masses.³⁹ Perhaps, indeed, “the power system of science, of politics, of economics” may be infused with religious impulses and religious symbolism, with the result that “a new synthesis of authority” emerges and rises “to greater heights than ever before in the story of the race.”⁴⁰

Some of the gnostic assumptions on which Merriam based his argument for a new political science can also be found in his defense of democracy in *The New Democracy and the New Despotism*. This defense is in terms of five explicit “assumptions of democracy” whose status is somewhat unclear. It is probable, however, (1) that Merriam himself believed the assumptions; (2) that he believed that the goals contained in them were more easily realizable and more likely to be pursued in democracies, at least in stable democracies, than in other types of political system; and (3) that he believed the “validation” of the assumptions possible, both through philosophical and scientific analysis and through progress in attainment of the goals.⁴¹ For the most part the concern here will not be with the epistemological problems raised by Merriam’s analysis. The procedure will be to list the five assumptions, to point out the overlap with the assumptions underlying Merriam’s plea for a behavioral political science, and to make several other observations about his defense of democracy.

First, democracy assumes “the essential dignity of all men and the importance of protecting and cultivating personality primarily on a fraternal rather than on a differential basis.”⁴² The second assumption of democracy

is "that there is a constant trend in human affairs toward the perfectibility of mankind."⁴³ Democracy assumes, further, that economic gains "should be diffused through the mass by whom they were created as rapidly as possible";⁴⁴ that regularized popular control over basic matters of public policy is desirable;⁴⁵ and that "conscious social change, accomplished normally by consent rather than violence," is possible.⁴⁶

In elaborating on these assumptions, Merriam made some of the points examined—in the same or slightly different form—in the discussion of the assumptions underlying his plea for a scientific political science. Phrases already quoted will not be repeated here. It will suffice to note two more sets of assertions. Democracy aims at "the leveling up of the standards of human living to a point far beyond any thus far attained even by the aristocrats themselves," at "an era of plenty," and at "fulfillment on the widest possible scale of human aspirations and potentialities";⁴⁷ the adoption of humane, preventive, and therapeutic measures to deal with crime means that, in the last hundred years or so, "enormous progress has been made in the intelligent application of social policy to individual deviation from it," although "there is still a long way to go in this direction before the goal is reached."⁴⁸

Several other observations ought to be made about Merriam's defense of democracy, on which, it will be recalled, his defense of science rests in part. The evocation of human dignity in the first assumption has appeal, though it would be more attractive if Merriam had sought to explain the source of human dignity—something he could not do without recourse to theology, an area which he refused to enter except for its historical interest. Nonetheless, in discussing the assumption of human dignity he made what was perhaps the strongest point in his case for democracy. He said what other contemporary thinkers have also said: that the alternative to democracy is rule by an elite, that difficulties arise in establishing criteria for an elite that is to remain an elite in any sense other than that of sheer possession of power, and that elites are perfectly capable of putting self-interest above the general interest, especially when they are not subjected to the kinds of restraints put on rulers in democracies.⁴⁹

Growing out of his valid criticism of elite rule was a weakness in Merriam's thought which is germane to the conclusion of this study. Merriam failed to deal adequately with the question of where democracies were to get their leaders. He said, to be sure, that "truly great natures are likely to find a response in the mass of mankind."⁵⁰ This statement contains much truth as far as it goes. But it will not do to assume that "great natures" will emerge regardless of the social and spiritual conditions under which men are educated. Merriam did not completely miss the point, for he knew that Plato had addressed himself to it, although not within a theory of democ-

racy. But Merriam dismissed Plato's analysis with the comment that it "is disregarded almost as if it did not exist."⁵¹

IV

One can argue that the last generation produced major contributions to Western political theory. The contributions were great for the same reason the theology of the last generation was great: the authors had to come to terms with the immense spiritual and political disorder of the 20th century. In so doing they produced theories which do not suffer from the illusions about human perfectibility and historical progress which characterize much modern political thought. No culture can continually sustain contributions of this magnitude. But a culture can recognize contributions for what they are and learn from them.

The point is germane in the light of the lessons of the foregoing study. If Merriam's social and political theory tended to be unrealistic, theories were produced at about the same time which do not suffer from this deficiency. If Merriam's thought was gnostic, a literature on gnosticism is available to prevent others from making the same mistakes. If Merriam's expectations of behavioralism proved to be wishful thinking, the profession might consider new areas of emphasis in teaching and research. If it is agreed, in the light of what we read daily, that training for citizenship and leadership ought to be a professional concern, but that Merriam's views on civic education are unsatisfactory, we might consider the alternative of university instruction in Voegelin's and Leo Strauss' diagnoses of modern problems, in classical and medieval political philosophy, and in the great works, both Thomist and Protestant, of contemporary Christian democratic theory. Strauss said of behavioral political science that its lack of knowledge that Rome is burning and that it is fiddling kept it from being Neronian.⁵² Today the illusions on which it is based are so transparent, the smoke and flames so manifest, as to detract measurably from the validity of that excuse.

¹ A helpful biography is Barry D. Karl, *Charles E. Merriam and the Study of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). A list of Merriam's writings is contained in Leonard D. White (ed.), *The Future of Government in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), pp. 269-74.

The present study parallels in certain respects the perceptive analysis of Merriam's thought by Bernard Crick in his *The American Science of Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), pp. 133-55. Crick, however, did not interpret Merriam's thought in terms of Eric Voegelin's concept of gnosticism, and in offering

such an interpretation the present study tries to show where Merriam—and American political science—ultimately went wrong, with the result that today, instead of helping to alleviate the problems that most concerned Merriam, the profession, by following his advice, may on balance be making them worse. In the light of the present study, Merriam's ends appear no less fanciful and his means no less ill suited to even a realistic version of his ends; but both the ends and the means are more comprehensible than they otherwise would be.

For a more general discussion of the current problems traceable to gnosticism and of the form which a solution to those problems might take, the reader may be referred to Glenn N. Schram, "Eric Voegelin, the Christian Faith, and the American University," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, 16, No. 2 (Spring 1977), 130-35. Reservations about Voegelin's ambiguity on the Christian doctrine of the Atonement and on the value of democracy are expressed in the article just cited and in Glenn N. Schram, "Reinhold Niebuhr and Contemporary Political Thought: A Review Article," *Interpretation*, 6, No. 1 (Fall 1976), 65-77.

The attitude toward American progressivism expressed in the present article is more critical than Voegelin's in his 1928 book, *Ueber die Form des amerikanischen Geistes* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr). The latter book was written before Voegelin adopted his present and, as it seems to the present writer, his more valid philosophical position.

² Hans Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*, Part I: *Die mythologische Gnosis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1934), pp. 4-5; Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), pp. 34-47; and Eric Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1968), pp. 3-12. See Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), Part II, pp. 91-92, on the differences between *gnosis* and Christianity.

³ Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 108-10; Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 145-59; Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 110-13; and Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pp. 92-99.

⁴ See Löwith, *Meaning in History*, pp. 145-59 and 208-13. It should be noted that Voegelin had already assigned considerable importance to Joachim's thought in his *Die politischen Religionen* (Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer Verlag, 1939), pp. 39-42.

⁵ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Prometheus* (Heidelberg: F. H. Kerle Verlag, 1947), pp. 24-26.

⁶ Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pp. 86-88.

⁷ Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 5.

⁸ Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pp. 89-90.

⁹ Quoted in Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., *Progressivism in America* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1974), p. 14.

¹⁰ On 19th-century American "millennialism," see Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 52-90.

¹¹ Cf. on many of these points Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 1-60, and Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), pp. 7-64.

¹² See Karl, *Charles E. Merriam and the Study of Politics*, pp. 80-83 and 105. Karl gives a valuable account of Merriam's early life and involvement in progressive politics prior to World War I.

¹³ Charles E. Merriam, *New Aspects of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925).

¹⁴ Charles E. Merriam, *The New Democracy and the New Despotism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939).

¹⁵ Merriam, *New Aspects of Politics*, pp. 230-31.

¹⁶ Charles E. Merriam, "The Present State of the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review*, XV, No. 2 (May 1921), 182.

¹⁷ However little Merriam may have said about training for leadership, the qualities of leaders were a recurrent concern of his. The problem with his work on the subject was his general failure, also characteristic of his work in the 1930s on civic education, to appreciate the importance of religion. Just as he failed to ask whether, in a democracy, civic virtue can long be sustained without religion, so also one misses in Merriam a sense of the extent to which major leaders of democratic societies have owed their success to an ability (1) to view themselves and their countries in the perspective of a relationship to transcendent reality, and (2) to communicate this perception to their peoples.

¹⁸ Charles E. Merriam, "Political Research," *American Political Science Review*, XVI, No. 2 (May 1922), 319-20.

¹⁹ Charles E. Merriam and Harold F. Gosnell, *Non-Voting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924).

²⁰ Merriam, *New Aspects of Politics*, p. 239.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 242.

²³ Charles E. Merriam, *The Making of Citizens* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), pp. 333-34.

²⁴ Merriam, *New Aspects of Politics*, p. 232.

²⁵ See Charles E. Merriam, "The Significance of Psychology for the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review*, XVIII, No. 3 (August 1924), 488.

²⁶ Merriam, *New Aspects of Politics*, p. 247. See also *ibid.*, pp. 238-39.

²⁷ Cf. Merriam, *The Making of Citizens*, pp. 333-34.

²⁸ Merriam, *New Aspects of Politics*, pp. 235-36.

²⁹ Charles E. Merriam, *Civic Education in the United States* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 184.

³⁰ Merriam, *The New Democracy and the New Despotism*, pp. 95-96.

³¹ Charles E. Merriam, *Systematic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), p. 329.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 331.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 331-32.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

³⁵ Charles E. Merriam, "Recent Advances in Political Methods," *American Political Science Review*, XVII, No. 2 (May 1923), 294.

³⁶ Merriam, *Civic Education in the United States*, pp. 185-86.

³⁷ Merriam, *The New Democracy and the New Despotism*, p. 34.

³⁸ See Merriam, *Systematic Politics*, pp. 67 and 331-32, and, especially, Charles E. Merriam, "Political Power," in Harold D. Lasswell *et al.*, *A Study of Power* (Glen-coe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1950), pp. 325-26, and Charles E. Merriam, *The Role of Politics in Social Change* (New York: New York University Press, 1936), pp. 77 and 141-43.

³⁹ Merriam, *The New Democracy and the New Despotism*, pp. 93-94, and Charles E. Merriam, *Prologue to Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), pp. 52-53.

⁴⁰ Merriam, "Political Power," p. 317.

⁴¹ See especially Merriam, *The New Democracy and the New Despotism*, pp. 45-49.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-86.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-34 and 91-92.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33. Also see Charles E. Merriam, *The Written Constitution and the Unwritten Attitude* (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), pp. 56-57: "If . . . [the] new urban groups really prove to be constitutionally incapable of self-government, America also will be incapable of self-government. . . . [unless] we suppose that political leadership is evolved from something else than the social, economic, and cultural material of which our society is made up. . . ."

Merriam thought in terms of two pure forms of government—democracy and rule by an elite. Probably because of the extent to which his views were influenced by his American background, he did not consider the possibility of an aristocratic stratum from which the people elect their rulers under a mixed constitution. Recalling the Whig constitution in Great Britain, Joseph A. Schumpeter was later to espouse a system of this kind in his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 290-91.

Establishing criteria for membership in an aristocratic stratum to be combined with democracy presents problems similar to those described by Merriam as inhering in the definition of criteria for the elite in a pure system of elite rule. Two differences between the two kinds of system, however, ought to be mentioned: when an aristocratic stratum is combined with democracy, (1) the people do not have to elect wastrels from within the stratum, and (2) the rulers can be voted out of office if they misuse their power and consequently are subject to checks similar to those on the rulers in a pure democracy.

⁵² Leo Strauss, "An Epilogue," in Herbert J. Storing (ed.), *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), p. 327.