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A Selection of Readings

COMPILED BY THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

(Pursuant to S. Res. 258, 92d Cong.)

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE

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FOREWORD

As part of our continuing study of the national policy process, we thought it would be useful to assemble a short anthology on the use and abuse of councils and committees.

The materials we have drawn on range in time from 850 B.C. to the present day, and in form from fables and parables to letters, historical episodes, and essays. In the variety of their modes and moods, these selections enlighten and entertain. Hopefully this approach will demonstrate the truth of Mr. Justice Holmes' aphorism: to be weighty one need not be heavy.

The selections, made by the subcommittee staff, are arranged in approximate historical order.

HENRY M. JACKSON,
Chairman, Subcommittee on National Security and International Operations.

MAY 22, 1972.

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[From *The Iliad of Homer* (Butler Translation), Great Books Series, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.]

THE HEAVENLY CHAIRMAN

By Homer

(c. 850 B.C.)

Now when Morning, clad in her robe of saffron, had begun to suffuse light over the earth, Jove called the gods in council on the topmost crest of serrated Olympus. Then he spoke and all the other gods gave ear. "Hear me," said he, "gods and goddesses, that I may speak even as I am minded. Let none of you neither goddess nor god try to cross me, but obey me every one of you that I may bring this matter to an end. If I see any one acting apart and helping either Trojans or Danaans, he shall be beaten inordinately ere he come back again to Olympus; or I will hurl him down into dark Tartarus far into the deepest pit under the earth, where the gates are iron and the floor bronze, as far beneath Hades as heaven is high above the earth, that you may learn how much the mightiest I am among you. Try me and find out for yourselves. Hang me a golden chain from heaven, and lay hold of it all of you, gods and goddesses together—tug as you will, you will not drag Jove the supreme counsellor from heaven to earth; but were I to pull at it myself I should draw you up with earth and sea into the bargain, then would I bind the chain about some pinnacle of Olympus and leave you all dangling in the mid firmament. So far am I above all others either of gods or men."

They were frightened and all of them held their peace, for he had spoken masterfully; but at last Minerva answered, "Father, son of Saturn, king of kings, we all know that your might is not to be gainsaid, but we are also sorry for the Danaan warriors, who are perishing and coming to a bad end. We will, however, since you so bid us, refrain from actual fighting, but we will make serviceable suggestions to the Argives that they may not all of them perish in your displeasure."

Jove smiled at her and answered, "Take heart, my child, Trito-born; I am not really in earnest, and I wish to be kind to you."

[From *Exodus*, The Holy Bible (Moffatt Translation)]

THE MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

(c. 1000–700 B.C.)

Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for his people Israel (for the Eternal had brought Israel out of Egypt). Jethro, the father-in-law

of Moses, came into the desert then, with the sons and the wife of Moses, to where Moses was camped, at the hill of God.

Next day, as Moses was holding a popular court, with the people surrounding him from morning to night, the father-in-law of Moses noticed all his labour for the people, and said to him, "What is this you are doing? Why sit alone as a judge, with the people all round you from morning to night?" Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to get God's own decision in their cases; whenever they have any disputes, they come to me, I decide between one man and another, and let them hear the rules and directions of God." The father-in-law of Moses said to him, "You are not doing right. You will wear yourself out, you and your people; this work is too heavy for you, and you cannot manage it alone. Now listen to me, let me advise you, that God may be with you; do you represent God to the people, laying their cases before God, and instructing them in his rules and directions, letting them see how they are to live and what they are to do; but look out some capable men among the people, religious men, honest men, who scorn unjust profits, and appoint them to supervise groups of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens; let them act as judges in ordinary cases; they can refer any special case to you, and judge lesser matters by themselves. That will make things easier for you, as they share the work with you. If you do this, supposing that God so orders you, then you can stand the strain, and all the people will go home satisfied."

Moses listened to what his father-in-law said, and did exactly as he told him; he chose capable men out of all Israel, and put them at the head of the people, over groups of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens; they acted as judges in ordinary cases, deciding lesser matters by themselves, and referring difficult cases to Moses. Then Moses let his father-in-law go; he betook himself to his own country.

[From *2 Kings*, The Holy Bible (Moffatt Translation)]

A COUNCIL OF WAR

(c. 1000–700 B.C.)

In the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned for twelve years. He did what was evil in the sight of the Eternal, though not like his father and his mother, for he removed the obelisk of Baal which his father had made....

Mesha king of Moab was a sheep-master; he used to pay tribute to the king of Israel, the fleeces of a hundred thousand sheep and a hundred thousand rams. But after Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. Then king Jehoram left Samaria to muster all Israel; he also sent this message to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah: "The king of Moab has rebelled against me; will you join me in making war upon Moab?" "I will," he answered; "I am one with you, my people are one with your people, my horses with your horses." He added, "And how are we to march?" "By the desert of Edom," said Jehoram. So the king of Israel started, with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, marching for seven days along a roundabout route,

till the army and its train of beasts had no water. "Alas!" said the king of Israel, "here has the Eternal gathered three kings, only to put them into the hands of Moab!"

Jehoshaphat said, "Is there no prophet of the Eternal here, by whom we may consult the Eternal?" An officer of the king of Israel replied, "Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who used to be servant to Elijah." Said Jehoshaphat, "The word of the Eternal is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went to him. Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What have you to do with me? Away to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother!" The king of Israel protested, "No, it is the Eternal who has gathered us three kings, only to put us into the hands of Moab." "As surely as the Eternal lives, whom I serve," said Elisha, "were it not that I have some respect for Jehoshaphat the king of Judah here, I would not look your way, I would never notice you. However, bring me a minstrel" (for, whenever a minstrel played, he would fall into a trance from the Eternal). Then he uttered this word from the Eternal: "I will make this dry ravine pool after pool of water. For, the Eternal declares, though you see neither wind nor rain, this dry ravine shall be so full of water that you and your armies and your beasts shall all drink. So little is this to the Eternal, that he will also put the Moabites into your power; you shall storm every fortified town and fell every fruitful tree and stop every fountain and spoil every good field with stones."

Next morning, about the hour for the morning sacrifice, water did come from the direction of Edom, till the country was full of water. Now, on hearing that the kings had marched to attack them, all the Moabites had been mustered, all at and above the age of bearing arms; they were posted on the frontier. When they rose in the morning, the sun was shining on the water, and, seeing the water in front of them as red as blood, the Moabites said, "This is blood! The kings must have been fighting among themselves, they have killed one another! Now then, Moab to the spoil!"

But when they reached the camp of Israel, the Israelites started an attack, till the Moabites fled before them; they pressed forward, cutting down the Moabites as they went; they demolished the towns, every man threw a stone on every good field till it was covered, they stopped every fountain, and they felled every fruitful tree, harrying Moab till no Moabites were left except in Kir-hareseth, which the slingers surrounded and laid low.

[From *Aesop's Fables*, Grosset & Dunlap, Inc., 1947]

THE LIONESS

By Aesop

(c. 620–560 B.C.)

A great rivalry existed among the beasts of the forest over which could produce the largest litter. Some shamefacedly admitted having only two, while others boasted proudly of having a dozen.

At last the committee called upon the lioness.

"And to how many cubs do you give birth?" they asked the proud lioness.

"One," she replied sternly, "but that one is a lion!"

Application: QUALITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN QUANTITY.

[From "Oration to Nicocles" in *Isocrates*, translated by George Norlin, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1928]

PRECEPTS FOR PRINCES

By Isocrates

(c. 436–338 B.C.)

Now as to each particular course of action, it is the business of those who are at the time associated with a king to advise him how he may handle it in the best way possible, and how he may both preserve what is good and prevent disaster; but as regards a king's conduct in general, I shall attempt to set forth the objects at which he should aim and the pursuits to which he should devote himself.

I think that all would agree that it is a king's business to relieve the state when it is in distress, to maintain it in prosperity, and to make it great when it is small; for it is with these ends in view that the other duties which present themselves day by day must be performed. And surely this much is clear, that those who are able to do all this, and who pronounce on matters of so great moment, must not be indolent nor careless, but must see to it that they are superior to all others in intelligence; for it is evident that they will reign well or ill according to the manner in which they equip their own minds. Therefore, no athlete is so called upon to train his body as is a king to train his soul; for not all the public festivals in the world offer a prize comparable to those for which you who are kings strive every day of your lives.

This thought you must lay to heart, and see to it that in proportion as you are above the others in rank so shall you surpass them in virtue; and do not hold the view that while diligence is of use in all other matters it is of no avail to make us better and wiser; and do not deem us, the human kind, so unfortunate that, although in dealing with wild beasts we have discovered arts by which we tame their spirits and increase their worth, yet in our own case we are powerless to help ourselves in the pursuit of virtue. On the contrary, be convinced that education and diligence are in the highest degree potent to improve our nature, and associate yourself with the wisest of those who are about you and send for the wisest men from abroad whenever this is possible.

. . . Believe that your staunchest body-guard lies in the virtue of your friends, the loyalty of your citizens and your own wisdom; for it is through these that one can best acquire as well as keep the powers of royalty.

Do not give your friendship to everyone who desires it, but only to those who are worthy of you; not to those whose society you will

most enjoy, but to those with whose help you will best govern the state. Subject your associates to the most searching tests, knowing that all who are not in close touch with you will think that you are like those with whom you live. When you put men in charge of affairs which are not under your personal direction, be governed by the knowledge that you yourself will be held responsible for whatever they do. Regard as your most faithful friends, not those who praise everything you say or do, but those who criticize your mistakes. Grant freedom of speech to those who have good judgment, in order that when you are in doubt you may have friends who will help you to decide. Distinguish between those who artfully flatter and those who loyally serve you, that the base may not fare better than the good. Listen to what men say about each other and try to discern at the same time the character of those who speak and of those about whom they speak. Visit the same punishment on false-accusers as on evil-doers.

Whenever you desire to gain a thorough understanding of such things as it is fitting that kings should know, pursue them by practice as well as by study; for study will show you the way, but training yourself in the actual doing of things will give you power to deal with affairs.

Reflect on the fortunes and accidents which befall both common men and kings, for if you are mindful of the past you will plan better for the future.

Regard as wise men, not those who dispute subtly about trifling matters, but those who speak well on the great issues; and not those who, being themselves in sorry straits, hold forth to others the promise of a prosperous fortune, but those who, while making modest claims for themselves, are able to deal with both affairs and men, and are not upset by the vicissitudes of existence, but have learned to bear moderately and bravely both the good and the evil chances of life.

I have dwelt on these matters because I think that you, who are not one of the multitude but a king over the multitude, ought not to be of the same mind as men at large; you ought not to judge what things are worthy or what men are wise by the standard of pleasure, but to appraise them in the light of conduct that is useful; especially, since the teachers of philosophy, however much they debate about the proper discipline of the soul (some contending that it is through disputation, others that it is through political discussion, others that it is through other means that their disciples are to attain to greater wisdom), yet are all agreed on this, that the well-educated man must, as the result of his training in whatever discipline, show ability to deliberate and decide. You should, therefore, avoid what is in controversy and test men's value in the light of what is generally agreed upon, if possible taking careful note of them when they present their views on particular situations; or, if that is not possible, when they discuss general questions. And when they are altogether lacking in what they ought to know, reject them (for it is clear that if one is of no use in himself, neither can he make another man wise); but when they are intelligent and able to see farther than the rest, prize them and cherish them, knowing that a good counsellor is the most useful and the most princely of all possessions. And believe that those contribute most to the greatness of your reign who can contribute most to your understanding.

[From *Proverbs*, The Holy Bible (Moffatt Translation)]

MAXIMS OF KING SOLOMON

(c. 444–100 B.C.)

For lack of statesmanship, a nation
sinks:
the saving of it is a wealth of
counsellors.

Take counsel when you form a
plan,
and have some policy when
you make war.

He who accepts advice is safe:
he who will not be warned is
in danger.

A fool is sure that his own way
is right:
sensible men will listen to
advice.

A wise reproof laid on a willing
hearer
is like a golden apple laid on
silver network;
a golden earring, a necklace of
rare gold—
an apt word is like that.

Good sense makes men judicious
in their talk;
it adds persuasiveness to what
they say.

A man's mind may lie deep as
water in a well,
but a clever man will draw it
from him.

[From Letters XXXVIII and XL, *Seneca: Letters From a Stoic*, translated by Robin Campbell, Penguin Books, Inc., 1969]

SPEAK LESS, SAY MORE

By Lucius Annaeus Seneca

(c. 4 B.C.–65 A.D.)

You are quite right in urging that we should exchange letters oftener. The utmost benefit comes from talk because it steals little by little into the mind. Lectures prepared beforehand and delivered before a listen-

ing audience are more resounding but less intimate. Philosophy is good advice, and no one gives advice at the top of his voice. Such harangues, if I may call them that, may need to be resorted to now and then where a person in a state of indecision is needing a push. But when the object is not to make him want to learn but to get him learning, one must have recourse to these lower tones, which enter the mind more easily and stick in it. What is required is not a lot of words but effectual ones.

Words need to be sown like seed. No matter how tiny a seed may be, when it lands in the right sort of ground it unfolds its strength and from being minute expands and grows to a massive size. Reason does the same; to the outward eye its dimensions may be insignificant, but with activity it starts developing. Although the words spoken are few, if the mind has taken them in as it should they gather strength and shoot upwards. Yes, precepts have the same features as seeds: they are of compact dimensions and they produce impressive results—given, as I say, the right sort of mind, to grasp at and assimilate them. The mind will then respond by being in its turn creative and will produce a yield exceeding what was put into it. . . .

You say in your letter that you went and heard the philosopher Serapio when his ship put in where you are. 'His words,' you say, 'tend to be tumbled out at a tremendous pace, pounded and driven along rather than poured out, for they come in a volume no one voice could cope with.' I do not approve of this in a philosopher, whose delivery—like his life—should be well-ordered; nothing can be well-regulated if it is done in a breakneck hurry. That is why in Homer the impetuous type of eloquence which he compares to snow that keeps on coming down without a break, is given to the orator, while from the old man there comes a gentle eloquence that 'flowed sweeter than honey'. You should take the view, then, that this copious and impetuous energy in a speaker is better suited to a hawker than to someone who deals with a subject of serious importance and is also a teacher.

Yet I am just as much against his words coming in a trickle as in a stream. He should not keep people's ears on the stretch any more than he should swamp them. For the other extreme of thinness and poverty means less attentiveness on the part of the listener as he becomes tired of this slowness with all its interruptions. Nonetheless what is waited for does sink in more readily than what goes flying past; one speaks in any event of instruction as being handed on to those being taught, and something that escapes them is hardly being handed on.

You will be doing the right thing, therefore, if you do not go to listen to people who are more concerned about the quantity than the quality of what they say, and choose yourself—if you have to—to speak in the manner of Publius Vinicius. When Asellius was asked how Vinicius spoke, he described it as being 'at a slow pace'. Geminus Varius in fact remarked, 'How you can call the man eloquent I simply don't know—he can't string three words together.' Is there any reason why of the two you should not choose Vinicius' style? You can expect to be interrupted by persons with as little taste as the one who, when Vinicius was jerking the words out one by one, as if he were dictating rather than speaking, exclaimed, 'I call on the speaker to speak.' The pace of Quintius Haterius, a celebrated speaker of his day, is something I should have a sensible man keep well clear of: with him there was never a hesitation or a pause, only one start and only one stop.

[From *The City of God*, translated by John Healey, J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London, 1931]

ET TU, BRUTE!

By Saint Augustine

(354–430 A.D.)

We do worthily approve their enjoining a wise man to live in mutual society: for how should our Celestial City have ever come to its origin, development, or perfection, unless the saints live all in sociable union? But yet what is he that can recount all the miseries incident unto the societies of mortals? Here what the comedian says, with a general applause: "I married a wife. O what misery wanted I then! I begat children: so there's one care more." And those inconveniences that Terence pins on the back of love as injuries, enmities, war, and peace again, do not all these lackey our mortality continually? do not these foot sometimes into the friendliest affections? and does not all the world keep these examples in continual renovation as war, I mean injuries and enmities? And our peace is as uncertain, as we are ignorant of their hearts, with whom we hold it, and though we nigh know to-day what they would do, to-morrow we shall not. Who should be greater friends than those of one family? yet how many secret plots of malice lie even amongst such, to expel security? their firmer peace becoming fouler malice: and being reputed most loyal, whereas it was only most craftily feigned: the far-spread contagion of this made Tully let this saying run out with his tears: "Treason is never so close carried, as when it lurks under the name of duty or affinity. An open foe is easily watched: but this your secret serpent both breeds and strikes ere ever you can discover it." Wherefore that which the Holy Scriptures says, "A man's foes are those of his own household," this we hear with great grief: for though a man have fortitude to endure it, or prevention to avoid it, yet if he be a good man, he must needs take great grief at the badness of those so near him; be it that they have been accustomed unto this viperous dissimulation of old, or have learnt it but of late. So, then, if a man's own private house afford him no shelter from these incursions, what shall the city do, which, as it is larger, so is it fuller of brabbles, and suits, and quarrels, and accusations, even if we grant the absence of seditions and civil contentions, which are too often present: and whereof the cities are in continual danger, when they are in their safest estate? . . .

After the city, follows the whole world, wherein the third kind of human society is resident, the first being in the house, and the second in the city. Now the world is as a flood of waters, the greater, the more dangerous: and first of all difference of language divides man from man. For if two meet, who perchance light upon some accident craving their abiding together, and conference, if neither of them can understand the other, you may sooner make two brute beasts of two several kinds, sociable to one another than these two men. For when they would commune together, their tongues do not agree, which being so, all the other helps of nature are nothing: so that a man had rather be with his own dog, than with another man of a strange language. But

the great western Babylon endeavours to communicate her language to all the lands she has subdued, to procure a fuller society, and a greater abundance of interpreters on both sides. It is true, but how many lives has this cost! and suppose that done, the worst is not past: for although she never wanted stranger nations against whom to lead her forces, yet this large extension of her empire procured greater wars than those, named civil and confederate wars, and these were they that troubled the souls of mankind both in their heat, with desire to see them extinct, and in their pacification, with fear to see them renewed.

[From *Letters of John Huss* by Emile de Bonnechose, translated by Campbell Mackenzie, William Whyte & Co., Edinburgh, 1846]

TO HIS FRIENDS, CONCERNING HIS FURIOUS RECEPTION BY THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE

By John Huss

(1415)

I, Master John Huss, in hope, servant of Christ, and ardently believing that believers in Christ may not, when I shall have ceased to live, find in my death an opportunity for scandal, and look on me as an obstinate heretic, do take to witness Jesus Christ, for the sake of whose word I have wished to die; and I leave in writing the remembrance of these things for the friends of truth.

I had often declared, both in private, in public, and before the Council, that I would consent to an inquiry, and would submit myself to instruction, abjuration, and punishment, if it was demonstrated to me that I had written, taught, or disseminated, any thing contrary to the truth. But fifty doctors, who stated that they were deputed by the Council, having been frequently corrected by me, and even in public, for having falsely extracted articles from my works, refused me any private explanation, and declared that they would not confer with me, saying, You ought to submit yourself to the decision of the Council. And the Council mocked when, in the public audience, I quoted the words of Christ and the holy doctors; at one time they reproached me with misunderstanding them, and, at another, the doctors insulted me.

An English doctor, who had already said to me in private, that Wycliffe had wished to annihilate all science, and had filled his books and his logic with errors, began to discourse on the multiplication of the body of Christ in the consecrated host, and, as his arguments were weak, he was told to be silent; then he cried out: "This man deceives the Council; take care that the Council be not led into error as it was by Berenger." When he was silent, another discussed noisily concerning the created and common essence. All began to clamor against him. I then demanded that he might be heard, and said to him, "You argue well; I will answer you most willingly." He also broke down, and he added in a sullen voice: "This man is a heretic." The Seignior Wenceslaus Duba, John de Chlum, and Peter, the notary, valiant champions and friends of the truth, know what clamors, what unworthy raillery and blasphemies were poured upon me in this assembly. Stunned by

so much, I said, "I thought there was to be found in this Council, more decency, more piety, and more discipline." All then began to listen, for the Emperor had commanded silence to be observed.

The cardinal who presided said to me—"You spoke more humbly in your prison." I answered—"It is true; for then no one clamored against me, and now they are all vociferous." He added—"Will you submit to an investigation?" "I consent to it," replied I, "within the limits which I have fixed." "Take this for the result of the inquiry," resumed the cardinal, "that the doctors have declared the articles extracted from your books to be errors, which you ought to efface, in abjuring those already testified against you by witnesses." The Emperor afterwards said—"This will soon be committed to writing for you, and you will answer it." "Let that be done at the next audience," said the cardinal; and the sitting closed. God knows how many trials I have suffered since!

[Condensed from *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus*, Little, Brown and Company, 1942]

EXPERT COMMITTEES AND THE QUEEN'S CONSENT

By Samuel Eliot Morison

COLUMBUS' CALCULATIONS

The circumference of the globe can easily be figured out by multiplying the length of a degree by 360. But how long was a degree? That problem had been bothering mathematicians for at least eighteen centuries. Eratosthenes around 200 B.C. made a guess at it that was very nearly correct: 59.5 nautical miles instead of 60. The Alexandrian school made a worthy attempt at actual measurement. Meridian observations of the sun were taken from the bottom of wells (to avoid any large error) at two distant points supposed to be on the same longitude, their respective latitudes were figured out with declination table, and the distance between them measured. The result of about 50 nautical miles to a degree was announced by Ptolemy. In the ninth century some Arab geographers repeated the experiment (logging the distance with a camel), and the result was published by Alfragan. The degree, according to this learned Moslem, measured 56⅔ Arab "miles." The "mile" he used had a value of 2164 meters; consequently Alfragan's degree measured 66.2 nautical miles. Now, Columbus took Alfragan's figure of 56⅔ but assumed that he meant Roman or Italian miles of 1480 meters each; and upon that false basis computed that the degree measured only 45 nautical miles, roughly 75 per cent of its actual length, and the shortest estimate of the degree ever made. Arguing from this faulty premise, Columbus concluded that the world was 25 per cent smaller than Eratosthenes, 10 per cent smaller than Ptolemy, taught.

Of course this calculation is not logical, but Columbus' mind was not logical. He *knew* he could make it, and the figures had to fit.

THE KING'S MARITIME ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Whether or not Columbus first tried to interest his native city in the Enterprise of the Indies, the first definite offer known to us is the one that he made to D. João II, king of Portugal.

This same year, 1484, the king appointed a *Junta dos Mathemáticos* or Maritime Advisory Committee to deal with matters of navigation and discovery. Its principal members were Diogo Ortiz de Vilhegas, a churchman high in the king's favor, and two learned Jewish physicians: Master Rodrigo the king's physician, and Master José Vizinho, a pupil of the famous Rabbi Abraham Zacuto who was professor of mathematics at Salamanca.

Columbus' strongest point was the practical possibility of reaching gold-roofed Japan. And there must have been something mathematical about Columbus' proposition, or the king would not have submitted it to his maritime commission.

To anticipate a bit, the Portuguese king's committee of mathematicians will have no difficulty in seeing the flaw in his reasoning; for even if he were right and Ptolemy wrong about the length of a degree (which they would hardly be disposed to admit), he had applied the corrections both ways in order to narrow down the ocean as much as possible. One can well imagine him explaining it, his eyes sparkling and his ruddy complexion flaming, with Bartholomew standing by to back him up; and one can anticipate the committee's reply. No bogy terrors of shoals and sea monsters, no flat-earth nonsense, but good solid arguments like this:—

Unfortunately, Captain Colombo, we deny the validity of your calculation of the globe, we suspect the accuracy of your compatriot Marco Polo, we doubt the existence of his Cipangu; Ptolemy mentioned no such place. According to the close calculations of our mathematical experts, who were already studying the heavens when you were plying the shuttle, it would be necessary to sail at least 10,000 nautical miles due west before reaching Catigara, the eastern verge of the known world. Master Paul, on your own showing, makes it 5000 miles to Quinsay, if such a place there be. Even assuming that you find favorable winds over that vast expanse of ocean (which we strongly doubt), and that you can sail an average of four knots, which is what our best caravels can do on long voyages, your passage would require a hundred days. Over fourteen weeks beyond sight of land! We should not feel justified in risking the money of the king our lord (whom God preserve), or the lives of his subjects, on so dubious an enterprise. Some day, perhaps, when navigation is further perfected, it can be done; but the hazard is now too great. Our countrymen are already on the route to the Indies, around Africa. You yourself have been to São Jorge da Mina; no doubt His Most Serene Majesty would give you a ship for further exploration in that direction, where older and more experienced seamen than you have won glory and wealth.

But that's not what I want, gentlemen, you don't understand. Master Paul the physician said—

Enough, Captain Colombo, we have given you a fair hearing and made our decision. You may go.

Only this is certain about the Portuguese negotiations of 1484–1485: Columbus required the king to provide him with more than one ship, and Japan was his proposed destination. The proposition was rejected by a commission of experts on technical grounds. Now, Japan was oriental, a part of Asia or of "The Indies" as then commonly understood; Columbus' intention to reach "The Indies," and not merely to pick up Antillia or other reported islands, may then be considered proved. And we may fairly infer that the experts' objection to his enterprise was their knowledge that his estimate of the distance was impossibly small. How old Neptune must have laughed at this eager navigator and the skeptical experts, both in a sense right, yet both so completely wrong!

THE TALAVERA COMMISSION

About the middle of the year 1485 Christopher Columbus with his five-year-old son Diego took passage from Lisbon for the port of Palos in Andalusia, with the purpose of offering his Enterprise of the Indies to the Sovereigns of Castile.

Fray Hernando de Talavera, Prior del Prado (a Jeronymite monastery near Valladolid), the Queen's confessor and subsequently Archbishop of Granada, was chosen to organize a commission to examine Columbus' project. It first met at Cordova in the early summer of 1486, and adjourned to Salamanca where the court spent Christmas.

Salamanca was then a university of residential colleges, following the usual late-medieval organization that is now preserved only in Oxford and Cambridge. One of these colleges, that of St. Stephen, was presided over by the Dominican father Diego de Deza, later Bishop of Palencia and Archbishop of Seville. Columbus found in him one of his warmest and most useful advocates in Spain. In this college the Talavera commission sat. For, in 1515 a city councilor named Dr. Rodrigo Maldonado testified that he was there present when Talavera "with other wise and learned men and mariners, discussed with the said Admiral about his going to the said islands, and that all of them agreed that what the Admiral said could not possibly be true, and that contrary to what appeared to the most of them the Admiral persisted. . . ."

Obviously the thing that "could not possibly be true" was the Admiral's theory of a narrow ocean between Spain and the Indies. It was not true. Yet, owing to the feeling of Diego de Deza, perhaps also of Talavera, that there might be something in Columbus' project nevertheless, the commission postponed rendering a report.

What, then, becomes of the celebrated sessions of the University of Salamanca, before whose professors of mathematics, geography and astronomy Columbus argued his case, and was turned down because he could not convince them that the world was round? That is pure moonshine. Washington Irving, scenting his opportunity for a picturesque and moving scene, took a fictitious account of this nonexistent university council published 130 years after the event, elaborated on it, and let his imagination go completely. The result is that wonderful chapter where "an obscure navigator, a member of no learned society, destitute of all the trappings and circumstances which sometimes give oracular authority to dullness, and depending on the mere force of natural genius," sustains his thesis of a spherical globe

against "pedantic bigotry" of flat-earth churchmen, fortified by texts from the Bible, Lactantius and Saint Augustine, until he began to feel nervous about the Inquisition. And how Columbus "met them upon their own ground, pouring forth those magnificent texts of Scripture, and those mysterious predictions of the prophets, which, in his enthusiastic moments, he considered as types and annunciations of the sublime discovery which he proposed." A gripping drama as Irving tells it, this has become one of the most popular Columbian myths; for we all love to hear of professors and experts being confounded by simple common sense.

Yet the whole story is misleading and mischievous nonsense. The University of Salamanca was not asked to decide. Columbus and Talavera merely held committee hearings in the College of St. Stephen, at which neither side was able to convince the other. The sphericity of the globe was not in question. The issue was the width of the ocean; and therein the opposition was right.

The court spent part of 1490 in Seville, and it was probably there late in the year that Talavera finally rendered a report. The committee "judged his promises and offers were impossible and vain and worthy of rejection," says Las Casas, and advised the Sovereigns "that it was not a proper object for their royal authority to favor an affair that rested on such weak foundations, and which appeared uncertain and impossible to any educated person, however little learning he might have." Ferdinand and Las Casas give six arguments used by Talavera to prove that Columbus was wrong. (1) A voyage to Asia would require three years. (2) The Western Ocean is infinite and perhaps unnavigable. (3) If he reached the Antipodes (the land on the other side of the globe from Europe) he could not get back. (4) There are no Antipodes because the greater part of the globe is covered with water, and because Saint Augustine says so. (According to Las Casas, *duda Sant' Agustin*, "Saint Augustine doubts," became a sort of refrain of the Talavera committee.) (5) Of the five zones, only three are habitable. (6) So many centuries after the Creation it was unlikely that anyone could find hitherto unknown lands of any value.

Although this set of reasons is denounced by Vignaud and others as frivolous and fabricated (for they help to prove Columbus' Asiatic objective, and are no great credit to the Spanish intellect of 1490), there seems no good reason to doubt Las Casas' word. They are exactly the sort of objections anyone would have made in 1490, in the then state of geographical knowledge in Castile, a country not so far advanced in such matters as Portugal. After all, the Portuguese had been merely pushing coastwise along a continent known to the ancients. Striking out westward to the Orient was a very different matter, novel, risky and uncertain. The postils in Columbus' books prove that he had been accumulating answers to the first five points, and Seneca's *Medea* was a sufficient answer to the sixth. It certainly did not take much learning to see that Columbus' 60° ocean was all wrong. Why then, we may ask, did the committee require four and a half years to report on it? Simply the custom of the country.

Ferdinand and Isabella neither accepted nor rejected the Talavera report. They caused Columbus to be informed, says Las Casas, that his Enterprise might again be brought to their attention at a more propitious moment, when the war with Granada was over.

THE QUEEN'S AD HOC COMMITTEE AND THE ROYAL COUNCIL

Before long the Queen wrote directly to Columbus, commanding him to proceed to court. Either she recalled his shabby appearance on a former occasion, or Fray Juan excited her compassion by describing his state of extreme penury; for the Queen sent with her letter the sum of 20,000 maravedis in order that Columbus might procure some decent clothing and a mule.

Not before August, and probably somewhat later in the year 1491, Columbus in his new suit of clothes appeared before the Queen. And again his Enterprise was put in the hands of a committee; for Las Casas says that *astrólogos* (astronomers), mariners and pilots as well as *filósofos* were consulted. From this *ad hoc committee* (like the Ortiz one in Portugal and the Talavera one in Spain) which examined and reported on the technical aspects of the case, the Enterprise was referred to the Royal Council of Castile, composed of grandees and higher ecclesiastics. There, presumably, the technical aspects were reviewed. Bishop Geraldini, who was present, remembered the old "duda Sant' Agustin" being dragged out again; he observed to the Cardinal of Spain that, whilst Saint Augustine was undoubtedly a great theologian. navigators like Columbus who had sailed beyond the Line probably knew somewhat more about antipodean geography.

Granada capitulated on January 2, 1492, and Columbus had the joy of marching in the procession that entered the last stronghold of the Moslem in Catholic Spain. Then the axe fell for him. Before many days he was informed that his Enterprise was absolutely and definitely rejected. The Sovereigns themselves confirmed this at an audience which they meant to be final, and in which they wished him *bon voyage*.

So that was the result of six and a half years' watching and waiting in Spain. "By San Fernando" he was through!

A CHANGE OF MIND

Suddenly the whole picture changed. The Queen sent a messenger for Columbus, who overtook him at the village of Pinos-Puente, about ten miles from Granada and four from Santa Fe, where the court was then residing.

Royal commands must be obeyed. The fellow travelers came about, and caught a fair wind that lasted to America.

Why this sudden change of mind? One may speculate that personality had much to do with it. The most impressive thing about Columbus' presentation of his case had not been the facts and the arguments, but the man. His dignity, sincerity and absolute certainty must have left their mark on the Queen. "When he had made up his mind," wrote Las Casas, "he was as sure he would discover what he did discover, and find what he did find, as if he held it in a chamber under lock and key."

His character was very similar to that of the Queen, and he reasoned much in the same way, from fixed ideas and religious preconceptions. What if the experts or some of them did laugh at the Enterprise and say that the geographical notions of this Genoese were absurd, impossible, ridiculous? How did they know, these closet cosmographers and

Mediterranean mariners? The Queen had seen a good deal of experts in her reign of eighteen years, and realized that half the time they did not know what they were talking about. This man Colombo or Colón appealed not only to her reason, but to her instincts.

[From *The Prince*, translated by Ninian Hill Thompson, Clarendon Press. Oxford, 1913]

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HIS AIDES

By Niccolo Machiavelli

(1513)

OF THE SECRETARIES OF PRINCES

The choice of Ministers is a matter of no small moment to a Prince. Whether they shall be good or no depends on his prudence, so that the readiest conjecture we can form of his character and sagacity, is from seeing what sort of men he has about him. When they are at once capable and faithful, we may always account him wise, since he has known to recognize their merit and to retain their fidelity. But if they be otherwise, we must pronounce unfavourably of him, since he has already erred in making this selection.

There was none who knew Messer Antonio of Venafro as Minister of Pandolfo Petrucci, Lord of Siena, but thought Pandolfo a most prudent ruler in having secured him for his servant. And since there are three scales of intelligence, one which understands by itself, a second which understands what is shown it by others, and a third which understands neither by itself nor on the showing of others, the first of which is most excellent, the second good, but the third worthless, we must needs admit that if Pandolfo was not in the first of these degrees, he was in the second; for when one has judgment to discern the good from the bad in what another says or does, though he be devoid of invention, he can recognize the merits and demerits of his servant, and will commend the former while he corrects the latter. The servant cannot hope to deceive such a master, and will continue good.

As to how a Prince is to know his Minister, this unerring rule may be laid down. When you see a Minister thinking more of himself than of you, and in all his actions seeking his own ends, that man can never be a good Minister or one that you can trust. For he who has the charge of the State committed to him, ought not to think of himself, but only of his Prince, to whose notice he should never bring what does not directly concern him. On the other hand, to keep his Minister good, the Prince should be considerate of him, dignifying him, enriching him, binding him to himself by benefits, and sharing with him the honours as well as the burthens of the State, so that the abundant honours and wealth bestowed upon him may divert him from seeking these at other hands; while the great responsibiilties wherewith he is charged may lead him to dread change, knowing that he cannot

stand alone without his master's support. When Prince and Minister are upon this footing they can mutually trust one another; when the contrary is the case it will always fare ill with one or other of them.

THAT FLATTERERS SHOULD BE SHUNNED

One error into which Princes, unless very prudent or very fortunate in their choice of friends, are apt to fall, is of such importance that I must not pass it over. I mean in respect of flatterers. These abound in Courts, because men take so much pleasure in their own concerns, and so deceive themselves with regard to them, that they can hardly escape this plague; while even in the effort to escape it there is risk of incurring contempt.

For there is no way to guard against flattery but by letting it be seen that you take no offense in hearing the truth: but when every one is free to tell you the truth, respect falls short. Wherefore a prudent Prince should follow a middle course, by choosing certain discreet men from among his subjects, and allowing them alone free leave to speak their minds on any matter on which he asks their opinion, and on none other. But he ought to ask their opinion on everything, and after hearing what they have to say, should reflect and judge for himself. And with these counsellors collectively, and with each of them separately, his bearing should be such, that each and all of them may know that the more freely they speak their minds the better they will be liked. Besides these, the Prince should listen to no others, but should follow the course determined on, and afterwards adhere firmly to his resolves. Whoever acts otherwise is either undone by flatterers, or, from continually vacillating as opinions vary, comes to be held in light esteem.

With reference to this matter, I shall cite a recent instance. Father Luke, who is attached to the Court of the present Emperor Maximilian, in speaking of his Majesty told me, that he seeks advice from none, yet never has his own way; and this from his following a course contrary to that above recommended. For being of a secret disposition, he never discloses his intentions to any, nor asks their opinion; so that it is only when his plans are to be carried out that they begin to be discovered and known, and at the same time to be thwarted by those he has about him, when he being facile gives way. Hence it happens that what he does one day, he undoes the next; that his wishes and designs are never fully understood; and that it is impossible to build on his resolves.

A Prince, therefore, ought always to take counsel, but at such times and seasons only as he himself pleases, and not when it pleases others; nay, should discourage every one from obtruding advice on matters on which it is not sought. But he should be free in asking advice, and afterwards, as regards the matters on which he has asked it, a patient hearer of the truth, and even displeased should he perceive that any one, from whatsoever motive, keeps it back.

But those who think that every Prince who has a name for prudence owes it to the wise counsellors he has around him, and not to any merit of his own, are undoubtedly mistaken; since it is an unerring rule and of universal application that a Prince who is not wise himself cannot be well advised by others, unless by chance he surrender himself to be

wholly governed by some one adviser who happens to be supremely prudent; in which case he may, indeed, be well advised; but not for long, since such an adviser will soon oust him from his Princedom. If he listen to a multitude of advisers, the Prince who is not wise will never have consistent counsels, nor will he know of himself how to reconcile them. Each of his counsellors will study his own advantage, and the Prince will be unable to detect or correct them. Nor could it well be otherwise, for men will always grow rogues on your hands unless they find themselves under a necessity to be honest.

We may take it therefore that good counsels, whencesoever they come, have their origin in the prudence of the Prince, and not the prudence of the Prince in wise counsels.

[From *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne* (Cotton Translation), Great Books Series, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.]

ON JUDGING COUNSELLORS

By Michel de Montaigne

(1533–1592)

Dignities and offices are of necessity conferred more by fortune than upon the account of merit; and we are often to blame, to condemn kings when these are misplaced: on the contrary, 'tis a wonder they should have so good luck, where there is so little skill;

Principis est virtus maxima, nosse suos;[1]

for nature has not given them a sight that can extend to so many people, to discern which excels the rest, nor to penetrate into our bosoms, where the knowledge of our wills and best value lies: they must choose us by conjecture and by groping; by the family, wealth, learning, and the voice of the people, which are all very feeble arguments. Whoever could find out a way by which they might judge by justice, and choose men by reason, would, in this one thing, establish a perfect form of government.

"Ay, but he brought that great affair to a very good pass." That is, indeed, to say something, but not to say enough: for this sentence is justly received, "That we are not to judge of counsels by events." The Carthaginians punished the ill counsels of their captains, though the issue was successful; and the people of Rome often denied a triumph for great and very advantageous victories because the conduct of their general was not answerable to his good fortune. We ordinarily see, in the actions of the world, that Fortune, to show us her power in all things, and who takes a pride in abating our presumption, seeing she could not make fools wise, has made them fortunate in emulation of virtue; and most favours those operations the web of which is most purely her own; whence it is that we daily see the simplest amongst us bring to pass great business, both public and private; and, as Seiramnes, the Persian, answered those who wondered that his af-

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[1] 'Tis the chief virtue of a prince to know the people about him.—Martial, viii. 15.

fairs succeeded so ill, considering that his deliberations were so wise, "that he was sole master of his designs, but that success was wholly in the power of fortune;" these may answer the same, but with a contrary turn. Most worldly affairs are performed by themselves.

Fata viam inveniunt; [2]

the event often justifies a very foolish conduct; our interposition is little more than as it were a running on by rote, and more commonly a consideration of custom and example, than of reason. Being formerly astonished at the greatness of some affair, I have been made acquainted with their motives and address by those who had performed it, and have found nothing in it but very ordinary counsels; and the most common and usual are indeed, perhaps, the most sure and convenient for practice, if not for show.

[From *The Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral and Wisdom of the Ancients* by Francis Lord Verulam, William Pickering, London, 1845]

METIS, OR COUNFEL

By Francis Bacon

(1561–1626)

The Ancient Poets report, that *Jupiter* took *Metis* to Wife, whofe Name doth plainly fignify Counfel, and that fhe by him conceived. Which when he found, not tarrying the time of her Deliverance, devours both her and that which fhe went withal, by which means *Jupiter* himfelf became with Child, and was delivered of a wondrous Birth; for out of his Head or Brain came forth *Pallas* Armed.

The Senfe of this Fable (which at firft Apprehenfion may feem monftrous and abfurd) contains in it a Secret of State, to wit, with what Policy Kings are wont to carry themfelves towards their Counfellors, whereby they may not only preferve their Authority and Majefty free and entire, but alfo that it may be the more extolled and dignified of the People: For Kings being as it were tied and coupled in a Nuptial Bond to their Counfellors, do truly conceive that communicating with them about the Affairs of greateft Importance do yet detract nothing from their own Majefty. But when any Matter comes to be cenfured or decreed (which is a Birth) there do they confine and reftrain the liberty of their Counfellors; left that which is done fhould feem to be hatched by their Wifdom and Judgment. So as at laft Kings (except it be in fuch Matters as are diftafteful and maligned, which they always will be fure to put off from themfelves) do affume the Honour and Praife of all Matters that are ruminated in Council, and, as it were, formed in the Womb, whereby the Refolution and Execution (which becaufe it proceeds from Power, and implies Neceffity, is elegantly fhadowed under the Figure of *Pallas* Armed) fhall feem to proceed wholly from themfelves. Neither fufficeth it, that it is done by the Authority of the King, by his mere Will and free

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[2] The destinies find the way.—*Æneid,* iii. 395.

Applaufe, except withal, this be added and appropriated as to iffue out of his own Head or Brain, intimating, that out of his own Judgment, Wifdom, and Ordinance, it was only invented and derived.

[From Milton's *Sonnets*, Great Books Series, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.]

TO THE LORD GENERALL CROMWELL, MAY 1652

On the proposalls of certaine ministers at the Committee for Propagation of the Gospell

By John Milton

Cromwell, our cheif of men, who through a cloud
Not of warr onely, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith & matchless Fortitude
To peace & truth thy glorious way hast plough'd,
And on the neck of crowned Fortune proud
Hast reard Gods Trophies, & his work pursu'd,
While Darwen stream with blood of Scotts imbru'd,
And *Dunbarr feild* resounds thy praises loud,
And Worsters laureat wreath; yet much remaines
To conquer still; peace hath her victories
No less renownd then warr, new foes aries
Threatning to bind our soules with secular chaines:
Helpe us to save free Conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves whose Gospell is their maw.

[From *A King's Lessons in Statecraft: Louis XIV: Letters to His Heirs*, translated by Herbert Wilson, Kennikat Press, London, 1970]

THE SUPREME COUNCIL

By Louis XIV

(1638–1715)

It has seemed necessary to me to impress upon you, my son, from fear of an excess of good intentions in your first youth, and from the very ardour which these Memoirs may arouse in you, that you should not confound two very different things: I mean the ruling of oneself, and the giving heed to no advice, which latter might be as dangerous an extreme as that of being ruled by others. The cleverest private individuals take advice from other clever people about their little concerns. What should be the rule for Kings who have in their hands the public weal, and whose resolutions harm or benefit the whole earth? Decisions of such importance should never be formed, if possible, without calling upon all the most enlightened, reasonable and wise among our subjects.

Necessity reduces us to a small number of persons chosen from the rest, and whom it would not be politic to neglect. You will find out.

moreover, my son, what I soon recognised, that by talking over our affairs when no other personal consideration should stand in our way, we learn not only much about others, but also about ourselves. The mind brings to fruition its own thoughts by giving them the light of day, whereas, before, it held them in confusion, undeveloped, and rough-hewn. Discussion, which excites and warms it, carries it insensibly from object to object further than solitary and silent meditation had done, and opens out a thousand fresh expedients from the very difficulties opposed to it.

Besides, our lofty position in some way separates us from our people to whom our ministers are closer, and are consequently able to see a thousand things of which we know nothing, but on which nevertheless we must make up our minds and take measures. Add to this their age, experience, deliberations, and their greater liberty to obtain information and suggestions from their inferiors, who in their turn gather them from others, step by step down to the lowest.

But when, on important occasions, they have reported to us all the aspects and all the opposing reasons, all that is done elsewhere in similar cases, all that has been done formerly, and all that might be done to-day, it is incumbent upon us, my son, to choose what must be actually done. And in regard to that choice I will make bold to tell you that if we do not lack good sense or courage there is no other who can make a better one than us; for to decide requires the *esprit de maitre*, and without any comparison it is easier to do what one *is* than to imitate what one *is not*. And if we nearly always notice some difference between the private letters which we ourselves take the trouble to write, and those which our most skilled secretaries write for us, discovering in the latter a something less natural and the anxiety of a pen everlastingly in fear of saying too much or too little, have no doubt that in matters of the greatest consequence the difference will be still greater between our own resolutions and those which we leave our ministers to take without us; wherein, the cleverer they are the more will they hesitate from fear of the issue, and owing to their responsibility will sometimes become embarrassed for quite a long time over difficulties which would not have delayed us for a moment.

Wisdom directs that on certain occasions we allow much to chance. In such cases reason herself counsels us to follow some kind of blind motion of instinct above itself which seems to come from Heaven and is known to all men, but is undoubtedly of greater weight and more worthy of consideration in the case of those whom it has itself placed in the first rank. No one can say when we should distrust or obey this motion; neither books, nor rules, nor experience tell us; a certain appropriateness, a certain daring of the mind, always more unfettered in a man who owes no account of his actions to anyone, enables us to discover this.

However this may be, and not to allude again to the subject, immediately I had begun this system of conduct with my ministers I knew very well, not so much from what they said, but from a certain air of truth which detached itself from flattery, just as a living person differs from the most perfect statue (and it came back to me afterwards in many unsuspected ways), that they were not only satisfied but somewhat surprised to see me not accepting entirely all that they advised on the most difficult questions, and, while I did not affect to

disregard it, taking my part so unconstrainedly, and following the line which more often than not subsequent events clearly showed to have been the better. And though they saw very well from that time onwards that they would always hold the proper position of ministers with me and nothing else, they were only the more pleased at the situation in which they were placed, with its thousand other advantages, of entire security for doing their duty in it. For there is nothing more dangerous to men occupying positions such as theirs as a King who is usually asleep, and wakes up with a start from time to time after losing the thread of affairs, and one who, in this uncertain and confused light, blames everybody for their want of success, for chance mishaps, or for faults for which he should accuse himself.

[From *Gulliver's Travels*, Great Books Series, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.]

ON ACADEMIC BRAIN-TRUSTING

By Jonathan Swift

(1667–1745)

In the school of political projectors, I was but ill entertained; the professors appearing in my judgment wholly out of their senses; which is a scene that never fails to make me melancholy. These unhappy people were proposing schemes for persuading monarchs to chuse favourites upon the score of their wisdom, capacity, and virtue; of teaching ministers to consult the publick good; of rewarding merit, great abilities, and eminent services; of instructing princes to know their true interest, by placing it on the same foundation with that of their people: of chusing for employments persons qualified to exercise them; with many other wild impossible chimæras, that never entered before into the heart of man to conceive; and confirmed in me the old observation, that there is nothing so extravagant and irrational which some philosophers have not maintained for truth.

But, however I shall so far do justice to this part of the academy as to acknowledge, that all of them were not so visionary. There was a most ingenious doctor who seemed to be perfectly versed in the whole nature and system of government. This illustrious person had very usefully employed his studies in finding out effectual remedies for all diseases and corruptions, to which the several kinds of publick administration are subject by the vices or infirmities of those who govern, as well as by the licentiousness of those who are to obey. For instance: whereas all writers and reasoners have agreed, that there is a strict universal resemblance between the natural and the political body; can there be any thing more evident, than that the health of both must be preserved, and the diseases cured by the same prescriptions? It is allowed, that senates and great councils are often troubled with redundant, ebulliant, and other peccant humours; with many diseases of the head, and more of the heart; with strong convulsions, with grievous contractions of the nerves and sinews in both hands, but especially the right: with spleen, flatus, vertigoes and deliriums; with scrophulous

tumours full of fœtid purulent matter; with sowre frothy ructations; with canine appetites and crudeness of digestion; besides many others needless to mention. This doctor therefore proposed, that upon the meeting of a senate, certain physicians should attend at the three first days of their sitting, and at the close of each day's debate, feel the pulses of every senator; after which, having maturely considered, and consulted upon the nature of the several maladies, and the methods of cure, they should on the fourth day return to the senate-house, attended by their apothecaries stored with proper medicines; and before the members sat, administer to each of them lenitives, aperitives, abstersives, corrosives, restringents, palliatives, laxatives, cephalalgicks, ictericks, apophlegmaticks, acousticks, as their several cases required; and, according as these medicines should operate, repeat, alter, or omit them at the next meeting.

This project could not be of any great expence to the publick; and might, in my poor opinion, be of much use for the dispatch of business in those countries, where senates have any share in the legislative power; beget unanimity, shorten debates, open a few mouths which are now closed, and close many more, which are now open; curb the petulancy of the young, and correct the positiveness of the old; rouse the stupid, and damp the pert.

Again, because it is a general complaint, that the favourites of princes are troubled with short and weak memories; the same doctor proposed, that whoever attended a First Minister, after having told his business with the utmost brevity, and in the plainest words; should at his departure, give the said minister, a tweak by the nose, or a kick in the belly, or tread on his corns, or lug him thrice by both ears, or run a pin into his breech, or pinch his arm black and blue; to prevent forgetfulness: and, at every levee day, repeat the same operation, until the business were done, or absolutely refused.

[From "Speech at the Conclusion of the Poll in Bristol, November 3, 1774," *Edmund Burke on Revolution*, Edited by Robert A. Smith, Harper and Row, Inc., New York, 1968]

THE DUTY OF A REPRESENTATIVE

By Edmund Burke

(1774)

He [Henry Cruger] tells you that "the topic of instructions has occasioned much altercation and uneasiness in this city"; and he expresses himself (if I understand him rightly) in favor of the coercive authority of such instructions.

Certainly, Gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinions high respect; their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasure, his satisfactions, to theirs,—and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own.

But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure,—no, nor from the law and the Constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

My worthy colleague says, his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours, without question, ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion, in which one set of men deliberate and another decide, and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments?

To deliver an opinion is the right of all men; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear, and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But *authoritative* instructions, *mandates* issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience,—these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our Constitution.

Parliament is not a *congress* of ambassadors from different and hostile interests, which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but Parliament is a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation, with *one* interest, that of the whole—where not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member, indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not member of Bristol, but he is a member of *Parliament*. If the local constituent should have an interest or should form an hasty opinion evidently opposite to the real good of the rest of the community, the member for that place ought to be as far as any other from any endeavor to give it effect. I beg pardon for saying so much on this subject; I have been unwillingly drawn into it; but I shall ever use a respectful frankness of communication with you. Your faithful friend, your devoted servant, I shall be to the end of my life: a flatterer you do not wish for. On this point of instructions, however, I think it scarcely possible we ever can have any sort of difference. Perhaps I may give you too much, rather than too little trouble.

From the first hour I was encouraged to court your favor, to this happy day of obtaining it, I have never promised you anything but humble and persevering endeavors to do my duty. The weight of that duty, I confess, makes me tremble; and whoever well considers what it is, of all things in the world, will fly from what has the least likeness to a positive and precipitate engagement. To be a good member of Parliament is, let me tell you, no easy task,—especially at this time, when there is so strong a disposition to run into the perilous extremes of servile compliance or wild popularity. To unite circumspection with vigor is absolutely necessary, but it is extremely difficult.

We are now members for a rich commercial *city;* this city, however, is but a part of a rich commercial *nation*, the interests of which are various, multiform, and intricate. We are members for that great nation, which, however, is itself but part of a great *empire*, extended by our virtue and our fortune to the farthest limits of the East and of the West. All these wide-spread interests must be considered,—must be compared,—must be reconciled, if possible. We are members for a *free* country; and surely we all know that the machine of a free constitution is no simple thing, but as intricate and as delicate as it is valuable. We are members in a great and ancient *monarchy;* and we must preserve religiously the true, legal rights of the sovereign, which form the keystone that binds together the noble and well-constructed arch of our empire and our Constitution. A constitution made up of balanced powers must ever be a critical thing. As such I mean to touch that part of it which comes within my reach.

[From *The Great Fables*, Edited by Manuel Komroff, The Dial Press, New York, 1928]

APOLOGUE

By Benjamin Franklin

(1706–1790)

Lion, king of a certain forest, had among his subjects a body of faithful dogs, in principle and affection strongly attached to his person and government, but through whose assistance he had extended his dominions, and had become the terror of his enemies.

Lion, however, influenced by evil counsellors, took an aversion to the dogs, condemned them unheard, and ordered his tigers, leopards, and panthers to attack and destroy them.

The dogs petitioned humbly, but their petitions were rejected haughtily; and they were forced to defend themselves, which they did with bravery.

A few among them, of a mongrel race, derived from a mixture with wolves and foxes, corrupted by royal promises of great rewards, deserted the honest dogs and joined their enemies.

The dogs were finally victorious: a treaty of peace was made, in which Lion acknowledged them to be free, and disclaimed all future authority over them.

The mongrels not being permitted to return among them, claimed of the royalists the reward that had been promised.

A council of the beasts was held to consider their demand.

The wolves and the foxes agreed unanimously that the demand was just, that royal promises ought to be kept, and that every loyal subject should contribute freely to enable his majesty to fulfill them.

The horse alone, with a boldness and freedom that became the nobleness of his nature, delivered a contrary opinion.

"The King," said he, "has been misled, by bad ministers, to war unjustly upon his faithful subjects. Royal promises, when made to

encourage us to act for the public good, should indeed be honourably acquitted; but if to encourage us to betray and destroy each other, they are wicked and void from the beginning. The advisers of such promises, and those who murdered in consequence of them, instead of being recompensed, should be severely punished. Consider how greatly our common strength is already diminished by our loss of the dogs. If you enable the King to reward those fratricides, you will establish a precedent that may justify a future tyrant to make like promises; and every example of such an unnatural brute rewarded will give them additional weight. Horses and bulls, as well as dogs, may thus be divided against their own kind, and civil wars produced at pleasure, till we are so weakened that neither liberty nor safety is any longer to be found in the forest, and nothing remains but abject submission to the will of a despot, who may devour us as he pleases."

The council had sense enough to resolve—that the demand be rejected.

[From *Kriloff's Original Fables*, translated by I. Henry Harrison, Remington & Co., 1883]

THE QUARTETT

By Ivan Kriloff

(1769–1844)

A roguish Monkey,
A Goat, and Donkey,
With a great clumsy Bear,
Agreed in a Quartett to share.
They got their notes, two fiddles, flute, and bass,
And on a grass plot sat, under some limes,
Fain to enchant the world with skill and grace;
But how they struck up can't be told in rhymes.
"Stop, brothers, stop!" the Monkey cries, "Be quiet!
Your music ends in riot,
Because you all are seated wrong:
Thou Bruin, seat thee with thy bass
Before the flute there, face to face!
And thou, good second fiddler, take thy place
'Gainst this, which doth to me as first belong!
Our music now will go apace,
Rousing the woods and mountains into song!"
They change, and the Quartett begins;
But by it music nothing wins,

"Hold hard, the secret I have hit!"
Bawls out the Donkey. "We shall get on better,
If in a row we sit."
The donkey is obeyed unto the letter;
They all sit in a row:
Still the Quartett will not consent to go.
Now worse than ever quarrel they, disputing,
And refuting
The place of each.
It happened that a Nightingale their noise did reach;
She flew to them: they asked her to decide,
"Have patience here with us a space," they cried,
"Set our quartett in order, that we may
These notes and instruments correctly play;
Above all show us how to sit!"
"To be musicians first of all 'tis fit
Talent to have, and good ears too,"
Replied the judge that music knew;
"But ye, my friends, whatever seats ye take,
Musicians all your lives will never make."

Translator's note.—According to some, this alludes to a quadruple division into committees of the society called literally "Conversations of the Friends of Russian Literature," to which Kriloff belonged, and in which were first read a large number of his fables. This separation merely led to a useless multiplication of Secretaries and Presidents; and in no way advanced the work of the society. According to others, the fable alludes to a similar division of the labours of the Council of State, and the disputes of the leaders about their titles and precedence. Kenévitch considers either explanation equally applicable.

[From the *Brooklyn Daily Times*, June 29, 1858, in *The Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman*, Edited by Louis Untermeyer, Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York, 1949]

THE RADICALS IN COUNCIL

By Walt Whitman

One of the queerest conventions on record even in this land where all extremes of belief meet upon a common ground and all sorts of odd-fishes do most congregate, has been in session, during the last few days, in Rutland, Vermont, much to the astonishment, no doubt, and not much to the edification of that quiet country village.

Here all the uneasy spirits of the day seem to have met to enter a protest against conventionalisms and to find a safety-valve for the erratic ideas with which they are boiling over. There were free-lovers, ultra-abolitionists, trance-media, female atheists, vegetarians, phre-

nologists, people in short possessed of all the 'isms of the day, and all eager to participate in the feast of reason (?) and flow of soul. The said feast was accordingly partaken of in the freest manner and the soul continued to flow, with not a thing to stop its current, except the Chairman's warning cry of "Time!" During the days that the convention continued in session, more ideas and sentiments were gotten off that were utterly repugnant to all preconceived ideas than at any previous gatherings of which we have any knowledge. All priesthoods, creeds and Sacred Books were denounced and religion was stamped as "the blackest and most scoundrel-like name in the world." The marriage relation, in the opinion of these amiable lunatics, was a detestable humbug. It was declared that women ought to be placed politically and industrially on a level with man and to be allowed to swing sledge-hammers, climb the giddy mast, and hit out from the shoulder at primary elections. The Sabbath was of no effect, and in fact was to be disregarded as a systematic violation of individual rights. The right to murder without incurring the penalty of blood for blood was also among the tenets set forth, and in conclusion, (our space is somewhat contracted) everything new was declared to be right, and everything old was pronounced to be wrong.

This gathering, like other gatherings of the kind, we look upon as significant of a grand upheaval of ideas and reconstruction of many things on new bases—not in the manner—indicated by these excrescences who have just finished their pow-wow at Rutland, but on an infinitely larger, grander and nobler scale—all in God's good time. Nevertheless, these too, have their uses.

[From *Diedrich Knickerbocker's History of New-York*, (by Washington Irving), The Heritage Press, New York, 1940]

THE GRAND COUNCIL OF NEW-AMSTERDAM

By Washington Irving

(1848)

It was in the year of our Lord 1629 that Mynheer Wouter Van Twiller was appointed governor of the province of Nieuw-Nederlandts, under the commission and control of their High Mightinesses the Lords States General of the United Netherlands, and the privileged West India Company.

The person of this illustrious old gentleman was formed and proportioned, as though it had been moulded by the hands of some cunning Dutch statuary, as a model of majesty and lordly grandeur. He was exactly five feet six inches in height, and six feet five inches in circumference. His body was oblong and particularly capacious at bottom; which was wisely ordered by Providence, seeing that he was a man of sedentary habits, and very averse to the idle labor of walking.

In his council he presided with great state and solemnity. He sat in a huge chair of solid oak, hewn in the celebrated forest of the Hague, fabricated by an experienced timmerman of Amsterdam, and curiously carved about the arms and feet, into exact imitations of gigantic

eagle's claws. Instead of a sceptre he swayed a long Turkish pipe, wrought with jasmin and amber, which had been presented to a stadtholder of Holland, at the conclusion of a treaty with one of the petty Barbary powers. It has even been said, that when any deliberation of extraordinary length and intricacy was on the carpet, the renowned Wouter would shut his eyes for full two hours at a time, that he might not be disturbed by external objects—and at such times the internal commotion of his mind was evinced by certain regular guttural sounds, which his admirers declared were merely the noise of conflict, made by his contending doubts and opinions.

To assist the doubtful Wouter in the arduous business of legislation, a board of magistrates was appointed, which presided immediately over the police. This potent body consisted of a schout or bailiff, with powers between those of the present mayor and sheriff—five burgermeesters, who were equivalent to aldermen, and five schepens, who officiated as scrubs, subdevils, or bottle-holders to the burgermeesters, in the same manner as do assistant aldermen to their principals at the present day; it being their duty to fill the pipes of the lordly burgermeesters—hunt the markets for delicacies for corporation dinners, and to discharge such other little offices of kindness as were occasionally required. It was, moreover, tacitly understood, though not specifically enjoined, that they should consider themselves as butts for the blunt wits of the burgermeesters, and should laugh most heartily at all their jokes; but this last was a duty as rarely called in action in those days as it is at present, and was shortly remitted, in consequence of the tragical death of a fat little schepen—who actually died of suffocation in an unsuccessful effort to force a laugh at one of burgermeester Van Zandt's best jokes.

In return for these humble services, they were permitted to say *yes* and *no* at the council-board, and to have that enviable privilege, the run of the public kitchen—being graciously permitted to eat, and drink, and smoke, at all those snug junketings and public gormandizings, for which the ancient magistrates were equally famous with their modern successors.

The ancient magistrates of this city corresponded with those of the present time no less in form, magnitude, and intellect, than in prerogative and privilege. The burgomasters, like our aldermen, were generally chosen by weight—and not only the weight of the body, but likewise the weight of the head. It is a maxim practically observed in all honest, plain-thinking, regular cities, that an alderman should be fat.

As a board of magistrates, formed on this principle, think but very little, they are the less likely to differ and wrangle about favorite opinions—and as they generally transact business upon a hearty dinner, they are naturally disposed to be lenient and indulgent in the administration of their duties. Charlemagne was conscious of this, and therefore ordered in his cartularies, that no judge should hold a court of justice, except in the morning, on an empty stomach.—A pitiful rule, which I can never forgive, and which I warrant bore hard upon all the poor culprits in the kingdom.

Nothing could equal the profound deliberations that took place between the renowned Wouter, and these his worthy compeers, unless it be

the sage divans of some of our modern corporations. They would sit for hours smoking and dozing over public affairs, without speaking a word to interrupt that perfect stillness, so necessary to deep reflection. Under the sober sway of Wouter Van Twiller and these his worthy coadjutors, the infant settlement waxed vigorous apace, gradually emerging from the swamps and forests, and exhibiting that mingled appearance of town and country, customary in new cities, and which at this day may be witnessed in the city of Washington; that immense metropolis, which makes so glorious an appearance on paper.

Such are the comfortable and thriving effects of a fat government.

[From *The Complete Poetical Works of Oliver Wendell Holmes*, Edited by Horace E Scudder, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1908]

ODE FOR A SOCIAL MEETING

With Slight Alterations By a Teetotaler

By Oliver Wendell Holmes

(1857–8)

Here is a little poem I sent a short time since to a committee for a certain celebration. I understood that it was to be a festive and convivial occasion, and ordered myself accordingly. It seems the president of the day was what is called a "teetotaler." I received a note from him in the following words, containing the copy subjoined, with the emendations annexed to it.

"Dear Sir,—Your poem gives good satisfaction to the committee. The sentiments expressed with reference to liquor are not, however, those generally entertained by this community. I have therefore consulted the clergyman of this place, who has made some slight changes, which he thinks will remove all objections, and keep the valuable portions of the poem. Please to inform me of your charge for said poem. Our means are limited, etc., etc., etc.

"Yours with respect."

Here it is with the slight alterations.

Come ! fill a fresh bumper, for why should
~~we~~ go
logwood
While the ~~nectar~~ still reddens our cups as
they flow?
decoction
Pour out the ~~rich~~ ~~juices~~ still bright with the
sun,
dye-stuff
Till o'er the brimmed crystal the ~~rubies~~
shall run.

half-ripened apples
The ~~purple globed clusters~~ their life-dews have bled;
taste sugar of lead.
How sweet is the ~~breath~~ of the ~~fragrance they shed!~~
rank poisons *wines! ! !*
For summer's ~~last roses~~ lie hid in the ~~wines~~
stable-boys smoking
That were garnered by ~~maidens who~~
long-nines.
~~laughed thro' the vines.~~

scowl howl scoff
Then a ~~smile,~~ and a ~~glass~~, and a ~~toast~~, and sneer,
a ~~cheer~~,
strychnine and whiskey, and ratsbane and
For all ~~the good wine, and we've some of it~~ beer!
~~here!~~
In cellar, in pantry, in attic, in hall,
Down, down with the tyrant that masters us all!
~~Long live the gay servant that laughs for us all!~~

[From *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln*, Collected and edited by Allen Thorndike Rice, North American Publishing Company, 1886]

THE LINCOLN STYLE

By Titian J. Coffey

The skill and success with which Mr. Lincoln would dispose of an embarassing question or avoid premature committal to a policy advocated by others is well known. He knew how to send applicants away in good humor even when they failed to extract the desired response.

A story told of him after General Cameron's retirement from the War Department illustrates this habit. Every one knows that Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet was chosen chiefly from his rivals for the Presidential nomination, and from considerations largely political. But the exigencies of the war demanded, in the opinion of many good Republicans, a reorganization of the Cabinet based on the special fitness of each member for the great work in hand. Of this opinion were some of the leading Republican Senators. After the retirement of General Cameron they held a caucus and appointed a committee to wait on the President. The committee represented that, inasmuch as the Cabinet had not been chosen with reference to the war, and had more or less lost the confidence of the country, and since the President had decided to select a new War Minister, they thought the occasion was opportune to change the whole seven Cabinet Ministers. They therefore earnestly advised him to make a clean sweep and select seven new men, and so restore the waning confidence of the country.

The President listened with patient courtesy, and when the Senators had concluded he said, with a characteristic gleam of humor in his eye:

"Gentlemen, your request for a change of the whole Cabinet because I have made one change reminds me of a story I once heard in Illinois of a farmer who was much troubled by skunks. They annoyed his household at night, and his wife insisted that he should take measures to get rid of them. One moonlight night he loaded his old shot-gun and stationed himself in the yard to watch for the intruders, his wife remaining in the house anxiously awaiting the result. After some time she heard the shot-gun go off, and in a few minutes the farmer entered the house. 'What luck had you?' said she. 'I hid myself behind the wood-pile,' said the old man, 'with the shot-gun pointed toward the hen-roost, and before long there appeared not one skunk but *seven.* I took aim, blazed away, killed one, and he raised such a fearful smell that I concluded it was best to let the other six go.' "

With a hearty laugh the Senators retired, and nothing more was heard of Cabinet reconstruction.

[From *Parliamentary Government in England*, The Viking Press, New York, 1938]

INVESTIGATION BY COMMITTEE

By Harold J. Laski

No one can read the parliamentary question-period over any length of time without the clear impression that whatever the light of day can do to make intelligible the business of administration this process is in a high degree likely to do. But its merit, great as this is, does not end there. Some questions will reveal a defective state of affairs. The Minister is made aware that his answers have proved unsatisfactory. He feels that he must go further than the answer his department is able to render. He is eager to placate a special or general public opinion which continues to insist that more should be known. He appoints a select committee, a departmental committee, or a Royal Commission to report upon the problem. Or he thinks that some question ought to come into the public view upon which there is inadequate knowledge, or confused or irritated public sentiment. A committee will discover the facts and trace the outlines of a policy upon which, at a later stage, action may become possible.

Investigation by committees has been one of the most vital techniques contributed by the parliamentary system to the methodology of representative government, and it has been made possible only by the fact that the parliamentary system exists. Not a few of the reports these bodies have issued have been landmarks in the history of their subjects. In education, in the improvement of factory conditions, on poor-law reform, on the machinery of government, on the reorganization of the army, on the limits of ministers' powers, on the principles of local taxation, we have reports that have profoundly affected the contours of policy. When the Budget leakages of 1936 provoked an

angry feeling in public opinion, the work of the Porter Committee did one of the most cleansing pieces of work the public life of any modern state has known—a piece of work, it should be added, that would have been possible only under a democratic form of government; and the same is true of the remarkable inquiry by the Fisher Committee which resulted in the dismissal of a permanent secretary of a department from the public service. In a sense, the Fisher report is even more remarkable than that of Mr. Justice Porter. The latter applied to an alleged scandal which was the theme of universal discussion. But the former tackled, rigorously and thoroughly, one which, at most, was known to hardly more than half a dozen persons and could easily have been met by private action which would have successfully screened the facts from the public view. It was interesting evidence of the way in which the technique of parliamentary government has developed a tradition of self-criticism in the civil service which is the supreme safeguard against the vices of bureaucracy.

The method has its limits. The value of investigation by committees depends very largely on the personnel of committees, and this raises interesting problems upon which it is worth while to say a word. Our system in this regard suffers from a number of dangers. A Treasury zest for economy may provide it with inadequate secretarial assistance. Its members may be appointed less for the knowledge they possess than because the Minister desires to confer a distinction upon a friend. There is a tendency, in appointments, to specialize in retired statesmen and, on the Labour side, on trade-union officials whose "moderation" can be trusted. There is a straining towards unanimity in the reports—a belief that the strength of the conclusions lies not in the power of the analysis but in the arrival at conclusions least calculated to disturb existing interests. The report of the Royal Commission on Local Government is an illuminating example of these dangers. After all its monumental labours, it timidly refuses to face any of the problems it was invited to examine. Its value consists almost wholly in the evidence tendered to it by the witnesses, especially officials, who appeared before it. The evidence is of great significance; but it is not merely to receive evidence that a Royal Commission is appointed.

Yet even when all this is taken into account, the importance of the technique is very great. Without it, and without the mass of information daily made available in government publications, there would be hardly anything of the factual basis we possess for carving out principles from the raw material of life. After all, we must remember that Karl Marx's massive indictment of capitalist civilization was largely built on facts made available to him by investigations undertaken through parliamentary pressure. On any showing, that is a remarkable fact. Once again, if we compare these habits with the limited and dubious publicity of Fascist countries, the contrast is all to the advantage of the parliamentary system. There is no Fascist country in the world today which makes available to its public opinion truthful statistics about wages and prices, the number of unemployed and their treatment, the operation of the judicial system. There is none, either, that permits discussion even of the results of the halftruths it makes available. To make the facts known and to work out principles of politics which display the meaning of those facts are achievements it would not be easy to overestimate.

[From *Government Control in War*, Lees Knowles Lectures, 1945, Cambridge University Press, London, 1945]

THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM IN WAR

By The Right Honorable Lord Hankey

There are some who hold that our system of preparation for and control of war is radically unsound. It is sometimes roundly condemned as a pernicious means of avoiding or delaying decisions and shifting responsibility. The supposed revival after the last war of the Committee system has been contrasted adversely with the vigorous conduct of the last war by the small War Cabinet under Mr. Lloyd George.

In this respect, however, the critics are misinformed. The Lloyd George War Cabinet, which was, of course, itself a Committee, inherited and greatly extended the Committee system of its predecessors, and by the end of the war the number must have been between 150 and 200. For example, there were no less than 45 inter-allied Committees focusing ultimately into the Supreme War Council. After the re-establishment of the Committee of Imperial Defence the number was much reduced. No figures have been published of the number of Committees to-day, but it would be a fair guess that they are not less than in the last war. The systems in war and peace are virtually the same, except that in war the *tempo* is increased.

The fact is that there is in the last resort no alternative to Committees for the prompt despatch of business where the action of a number of different executive authorities has to be combined. Somehow or other the representatives of those who have to take action have to be got together round a table, conflicting difficulties have to be adjusted, and action concerted in an ordered sequence. The easiest way of doing this is to bring the parties together into a Committee.

Take, for example, a simple illustration—the despatch of supplies to a great ally, of which we have had much experience in the last and in the present war.

First the requirement has to be ascertained from the ally over a range of perhaps hundreds of items. Resources are not unlimited and the demands of other users—our own Navy, Army and Air Force, the civilian population, the Dominions, India and the Colonies and other allies—have to be ascertained and put into an order of priority. The stocks available, the present and future capacity of output, and the possibilities of expansion have then to be ascertained from the supply departments concerned, who themselves have to weigh up such matters as manufacturing capacity, machine tools, raw materials and labour (which brings in another Department, the Ministry of Labour). On these data a programme can be laid out. Next comes the transport of all this material by land and sea, and if shipping tonnage is tight, that may give the Ministry of Transport a difficult problem. The capacity of the ports of embarkation and of disembarkation, and of the railways serving them then comes into the picture. Often they require huge works to enable them to handle the programme. Then there comes an Admiralty problem—the provision of escorts for the protection of the convoys—and a closely connected Air Force problem—the provision of air cover.

In order to ensure that all those processes are properly examined, mistakes avoided, and the whole embodied rapidly in a concerted programme designed to avoid all possible delay, it is absolutely necessary to get together the representatives of every section concerned, so that each of them understands the plan into which he has to fit and exactly the part he has to play, and the dates at which he must be ready to take action. And the programme must be watched from day to day to ensure that nothing gets behindhand.

That means a Committee and perhaps Sub-Committees and Conferences as well. It is sheer nonsense to say that this means delay and passing on responsibility. A good chairman, who must of course be well acquainted with the policy of the War Cabinet, will never tolerate that. He will watch the situation every day, ever on the look out for a hitch, finding a solution for every difficulty, never allowing matters to stand still. He must also have a first-rate and prompt secretariat to act as his executive.

That is how Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues worked in the last war and their successors in the present war. Even in cases where questions were delegated to one or more members of the War Cabinet they had to proceed by calling into Conference or Committee those responsible for action in order to concert their arrangements.

Of course, the meetings must be carefully prepared for, fully documented, and often preceded by personal consultations so that all may go rapidly and smoothly. The truth is that the Committee system is only pernicious when it is badly run.

The supposed superman, who thinks he knows everything, refuses to call into counsel those who know the details and issues slapdash orders without proper investigation, usually lands his country and himself in a dreadful mess. The result often is great confusion. The right hand of the Government does not know what the left hand is doing. Order, counter-order and disorder follow. That is where the Dictators have failed. No enemy operation has approached the perfection of far-sighted planning and execution achieved on 'D' Day. We owe that to the concerted action of the Heads of Governments at their periodical meetings in Committee, the Combined Staff, working in Committee in Washington, the War Cabinet system, and especially the Chiefs of Staff Committee in London. To these must be added the brilliant work of the Commanders-in-Chief of the British and American Navies, Armies and Air Forces under General Eisenhower, and, of course, the valour and efficiency of the Forces, which result in large degree from well-concerted training and rehearsal.

[From "Methods of Work of Party Committees" by Mao Tse-tung, March 13, 1949, *Selected Works*, Vol. IV]

PARTY COMMITTEES, COMMUNIST STYLE

By Chairman Mao

Place problems on the table. Do not talk behind people's backs. Whenever problems arise, call a meeting, place the problems on the table for discussion, take some decisions and the problems will be

solved. If problems exist and are not placed on the table, they will remain unsolved for a long time and even drag on for years.

Notice of meetings should be given beforehand. In some places, meetings of cadres are called without first preparing reports and draft resolutions, and only when people have arrived for the meeting are makeshifts improvised; this is just like the saying, "Troops and horses have arrived, but food and fodder are not ready", and that is no good. Don't call a meeting in a hurry if the preparations are not completed.

Members of a Party committee should keep each other informed and exchange views on matters that have come to their attention. This is of great importance in achieving a common language. Some fail to do so and, like the people described by Lao Tzu, "do not visit each other all their lives, though the crowing of their cocks and the barking of their dogs are within hearing of each other."

Listen also to the mistaken views from below; it is wrong not to listen to them at all. Such views, however, are not to be acted upon but to be criticized.

Learn to "play the piano." In playing the piano all ten fingers are in motion; it won't do to move some fingers only and not others. But if all ten fingers press down at once, there is no melody. To produce good music, the ten fingers should move rhythmically and in co-ordination. A Party committee should keep a firm grasp on its central task and at the same time, around the central task, it should unfold the work in other fields.

The Party committee must not merely "grasp", but must "grasp firmly", its main tasks. One can get a grip on something only when it is grasped firmly, without the slightest slackening. Not to grasp firmly is not to grasp at all. Naturally, one cannot get a grip on something with an open hand. When the hand is clenched as if grasping something but is not clenched tightly, there is still no grip. Some of our comrades do grasp the main tasks, but their grasp is not firm and so they cannot make a success of their work. It will not do to have no grasp at all, nor will it do if the grasp is not firm.

Talks, speeches, articles and resolutions should all be concise and to the point. Meetings also should not go on too long.

[From *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Cabinet and the Presidency 1920–1933*, The Macmillan Company, 1952]

COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

By Herbert Hoover

There was a great deal of clatter from the Democrats about the "committees and commissions" with which I was supposed to have deluged

the country. As to this "dreadful plague," I seem to have been fairly moderate. Such bodies are of two kinds: those set up at government expense, and those informal groups of experienced, public-spirited citizens called by the President to advise him on special questions, who pay their own expenses. I created thirty-eight such committees, of which only seven received any appropriations, and four were permanent. Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Calvin Coolidge all showed a far larger score in their first four years.

Like some of my predecessors, I can claim to be a much misunderstood man on this question of committees and commissions. There is no more dangerous citizen than the person with a gift of gab, a crusading complex and a determination "to pass a law" as the antidote for all human ills. The most effective diversion of such an individual to constructive action and the greatest silencer on earth for foolishness is to associate him on a research committee with a few persons who have a passion for truth—especially if they pay their own expenses. I can now disclose the secret that I created a dozen committees for that precise purpose.

[From *American Scientist*, January 1951. Vol. 39, No. 1]

HOW NEWTON DISCOVERED THE LAW OF GRAVITATION

By James E. Miller

. . . These details have been collected from Newton's *Principia*, personal letters, notebooks and other papers, and a series of personal interviews arranged by a medium of the author's acquaintance.

In 1665 the young Newton became a professor of mathematics in the University of Cambridge, his alma mater. His devotion to his work and his capabilities as a teacher and friend of the student may be assumed without question. It is well to point out also that he was no dreamy, impractical inhabitant of an ivory tower. His services to his college went far beyond the mere act of classroom teaching. He was an able and active member of the college's curriculum committee, the board of the college branch of the Young Noblemen's Christian Association, the dean's advisory committee on scholarships and awards, the committee for discipline, the grounds committee, the publications committee, the ad hoc committee, and numerous other committees essential to the proper administration of a college in the seventeenth century. An exhaustive compilation of Newton's work along these lines reveals that, during a five-year period, he served on 379 committees, which investigated an aggregate of 7924 problems of campus life and solved 31 of them.

Newton the genius was yet a human being; and though, in energy and ability, he far surpassed the great majority of his fellow men, he found himself ultimately limited in his powers. His unselfish devotion to the important work of his committees absorbed so much time that he was constrained to turn more and more of his teaching duties over to one of his students. Eventually, when his substitute had proved his ability as a teacher, Newton turned all of the classroom work over to

him and was thus able to channel all his tremendous powers into the administrative work of the college.

One evening of a crowded day in the year 1680, a committee that was scheduled to meet at eleven o'clock, no earlier time being available, was unable to muster a quorum because of the sudden death from exhaustion of one of the older committee members. Every waking moment of Newton's time was so carefully budgeted that he found himself with nothing to do until the next committee meeting at midnight. So he took a walk—a brief stroll that altered the history of the world.

It was on this excursion into the night air of Cambridge that Newton was struck by a flash of insight which set off a chain of events culminating in his announcement of the law of gravitation to the world in 1686. The season was autumn. Many of the good citizens in the neighborhood of the modest Newton home had apple trees growing in their gardens, and the trees were laden with ripe fruit ready for the picking. Newton chanced to see a particularly succulent apple fall to the ground. His immediate reaction was typical of the human side of this great genius. He climbed over the garden wall, slipped the apple into his pocket, and climbed out again. As soon as he had passed well beyond that particular garden, he removed the apple from his pocket and began munching it. Then came inspiration. Without prelude of conscious thought or logical process of reasoning, there was suddenly formed in his brain the idea that the falling of an apple and the motions of planets in their orbits may be governed by the same universal law. Before he had finished eating the apple and discarded the core, Newton had formulated his hypothesis of the universal law of gravitation. By then it was three minutes before midnight, so he hurried off to the meeting of the Committee to Combat Opium Eating Among Students Without Nobility....

[From *Punch*, August 24, 1955, Messrs. Bradbury, Agnew & Co., Limited, London]

ROYAL COMMISSION

By Geoffrey Parsons

If you're pestered by critics and hounded by faction
To take some precipitate, positive action
The proper procedure, to take my advice, is
Appoint a Commission and stave off the crisis.
By shelving the matter you daunt opposition
And blunt its impatience by months of attrition,
Replying meanwhile, with a shrug and a smile,
"The matter's referred to a Royal Commission."

A Royal Commission is strictly impartial,
The pros and the cons it will expertly marshal
And one of its principal characteristics
Is getting bogged down in a sea of statistics.
So should you, perhaps, for inaction be chided
An answer to all men is aptly provided;
You simply explain, again and again,
"The Royal Commission has not yet decided."

Let the terms of its reference lack proper precision
That arguments lengthy may hold up decision,
And then, while they fumble with fact and with figure,
The conflict within the Commission grows bigger.
And so, when at last its report is provided,
If clamour for action has still not subsided,
You say with a pout "The matter's in doubt.
The Royal Commission is somewhat divided."

Thus, once a Commission its session commences,
All you have to do is to sit on your fences
No longer in danger of coming a cropper,
For prejudging its findings is highly improper.
When the subject's been held for so long in suspension
That it ceases to call forth debate and dissension,
Announce without fuss "There's no more to discuss.
The Royal Commission's retired on a pension."

[From *The Secretary of State*, The American Assembly, Columbia University, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960]

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES

By Don K. Price

During the second World War, especially as a result of the lessons in staff work they learned from their British colleagues, American staff officers began to make more use of interdepartmental committees. This was to be a time saver: instead of sending a paper around for several days to be initialled for a good many concurrences, the officer could take the problem into a committee and get agreement the same day. Washington was then full of draft plans for Cabinet secretariats and such machinery to run the committee system; about the time of the first Hoover Commission, I had quite a collection of such plans that had been prepared by Cabinet members, Washington lawyers, General Staff officers, professors, and mere civil servants like myself.

Now committees are becoming fair game for all the critics. They were praised too highly to begin with, and are given too much blame for some of our present difficulties. The crucial problem is not the committees, or the techniques of running their meetings. The real problem is the motives of the people who come to them, and those motives are usually determined by the issues, and the balance of power, between the Departments concerned. Nothing in the way of technical committee management can be as important as the question whether the departmental representatives are sent to the meeting to come to an agreement, or with instructions to prevent anything from happening. As every hardened bureaucrat knows, either can happen in interdepartmental, just as in international, committee meetings. But the basic trouble will not be rooted out by abolishing the committees. For the trouble is the relative independence of the federal departments and services and bureaus, with their roots in the independent Congressional committees and the special interest groups concerned, and the lack of a

system of top personnel with a government-wide sense of professional purpose. . . .

Along with the general distrust of committees has developed an awareness of a much more specific difficulty. This is a modern version of the old query, *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*, which, being freely translated, means "Who coordinates the coordinating committees?"

If I have complained about the insubordination of Executive Departments and the independence of Congressional committees, it was only to complain of an excess of a desirable quality. It is necessary to departmentalize a great operation, and impossible to do so without having great overlaps of interest. Hence it is necessary and desirable for strong and aggressive Department heads to state the case for their respective Departments, to see policy from their special points of view, and to be called to account by Congressional committees for their discharge of statutory responsibilities. The overlaps and inconsistencies in this process can be adjusted by political leadership, and tolerated in reasonable degree. If an interdepartmental committee is set up to help the President adjust those overlaps or inconsistencies, it can be quite useful. But if such a committee acquires legal status, *esprit de corps*, and jurisdictional interests of its own, and is looked to by the Congress and the public as the source of policy, the only outcome can be a muddle.

For a Department head assumes political responsibility to the President and the Congress not only for thinking great thoughts about policy, but for seeing that they are put into effect. That is a sobering discipline. But a committee that has a public and statutory status is another matter. It acquires an influence of its own even though it has no responsibility for getting things done, and its responsibility even for advice is diffused. Even if its statutory function is nominally advisory, it feels it has something of a right not to have its advice disregarded, and the executive to whom it reports is never able to decide against its advice without considering the political consequences. Moreover, the formality and slowness of committee procedures are enhanced by the political self-importance that goes with formal status. Most troublesome of all, it is even more difficult to distinguish between the terms of reference of committees than the functions of departments, for the policy questions that ought to be considered by any committee are so broad that they must overlap with the interests of other committees in related fields.

This overlap is only a minor technical problem to be taken care of by good staff work, if the committees in question are merely auxiliary to a responsible system of executive organization—that is to say, if a responsible executive sets them up without fanfare, and can change their assignments and membership and disregard their advice when it suits him to do so. But if they acquire a right in the eyes of the public and of the Congress to formulate policy in a given field—and statutory status can hardly mean anything else, no matter how carefully that status is limited to an advisory role—the channels of executive responsibility to the electorate and the Congress are inevitably confused.

The Secretary of State has been the chief loser from this tendency to set up highly formalized committees at the policy level. It may have been inevitable, since the Department of State at the end of the second

World War was certainly not equipped by its experience and traditions to become, in effect, the President's chief coordinating agency for Executive Branch policy. Since something had to be done, in several important fields, the result was statutory committee machinery: the National Security Council in 1947, the National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Problems (NAC) in 1945, and in 1958 the National Aeronautics and Space Council.

[From testimony before the Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, United States Senate, 86th Cong., 2nd sess., Hearing, February 23, 1960]

A PERFORMANCE AUDIT

By Robert A. Lovett

I think appearances before the congressional committees are a part, and a very important part, of the responsibility when you take your oath of office. It is a very time-consuming necessity. There is no question about that.

I learned a very painful but useful lesson during the war when, having gotten rather beaten down by consistent appearances before various committees of the Congress, I suggested to Senator O'Mahoney, after one of the Appropriations Committee meetings of the Senate, that this was getting to be terribly time-consuming and exhausting, and it was very hard to keep up with, and couldn't something be done about it.

He said, in effect, just breathe deeply and this will pass off in time; go back and do your job and do not worry about this aspect of it. Which I did.

I subsequently made an inspection trip to Germany, and in the process was presented with the information which had been collected by the teams which were sent in to question the leading German industrialists and war production leaders. One of these was Dr. Albert Speer. It was his opinion, expressed to our examiners, that one of the reasons that the German economy collapsed and that the Wehrmacht was left inadequately supplied in the latter days was because under a dictatorship, once a department head got the nod from Hitler, he went ahead as a little dictator and rode his particular hobby without criticism. There was no performance audit run on him as his program continued.

The best example of that was when they got their jet fighters. They were so impressed by our use of the fighter bomber that they tried to turn their interceptor jet fighter into a fighter bomber and of course, failed because of the difference in thrust as compared with propeller on takeoffs.

It impressed me so much as I went further into it that I found it necessary to come up and eat humble pie before Senator O'Mahoney. I said then if I had to choose between having a congressional committee breathe on the back of my neck as a form of performance audit and getting in the position as a department executive of riding some particular conviction or belief to the point of defeat I would choose a

congressional hearing. And I still feel that way about it. Appearing before committees is time-consuming, it is exhausting, sometimes terribly irritating, but on the whole, as long as we have our form of governmental system, I think it is a necessary part of it.

The time-consuming part is the duplication of hearings, of walking from one side of the Capitol to the other before committees interested in the same material. If you could appear before combined committees, as, for example, in the case of the Marshall plan, that accelerated the consideration appreciably.

[From testimony before the Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, United States Senate, 86th Cong., 2nd sess., Hearing, June 2, 1960]

COMMITTEE KILLING

By Averell Harriman

In a government as large and as complicated as ours, there is no alternative to the interdepartmental committee to coordinate policy and action. The reason for the existence of each such committee, however, should be kept under constant review. There should be a committee-killing outfit to review constantly the need for existence. Many have become a waste of time. Many were established when a need existed but now serve no apparent purpose except to give social outlet to staff members.

There is nothing a member of a staff likes to do more than leave his office, quit working and sit around, smoke his pipe and exchange views with other departments.

[From *Present at the Creation*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1969]

THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

By Dean Acheson

The capacity for decision does not produce, of itself, wise decisions. For that a President needs a better eye and more intuition and coordination than the best batters in the major leagues. If his score is not far better than theirs, he will be rated a failure. But the metaphor is inadequate; it leaves out the necessary creativity. A president is not merely coping with the deliveries of others. He is called upon to influence and move to some degree his own country and the world around it to a purpose that he envisions. The metaphor I have often used and find most enlightening is that of the gardener who must use the forces of life, growth and nature, to his purpose—suppressing some, selecting, encouraging, developing others. The central role of directing so great an effort of imagination, planning, and action cannot come, as some seem to imagine, from such spontaneous intuition among the hired hands as guides a flock of shorebirds in flight. It must come from the head gardener. If he tries to do it all himself—to "be his own Secretary of State" or Defense, as the phrase goes—he will soon become too exhausted and immersed in manure and weed-killer to direct anything wisely.

President Truman had a passion for orderly procedure and a deep, if simple, idea of how to attain it. Although many presidents had been lawyers, none of them—notably his immediate predecessor—utilized in administration the law's most fundamental procedure. For centuries courts have required all parties in interest to be present before the court at the same time with the right to be heard and to hear one another. President Truman introduced this procedure into executive administration. To it he added an equally ancient, and in administration equally novel, practice of law: the decision was immediately reduced to writing.

The vehicle for these innovations was the National Security Council. This was created in the Truman years and reached its highest usefulness during them. It was kept small; aides and brief-carriers were excluded, a practice—unfortunately not continued—that made free and frank debate possible. Those present came prepared to present their views themselves, and had previously filed memoranda. Matters brought before the council were of importance worthy of the personal attention of the highest officers and decision by the President. In succeeding administrations practice deteriorated in two ways. The first was toward a desire by the President for "agreed recommendations." This was a deathblow. Agreement can always be reached by increasing the generality of the conclusion. When this is done, the form is preserved but only the illusion of policy is created. The President gives his hierarchical blessing to platitudes. To perform his real duty must involve the anguish of decision, and to decide one must know the real issues. These have to be found and flushed like birds from a field. The adversary process is the best bird dog.

Another way in which a President's role can become diluted and weakened is through yielding to the temptation to take over and run all operations. This not only wastes a vast amount of time and effort by a committee system for executing every important task and making all minor decisions, but limits, by narrowing, the President's attention to a few subjects that he allows to absorb him. The administrative tasks of the great departments of government are beyond the capacity of even the President's large personal staff to assume. To attempt to do so impairs both the broad direction of national affairs and the specific administration of particular parts of the whole. President Truman's strength lay not only in knowing that he was the President and that the buck stopped with him, but that neither he nor the White House staff was the Secretary of State, or Defense, or Treasury, or any other. To him the heads of departments were secretaries of state and members of his staff, as Lord Burghley was to the first Elizabeth. He made the ultimate decisions upon full and detailed knowledge, leaving to lieutenants the execution.

The decision made in writing was also an innovation of the Truman administration in this country, though Mr. Truman was not the first head of government to employ it. On July 19, 1940, Prime Minister Churchill sent a note to the Secretary of the Cabinet: "Let it be very clearly understood that all directions emanating from me are made in writing, or should be immediately afterwards confirmed in writing, and that I do not accept any responsibility for matters relating to national defence on which I am alleged to have given decisions, unless they are recorded in writing." His Military Assistant Secretary, Sir Ian Jacob, adds his comment: "Much of the conduct of the war was

determined by the personal habits of the Prime Minister. Everything had to be done in writing, and he made it clear at the outset that nobody who said that the Prime Minister had ordered this or that was to be heeded unless the Prime Minister had written so in black on white."

President Roosevelt has been praised for a supposedly deliberate secrecy in consultation and vagueness in decision that left policy fluid, relationships uncertain, and great freedom of maneuver for the President. In the currently fashionable phrase, his constant purpose was "to keep his options open." Flexibility in maneuver may be highly desirable in certain circumstances, but when it leaves one's own and friendly forces and commanders uncertain of the nature and purpose of the operation or of who has responsibility for what, it can be a handicap.

[From *The Revolt Against the Masses*, Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1971]

THE PROBLEM OF COMMITTEES

By Aaron Wildavsky

Whenever anything goes wrong in the federal government, especially when some interests and their supporters in academic life do not get the action they want, someone is sure to say that the difficulty lies with all those interdepartmental committees. In fact, when a scapegoat is needed for almost any purpose the proliferation of committees is a handy target. All the noise to the contrary notwithstanding, however, the problem of committees, when posed in this fashion, is strictly illusory.

Consider two of the most elementary propositions about national political administration: (1) most important issues involve several agencies; (2) departments and bureaus represent somewhat independent areas of influence to the extent that the President frequently cannot command their obedience but must work through persuasion, bargaining, and conflict. It follows that "government by committee" is inevitable, for only if the expertise and support of various agencies is not necessary can they be bypassed. No doubt a person with a pathological fear of committees may avoid them by going around serially to all the agencies represented and securing the essential clearances. This process contains the essence of the committee principle—clearance; it just takes longer and requires a more athletic person.

Putting the blame on the committee system may serve to hide the fact that the Chief Executive does not want to act. It is an error to assume that the only purpose of committees is to make decisions, and that something must be wrong with them if this purpose is not served. Committees may and do serve many other purposes as the following brief enumeration should demonstrate. Committees may

1. Delay decisions until the President and other participants are ready to act.
2. Postpone interdepartmental conflicts by insisting on further discussion before the conflict spills over into the public arena.
3. Kill a proposed action by keeping the matter under consideration endlessly with no intent to do anything about it. This is the administrative version of the filibuster.

4. Divorce the President from an issue when he is unwilling to use up his influence but is willing to accept whatever agreement may be bargained out by the interested agencies. In the absence of widespread agreement among the participants, the result may be inaction or a vastly watered down policy. Sometimes the conferees may decide that some agreement is better than none and will come up with something. Whatever happens or fails to happen the President has succeeded in avoiding unwanted involvement.

5. Spread the responsibility where no one participant feels able to assume the risk. In bureaucratic jargon a request to "initial" a document is often interpreted as meaning, "let's spread the risk." Rather than necessarily inhibiting action, a committee mode of operation may facilitate it by permitting the sharing of risks and obligations and, if necessary, of the sanctions which may follow.

6. Add legitimacy to an outcome, thus increasing the commitment to abide by it.

7. Increase the bargaining power of the President through a version of what T. C. Schelling has called the commitment tactic. By claiming that a committee has limited his freedom, or that he has given it a solemn pledge, a President may be able to induce others to accept his position since he has limited his ability to accept theirs.

To spell out in detail the differences in outcomes attributable to varieties of interdepartmental committees would be a worthy undertaking. To ask that they be eliminated, however, is to suggest a radical change in the national political system in which the pluralism of interests in the federal bureaucracy which gives them life would be undermined. What difference would it make if interdepartmental committees were abolished? A great deal, almost too much, since this would have been accompanied by a change to another political system in order to be effective. Very little, if things remain as they are because some equivalent of the committees would be certain to appear so long as agencies represent interests which cannot be coerced.

[From *Solzhenitsyn: A Documentary Record*, Edited by Leopold Labedz, Harper & Row, Inc., New York, 1971]

PROTEST AGAINST EXPULSION

By Alexander Solzhenitsyn

On November 4, 1969, the Ryazan section of the Soviet Writers' Union resolved to expel Alexander Solzhenitsyn from the Writers' Union of the USSR. The vote was 5 to 1. Solzhenitsyn cast the one vote against expulsion. Subsequently, in the absence of Solzhenitsyn, the resolution of expulsion was endorsed by the Secretariat of the Board of the Soviet Writers' Union. On November 12 Solzhenitsyn wrote the following letter to the Secretariat of the Soviet Writers' Union.

Shamelessly trampling underfoot your own statutes, you have expelled me in my absence, as at the sound of a fire-alarm, without even sending me a summons by telegram, without even giving me the four hours I needed to come from Ryazan and be present at the meeting.

You have shown openly that the RESOLUTION preceded the 'discussion'. Was it less awkward for you to invent new charges in my absence? Were you afraid of being obliged to grant me ten minutes for my answer? I am compelled to substitute this letter for those ten minutes.

Blow the dust off the clock. Your watches are behind the times. Throw open the heavy curtains which are so dear to you—you do not even suspect that the day has already dawned outside. It is no longer that stifling, that sombre, irrevocable time when you expelled Akhmatova in the same servile manner. It is not even that timid, frosty period when you expelled Pasternak, whining abuse at him. Was this shame not enough for you? Do you want to make it greater? But the time is near when each of you will seek to erase his signature from today's resolution.

Blind leading the blind! You do not even notice that you are wandering in the opposite direction from the one you yourselves announced. At this time of crisis you are incapable of suggesting anything constructive, anything good for our society, which is gravely sick—only your hatred, your vigilance, your 'hold on and don't let go'.

Your clumsy articles fall apart; your vacant minds stir feebly—but you have no arguments. You have only your voting and your administration. And that is why neither Sholokhov nor any of you, of all the lot of you, dared reply to the famous letter of Lydia Chukovskaya, who is the pride of Russian publicistic writing. But the administrative pincers are ready for her: how could she allow people to read her book [*The Deserted House*] when it has not been published? Once the AUTHORITIES have made up their minds not to publish you—then stifle yourself, choke yourself, cease to exist, and don't give your stuff to anyone to read!

They are also threatening to expel Lev Kopelev,[1] the front-line veteran, who has already served ten years in prison although he was completely innocent. Today he is guilty: he intercedes for the persecuted, he revealed the hallowed secrets of his conversation with an influential person, he disclosed an OFFICIAL SECRET. But why do you hold conversations like these which have to be concealed from the people? Were we not promised fifty years ago that never again would there be any secret diplomacy, secret talks, secret and incomprehensible appointments and transfers, that the masses would be informed of all matters and discuss them openly?

'The enemy will overhear'—that is your excuse. The eternal, omnipresent 'enemies' are a convenient justification for your functions and your very existence. As if there were no enemies when you promised immediate openness. But what would you do without 'enemies'? You could not live without 'enemies'; hatred, a hatred no better than racial hatred, has become your sterile atmosphere. But in this way a sense of our single, common humanity is lost and its doom is accelerated. Should the antarctic ice melt tomorrow, we would all become a sea of drowning humanity, and into whose heads would you then be drilling your concepts of 'class struggle'? Not to speak of the time when the few

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[1] Lev Kopelev (born 1912), a writer and critic, is an expert in German literature. He is a former inmate of the labour camps under Stalin. Rehabilitated after 1956, he has now been again expelled from the Party and dismissed from his post in the Institute of Art History to which he was previously re-admitted. Anna Akhmatova was expelled from the Writers' Union in 1946 after a virulent attack on her by Zhdanov. Boris Pasternak was expelled from it in 1958 after a campaign against him for the publication of *Doctor Zhivago*.

surviving bipeds will be wandering over a radioactive earth, dying.

It is high time to remember that we belong first and foremost to humanity. And that man has distinguished himself from the animal world by THOUGHT and SPEECH. And these, naturally, should be FREE. If they are put in chains, we shall return to the state of animals.

OPENNESS, honest and complete OPENNESS—that is the first condition of health in all societies, including our own. And he who does not want this openness for our country cares nothing for his fatherland and thinks only of his own interest. He who does not wish this openness for his fatherland does not want to purify it of its diseases, but only to drive them inwards, there to fester.

12 November 1969

A. SOLZHENITSYN.