
Citizens not Consumers:
Or, “give me liberty or give
me an iPad”, Part 2

James Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*

What is a democracy?

- Rule by citizens or a mob?
- H.L. Mencken thought a mob
- The Students for a Democratic Society thought that citizens were capable of being rational, civic-minded individuals.
- What makes a citizen? Practice

Citizenship in the United States

- “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.”

-Fourteenth Amendment to US Constitution

- But is there more that is required?
- Must Americans act like citizens to be citizens?
- How does one act like a citizen?

Students for a Democratic Society

- Student Activist Movement
- Part of the “New Left”
- Most famous member: Tom Hayden
- Created the “Port Huron Statement” in 1962
- Protested Vietnam War, racial discrimination, public apathy with politics
- Ended in 1969
- Splinter group went on to form the “Weather Underground”
 - Identified by FBI as a domestic terrorist group.

What is their Problem?

- Bureaucratization
- Cold War
- Too much administration by big shots
- Too much cynicism and not enough values
- Not enough democracy
- Not enough community
- Not enough “power to the people”

The Port Huron Statement

- “We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit.”
- “...an effort rooted in the ancient, still unfulfilled conception of man attaining determining influence over his circumstances of life.”
 - Power is the ability to work one’s will in the world.

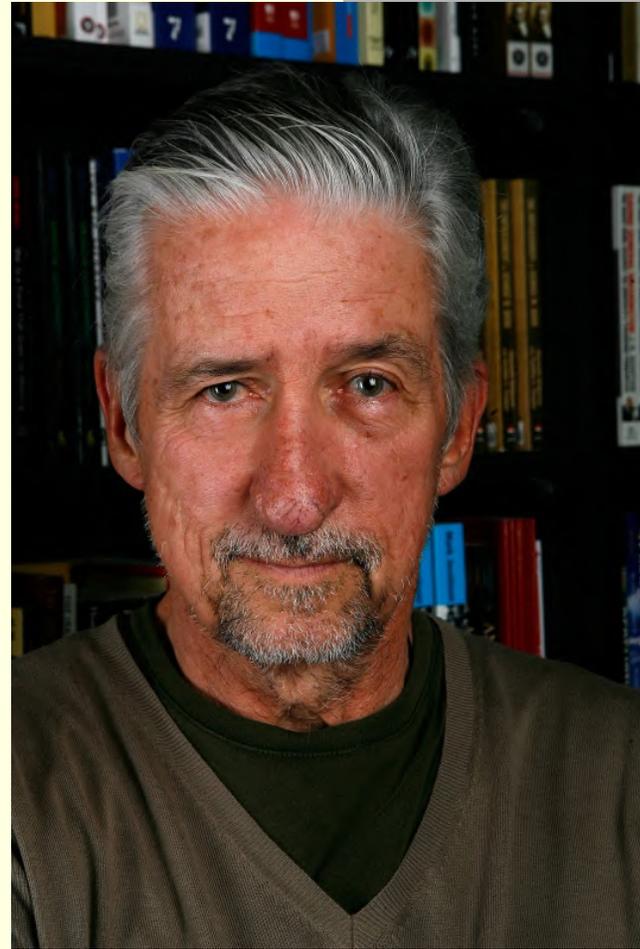
The Port Huron Statement

- “Doubt has replaced hopefulness -- and men act out a defeatism that is labeled realistic.”
- “Men have unrealized potential for self-cultivation, self-direction, self-understanding, and creativity.”

The Port Huron Statement

- “Human relationships should involve **fraternity** and honesty.”
 - Remember the cry of the French revolutionaries, “liberté, égalité, fraternité”
- Perhaps here is part of a missing piece of citizenship...the idea of fraternity, brotherhood, community.
- A citizen is a member of a community.

Tom Hayden (1939-)



Tom Hayden

- Drafted the “Port Huron Statement” in 1962
- President of SDS from 1962-63.
- Took part in the “Siege of Chicago” in 1968
- California State Assemblyman, 1982-1992
- California State Senator, 1992-2000
 - CS Assembly Bill SB 1785 “The Hayden Act”

Participatory Democracy

- “As a social system we seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation, governed by two central aims: that the individual share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life; that society be organized to encourage independence in men and provide the media for their common participation.”
- “common participation” = rights & duties

Participatory Democracy

- “that decision-making of basic social consequence be carried on by **public groupings**;
- that politics be seen positively, as the art of **collectively** creating an acceptable pattern of social relations;
- that politics has the function of **bringing people out of isolation and into community**, thus being a necessary, though not sufficient, means of finding meaning in personal life;”

Representative Democracy

- Don't we already have a democracy?
 - Not exactly. In some ways yes, in some ways no.
- Better to say we have a representative democracy.
 - Government is controlled by people but through elected representation
- Much of our democratic decision-making has been delegated.
 - Congress
 - Bureaucracies
 - Courts
 - Central Bank

Examples of democracy

- Participatory democracy seeks an active rather than a passive citizenry with power and consent more directly linked to citizens.
- Examples of participatory democracy:
 - Party Caucuses
 - Such as in Iowa in January
 - Town Councils
 - Referendums
 - Civil Society

Life without Institutions

- So, what's wrong with democracy?
- Problems organizing?
 - within the SDS for example
- Lacks competence?
- Lacks secrecy?
- Lacks flexibility?
- Lacks credibility?

Two Undemocratic Institutions

- The Supreme Court
 - Judicial review (constitutionalism) allows unelected judges to overturn laws.
 - Purpose: “To bind Ulysses to the mast”
 - To protect minority rights
 - To protect majorities from themselves

Two Undemocratic Institutions

- The Federal Reserve
 - Unelected central bank sets monetary policy
 - Purpose: To keep inflation and unemployment low
 - Independence removes monetary policy from bargaining between interest groups
 - i.e. debtors vs. creditors
 - i.e. importers vs. exporters
 - Independence removes monetary policy from electioneering
 - i.e. Politicians goosing the system during election years

But!

- What about accountability?
- What about majority wishes?

- The Supreme Court upheld segregation until the 1960s.
- The Federal Reserve has delivered low inflation but high unemployment since 2008.

But!

- In addition, the more powers we delegate the less we retain.
- If practice makes perfect, what happens when we don't practice being citizens?
- The challenge is to combine vibrant, full citizenship with institutions capable of creating a working government.
 - This is the challenge that faced the founders
 - Led to the first factions in American politics.
 - Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists

Association

- One answer is through a strong civil society.

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or **the right of the people peaceably to assemble**, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

-First Amendment of the US Constitution

Association

“Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition, are **forever forming associations**. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types--religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute. . . . Nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America. ”

-Alexis de Tocqueville

Associations and Trust

- Historically, a strength of American society has been the civic-mindedness of its citizens arising out of our associations with one another.

Civil Society

- Ties that bind and teach
- Horizontal and vertical ties
 - Vertical: (desires obedience)
 - Government and citizen
 - Boss and worker
 - Father and son
 - Horizontal: (desires cooperation)
 - Rotarians
 - Catholics
 - National Rifle Association
 - Democrats

Institutions of Civil Society

- Churches
- Newspapers
- Book Clubs
- Bowling Leagues
- The Elks
- Sierra Club
- Unions
- PTA
- Coffeehouses

Benefits of Civil Society

- We come to recognize ourselves in others
- Teaches people to practice democracy
- Teaches people to trust one another
- Allows for coordination and cooperation
 - Builds “social capital”
- Helps to make democracy work
- Helps to make countries safer and richer

Social Capital

- Social capital is “a sociological concept which refers to the value of social relations and the role of cooperation and confidence to get collective or economic results.”
- It refers to the community’s accumulated ability to trust and cooperate with one another.
 - Many institutions depend upon trust
 - Science, education, capital markets, elections, etc...
- Social Capital creates a more livable society capable of creating the “good life” for humans.

The Political Animal

- The “good life” for humans is in community.
- Humans are “zoon politikon” –polis animals
 - Polis = city, community
 - Citizen = member of a city, community
- We are fully human as citizens participating in our community.
 - We become more fully ourselves together as citizens.

What is our soil?

“Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing.”

-John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

- Our community is the soil where we develop as individuals.

Who are we as citizens?

- To a large extent we are the product of :
 - Each Other
 - Social capital
 - Social emotions
 - Culture
 - Economy
 - Ourselves
 - Our work ethic
 - Our beliefs
 - Our history

Participatory Citizens

- Participatory democracy aims to create a richer, fuller sense of citizenship.
 - Both the rights and the duties.
 - You have the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”
 - You have the duty to create a community where this is possible.
- Citizens shape their community; consumers use it
- Our community is the accumulated history of those who have come before us.

We are our History

“History does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do”

-James Baldwin

POL 110J

- The purpose of this course is to examine the ways in which political power and participation – *what it means to be a citizen* – have been contested over the course of American history.



What does it mean to be an American?

“It is peculiarly easy to become an American. The adjective provides no reliable information about the origins, histories, connections, or cultures of those whom it designates.”

-Michael Walzer

- Is this true?

What is America?

“The promise of America was born in the 18th century out of the bold conviction that we are all created equal. It was extended and preserved in the 19th century, when our nation spread across the continent, saved the union and abolished the scourge of slavery. Then, in turmoil and triumph, that promise exploded onto the world stage to make this the American Century. America became the world’s mightiest industrial power; saved the world from tyranny in two world wars and a long Cold War; and time and again, reached across the globe to millions who longed for the blessings of liberty.”

-William Jefferson Clinton

What is America?

"There is nothing wrong in America that can't be fixed with what is right in America."

-William Jefferson Clinton

What is America?

“America is still a radically unfinished society...”

-Michael Walzer

- America is what we make it.
- Get to work.

The Beginning

