

THE ALTERNATIVE:

TO BARE THE WITNESS AND THE TRUTH

Published remarkably without regard to race, color, creed,
or (most redundantly of all) national origin -- the question of
sex is still in committee.

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NOTICE

This issue of The Alternative has
been pre-dated by one month to give
distributors more time to place it on
newsstands. The April dateline,
therefore, does not mean that you
have missed the March issue; it
means only that what would have
been the March issue is datelined
one month ahead. Subscribers will
still receive the full term of their
subscriptions. Also, the numerical
sequence remains unchanged; this
issue, No. 5, follows the last issue,
datelined February, which was issue
No. 4.--Eds.

Editorial I

Anti-Semitism in the 1970s

Anti-Semitism in America is not a
fashionable concern. So why discuss it?
When a society loses confidence in its
principles, it often loses sight of its virtues.
When its history is viewed as a succession
of errors and evils its past successes will
go unrecognized and its contemporary
realities misperceived.

Consider the following: Not long ago at
Marquette University, six Indian students
objected to the school's symbol "The
Warriors." They trotted out the usual
transmogrified claims of racism, and after
little debate an apprehensive ad-
ministration changed the offending
symbol. Further, it removed all pictures of
Indians from university buildings. An
(continued on page 19)

• From the world of sport we hear that
Mr. Joe Frazier beat Muhammed Ali to
retain the heavyweight boxing cham-
pionship of the world, but in the World
Championship Worm Races in Brighton,
England, Wippie Willie II was upset by
Toy Token Tom. The eight-inch thorough-
bred electrified the crowd by covering the
two-foot plate glass course of the Brighton
Worm Prix in one minute and seven
seconds—sixty-eight seconds under the
record held by Wippie Willie II's alleged
sire, the late Wippie Willie I. Senator
Edward (Teddy) Kennedy got his drivers
license back, and the Apollo 14 astronauts
returned from their successful moon
mission.

• South Vietnamese troops penetrated
deeper still into Laos and Cambodia,
severing the Ho Chi Minh Trail, despite
spunky resistance. By the end of the
first week in March, American officials
had admitted the loss of sixty helicopters
on support missions over Laos and
Cambodia. But there was good news from
the 360th Tactical Electronic Warfare
Squadron when it announced that the
entire crew of Captain Craig Smith's EC-47
Skytrain is named Smith. The Associated
Press carried the story.

• And Presidential hopeful George
McGovern, the man the New Republic has
called "too decent" for the presidency and
the man who has promised to bring
"candor and reason" back to political
discourse, showed that he is also
somewhat of a scholar when he put the
United States' bombing of Indochina into

perspective, essaying it the "most bar-
baric act that's been committed by any
modern power since the death of Adolph
Hitler."

• On 1 March anti-war demonstrators
bombed the capitol; another bomb was
exploded in the New School for Social
Research. Mr. Peter Knutson, an eighteen-
year-old freshman at Stanford, divulged to
the Senate Armed Services Committee his
findings that the Senators had betrayed
the Constitution, committed hypocrisy and
aroused the hatred of young people by
forcing them to fight in Vietnam. Senator
Strom Thurmond walked out in the midst
of Mr. Knutson's discourse.

• There was unrest at Columbia
University again this time over those
bombings in Laos, and during an anti-war
demonstration at Stanford pacifists shot
two students as they stood by the
headquarters of a conservative-libertarian
student organization.

• At Northwestern University Mr. Nixon
was burned but only in effigy. Senator
Fulbright expressed displeasure over the
bombings, offering the observation that to
send American troops into Laos would
probably be "illegal". And a band of anti-
war protesters announced plans to get
what they called a "People's Peace
Treaty" placed on ballots across the
country in what was described as a "new
attempt to end the Vietnam war." A
spokesman for a group calling itself the
National Student Association said they
wanted this action to be "a grass roots
(continued on page 22)

THE

ALTERNATIVE

April, 1971

Superiority of Federalism

Gordon Tullock

In the early days of the Nixon administration many thoughtful persons and many jackasses spent a great deal of time ruminating over the New Federalism. Some dismissed it as mere political fustian. Others doubted federalism practicable in a complex post-industrial state. Still others felt federalism would lead to birth defects if injected into the drinking water. Many college students were especially chary of a New Federalism, for political science departments across the country have for years attitudinized their students to disdain decentralization.

Today, the conventional wisdom is in an alembic. The political scientist, Robert Dahl, speaking some years ago at a meeting of the American Political Science Association expressed an incipient dissatisfaction with centralization. Then Peter Drucker, in *THE AGE OF DISCONTINUITY*, arrestingly catalogued the limitations of centralized government. Both theoretically and in practice big government has become a mess. The Post Office has been in need of liberation for years, yet bureaucracy would not loose its hold. The Welfare machine is the oddest and most wasteful contraption of all time. Of every dollar appropriated for the poor, only a few cents ever reaches its destination. Even the military is fraught with inefficiency. As Drucker says all big government has shown in the past thirty or forty years is that, "It can wage war. And it can inflate the currency. Other things it can promise, but only rarely accomplish." Practically speaking, the basic problem with governmental enterprises like Welfare and the Post Office is that unless you can control the habits of the poor and the volume of mail, you have to adapt your programs to changing situations—governmental bureaucracy simply does not allow for such innovation. If the central government decides to assist fatherless families and the result is increased desertion, a withering of family life and unimagined welfare costs, the whole nation will be inflicted with one bureaucracy's shortsightedness. But, what if there were fifty bureaucracies experimenting with solutions to the problems of government? Some, of course, would be disastrous, but others would certainly be successful. And, it is a lot easier to leave George Wallace's Alabama and take up citizenship in Ronald Reagan's California than to imigrate to Switzerland.

These and similar considerations have impressed us with the validity of federalism. Below Professor Gordon Tullock of the Center for Study of Public Choice at Virginia Polytechnic Institute cogently essays the benefits of a renewed federalism.

Perhaps the oldest scientific argument for a federal form of government is the one that John Quincy Adams used when he was ambassador to England to convert that compulsive centralist, Jeremy Bentham. Under a federal form of government it is possible to experiment with new techniques without much cost. As Adams pointed out, if Alabama has an idea for a new way of dealing with burglary, it can implement it. Massachusetts can watch and, if it works, adopt the same procedure. If it does not work in Alabama, Massachusetts has lost nothing. Clearly this argument would apply with even greater force to the some eighty thousand local governments than to the fifty states.

In recent times, this particular argument has been strengthened by the development of modern statistical techniques. In many cases, different state governments or different local governments follow policies which make it possible to statistically test the efficiency of different policies.

For example, it is almost orthodox in criminology that punishment does not deter crime. As it happens, however, different states impose different amounts of punishment upon different crimes. Further, the crime rates differ from state to state. The statistical problem is difficult but has been solved, and statistical analyses based on these data indicate quite clearly that imprisonment does serve as a deterrent to crime. There is an inverse correlation between the frequency with which any type of crime is perpetrated and the length and likelihood of prison sentence on that particular type of crime.

A somewhat more recent argument for federalism, one which Jeremy Bentham was not impressed by, is that it permits individuals to exercise better control over their governments. If you are one of seventy million voters voting in a national election, you have less influence *per se* on the outcome than you have as one of, say, one and one-half million voters in a state election or ten thousand voters in a local

election. You could, therefore, anticipate that government policies would be more closely adjusted to your preferences in local government agencies than in national government agencies.

As far as we can see, this theoretical proposition is true. It is somewhat obscured by the national media which give much more attention to the national scene than to local matters. As a result, voters in state and local elections frequently find it very hard to get information about the behavior of their government. Further, it must be said that recent mathematical investigations seem to indicate that this is basically a rather small factor. Only in those cases where the population of a state (like Utah with the Mormons) or local government is quite different from the population of the nation as a whole, do you get major differences caused by differences in taste. Still, it is clear that there is some gain to be made here, even if it is not a massive one.

The third and most recently discovered advantage of federalism waited upon the widespread use of the automobile before it became of major importance. Local government permits individuals to "vote with their feet." I can select the suburb around a major city which best provides a combination of public services and taxes. Thus my choice of where I live or where I establish a business is determined partly by market considerations and partly by my consideration of the political situations in various places. This same phenomenon on a larger scale occurs between states. A number of southern states, for example, have established domestic policies which are particularly suitable for industrial development and have, therefore, obtained very rapid rates of growth. This, in a way, is a reaction to the previous situation. In the years immediately after the Civil War, most southern states — as a result of Reconstruction — had local policies which were averse to economic development and hence fell behind the rest of the nation.

The importance of this phenomenon is only now beginning to be fully recognized. Recent mathematical work, in fact, seems to indicate that if you have a number of government units operating close enough together so that the citizens can readily move from one to another, the form of government in those units becomes relatively unimportant. The civil servants and elected representatives who run many