

The original documents are located in Box D16, folder “Inter-Parliamentary Union, Belgrade, September 19, 1963” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. The Council donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Speech by The Honorable Gerald B. Ford, Jr. before the Inter-Parliamentary Union at Belgrade, September 19, 1963

Mr. Chairman

Our subject matter at this session, "Representation of Social and Economic Interests in the National Legislature," is of the utmost significance in the years ahead -- perhaps more so than ^{for the preservation of parliaments} ever before. The basic question, however, is how best these objectives can be accomplished. *Utopia is our aim - but achievement will vary - country by country - some nations*

I hope I may be forgiven if I sound a national note, but in my country this problem was recognized from the ^{very founding of our nation} outset. James Madison, perhaps the chief architect of our constitution, ~~wrote~~ in Number 10 of The Federalist, in which he was arguing for the adoption of that historic document, said: "A landed interest, the manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a monied interest, with many lesser interests, grows up of necessity in civilized nations and divides them into different sentiments and views. The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operation of the government."

will need more change some less. Let me say how it is the pleasure represented by people to make these changes. The EXEC & the SOUV should not be moved

in the late 18th century

This clash of economic interest groups which Madison discussed is still with us. Quite frankly, it invigorates our politics in the United States. One of the chief functions of our political party system is to blunt the severity of this clash, to serve as a funnel through which competing interests may be moulded into a single viewpoint. *We have a strong two party system with wide professional, economic & social participation.*

Admittedly Functional organizations such as labor unions, management organizations, agricultural associations and professional groups must find expression in our various parliaments if representative ~~institutions~~ ^{INSTITUTIONS} are to be truly meaningful.



Mr. Ford, page two - 9/19/63

Specific parliamentary representation according to significant economic pressure groups is one way to accomplish this aim. *This would be impractical + highly unprobable in our country.*

~~Another leading American political leader, during the first half of the 19th century, John C. Calhoun, proposed in his "Disquisition on Government" that government can become the instrument through which one interest can oppress and impoverish the others. To avoid this possibility, Calhoun suggested the powers of government be divided and distributed in such a way that each division or interest, through its appropriate organization, be given either a concurrent voice in making and executing the laws, or a veto on their execution. This is Calhoun's doctrine of concurrent majority, in which ordinary suffrage and ordinary representation would be supplemented by what amounts to functional representation. He argued that in this way the representative process would afford greater protection for all, and in essence, greater justice.~~

~~On the other hand, I am informed that different versions of functional representation were used by the Fascist regime in Italy and by the Weimar Republic in Germany as well. Some modern-day theorists in government argue that lobbying organizations in America are a form of functional representation.~~

although I concede such organizations are helpful in providing information
As I see it, this is stretching the point to a considerable degree *and lobbyists*
in America are not in any way whatsoever an official part of ~~the~~ or an adjunct
to our government. For further clarification, I should say such groups are
controlled in many ways by legislation and conceivably may be more so in the
future.

*for both
the
executive
&
legislative
branches
of govt.*



Mr. Ford, page three - 9/19/63

Despite the previous attempts to put into practice functional representation in government, despite the theories of some contemporary political writers, the overwhelming weight of the evidence on hand argues convincingly against the adoption of this approach to ~~the~~, just and effective representation in our modern day parliamentary systems.

For example, elected delegates representing specific units of society such as agricultural or industrial workers, or management, would obviously possess far too narrow a focus on the multitude of problems facing the nation. These individuals identified by a precise economic interest would owe their basic allegiance to ^{rigidly} aligned groups and, in my judgment, would lack the breadth of viewpoint to perform effectively their true legislative function. *on both domestic + international problems.*

Another difficulty that arises is purely quantitative. ~~It~~ If people are to be represented according to their memberships in interest groups, how would you apportion the weight to be allotted to the various interests in order to approximate justice? How many representatives of labor must there be? How many of capital? How many for agriculture? How many for professional and technical associations?

From a positive ^{point of view} position, the most persuasive argument ^{against} to this new theory is that one's interest as a citizen ^{in its broadest context} takes precedence over one's interest as a member of a particular group.



Mr. Ford, page four - 9/19/63

The proponents of functional representation will argue that people have less in common as inhabitants of their particular community than they have in ways of earning a living. Therefore, they contend that geography as a basis of representation has been and should be demoted in the representative system and that loyalty to locality should be replaced by allegiance to function. Allegedly this is a result of the division of labor and the high degree of specialization in a modern industrial society.

From practical experience in our country, and I trust in yours, our people place their principal loyalty and allegiance to the national government. They are first and foremost citizens of the nation. They expect their elected representatives to act on their behalf with original and primary focus on the national aspect of all problems. This does not mean that our citizens lack a local, a geographical allegiance. This does not mean that our citizens do not have strong and divergent ideological, philosophical or economic views. I only say that all interests other than the nation's are secondary on the ladder of priorities.

This being true, it is my belief that our representative government should be based on a pattern that in practice has not divided, but solidified a people. We find from experience the average legislator chosen on a geographical basis is responsibly conscious of the territorial, economic and social interests in his constituency and does his best to represent



Mr. Ford, page five - 9/19/63

them. However, when the choice is drawn between the national interest on the one hand, and any other -- be it geographic, economic or social -- the decision is easy. The legislative representative votes for the broader choice. In my judgment, this would be the true reflection of the people, who look upon themselves first as citizens and thereafter as a part of an economic or social segment of society.

Furthermore, history records that the key programs of important social and economic groups -- once such social problems and policies have established their merit and have won acceptance of popular majorities -- usually are enacted into law. Finally, from our experience, the legislature based on the territorial constituency is far more likely to attain consensus on a broad national scale than one organized to give voice to economic and social interests.

In conclusion: If we have deficiencies, if our efforts are not perfect, and effective representation, let us make those essential changes in a constructive manner. *with the tools at hand. The 10 point program mentioned by Mrs St. George,* *head of the N.S.* *legislation is a sound approach.* ~~But~~ ^{1 established} to achieve the goal of better representation, let us not tear asunder ~~tried and true~~ systems of representative government that, over the years, have brought cohesion to our people, ~~for~~ ^{that} ~~the~~ ¹ ~~might well divide in bitter battle segments of citizens of our representative countries.~~



As the last American speaker may I think the delegates for the consideration of our views & may I express our appreciation to Yugoslavians ~~step~~ for their generous & warm hospitality.