CHAPTER 2

That the Ideas of Democratic Peoples in Matters of Government Naturally Favor the Concentration of Powers

a. Order of this section.

The theoretical and philosophical idea of government among democratic peoples is uniformity and centralization.

[To the side: That democratic peoples imagine liberty only in the form of a great assembly of representatives with strong and regulative executive power.]

Diverse instincts which lead democratic peoples to love centralization of power.

1. Difficulty of knowing to whom to deliver provincial administration.
2. The noble having disappeared, incapacity of local [v: new] men, ignorance, above all at the beginning.
3. Envy of the neighbor. Sentiments above all visible when aristocracy has long reigned in a country
4. That a despot in embryo must loudly profess these doctrines, favor and approve interests.

#5. Establish only a sole representative assembly, a strong and regulative executive power.

5. Establish only national representation, next to it an executive power which would be more or less subject to it, but which would be strong, inquisitorial, regulative.

[To the side: Among democratic peoples, it is not impossible that a government is centralizing and popular at the same time, and it can go so far as calling itself centralizing and liberal, and it is not impossible that it is believed.]

6. Individualism, material enjoyments (YTC, CVd, pp. 31–32).

b. Titles on the jacket that contains the manuscript: "WHAT IDEAS MEN NATURALLY CONCEIVE IN THE MATTER OF GOVERNMENT IN CENTURIES OF EQUALITY."

"HOW THE IDEAS THAT NATURALLY PRESENT THEMSELVES TO MEN IN CENTURIES OF EQUALITY LEAD THEM TO CONCENTRATE ALL POWERS."

[The principal notions that men form in the matter of government are not entirely arbitrary. They are born in each period out of the social state, and the mind receives them rather than creating them.]

The idea of secondary powers, placed between the sovereign and the subjects, presented itself naturally to the imagination of aristocratic peoples, because these powers included within them individuals or families that birth, enlightenment, wealth kept unrivaled and that seemed destined to command. This same idea is naturally absent from the minds of men in centuries of equality because of opposite reasons; you can only introduce it to their minds artificially, and you can only maintain it there with difficulty; while without thinking about it, so to speak, they conceive the idea of a unique and central power that by itself leads all citizens.

In politics, moreover, as in philosophy and in religion, the minds of democratic peoples receive simple and general ideas with delight. They are repulsed by complicated systems, and they are pleased to imagine a great nation all of whose citizens resemble a single model and are directed by a single power.

After the idea of a unique and central power, the one that presents itself most spontaneously to the minds of men in centuries of equality is the idea of a uniform legislation. As each one of them sees himself as little different from his neighbors, he understands poorly why the rule that is applicable to one man would not be equally applicable to all the others. The least privileges are therefore repugnant to his reason. The slightest dissimilarities in the political institutions of the same people wound him, and legislative uniformity seems to him to be the first condition of good government.

I find, on the contrary, that the same notion of a uniform rule, imposed equally on all the members of the social body, is as if foreign to the human mind in aristocratic centuries. It does not accept it, or it rejects it.

These opposite tendencies of the mind end up, on both sides, by becoming such blind instincts and such invincible habits, that they still direct actions, in spite of particular facts. Sometimes, despite the immense variety

c. To the side: "Be careful that this does not too much resemble the opening regarding honor."
of the Middle Ages, perfectly similar individuals were found; this did not prevent the legislator from assigning to each one of them diverse duties and different rights. And, on the contrary, in our times, governments wear themselves out in order to impose the same customs and the same laws on populations that are not yet similar.

As conditions become equal among a people, individuals appear smaller and society seems larger; or rather, each citizen, having become similar to all the others, is lost in the crowd, and you no longer notice anything except the vast and magnificent image of the people itself.\textsuperscript{d}

This naturally gives men of democratic times a very high opinion of the privileges of the society and a very humble idea of the rights of the individual.\textsuperscript{e} They easily agree that the interest of the one is everything and that the interest of the other is nothing. They grant readily enough that the power that represents the society possesses much more enlightenment and wisdom than any one of the men who compose it, and that its duty, as well as its right, is to take each citizen by the hand and to lead him.\textsuperscript{f}

If you really want to examine our contemporaries closely, and to penetrate to the root of their political opinions, you will find a few of the ideas that I have just reproduced, and you will perhaps be astonished to find so much agreement among men who are so often at war with each other.

\textsuperscript{d} Note to the side of a first version: “Perhaps all these ideas, which seem to me clear and even too evident, will seem too metaphysical, and perhaps it will be necessary to put them within the reach of the ordinary reader by more detailed explanations?” (Rubish, 2).

\textsuperscript{e} “To show better also how in the United States the state breaks individuals and even organized groups of men [corps] with a prodigious ease, since the idea of individual rights there is weaker and more obscure than in England.” Jacket, THOUGHTS TO ADD ON THE INFLUENCE EXERCISED BY DEMOCRATIC IDEAS ON THE FORMS OF GOVERNMENT (Rubish, 2).

\textsuperscript{f} A note in the manuscript: “Can introduce piece (a) there.”

This piece (a) specifies: “A unique and central government [v: power] charged with dispensing the same laws to the entire State and with regulating in the same way each one of those who inhabit it, an intelligent, far-sighted and strong administration that enlightens, aids, constantly directs individuals, such is the ideal that in democratic times will always occur by itself to the imagination of men as soon as they come to think about government.”

The Americans believe that, in each state,\textsuperscript{TM} social power must emanate directly from the people; but once this power is constituted, they imagine, so to speak, no limits for it; they readily recognize that it has the right to do everything.

As for the particular privileges granted to cities, to families or to individuals, they have lost even the idea. Their minds have never foreseen that the same law could not be applied uniformly to all the parts of the same state and to all the men who inhabit it.

[#In Europe we reject the dogma of sovereignty of the people that the Americans accept; we give power another origin. #]\textsuperscript{g}

These same opinions are spreading more and more in Europe; they are being introduced within the very heart of nations that most violently reject the dogma of sovereignty of the people. These nations give power a different origin than the Americans; but they envisage power with the same features. Among all nations, the notion of intermediary power is growing dim and fading.\textsuperscript{h} The idea of a right inherent in certain individuals is disappearing rapidly from the minds of men; the idea of the all-powerful and so to speak unique right of society is coming to take its place. These ideas take root and grow as conditions become more equal and men more similar; equality gives birth to them and they in their turn hasten the progress of equality.\textsuperscript{j}

\textsuperscript{g} In the margin: “<These opinions have not been borrowed by the Americans from their fathers the English, for at the period of the establishment of the colonies, the English, no more than other Europeans, had not yet conceived of such opinions. Still today they have adopted them only in part. They introduce them only in our times, but with difficulty and as conditions become less different and men more similar.”

\textsuperscript{h} In the margin: “The problem with all this is that it seems to me to anticipate section IV, which I will be able to judge only when I am there. If so, it would be necessary to stop at the end of page 2 and make this chapter the head of the following chapter which would then be titled: How the ideas and the sentiments ... >” Page 2 of the manuscript ends at the paragraph that begins thus: “If you really want to examine ...”

\textsuperscript{j} On a loose sheet in the manuscript:

I listen to those among my fellow citizens who are most hostile to popular forms and I see that, according to them, the public administration must get involved in almost
In France, where the revolution I am speaking about is more advanced than in any other people of Europe, these same opinions have entirely taken hold of the mind. When you listen attentively to the voices of our different parties, you will see that there is not one of them that does not adopt them. Most consider that the government acts badly; but all think that the government must act constantly and put its hand to everything. Even those who wage war most harshly against each other do not fail to agree on this point. The unity, ubiquity, omnipotence of the social power, the uniformity of its rules, form the salient feature that characterizes all the political systems born in our times. You find them at the bottom of the most bizarre utopias. The human mind still pursues these images when it dreams.

If such ideas present themselves spontaneously to the mind of individuals, they occur even more readily to the imagination of princes.

While the old social state of Europe deteriorates and dissolves, sovereigns develop new beliefs about their abilities and their duties; they understand for the first time that the central power that they represent can and must, by itself and on a uniform plan, administer all matters and all men. This opinion, which, I dare say, had never been conceived before our time by the kings of Europe, penetrates the mind of these princes to the deepest level; it remains firm there amid the agitation of all the other opinions. [A few perceive it very clearly, everyone glimpses it.]

So the men of today are much less divided than you imagine; they argue constantly in order to know into which hands sovereignty will be placed; but they agree easily about the duties and about the rights of sovereignty. All conceive the government in the image of a unique, simple, providential and creative power.

All the secondary ideas in political matters are in motion; that one remains fixed, inalterable; it never changes. Writers and statesmen adopt it; the crowd seizes it avidly; the governed and those who govern agree about pursuing it with the same ardor; it comes first; it seems innate.

So it does not come from a caprice of the human mind, but it is a natural condition of the present state of men.

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m. Order of ideas already followed.1
3. Idea of a unique power.
4. Immense idea of social right, very thin idea of individual right.
5. Confirmation of what precedes by the idea of the Americans, of the English, of the French . . . in the matter of government.
(i) Be very careful that it is not a matter of showing what is happening among these peoples, but the idea that they are forming in the matter of government (relative to the idea of unity in general, Rubish, 2).

n. In the margin: "#This sentence excludes the preceding one. Either the one or the other must be removed."

o. Note in the margin in a first version: "Perhaps here all the ultra-unitary extravagances, Saint-Simonianism . . ." (Rubish, 2).

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k. See note b of p. 727.
CHAPTER 3

That the Sentiments of Democratic Peoples Are in Agreement with Their Ideas for Bringing Them to Concentrate Power

If, in centuries of equality, men easily perceive the idea of a great central power, you cannot doubt, on the other hand, that their habits and their sentiments dispose them to recognize such a power and to lend it support. The demonstration of this can be done in a few words, since most of the reasons have already been given elsewhere.

Men who inhabit democratic countries, having neither superiors, nor inferiors, nor habitual and necessary associates, readily fall back on themselves and consider themselves in isolation. I have had the occasion to show it at great length when the matter was individualism.

So these men never, except with effort, tear themselves away from their particular affairs in order to occupy themselves with common affairs; their natural inclination is to abandon the care of these affairs to the sole visible and permanent representative of collective interests, which is the State.

Not only do they not naturally have the taste for occupying themselves with public matters, but also they often lack time to do so. Private life is so active in democratic times, so agitated, so full of desires, of work, that hardly any energy or leisure is left to any man for political life.

It is not I who will deny that such inclinations are not invincible, since my principal goal in writing this book has been to combat them. I maintain only that, today, a secret force develops them constantly in the human heart, and that it is enough not to stop them for those inclinations to fill it up.

I have equally had the occasion to show how the growing love of well-being and the mobile nature of property made democratic peoples fear material disorder. The love of public tranquillity is often the only political passion that these peoples retain, and it becomes more active and more powerful among them, as all the others collapse and die; that naturally disposes citizens to give new rights constantly to or to allow new rights to be taken by the central power, which alone seems to them to have the interest and the means to defend them from anarchy while defending itself.

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a. The idea of all this chapter is simple.

Equality gives birth to two tendencies:

1. One which takes men to liberty.
2. The other which distances men from liberty and leads them to servitude.

Liberty and servitude coming from equality. There is the idea of the chapter. Equality comes only as source of liberty and of servitude.

Now.

To know what makes men love equality more than liberty; it is a closely connected, but very distinct idea; for men could prefer equality to liberty, without equality being what pushed them toward servitude.

The comparison of the love of equality and the love of liberty is worth being made. But here it hinders the natural movement of the mind.

Make it a separate chapter which I will introduce afterward where I can (Rubish, 2).

It is possible that certain ideas on centralization set forth in this chapter and the following had their origin in the observations made by Tocqueville in England. In 1835, particularly, Tocqueville believed he had found in England a tendency toward centralization that he thought likely for the ensemble of democracies. The Poor Law and conversations with Mill and Reeve seem to have in part confirmed his theory for him (Voyage en Angleterre, OC, V, 3, pp. 22, 26, 49, and 53); also see Seymour Drescher, Tocqueville and England (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964).

On 8 July 1838, when he began this last part, Tocqueville asked Beaumont for examples about centralization. Beaumont's answer is lost (Correspondance avec Beaumont, OC, VIII, 1, pp. 311-12).

b. "I see clearly how the fear of revolutions leads men to give great prerogatives to power in general, but not how it leads them to centralize power." (Rubish, 2).

c. 7 March 1838. Unity, centralization.

However animated you are against unity and the governmental unity that is called centralization, you cannot nonetheless deny that unity and centralization are
[<For they do not see around them either individual or corps that is by itself strong enough and lasting enough to defend itself and to defend them.>]

Since, in centuries of equality, no one is obliged to lend his strength to his fellow, and no one has the right to expect great support from his fellow, each man is independent and weak at the very same time. These two states, which must not be either envisaged separately or confused, give the citizen of democracies very contradictory instincts. His independence fills him with confidence and pride among his equals, and his debility makes him, from time to time, feel the need for outside help which he cannot expect from any of his equals, since they are all powerless and cold. In this extreme case, he turns his eyes naturally toward this immense being that alone rises up amidst the universal decline. His needs and, above all, his desires lead him constantly toward this being, and he ends by envisaging it as the sole and necessary support for individual weakness.¹

the most powerful means to do quickly, energetically, and in a given place, very great things.

That reveals one of the reasons why in democratic centuries centralization and unity are loved so much. The character of these centuries is love of rapid and easy enjoyments and indifference about the future. In the eyes of all the public men of those times, centralization is the means of attaining quickly and without difficulty the results that they desire.

Thus equality gives birth to the idea of unity and the same equality suggests the taste for it (Rubish, 2).

1. In democratic societies, only the central power has some stability in its position and some permanence in its enterprises. All the citizens are stirring constantly and becoming transformed. Now, it is in the nature of every government to want gradually to enlarge its sphere. So it is very difficult that in the long run the latter does not manage to succeed, since it acts with a fixed thought and a continuous will on men whose position, ideas and desires vary every day.

Often it happens that the citizens work for it without wanting to do so.

Democratic centuries are times of experiments, of innovation and of adventures. A multitude of men is always engaged in a difficult or new enterprise that they are pursuing separately without being burdened by their fellows. The former very much accept, as a general principle, that the public power must not intervene in private affairs, but, by exception, each one of them desires that it helps him in the special matter that preoccupies him and seeks to draw the action of the government in his direction, all the while wanting to restrain it in all others.

Since a multitude of men has this particular view at the same time on a host of different matters, the sphere of the central power expands imperceptibly in all directions, even though each one of them wishes to limit it. So a democratic government increases its attributions by the sole fact that it lasts. Time works for it; it profits from all accidents; individual passions help it even without their knowing, and you can say that a democratic government becomes that much more centralized the older the democratic society is.

d. This proposition that hatred of inequality is that much greater as inequality is less is well proved by what happened among aristocratic peoples themselves within the interior of each class. The nobles were not jealous of the king, but of those among them who rose above the others, and they called loudly for equality. As long as the bourgeois were different from the nobles, they were not jealous of the nobles, but of each other; and if we get down to the bottom of our heart, won't we all be appalled to see that envy makes itself felt there above all in regard to our neighbors, our friends and our near relations? You are not jealous of those people because they are neighbors, friends and relations, but because they are our fellows and our equals.

The hatred of inequality in proportion as inequality is less is therefore a truth in all times and applicable to all men (New Ideas Relative to Democratic Sentiments That Favor Centralization, Rubish, 2).
izens, does not excite the envy of any one of them, and each one believes that all the prerogatives that he concedes to the sovereign are taken away from his equals.

[In centuries of equality, each man, living independent of all of his fellows, becomes accustomed to directing his private affairs without constraint. When these same men are united in common, they naturally conceive the idea of and the taste for administering themselves by themselves. So equality leads men toward administrative decentralization, but creates at the same time powerful instincts which turn them away from it.>]e

The man of democratic centuries obeys only with an extreme repugnance his neighbor who is his equal; he refuses to acknowledge in him an enlightenment superior to his own; he mistrusts his neighbor's justice and regards his power with jealousy; he fears and despises him; he loves to make him feel at every instant the common dependence that they both have on the same master.

Every central power that follows these natural instincts loves equality and favors it; for equality (of conditions) singularly facilitates the action of such a power, extends it and assures it.

You can say equally that every central government adores [legislative] uniformity; uniformityf spares it from the examination of an infinity of details with which it would have to be concerned, if the rule had to be made for men, rather than making all men indiscriminately come under the same rule. Thus, the government loves what the citizens love, and it naturally hates what they hate. This community of sentiments, which, among democratic nations, continually unites in the same thought each individual and the sovereign power, establishes between them a secret and permanent sym-

pathy. You pardon the government its faults in favor of its tastes; public confidence abandons the government only with difficulty amid its excesses and its errors, and returns as soon as it is called back. Democratic peoples often hate the agents of the central power; but they always love this power itself. [Because they consider it as the most powerful instrument that they could use as needed to help them make everyone who escapes from the common rule come back to it.>

I said that in times of equality the idea of intermediary powers set between simple individuals and the government did not naturally present itself to the human mind. I add that men who live in these centuries envisage such powers only with distrust and submit to them only with difficulty.]

Thus, I have come by two different roads to the same end. I have shown that equality suggested to men the thought of a unique, uniform and strong government. I have just shown that it gives them the taste for it; so today nations are tending toward a government of this type. The natural inclination of their mind and heart leads them to it, and it is enough for them not to hold themselves back in order to reach it.

I think that, in the democratic centuries that are going to open up, individual independence and local liberties will always be a product of art. Centralization will be the natural government.