CHAPTER 10

THE TRIUMPH OF WHITE MEN'S DEMOCRACY

Democratic Space: The New Hotels
The 1820s and 1830s witnessed the rise of popular democracy and a swelling of national political involvement. European visitors were amazed at the equalizing tendencies that were exposed in American legal institutions, clerical professions, and public spaces. Specifically, hotels epitomized a new institution that oftentimes blurred social distinctions. At the same time, hotels revealed the limitations of American democracy: African Americans, Native Americans, and women were generally denied service—just as they were denied the right to vote.

Democracy in Theory and Practice
The nation's founders had believed that "democracy" contained dangerous impulses, but by the 1820s and '30s the term had become more acceptable and applicable to American institutions. Alexis de Tocqueville noticed the decline of deference and the elevation of popular sovereignty in America. "Self-made" men could now rise in stature.

Democracy and Society
Social equality dominated the public discourse during this era. Social, economic, and political connections no longer guaranteed success. Industrialization, oftentimes, perpetuated inequality, not in the traditional sense of birth or privilege, but rather in terms of wealth and attainment.

Democratic Culture
Romanticism in American literature often appealed to the feelings and intuitions of ordinary people. A mass reading audience developed, and poets, writers, and artists directed their work to a democratic populace. American artists (although striving to elevate popular tastes) were encouraged to contribute to the general welfare by supporting virtue and middle-class sentiments.

Democratic Political Institutions
By 1820, most states had eliminated property requirements for manhood suffrage, and as public political involvement swelled, a permanent two-party system became a forum for political ideas. It became understood that a "loyal opposition" was essential to democratic government.

Economic Issues
Economic questions (prompted by the Panic of 1819) and the role of the federal government were major concerns that assisted a great swelling of popular political interest. Fears of economic conspiracies engendered fervent outcries for republicanism's survival. The government’s role in guiding the economy inspired debate.
Labor Radicalism and Equal Rights
Workingmen's parties and trade unions emerged as workers became convinced that the government should protect the rights of labor as well as those of the producers. Abolitionists sought an end to slavery and supported the civil rights of free African Americans and women.

Jackson and the Politics of Democracy
Andrew Jackson symbolized the triumph of democracy and egalitarianism from the 1820s to the 1840s.

The Election of 1824 and J.Q. Adams's Administration
Popular hero Andrew Jackson rose to prominence as a result of "popular sovereignty." Despite winning a plurality of popular votes, Jackson was denied the presidency by the House of Representatives, in favor of Adams. Rumors of a "corrupt bargain" between Adams and Henry Clay and controversy over tariff policy damaged Adams’s administration.

Jackson Comes to Power
Supported by the newly organized Democratic party, Jackson returned to defeat Adams convincingly in 1828 in an election that featured a massive popular turnout. Possessed of indomitable will, Jackson became one of the most forceful presidents in history. He endorsed the "spoils system" as a way to provide himself with loyal advisors.

Indian Removal
Beginning in 1830, Jackson ordered the swift and forceful removal of all Indian tribes to reservations located west of the Mississippi River. Jackson ignored humanitarian protests, and the Supreme Court’s ruling that found removal to be unconstitutional. By 1838, the last of the southeastern tribes, the Cherokee, were forced to abandon ancestral grounds and embark on the "Trail of Tears."

The Nullification Crisis
Although an advocate of states' rights, Jackson regarded nullification as a major threat to federal authority. After South Carolina nullified the Tariff Acts of 1828 and 1832 in defiance of federal authority, Jackson threatened forceful intervention to bring the nullification crisis to an end. Appeased by the protests of lower tariffs, South Carolina suspended its nullification ordinance in 1833.

The Bank War and the Second Party System
Jackson's successful attack on the Bank of the United States aroused great controversy and called into question the president's power over the nation's finances. This debate led to a new, national political party: the Whigs.
Mr. Biddle's Bank
When Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank of the United States, sought a recharter in 1832, Jackson declared war on this "monster" corporation, which he was convinced violated the fundamental principles of a democratic society.

The Bank Veto and the Election of 1832
When Biddle tried to force an early recharter bill through Congress, Jackson responded by vetoing the bill and calling on the people for support. Jackson's overwhelming victory in the 1832 election provided a popular mandate for the Bank's destruction.

Killing the Bank
Jackson proceeded to order that federal deposits in the Bank be removed and deposited in selected "pet banks." Strong opposition to Jackson's fiscal policy developed in Congress as fear spread that the destruction of the Bank would be disastrous for the nation's economy. Opposition to Jackson’s move the Senate to censure the president. Jacksonians in the house blocked the Senate’s action.

The Emergence of the Whigs
Using the cry of "executive usurpation," and opposition party, the Whigs emerged in Jackson's second term. Led by Clay and Daniel Webster, the Whigs opposed the growth of presidential power and prerogative under "King Andrew." Overspeculation and currency devaluation staggered the country's economy, leading Jackson to order the "specie circular," further exacerbating the nation’s economic depression.

The Rise and Fall of Van Buren
Martin Van Buren, with Jackson's endorsement, gained the presidency in 1836. Van Buren attempted to improve the faltering economy with his creation of an "independent subtreasury," but the persistent depression was beyond governmental control. The state of the economy cost Van Buren reelection in 1840 to the Whig candidate William Henry Harrison.

Heyday of the Second Party System
Promoting a "positive liberal state," the Whigs challenged the Democrats on equal terms in the 1840s. The Whigs supported an active and responsive government to the nation’s economy. Although they supported a market economy, the Whigs wanted to restrain disorder and selfish individualism by enforcing high moral standards and community values. Democrats appealed to small farmers, workers, rising capitalists, immigrants, and Catholics by supporting individualism and personal liberty.

Conclusion: Toqueville's Wisdom
Although De Toqueville was impressed by the American talent for local self-government, he keenly observed "White man's democracy" limitations: women’s restricted roles, and the continued oppression of people of color.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to

1. Explain factors that contributed to the rise of democracy in the 1820s and 1830s.

2. Describe how the diffusion of political power among the masses encouraged reform initiative and inspired new literary, artistic, and professional trends.

3. Evaluate the main political and economic issues brought forth in the 1824 and 1828 elections and explain the outcomes of those presidential elections.

4. Determine the political characteristics and personality traits that contributed to Jackson's image as a "man of the people."

5. Summarize the problems encountered under Jackson's Indian-removal policy.

6. Contrast the arguments put forth by the states' rightists and the unionists regarding the nullification crisis.

7. Explain why South Carolina seized the tariff issue to mount its support for states' rights.

8. Summarize Jacksonian arguments in their attack against the Bank of the United States.

9. Evaluate the Depression of 1837’s causes and Van Buren’s attempts to correct the financial disorder.

10. Compare and contrast the ideologies and objectives of the Whigs and Democrats and identify the socioeconomic groups from which they drew their support.

11. Reveal how the conflict over the Bank’s recharter dominated political banter.

12. Evaluate Jackson's strategy in "killing the Bank" and his use of state banks as depositories.

13. Understand the reasons for political realignment in the 1830s and the emergence of the Whigs.

14. Paraphrase both the blessings and perils of American democracy according to Toqueville.
GLOSSARY

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms:

1. **Natural aristocracy** those of well-born status naturally destined to direct economic and political institutions. "... a well-balanced republic led by a 'natural aristocracy'."

2. **Popular sovereignty** authority based on popular support. "Besides evoking a heightened sense of 'popular sovereignty,' the democratic impulse . . ."

3. **Social leveling** a process to create equality by denying special privilege. "The democratic impulse stimulated a process of social leveling."

4. **Deference** giving decision making or authority to another person or group. "The decline of deference meant that 'self-made men' of lowly origins could now rise more readily . . ."

5. **Entrepreneurs** those who organize business ventures by investing capital. "... particularly emerging entrepreneurs, saw salvation in government aid and protection for venture capital."

6. **Tyrannical** characterized by excessive or arbitrary power. "... alleged 'rabble-rousers' who gulled the electorate into ratifying high-handed and tyrannical actions . . ."

7. **Laissez-faire** the noninterference by government in economic affairs. "... by divorcing the government from the economy in the name of laissez-faire . . ."

8. **Plurality** having more in number than any other, but not more than half of the total. "In the election Jackson won a plurality of the electoral votes."

9. **Nullification** the process of declaring something to be void or inapplicable. "He . . . issued a proclamation denouncing nullification as a treasonous attack . . ."

10. **Positive liberal state** that the state (government) would encourage and support economic development to bring about prosperity. "Whigs stood for a 'positive liberal state'."

11. **Elitism** leadership by a powerful or wealthy group. "... traditional forms of privilege and elitism were indeed under strong attack."

12. **Ostracism** banishment or exclusion. "The vice president and his wife were viewed by Jackson as prime movers in the ostracism of Peggy Eaton."
13. **logrolling** political bargaining or trading of favors. "... the process of legislative bargaining known as logrolling."

14. **aristocratic art** style that reflected aristocratic tendencies of tastes. "... rather that the traditional subjects of 'aristocratic art'."

15. **centralized state** government in which power flows from a centralized source and has predominance over state or local governments. "... and he praised Americans for not conceding their liberties to a centralized state."

**IDENTIFICATION**

Briefly identify the meaning and significance of the following terms.

1. Jacksonianism

2. Corrupt Bargain

3. “Spoils System”

4. independent subtreasury

5. Indian Removal

6. “Trail of Tears”

7. Nullification Crisis
8. The Bank War

9. The Whigs

10. “Specie Circular”

MATCHING

A. Match the following public figures with the appropriate description.

_____ 1. John C. Calhoun

a. champion of states rights and leading proponent of nullification during the tariff crisis

_____ 2. Thomas Hart Benton

b. Jackson's secretary of state, who resigned over the Peggy Eaton affair

_____ 3. Amos Kendall

c. secretary of treasury under Jackson who withdrew federal funds from the Bank of the United States

_____ 4. Nicholas Biddle

d. Kentucky editor who marshaled opposition to Henry Clay and helped build the Jacksonian Democratic party

_____ 5. Roger Taney

e. Jacksonian senator from Missouri and leading opponent of Bank recharter

f. president of the Bank of the United States, who sought recharter four years early
B. Match the following public acts with the appropriate description.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Worcester v. Georgia</strong></td>
<td>a. issued by Jackson, requiring that only gold and silver be accepted in payment for public lands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Maysville Road Bill</strong></td>
<td>b. vetoed by Jackson on grounds of strict construction of the Constitution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Specie circular</strong></td>
<td>c. passed by Congress to give the president the military powers to enforce the tariff laws</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Tariff of 1828</strong></td>
<td>d. issued by the Supreme Court, denying states’ right to jurisdiction over Indian lands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Force Bill</strong></td>
<td>e. nullified by South Carolina on the grounds of unconstitutionality</td>
<td>f. provided substantial across-the-board duty increases to protect manufacturers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMPLETION**

Answer the question or complete the statement by filling in the blanks with the correct word or words.

1. The rise of democracy meant that ____________ could rise more easily to positions of importance and status.

2. In the first quarter century of the republic, political leaders had regarded ____________ as obstructionist and threatening to Republican virtue.

3. During the 1830s and 1840s, a mass market became available for popular literature due to the increase in ____________.

4. The dominant genre in the theater during the Jacksonian period was ____________.

5. In preparing for the 1828 election, Jacksonians laid the groundwork for the first modern political party, the ____________.

6. The unofficial set of advisors from whom Jackson constantly sought advice was known as the ____________.
7. The first ____________ was begun in Philadelphia to organize workers in 1827.

8. The Indian tribe that presented the greatest obstacle to voluntary relocation under Jackson's plan because of its settled agrarian way of life was the ____________.

9. That government should support enterprises that contribute to prosperity was the Whig support for the ____________.

10. Southern free traders and planters referred to the Tariff of 1828, which increased rates across the border, as the ____________.

TRUE/FALSE

Mark the following statements either T (True) or F (False).

_____ 1. By the 1820s, most states still had property qualifications to determine manhood suffrage.

_____ 2. In the presidential elections from 1824 through 1840, the percentage of males voting remained relatively the same.

_____ 3. Industrialization created a permanent class of poorly paid wage earners, primarily in the cities.

_____ 4. The Jacksonians were convinced that a "corrupt bargain" between Adams and Clay in 1824 had deprived their candidate of the presidential election.

_____ 5. The election of 1828 indicated clearly that there was more anti-Adams sentiment nationwide than pro-Jackson support.

_____ 6. The main issue before Congress in the late 1820s was the tariff issue.

_____ 7. A major advantage for any presidential aspirant during the Jacksonian period was to be portrayed as a self-made man from a humble background.

_____ 8. Being a confirmed states' rightist and a Southerner, Jackson sided with South Carolina in its opposition to the Tariff of 1828.

_____ 9. Because political parties were acknowledged by practically everyone by 1832, Jackson approved of a competitive two-party system.

_____ 10. The Bank War illustrated Jackson's flexibility and his ability to compromise on key economic issues.
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Circle the one alternative that best completes the statement or answers the question.

1. Regarding industrialization, workingmen's parties and trade union leaders condemned
   a. the growing gap between rich and poor.
   b. the subjugation of workers under parasitic nonproducers.
   c. the lack of governmental support for workers.
   d. all of the above

2. The tariff law of 1828 can best be historically explained by saying that
   a. a complicated Jacksonian plot was revealed to discredit the Adams administration.
   b. since the tariff was perceived to be judicious and compromising, it was supported by all groups, except the Southern planters.
   c. the tariff revealed the growing world desire for protectionism.
   d. the tariff showed how special interest groups can achieve their goals through congressional "give and take."

3. What gave the Jacksonians the edge in the 1828 election was their portrayal of Jackson as
   a. an aristocratic gentleman in the mold of Washington and Jefferson.
   b. an intellectual, despite his limited formal education.
   c. a military hero determined to make the United States a world power.
   d. an authentic man of the common people.

4. Jackson defended the "spoils system" by saying that the system
   a. insured that the best qualified men would be placed in important advisory positions.
   b. had been used successfully in Britain to determine appointment of ministers.
   c. was a legitimate application of democratic principle, in that the duties of public office are simple enough for any man of intelligence to accomplish.
   d. policies would be established with greater continuity and consistency.

5. The difference between Jackson's Indian policy and those of previous presidents was that Jackson
   a. wanted to relocate the Indians to the west of the Mississippi.
   b. was the first president to support the Cherokee autonomy assertion.
   c. demanded a much speedier and thorough removal of all eastern tribes to reservations west of the Mississippi.
   d. was the first president to oppose the rights of separate states to assert their jurisdiction over the tribes within their borders.
6. The main economic reason why the South opposed the protective tariff was because it
   a. raised the price of manufactured products on which they depended and led to foreign counterprotection against southern crops.
   b. would encourage economic modernization and the birth of the factory system in the South.
   c. would insure economic preeminence of the northern industrial states.
   d. contradicted the unqualified southern commitment to free trade.

7. The nullification crisis revealed
   a. the hatred in the South for Jackson.
   b. the acceptance in the South of the supremacy of the federal government over the states.
   c. that the remaining southern states would back South Carolina's stand with military support.
   d. that Southerners would not tolerate any federal policies that threatened their interests or challenged the existence of slavery.

8. The most forceful objection to the existence of the Bank of the United States was that
   a. it served eastern interests at the expense of the rest of the nation.
   b. its board of directors had contributed heavily to the John Quincy Adams campaign.
   c. it had loaned out so much money that devaluation and inflation resulted.
   d. it possessed great power and influence without being under popular, democratic control.

9. Regarding Jackson's banking and fiscal policies, Henry Clay and his supporters in Congress contended that the president had
   a. exceeded the powers of his office.
   b. supported western speculative interests at the expense of the rest of the nation.
   c. been wrong all along about the bank's excessive power.
   d. been wrong to pursue the issue as a personal vendetta against Biddle.

10. According to the Democrats of the 1840s, the role of the federal government should be to
    a. support state and private banking and "hard money" interests.
    b. erect a system of high protective tariffs to support industrial interests.
    c. make the United States a world power after the example of Britain.
    d. remove obstacles to individual economic, moral, and religious rights.
11. What new political trend was considered by Van Buren to be essential to Democratic government?
   a. universal manhood suffrage
   b. the spoils system
   c. the rise of a permanent two-party system
   d. the emphasis on economic issues

12. The romantic movement
   a. emphasized aristocratic more than plain folk's activities.
   b. stressed the equality of race and gender.
   c. valued emotionalism and intuition over rationality.
   d. always paralleled the growth of democracy.

13. The election of 1828 revealed
   a. widespread opposition to Adams’s presidency.
   b. the birth and triumph of mass democracy.
   c. that certain issues were more important than personalities.
   d. that two political parties had become well organized.

14. The new Whig party believed that the role of the government in regard to the economy was to
   a. become a "positive liberal state" with the responsibility of protecting industry and contributing to economic progress.
   b. remain passive to economic progress.
   c. protect the hard money interests against the greedy desires of speculators.
   d. provide a welfare system for the poor and recognize the rights of trade unions.

15. The new hotels of the 1820s were "obviously democratic" because they
   a. were all built according to the same architectural concepts.
   b. were squalid, shabby, and poorly built.
   c. welcomed anyone regardless of race, sex, or ability to pay.
   d. extended personal service previously available only to the privileged class to practically anyone who could afford to pay.
**THOUGHT QUESTIONS**

To check your understanding of the key issues of this period, solve the following problems:

1. Why was "democracy" no longer thought of as a dangerous tendency by the 1820s? What democratic features of American life would have amazed European visitors?

2. Why was Jackson considered to be representative of this popular democratic movement? What were his political strengths and weaknesses?

3. How was industrialization transforming the American economy, as well as altering social classes and functions?

4. Why did South Carolina resort to nullification over the tariff controversy of the early 1830s? What deeper sectional and political issues were exposed by the nullification crisis?

5. What economic principles did the Whig party stand for? In what ways were its objectives more modern than those of the Democrats? Do you think that the government should be the moral guardian of the people?

6. What do you think were the underlying reasons for Jackson's war on the Bank of the United States? Do you think he was justified in his actions?

**CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES**

Using the material in Chapter 10 of the text and the primary source noted below, please answer the questions following this passage.

Elizabeth Emery and Mary P. Abbott, Letter to *The Liberator* (1836)

Andover, Massachusetts, August 22, 1836

Mr. Editor:

In these days of women’s doings, it may not be amiss to report the proceedings of some ladies in Andover. The story is now and then told of a new thing done here, as the opening of a railroad, or the building of a factory, but we have news better than all—it is the formation of a “Female Antislavery Society.”

The call of our female friends across the waters—the energetic appeal of those untiring sisters in the work of emancipation in Boston—above all, the sighs, the groans, the deathlike struggles of scourged sisters in the South—these have moved our hearts, our hands. We feel that woman has a place in this Godlike work, for women’s woes, and women’s wrongs, are borne to us on every breeze that flows from the South; woman has a place, for she forms a part in God’s created intelligent instrumentality to reform the world. God never made her to be inactive nor in all cases to follow in the wake of man. When man proves recreant to his duty and faithless to his Maker, woman, with her feeling heart, should rouse him—should start his sympathies—should cry in his ear, and raise such a storm of generous sentiment, as shall never let him sleep again. We believe God gave woman a heart to feel—an eye to weep—a hand to work—a tongue to speak. Now let her use that tongue to speak on slavery. Is it not a curse—a heaven-daring abomination? Let her employ that hand, to labor for the slave. Does not her sister in bonds, labor night and day without reward? Let her heart grieve, and her eye fill with tears, in view of a female’s body dishonored—a female’s mind
debased—a female’s soul forever ruined! Woman nothing to do with slavery! Abhorred the thought!! We will pray to
abhor it more and more. Is not woman abused—women trampled upon—woman spoiled of her virtue, her probity, her
influence, her joy! And this, not in India—not in China—not in Turkey—not in Africa but in America—in the United
States of America, in the birthplace of Washington, the father of freedom, the protector of woman, the friend of
equality and human rights!

Woman out of her place, in feeling, playing, and acting for the slave! Impious idea! Her oppressed sister cries
aloud for help. She tries to lift her manacled hand—to turn her bruised face—to raise her tearful eye, and by all these,
to plead a remembrance in our prayers—an interest in our labors. . . . Woman then may not be dumb. Christian sisters
of Boston! We gladly respond to your call. We will “leave no energy unemployed—no righteous means untried. We
will grudge no expense—yield to no opposition—forget fatigue, till by the strength of prayer and sacrifice, the spirit of
love shall have overcome sectional jealousy—political rivalry—prejudice against color—cowardly concession of
principle—wicked compromise with sin—devotion to gain, and spiritual despotism, which now bear with a mountain’s
weight upon the slave.” As Christian women, we will do a Christian woman’s duty.

The Constitution of our Society is so similar to that of other Antislavery Societies, it may not be necessary to
give a copy of it. Our preamble gives our creed:

“We believe American Slavery is a sin against God—at war with the dictates of humanity, and subversive of
the principles of freedom, because it regards rational beings as goods and chattel; robs them of compensation for their
toil—denies to them the protection of law—disregards the relation of husband and wife, brother and sister, parent and
child; shuts out from the intellect the light of knowledge; overwhelms hope in despair and ruins the soul—thus sinking
to the level of brutes, more than one million of American females, who are created in God’s image, a little lower than
the angels’, and consigns them over to degradation, physical, social, intellectual and moral: consequently, every
slaveholder is bound instantly to cease from all participation in such a system. We believe that we should have no
fellowship with these works of darkness, but rather reprove them—and that the truth spoken in love, is mighty to the
removal of slavery, as of all other sins.”

On such a creed, we base the constitution, which binds us together, and which we omit. . . .

[M]ay fearful foreboding lead the slave holder to timely repentance.

Elizabeth Emery, President Mary P. Abbott, Rec. Secretary

1. Using the text, describe the character and beliefs of a typical “Jacksonian.” What
were his major motivations and fears? What kinds of things would most likely
stimulate his interest in the new political opportunities of the Jacksonian period?

2. In what ways does the text author believe that the democratic spirit of the Jacksonian
period was indicated in the emergence of new forms of literature and art—the so-
called “democratic culture?”

3. According to the text, one of Andrew Jackson’s most important and controversial
actions as president was his war against the Bank of the United States. From your
reading of the text, what evidence can you cite to suggest that Jackson’s actions were
justified or unjustified? In what ways did Jackson use the power of the “democratic
spirit” to oppose, and ultimately kill, the bank?

4. Read “Letter to The Liberator.” Although it is clearly an expression of moral outrage
against slavery, in what ways is it also an expression of outrage against women’s
exclusion from the democratic spirit and reforms of the period?