

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

their campaign promises. The Canadians can attest to that: In 1974, Pierre Trudeau and his Liberal Party won election on a platform attacking the Conservatives' proposal for wage and price controls. A year later, Trudeau imposed wage and price controls.

Parliamentary systems have some built-in hazards as well. They tend to discourage bipartisan cooperation, exacerbate regional tensions, and encourage splinter parties (e.g., Britain's Social Democrats, Ulster Unionists, Scottish Nationalists). Nor do they offer more long-range predictability in policy than Washington does. Consider the plight of Britain's steel industry: The Labour government nationalized it in 1967. Now Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Conservative coalition wants to denationalize it.

By comparison, says Weaver, Uncle Sam's regime—for all its faults—does not look so terrible.

Court Battles

"How the Constitution Disappeared" by Lino A. Graglia, in *Commentary* (Feb. 1986), 165 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Addressing the American Bar Association last July, U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese said, among other things, that federal judges (especially those on the Supreme Court) should interpret the U.S. Constitution according to the intentions of its original framers.

Three months later, U.S. Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan retorted that Meese's "facile historicism" would require judges to "turn a blind eye to social progress."

For his part, Graglia, professor of constitutional law at the University of Texas, takes issue with Brennan's advocacy of what he calls "judicial activism." While he does not support Meese's literal reading of the Constitution (which originally included provisions for slavery and property requirements for voting), he also rejects Brennan's antihistoricism. In essence, Graglia argues, during the past 30 years the High Court has usurped the role of federal and state legislatures. On many matters, the nine Supreme Court justices have become nonelected legislators for the entire country. Yet, contends Graglia, their opinions do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the nation's majority (on such issues as capital punishment). And, by bearing down on a multitude of state and local laws, the justices have overstepped the Constitution's limits on federal authority.

Through judicial review, the Court is able to invalidate legislative actions as it sees fit. Although judicial review was initiated in 1803 (*Marbury v. Madison*), judicial activism did not take hold until after the Court's 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. (In that decision the Court overturned an 1896 ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which sanctioned "separate but equal" status for whites and blacks.) The "undeniable rightness" of the 1954 decision, notes Graglia, led the Court to become a self-directed "engine of social change" in many areas for the next 30 years.

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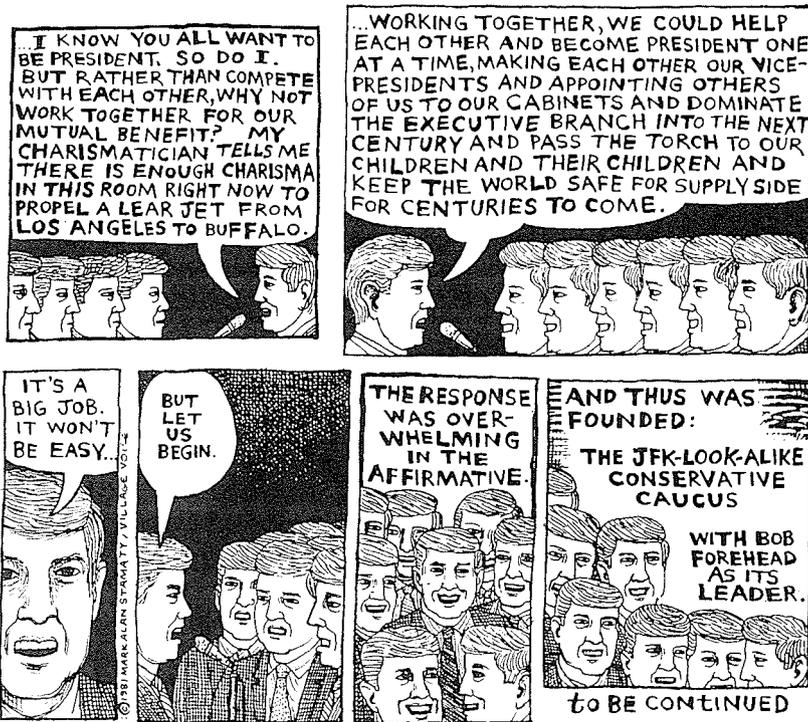
Though Justice Brennan thinks that the Court should shelter the nation's political minorities from "the reach of the temporary political majorities," Graglia sees such fears as unfounded. Expressed through the political process, "the good sense of the American people," he says, will afford adequate protection.

Who Likes Charisma?

"Evaluating Presidential Candidates: Who Focuses on Their Personal Attributes?" by David P. Glass, in *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Winter 1985), Journalism Bldg., Columbia Univ., 116th St. and Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10027.

Everyone knows that personality plays a big role in determining who ends up in the Oval Office. But which voters are most swayed by style over substance?

Contrary to popular assumptions, Glass, a demographics researcher at the University of California, Berkeley, asserts that college-educated voters pay more attention to a candidate's "personal attributes" than do



Grooming for the presidency: Rep. Bob Forehead and his colleagues brainstorm in the cartoon strip *Washington* by Mark Alan Stamaty.