

**Times Literary Supplement**  
**March 23, 2001**

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***PRESIDENTIAL STUDIES QUARTERLY***

There is simply no political institution that garners the attention of the world like that of the Presidency of the United States. A large part of the fascination, of course, stems from the vast international and domestic power wielded by whoever happens to hold the office. Strong Presidents like Franklin Roosevelt or Ronald Reagan can put their mark on the world for generations, while even weak ones are still formidable political figures compared with nearly everyone else. That this is so is not merely the result of tradition or chance. Rather, the Presidency was designed by those who crafted the Constitution to be an office with power sufficient to provide true leadership.

When Alexander Hamilton turned his attention in *The Federalist* to defending this new office, he was blunt. "Energy in the executive", he wrote, "is leading character in the definition of good government. It is essential to the protection of the community against foreign attacks. It is not less essential to the steady administration of the laws . . . [and] to the security of liberty against the enterprises and assaults of ambition, of faction, and of anarchy." To Hamilton and his fellow defenders of executive power, "a government ill executed, whatever it may be in theory, must be in practice a bad government."

It is not simply the power of the Presidency that fascinates, but also the politics of that awesome office. The Founders' design was not meant to create an office with power that was not "inconsistent with the genius of republican government". By making the Presidency an office of a single person, not encumbered or obscured by a council or complicated by having a plural executive, they sought to create the power necessary to govern within a

political context that would guard against abuse. Power would be linked with the responsibility that would come from "the restraints of public opinion". By being the only office that is truly representative of the nation as a whole (as opposed to representing States or Districts), the Presidency is unique.

While James Bryce may have complained in *The American Commonwealth* that, by and large, great men are not elected President, history displays how the office survives the smallest of its holders as well as allowing for a politics of greatness by those who have risen above ordinary politician towards statesmanship. The achievements of George Washington at the beginning, Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, and Roosevelt during the Great Depression and the Second World War, were made possible by the nature of the office they were chosen to fill. Thus it is the interplay between power and personality, what James Madison described as connecting "the interest of the man . . . with the constitutional rights of the place", which makes this office an important object of study.

One way of getting a firm grip on the American Presidency is through the *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, a journal that focuses exclusively on the great office and considers it from a variety of perspectives. One of the virtues of this publication is that, while scholarly, it is accessible even for those not professionally trained in the arcane business of political science. In every issue, the journal canvases a range of topics that will be worth the time of everyone with an interest in American politics. Recent issues, for example, have had articles on the how the President undertakes to shape domestic policy, how he endeavours to manage the bureaucracy, and what he must do to build the coalitions

necessary to see his programme enacted.

To its credit, *Presidential Studies Quarterly* does not get bogged down merely in the language of political science; history, too, looms large in these pages. One is exposed to scholarly studies of such subjects as Eisenhower's "I Shall Go to Korea" speech during the 1952 Presidential campaign, the history of economic sanctions as a tool of foreign policy, and Lyndon Johnson's secret plan to have himself drafted by the Democratic Convention of 1968. In addition, there are articles of a more theoretical bent, such as consideration of "Lincoln, Machiavelli, and American Political Thought" and "As Far as Republican Principles Will Admit: Presidential Prerogative and Constitutional Government".

One of the most compelling aspects of this good journal is its Features section, where in each issue, there are special articles under four main heads: "The Law", "The Polls", "The Contemporary Presidency" and "Source Material". Each of these special sections brings a vitality to the journal, with such articles as "The Clinton Impeachment", "Public Attitudes Toward the First Lady", "The White House Public Opinion Apparatus and the Clinton Impeachment", and a debate over "The 1997 Published Transcripts of the JFK Cuban Missile Crisis Tapes: Too good to be true?" In addition to the usual collection of essays, there is also in each issue a substantial book-review section where nearly everything published on the Presidency seems to be listed.

One of the more commendable attributes of this journal is its relatively liberal editorial policy when it comes to its contributors. Too many journals are

all but closed off to the youngest scholars, and seemingly completely so to those still labouring in graduate schools on their dissertations. The policy here seems to be quality over status. There are several pieces in Volume 30 that are from doctoral students and, if not told in notes, one would never know. In one sense, the inclusion of the young in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* grows from the general commitment to

students by the publishing organization, the Center for the Study of the Presidency.

The Center has for over three decades dedicated itself to the encouragement of serious reflection on the Presidency by the younger generation. With a programme of annual fellowships and conferences, including an annual student symposium and a "Leadership Conference", the Center seeks to

promote a proper understanding of the office of the Presidency and its powers, as well as its place in the American political order. The breadth and depth of the Center's commitment is seen clearly in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, a journal worthy of the attention both of those with power and those who are merely intrigued by it.