

Anti-intellectualism

The triumph of popular democracy brought an anti-intellectual bias to American politics that never entirely disappeared.

Self-government didn't require any special learning, just the native wisdom of the people.

"Even in its earliest days," Richard Hofstadter wrote, "the egalitarian impulse in America was linked with a distrust for what in its germinal form may be called political specialization and in its later forms expertise."

Hostility to aristocracy widened into a general suspicion of educated sophisticates.

The more learned citizens were actually less fit to lead; the best politicians came from the ordinary people and stayed true to them.

George Packer, *The Atlantic*, July/August 2021