

THE WASTE LAND OF THE STATE

To that dean of abstract poets, T.S. Elliot, April is the cruelest month. To too many millions of Americans his imagery is only too true for each April the iron fist of the ubiquitous State unfolds to carve out the mountainous pounds of flesh it needs to feed its obscene near trillion dollar appetite. To ask courteously is beneath it; to demand is its right. So it thinks. Woe unto the luckless citizen who dares to deny what it considers to be its due. Though he flee to the ends of the earth, it will seek him out to collect its wherewithal. Nothing that he owns is sacred. To meet its demands, it invades his privacy in any direction it feels necessary and takes even the last cent needed to sustain his life.

With its gargantuan appetite has come all the vices that any glutton develops -- slothfulness, immorality, corruption, venality, licentiousness, ruthlessness. But just as a dissapator is incapable of decent sustained effort, so the tax-swollen State is unable to attain any worthwhile goal.

Instead, its overblown size inhibits not only individual freedom but economic and social efficiency. The growth and spread of knowledge in the past century have caused explosive activities in areas of human endeavor almost beyond belief, as in the field of communication with the telephone, radio, and television spreading their networks of contact around the world not only by means of earthbound devices but statelities endlessly orbiting the world. Increasing means of information gathering and storage have arisen with the computer which are so sophisticated that weighty arguments have been raised on whether a computer can be designed which will actually imitate man. Transportation is not now limited merely to travel on the surface of the earth but involves

planes speeding across oceans at supersonic speed, while instant photography now presages instant motion pictures. Marvel upon marvel has been produced in such profundity and rapidity that one begins to accept them as commonplace.

But how much longer will this explosion of achievement in the fields of human endeavor continue? The tremendous advancement in knowledge--scientific, economic and social--has been predicated on freedom from statist interference. It has been primarily in the western oriented countries, as the United States, Europe and Japan that these great advances have been made. In these portions of the globe a sufficiently high degree of freedom has been permitted so scientific and experimental work could be performed by private individuals and companies

without too much interference from the State. In the slave states, as the Soviet Union and China, few, if any, quantum leaps in knowledge or achievement are made. What few advances are accomplished represent primarily improvements of inventions and ideas which have arisen in the freer areas of the world. And even these innovations are largely designed not to increase the standard of living of the people but of the military prowess of the State.

But the people in the western oriented States seem to be unaware of what is the fundamental basis of their great achievements. It is the non-interference by the State. Because they do not understand, or have forgotten, increasingly they permit the State to intervene in more and more activities. As but one example, on the questionable claim that a better environment necessitates Statist action, an environmental bureaucracy has arisen causing ever greater delays, if not actually preventing the construction of homes, plants and other im-

provements. Nuclear power--a tribute to the genius of man--is hampered by so much red tape by the State that the enormous increase in energy at low cost which is possible may never be realized.

Gradually, much as does a man who is suffering from hardening of the arteries, the western world is suffering from the hardening of the arteries of science, commerce and industry as the State injects itself into the arteries creating an economic arteriosclerosis which threatens to kill the patient--the society of individuals trying to live their lives as happily as possible.

What is to be done? A great emotional and educational campaign must be initiated to awaken the people of the Western World of the menace which the State presents. Albert Jay Nock labeled it rightly when he called it "Our Enemy, The State". Much as a fire must be contained if it is not to consume all about it, so the State must be contained if it is not to destroy society. Since the heart is more easily aroused than the brain, a simple emotional campaign must be inaugurated pointing out the manifold injustices of the State and its myriad bureaucracies.

But paralleling it must be an educational campaign teaching what should be obvious that knowledge has now attained a degree of sophistication too great to afford the interference of a blundering State. The knowledge which man has now acquired, if used unwisely, can result in the death of individual freedom much sooner and easier than was possible in past civilizations. Already such a marvel for collecting

information as the computer is being used to collate information about each individual almost from the day of birth to death. This material can be used by the State to browbeat and blackmail him into behavior contrary to his own desires or well-being.

The very marvelous achievements which arose as a result of freedom of thought and action can make it that much easier for the State to control all thought, stultifying individual achievement until at last the State collapses through the weight of its own obesity. But before and during the collapse, the individual will suffer the impossible agonies that the minorities did in Nazi Germany under the megalomaniac, Hitler, and still do suffer under the monstrosously ruthless bureaucracies of the Soviet Union and China.

The peoples of the earth can no longer continue to be apathetic and indifferent to the rise of the monolithic State. They must be aroused to stop it. Each day that passes with no action makes it that much harder for the fight to be won. Unless they bestir themselves, the world in the not too distant future will indeed become a Waste Land.

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