

CHAPTER III

RESTRICTIONS OF THE STATE

VERSATILITY AND ADAPTABILITY

Adaptability in man is an art; in the animal it is merely a necessity. One does not find the polar bear in the Indian jungle nor does one find the elephant in the Arctic regions. Somehow it has been arranged for animals to live in somewhat circumscribed areas where climate and food are suitable for their sustenance. Although man can take the animal from the jungle, and also from the Arctic seas, and lodge it in different temperate zones, he is obliged to provide it with special food to keep it in health. Man, however, can visit any of the regions, and adapt himself to the climatic conditions he finds there. The poles stimulate his curiosity, no matter how much hardship and privation he suffers in braving the intensest cold. Man can adapt himself to the zero degrees of the Arctic and also adapt himself to the highest temperatures of the tropics. This special art he has learned, how to protect himself in any climate and in any situation, is his gift and his gift only. There was no limit to his adventure save the boundary of the earth, but now his art carries him far above the clouds, miles high above his dwelling place.

The freedom which at the beginning must have been manifest, that is, the freedom to use the earth not only as the source from which sustenance could be gained, but also to use it as a place to be explored and in which

there could be found all the material necessary for man to build up a culture, came to an end when the State took him in hand. It is true, milleniums must have passed before the change became effective and before man realized to the full the benefits of the paradise that he had lost. Yet, in every civilization of which we have record, it is clearly laid down by poet or historian that man's effort to satisfy his hunger, and his natural curiosity to discover the good things the earth will yield for his desires and needs, are restricted by regulations imposed by the State. But the relics of no civilization show that the freeman suffered restrictive laws to the extent that the freeman suffers under the State today. Most of the restrictions of which we know, that were imposed in classical times, fell upon the slave, and he was called a slave.

The only restrictions within the boundary of the globe that man now suffers are imposed by the State. Once free to roam over the earth at will, now he is often photographed, finger-printed and labelled if he wishes to cross a frontier to enter another country. And it would be exceedingly difficult for him to re-enter his own land, if he were so unfortunate as to lose his passport. It is strange how so many of our countrymen, who have not travelled abroad, have little or no knowledge of the daily annoyances to which Europeans must submit if they would trade or travel beyond their own frontiers. If a person, desiring to travel from San Francisco to New York, had to submit to passport examination and search of his baggage for dutiable articles by the customs seven or eight times during the journey, it would bring home to him the rigors and terrors of such a journey as one from London to Constantinople by train and boat. Comparatively few Americans know what a frontier is, in the European sense of the term.

THE COMING OF THE STATE

Yet, the means politicians take to protect themselves from alien agitators, and such people who might overturn the government, are not always successfully exercised. But these means never fail to cause their own nationals the deepest humiliation a sensitive being can suffer. It has been well said, that it was a good thing for geographers and geologists that no port of entry or frontier restrictions were imposed upon such men as Columbus, Cook, Marco Polo, and Livingston. The caretakers, that man has imposed upon himself, are not always selected from the best type of citizen and, in my experience, I have found that the most superior politician never hesitates to accept all those international privileges which he denies to his electorate. This is worth mentioning, if only to point out what has happened under the group system in the evolutionary process. Man, before he dreamed of such a thing as the State, was responsible for doing all the hard chores, the ground work necessary for the making of a culture. Without the aid of a bureaucrat, he himself, on his own initiative, rose in the scale of well-being and achievement, millenium after millenium, transmuting order from chaos and, with ever-increasing persistency, lightening the labor necessary for his sustenance. Indeed, he made a valuable estate for himself, so productive of good things, that certain marauders thought it worth while to take it from him, and to reduce him to a peonage which, although he sometimes talks about freedom, he has not lost.

Now all this is told quite clearly, sometimes impolitely, in the eddas and the sagas that I know. It does not matter whether you look through the early literature of India or China, Greece or Rome, Babylon or Egypt,

the same story is told in unmistakable terms. It is told with amazing freshness in the *Li Ki*; told as pointedly and succinctly in the *Republic* of Plato. But classics are out of date, and well they may be, because to a thoughtful modern, a classic is a most uncomfortable work to read. The uneasy conscience of modern lawmakers is quick to discover how differently things were done in the early history of man.

ENSLAVEMENT BY THE STATE

For man as an individual there was no economic limitation imposed, and all the limitations of which we are now conscious are for men, in what is called organized society. A generation ago, it was one of the pet theories of the protectionist that restriction was, if not a rule of the universe, a convenient one for the State to adopt. Many specious arguments were put forward in support of this. And now we have a world of trade barriers, frontiers, armies, navies, and nationalism—all expedients of the State; but at no time can these expedients be relied upon to work effectively in the interests of the group. Beyond the frontier, over and above the authority of the State, we may see conditions which are without limitation. The people of a State suffer want and privation because of drought. Over the frontier, perhaps, there is an abundance. Indeed, Nature has often been so abundant in its yield of food that producers have destroyed crops at a time when millions are starving and dying, almost within reach of the food they crave. There is present now, almost every day we live, this extraordinary contradiction between the State and Nature. The one seems to give the other the lie, and the lie usually falls on the State; but statesmen disregard the lesson Nature points at them, and usually, they are

driven to complicate the confusion by an extension of further limitations.

So we are tempted to believe that limitations, which harass and annoy producers and deprive the people generally of their means of subsistence, are all political in their nature. Hence, economic man, who entered into his sphere without limitation, has been enslaved by the State, for the purpose of serving the politician. As Oppenheimer says, "The system is the exploitation of the economic means by the political means." It is beside the point to say that there must be rule (meaning the State), lest there should be chaos and anarchy. This is no excuse for what is done today, because the very conditions which the politician would shun in a natural state, are actually present in the State of his creation.

That these conditions exist and that numbers of serious thinkers realize the gravity of these conditions are shown clearly in a letter which Lord Lothian sent to *The Times* (London), July 30th, 1938, in which he said:

"As the Archbishop of York agrees, no thinking person can seriously dispute that it is State sovereignty and the anarchy it creates in a shrinking world which is the basic cause of our main troubles today. The barriers of trade raised by the State, not capitalism, are the main causes of the unemployment and the economic chaos which constitute the breeding ground for Communism and Fascism. The anarchy to sovereignties is the root cause of competition in armaments, the return to power politics, the dethronement of morality by expediency, the uncontrollable rise in taxation, and of wars and rumours of wars."

If that be the case, as thoughtful Europeans understand it, may it be asked if the time is not ripe for

serious-minded Americans to give their thought to this condition, which is world-wide, and realize the danger in which they stand?

As I proceed with the analysis, I shall endeavor to show that there is little or no rule exerted, either by the Federal government or by State legislatures in this country, of the type that makes for order and the amenities of social existence. Indeed, the most noticeable symptom of decay of the State, that observers describe, is the form of anarchy which affects nearly all classes from the underworld to the very powers, legislative and judicial, to which we should look for safeguarding the best interests of society.

THE STAGNATING STATE

There was a time, perhaps, when the State was something of a beneficent organization which worked in the interest of all its citizens; in this respect, citizen is scarcely the right word, for the citizens might have been a small minority of the people within its confines. Suppose we say, instead, its people, meaning the franchised and the disfranchised. There is, however, no record of such a State. But let us suppose for a moment that such an one did exist, and let us speculate on its effects upon the country beyond its borders. A frontier is not a mere geographical line drawn to mark the boundary of ownership and jurisdiction; it is something else: it is a wall of protection against invaders and, whether there be actually a wall built to mark the area or not, the frontier can be maintained as the State desires, only through restrictive rules and regulations, the breaking of which would instantly bring upon the head of the culprit severe penalties. In the suppositious case I have mentioned, we may find what has been

called "a beneficent State," so organized that it must observe every protective measure to thwart those who would overthrow it, from within or without. Now it seems to me, the more beneficent the State, the greater will be the desire of those, who enjoy its blessings, to extend its boundary lines. One can scarcely think of State in a static sense. The very word State conjures up the larger term Empire.

No one in the classics puts this more clearly and pointedly than Socrates in Plato's *Republic*:

"Then a slice of our neighbours' land will be coveted by us for pasture and tillage, and they will want a slice of ours, if, like ourselves, they exceed the limit of necessity, and give themselves up to the unlimited accumulation of wealth.

"That, Socrates, will be inevitable.

"And so we shall go to war, Glaucon, shall we not?

"Most certainly, he replied.

"Then, without determining as yet whether war does good or harm, this much we may affirm, that now we have discovered war to be derived from causes which are also the causes of almost all the evils in states, private as well as public."

THE PARASITIC CLASS

There is, moreover, another point to be considered while we are dealing with the wholly imaginary organization of "the beneficent State" and it is this: the State, in a political sense, must have governors and assistants. No State can exist without a bureaucracy of some kind. Therefore, there is a deep economic difference between the producers of the State and those who govern and, naturally, because of this difference, there will be special classes of the community who will strive, at all costs,

to leave the ranks of producers, and to enter the more comfortable sphere of the governors. Unfortunately, the governors will have no time to produce for themselves, always being so busy governing; therefore, others must give at least a share of the necessaries they produce, in order to maintain their masters. So it is utterly impossible to set up even a beneficent State, without creating the evil of a parasitic class. It may be said that governors serve in directing, and controlling, and preserving order, in maintaining the army, the navy, and the police. That is true enough: they do so in the beneficent State. But they, as governors, are, nevertheless, parasites, for they add nothing whatever to the production of wealth, and they ought never to be included in such services as those which minister to the legitimate needs and desires of man.

All history reveals the growth and decay of such systems and, oddly enough, there has been no evolutionary process at work in the scheme; that is, evolutionary in the sense of rising to a better and finer condition. The modern State, as we know it, is doing exactly the same things as were done by every State of which we have record. The longer it is in being, the greater is the growth of the parasitic class and, consequently, the greater the need to maintain the paupers.

Few seem to realize that the State, as we know it today, presents the extraordinary spectacle of two millstones, constantly at work destroying the grain. The upper stone is the government (Federal and State in our land); the under stone represents the classes who subsist upon relief. And these two parasitic stones, constantly revolving, now grind the producers to powder. The same condition existed towards the end of every civilization we have known. Such was the condition in

Rome; such was the condition in Greece. The rich parasites and the poor parasites devoured the producers.

In those States which have, to some extent, stamped out corruption, nepotism, and thievery in the bureaucracy, there still remains the pernicious system of making the bureaucracy larger and larger. But few within the system realize that the bureaucracy grows by what it feeds on, and the greater its appetite grows, the less is left both for the individual pauper, and the producer who finds the food.

There are a few States which pretend to be democratic and which conduct their affairs with some degree of honesty, but in those States it is almost impossible for the individual to make a living at politics. Generally, the chief offices are held by men who are well-to-do, and nearly all the work of local government is done by men who are not paid; only professionals, such as town-clerks, engineers and sanitary inspectors, the clerical staffs and so on, are remunerated. Other States make a boast of opening the services to all and sundry in the political arena, as opportunities for making a living, not only beyond the nominal salary which goes with the post, but by many perquisites and, not infrequently, extraordinary opportunities for diverting State funds to their own purses.

Even in the States which are conducted with some semblance of uprightness, no matter what the system of such a State may be called—Fascist, Communist or Democratic—the type of man whose ambition is to become a member of the bureaucracy, either in Parliament or in the great departments of the State, varies according to the opportunities for self-aggrandizement which are given by the system. The system which makes it difficult for a man to make a living in politics always

inspires the finer type for service. But whether it be made easy for a man to batten upon the producers, or merely to subsist on a small salary, there is no experience required for the job. Anybody who can win the suffrages of the people, or win the favor of patronage, is eligible for office. Some countries, however, debar bankrupts, criminals, the diseased, and the demented; other countries do not. It is the only vocation that ever has been invented which is open, without test of intelligence, health and probity. In many States, some of the riff-raff of the system may be found enjoying the security of a job in the bureaucracy. Seldom, in such States, do misdemeanants and grafters suffer the opprobrium of the courts or those punishments which would approximately fit their crimes. In such States the rottenness of the system may be a by-word, the chief feature of its cartoonists, the quip of the most ribald columnist; indeed, the notoriety of political crooks may be widespread, but neither newspaper publicity of political scandal, nor the exertions of resolute reformers, seems to make the slightest impression upon the apathy of the people in general. All is accepted as part of the game played by the politicians. In such a system, it may be found that there are many exceptional men who, personally, would not stoop to the slightest derogatory action. But try to urge such men to unearth the party scandals, and take action against the corrupters, and you will find them immovable. These men will investigate bankers, manufacturers, great corporations; hail the officials before committees, scrutinize their books, and catechize their clerks but, as for taking action against the misdemeanants of their own party, it is an unheard of thing! Why? Because the votes of the *scum* have the same ballot value as the votes of the *froth*. Each one counts one.

ANOMALIES OF THE STATE

The most curious situations arise under this system, which in some directions indicate how low man has fallen in intelligence since the State absorbed him. In some States the men who make a living by politics are those who say how much the producers of the country shall pay to maintain not only the politicians, but also the paupers who elect them to office. Locally, in some of these States, the office-holders are exempt from taxation. Then there are men of quite a high type, who go into politics with worthy ideals, who, regarding this question of making a living out of the producers, imagine there is nothing derogatory in remaining in office, when they know that their ideals can never be carried out. It should be plain to the thinking man that the evil of setting up a parasitic class, which began with the creation of the first State (call it a bureaucracy or what you will) has never changed in any particular, save that of becoming greater and more and more iniquitous in its greed for power.

Perhaps one reason for the longevity of this system is that there have been periods in the history of every State, when there have been "good times," that is, a few decades or a generation of rehabilitation, better trade, more real wage, and peace. Our minds go back to these times and, as we must be optimists, even under the worst conditions the State can impose, we hoodwink ourselves by believing that "good times" will come again.

This curious business reveals another preposterous anomaly; that is, the position of the politician during a war. It is so arranged that the politicians contrive to send the producers to do the fighting. In some countries,

however, a politician would be found, here and there, "doing his bit" (sometimes voluntarily, more often than not because of the obligations of compulsory service). Then again, the politician invents the story of the cause of the war; he also invents the slogans which will inspire the producers to fight. But few realize what these anomalies mean, and this lack of appreciating the disadvantages of the system for the many, is surely another indication of the reversal of an evolutionary process: that which tends to subdue the productively strong in the struggle for existence.

THE FALL OF MAN

The political State, therefore, to my mind, is not only an unnatural development; it is also a Frankenstein bent on wrecking itself. Today all that the most upright statesmen can say of it is: "we must make the best of it"; and that is saying a great deal, for it must be patent to every man of comprehension, who holds a high position in any State of western civilization, that the tendency is toward greater confusion and disorder.

It is said quite openly today by statesmen, whether of good or ill repute, that another World War will mean the end of our culture. But man, plain man, man the producer, the finder of wealth, who must gather the cost to be dissipated, grovels under the yoke of the State and never seems to realize that he is a creature without hope, beyond the mere satisfaction of his momentary needs.

Such is the fall of man—the creature put here to rely upon his own resources, to overcome the initial problems of production, to discover he had inventive genius, to fashion the first piece of capital wherewith to lighten the exertion of producing his desires and needs! Such thoughts may give rise, in the mind of the reader, to a question: how can it all be changed?