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PEOPLE AND THE TECHNOCRATIC TRINITY

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A "modern" society, as here conceived of, is characterized by the articulation, at the national level, all bureaucracies and corporations. Both are engaged in the exercise of power, but whereas the former specialize in ideological normative and punitive power the latter are more concerned with utilitarian power, providing the members of the society with goods and services, thereby directing their supplies of money and labor. However, increasingly, the bureaucracies of the modern state also engage in the exercise of this type of power, providing goods and services according to plans and needs rather than (or in addition to) markets and demand, making the state with its bureaucracies relatively allpervasive. Of course, having said this the ideological dimension and the punitive dimension of the corporations should also be emphasized: there is a message in every goods and service provided; there is a tremendous punitive power in the possibility of withholding goods and services and jobs.

To make this system work at the level of a modern nation state beginning with a number of members in the order of magnitude of hundreds of thousands, millions (10^5, 10^6, 10^7, 10^8), generalizations and abstractions are indispensable. Such a system cannot be steered on the basis of particularistic, personal relations only, there has to be an element of universalism both in the rules and in the forms of understanding in general. The specialists in producing such universally valid, meaning general and abstract, rules of understanding are known as intellectuals; the persons enacting them are referred to here as the intelligentsia for the society, divided into a number of professions depending on what kinds of rules they specialize in. They may act for bureaucracy, for corporations or for both; in any case they will receive salaries and/or honoraria. But they may also be directly related to the people, supplying skills that are in demand by people and for which they are willing to offer money, or labor (like the peasant placing some eggs or chicken on the steps of the parish priest some morning at Christmas-time).

In the figure on the next page an effort is made to depict these relations. Modern societies here are seen as having exactly these four elements; bureaucracy, corporation, intellegentsia-professions and people; tight together in a network of give and take, systems of reciprocity. Everything depends on how balanced this system is, and much of the problèmatique how modern society can be located inside this type of figure. Thus, it should be noted that the three components of the BCI-complex define people according to their perspectives as citizens, consumers and clients respectively (the triple C perspective).

As a first way of using this "model" let us ask one question: what happens if one of the four components is so strong as to dominate all the other three?

If that component is "people" the answer is simple: the society is not a "modern" society. It may be what is often referred to as a "primitive" or "traditional" society, it is green in developmental terms, local (nomadic or sedentary); family clan and usually village-based. If there is a bureaucracy it is remote and largely irrelevant; the same applies to national corporations. There are skills in the population, but they are more evenly divided, not monopolized by a particular group except - in most cases - certain very particular skills related to life and death (the medicine man being one example).

Then, let us imagine a society where "bureaucracy" is predominant. People are above all citizens, the bureaucracy provides goods and services in addition to identity and security. Such societies will tend to be military, belligerant, Sparta-like. There is no group of independent professions that can challenge the rule-making and rule-excercise of the state; there are no corporations that can provide alternative messages when it comes to goods and sercices. In general the absolute absolutist state would be in this category.

Then the third case: society where "corporations" dominate. Bureaucracy is subordinate to the wims and wills of the corporation, production and marketing of goods and services become the raison d'etre of the society. People are converted into consumers, just as they appear as citizens in the state-dominated-society. Actually, the word "consumer" might give a too active connotation as people are more likely to become objects manipulated by corporate interests and strategies; in a corresponding vein the word "citizen" may also have a too active connotation where the word "subject" may be more appropriate.

Is there then a society one could conceive of where the fourth grouping, the intelligentsia/profession predominate? In other words the society where all those people with high education, lawyers, physicians, architects and engineers, social scientists, economists, and so on dominate society according to their rules of general understanding - regardless of whether they work for and in the bureaucracy, for and in corporations or in direct relations with people? Of course, it would be difficult to imagine that all these professions would at the same time have equal influence; some of them would no doubt be more equal than others. But if one looks at contemporary society it might be argued that just as lawyers as a profession had a considerable influence one or two generations ago the corresponding profession today would be the economists. Or, to but it more clearly, that the economists as a group have more power over bureaucracy, corporation and people than these three have over the economists because the latter can define the rules of the discourse, define what relevant data and valid theory, rule out questions and problems as inappropriate even when they come from people with tremendous power-potentials, be that in the form of force (punitive power) or money (remunerative power). In other words, such a society is not at all so far-fetched as it might seem.

What kind of conclusion can be drawn from this little excursion into sociology of modern societies? Probably only one: that none of these four extreme versions would sound like very desirable societies today. Just to the contrary, one guess would be that most people or at least very many people might prefer some society with an adequate balance between the four groups. Whether one likes it or not the national level fo organisation has become a fact to which people in such societies are not only habituated but also addicted, expecting to find to a large extent the same rules practised from one end of the country to the other; and the same goods and services. The freedom to move inside a country is also interpreted as the freedom not to be exposed to two sharp differences in rules, goods and services. And the inculcational skills in concrete persons who can exercise according to the rules is also seen as a condition by society to be worthy of allegiance, In other words, it might be said that people have to some extent applicated during the process of modernization, giving the powers to rule to the bureaucracies, the supply to corporations, and skills to the professions. But in principle this application is never complete. People may withdraw their obedience from the state; in some cases also refuse to do taxes or enter services of other kinds. People may withhold their money and their labor from corporations, thereby at least attempting to steal their outputs. And they may stop demanding the skills of the professions, and/or withholding payment thereby making them rather impotent. That it is difficult to do one, two or all three of these goes without saying and it would only happen in extreme cases, and actually be tantamount to the break-down of the social order. But the same type of thinking applies to the other relations in figure 1 : as they are give and take relations one may refuse to give, knowing that there will be nothing to take. Of course the bureaucracy, being a part of the state, may have at its disposal the ultimo ration regis but even

that depends on professions, such as the military and the police that on some conditions may prefer to side with one or more of the other three.

In other words, one arrives at the conclusion that a desirable society is based on some kind of equilibrium. Certainly not a very original conclusion, but one which is fruitful when it comes to analysing processes in such societies. And that leads to the second major point of departure making use of this "model": what kind of alliance formations could one have according to this "model"?

With four groups there are six alliances that are possible, and all of them are actually quite interesting.