

CHAPTER 15

One Can Always Hope

IT IS NOT INCUMBENT on a diagnostician to prescribe a remedy, and it would be quackery for him to do so when he has misgivings as to its curative value. It may be that the struggle between Society and the State is inevitable; it may be in the nature of things for the struggle to continue until mutual destruction clears the ground for the emergence of a new Society, to which a new political establishment attaches itself to effect a new doom. Perhaps the malignancy is inherent in man. It would be silly to suggest that four-footed males, driven by the reproductive urge, ought to know better than engage in deathly battles over possession of females, and it is possible that the historical struggle between the social organization and the political organization is likewise meant to be.

Support for this conclusion is found in the ground we have covered.

Beginning with man—where else can we begin?—we find him impelled by an inner urge to improve his circumstances and widen his horizon; a self-generating capacity for wanting drives him from one gratification to another. Each gratification represents an expenditure of labor, which, because it produces a feeling of weariness, he finds distasteful. His inclination is to by-pass labor as much as possible, but without

sacrificing his betterment. He brings to bear on this natural *modus operandi* a peculiarly human gift, the faculty of reason. (It is this faculty that suggests a possible solution of the Society-State conflict, which we will discuss later.) His reason tells him that the business of multiplying satisfactions is best pursued by cooperation with his fellow man. Thus arises Society and its techniques: specialization and exchange, capital accumulations, competition. Society is a labor-saving device, instinctively invented; it is not a contractual arrangement, any more than the family is, but like the family it germinates in the composition of man.

The market-place method yields more for less labor than individual self-sufficiency does, yet the price it always demands is labor. There is no getting away from that. Still, it is a price paid with reluctance, and out of this inner conflict between cost and desires comes the drama of organized man. The impossibility of getting something for nothing, the *sum-mum bonum*, does not banish hope or intimidate the imagination, and in his effort to realize the dream, man frequently turns to predation: the transference of possession and enjoyment of satisfactions from producer to nonproducer. Since men work only to satisfy their desires, this transference induces a feeling of hurt, and in response to that feeling the producer sets up a protective mechanism. Under primitive conditions, he relies on his own powers of resistance to robbery, his personal strength plus such weapons as he has at his disposal. That is his Government. Since this protective occupation interferes with his primary business of producing satisfactions, and is frequently ineffective, he is quite willing to turn it over to a specialist when the size and opulence of Society call for such a service. Government provides the specialized social service of safeguarding the market place.

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The distinctive feature of this service is that it enjoys a monopoly of coercion. That is the necessary condition for the conduct of the business; any division of authority would defeat the purpose for which Government is set up. Yet, the fact remains that Government is a human organization, consisting of men who are exactly like the men they serve. That is, they too seek to satisfy their desires with the minimum of exertion, and they too are insatiable in their appetites. In addition to the run-of-the-mill desires which possess all men, Government personnel acquire one peculiar to their occupation: the adulation showered on them because they alone exercise coercion. They are a people apart.

The honorifics that stem from the exercise of power arouse a passion for power, particularly with men whose capacities would go quite unnoticed in the market place, and the temptation is strong to expand the area of power; the negative function of protection is too confining for men of ambition. The tendency then in the world of officialdom is to assume a capacity for positive functions, to invade the market place, to undertake to regulate, control, manage, and manipulate its techniques. In point of fact, it does nothing of the kind, since the techniques are self-operating, and all that political power can accomplish by its interventions is to control human behavior; it effects compliance by the threat of physical punishment. That, indeed, is the be-all and end-all of political power. Yet, such is the makeup of the human that he looks up to, and sometimes worships, the fellow human who dominates his will, and it is this acquired sense of superiority that is the principal profit of officialdom.

The transition from negative Government to positive State is marked by the use of political power for predatory purposes. In its pursuit of power, officialdom takes into consid-

eration the ineluctable something-for-nothing passion, and proceeds to win the support of segments of Society bent on feathering their nests without picking feathers. It is a *quid pro quo* arrangement, by which the power of compulsion is sublet to favored individuals or groups in return for their acquiescence to the acquisition of power. The State sells privilege, which is nothing but an economic advantage gained by some at the expense of others. In olden times, the privileged group were a land-owning class, who furnished military support for political power, or a mercantilist group, who contributed to the imperial coffers out of their politically generated monopoly profits; with the advent of popular suffrage, making political preferment dependent on wider favor, the business of bribery had to be extended, and so came the subsidization of farmers, tenants, the aged, users of electric power, and so on. Their vested interest in the State makes them amenable to its purposes.

It is this partnership in predation that characterizes the State. Without the support of privileged groups the State would collapse. Without the State the privileged groups would disappear. The contract is rooted in the law of parsimony.

The instrument that puts the State into a bargaining position with its favorites is taxation. In the beginning, when the simple community sets up Government, it is admitted that its operatives cannot be productive and therefore have to be supported by the market place. Services must be paid for. But the manner of paying for Government service poses a problem: taxes are compulsory charges, not voluntary payments, and their collection has to be entrusted to the very people who live by them; the compulsory power entrusted to them is used in the collection of their own wages. That this func-

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tion should be pursued with vigor is understandable. Yet, where political power is under the constant surveillance of Society, the urgency to increase taxes for the purpose of enlarging political power can be held in leash. But this restraint loses potency as Society grows in size and in complexity of interests; the preoccupation of its members with productive enterprise dims their interest in public affairs, which tend to become the private concern of officials. Centralization of political power, which is merely its release from the restraint of social sanctions, ensues, and tax levies grow apace. The political establishment—the court of Louis XIV or the equally nonproductive bureaucracy of the modern “welfare” State—thus acquires self-sufficiency; it has the wherewithal to meet its enforcement payroll and to invest in power-accumulating enterprises.

There is always good and sufficient reason for more and more taxes. Solomon’s temple, the roads of Rome, the rearing of “infant industries,” military preparedness, the regulation of morals, the improvement of the “general welfare”—all call for drafts on the market place, and the end-product of each draft is an increase in the power of the State. Some of the appropriations seep through to some members of Society, thus satisfying the something-for-nothing urge, at least temporarily, and so stimulate a disposition to tolerate the institution and to obliterate understanding of its predatory character. Until the State reaches its ultimate objective, absolutism, its answer to tax-grumbling is that the “other fellow” pays all the levies and that seems to satisfy.

Pushing on fast through the biography of political institutions, the practice of buying the support of privileged and subsidized groups sloughs off when the State becomes self-sufficient; that is, when the market place is completely under

its domination. The State then becomes the only privileged class. Custom and necessity reduce Society to a condition of subservience to the bureaucracy and the police, the components of the State. This condition is currently known as totalitarianism, but it is in fact nothing but conquest, the conquest of Society by the State. So that, whether or not the State originated in conquest, as some historians hold, the end result of unchecked political institutions is the same: Society is enslaved.

The end is not yet. The stature of the State grows by predation, the stature of Society shrinks in proportion. For an explanation for this antithesis we return to the composition of man. We find that he works only to satisfy his desires, of which he has a plenitude, that his output of effort is in proportion to his intake of satisfactions. If his investment of labor yields no profit, or if experience tells him none can be expected, his interest in laboring flags. That is, production declines by the amount of expropriation he must endure; if expropriation is severe enough and evasion becomes impossible, so that he learns to accept it as a way of life and forgets what it actually is, his output tends to the minimum of mere existence. But, since the State thrives on what it expropriates, the general decline in production which it induces by its avarice foretells its own doom. Its source of income dries up. Thus, in pulling Society down it pulls itself down. Its ultimate collapse is usually occasioned by a disastrous war, but preceding that event is a history of increasing and discouraging levies on the market place, causing a decline in the aspirations, hopes and self-esteem of its victims.

When we speak of the disappearance of a civilization we do not mean that a people has been extinguished. Every holocaust leaves survivors. What is implied by the fall of a civili-

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zation is the disappearance from memory of an accumulation of knowledge and of values that once obtained among a people. The prevailing arts and sciences, the religion and manners, the ways of living and of making a living have been forgotten. They have been obliterated not by a pile of dust but by a general lack of interest in marginal satisfactions, in the things men strive to achieve when the struggle for existence is won. One can manage to get along without knives and forks when the getting of food is trouble enough, and the first business of raiment is to provide warmth, not adornment. Contrariwise, as the primary necessities accumulate, the human begins to dream of new worlds to conquer, including the world of the mind—culture, ideas, values. The accumulating conquests become the indicia of a civilization. The loss of a civilization is the reverse of that process of cultural accumulation. It is the giving up, as a matter of necessity, of those satisfactions that are not essential to existence. It is a process of forgetting through force of circumstance; it is abstinence imposed by environment. Sometimes nature will for a while impose abstinence, but the record shows that man is quite capable of overcoming such obstacles to his ambitions. The obstacle he does not seem able to overcome is his inclination to predation, which gives rise to the institution of the State; it is this institution that ultimately induces a climate of uselessness, of lack of interest in striving, and thus destroys the civilization it feeds upon. Or so the record shows: every civilization that declined or was lost carried an all-powerful State on its back.

Collapse of a State means a weakening of the instruments of coercion by means of which property in the fruits of one's labors was transferred to nonproducing rulership or its supporting accomplices. Thereafter, maybe for centuries, free-

dom prevails, men learn to dream and hope again, and the realization of each dream through effort encourages further fantasy and generates more effort; thus wealth multiplies, knowledge accumulates, manners take shape, and the non-material values attain importance in man's hierarchy. A new civilization is born. Although something of the lost civilization is recaptured by accident, what is dug up has to be re-learned; the new civilization does not grow out of its predecessor, but emerges from the efforts of the living. At any rate, history tells us, a civilization no more than gets started when a political institution attaches itself to it, feeds on it, and in the end devours it. And the roundelay starts all over again.

Is there no escape from the cycle? None has as yet been discovered. Nevertheless, the search for a formula for the "good society" has never been abandoned, hope being what it is, and out of the laboratory of the human mind has come a congeries of utopias. The connotation of unreality that the word has acquired follows from the fact that every utopia ignores the central operating lever of man: he seeks to satisfy his desires with the least expenditure of effort. Every "good society" conjured up by philosophers and reformers presupposes an imaginary man managing his behavior by the dictates of pure reason and keeping in mind the long-range effects of his every act. Since there is no such man, or none we know of, every utopian scheme is indulgently put into the category of a fairy tale, interesting but unreal.

To be sure, man is a reasoning animal, and if he were to refer the matter to his reason he would conclude that something-for-nothing is an impossibility; what one acquires "for free" must be provided by another. He would admit that a

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Society consisting entirely of consumers, say pirates, could not exist. He would concede without argument that production must precede consumption, that the purpose of production is consumption, that nothing would be produced if there were no prospect of enjoyment. He need not be an economist to arrive at such conclusions. All that, he would say, is common sense.

Yet, how easily does common sense take flight before the prospect of a gratuity or an unearned profit! Reason is not lacking in sufficient logic to circumvent reason when a hand-out is involved. The beneficiary finds nothing incongruous in a regimen of "bread and circuses"; here is visible evidence that something-for-nothing is not a mirage. Is it cold logic that generates an urgency for "protective" tariffs or a passion for getting more than one gives? When the State undertakes to provide "cheap" electricity for one section of the population at the expense of another, there are reasoners enough to support the arrangement. The libraries are full of tomes justifying subsidies of all sorts, and leveling—or the forcible taking from one to give to another—has long been the favorite preoccupation of professorial brains. Aristotle, the peer of logicians, found a syllogism to support the oldest form of exploitation known to man.

Yes, man is endowed with the gift of reason, but he is also possessed of appetites and an aversion to labor, and too often his reason bends to his other characteristics. The failure of utopians to accept this fact, or to accept man as he is, not as he ought to be, gives their schemes a dreamlike quality.

Generally speaking, utopianism falls into two main categories: the anarchistic and the communistic. The one posits as its primary premise the essential reasonableness and goodness of man, which are perverted by the introduction of force.

It is the policeman, says the anarchist, who makes the criminal; remove the one and the other disappears. The communistic utopian, on the other hand, puts all the blame for social disorder on the institution of private property; abolish that institution (with or without force, according to the utopian's conceit), and the "good society" will follow as a matter of course. (Incidentally, most anarchistic utopians would also abolish private property by the very force they decry; apparently, force is commendable when it is used by the right person for the right purpose.) The anarchistic premise, that the policeman came before and made the thief, is lacking in historical support; the sheriff came only because cattle rustling called for him. The communistic premise, that private property is the root of all social evil, assumes that man works for the sake of working, and without regard for the prospect of possession and enjoyment. Neither premise coincides with observable experience, and therefore the syllogisms built on each hang in the mid-air of unreality.

Significantly, all utopian programs pay considerable attention to the political organization of man. The philosophic anarchist (relying on the perfectibility of man through education) is convinced that when the individual comes to his senses he will not need or tolerate the State. The communist believes that an all-powerful State is necessary not only for the wiping out of private property but also of the inclination of the individual to own, and expects that instrument to "wither away" when it has accomplished that purpose. Then there are the utopians who dwell somewhere between these schools; accepting the State as a desirable or unavoidable fact of life (or even enjoying divine sanction), they propose to rid it of its admitted imperfections by legalistic tinkering; *The Republic* of Plato is the best known of this type. All

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utopias are characterized by an avoidance of the fact that the State is made by man and in his own image, that if he were not constantly on the prowl for something-for-nothing he would never build such an institution.

Some indirect recognition of the fact that the State is the image of man, or vice versa, is found in those utopias that lay claim to scientific exactitude. Beginning with a theory that is nothing but an unproven hypothesis, they do pretty well in endowing the State with a socially beneficial character. The theory holds that man is not a reasoning animal, or even a thinking one, and is certainly without fixed or immutable instincts; his behavior consists entirely of reflex actions induced by environmental conditioning. From this premise (which its proponents accept as axiomatic) it follows that man will be what his environmental influences compel him to be, and that the "perfect" man will emerge from the "perfect" environment. It is the mold that makes the man. If, therefore, we would improve the condition of man we must apply ourselves to the improvement of the mold into which this bit of protoplasm is to be poured.

But how and by whom is this mold to be built? It is admittedly a colossal job, which only the State with its monopoly of power is capable of performing. But the State itself is a human institution, and the question arises as to the capacity of the nonthinking human to put the State on the job of producing the "perfect" environment. The "scientists" get themselves out of this logical quandary by simply putting their basic theory aside for the moment and admitting, at least tacitly, that *some* people are in fact capable of thinking. For an as-yet-unexplained reason, these "scientists" have been able to free themselves from *their* environmental influences and are actually capable of cerebration; for that reason they

have been chosen (by themselves, of course, since nobody else is capable of passing judgment on their capacities) to draw up the blueprint for the "perfect" environment which, by use of its force, the State can effectuate. Certainty of success will be assured by entrusting the power to the "scientists." And we who cannot think are for that very reason estopped from questioning either their logic or the soundness of their utopia.

Is utopia—the "good society"—an impossibility? One would be rash indeed to say so categorically. Yet, anyone who speculates on man's ability to put his social life in perfect order must take into account the biological fact of longevity. Man seeks to satisfy his desires while he lives, not when death has cut short his appetites, and actuarial figures tell him just about how long he may expect to live. His pattern of behavior is necessarily determined by his expectancy. Which is to say that in the nature of things his is a short-run view, although his perspective may be lengthened by a concern for the welfare of his immediate posterity, his children and grandchildren in being. Beyond that there is the "future of his country," a speculative interest that can have little bearing on his day-to-day chores.

The banker knows full well that the State's bonds in his vaults do not represent goods produced but are merely claims on production; the "interest" they yield is taxes, draughts on the market place, and he is in fact a tax collector once removed. Nor is he unaware of the inflationary character of these pieces of paper: that in the long run they depreciate the value of all his assets as well as those of his depositors, that the market place is indeed impoverished by his holdings. What's more, if he stops to think about it, he must know

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that the more of these bonds he holds the more he must support the fiscal activities of the State, for depreciation of the value of these bonds could put him out of business. Prudence compels him to disregard such considerations; he cooperates with the State's financing schemes, even if he suspects that in doing so he will gradually be downgraded to a secretarial position. In his need for showing a profit this year he puts aside whatever scruples he may have about buying the State's bonds. The future must take care of itself.

The corporation president has become accustomed to a standard of living calling for a certain income. He likes it and so does his wife. It is true that he has earned three times that amount and that the State has confiscated two thirds of his earnings. He resents the confiscation, wishes he could retain more and thus improve his standard, but finds it convenient to go along with the State for good reason. Perhaps his corporation is wholly or partly in the employ of the State; in that case, his income is actually derived from the taxes he is forced to pay. It is true that his employees in the aggregate pay more than he does and, though he has not figured it out, the probability is that he senses a profit in this allocation of taxes. Perhaps, if they were not taxed, his employees would buy the corporation's products as liberally as does the tax collector, but selling to a multitude of buyers would entail more sales and credit problems, and for the time being (which is all he is interested in) he finds it easier to do business with the One Big Buyer. He hires a lobbyist to do his selling.

Continuing with the corporation president, if the sales of his product drop to a point where his accustomed profits are threatened—say because taxes have deprived his prospective customers of purchasing power—he is inclined to look with

favor on the State's inflationary activities. The distribution of more money, even though slightly counterfeit, will temporarily enrich the populace and enable them to make his sales chart good to look at. That the infusion of new money into the market place will have the effect of depreciating the value of his eroding plant, possibly to the extent of putting his business in an insolvent condition, no matter how much he may put aside for replacement, is a consideration, to be sure; but that is something for the next president and the stockholders of the future to worry about. This year he must pay dividends.*

It would be a stupid farmer indeed who did not realize that being paid for not producing is an anomaly; it would be an insensitive one who did not resent the regulations that accompany the largess. Yet the immediate need for a tractor or television set obliterates such considerations, including the probability that his son will never be an independent farmer. The subsidized renter may see some connection between his privilege and the deductions from his pay envelope; even so, it is nice to know that his quarters cost him less than does the comparable habitation of his nonsubsidized neighbor. The old lady living on "social security" remittances, the veteran whose doctor bill is taken care of by the State, and the malingerer receiving unemployment gratuities are not in the least concerned with the future. Even the philosopher who sees dire forebodings in the trend makes peace with it, if necessity demands, and in the comfort of an unearned grant finds solace for his misgivings. We are condemned to live in the present.

* In the classical economic tradition it was always the debtor class who asked for "cheap" money. We now find the industrialist and, at times, the financial crowd who look favorably on "controlled" inflation. This phenomenon is worth exploring.

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It is this biological necessity that robs the long-term point of view of reality and facilitates the operations of the State. The need of living now bends the will to live to the conditions under which living is possible; just as a man patterns his life in the wilderness to primitive conditions, so does he make adjustment to the rules, regulations, controls, confiscations, and interventions imposed on him by political power. If these restraints on his aspirations are regularized, so that his "way of life" achieves a semblance of stability, he soon loses consciousness of restraint; what he may have resented at the beginning is not only accepted but also defended. For such is the composition of man that his adjustment to environment is not confined to mere physical, insensate accommodation; it must include a conscious acceptance, a justification, a moral support. He cannot live comfortably without giving his blessing to the conditions under which he lives. His competence with words aids the process of accommodation; with words he develops an ideology that satisfies his mind as to the correctness and even righteousness of his "way of life." This is the secret ally of the State—the inclination of the human to adore the conditions which have been imposed on him and under which he has found a comfortable adjustment. Its propaganda machinery, by constant reiteration, turns the ideological phrases into a liturgy; its bureaucracy, which regularizes the cherished "way of life," acquires the glory of a priesthood; its buildings, even its prisons, are covered with a distinctive aura; its formalism becomes ritualistic, its utterances oracular. Only the theoretician, the economist and the historian, concerns himself with the long-term consequences of the State's interventions. In the meantime one must live, and in the meantime "long live the king."

In these circumstances, the long-termer, the prophet who harps on first principles and the ultimate consequences of violation, is a dealer in unreality and an unwanted disturber of the adjustment. His vagaries may be remembered and his prophecy recalled when at long last his forebodings have come to pass. That is, when the restraints multiply to the point where adjustment leaves little area for living, when a miserable existence is all that one can get out of one's efforts. It is then that the primordial instinct for freedom looms larger than the instinct for life itself and there is nothing left to do but to throw off the shackles of the State. But that, for the present, is in the unrealistic realm of the long-term.

The instinct for freedom, the yearning for self-expression without let or hindrance, is the stuff of which utopia is made. Were it not for that element in unscrutable man's makeup he would never be involved in political matters and his history would be like unto a history of the jungle. Man, the producer, must have freedom, while man, the predator, puts limitations on freedom, and this inner dichotomy is the plot of his life story. His search for the "good society" is his search for a denouement. Whether or not it is in the nature of things that the struggle should go on indefinitely, he cannot help trying his hand at fashioning a happy ending. And what follows herewith is simply another attempt at the same thing.

The principal ingredient in any formula for the "good society" must be a preventive. How can Society protect itself against the tendency of political power to encroach upon and liquidate social power? This has been the continuing problem of social integrations, and the only solution human ingenuity has hit upon is surveillance and supervision. Society must always keep its eyes on and, when need be, lay its hands on

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political power. In practice, surveillance and supervision take the form of constitutionalism, or written limitations on political power, with popular suffrage the enforcement agency. Experience shows, however, that constitutions and suffrage only delay, do not prevent, the fermentation of political power; men can and do vote themselves into its clutches under the promise of an unearned advantage, and constitutions are not written in the indelible ink of natural law. The fallibility of constitutionalism lies in the fact that as political power extends its area of operations it is able to play one group against another, catering to their diverse cupidities, and under cover of such intrasocial conflicts (class struggles) its inherent proclivity for expansion breaks through the constitutional bounds. There is the further fact that production, not surveillance and supervision of political power, is the first business of Society, and that this ancillary occupation is likely to be overlooked; particularly so when those who exercise power are beyond the personal purview of those upon whom it is exercised. As a practical matter, therefore, surveillance and supervision are an effective restraint only when the political unit is small, so small that the political personnel cannot escape social pressures. That is, the town-hall type of Government.

We are speaking of the political, not the economic, unit. The size of the economic unit is always determined by the radius of exchanges, and is always regulated by the human sense of value. Buyer and seller, regardless of the distance between them, either in space or culture, become members of the market place by the act of exchange. The market place is self-regulatory, operating under laws which are self-enforcing and carry their own sanctions; it is a mechanism which functions without the use of political power and whose

efficiency can only be lowered by the injection of that power. It will be as large as customers and sellers want it to be. Without political interference it can be world-wide.

The best that political power can do in the premises is to prevent theft (including the violation of contract), and this it can do only by punishing the thief after the act has been committed, with the hope that such punishment will discourage repetition or emulation. Even in this function it is less effective than social sanctions; exile from the market place of a community unable or unwilling to keep its house in order, or of an individual who establishes a reputation for dishonesty, is retribution enough. If it is in the economic interest of any political unit to maintain police relations with other communities, liaison through representatives can be established, but the powers and functions of these representatives must be held within the purview of their employers, the local town-hall meeting. Political power can and will be put to antisocial practices only when those to whom it is entrusted act as principals, not as agents.

The means by which the political person—"divine right" king or elected official—achieves independent stature is the power to appropriate property. Without appropriation there cannot be a State, and the power of the State is in direct proportion to the amount of property it appropriates. Contrariwise, social power is measurable by the amount of property the individual producer is able to retain and dispose of as he sees fit. The State thrives on taxation, Society suffers from it. The difference between a free Society and a dominated one is in the percentage of property the State lays its hands on.

All taxes are compulsory exactions—"voluntary taxation" is a contradiction in terms—and the problem that Society

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must face, if it would retain its freedom, is whether it will keep the compulsory power in its own hands, under strict surveillance, or transfer it to its political agents. Transference carries with it the relinquishment of social power and the enlargement of political power, or the deterioration of the negative Government into the positive State. Hence, the safeguard of the "good society," or the means by which it can be achieved, is the constant, rigorous, and jealous examination of every tax request, and the careful supervision of the disbursement of the levies. Above all, the politician must never be given blanket authority to impose taxes; each tax proposal must be considered on its own merits, as a temporary levy intended for a specific purpose, even as the individual manages his own economy. Thus, if a road is to be built, the cost should be provided for by a tax that terminates when the road is completed; if war is forced on a people, the taxing power should be granted for the duration only. The ideal of the "good society" is the abolition of all taxes, but that presupposes the existence of the "perfect" man and a general understanding of how public expense can be met without levying on production; until that time comes, if ever, the best that Society can do to protect itself is to keep a suspicious eye on all taxation.

The proposal to keep political power so decentralized that it cannot escape the vigilance of social power rests its case on the assumption that the highest value in man's hierarchy is freedom. Does he put it above all other desires? Even material satisfactions? If so, what does he mean by freedom? The definition that quickly suggests itself is "absence of restraint." The lone frontiersman had plenty of that kind of freedom and found it wanting; he was quite willing to part

with some of it in exchange for the higher wages that came from cooperation with others. But cooperation entails an obligation, that of shaping one's behavior to the wishes of others, of considering public opinion both in one's occupation and in one's deportment. So then, freedom in Society is not the absence of restraints, but the management of one's affairs by a code of self-governance. The price of the benefits of cooperation is self-restraint.

In particular, the obligation imposed by freedom in Society is respect for the privacy of property. When the frontiersman worked for himself, directly, he concerned himself with property only when a marauding animal or stray human threatened his ownership. He had a keen interest in holding on to the things he produced—because of his labor investment—and kept his firearm ready to assure him of possession. But the concept of property rights assumed significant meaning when through the mechanism of the market place abundances and accumulations made their appearance. It is at this point that self-governance is put to the test. Why? Because man seeks to satisfy his desires with the minimum of exertion. The same urgency was upon him when he worked alone, but the best he could do about it was to devise some rudimentary short cuts or labor-saving instruments. When the cooperative social organism grows up around him and abundances appear, the thought occurs to him that perhaps the satisfaction of desires at no expenditure of labor is an attainable goal. The something-for-nothing impulse that is imbedded in his makeup sometimes gets beyond the bounds of self-restraint. At this point, or in expectation of its coming, the common concern for property gives rise to a compact among the members of Society; external restraints on the inner urge are set up. Government

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is an admission that the "absence of restraint" is inconsistent with freedom.

It might be argued that reason should tell the individual there is no such thing as something-for-nothing, that somebody has to labor to provide satisfactions, that the condition necessary for general abundance is security of possession. In fact, reason might put him in the way of a principle: that production alone can raise the level of wages, that expropriation tends to lower it. But, taking him by and large, man does not always act on principle; more often, he acts on considerations of immediate profit and convenience. Reason seems to be less of a guide for human behavior than appetite. His history supplies plenty of support for this opinion. Even in the smallest and most intimate social unit, the family, the predatory impulse finds expression in the Jacob-Esau inheritance swindle, and the use of fraud or force to acquire property without laboring for it is the leitmotiv of the social saga. Were it not for this dominant element in man's makeup, conquest would never have been practiced, slavery would never have been known, privileged classes would never have made an appearance, monopolies never instituted and the "welfare state" never thought of. Indeed, there never would have been a State, which is merely the organization of force for the transference of property from "one set of pockets to another."

Freedom is not the highest in man's hierarchy of values. He may talk of it in the most laudatory terms, but his behavior belies his protestations. Although at times, when the multiplication of external restraints makes existence unbearable, he does put forth effort to shake off some of the shackles, his over-all biography indicates an overpowering passion for something-for-nothing, an inability or unwillingness to hold

it in leash, and a readiness to submit to restraints under the promise of loot. The modern "welfare state" is most illustrative; it is admittedly and boastfully the organization of force for the confiscation and distribution of property. It is the complete antithesis of that "absence of restraint" which is the substance of freedom. Despite this bald fact, it acquires a reputation for humanitarianism and receives the blessing of all who batten on the production of others as well as of those who hope to: the banker and the industrialist who thrive on the taxes it collects, the farmer who is paid for not farming, the "free lunch" mother, the host of pleaders for special privilege. Is it freedom they want? Hardly. The responsibilities of freedom are in conflict with the law of parsimony.

One last word, for Americans who have a penchant for the long run and hope "to do something about it." Supporting that hope is the still-green memory of a Society that managed its affairs with a minimum of external restraint. Even though the American State has gone a long way toward establishing its dominance over American Society, it is still in contention with the folklore of freedom, and it may be possible to impede the progress of the State by invoking this tradition. After all, this is a young country; the record of its beginnings is still alive, while living men can recall the struggles of the State to attain its present position. If the original enthusiasm for freedom can be revived, it may be possible to restrain political power before it completely engulfs social power. It is worth a try.

In the tradition, to begin with, there is the doctrine of states' rights. It is a decentralizing doctrine, intended to keep political power contained and off balance. Though it

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has been only rarely invoked since the formation of the Union, and then only for some specious and temporary purpose, its original idea of keeping political power under close surveillance and supervision has potency. It is in the interests of the political establishments of the separate states to prevent their engulfment by the central authority, even as in olden times the local chieftains kept a jealous eye on the growing power of the king. If this concern for local autonomy can be revived, the case for freedom will not be completely lost.

The drive toward centralization began long before the American State acquired the power to tax incomes, but this instrument provided the means for reducing the states to mere administrative subdivisions; for it gave the central authority the wherewithal to buy the subservience of local authorities. Hence, nothing can be done about restoring the balance between the two unless the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution is repealed.

But, while this political purpose demands repeal of the amendment, a far more fundamental reason calls for it. It is that the power to tax incomes violates the right of property, which underlies the sacred rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." It is silly to talk of freedom as long as the State can and does lay its hands on the earnings of the producer; unless the individual has the prerogative of possession, enjoyment, and disposition of all his produce, without let or hindrance, his status is less than that of a freeman; the more of it that is taken from him the nearer he approaches the status of a slave. It is interesting to note that the amendment puts no limit on the amount the State may confiscate.

Therefore, if the progress of the American State toward the subjugation of American Society is to be stopped, its

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power to levy on incomes must be abolished. But that can be done only if absence-of-restraint takes precedence over something-for-nothing in the scale of human values. The will for freedom comes before freedom.