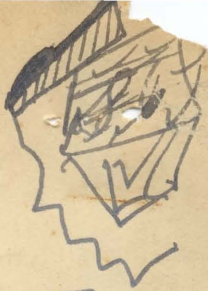


VERSE - NO - MAYBE - SO.



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The Second Report
of
Herbert Baumgard
inspired
by
John Locke's
"Two Treatise's"
on
Civil Government

91

The political philosophers of the middle ages advanced the theory of Church supremacy in both the temporal and spiritual spheres; came the Reformation, and with it the ascendancy of the doctrine of Divine Right and the domination of the national state with regard to things material on the one hand, and the concomitant decline of the importance of religion and the established church; ^{on the other} the swing from empire and universal solidarity to national solidarity was a matter accomplished when John Locke took up his pen. The battle of the Church vs. the State was not to be the central theme of his writings as ~~it~~ had been of most of the great thinkers immediately before him. Rather was it his task to temper the form of national government then in vogue, to propound the theory that the national government was for men and not for a man, that national rule was to be by the many and not by one, that men had certain inherent rights among which are life, liberty, and property, which could not be denied them, and that known law was to be the palladium of these rights.

From the disorder occasioned by the needless conflict of numerous small governmental divisions, Machiavelli moulded the conception of the unified nation-state, ruled by one. From the ^{rulers of} disorder created by national governments who misused their power, Locke was able to conceive of a form of rule which raised the average man to the point of sharing in the government that was of such significance in the conduct of his life. Men ^{he said or you say?} are rational creatures capable of ruling themselves, not mere puppets responding to the will of an omnipotent sovereign. Today, much of the political theory concerns a still greater change in the form of government - the ^{equality} of all is upheld as the only solution to the problem of government, ~~that is put in one way or another~~. I do not believe that Locke, were he living today, would suggest this drastic step in governmental change, for

fan the flames of disagreement for these movements will simply be driven underground where the necessity for secrecy and the realness of danger leads men's convictions to greater extremes and to more violent methods of expression. On the other hand, if a citizen were allowed to express himself, he would feel more contented and less liable to resort to the use of force on his own part.

The advocating of toleration is but another point in the list of many designed to break down the conception of the absolute power of the state as the state, or ^{of} the ruler as the ruler. It is the people who are the government, and government exists only to serve the people. Locke carries this argument to the point where he grants the populace the right to revolt against those in power if that ruling power is definitely turning against the aim of the state. Where Hobbes sought to prevent revolt by placing anarchy as the inevitable result, Locke contends that betrayal on the part of the ruling power IS revolt. The people are, therefore, forced to revolt ^{on their own part} if they are not to give up their natural rights. To deny the people the right to revolt (in these extreme cases) is to deny the honest man the right to resist a thief or a murderer. In a state of war the weapons of war must be used. In granting the right to revolt, Locke is no more than distinguishing the aim of government from being simply the creator of order that Hobbes makes it. The state is also to provide its citizens with a means to social well-being. ~~Power is subject.~~

Locke, then, is the representative of the rising propertied class of England. He seeks to remove the shackles that divine right binds around the ankles of men. With him the interest of the individual is of prime importance. Let the people have free play with certain limits, he contends. It is not the purpose of government to restrict the freedom of men, but to allow them the proper expression of certain inalienable rights by removing the obstacles in the way of that expression. The ruling body is to occupy the role of an umpire, and the limits to freedom are well known laws founded on natural law-the rule of reason.

"Liberty under Conscience" is the cry of Milton. "Liberty under law"-the banner of Locke. Hobbes had little faith in man's ability at rationalization, therefore little freedom was to be granted the citizen~~s~~. Milton, in his early life, overestimated man's ability and desired to grant him complete freedom. Locke, the moderate, stepped between these two and offered a great measure of freedom within the bounds of reason as ^{Applied} ~~interpreted~~ by known law. Certainly Locke's solution is the more practical.

There can be little doubt that the individual under Locke's ~~gov~~ government would be far ^{happier} ~~happier~~ than the citizen of Hobbes's state. For continued uncertainty as to the future, such as would prevail in the case of absolute sovereignty, when every whim and caprice of the ruler was law, makes men indifferent and results in the breakdown of sound character. Certainly forceful restraint does not allow man to develop his abilities. On the other hand, if men were as free as Milton would have them, conflicts of self-interest and the resultant chaos would be unavoidable. Under government by means of established law, however, the individual can plan his future to a far greater extent. Within certain broad, well-defined limits he knows he is safe. He begins to feel a sense of security, and it is only with the growth of this feeling that men tend to cultivate the higher arts. Freedom of expression results in the development of differences among human beings. Particular abilities are nourished and the contributions of the many varied talents results in a fertile, expanding whole.

Again, under established law, change is gradual, and the attendant evils of maladjustment created by sudden distinct changes are avoided. The democracies are attacked by the dictators for their slow process of government and development, but they can not deny that ^{they} do progress, though that progress be ever so slow. It has become this student's belief that sudden, broad progress is inferior to a process of gradual forward

movement. For a sharp jump forward invariably brings maladjustment and a sharper jump backwards. True progress is the result of gradual change.

For the absolute ruler of Hobbes, Locke substituted constitution^{al} representative democracy. The difference between the two theories is the difference between two eras. Locke may well be called the father of the present era, although we do have evidences of a reversion to the theories of Hobbes. There are present, too, indications that a "new" stage may be in the offing--the rule of all under a system of equality.

^{That} ~~but~~ Locke would be opposed to this "new" doctrine, I can not help but believe. It is interesting, indeed, that today, the manifestations of these two extremes have allied themselves in battle against the advocates of the mean. The student believes and hopes that the alignment is to the best advantage for the followers of Locke, for now the latter may draw a bead on the united enemy and destroy them both with the same shot!