

The Impossibility of a Virtuous State

It is a big stereotype to think in terms of races. Any human society has always rise from a state of pretty much poverty into a moment of richness. From this state of richness corruption has set in giving the opportunity for other societies to get richer.

I could now give hundreds of examples. I can think of the Roman empire, their frugal state during the republic and the wealth reached with the first emperors followed by a descend which Stoicism itself was able to slowed. Today we can think of the United States as following the same path, becoming suddenly imperialistic and simply opening up the path to corruption and decadence.

Without thinking in these terms I can also think of a city being very industrial for one or two generations but then requiring new humans to set in and replace the old humans. I am writing from the alps now where thousands of people have left to work in the postwar industries of the flatland, never to return. Now that also these people are "consumed" it only seemed natural that the immigration wave would have brought a new human replacement.

I guess the attitude here may vary. There are the hyper civilized countries which are able to take advantage of migrants and replace the old consumed humans unable to regenerate themselves or at least to do any kind of humble job. The best countries however should also understand the nature of the migrants placing them to do the work most suitable to them. Yet most of the countries see migration as the later Roman empire would see them, as a counter wave destroying a now almost corrupted civilization.

I believe that a country can withstand anything if it is healthy. If it is not, sooner or later it will collapse. My interest in this essay however is to think along whether it is possible to avoid this human consumption cycle bringing often so much distress and eventual destruction. I am now thinking ethically and start to believe that perhaps if one is to conceive a state whose human legacy ought to last, one ought to include elements from both Athene and Sparta.

I am saying this as any state that is caring for its citizens, caring thus that the state-machine is not simply with one hand securing the citizen life and with the other in fact taking it from him or her, that the state-machine also needs to worry that a flourishing society may not become the target of ugly neighbour states willing to take over it and exploit it.

In this respect the ethic of a state ought to be thought of as a way to hinder any form of

richness and excess maintaining the common good for everyone yet giving more or less awards for whoever deserves, allowing personal freedom of expression without restrictions however also bringing much sense of solidarity among its citizens and bringing a sense that the society itself ought to be protected.

I thus believe that a healthy constitution ought to be conceived in terms of two great enemies, one enemy within the state and one outside it. The one within is the possible willing to get rich. This ought to be at all times hindered. Even if the resources are great life ought to be always kept frugal. The other enemy is the possibility of being oppressed by an outer force. This risk is much reduced if a state is kept frugal yet it is always an option (I am thinking now of China oppressed Tibet).

In this respect (and I am sort of inclined here to think of modern Israel) a nation based service is required as much as communal activities are, certainly not in the burlesque fashion of the fascists and the communists but in some scale it is certainly needed (let's maybe think of modern Switzerland). Generally also the entire education system should be reformed. Here I am thinking of modern India where still ashrams are present and where still folk travel to gurus to reform their spirituality.

Rather than spirituality however I am thinking more in terms of teachers of life ethics. I am thinking that humans of a good nation cannot just simply be in a city but ought to walk out of it, into the hills, meet a wise person, spend time with him or her, get back to the city, integrate somehow their teaching. The divide between nature and the city is now too strong and I believe this is partially accelerating the corruption of our human societies.

Nature allows the sort of set back to a more frugal life ethic which the life caged in a city only let go to, turning humans more and more astray in their thoughts and manners. Astray is the form of luxury resulting in the corruption I am so much experiencing among my contemporaries. To them I suggest to only get wild at times, or just go to the wild basically, away from all their increasing commodities, nature burning machines. Once in the wild I invite them to recover certain process of survival, to turn manual once again and loose the frantic rush to self-destruction I so much sense among them.

When I am thinking of a state then I am perhaps more and more inclined to think of a commune, a parallel micro-state which can prepare the regermination of a much healthier humanity once the bigger nation based apparatus will fall apart. I guess then the idea of small monasteries could work although once again so hard is their defense. Perhaps for now let's restrict ourselves to donate our ethics to the corrupted societies in the form of Troy horses, stowing all of our thinking within and simply awaiting for the

right moment to let our philosophical fire out.