

reference to the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, both of whom sought after its spirit in theorizing about the ideal state.

The conflict between philosopher and polis - which saw its extreme expression in the death of Socrates - led Plato towards a compromise in terms of the philosopher-ruler as outlined in The Republic, particularly in the analogy of the cave, where an individual, as philosopher, is painfully forced to realize the truth behind the shadows, then as ruler, is morally obliged to relate that truth to human affairs.

After careful selection and training, such rulers will fulfil the duties of administrators of the state, so that by virtue of their special skills and knowledge, they will be elevated above the free and equal citizens of the polis. Plato justifies their position with reference to the superior knowledge and integrity of the philosopher-rulers.

In the absence of a concept of authority, Plato is ultimately reduced to relating themes of reward and punishment through the medium of the parable as illustrated in the Myth of Er in The Republic. These devices merely function to secure the obedience of the majority to a minority, in an unequal relationship of ruled

versus rulers, without recourse to external force or violence.

It is precisely because the philosopher-rulers' claim to legitimacy rests on reason, and not on a notion of authority, that Plato invites criticisms, concerning which skills are related to ruling, how they should be assessed and by whom, and finally, given all these criteria, whether they, per se, are sufficient to render rulers infallible in their judgements. At the heart of these criticisms is the rejection of authoritarian, non-democratic rule which is the likely consequence of government by experts or élites.

In outlining his ideas for an ideal state, Aristotle looks towards nature as a model of authority. In the same way that a plant or animal follows a sequence of natural development, man, a political animal, realizes his telos or end by living in a state, the polis which is an association arising from the natural pairing of husband/ wife, master/slave, parent/child within each household to form villages which combine to establish a state.

The original impetus for the polis comes from the need for self-sufficiency, which once realized, continues to enable man to strive for happiness and the 'good life'.

Before a household ruler can participate in the affairs of the polis as a free and equal citizen, he must have secured the basic necessities for survival through the domination of the household, i.e. equality in the polis and the freedom to enjoy the 'good life' depend upon exercising power over slaves, women and children in the prepolitical domain.

Although Aristotle warns against comparing the rulers of the state with those of the household (equivalent to a modern distinction between the private and public spheres), he himself is forced to rely on a justification of slavery and the subordination of women, as natural, to demonstrate a model of authority. He describes the relationship between ruler and ruled as expedient in that it conforms to a broader universal pattern i.e. man/beast; stronger/weaker; male/female; mind/body; rational/irrational.

In appealing to nature, Aristotle wants to reject the doctrine of might is right but at the same time, lacking an adequate concept of authority, he makes disputable assumptions. For example, he assumes that the polis is naturally hierarchical and that it rests on biological characteristics which are universally valid and inevitably right and good. As such, despite man's natural impulse towards the polis, Aristotle, equally aware of

the inclination towards immorality, argues that the state is prior to the individual and that the law exists to impose justice. Thus political obligation for Aristotle lies not in authority, but rather in conformity to the polis, which exists for a purpose that is fixed and given and which affords the only opportunity for the attainment of the 'good life'.

c) Christian Influence

There was, therefore, no Greek equivalent of 'auctoritas' which implies an obedience without sacrificing freedom. Yet, in their search for the highest authority, Arendt claims it was the Romans' veneration of Greek political thought that was responsible for its inclusion into the tradition of the West, and ultimately, for transforming the concept 'auctoritas'.

Arendt shows that the decline of the Roman Empire was simultaneously accompanied by the institutionalization of the Christian Church which was to adopt much of Rome's political and spiritual heritage. Whereas authority, for the Romans, had been vested in the city's founding fathers, for the Church it was located in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth as witnessed by the Apostles so that the sense of citizenship which Rome could no longer offer was translated

into the membership of the Church.(3) Thus, authority, which had always been linked with tradition and religion through the worship of ancestors, was transferred intact into the domain of the Church.

In claiming for herself the old authority of the Senate and acknowledging the power of the secular princes, the Church retained the Roman distinction between power and authority, as Hannah Arendt illustrates by quoting from a letter written to the Emperor Anastasius I by Pope Gelasius I at the close of the fifth century:

Two are the things by which this world is chiefly ruled: the sacred authority of the Popes and the royal power.(4)

As a result of the politicization of the Church and state and their subsequent struggle, the political realm was robbed of authority which had previously lent it durability and permanence, as demonstrated in the never to be repeated 'pax Romana'. Authority in the political sphere, divorced from tradition and religion, was undermined. Furthermore, under the auspices of the Church, it was permeated by an element of violence through the incorporation of the Platonic myths of hell and immortality.

For Plato, truth was beyond justification. It was by nature self-evident but, because it was accessible only to a few, it was necessary and politically expedient to compel the multitude through tales of reward and punishment after death, to act in accordance with its standards. Similarly, when the Church extended its morality into the political sphere, seeking to impose its values as absolute, it played on the hopes and fears of an afterlife as a means towards securing control.

Arendt argues that a combination of the Roman concept of 'auctoritas' and the Platonic myths transformed into Christian dogma, at once established the religious authority of the Church, while saturating the concept of authority with elements of fear, coercion and violence that were to overshadow its original meaning and use.

The discussion of the nature of authority leads Arendt to claim that the experience of 'auctoritas' is lost and that authority has subsequently vanished from the modern world, leaving in its wake a lacuna in our political tradition, at the centre of which is the crisis of our times. It would, however, be difficult to substantiate the truth of this claim. Indeed, to do so would be incompatible with my position which is that there is still a space for a viable concept of authority in our present conceptual scheme, however tenuous it may be.

Arendt's argument, nevertheless, offers a useful starting point for two reasons:

- 1) it pinpoints a crucial characteristic of authority, namely, its separateness from power, and
- 2) it outlines the way in which the two concepts were conflated.

Section ii) Power and authority in Western political philosophy from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth centuries

I have chosen from amongst those political philosophers between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries to refer to the works of Calvin, Hobbes, Rousseau and J.S. Mill. Each, in tackling a problem posed by authority, illustrates how power and authority inform different conceptions of human behaviour. In addition, they shed light on the gradual weakening of the ties of the Church on these concepts.

a) Calvin

Some reference to Calvin (5) is particularly important in view of the impact that Calvinism and neo-Calvinism have had on thinking in South Africa, especially in the sphere of education, as will be illustrated in Part IV.

One of the fundamental issues on which the Reformation was fought was the question of authority. In challenging the established church, Calvin was, at once, ironically faced with the need to reconcile an act of rebellion and defiance with conformity to a new seat of control. His justification for attacking the Roman Catholic Church was based on the supreme authority of the Word of God or the Scriptures as revealed in the Bible and confirmed by the doctrine of the Holy Spirit - 'testimonium Spiritus Sancti'.

For many the seat of authority was transferred from the Pope to the Bible. The question that concerns me is: what significance did this move have in terms of the concepts of power and authority? I shall briefly consider three aspects of Calvin's teachings:

- 1) religious authority,
- 2) the Calvinist way of life,
- 3) the relationship between Church and State.

1) Calvin's notion of religious authority incorporated objective and subjective elements. Through the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the right of private judgement was guaranteed but this in no way constituted authority; it was subordinate to the Scriptures and merely provided a

spiritual corroboration of their divine origin. Thus, acceptance of the Bible as a source of authority depended not on reason and argument, but on faith and intuition. Furthermore, it perceived truth and knowledge, located wholly outside the individual, as fixed and static, with profound consequences for education.

Through the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Calvin allows for the intervention of personal conscience but deplors its unrestrained expression in private subjectivism, as exemplified by Anabaptists. This leads him to circumscribe its action in terms of the Scriptures, so that any wider application of its authority is negated. The individual, in accepting the absolute authority of the Bible, must put aside reason in preference to an irrational leap of faith which confines all knowledge and truth to a single authoritative source. As such, Calvin creates the conditions for an uncritical obedience, contrary to an understanding of authority, but in perfect accord with that of power.

2) In conjunction with the absolute authority of the Bible, the conception of man's nature as sinful as a result of the Fall, offers life's motivating force (which also coincides with the Calvinist aim of education), namely, the achievement of salvation through

spiritual and moral maturity. All other activities are secondary to and flow from this divine purpose for which the life of Christ is the model and the Scriptures both necessary and sufficient.

Undercutting this is the doctrine of predestination which confers grace on some and eternal damnation on others. It portrays a God whose inscrutable purposes are outside the realms of mortal comprehension and justice, whose unlimited power is contrasted with the futility of human effort. To counteract individual feelings of anxiety and helplessness, Calvin emphasizes man's sacred duty in mastering and subordinating the material world. Intense worldly activity with its outward manifestations of wealth and success, although it does not secure salvation, is prescribed as an antidote to defeatism and the uncertainties inherent in the dogma. It was this aggressive work ethic, Weber argues, that provided the psychological grounding for the development of capitalism.(6) The spirit of activity that accompanied the exaltation of work was tempered by the ascetism of Calvin who inculcated attitudes of self-denial, suffering, endurance and humility in striving to glorify God.

From this brief description it would appear that the Calvinist way of life embodies certain contradictions, the most important of which for this dissertation, is the tension generated between two opposing conceptions of mankind. On the one hand, precedence is given to salvation as the individual's prime concern. Although this is narrowly defined in terms of the Scriptures, it involves some notion of agency and individual action and commitment towards the realisation of a specific purpose. On the other hand, however, the doctrine of predestination contains within it irrational forces over which the individual can exercise no control or human understanding. These conflicting beliefs present irreconcilable alternatives: the former may be expressed in terms of authority and the latter in terms of power.

3) In theory, Calvin claimed the independence of the Church and State. The latter's function was to establish and maintain order so that the Church would be free to go about its work. Calvin aimed to draw a distinction between morality and the law, where the former was the province of the Church as ordained in the Bible and the latter was the jurisdiction of the State. In the area of social control, excommunication was the ultimate disapprobation with which the Church might react, while

the death penalty afforded the state's most severe punishment. In practice, however, this distinction was difficult to maintain, as demonstrated in the cases of those heretics who were executed in Geneva.

The reciprocal relationship of the church and civil society was further reflected in the co-operation between the ministers and magistrates in Geneva. In addition to regulating activities such as the inspection of weapons, collection of taxes, connected with the state, magistrates were expected to enforce matters ranging from dress and ornamentation to the prohibition of gambling and dancing. The Church Consistory was entitled to reprimand and humiliate the morally recalcitrant, but not to impose fines - that was a matter to be referred to the secular council. Ministers and magistrates, both subject to the laws of God were, therefore, communally involved in maintaining the strictest surveillance of the affairs of citizens, so much so, that there remained little trace of privacy. Yet, Calvin did not regard the compelling of righteousness an invasion of liberty, as it would necessarily exclude the already virtuous.

The insistence he lays on order and conformity tends to submerge the distinction between following rules from an inner conviction of their virtue and being coerced into

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compliance i.e. the difference between accepting authority and being subject to power. Calvin is aware that clinging to rules alone might invite hypocrisy and ritual rather than sincerity and faith, but he cannot take this to its logical conclusions and assert a space for the operation of authority and choice because the possibility of contradictory consequences emerging is incompatible with his overriding sense of order and control.

Although the authority of the state is derived from God, its form of constitution was not prescribed in the Scriptures. Different arrangements were to be accepted as the divine will of God and to the extent that a Christian life may be pursued under (almost) any circumstances, Calvin held that the Church should co-operate with whatever constitution was available. Even obeying a tyrant, the subject would be discharging an obligation to God, (a clear illustration of the distinction which Calvin wished to draw between morals and the law). Only where obedience to rulers might mean disobedience to God, was there some justification in resistance in terms of the individual's conscience but this was inconsistent with any idea of mass rebellion.

The crisis of the Huguenots led Calvin to qualify his stand on passive obedience, by claiming the right of those in authority such as magistrates and local lords, (many of whom were involved in the predominantly middle class movement) to resist the constitutional government. Where the laws of society had established public officers to protect the rights of the people, they also afforded the privilege of resistance in defending those liberties. Except for this minor concession, Calvin firmly aligned himself with the authority of the state, so that, despite the use of political resistance by some of his later followers, Calvinism was to develop as a politically conservative force.

Throughout his teachings, there is an overwhelming tendency to conceptualize human behaviour in terms of power relations as a result of their emphasis on the the supreme authority of God and the Scriptures. Calvinism demanded obedience and conformity to the Word of God so that any opportunities for the critical assessment of reasons were denied, thereby eliminating the possibility of unanticipated consequences arising from the operation of authority relations. The Scriptures may be elucidated but not modified because the Bible is "such a depository of doctrine as would secure truth from perishing from neglect, vanishing amid error, or being corrupted by the presumptuous audacity of men".(7)

What Calvin and others of his age assumed was the existence of a single authority, logically prior in all other matters of debate. Later thinking has emphasised the provisional nature of authority, preferring a view of knowledge and truth that is not fixed and absolute but progressive and multi-dimensional. The priority that Calvin laid on order led him to suppress any opposition and, ultimately, to overlook the distinction between power and authority.

b) Hobbes

While Calvin was faced with the need to consolidate the gains of the Reformation on a foundation that was comparable in orthodoxy and sophistication with that of the Roman Catholic Church, Hobbes (8) challenged traditional Christian values from another point of view. Critical of the notion of the divine right of kings, he sought an alternative source of authority for civil government. He wanted to reject the link described by Arendt (Section i) between authority and religion.

Hobbes based his theory on a psychological conception of man in the state of nature where the conflict of individual will is governed by natural laws which depend on mechanistic principles; namely, desire and aversion, linked with pleasure and pain, respectively. These two

emotions provide a fundamental response to external objects and events and set the stage for utilitarian theories. In themselves though, desire and aversion are not the sole motivating forces of life for Hobbes. They are subordinate to the biological principle of self-preservation which gives rise to the need for power and security and this dictates the formation of civil government. Thus, the latter is created in response to a physiological demand rather than as a result of reason.

This presents a paradox: if human beings in the state of nature are not motivated by reason, how then are they able to envisage the advantages of establishing a civil authority, or conversely, if they are reasonable, how then do they account for man's existence in the state of nature? Hobbes's theory of social contract suggests how he might have addressed this problem as well as shedding light on the way in which he might have drawn a distinction between power and authority.

It is as a result of man's overriding desire for peace and self-preservation that a civil society under the rule of a sovereign - either one man or a central assembly - is created through an act of covenant, expressed either tacitly or explicitly. Individual subjects elect a sovereign to whom they, in theory,

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