

File in Department  
of Officialdom

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Raison d'état and the New Officialdom

The final thrust of raison d'état, as seen in some of the quotations of Richelieu's champion in Church's work on Richelieu & Reason of State, is that only the King and his chief minister should be privy to the final mysteries of state which effectively control the policy that must be adopted. All other ministers, or magistrates, -- or bureaucrats to use a somewhat anachronistic phrase -- must be agents of that policy just as intelligences are the intermediate powers between the divine premium mobile and the secular below.

The whole reasoning behind the creation of royal officialdom, on the other hand, is to develop a corps of administrators whose qualifications are chiefly intellectual, based on education in the first place, in contrast to the notoriously anti-intellectual ethos of the old nobility that was being replaced as the governing class. Royal officialdom was given finally the same kind of dynastic security the feudality had had, by means of the real-hereditary ~~absolute~~ perpetuation of office as part of patrimonies, but the criterion of intelligence -- formally developed intelligence -- was always there in some kind of examination and, even more importantly, was maintained by dynastic officialdom itself for the sake of its pride and status.

There <sup>appears to be</sup> a fundamental contradiction between ~~the~~ reason of state and dynastic officialdom, such as they both appeal to reason, i.e., intelligence, as the highest quality necessary for governance. Simply put, reason of state allows that only the topmost of the system of new ruling corps shall acquire the final power to make policy according to the wisdom they have gained, while all others shall be but cogs in the machinery of government. The contradiction might be explained in simply pragmatic terms, given the limitations of those times. The educational system was still very limited and utterly private, so that there was no chance for an openly competitive bureaucratic corps, in the fashion of Confucian examination. The families that had the offices had to educate their own to replace them, ~~which~~ <sup>albeit that it</sup> conveniently provided the crown with a self-perpetuating ~~of~~ educated officialdom, ~~but~~ <sup>also</sup> meant that the succeeding generations of officials would be cooptative rather than competitive in the gross, and so competitive only in the detail of the highest position in their rank, ~~for~~ that is to say, a closed system of selection at large created a small universe from which the best could be selected, ~~and that~~ rather than the pool being identical with the population at large as is theoretically true in the modern societies where universal education is the rule. Had the system been fully open, so that there was no distinctive separation of those born to the ~~rank~~ rank of officialdom and those not,

so that the scales of graduation from the least competent citizen to the prime minister ~~was not~~ existed ~~fully~~ ~~small~~ over a series of extremely small gradations, then the exaltation of the prime minister would be relatively much less over those below than was true in the situation where the pool of the ~~prime minister~~ - worthy was very small to begin with. The ~~notion~~ <sup>fact that</sup> of the potentially top leadership ~~was~~ <sup>being</sup> limited to a ~~very~~ <sup>relatively</sup> few, ~~to which~~ <sup>insinuates the</sup> dynastically perpetuated, ~~established~~ <sup>premise</sup> of governing and governed, which abets the notion of elitism among the governing. Over time the sense of corporate governance might develop ~~an~~ ~~idea~~ among dynastic officeholders - and I believe it did - but in the beginning it has as a model only the existing notion of ~~class~~ ~~rank~~ ~~difference~~, nobles & commoners (duplicated in royal officialdom) and ~~the~~ correspondingly the assumption of a kind of monarchic rule ~~in which~~ in which their leading member would be prime minister. [The difference between officialdom & old feudality here lies in the fluidity of <sup>status</sup> movement to the top by officialdom, depending on ~~status~~, contrasted with the in born right of highest nobles to ~~be~~ enjoy a patrimonial heritage.]

(European)

Another <sup>resolution</sup> explanation of the paradox of the absolutism inherent in reason of state and the openness ~~of~~ <sup>to</sup> advancement by talent of a large group of officials lies also in the matrix of the monarchic rulership within which dynastic officialdom developed. Whatever it produced in terms of top leadership

had to share that leadership with the monarch himself. The glory of the system, from the point of view of the monarch, was the institutionalized perpetuation of officials who were talented -- some of them certainly, and most of them ~~perhaps~~ perhaps, more talented than the ruler himself in terms of native intelligence as well as education. Originally, at least, all of them were regarded as his servants, and the idea that any of them might take his place was unthinkable. Over time, the awareness that they as a group constituted the better part of government, and that ~~he~~ <sup>the king</sup> could be dispensed with, must have grown at least subconsciously long before it was actualized in the abolition of the monarchy. The evolution of this, over two centuries' time, ~~is~~ can be hypothesized -- though hardly capable of being documented expressis verbis -- as the petering out of the principle of rulership according to a dynastic birthright and the petering in of the principle of leadership according to competition of the talented. The former is ~~practically~~ genetically determined to be possible for only one person in the whole realm, the latter to be ~~selective~~ ~~among a large pool~~ fortuitously determined from within a large group of potentially capable.

In sum, then, dynastic officialdom is a prototype of the open system of selecting leaders characteristic of modern elective political systems, created within a dynastic monarchy which ~~gave the officialdom itself~~ was categorically opposed to the notion of elective leadership. The monarchy had always sought talent in governance, be it from the

lack of no nobility, from the best of the clergy, secular or  
regular, or on ad hoc basis from ~~the~~ educated commoners.  
The ~~definition, delimitation~~ of that pool composition of that  
pool was so heterodox -- an hereditary caste, ~~an absolutely~~  
~~non-hereditary~~ caste, and with some local right to rule  
no matter what, <sup>extra</sup> royal <sup>office</sup> ~~right~~ was <sup>granted</sup> given, a non-hereditary  
caste without any right to secular rule without royal grace,  
and a purely ~~arbitrary~~ and the masses without status or  
hope save what the king preferred -- this pool ~~was~~ had no  
intrinsic unity which might lead to a sense of  
corporate ~~capability~~ <sup>capability</sup> that would put in  
question the principle of monarchy. It is exactly this  
~~kind~~ kind of corporate identity which the system of  
dynastic officialdom created: each member came to his  
office by the function of patrimony or <sup>private</sup> ~~legal~~ purchase,  
~~subsequent~~ and exercised royal power independent of the  
king's grace. It is a classic case of the dialectic,  
where the seeds of destruction were sown in the act of  
promoting one's own good.

[above stimulated by reading Michael Walzer's <sup>20/11/80</sup> NRR of G. Konrad &  
Ivan Szelenyi, The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power Harcourt 1979(?)  
wherein notion of modern bourgeoisie de robe created to run bourgeois  
world likened to Proletaria de robe doing that in ancien regime.]