POLITICAL OBLIGATION AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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by

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: This thesis will examine the two most prevelant forms of political obligation in the modern world and, after describing the technological society, will assess the two theories in light of the needs of that society.

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David Chanter

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM

To live in a state is to be politically obligated. This statement is valid for all political societies whether they be primitive or complex, democratic or totalitarian, modern or ancient. For the concept of political obligation, no matter how defined, is that characteristic which ties men to society in a political context. In some respects, the definition of political obligation is the key to all political theory. For those "duties" with which both the citizen and the state are endowed will decide the very nature of that political community.

My task in this thesis is not simply to describe the various definitions of political obligation. It is, rather, to explore the implications that are contained within the various definitions and so better understand our present condition. In order to reach this understanding, it will be necessary to engage in a twofold operation: first, to analyse the two major theories of political obligation as theoretical constructs; and, second, to outline the political characteristics of the modern technological society in order to make meaningful the theoretical considerations. Practise without theory leads to amoral action and theory without practice leads to complete absurdity.

Before examining the major conceptualizations of political obligation, it would be helpful if I were to give an all encompassing definition of the term before discussing the differing interpretations that have been given to the concept. There is, in my opinion, a quality or "essence" to any major concept within which lies that particular ingredient which permits one to speak of the term even though there may very well exist substantive disagreements as to what the full or complete meaning of that term is. Furthermore, since the bulk of this work will be concerned with precisely those differences in meaning and their implications for action, it would be useful to outline the general qualities of political obligation in order to avoid getting lost in all the refinements and clarifications that theorists have given to the concept.

In its most universal meaning, I would define political obligation as that set of laws, rules, customs and/or norms which form the bonds between the citizen and the state. What the rest of this thesis will be concerned with is what the nature of those bonds can be and what implications for action they hold.

There are two major theories of political obligation that I shall be examining. The first of these is what I call the narrow or legalistic theory; the second I call the broad or moralistic theory. Each stems from certain basic assumptions about man and political society and each has, therefore, rather

differing consequences. While the two theories may be said to exist simultaneously and while the overt actions of the citizens may appear to be the same even though they rest on different theoretical promises, actions taken to their logical conclusion would have very significant differing results and the nature of society would be substantially altered.

Since the second chapter of this work is devoted to a detailed explication of the two theories, I shall in this section only briefly outline them and raise certain key questions that arise out of them. The first theory to be examined is by far the most commonly accepted one in Western liberal democracies; it strengths and weaknesses are the same strengths and weaknesses that we perceive in the very urgent political questions that face us today. The second theory is to a large extent the antithesis of the first and is the one that can unite the radical and the staunch conservative.

The narrow or legalistic theory of political obligation has as its most fundamental precept the belief that man is basically selfish and amoral. It lays the foundation for the contractual theory of the state in that it perceives the relationship between the citizen and the state as being one of a binding contract between both parties. In its most lucid and fully developed form i.e. Thomas Hobbes' theory, the State is given almost complete authority over the activitives of the individual. For according to this theory, the individual enters into an agreement with every other man in which each

party agrees to give to an intermediary, now the state, sovereignty whereby the state, acting as the agent, may enforce the contract. The net result of this is that the state is now in a position to guarantee to each man protection from his fellow man. Thus any and all actions which the State deems necessary to that preservation are acceptable. Of course, this theory is not as clear cut when it is put into practice within a democratic framework.

Within a democracy, the contractual theory of political obligation usually falls under the rubric of the "rule of law" in which the laws of the State assume a meaning independent of all ethical and moral connotations. Thus, Abe Fortas, former Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, can state without qualms that:

> "this is what we mean by the rule of law: both the government and the individual must accept the result of procedures by which the courts . . . decide that the law is such and such, and not so and so; that the law has or has not been violated in a particular situation, and that it is or is not constitutional; and that the individual has or has not been properly convicted and sentenced."[1]

We see in this definition the complete absence of any moral considerations and the reliance on the courts for the Law's

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[1]Abe Fortas, Concerning Dissent and Civil Disobedience (New York: Signet, 1968), p. 58.

interpretation in which the final arbitrator is the author of the constitution i.e. the State. Thus the political obligation of the citizen is to obey the rules and procedures as specified by the government. Now this is very oversimplified; but, it does give what I consider to be the essence of the narrow interpretation of political obligation.

A more formal way of explicating the particular qualities of political obligation in the narrow sense would be to state that:

> "Obligations in this narrower sense have at least two noteworthy characteristics. First, they are assumed . . . and second, the force of the obligation derives not from the nature of the action or the consequences of the action to be performed by the person who is obligated, but from the fact that he assumed the obligation."[2]

Thus,

> "a person has an obligation to obey the law if, and only if, he has committed himself to do so. Political obligation in this sense is assumed, in that no one is obligated to obey except in so far as he has committed himself to obey. And it is also independent of content in that one is obligated to perform only those actions he has committed himself to perform."[3]

The broad or moral sense of political obligation rests on the premise that man is fundamentally good and that he can be relied upon to perform actions which will be in the interests

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[2]Thoas Pocklington, "Protest, Resistance, and Political Obligation", Canadian Journal of Political Science, III, (March, 1970), 3.

[3]Ibid., III, 4.

of all even if they should entail some inconvenience to the actor. In this theory there are said to be obligations which go beyond the narrow obligations of only performing those actions which are required by law or those that one has previously committed one's self to perform. This broad interpretation would require the moral and ethical consequences of a given act to be given more weight than 'standard procedure' and it would prescribe actions for which there would be no external compulsion to do so.

Before proceeding to further explicate the argument, it is necessary to explain the method of analysis that will be employed throughout the rest of this thesis. The method used will be analytic i.e. arguments will be presented and explored on the basis of their own internal logic and on the basis of their a priori assumptions. It is not the purpose of this thesis to establish the truth of these theories as could be established through empirical investigation.

There are serious problems that arise in both theories. The first theory fails to provide any criteria by which one may evaluate the actions of the state (except in a procedural manner) neither is it able to discriminate between the various types and degrees of resistance to the laws or obligations which the State imposes on the citizen. The problem with the second theory is that it must ultimately uphold the acceptance of all moral and ethical codes since it too fails to provide any criteria by which one can evaluate the actions

of either an individual or the State save that of the dictates of one's conscience.

CHAPTER TWO

TWO CONCEPTS OF POLITICAL OBLIGATION

In this chapter, two very different concepts of political obligation will be detailed. One of these concepts will be called "narrow"; the other will be called "broad". While it is clear that there should be great care in making these two theories as lucid as possible, equal care will be taken in the examination of these theories with respect to the implications that they contain for future political action.

To label the first of the two major theories as "narrow" is, in some ways, very misleading. For the theory is anything but limited in scope. It derives its name from the fact that it restricts or limits the amount of political activity that an individual may engage in without suffering some kind of imposed penalty. The clearest and most lucid explicator of the narrow theory of political obligation is, without doubt, Thomas Hobbes. For while others who came after him, notably John Locke, may be more 'acceptable', a careful study of the writings of Locke will reveal the enormous debt that he owes to Hobbes.[1]

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[1] Leo Strauss, "What is Political Philosophy?", What is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press of Glencoe, 1959), p. 49.

The starting point for Hobbes' concept of political obligation is his belief that all men are equal.

> "Nature hath made men so equal, in the faculties of the body, and mind; as that though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind than another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he. For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others, that are in the same danger with himself."[2]

But even with this ability that the weakest has to kill the strongest, it would not be necessary for Hobbes to take such a strong position on the question of limiting or narrowing man's sphere of action in society were it not for the added concept that man is a creature consumed with appetites.

Hobbes very explicitly rejects the relevance of the necessity to incorporate the concept of the innate goodness in man in his construction of man either in the state of nature or in civil society. "For there is no such _finis ultimus_, utmost aim, nor _summum bonum_, greatest good, as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers."[3] Thus, "the voluntary actions, and inclinations of all men, tend, not only to the procuring, but also to the assuring of a contented life."[4] The result of there being no greatest good

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[2]Thomas Hobbes, _Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forms and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil_ (1651), ed. M. Oakeshott (New York: Collier, 1962), p. 98.

[3]_Ibid._, p. 80.

[4]_Loc. cit._

and no other aim in life save the attainment of the contented life, combined with the fact that all men are equal, leads Hobbes to a very unflattering conclusion about man. For man's appetite can rest only in his sensousness, in his animal nature. From the scientific methods of understanding man, Hobbes is led to the conclusion that

". . . for a general inclination of all mankind, (there exists) a perpetual and restless desire for power after power, that ceaseth only in death."[5]

For it is man's quest for felicity, and security that forces him to seek out after power after power; it becomes a quest which can never end for only when one man has obtained all power -- an impossible situation in Hobbes' schema -- can even one man achieve happiness.

There are two elements to this striving for power: the rational and irrational. the rational striving after power rests on already rational reflection and is for that very reason not natural i.e. innate, not in existence prior to all external motivations, to all experience and education.[6] Because all men are equal it follows that all men can have power, but if there is no distributor or regulator of that power, then man is forced into a world of unfathomable horror.

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[5] Ibid., p. 80.

[6] Leo Strauss, The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis (Oxford: University Press, 1936), p. 10,

"From this equality of ability, ariseth equality of hope in attaining of our ends. And therefore if two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their end which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their declectation only, endeavor to destroy, or subdue one another. And hence it comes to pass, that where the invader hath no more to fear, than another's single power; if one plant, sow, build or possess a convenient seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united to dispossess, and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labour, but also of his life, or liberty. And the invader again is in the danger of another".[7]

Life in such a state becomes intolerable; no man can feel secure; there is no pleasure. It is, in brief, "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Society too ceases to be, for in this continual state of uncertainty and fear with every man an enemy to every other man, there can be

"no culture of the earth; no navigation; nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving; and removing; . . . no knowledge . . . no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society."[8]

Thus the quest for power can, in the state of nature be only an irrational quest since there is no knowledge and no method by which the experience of the past can be trasmitted to future generations.

The fact remains, however, that society does exist and that trade and commerce do flourish. It becomes necessary therefore to discover why man left this 'state of nature'

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[7] Hobbes, Leviathan pp. 98-99.

[8] Ibid., p. 100.

and entered into civil society. It is out of this explanation that we find Hobbes' theory of political obligation and hence the articulation of the 'narrow' perspective.

Clearly, a partial explanation for man's entering into civil society can be discerned from the condition of man in the state of nature. It is made abundantly obvious by Hobbes that fear is the most dominant emotion in man in this pre-societal period. This fear derives from the fact that in this particular environment there is and can be no law.

> "The desires, and other passions of men, are in themselves no sin. No more are the actions, that proceed from these passions, till they know a law forbids them: Which laws be made they cannot know: nor can any law be made, till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it."[9]

Throughout his discussion of man in the state of nature, Hobbes is very insistent that "notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law: no justice."[10] This formulation of 'no law, no justice' is the cornerstone to the narrow interpretation of political obligation. Justice becomes purely an instrumental value. 'Law and order' become the root of society. The conception of justice as a final good or desired virtue which transcends law is explicitly denied here.

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[9] Ibid., p. 101.

[10] Loc. cit.

But man does not live in a state of nature. For while it would appear from the above description that Hobbes sees man in this condition as a completely sensuous creature, such an impression would be incorrect. For while man may be a passionate being, he is also a national being. The motivating force in man becomes his desire for self-preservation.

"True reason is a certain law which (since it is no less a part of human nature than any other faculty, or affection of the mind) is also termed natural. Therefore the law of nature, that I may define it, is the dictate of right reason, conversant about those things which are either to be done or omitted for the constant preservation of life and members, as much as in us lies."[11]

With man in the pre-convenant society having an equal right to all things, there inevitably arises conflict between all men because of the scarcity of goods and the law of nature, that is, the quest for self-preservation. Hobbes argues, therefore that

"The right of all men to all things, ought not to be retained, but that some certain rights ought to be transferred, or relinquished. For if every one should retain his right to all things, it must necessarily follow, that some by right might invade, and others, by the same right, might defend themselves against them, (for every man, by natural necessity, endeavours to defend his body, and the things which he judgeth necessary towards the protection of his body). Therefore war would follow."[12]

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[11] Thomas Hobbes, De Cive or The Citizen (1642), ed. E. Lamprecht, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949), p. 32.

Note that the use of the word "law" in this quotation does not mean law in the sense previously referred to. In this context, "law" refers to natural law and not to written law which is enforced by other men.

[12] Ibid., p. 33.

The rest of the discussion on Hobbes will consist of a detailed examination of what precisely he means by "certain rights ought to be transferred, or relinquished." I will investigate what rights he means, to whom ought these rights go to, and what the resulting status of the individual will be in the civil society i.e. in the society in which these rights have been relinquished.

In order to ascertain what rights should be transferred or relinquished, it is essential that we fully understand the two most fundamental laws of nature according to Hobbes. The first is

"that every man ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use all helps, and advantages of war."[13]

The second law is derived from the first, particularly the first part that all men must strive for peace. Thus the second law is

"that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far-forth, as for peace, and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down his right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself."[14]

We can see from the above two postulates that the origin of the law and the State comes from man's desire for peace and his aversion to death. What is specifically denied here is the notion that the State exists to make manifest the potent-

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[13] Hobbes, Leviathan p. 104.

[14] Ibid., p. 104.

ialities and/or the innate goodness in man.

Hobbes never specifies precisely what the "certain rights (which) ought to be transferred, or relinquished" are. We can, however, ascertain from his writings that the failure stems from his concern with order and that by specifying those rights there may very well be some which would be left out and which would cause disorder in the future. Thus, Hobbes states that the only right which cannot be

> "understood by any words, or other signs, to have abandoned, or transferred . . . (is) the right of resisting them, that assault him by force, to take his life; because he cannot be understood to aim thereby, to any good to himself."[15]

We can see from this quote that Hobbes

> "exposed the only political theory according to which the state is based not on some kind of constitution law . . ., but on the individual interests themselves, so that 'the private interest is the same with the publique'."[16]

The manner in which a man transfers his rights to another is via the contract. It should be noted that the contract which establishes civil society is between men and not between men and the State. The State, must, therefore, take on an instrumental quality whose aim is is to enforce the contract between men. The first 'rule' of the contract is that

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[15] Ibid., p. 105.

[16] Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism 2nd ed., (New York: Meridian Books, 1958). pp. 104-105.

"When a man . . . abandoned, or granted away his right, he is said to be OBLIGED or BOUND, not to hinder those, to whom such right is granted, or abandoned, form the benefit of it; and that he ought, and it is his DUTY, not to make void the voluntary act of his own; and that such a hinderance is INJUSTICE, and INJURY."[17]

The second rule of the contract deals with the time limit during which that contract is enforceable. "In contracts, the right passeth, not only where the words are of time present, or past, but also where they are of the future."[18] Thus, the contract of our forefathers becomes binding upon us and our heirs. The further implication is that the nature of the contract as well as its contents cannot be amended or revoked in order to devise a more 'equitable' system. For to suspend or break the contract is a crime whereby the citizen voids himself of any protection which civil society may afford him; in short, an out-law. Furthermore, since the contract is amongst all men, it would require the consent of all men to break the contract before it could become void. The final argument against the breaking of the contract is that in so doing man would soon return to that state of nature where there would and could exist no law or protection.

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[17] Hobbes, Leviathan, pp. 104-105.

[18] Ibid., p. 107.

It is clear from the above discussion that political obligation, in the Hobbesian sense, has at least two noteworthy characteristics. The first is that political obligation is assumed in that no one is obligated to obey except in so far as he has committed himself to obey. "When a man hath . . . abandoned, or granted away his right; then he is said to be obligated."[19] The second characteristic is that political obligation is independent of content in that one is obligated to perform only those actions he has committed himself to perform. Thus the force of the obligation derives not from the nature of the action to be performed by the person who is obligated, but from the fact that he assumed the obligation.[20]

> "To promise that which is known to be impossible, is no covenant. But if that prove to be impossible, which before was thought possible, the covenant is valid, and bindeth though not to the thing itself, yet to the value; or, if that also be impossible, to the unfeigned endeavour of performing as much as is possible."[21]

The result of the condition is that although social and/or political conditions may have changed drastically over the years, one's obligation to others or to their agent, the state, remains the same as it was at its day of inception.

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[19] Loc. cit.

[20] Thomas Pocklington, "Protest, Resistance, and Political Obligation", Canadian Journal of Political Science, III (March, 1970), 3-4.

[21] Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 109.

The concept of political obligation in the narrow sense is not confined to political philosophers, but finds itself made an operative force in the political world through the doctrine of democratic absolutism.

> "Those who enjoy the rights of citizenship in a democratic polity, we are often told, have an absolute obligation to comply with the decisions reached by democratic processes. By participating in the democratic process which is governed by the principle of majority rule, men commit themselves to abide by the majority decisions no matter how distasteful it may be to submit."[22]

Thus the concept of political obligation in the narrow sense can be seen as being comparable to Isaiah Berlin's notion of 'negative' freedom as found in his essay, Two Concepts of Liberty. Berlin discusses in some detail the reciprocal of Hobbes' conception of political obligation by describing 'negative' freedom as "simply the area within which a man can do what he wants."[23] It is a restatement of Hobbes' position in that it emphasizes the restrictions that must be placed on man's freedom. Similarly, Berlin and Hobbes argue that the nature of justice consits of keeping valid convenants with the result that both see freedom as having the dual aspect of being restricted by the contract and open to the extent that one has not surrendered any freedom which is not enjoined by the contract.

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[22]Pocklington, Protest, Resistance, and Political Obligation, p. 8.

[23]Isaiah Berlin, Two Concepts of Liberty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 7.

"Liberty, or freedom, signifieth, properly the absence of opposition; by oppositon, I mean external impediments of motion . . . A free man, is he . . . which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to do what he has a will to do."[24]

One consequence of this particular characterization of freedom is that

"a frontier must be drawn between the area of private life and public authority . . . (because) we must preserve a minimum area of personal freedom if we are not to 'degrade or deny our nature'. We cannot remain absolutely free, and must give up some liberty to preserve the rest."[25]

This does not in any way, however, negate the previous assertion that Hobbes united the private and the public interest by making the public interest the private one.

If we follow Hobbes' model of political obligation, we can readily perceive two major flaws in his argument. These flaws are not found in the logical consistency of the arguemnt, but reveal themselves when the model is applied to the everyday world of the citizen and politics.

The first major flaw in the narrow conception of political obligation is that it is "is incapable of answering, even in a general way, questions about the conditions under which various types of political disobedience are justified."[26]

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[24]Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 159.

[25]Pocklington, Protest, Resistance, and Political Obligation, p. 9.

[26]Ibid., pp. 9-11.

In a sense, this weakness could be called nonsense, in that the narrow perspective specifically excludes the notion of justified political disobedience since justice and law derive their meaning solely from the compliance or non-compliance to the terms of the social contract. Thus, justified political disobedience is deliberately excluded from Hobbes' consideration. Nevertheless, men do act on the premise that justified political disobedience does exist and to exclude it from our consideration would be foolhardy. Because it is neglected in Hobbes' schema and because of the impact of Hobbes on our own political culture, it should not strike us as unexpected that one of the major problems today revolves around the question of justified political disobedience, for under the narrow perspective, this problem is essentially a non-problem.

Just as the narrow conception is incapable of recognizing legitimate political disobedience, it is similarly incapable of addressing itself to questions concerning the appropriateness of different types of disobedience. Either an act is legal i.e. within the bounds of the contract or it is illegal in which case the full weight of the sovereign power must be brought to bear upon the offender. Thus, morality is considered independent of political actions.

In summarizing the narrow perspective of political obligation, we can see that it is noteworthy for two reasons. First, political obligation in this sense is assumed in that

no one is obligated to obey except in so far as he has committed himself to obey. That is, the force of the obligation derives not from the nature of the action or the consequences of the action to be performed by the person who is obligated, but from the fact that he has previously assumed the obligation. Secondly, political obligation in this sense is independent of content in that one is obligated to perform only those actions he has committed himself to perform (that is, regardless of the nature of the actions).[27]

It is now necessary to examine in some detail the other major theory of political obligation -- the broad or moral conception. In its simplest form, one could state that this perspective is simply the antithesis of the narrow perspective; whereas the former theory derives its strength and force from the premise that man has entered into an all inclusive contract with every other man and can be broken only with the consent of all, the latter theory derives its strength from the belief that the individual is the most important element and that his sense of morality, law, and obligation should supercede any group concensus. Thus the individual is left with the right to decide for himself what is legal and moral and act accordingly.

This belief in the supramacy of the individual derives

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[27] Ibid., pp. 9-11.

its strength from the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master,

> "I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were from the outside."[28]

Although Berlin's essay deals with liberty and freedom, we can readily use his formulation of positive liberty in order to derive an understanding of the broad perspective of political obligation when we realise that liberty and freedom (particularly the extent of each) are the prime determinants in establishing the type of political obligation we wish to speak of. If freedom is given a narrow or 'negative' interpretation, then we are, at the same time, discussing the narrow interpretation of political obligation. For the amount of freedom allotted to the individual will determine whether or not we are discussing the narrow or broad conception of political obligation.

The 'broad' conception of political obligation entails a much more optimistic view of mankind than does the narrow conception. For if the broad conception of political obligation is to be realised in practise, it must ultimately rely on the basic goodness of some or all men in order to be operative. To be able to rest one's theory on the assumption that each man should be his own master -- the right of nature

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[28]Berlin, Two Concepts of Liberty, p. 16.

for Hobbes -- and to continue to stress that should be so in all societies for all time requires a rejection of Hobbes' theory and its replacement by a theory whose corner-stone is the benevolent foresight of man. The premise of 'benevolent foresight' should not be thought of as meaning the cold, self-calculating planning which seeks only to increase one's own position. Instead, benevolent foresight emphasizes the well-being of others and would weigh the consequences of a given act not only in terms of the benefit that would accrue to the individual, but also in terms of the benefits that would accrue to others, or at least, the minimal cost to others.

It should not be implied by this that the broad conception of political obligation is blind to the the less altruistic side of man -- the greedy, intolerant side. This perspective has within it ample room for restrictions which can be placed on an individual i.e. law. Law in this case is not regarded as a necessity as Hobbes does, but, is viewed as an instrument to provide the maximum amount of freedom for the individual. For example, it serves no one any good if he lives in a situation where thieves go unpunished, therefore, laws are enacted to protect property. The distinction to be made between the narrow and the broad perspectives within the realm of law is that in the narrow view, law is treated as an absolute whereby the person restricts himself solely to the letter of the law in order to establish innocence or guilt; whereas, in the broad perspective, law is viewed as

a relative standard by which to establish innocence or guilt allowing for outside factors such as the circumstances under which the 'crime' was committed, to play a large role in judgement.

The broad perspective can also be called the moral perspective. The reason for this is that the actions of others are not judged only on the basis of whether a law has been broken or, in Hobbes' manner, whether the covenant has been broken, but also on other non-legal criteria. For example, the theft of a loaf of bread by a starving man would not, under this perspective, be considered as serious a crime as the theft of a loaf of bread by a wealthy man.

Until now, we have been speaking of the broad or moral perspective in a very general manner. It is now necessary to distinguish clearly between two sub-species of the broad conception of political obligation. The first sub-specie is what I call the "individualistic-rational" which when taken to its logical conclusion leads directly to anarchism. The second sub-specie is called the "collective-rational" which, again taken to its logical end, leads directly to totalitarianism.

In terms of political obligation, the individualistic-rational theory imputes to the individual, not to society or government, the final say in whether or not an act is just or unjust, legal or illegal. If the individual believes that an act of the government violates his ethical code, then,

the individual, under this theory, is at liberty to do all that he can to change that act. Furthermore, this particular theory, imputes to each and every individual the unique ability to judge the actions of others and all men, through reason, can arrive at the just and correct solution. Thus, under this theory, one is obligated to one's self first and to the state second. This does not lead, however, to the state of nature in the Hobbesian sense because of the different conception of man. It should be clear that this theory can be used to justify a policy of minimal governmental interference in the affairs of men; however, taken in the larger context of the broad perspective one can develop a policy which could be used to justify more governmental participation in the affairs of men.

The basis of the differing outlooks in the individualistic-rational and the collective-rational perspectives is found within the moral basis of the broad perspective. With the growing realization that certain conditions in life can prevent a man from attaining his full potential i.e. becoming his own master, those who adopt the broad perspective can legitimately argue that governments should devote a larger amount of time and energy to the eradication of poverty, the creation of equal opportunities, and the elinination of social and class distinctions. Within the broad perspective then, there develops a contradiction between the desire to use government for social or other purposes and the desire for

the government NOT to administer these programs because of 'unwarranted' interference in the daily lives of people.

The irony of the broad perspective is that with its adoption by the majority of the population, totalitarianism can result. Thus the theory which is the most individualistic and provides the greatest opportunity for freedom can by its very nature lead directly to a regime dedicated to the elimination of individual liberty. To understand this shift, we begin at the point where both perspectives within the broad theory unite -- the belief in rationality. For the starting point for totalitarian rule is found in the desire of the individual to live as his rational will commands, but the individual realizes that this can be accomplished only if others act in a similar manner. Thus

> "my claim to unfettered freedom (the removal of all political obligation) can prima facie at times not be reconciled with your equally unqualified claim; but the equally true solution to one problem cannot collide with the equally true solution of another, for two truths cannot logically be incompatible; therefore a just order must in principle be discoverable -- an order of which the rules make possible correct solutions to all problems that could arise in it . . . But it is only irrationality of men that leads men to wish to oppress or exploit one another. Rational men will respect the principle of reason in each other, and lack all desire to fight or dominate one another."[29]

Where the collective-rational view differs most strikingly from the individual-rational view is that the collective-rational perspective argues that because not all

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[29]Berlin, Two Concepts of Libery, pp. 30-31.

men are equally rational or because they have become 'blinded' to the truth by their class and/or social status, it becomes necessary for a group of people who are the most 'rational' to govern and lead others till all share the same view. This viewpoint can lead to a dictatorship of one man who is either the most 'rational' or who embodies within himself all the desires and 'rationality' of the collective or it can lead to a temporary dictatorship whose leaders regard themselves as "protectors and educators" whose task it is to guide the collective along a certain path until such time as all within the collective have reached a certain common plateau.

Whereas the narrow conception of political obligation does not require any teleological inference, the broad conception does.

> "If the universe is governed by reason, then there will be no need for coercion; a correctly planned life for all will coincide with full freedom -- the freedom of rational self-direction for all. This will be so if, and only if, the plan is the true plan -- the one unique pattern which alone fulfills the claims of reason. Its laws will be the rules which reason prescribes: they will only seem irksome to those whose reason is dormant, who do not understand the true 'needs' of their 'real' selves."[30]

The above statement is an example of the logic employed by those who support modern totalitarian ideologies.

The reply to such an argument, within the broad perspective, is given by those who uphold the individualistic-

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[30] Ibid., p. 32.

rational view i.e. the anarchists. They would argue that there can exist more than one truth and that the clash of wills need not be reduced to the clash of rational versus irrational men. There would be a toleration for differing viewpoints if, and only if, there were agreement amongst all parties that there could exist a proliferation of truths i.e. that where there is conflict both parties should recognize that what may be true for one actor may not be true for another and that each should recognize the other's truth as true for that particular individual. If this is too extreme, the anarchist could argue along similar lines that there are many paths and routes to the 'final' truth and that each actor, given the suitable societal condition, could through reason and benevolent self-interest arrive at that final truth.

In summation, the broad perspective does allow the actor to confront two major problems posed by the narrow perspective head on and answer them. The citizen is now capable of judging and answering questions about the conditions under which various types of political disobedience are justified. For the broad perspective, by being outside the restrictions of the rule of law can apply both the criteria of rationality and sociological factors. Secondly, the broad perspective is capable of addressing itself to questions concerning the appropriateness of different types of disobedience.

This should not mean, however, that the broad perspective is not without problems of its own. The first problem is the theory's tremendous eclecticism. It is capable of laying down any criteria for judging any action save that of individual or collective caprice; its foundation rests on what Berlin has called the "inner citadel". The second major problem with this perspective is that it can lead to a justification of totalitarian rule by appealing to the one 'best' way. For if there is only one rational way of doing things and ordering one's political life, then all others become aberrations or are contrary to the teleological purpose. The third problem with the broad perspective is that it can lead to increased political tension and if carried far enough to violence and war. For if two or more parties insist that their side and their side alone has the truth and believe that it is their right to enforce that perception on others, then violence can be the only possible result.

In modern liberal democracies, the tension between the narrow and the broad perspectives on political obligation is this: the narrow perspective cannot allow for fundamental, radical change within the present environments; while the broad perspective, in the course of changing or attempting to change that order may very well succeed only in destroying it and, by being unable to come to any agreement about the purposes and methods of implementation, may very well leave the present political and societal framework in total ruin.

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPACT OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

After having examined in some detail the two major theories of political obligation, I should now like to examine the outstanding features of modern, post-industrial society in order to determine which of the two theories is most compatible with the political needs of the new society. It should not be assumed that the technological society is, by this author, regarded as the best of all possible worlds and that the needs of that society are held sacrosanct. Rather, the aim of this chapter will be to delineate the political character of the technological society and by so doing demonstrate which of the two theories of political obligation is most appropriate to the maintenance of such a society; and, secondly, to show the consequences for future political activity that would stem from the adoption of that particular theory.

The delineation of the outstanding featues of the technological society in an empirical manner is an almost impossible task. The difficulty arises from the fact that there has never existed a 'true' technological society and, thus, the outlining of its features requires an extrapolation from present conditions. What can be done, however, is a development of the technological society along analytic lines

in much the same manner as Hobbes develops his theory of obligation. Whether this analytic model is an accurate conceptualization of a future technological society, only time will tell. We can, nevertheless, look to history for trends which will point the way to the coming society.

In order to understand the modern, post-industrial society, it is necessary to examine the underlying principles which are the foundations of that society. The most profound change in Western society, a change which created the prerequisites for the germination of the seed of progress, was the shift in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the conception of 'reason'. It is this change which separates the ancients from the moderns.

Prior to the sixteenth century, reason was considered to be a part of an objective reality.

> "This view asserted the existence of reason as a force not only in the individual mind but also in the objective world -- in relations among human beings and between social classes, in social institutions, and in nature and its manifestations."[1]

This view of reason never precluded the modern conception of reason -- subjective reason --, but regarded it as only a partial, limited expression of a universal rationality from which other criteria for all things and beings were derived. The emphasis was on ends rather than means. The supreme endeavour of this kind of thinking was to reconcile the

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[1]Max Horkeheimer, Eclipse of Reason (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 5.

objective order of the 'reasonable' as philosophy conceived it, with human existence, including self interest and self preservation. The theory of objective reason did not focus on the co-ordination of behaviour and man, but on concepts of the greatest good, on the problem of human destiny, and on the way of realization of ultimate goals.[2]

The reason why this conception of reason changed need not concern us here. Suffice it to say that a fundamental change did occur. Reason was now considered to be an entirely subjective faculty. Man and man alone possessed reason. The world of nature was a world of chaos, an enemy to be conquered, for nature was no longer 'reasonable'.

> "In the subjective view, when reason is used to connote a thing or an idea rather than an act, it refers exclusively to the relation of such an object or concept to a purpose, not to the object or concept itself. It means that the thing or the idea is good for something else. There is no reasonable aim as such, and to discuss the superiority of one aim over another in terms of reason becomes meaningless. From the subjective approach, such a discussion is possible only if both aims serve a third and higher one, that is they are means, not ends."[3]

In short, the change in the conceptualization of reason has been to deny the existence of any 'other' reason, be it theological or philosophical in favour of accepting reason as a faculty to serve one in the attainment of one's

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[2] Ibid., p. 6.

[3] Loc. cit.

goal. Furthermore, subjective reason, by definition, is incapable of assessing the value of one's aims except in so far as it can help arrive at the most utilitarian function i.e. giving pleasure and satisfaction to the person.

"If the subjectivist view holds true, thinking cannot be of any help in determining the desirability of goals itself. The acceptance of ideals, the criteria for our actions and beliefs, the leading principles of ethics and politics, all our ultimate decisions are made to depend on factors other than reason. They are supposed to be matters of choice and predilection."[4]

It might be implied from the above that the new understanding of reason left man a completely chaotic world. And, in one sense, this implication would be correct. For the great discoveries of Galileo and Newton that the universe was a world of perfect symmetry and perpetual motion created nothing less than the image of the Great Machine. In the words of J. Robert Oppenheimer

"The great machine had a determinate course. A knowledge of its present and therefore its future for all times was, in principle, man's to obtain, and perhaps practice as well."[5]

The Copernican revolution had dislodged man from the center of the universe; it remained for the Galileoan-Newtonian revolution to remove him from the universe altogether. Through the inexorable reduction of all knowable reality to the dimensions of objective mechanism, the gap between the knower and the known, between the subjective self and the world, came

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[4] Ibid., p. 9.

[5] Floyd W. Matson, The Broken Image (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., 1966), p. 1.

to be the measure of the distance between appearance and reality. For the purposes of science, the animal was removed -- except as an insensitive body, or, more accurately, as mechanism. The consequences of this displacement have not yet, after three centuries, fully run their course. The "Infinitely closed" universe of Newtonian cosmology seemed to seal man's fate by abolishing man's hope: and not only his hope but, in swift succession, his spiritual sovereignty over the natural world, his autonomy apart from it, and his distinctive reality within it.[6]

The traumatic effect of what Alexandre Koyré has called "the scientific and philosophical destruction of cosmos" came upon most men not as a shock of recognition counselling humility and curbing pride, but as a flash of inspiration and vision of a new, greater mastery. The seventeenth century (the century of Hobbes) was already the age of industrious ideology and enterprise; to the troublesome question, "What shall it profit a man . . .?", there were more than a few prepared to answer that the profits might be great indeed, were men to possess the universal knowledge which could unlock the great machine and expose its secret manipulations.[7]

It is the uniting of these two underlying assumptions about reason and nature that lays at the heart of the

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[6] Ibid., p. 5

[7] Loc. cit.

technological society. Together they obliterate any conception of innate goodness in either man or nature; it is man and man alone who has reason; nature is now an alien force. Man is now free of all ethical, moral, and religious constraints which were previously placed on nature; thus, nature is 'ready' to be conquered and put to any use which man may decree. The culmination of this project is the technological society.

Looking more closely at the technological society itself, we can identify the two essential characteristics of today's technical phenomena as rationality (subjective reason) and artificiality. Having become subjective, reason, by existing only in the individual, not in any finite definitive person or object, is unable to provide any standard by which 'reasonableness' can be measured except in terms of means and never ends. We may define this particular form of rationality as the search for and the application of the one best way of performing any task or set of tasks. The application of this form of rationaltiy is called 'technique'.

> "In technique, whatever its aspect of the domain to which it is applied, a rational process is present which mechanics to bear on all that is spontaneous or irrational. This rationality, best exemplified in systematizations, division of labour, creation of standards, production norms, and the like, involves two distant phases: first, the use of 'discourse' in every operation; this excludes spontaneity and personal creativity. Second, there is the reduction of method to its logical dimension alone."[8]

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[8] Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society tr. J. Wilkinson (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 78.

Thus, every intervention of technique is, in effect, a reduction of facts, forces, phenomena, means, and instruments to the schema of logic.

While in the beginning, subjective reason was applied to the cosmos, as time went on, this new mode of thought was applied to more and more spheres of human activity. For if there was no longer a telos in the universe, what possible reason could there be for assuming that a telos existed in man's institutions, or, for that matter in any sphere of activity. Thus the last three hundred years has been characterised by the expansion of technique into all spheres of human activity. The technological society is, therefore, the universal world of technique.

The second characteristic of the new society is artificiality, the mechanization of the world. Man is now free to create everything and anything; he ceases to be the imitator of the perfect -- nature -- because the perfect no longer exists. Rather, man becomes the manipulator, the conqueror, the creator. Because man can control the machine, since he created it; because man has discovered the 'main-springs' of the machine, the machine becomes superior to nature, for the element of chance has been removed. Modern man praises his creations, rejoices in the success of his subjective reason and scorns all other modes of thought -- the philosophers, the artists, the religious, all are cast out onto the refuse pile of history.

Politics also becomes radically changed when subjective reason is the mode of thought employed. Politics now becomes another tool to be used to expedite the total realization of the technological society. No longer is politics used as a forum for discussing the ends of society, even more remote, is the possibility of politics being used as a vehicle for achieving or securing any final or ultimate end (for there is no such thing in the technological society as the Final End). Thus the great debates and controversies that have surrounded politics in the past must pass out of existence. Politics becomes reduced to a process, a mechanism, a means. The rules of the game, the norms for political action, become all important.

Political obligation in the technological society takes on a Hobbesian perspective. By denying the importance of ultimate ends, both Hobbes and the citizen of the technological society insist on protection to preserve their lives in order to progress, in order to complete the discovery and hence the practical application of the main-springs of nature.

The victory of subjective reason appears to be inevitable. for those who have thought and advocated this victory, the culmination of this historic enterprise and its results may come with unexpected and unwelcomed results.

"For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might be truly said: 'Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved."[9]

But even with this awareness, the victory of subjective reason is unconditional. For the author states in the very next sentence that: "But this brings us to the world of judgements of values and faith, with which this purely historical discussion need not be burdened."[10]

But the single most perceptive comment on the finalization of subjective reason and its effects comes from the pen of Neitzsche:

> The earth has become small, and upon it hops the Ultimate Man, who makes everything small. His race is as inexterminable as the flea's; the Ultimate Man lives longest.
>
> 'We have discovered Happiness' say the Ultimate Men and blink
>
> They have left the places where the living was hard; for one needs warmth. One still loves one's neighbour and rubs oneself against him: for one needs warmth . . .
>
> No herdsman and one herd. Everyone wants the same thing, everyone is the same: whoever thinks otherwise goes voluntarily into the madhouse.
>
> 'Formerly, all the world was mad,' say the most acute of them and blink.
>
> They are clever and know everything that has ever happened: so there is no end to their mockery. They still quarrel, but soon makeup -- otherwise indigestion would result . . .
>
> 'We have discovered happiness,' say the Ultimate Men and blink.[11]

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[9]Max Weber, The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism tr. T. Parsons (New York: Scribner's, 1958), p. 182.

[10]Loc. cit.

[11]Friedrich Neitzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra tr. R.J. Hollingdale (Middlesex, U.K., Penguin Books, 1961), p. 46.

There is an air of finality to the previous discussion on the technological society, as, indeed there should be, if one fully accepts the arguments advanced in praise of the new society. Moreover, if one accepts the conclusions, then to even think of alternatives to the technological society is a futile task. There are, however, certain hidden premises within the discussion which when examined carefully would suggest at least a theoretical alternative, if not a plausible one.

There does exist, I believe, one underlying premise of the technological society which is tenuous at best. We saw how subjective reason was combined with 'modern' science to create a new mode of thought and action for society. But, because subjective reason and the new science complimented each other so neatly, surely the premise that this methodology could be applied with equal force and conciseness to all other spheres of human activity and thought is tenuous at best. If the technological society has any single dominant characteristic, it is the expansion of the scientific method into more and more spheres of human endeavour.

The point of weakness in the technological argument seems to me to be this 'expansionism' of its methodology. The method itself is a methodology of means, not ends; in brief, the method for determining the one best way to reach a given goal through the application of subjective reason. But what is the goal? What is the 'end'? But its own

internal logic, the methods of technique cannot supply us with the answer. Thus, only when the 'expansionism' of the methodology in the technological society is complete i.e. dominates all spheres of human activity and thought will the question of ends be eliminated.

There is no inherent reason to suggest that the expansion of technique is a necessary activity. In order to so argue, the advocate of the new order would be forced to emply the word 'best' -- purpose/end now re-enter the world. Therefore the question of ends remains open. The circle is not yet closed.

By allowing such questions as "Why poverty? Why injustice? Why labour?", the question of ends is re-raised in a much more concrete, political context. For we no longer must live "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods". The tools of the technological society have given us the potential to destroy the flies, the gods, and, it must be admitted, the boys.

But if this is so, then why the cause for concern? Surely the discovery of 'nature's process' will be of great material benefit to mankind. Unfortunately, not so.

"The human being, in the process of emancipation, shares the fate of the rest of the world. Domination of nature involves domination of man. Each subject not only has to take part in the subjugation of external nature, human and nonhuman, but in order to do so must subjugate nature in himself. Domination becomes 'internalized' for domination's sake. What is usually indicated as a goal -- the happiness of the

individual, health, and wealth -- gains its significance exclusively from its functional potentiality."[12]

Thus, what may have appeared as a way out of the finality becomes only another progression towards that finality.

And so the question of ends must be faced. By so doing, we may determine two things: first, whether or not the expansion of the methodology of the technological society into new spheres of human activity is in any way justifiable; and, secondly, whether or not the means given us by that new society are adequate to each the desired ends. But, before embarking on such an examination, let me be very clear about one thing: I am not going to pose an alternative to the technological society, neither am I going to develop a 'philosophy' as such. The aim here is to demonstrate that IF there are desirable alternatives then the approach developed will hopefully be of some use in that quest.

In order to explain and justify the expansion of technique, it becomes necessary to handle the concept of 'man' in the same way that a scientist handles other non-human, natural phenomena. The technician, the believer and advocate of the new order must first of all de-humanise man.

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[12]Horkheimer, Eclipse, of Reason, p. 93.

> The technician anticipates results, but it must be said, they are not genuine ends but merely results. And he makes the great leap into the unknown and finds as explanation of everything and answers to all possible objections: the Myth of Man. The technician either does not believe in the myth at all or believes it only superficially. It represents for him a ready-made and comfortable conviction, an answer to all criticism. It is a justification, but scarcely a conscious one . . . And if ever the slightest doubt were to penetrate his consciousness, his answer would be as clear as it would be staggering: the Man for whom I am working is Humanity, the Species, the Proletariat, the Race, Man the creature, Man the eternal, even You. All technical systems . . . come back in the final analysis to this abstraction . . . The abstraction, Man, is only an epiphenomena in the Marxist sense; a natural secreation of technical progress.[13]

In treating Man as an abstract entity, in the same way as the scientist treats other natural phenomena, the technician is forced to act in a manner which would deny reason to other men. For, as we saw previously, one of the major changes in the seventeenth century was the removal of reason from the natural and physical world. In treating 'man' as an abstract, natural entity, the technician succeeds in removing reason from man.

By expanding technique into the realm of entirely human affairs, there arises certain unforseen consequences. The first is the destruction of any purpose or end for man i.e. the denial of philosphy as any meaningful activity.

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[13]Ellul, The Technological Society, p. 132.

> By supplying all men with the goods which they desire, by being the obvious benefactress of all men, philosphy (or science) ceases to be suspect or alien. It ceases to be in rhetoric, except in so far as the goods which it procures must still be advertised in order to be sold; for men cannot desire what they do not know of . . . The new philosophy takes its bearings by how men live as distinguished from how they ought to live . . . The standard which it recognizes is "low but solid". Its symbol is the Beast Man as opposed to the God Man: it understands man in the light of the sub-human rather than of the super-human. The scheme of a good society which it projects is therefore in principle likely to be actualized by man's efforts or its actualization depends much less on chance than does classical "utopia": chance is to be conquered, not by abandoning the passionate concern with the goods of chance and the goods of the body but through giving free rein to it. The good society in the new sense is possible always and everywhere since men of sufficient brain can transform the most corrupt people, the most corrupt matter, into an incorrupt one by the judicious application of the necessary force. Since man is not by nature ordered toward fixed ends, he is as it were infinitely malleable.[14]

The second result of the expansion of technique is the alienation of man from man. By treating each man as part of a process, each man is reduced to a small, atomised part of the 'Great Machine'. Man becomes the object rather than the subject of his own endeavours.

The paradox in all of this is that there can be proof within the model of the technological society that philosophy has, no longer, any meaning or significance. It is philosophic, pre-scientific argument that man has no fixed ends. The world of philosophy, the debate concerning ends is re-opened.

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[14]Leo Strauss, Thoughts on Machiavelli (Glencoe: Free Press, 1958), pp. 296-297.

It is re-opened at the point where one asserts that ends do exist; where means do have consequences beyond their functional purposes. As Hegel defined it: "Thinking is, indeed, essentially the negation of that which is immediately before it."[15] Even the most ardent apostle of the technological society would not wish to have a society of non-thinking men. Barring surgical or chemically induced changes to the brain, it is not possible to eliminate thinking of a critical nature once the process of thought itself has begun. Once the activity of thought has begun (whether it be 'practical' or 'theoretical') the possibility for philosophy is established. And "Philosophic thought begins with the recognition that the facts do not correspond to the concepts imposed by common sense and scientific thought -- in short, with the refusal to accept them."[16]

I hope that I demonstrated that logically the technician cannot argue that ends, or the End, for man does not exist without his resorting to pre-scientific, a priori premises. Furthermore, I have attempted to show that the possibility for philosophy can exist and because of that

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[15]Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. vii.

[16]Loc. cit.

possibility, and in some cases, its practise, the deterministic trend of the technological society is less overwhelming than might otherwise be perceived.

With philosophy still a possibility, questions concerning ends and means are re-raised in a political context. A dispute is entered into between those who assert the inevitability of the new society and those who argue that man can determine ends as well as means. With respect to the determination of ends, they may not be material ends, but rather be moral, religious, or ethical ends which would lie outside of the boundaries of the technological society. When this occurs, the question of political obligation must be raised. For those who base their case on grounds other than functional ones (as defined by the technicians) have another conception of political obligation -- either the individual-rational or the collective-rational perspective.

THE CONCLUSION

In the second chapter, I delineated two primary perspectives on political obligation: the narrow or Hobbesian perspective; and the broad, or 'rationalistic' perspective. Within the rationalistic perspective, I catagorized two subsets: the collective-rational and the individual-rational. In the third chapter, I attempted to examine, in an analytic way, the technological society and its weaknesses. In this chapter, I should like to unite the perspectives on political obligation with the technological society as outlined in the first eight pages of the third chapter and with the denial or 'negation' of that society.

It is not my intention to supply any answer to the problem of political obligation *per se*, but, rather, to make clear what the limits are of accepting either position and the consequences for future political action that would stem from that adoption. In assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the perspectives, I shall do so on the basis of which theory is most compatible with the requirements of either the technological society or its alternative as that society so defines its needs.

Boldly stated, my conclusion is this: that the narrow perspective best serves the needs of the technological

society and that the individual-rational theory best meets the needs of that segment of the population which desires a less material, more moral society. Furthermore, the former theory eliminates any opportunity for basic political change if the actors operate within its limits; thus, only the latter theory can provide the framework within which beneficial political change can occur.

The concept of man in the Hobbesian theory and in the technological society is basically the same. Hobbes sees men as separate entities, striving to preserve their own lives, questing for power after power. In the technological society, men are similarly treated as separate entities who strive for position and power. Both theories perceive the state as being an artificial construct, devoid of any inherent 'Good' save its functinal attributes. The man of the technological society

> "has a profundly pessimistic view of man. He sees man in Hobbesian terms; human beings by nature aggressive, competitive, power seeking; uncivilized man is a jungle beast . . . Hence the vital need for law: without law we would all be at each other's throat; 'only the law makes us free'."[1]

Although Reich's interpretation of Hobbes is less than completely accurate, in that Hobbes does not say that man is naturally aggressive, the line of argument still holds true. For within the technological society, there is agreement with Hobbes' prescription that law is necessary if civil

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[1]Charles Reich, The Greening of America (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 68.

society is to exist in an orderly fashion. The technician

> "is deeply cynical about human motives and good intentions, and he doubts that man can be much improved. It is this philosophy that helps to explain the great emphasis on society and institutions: these are designed to do the best possible job of administering the doubtful and deficient raw material that is 'human nature'. Believing that the best and most helpful part of man is his gift of reason, the technician seeks to design a world in which reason will prevail."[2]

It would, however, be incorrect to suggest that the nature of political obligation in the technological society is entirely Hobbesian. The purpose of the Hobbesian junctures is solely to harness the passions of man to guarantee a life where protection can be assured (assured to the extent that the citizen abides by the rules as laid down by the sovereign). In the technological society, the citizens abide by the rules for reasons other than self-preservation. To understand these reasons we must turn to the modern conception of rationality in order to see how the technological society has adapted the Hobbesian perspective.

We saw that the world of the technician was a world in which reason was an attribute found only in man. But the nature of this reason had a particular meaning; it was an interpretation which excluded theology, teleology, and, to a large extent, intuition. The nature of reason in the technological society has a single-mindedness to it; it is that faculty which gives man the ability to decide

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[2] Loc. cit.

between alternative courses of action based on the criterion of efficiency. Because of this criterion and the subjectiveness of reason, the goal to which a particular course of action was directed became evaluated on the basis of certain 'objective' grounds. These grounds exclude emotion, aesthetics, and personal preference; in short, they are the ground rules for the masses. Thus, within the technological society, the ends and the means become united till it becomes almost impossible to distinguish between the two.

As far as the individual is concerned, it becomes his task to serve as a functional, productive unit in society -- a functional productive unit as defined by the rules of the game. It is this way because it is the only rational way to be. Furthermore, if everyone did what they wanted, then society would disintegrate into total chaos. But reason tells us that 'chaos' is a bad thing, for it is neither efficient nor artificial. In conclusion, the Hobbesian perspective and the particular kind of reason which dominates the technological society unite to demand the citizen's perspective on political obligation be that of the narrow variety. But the nature of the obligation in the technological society is not identical to Hobbes' perspective; for, as we have seen, the new society demands of its citizens actions which go far beyond those required to guarantee self-protection that lies at the heart of Hobbes' theory. The new society requires standard rules of

behaviour for all its members and as technique moves into more and more spheres of human activity, the need for such standardized behaviour increases. Like a very sophisticated, finely tuned machine, society's tolerance from the norm decreases with the result that it becomes more and more necessary for society to control all facets of human activity.

The political obligation of the citizen in the technological society is, therefore, one of passivity and obedience to the laws and requirements of that society. It becomes dysfunctional to challenge the aims of society; to question whether or not progress for the sake of progress is a beneficial drive. "Because society is conceived of as being an artificial construct of man, and therefore rational because he made it, the demands and requirements of that society are rational and therefore it is only rational i.e. necessary for the citizen to meet and fulfill its needs and requirements."

If we take the technological society as given, then, it appears to me, that we have no alternative but to accept the narrow conception of political obligation and reject the broad conception as being dysfunctional and, hence, irrational. If, on the other hand, we do not accept the technological society, but argue instead that it can be changed into a different society, what then?

While it may appear to be the easy way out, I would

argue that we cannot change the basic premises on which the technological society is built. The foundations of technology which has as its origins subjective reason, efficiency, and artificiality are so ingrained into our civilization that it is ludicrous to seriously contemplate any real alternative. The best that can be achieved is a development of a more humane technology in which the energies of the society will be directed less towards materialism and more towards humanity. This is not to say that there is no place for the broad conception of political obligation.

The value of the broad conception of political obligation is this: it can serve as the conscience for society. Those who choose to deliberately violate the law for non-selfish motives can act as a catalyst to institute much needed reforms e.g. Martin Luther King's Birmingham sit-ins and bus boycott. In order for society to become more humane, however, it will become necessary for society to listen carefully and with open minds to those who deliberately violate the law. We should always be prepared to correct injustices where they exist, but in doing so we must take care not to 'destroy the village in order to save it'.

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