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salvation positively approves of the taking of one’s own life (Freitod) – which has been transfigured (verklärt) only by philosophies.

In this light, the whole of ‘culture’ is a stepping out from the organically determined natural course of life, and the cultural person with every further step is condemned to ever more annihilating loss of meaning. The more the service to cultural goods was turned into a sacred undertaking and into a ‘vocation’, the more it became a senseless rush into the service of worthless purposes which were, moreover, contradictory and mutually antagonistic.

The world of culture, when seen purely ethically from the religious postulate of a divine ‘meaning’ for its existence, appeared to be both fragmented and devalued. For it was a place of imperfection, injustice, suffering and transitoriness, and culture’s ever increasing meaninglessness stemmed from its irremovable burden of guilt and its unstoppable further development and differentiation. This devaluation of the world was a consequence of the conflict between the rational claims of the world and its reality, and between the rational ethic and its in part rational, in part irrational values. With every elaboration of the specific distinctness of each of the world’s separate spheres the conflict became ever more acute and more insoluble. As the thinking about the ‘meaning’ of the world becomes more systematic, the more the world is rationalized in its external organization, and the more sublimated the conscious experience of the world’s irrational contents becomes, so – exactly paralleling this process – the religious began to be constituted in such a way that its specific contents were more unworlidy and more hostile to all formed life. It was not perhaps only theoretical thinking that led to the disenchantment of the world, but also the direct attempt of the religious ethic to carry through practically an ethical rationalization of the world.38

17 Bureaucracy

Characteristics of modern bureaucracy

Modern officialdom functions in the following manner:

1 There is the principle of official jurisdictional areas, which are generally ordered by rules, that is, by laws or administrative regulations. This means:

1 The regular activities required for the purposes of the bureaucratically governed structure are assigned as official duties.

2 The authority to give the commands required for the discharge of these duties is distributed in a stable way and is strictly delimited by rules concerning the coercive means, physical, sacerdotal, or otherwise, which may be placed at the disposal of officials.

3 Methodical provision is made for the regular and continuous fulfillment of these duties and for the exercise of the corresponding rights; only persons who qualify under general rules are employed.

In the sphere of the state these three elements constitute a bureaucratic agency, in the sphere of the private economy they constitute a bureaucratic enterprise. Bureaucracy, thus understood, is fully developed in political and ecclesiastical communities only in the modern state, and in the private economy only in the most advanced institutions of capitalism. Permanent agencies, with fixed jurisdiction, are not the historical rule but rather the exception. This is even true of large political structures such as those of the ancient Orient, the Germanic and Mongolian empires of conquest, and of many feudal states. In all these cases, the ruler executes the most important measures through personal trustees, table-companions, or court-servants. Their commissions and powers are not precisely delimited and are temporarily called into being for each case.

38 Weber concludes the essay with three types of theodicy

1 Taken from D&S, pp. 956-8.
II The principles of office hierarchy and of channels of appeal (Instanzenzug) stipulate a clearly established system of super- and subordination in which there is a supervision of the lower offices by the higher ones. Such a system offers the governed the possibility of appealing, in a precisely regulated manner, the decision of a lower office to the corresponding superior authority. With the full development of the bureaucratic type, the office hierarchy is monocratically organized. The principle of hierarchical office authority is found in all bureaucratic structures: in state and ecclesiastical structures as well as in large party organizations and private enterprises. It does not matter for the character of bureaucracy whether its authority is called 'private' or 'public'.

When the principle of jurisdictional 'competency' is fully carried through, hierarchical subordination – at least in public office – does not mean that the 'higher' authority is authorized simply to take over the business of the 'lower'. Indeed, the opposite is the rule; once an office has been set up, a new incumbent will always be appointed if a vacancy occurs.

III The management of the modern office is based upon written documents (the 'files'), which are preserved in their original or draft form, and upon a staff of subaltern officials and scribes of all sorts. The body of officials working in an agency along with the respective apparatus of material implements and the files makes up a bureau (in private enterprises often called the 'counting house', Kontor).

In principle, the modern organization of the civil service separates the bureau from the private domicile of the official and, in general, segregates official activity from the sphere of private life. Public monies and equipment are divorced from the private property of the official. This condition is everywhere the product of a long development. Nowadays, it is found in public as well as in private enterprises; in the latter, the principle extends even to the entrepreneur at the top. In principle, the Kontor (office) is separated from the household, business from private correspondence, and business assets from private wealth. The more consistently the modern type of business management has been carried through, the more are these separations the case. The beginnings of this process are to be found as early as the Middle Ages.

It is the peculiarity of the modern entrepreneur that he conducts himself as the 'first official' of his enterprise, in the very same way in which the ruler of a specifically modern bureaucratic state [Frederick II of Prussia] spoke of himself as 'the first servant' of the state. The idea that the bureau activities of the state are intrinsically different in character from the management of private offices is a continental European notion and, by way of contrast, is totally foreign to the American way.

IV Office management, at least all specialized office management – and such management is distinctly modern – usually presupposes thorough training in a field of specialization. This, too, holds increasingly for the modern executive and employee of a private enterprise, just as it does for the state officials.

V When the office is fully developed, official activity demands the full working capacity of the official, irrespective of the fact that the length of his obligatory working hours in the bureau may be limited. In the normal case, this too is only the product of a long development, in the public as well as in the private office. Formerly the normal state of affairs was the reverse: Official business was discharged as a secondary activity.

VI The management of the office follows general rules, which are more or less stable, more or less exhaustive, and which can be learned. Knowledge of these rules represents a special technical expertise which the officials possess. It involves jurisprudence, administrative or business management.

The reduction of modern office management to rules is deeply embedded in its very nature. The theory of modern public administration, for instance, assumes that the authority to order certain matters by decree – which has been legally granted to an agency – does not entitle the agency to regulate the matter by individual commands given for each case, but only to regulate the matter abstractly. This stands in extreme contrast to the regulation of all relationships through individual privileges and bestowals of favor, which, as we shall see, is absolutely dominant in patrimonialism, at least insofar as such relationships are not fixed by sacred tradition.

The technical superiority of bureaucratic organization over administration by notables²

The decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organization has always been its purely technical superiority over any other form of organization. The fully developed bureaucratic apparatus compares with other organizations exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production. Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs – these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration, and especially in its monocratic form. As compared with all collegiate, honorific, and avocational forms of administration, trained bureaucracy is superior on all these points. And as far as complicated tasks are concerned, paid bureaucratic work is not only more precise but, in the last analysis, it is often cheaper than even formally unremonerated honorific service.

Honorific arrangements make administrative work a subsidiary activity: an

² Taken from E&S, pp. 973–5.
avocation and, for this reason alone, honorific service normally functions more slowly. Being less bound to schemata and more formless, it is less precise and less unified than bureaucratic administration, also because it is less dependent upon superiors. Because the establishment and exploitation of the apparatus of subordinate officials and clerical services are almost unavoidably less economical, honorific service is less continuous than bureaucratic and frequently quite expensive. This is especially the case if one thinks not only of the money costs to the public treasury — costs which bureaucratic administration, in comparison with administration by notables, usually increases — but also of the frequent economic losses of the governed caused by delays and lack of precision. Permanent administration by notables is normally feasible only where official business can be satisfactorily transacted as an avocation. With the qualitative increase of tasks the administration has to face, administration by notables reaches its limits — today even in England. Work organized by collegiate bodies, on the other hand, causes friction and delay and requires compromises between conflicting interests and views. The administration, therefore, runs less precisely and is more independent of superiors; hence, it is less unified and slower. All advances of the Prussian administrative organization, for example, have been and will in the future be advances of the bureaucratic, and especially of the monocratic, principle.

Today, it is primarily the capitalist market economy which demands that the official business of public administration be discharged precisely, unambiguously, continuously, and with as much speed as possible. Normally, the very large modern capitalist enterprises are themselves unequalled models of strict bureaucratic organization. Business management throughout rests on increasing precision, steadiness, and, above all, speed of operations. This, in turn, is determined by the peculiar nature of the modern means of communication, including, among other things, the news service of the press. The extraordinary increase in the speed by which public announcements, as well as economic and political facts, are transmitted exerts a steady and sharp pressure in the direction of speeding up the tempo of administrative reaction towards various situations. The optimum of such reaction time is normally attained only by a strictly bureaucratic organization. (The fact that the bureaucratic apparatus also can, and indeed does, create certain definite impediments for the discharge of business in a manner best adapted to the individuality of each case does not belong into the present context.)

Bureaucratization offers above all the optimum possibility for carrying through the principle of specializing administrative functions according to purely objective considerations. Individual performances are allocated to functionaries who have specialized training and who by constant practice increase their expertise. 'Objective' discharge of business primarily means a discharge of business according to calculable rules and 'without regard for persons'.

'Without regard for persons', however, is also the watchword of the market and, in general, of all pursuits of naked economic interests. Consistent bureau-