

king and the tyrant upon precisely the point at issue. A tyrant rules by force over unwilling subjects, while the true king or statesman has the art of making his rule voluntary.⁶ There is no way in which the two positions can be made compatible, but it is apparent that Plato is not willing to abandon either. It is not unjust to force men to be better than their traditions, and yet he cannot conquer the Greek detestation of government that has to depend frankly upon force. The passage recalls the eloquent denunciation of tyranny and the tyrant in Books VIII and IX of the *Republic*, not least because of the tyrant's utter lack of piety and reverence toward all normal human relations.

The classification of states which Plato includes in the *Statesman* shows also that he has moved some distance from the position taken in the *Republic*. The two noticeable points are, first, that the ideal state is set off definitely from the class of possible states and, second, that democracy is given a more favorable place than in the *Republic*. In the earlier work, where little or no attention is given to an effort to classify, the ideal state is placed at the top and actual states are arranged as successive degenerations the one from the other. Thus timocracy, or the military state, is a corruption of the ideal state; oligarchy, or government by the rich, is a corruption of timocracy; democracy arises by the corruption of oligarchy; and tyranny, which is at the bottom of the list, is a corruption of democracy. In the *Statesman* a more elaborate classification is attempted. The ideal state, or a pure monarchy ruled by the philosopher-king, is "divine" and therefore too perfect for human affairs. It is distinguished from all actual states by the fact that in it knowledge rules and there is no need for law. It is the state of the *Republic* now definitely relegated to its place as a "model fixed in the Heavens" for human imitation but not for attainment. The classification of actual states is reached by crossing two classifications on each other. The traditional threefold division is subdivided in each of its parts into a lawless and a law-abiding form. In this way Plato reaches the sixfold classification, of three law-abiding states and their corresponding lawless corruptions, which Aristotle afterward adopted in the *Politics*. Thus the rule of one yields monarchy and tyranny; the rule of a few, aristocracy and oli-

garchy; while for the first time Plato recognizes two types of democracy, a moderate and an extreme form. More striking still, he now makes democracy the best of the lawless states, though the worst of the law-abiding states. Both forms of democracy are therefore better than oligarchy. Evidently Plato has moved toward the position later taken in the *Laws*, in which the second-best state is described as an attempt to combine monarchy with democracy. It is a tacit admission that in the actual state the factors of popular assent and participation cannot be overlooked.

Plato's new theory, then, is to be frankly a second-best, involving the unsatisfactory contrast of the heavenly with the earthly city. The available stock of human intelligence is not great enough to make the philosopher-king a possibility. The humanly best solution, therefore, is to rely upon such wisdom as can be embodied in the law and upon the natural piety of men toward the wisdom of use and wont. The bitterness with which Plato accepts this compromise is apparent in the irony with which he remarks that now the execution of Socrates must be justified.⁷ The state, with its inherited law, must be conceived as somehow an imitation of the heavenly city. At least there can be no doubt that law is better than caprice and the piety of the law-abiding ruler than the arbitrary will of a tyrant, a plutocracy, or a mob. Nor is it to be doubted that law is in general a civilizing force without which, human nature being what it is, man would be the worst of savage beasts. And yet this saying, so suggestive of Aristotle, is for Plato an act of faith for which his philosophy, in so far as it contrasts knowledge and opinion, can offer no real justification.

In one of the most striking passages of the *Laws* he does not hesitate to say that it is an act of faith:

Let us suppose that each of us living creatures is an ingenious puppet of the gods, whether contrived by way of a toy of theirs or for some serious purpose — for as to that we know nothing; but this we do know, that these inward affections of ours, like sinews or cords, drag us along and, being opposed to each other, pull one against the other to opposite actions; and herein lies the dividing line between goodness and badness. For, as our argument declares, there is one of these pulling forces which every man should always follow and nohow leave hold of, counteracting thereby the pull of the other sinews: it is the leading-string, golden and

⁷ *Statesman*, 299 b-c.

holy, of "calculation", entitled the public law of the State; and whereas the other cords are hard and steely and of every possible shape and semblance, this one is flexible and uniform, since it is of gold. With that most excellent leading string of the law we must needs co-operate always; for since calculation is excellent, but gentle rather than forceful, its leading-string needs helpers to ensure that the golden kind within us may vanquish the other kinds.⁸

The state of Plato's later theory, then, is to be held together by the "golden cord of the law" and this implies that its ethical principle of organization is different from that in the *Republic*. The law is now, so to speak, the surrogate for that reason which Plato had sought to make supreme in the ideal state and which he still regarded as the supreme force in nature. The chief virtue in the ideal state had accordingly been justice, the division of labor and the specialization of functions which puts every man in his proper place and "gives him his due" in the sense that he is enabled to bring all his faculties to their highest development and allowed to put them to the fullest use. [In the state of the *Laws* wisdom is crystallized — perhaps one might even say frozen — in the law] no such flexible adjustment of the individual to the state is possible, but the regulations made by the law are assumed to be the best possible "on the whole." [Consequently the supreme virtue in such a state is temperance or self-control, which means a law-abiding disposition or a spirit of respect toward the institutions of the state and a readiness to subordinate oneself to its lawful powers.]

[In the early books of the *Laws* Plato criticises pretty sharply those states, like Sparta, which have adopted the fourth virtue, courage, as the chief end of their training and so have made all civic virtue subordinate to military success.] The estimate of Sparta is distinctly less favorable than that implied by the account of the timocracy in the *Republic* and is outspoken in its condemnation of the futility of war as an end for states. [The end is harmony, both in domestic and foreign relations, and short of the perfect harmony which would issue from specialization of functions in the ideal state, its best guarantee is obedience to law. The state of the *Laws*, therefore, is a state constructed upon temperance or moderation as its chief virtue and seeking to achieve harmony by fostering the spirit of obedience to law.]

THE MIXED STATE

It is evident, then, that Plato requires a principle of political organization designed to bring about this desired result, one which shall play the part for his later theory that the division of labor and the division of citizens into three classes had played in the *Republic*. In point of fact he discovered⁹ a principle which passed into the later history of political theory and succeeded in gaining the adherence of the majority of thinkers who dealt with the problem of organization over a period of many centuries. (This was the principle of the "mixed" state, which is designed to achieve harmony by a balance of forces, or by a combination of diverse principles of different tendency in such a way that the various tendencies shall offset each other. Stability is thus a resultant of opposite political strains. This principle is the ancestor of the famous separation of powers which Montesquieu was to rediscover centuries later as the essence of political wisdom embodied in the English constitution. (In the case of Plato the mixed state sketched in the *Laws* is said to be a combination of the monarchic principle of wisdom with the democratic principle of freedom. It cannot be said, however, that he succeeded in making the combination which he had in mind or even that he always remained faithful to the ideal of the mixed constitution. Plato's allegiance was hopelessly divided and in the end he reverted to the more congenial line of thought already developed in the *Republic*.)

Nevertheless, his manner of introducing and defending the principle of the mixed state was in the highest degree significant for the later development of the study. The *Laws* deals with actual states. Plato accordingly sees that the method of free logical or speculative construction which he had consciously adopted in the *Republic* is out of place. The problem concerns now the rise and fall of states and the actual rather than the ideal causes of their greatness and decay. In the third book of the *Laws*, therefore, Plato makes the first suggestion of the innumerable attempts at a kind of philosophic history, which shall trace the development of human civilization, mark its critical

⁹ Possibly Plato did not discover the mixed state. See Aristotle's reference to other theories of mixed states (*Politics*, 1265 b 33) which may refer to earlier writers. The *Laws* is at any rate the earliest extant form of the theory.

stages, note the causes of progress and decay, and by analysis of the whole derive the laws of political stability which the wise statesman will observe in order to control and direct the changes that beset human society. He remarks, in a passage that suggests Aristotle, that human life is controlled by God, chance, and art, and art must co-operate with occasion.¹⁰ It is true that Plato's mythological history contained nothing suggesting canons of accurate investigation. And yet this suggestion in the *Laws*, that the study of politics is to be attached to the history of civilization, had more possibilities of fruitfulness than the analytic and deductive method which governed the *Republic*. It formed the beginning of the authentic tradition of social studies and in particular of the mode of investigation which was to be taken up and perfected by Aristotle.

The plan of Plato's philosophic history of the race is not very clear-cut because it has more than one purpose and combines more than one principle. In the first place it utilizes what was doubtless the current Greek conception of the direction in which their own institutions had developed. In the beginning men lived as herdsmen in solitary families, lacking the arts that use the metals and also the social distinctions and many of the vices of a civilized life. Plato imagines it to have been a kind of "natural" age, in which men lived at peace since the causes of war that mark a more ambitious society had not yet appeared. (Already in Plato the "state of nature" — that long-drawn myth of later political philosophers — has made its appearance.) As men increase in numbers, and as agriculture grows and new manual arts are devised, families are gathered in villages, and finally statesmen arise who unite the villages into cities. It is this line of evolution that Aristotle used in the opening chapters of the *Politics* to mark off the distinctive function of the city as the bearer of the possibilities of a civilized life.

Plato has, however, at least two other purposes, the one somewhat incidental and the other more closely connected with the emergence of the mixed constitution. (Incidentally he points his criticism of Sparta by tracing its downfall to its exclusively military organization, since "ignorance is the ruin of states.") But what he mainly wishes to do is to show how the arbitrary power of monarchy and the tyranny that goes with it has been a cause

¹⁰ *Laws*, 709 a-c.

of decay, as exemplified especially in Persia, and how an unbridled democracy at Athens ruined itself by an excess of liberty. Either might have been prosperous had it been content to remain moderate, to temper power with wisdom or liberty with order. It is the extreme in both cases that proved ruinous. (Here then is the principle upon which a good state must be formed. If not a monarchy it must at least contain the principle of monarchy, the principle of wise and vigorous government subject to the law. But equally, if not a democracy, it must contain the democratic principle, the principle of freedom and of power shared by the masses, again of course subject to law.)

The argument may be generalized. (Men have admitted historically several claims to power) — the right of parents over children, of age over youth, of freemen over slaves, of well-born over base-born, of strong over weak, and of rulers chosen by lot over other citizens¹¹ — some incompatible with others and hence the cause of factions. In Plato's opinion, of course, the only "natural" claim to power is that of the wise over the less wise, but this belongs to the ideal state. In the second-best state the problem is to select and combine these admitted claims in order to get on the whole the most law-abiding rule. In effect this means some approximation to wisdom by favoring age, good birth, or property; which may be taken perhaps as *prima facie* symptoms of better than average ability, with some concession to the lot for the sake of democracy. This Plato describes, not very aptly, as a mixture of monarchy and democracy.

✕The founding of a city to meet these specifications evidently requires attention to the underlying physical, economic, and social factors upon which the political constitution depends, since Plato's mixed state is not a balance of merely political forces. He begins accordingly by discussing the geographical situation of the city and the conditions of climate and soil which are most favorable. Here again he introduced what became a favorite and indeed almost a traditional part of the political theory of the philosophic historian, the influence of which was immediate, as may be seen in Aristotle's remarks preparatory to sketching the best state.¹² The best site is not, Plato thinks, upon the coast, because of the cor-

¹¹ 690 a-d. Cf. the similar list of claims in Aristotle's *Politics*, 3, 12-13, 1283 a 14 ff.

¹² *Politics* Bk. VII (the traditional arrangement of books).

ruptions introduced by foreign commerce and more especially because foreign trade means a navy and a navy means power for the democratic masses. This view is built upon the history of Athens and the condemnation of the abuses of naval power is a companion piece to the earlier condemnation of the abuse of military power by Sparta. The ideal is a mainly agricultural community, on a soil that is self-sufficing but rugged, since this is the nurse of the hardiest and most temperate kind of population. This recalls the admiration which many theorists of the eighteenth century felt for the Swiss and shows the same distrust of commercialism and industrialism. He believes also that common race, language, law, and religion are desirable, provided they do not give too great a weight to custom.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Of all social institutions that which is politically most significant is the ownership and use of property. This had been Plato's view in the *Republic* — though there he had tried to make a state that would put education into first place — and it is doubly true where he is trying to deal with actual states. In the *Laws* he makes no secret of the fact that he still thinks communism the ideal arrangement but too good for human nature. Accordingly he concedes to human frailty the two chief points and leaves private ownership and the private family standing. He still retains his plan for the equal education of women and for their sharing in military and other civic duties, though he now says nothing of their holding office. Permanent monogamous unions — with an intolerable amount of public supervision — are accepted as the lawful form of marriage. With his concession of the private ownership of property Plato unites the most stringent regulation of its amount and use, following in general the regulations in effect at Sparta. (The number of citizens is fixed at 5040 and the land is divided into an equal number of allotments, which pass by inheritance but can be neither divided nor alienated. The produce of the land is to be consumed in common at a public mess. Property in land is therefore equalized.) The cultivation of the land is to be done by slaves, or possibly a more descriptive word would be serfs, who pay a rental in the form of a share of the produce.

Personal property, on the other hand, is permitted to be un-