

ON THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE STATE AND KNEADING A LOAF OF BREAD

In many ways, the state is like a loaf of bread. Like a loaf of bread, the state has two considerations: the heat within and the moisture without. When we speak of the state, we speak of a group of individuals who come together to serve a common interest. And so a state applies as much to a household as it does to a realm like England.

Like a loaf of bread, a state is defined as much as what happens within its territory as what happens to it from outside. And considering the state's universal aspects, knowledge of the workings of the state is an important duty that affects every citizen involved: whether they wish to pay attention or avoid so doing.

By understanding the kneading and baking of bread, a statesman will better understand how to govern his realm. This applies as much to those in power as those seeking to gain it. Without it, a statesman forfeits his knowledge of good government.

As with the spiritual and physical virtues, a loaf of bread must neither be over kneaded or under kneaded. This too is similar with the state. Let us discover the effects of deficiency, excess and moderation in government.

On the one hand, states are governed deficiently. An under kneaded loaf of bread is unable to take in moisture and much of the heat remains within. In political terms, this is like allowing the passions of men to remain untamed without the cooling of government action. We see this in the European Dark Ages, and to a lesser extent many Sub-Saharan African countries today. Without taming passion, a state of nature ensues from the anarchy of the individual. The government fails to mark its authority on all areas of society. And so, anarchy rules under kneaded states.

On the other hand, states are governed excessively. An over kneaded loaf of bread is extinguished of its energy, and the excess moisture from water makes the dough sticky. In political terms, this is like the government micromanaging all areas of a man's life to the extent that it putrefies the competencies, and therefore the happiness of man. We see this unanimously across Western oligarchies: from America to England, from Germany to Sweden. Because the state has taken on the competencies of men, because the state makes excessive private decisions — from health care to welfare — citizens are prone to fall into nihilistic states. And with nihilism comes the fall of the individual. For a man without virtue, a man without competence, fails to honour himself. And how can a man be honoured without first honouring himself? Thus nihilism rules over kneaded states.

The best states, however, are governed with moderation. A loaf of bread that maintains its heat, and yet is cooled by water, makes the best dough and, after baking, the best loaf of bread. So too is it with the state. A state which governs with fewest rules produces the best results. And this is especially so with happiness. The Ten Commandments, interpreted far enough, is all a state needs to prosper. It is enough to learn the rules, and their connotations in natural law, and live by them everyday against violating the rules without surrendering freedom, adventure and common purpose. States which have achieved this desirable loaf include the late Macedonian Empire, the early Roman Empire and the first French Empire of Napoleon Bonaparte. In these states, competence is

at the heart of the education system and keeping the peace and defending the realm is at the heart of government activity. It is a state which requires an original commander to rule, and wise counsellors at his side. It is a state where all share a sacred law without forgetting the will to power. This is the strong state.

The well kneaded loaf of bread is as necessary to pleasure as the well governed state. Excess and deficiency in kneading is as repugnant as a poorly governed state: in intention and consequence. It is a rare, and so valuable triumph, to achieve and protect the strong state. Although, this makes it all the more worth fighting for. A poorly governed society is worthy only for animals, whilst a micromanaged state is to imprison one's self to perpetual infancy. The moderate state is the best state. By learning the Aristotelian Corpus, the Homeric poems and imitating their ways, you will have a happy and glorious life. Practice laziness, or control, and you condemn yourself and your neighbours to a life of slavery. Live moderately, restrain passion, follow the law.