

Preface

As a background to this book, let me begin with some brief autobiographical notes to explain why I feel qualified to write on foreign affairs although most of my work has been devoted to the internal functioning of the state. All my life I have been more interested in foreign affairs than in almost anything else. In high school, I followed the foreign news intensively and, even though I was studying law, did so also in the University. In a way I played an active role in foreign affairs since I was drafted into the army and trained as an infantry rifleman. Although I landed in Normandy on D plus seven, and crossed the Remagen bridge on the first night, my luck held out, and I was never within rifle range of any German soldier.

On return to the United States, I returned to the law school and on graduation, I took a job in a small law firm in downtown Chicago. Pursuing my hobby, however, I had passed the Foreign Service exam, and after four months of legal practice, I joined the Foreign Service. I now think that my interest in foreign affairs in a way disqualified me for success in that profession. The people who got ahead rapidly in the Foreign Service were those who concentrated their studies on the

higher levels of the Department of State rather than a given foreign country. In any case it shows in my career. I selected China as my field of activity for my first assignment. This was another mistake since I am, as I did not then know, partially tone deaf and hence could never really learn Chinese. My efforts to learn Chinese at places like Yale and Cornell were unavailing.

While I was studying law in Chicago, I took the required one quarter course¹ under Henry Simons in economics. Although I did not anticipate it at the time, this changed my whole life. I began as a hobby pursuing economics as well as foreign affairs. While studying Chinese at Yale, I entered the Coop one day and picked up a book entitled “Human Action” by Von Mises. Although I remained a good Chicagoan in my views, this book and my later personal acquaintance with its author pushed me even farther into economics.

The early part of “Human Action” is devoted to methodology and in Von Mises’ view similar methods could be applied in other fields. At the time I was employed in a large and inefficient bureaucracy, the Department of State. Further, I had had an opportunity to observe two other inefficient bureaucracies, the Nationalist and the Communist governments of China. I also had done some reading in history and was aware of the fact that China under the Empire had had a generally successful bureaucracy.

I decided to write a book on bureaucracy which would be radically different from the existing and in my opinion, inferior books then in

¹ The draft board shortened my studies on economics by one week.

existence. I started while still in the Foreign Service although fully occupied in writing other things for the Department such as analyses of politics in Korea.

I was not doing very well in the Foreign Service. Although I was always a member of the aristocracy as a political officer, I imagine I would eventually have been either selected out or sent to minor posts in Africa. As a matter of fact, I resigned and went off to California to write my book. I had, rather by accident, at this time formed a connection with Karl Popper and I intended to use him as an asset in writing the book. This turned out to be impossible, because Karl was deeply involved in translating his basic methodological book. Nevertheless, I learned a great deal from my contact with him and my first book, "Inside Bureaucracy" was markedly improved by his influence. It needed improvement. For many years I couldn't get it published, and when I finally broke through that barrier it sold badly.²

I can, nevertheless, claim considerable influence in the development of the modern theory of bureaucracy since both Anthony Downs and William Niskanen read the manuscript and drew on it heavily in their own books. I believe the basic reason that they sold well and my book did not is simply that they were much less radical than I.

After I resigned from the Foreign Service, I had about a year in which I held minor jobs and worked on my book. Eventually, I was offered

² It has recently been reprinted.

a job in a newly created Department of International Studies at the University of South Carolina. The job was offered to me by Richard Walker who was one of the very rare members of the then China studies profession who, like me, detested the Chinese Communists. He had, in fact, been fired from Yale because of his differences from the rest of the faculty on this point.

I had, however, had copies of the manuscript *Inside Bureaucracy* duplicated and circulated them. One of them went to the University of Virginia and they offered me a postdoctoral fellowship for one year. Walker generously permitted me to leave for that year and then return to South Carolina.

I learned a good deal more economics at the University of Virginia and began publishing in economic journals. My first important article essentially involved both economics and political science, and introduced the scientific examination of log rolling to economics and political science.

On completion of my one year there, I returned to the University of South Carolina and to the teaching of international studies. I had, however, while in Virginia, produced an eighty-page monograph on political applications to economics which eventually became the core of the *Calculus of Consent*.

Nevertheless, I continued to be highly interested in foreign affairs, even though my academic publishing from then on, concerned economic and political matters as well as strictly international studies topics.

In this book then, I return to my first love and attempt to convert what is otherwise a hobby into a serious study. Whither I succeed or not, the readers will have to judge for themselves. I can honestly say that I'm satisfied, but like most authors, I'm aware of the difference between my preference function and that of the readers, to say nothing of that of the reviewers. I, therefore, leave the book in the hands of its critics. I hope, but do not expect, they will view it kindly.