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Rosen. Cameralism and the Concept of Medical Police, In Bull. of the History of Medicine, 1953 [photocopie]

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Références bibliographiques

- [\[anonyme ou collectif\] Bulletin of the history of medicine](#)
- [Rosen, Cameralism and the Concept of medical police, In Bull. history of medicine 1953](#)

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more mouths, the more wealth," he said. With regard to consumption he argued that "Multitudes of people if they can be put into a condition to maintain themselves, must increase trade; they must have food, that employs land; they must have clothes, that employs a long variety of trade."⁸ Another weighty point in favor of a large population was that more people meant a greater revenue for the monarch. Furthermore, that ingenious physician, scientist, and economist, William Petty, urged that greater administrative economy would be yet another fiscal advantage of increased numbers.⁹

These examples taken from a host of others obviously are not the opinions and actions of men concerned with imaginary conditions and abstract problems. For any adequate appreciation of their relevance to practical affairs, they must be seen as part of something broader and more comprehensive, as part of a scheme of policy and organization whose supreme aim was to place social and economic life in the service of the power politics of the state. This was the system that came to be known generally as *mercantilism*, or as *cameralism* in its more politically-oriented, specifically German form.¹⁰

From a political standpoint, mercantilism has often and properly been described as the policy of power. The idea of mercantilism is not exhausted, however, in such a description of its content. Mercantilism was much more than this; it was also a conception of society. As such it comprised certain ideas of the social relations of individuals and groups, and of the way in which they should be treated in matters of social policy.

The attitude of mercantilist thought to organized society is characteristically revealed in its relation to the state. The welfare of society was regarded as identical with the welfare of the state. Since power was considered the first interest of the state, most elements of mercantilist policy were advanced and justified as strengthening the power of the realm. Politically, *raison d'état* was the fulcrum of social policy.¹¹

⁸ Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-250.

⁹ *The Economic Writings of Sir William Petty*, edited by C. H. Hull (2 vols.), Cambridge, at the University Press, 1899, vol. 1, pp. 255-256.

¹⁰ For discussion of mercantilism every student is deeply indebted to the monumental study by Heckscher cited above. Variant views are to be found in *Lecture Notes on Types of Economic Theory*, as delivered by Professor Wesley C. Mitchell (2 vols.), New York, Augustus M. Kelley, 1949, vol. I, pp. 15-23, 48-61; and in Maurice Dobb: *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, London, George Routledge & Sons, 1946, pp. 177-220. See also Louise Sommer: *Die Österreichischen Kameralisten in dogmengeschichtlicher Darstellung*, Wien, Carl Konegen, 1920-25, especially part one, pp. 43-56.

¹¹ For discussion of the history of *raison d'état* see Friedrich Meinecke: *Die Idee der Staatsräson*, München und Berlin, Verlag R. Oldenbourg, 1924.

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