

Society vs. The State

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As The State becomes more and more intrusive, questions are being raised as to what is this organization which occupies so much time of each individual? Is The State in actuality Society or a form of Society?

Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Unabridged) defines Society as "a voluntary association of individuals cooperating with one another for particular aims." A society may be as simple as a Chess Club in which the members voluntarily agree to cooperate with one another in playing chess, with specific rules which apply to all. The members join or leave the group, and no one prevents them from doing so, as it is a voluntary association. Society, in the broader sense, is an unorganized, voluntary association of all of us cooperating with one another to attain diverse ends.

The State is defined by the dictionary as "a body of people occupying a definite territory, and politically organized under a sovereign government almost entirely free from external control, and possessing coercive power to maintain order within the community." Essentially, then, The State is an organization which controls a certain area of land, large or small, with members who may have been born into it, or who voluntarily joined it, but who ordinarily cannot depart voluntarily unless under special dispensation. The State almost assumes the character of an individual and is often discussed in abstract terms as though it is a living and breathing creature. But it is nothing of the sort. It is primarily an organization in which the members, though they may or may not have established the rules, are forced to obey it, whether they like it or not. Though the members may think they control it, for all practical purposes it is controlled by a coterie of individuals, small or large, with or without the consent of the members. The coterie, whether elected, or in power by means of a *coup d'état*, is able to enforce its rules, as it has at its disposal

armed forces. It is the army which in the long run keeps the coterie in power. The smart dictator coddles the army with excellent pay and any emolument which will insure that the army will obey the dictator's commands.

With the passage of time, The State gains almost a godlike character so that its commands are almost divine. Its members will do things which, as individuals, they would never think of doing. They will drop bombs on people, killing men, women, and children. Though their consciences may trouble them, they feel they are obeying the commands of a Superior Being.

History teaches that The State began as an organized gang of individuals who by force of arms preyed on unorganized individuals, i.e., the organized gang robbed the unorganized individuals. With time's passage, all manner of rationales, consciously or unconsciously, arose to cover up the fact that what was nothing more than simple out-and-out robbery became "taxes," raised for the good of the people.

As The State grows, it acquires what are considered to be its duties, such as the protection of its members from anyone other than The State that is robbing them. The State is happy to perform these duties, as it makes its members more dependent on The State, thereby assuring the coterie will remain in power. All of the so-called beneficial duties of The State can be performed by Society, probably more effectively and efficiently, even armed protection, but few would believe this to be so. Thus, The State goes on its merry way, acquiring more and more power until it becomes so bloated that it implodes or is conquered by another less coercive State.

The beauty of parliaments and congresses is that the people believe they are running The State. The members of the coterie may change, but the results are still the same — taxes, taxes, and more taxes. Political campaigns are

primarily contests to determine who controls the people. And as The State acquires more power, the people become more demanding of the ever-increasing benefits, with the politicians who promise the most usually winning.

While there may be periods when there are no major wars, sooner or later wars erupt, often because of unemployment caused by our unjust system of land tenure. Hitler built up the German army to solve unemployment. In WW2, the German people thought they were fighting for the Fatherland, an abstraction which they could not define. Actually, they were fighting to keep Hitler in power. When they had won in the West, he had to turn to the East and fight Russia. To have disbanded the army would have meant huge unemployment. He, therefore, invaded Russia and hoped to conquer enough of it so he would have land for his soldiers, thereby solving unemployment in Germany.

The State, is, basically, corrupted Society. Will it be possible to eliminate The State? Probably not, for the fundamental law of human nature is that man seeks to satisfy his desires with the least effort. Robbery is probably the easiest way to acquire wealth, and when it is disguised as taxes, or welfare, or whatever other rationale is devised, it will continue to be practiced. Possibly, if people adopt the Ghandi-type of individual behavior in their relations with one another, it may be possible. Ethical and religious values would probably have to dominate, so that they become as natural as breathing. But that would take generations for them to be inculcated in the human psyche. Until that time comes, the best that can be done is probably to organize as many groups as possible with aims such as the reduction of taxes or the elimination of some of the monopolies which The State may have created.

It must never be forgotten that: The essence of The State is coercion, but the essence of Society is freedom.