

America: A Society in Crisis



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If one visualizes the establishment of the first (small) society, as Enlightenment thinkers did (ca. 1690-1800), one must suspect that it was founded on the mutual agreement of—a social contract among—the first members. It seems unlikely that it could not have lasted very long if any society had been fashioned on disagreement. Given that agreement was at the foundation of the community, the only thing that could break the club apart would be the introduction of disagreeers into its midst.

Of course, disagreeers might have been expected to come from outside the society, if only because they could not have been party to the agreement in the social contract. But disagreeers might also have been expected to come from inside the society if the children of the members needed to be schooled in the necessity to continue the agreement made by their parent, guardian, and ancestors. Such “schooling” arose at first within every family’s lodgings (and duties). As the generation succeeded generation, the survival of society depended upon the effectiveness of family schooling. Successful schooling and transmission of social commitment to the agreement eventually led to establishing a culture with rules, laws, and (sometimes) a constitution.

Anyway, somewhere along the line, in many (if not all) growing societies, these two types of problems arose. External problems arose as people from outside the club occasionally attempted (usually by engaging in armed conflict) to take over

the community and impose a new and different agreement system. Thus, the threat of external attack by disagreeers—aka enemies—made it necessary to devise an externally oriented (military) self-defense force.

(2) Internal problems arose, as people (parents) on the inside, for whatever reason, failed to properly school their children properly, opening the way for the rise of rebellious disagreeers in the midst the society, who would attempt (usually by engaging in law-breaking behaviors) to take action against one or more (law-abiding) members of the community. The threat of internal attack by disagreeers—aka criminals—made it necessary to devise an internally oriented (police) self-defense force. The problem faced by every society has been what to do with disagreeers, especially with those who were actually citizens by birth but technically non-citizens by disagreement—non-citizens by rebellious choice—against the very social contract in which they had been nourished to adulthood.

For thousands of years, the accepted way to deal with external enemies was to defeat them on the field of battle, and the accepted way to deal with internal criminals was to capture and punish them with lashing, torture, incarceration, exile, and execution.

But, today, we style ourselves as having reached Kantian (enlightened) maturity, no longer (completely) accepting such methods, if only because we think those methods are inhumane. Furthermore, our (U.S.) system of government not only permits disagreement, it has come to encourage it. It has created a (tacitly legal, at least) second category of citizen disagreeers who are not considered criminals.

This second category of citizens who disagree with the social contract has a variety of euphemistic labels: progressives, liberals, mainstream media, change agents, innovators, visionaries, special interest groups, etc. Hence society is

destined to be in constant turmoil as waves of new children (encouraged to question authority and to think there isn't even supposed to be a box) rush onto the agreement stage with ideas of how to change it from whatever it was before, even if it's for no good reason at all.

Drug users and the drug industry want drugs legalized the same way alcohol was because there is a market for getting stoned. Thieves want robbery legalized because they are poor. Criminals wish to have prisons abolished because they are oppressed. Illegal immigrants want citizenship rights even if they are not citizens. Even if they displace American jobs, businesses want to have international business ties for labor. Snoops wish to increase surveillance capabilities and rights with less hostility from privacy advocates because they think they can save the nation. Technologists wish to have more customers with less work. Governments want more power with less disclosure. Employers wish to lower wages for more work. Employees expect to pay higher wages for less work. Bullies don't like bullying criminalized. Stock brokers want insider trading legalized. Women's liberation leaders want to end the biological definition of womanhood and erase it from social memory. The salacious want sexting legalized, just like "adult" literature.

Muslims want to build mosques legally like churches have been lawfully made. Atheists want all public evidence and acknowledgment of Christianity and all religion removed from the public square. The NRA wants to keep Second Amendment rights free of surveillance. The anti-gun advocates wish to have every gun and owner tracked in detail. Etc. All these things are pleas and petitions about the social contract.

No society can survive for long in such persistent bickering and turmoil. And when we overlay all this with the "fact" that there are terrorists behind every tree, under every rock, and in every social setting, who can be confident that anything they say or do will not mark them for some watch list? After

all, everyone is watching everyone for signs of anti-social behavior. But what is anti-social behavior in this turmoil? Who is appropriately defending his human rights? Who is not entitled to display violence to make their point in a society drowning in messages of change? How else can the message gain precious national television and news media coverage?

I advocate for stopping the encouragement for change, if only because it affects the stability and future survival of this Great Nation that many of us have worked and died to establish. Not everything done or settled in the past is wrong and needs change, simply because the sweep hand passed the twelve on the clock and someone has succumbed to the media mantra for change. The fact is that every society must have a stable constitution, laws, and rules. And it is not much harder to adjust to the government to have no premarital sex than it is to accept the current calls for no sexual harassment.

Societies have adapted to the former quite well. It is time to think about establishing certain sections of the country where all those who disagree with the current constitution and laws are separated from those who accept them. Perhaps there should be sections of the country where all the gun advocates can live; areas of the country where all the free-sex people can live together; sections of the country where all the married men and women, who want to live happily with each other and raise their children together by the social contract, can live together; or sections of the country where all the disagreeers with the social contract can sit around disagreeing all day long if they want to.

According to the United Nations, self-defense is legal and a human right. But, in my view, no one has the right to violence and destruction of property for a political cause contrary to the law, no matter how much the change might be desired. Violations of the law must (should) be met with policing force to end them and punish the offenders, lest more illegalities

be encouraged the next time someone has a problem with authority. If one does the crime, one should do the time.

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