

(Free) The State: Its History and Development Viewed Sociologically

## The State: Its History and Development Viewed Sociologically

*Franz Oppenheimer*

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# THE STATE

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**Franz Oppenheimer : The State: Its History and Development Viewed Sociologically** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The State: Its History and Development Viewed Sociologically:

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Revealing Sociological Work Ever Written By Clyde Macalister Prior to reading this typographical reprint of this phenomenal 1908 work (translated into English in 1914), I held, overall, a very low opinion of the field of sociology. I perceived it as more-or-less a pseudo-science created to rationalize social engineering schemes of academics and the privileges of the ruling class. And indeed, most sociologists, particularly now, in the 21st century, use their field precisely to propagate such agendas. But in *The State*, Oppenheimer leads us to the binding, resolute, and thoroughly convincing conclusion that it is not sociology that lacks utility for the betterment of society, but rather, it is the incompetence of most of the sociologists themselves. Oppenheimer shows that the analytic approach to sociology proper, and its relation to history, must transpire with the recognition that two forces, and the conflict between them, have shaped the progression of all of history heretofore: namely, the "economic means" of life, i.e., the peaceful means of improving one's standard of living through labor and exchange; and the "political means," i.e., the violent means of improving that standard through the parasitic exploitation of the labors of subordinates. It is, in brief, a history of the unceasing conflict between subjects and rulers. Oppenheimer here demonstrates, first deductively and then empirically with supplementary historical evidence, the origins and essence of the State, its development, and his prognosis for its future. In particular, and by employing a comparatively simple mathematical deduction in the first chapter of the book, he demonstrates that all previous theories regarding the origins and essence of the State have failed to furnish adequate supporting evidence, whether deductive or empirical, to validate their claims. With these previous theories torn asunder and cast aside, Oppenheimer reveals conclusively that the State could have arisen in no other manner than through conquest and subjugation, through the violent imposition of dominion over peaceful tribes by violent tribes. To quote: "The State, completely in its genesis, essentially and almost completely during the first stages of its existence, is a social institution, forced by a victorious group of men on a defeated group, with the sole purpose of regulating the dominion of the victorious group over the vanquished, and securing itself against revolt from within and attacks from abroad. Teleologically, this dominion had no other purpose than the economic exploitation of the vanquished by the victors." He thereafter proceeds to cover the genesis of the State, involving a dynamic of interaction between peaceful primitive farmers, hunter and gatherer tribes, nomadic herding tribes, and the manner by which this gave rise to the slave trade, and thus, "the first seedling of the State, the first economic exploitation of man by man." Henceforth, Oppenheimer traces the development of the State after its genesis through the "primitive feudal State," consisting of a simple caste system; into the "maritime State" wherever States arise near the sea and its necessary subsequent end; proceeding to the "developed feudal State," consisting of a far greater degree of complexity and hierarchy of castes than its "primitive" predecessor; thereafter arriving at the emergence of the "constitutional State"; and concluding the book with his deductive prognosis for the future, i.e., the advent of the "free citizenship," a social arrangement in which the State at last vanishes from existence and humans live amongst one another no longer as subjects and masters, but as free equals. In respect to this lattermost task, he states: "The tendency of State development unmistakably leads to one point: seen in its essentials the State will cease to be the 'developed political means' and will become the 'a freeman's citizenship.' In other words, its outer shell will remain in essentials the form which developed in the constitutional State, under which the administration will be carried on by an officialdom. But the content of the States heretofore known will have changed its vital element by disappearance of the economic exploitation of one class by another. And since the State will, by this, come to be without either classes or class interests, the bureaucracy of the future will truly have attained that ideal of the impartial guardian of the common interests, which nowadays it laboriously attempts to reach. The 'State' of the future will be 'society' guided by self-government." I have not here provided all the details necessary to validate Oppenheimer's theory, in order to refrain from spoiling the work; but I do hope I have furnished a sufficient summary to inspire the purchasing and reading of this book. Those interested in the cause of liberty and free enterprise especially will regard it as an invaluable addition to their arsenal of knowledge when refuting the doctrines of those who seek to further enslave the human race by misrepresenting the development of the history of humankind.

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The organic history of the State is a long and exciting adventure, usually rendered dull in learned accounts. Not so in Oppenheimer's *The State* which extracts that history, in a highly stimulating manner, from the sharp necessities and homicidal conflicts of all sorts and conditions of men, from the Stone Age to the Age of Henry Ford...

Language Notes Text: English, German (translation) About the Author Paul Gottfried is professor of political science at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania. He is the author of *The Search for Historical Meaning*; *Conservative Millenarians: The Romantic Experience in Bavaria*; and *Arthur Schopenhauer and the Heritage of European Pessimism*. He is general editor of the *Religion and Public Life Series*.