

Community and Association

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One of the greatest of the difficulties which at the present day beset the social analyst is the confused nature of his vocabulary. Unlike the students of most other sciences he must accept the terms of everyday life. These terms are lacking in all precision, and if the sociologist is to avoid disaster he must not hesitate to refine them to his own purposes. This is the case with the essential terms of our subject-matter, the terms society, community, association, and State. The looseness with which these terms are often used even by professed authorities is remarkable, and the results most unhappy. That must be our excuse if at the outset we insist, in spite of popular usage, on limiting each of these terms to a single and definite meaning.

Society, the most general term of all, I intend to use in a universal or generic sense to include every willed relationship of man to man. If, then, we distinguish community, association, and State from society, it must be by delimiting the former as special kinds or aspects of social fact. The essential distinction here involved, one of the utmost importance, is that between community and association.

By a community I mean any area of common life, village, or town, or district, or country, or even wider area. To deserve the name community, the area must be somehow distinguished from further areas, the common life may have some characteristic of its own such that the frontiers of the area have some meaning. All the laws of the cosmos, physical, biological, and psychological, conspire to bring it about that beings who live together shall resemble one another. Wherever men live together they develop in some kind and degree distinctive common characteristics—manners, traditions, modes of speech, and so on. These are the signs and consequences of an effective common life. It will be seen that a community may be part of a wider community, and that all community is a question of degree. For instance, the English residents in a foreign capital often live in an intimate community of their own, as well as in the wider community of the capital. It is a question of the degree and intensity of the common life. The one extreme is the whole world of men, one great but vague and incoherent common life. The other extreme is the small intense community within which the life of an ordinary individual is lived, a tiny nucleus of common life with a sometimes larger, sometimes smaller, and always varying fringe. Yet even the poorest in social relationships is a member in a chain of social contacts which stretches to the world's end. In the infinite series of social relationships which thus arise, we distinguish the nuclei of intenser common life, cities and nations and tribes, and think of them as *par excellence* communities.

An association is an organisation of social beings (or a body of social beings *as organised*) for the pursuit of some common interest or interests. It is a determinate social unity built upon common purpose. Every end which men seek is more easily attained for all when all whom it concerns unite to seek it, when all co-operate in seeking it. Thus you may have an association corresponding to every possible interest of social beings. Community bubbles into associations permanent and transient, and no student of the actual social life of the pre-sent can help being struck by the enormous number of associations of every kind, political, economic, religious, educational, scientific, artistic, literary, recreative, which today more than ever before enrich communal life.

A community is a focus of social life, the common living of social beings, an association is an organisation of social life, definitely established for the pursuit of one or more common interests. An association is partial, a community is integral. The members of one association may be members of many other and distinct associations. Within a community there may

exist not only numerous associations but also antagonistic associations. Men may associate for the least significant or for the most significant of purposes ; the association may mean very much or very little to them, it may mean merely the source of a half-yearly dividend, or it may be the guardian of their dearest or highest interests—but community is something wider and freer than even the greatest associations ; it is the greater common life out of which associations rise, into which associations bring order, but which associations never completely fulfil. If we reflect, we perceive at once that there is a vast difference between the living together of men which makes a village or city or country on the one hand, and the association of men in a church or trade-union—or even, as we shall see, in a State—on the other. Often state-areas do not even coincide with the areas of effective community, as, for instance, when a subject-people, incorporated in an alien State, continues to lead its own manner of life. A distinction of name is essential. [1]

It may be well to show how infinitely associations vary in degree of permanence and significance, and the main reason of these variations, before we consider the relation to community of the most permanent and most comprehensive of all—the State.

Men may *mass* together without becoming organised. A mere aggregation is not an association. Take the case of a crowd casually collected to watch a fire. The aggregation serves no end, each individual of the crowd could watch the fire quite as well—better in fact—if the others went away ! A common interest keeps them together, but it does not bind them to one another, it need bring no individual into social contact with any other. It is a physical and not a social contiguity. No association is dissolved when the fire burns out—or when the policeman moves the crowd away ! But suppose the crowd had resolved to fight the fire and had organised themselves to that end. At once the aggregation would have been transformed into an association, its individuals would have fallen into social relations with one another, and the order which is attendant on social purpose would have permeated the whole. As soon as men see that any interest they share is furthered by organisation, they are preparing an association. So here an association would have come into being for an hour—and in an hour would have passed away.

Take next the case of men gathered to celebrate some occasion, say an historic anniversary. Here there is a purpose depending on and realised through association. The meeting-together is an essential element of the celebration. Time and place and procedure are pre-determined, it is an organised association, not a casual aggregation. But the purpose may be only a trivial thing in the life of each member of the assemblage. It brings him into social contact, but a very transient and partial contact, with the rest. There is a consciousness of common interest realised in association, but it finds only a momentary expression. When the pageant has passed, or the bonfire turned to ashes, or the dinner and the speeches are ended, the association dissolves. Because the purpose was transient, the association it created could not endure.

Consider next an association created for the achievement of some specific reform, political or religious, say for the passing of a bill or the formulation of a creed. Here a more permanent purpose animates the association, and works a deeper organisation. Each member of the association has a definite point of contact with every other. It is because each member has a certain individuality that he is a member. If he were different in a certain important way, he would not be a member. And in the association each holds a definite place, determined in part at least by his individuality. (For it is a general law of association that the deeper the purpose at work, the more complex becomes the organisation.) Yet since the purpose is specific and temporary, the association which pursues it pursues its own dissolution. When the bill is passed or the creed formulated, in the fulfilment of its sustaining purpose the association itself dissolves. When slavery was abolished, the associations for the abolition of slavery were abolished also. Every such association dies of its success.

Let us turn next to an association of a very different type, the association of marriage. The purpose on which this association rests is the deep foundation of all life, and that purpose is fulfilled not in the mere procreation of offspring and their tutelage until they attain the autonomy of manhood or womanhood—if it were, it might be dissolved when that purpose is completed, or when the association has failed to achieve that purpose. The profound purpose of the marriage-association includes the present as well as the future generations, and fulfils the lives of those who enter into it no less than it creates and develops the lives of those who issue from it. It is, therefore, a continuous and—unless perverted—permanent purpose of human life, and the association it creates is likewise continuous and permanent, strongly rooted in the heart of life.

Thus to a permanent purpose there always answers, in the nature of things, a permanent association. This appears still more clearly when we turn to such associations as Church and State. These rest on purposes more lasting than any individuals, and are thus maintained through periods of time infinitely larger than the life-periods of individuals. In so far as they are purposes necessary to the fulfilment of life, they create associations as immortal as life. And as the most enduring purposes are also those which grow and change the most, there is a continuous evolution of the greater associations.

Lastly, associations vary as much in extent as in permanence, and for the same reason. Wherever there is a character common to social beings, a common interest is implicit, an interest, that is, which can be furthered by organisation, by association. The extent of a common interest *should* measure the extent of its correspondent association. The most intimate interest is that which most directly unites just two human beings, as in the association of marriage ; but at the other extreme are interests universal as mankind—the interest we call justice, for example—and the history of society is in part a history of the widening of associations (and therefore of community) as men more and more recognise how much they have in common with other men, and more and more understand that every common value is protected and furthered by association. So out of the small circles of primitive society have grown the great and ever-widening associations of the modern world.

We have been speaking of the State as simply one among other associations, but the State has obviously a very peculiar and distinctive place. Other associations are limited to the pursuit of one or at most a few interests, the State seems to have some care for nearly every interest. Other associations cannot on their own initiative enforce their decisions on recalcitrant members, the State can and does. Other associations have their members scattered over a city or district or country, the State includes within its membership, or at least within its control, all the dwellers within determined communal frontiers. It is, therefore, highly important to determine the relation of the State, first to community itself, and next to the other associations within community.

§2. Community and State.

Because the State, like community, has territorial frontiers and because it exercises control over all, or nearly all, other associations, many writers speak as if community and State were one. This seems to have been the view of Hegel and is certainly the doctrine of the neo-Hegelian writers on the State, [2] as well as of many others to whom that epithet scarcely applies. Here is a representative statement of this doctrine from the late M. Fouillée: “Imagine,” he wrote, “a great circle within which are lesser circles combining in a thousand ways to form the most varied figures without overstepping the limits that enclose them ; this is an image of the great association of the State and of the particular associations that it embraces.” (*La Science Sociale Contemporaine*, p. 13.)

We shall see later that this doctrine, which makes the State the limit of community and makes all other associations but elements of the State, is contradicted by the whole evolution of the modern State. For the present it will suffice to show that the doctrine, so strangely maintained in the face of history, is contrary to the present fact. Here we are not concerned with what the State ought to be and to include, but with what the State actually is and does include. So regarded, it is quite obvious that the State is neither conterminous nor synonymous with community. Every State has rigid territorial limits, but the modern world, marked off into separate States, is not partitioned into a number of isolated communities. We have already seen that community is a matter of degree, that it is a network of social interrelations here denser, here thinner, whose ever new-woven filaments join men to men across countries and continents. The State, unlike community, is exclusive and determinate. Where one State ends, another begins ; where one begins, another ends. [2] No man can owe allegiance to two States, any more than he can serve two masters, but he can enter into the life of as many communities as his sympathies and opportunities will allow.

Quite obviously the metaphor of Fouillée is false. Let us draw our exclusive circles and call them England, France, Germany, and so on. By hypothesis, all associations fall within these circles, and do not intersect them. Well, in which circle shall we place the international economic associations without which none of the great States could to-day exist at all ? In which shall we place the numerous international unions, industrial, scientific, religious, and artistic ? “ Without overstepping the limits that enclose them”—that is the foundation of the neo-Hegelian doctrine of the State, and it is a foundation which is false in fact.

But, it will be answered, every association, international or intranational, is controlled by the State. Intranational associations are controlled by the separate States, international associations by agreement between States. No members of any State can enter into any association whatever unless that State permits it. Thus every other association is subordinate to the State.

We may grant the contention. At a later stage we shall see more clearly whence and why the will of the State has this pre-eminence. At that stage we shall understand more fully the distinction between community and State. Meantime we must insist that there is a false inference if we say that because the State has control over every other association, therefore all other associations are absorbed into the State, are simply parts of the State, or are completely circumscribed by its frontiers. If we hold this view, the process of conflict through which modern States have attained their present democratic forms, and in especial the long agony of strife due to the opposing claims of churches and of States, is without meaning for us.

There is an easy and direct way by which we can discover the limits of the State. The essential feature of the State is political order, the *primary* instrument of the State is political law. There has been community where no State yet existed, and even to-day we may discover, among certain Eskimo peoples, for instance, primitive forms of communal life still uncoordinated within a State, Where there is no political law, there is no State. Political law is thus the criterion of the State, and in learning the nature and limits of political law we are learning the nature and limits of the State.

Political law is in its proper nature unconditioned, formulated, and mainly negative. These characters reveal the limits of the State.

It is unconditioned. The laws of other associations bind their members, but if you don't like the laws you can leave the association—unless the *State* forbids. If you disapprove of the laws of your club or business-association or trade-union or church, you can resign. If any such association tries of its own accord to enforce its laws on you, it comes into collision with the powers of the State. It can properly do no more than deny you its special benefits

and privileges. So with communal or customary law, properly so-called. If you break the customs, traditions, fashions prevalent in your community, you may expect its disapprobation. It will boycott you, refuse to enter into social relations with you, but unless you break also the law of the State, it cannot otherwise visit upon you its displeasure. But if you break a political law, you do not merely lose privileges. The State will do more than deny its benefits, it will punish. It has behind it the united force of the community, the final sanction attached to no other kind of social law. Nor can you simply resign your membership of the State to escape its law. Even if you go beyond its frontiers its claims may follow you, and within the State, even if you shut yourself up within your walls, you are subject to the laws of the State, to all the conditions it may impose either directly or by delegation of authority.

Why does the State hold this unique position? Why has it behind it the united force of the community? The force of the law is not an ultimate thing, it is always and essentially dependent upon will. The State has this power of compulsion because its members *will* that power, because they subject themselves to its law and unite their force to maintain it. To what end?

No man can wholly cut himself off from social relations while he remains in the world of men. We are forced from all sides, by every instinct and every need, into society, into relations with our fellows. Such relations must be *ordered*, or life is impossible. Mutual good demands mutual service, mutual forbearance and restraint. Thus wherever society exists there exists a system of obligations and rights. Society incessantly creates these reciprocal relations between every man and all other men. Sometimes they remain unformulated and traditional, as in a primitive community ruled by “unwritten law,” but nearly always the most essential of these relationships of right and obligation are set out in clear formulæ, as political laws, and protected by a central authority endowed with communal power. Any body of men so organised that a central institution or government takes over the maintenance and development of the essential system of rights and obligations accepted among them is properly called a State. A State is thus the fundamental association for the maintenance and development of social order, and to this end its central institution is endowed with the united power of the community. It is not meant that the members of a State consciously realise why they give or permit it this final authority—if they did they would never have permitted the endless perversions of government—but only that as their political consciousness emerges, as they ask themselves why they should contribute this might to the State, the answer appears in this form. As the State develops, as its members grow in social wisdom, its power rests more and more on its service of that end. Subjection to law is political obligation, which is only the reverse side of political right. Beyond law, beyond government, and beyond force lie the common ends, the common will of community. The end is here as always the revelation of meaning and the justification of existence. If the citizen owes obedience to government it must be in virtue of some social good which in turn determines the respect the government shall show to him. Political right and political obligation, as all right and all obligation, are derived from the same source and are meaningless if separated. Already we see that the State and its government are not ultimate social phenomena but rest on what is yet deeper, communal life and will.

The special limits of the State are revealed when we consider the further characteristics of political law.

In the second place, political law is expressed in definite formulæ. A political law defines certain categories of persons as coming within its scope, and prescribes for them as precisely as possible certain forms of conduct. It is obvious, therefore, that it can apply only to general situations and can enforce only *external* fulfilments. Thus the State is at once outside large spheres of human activity. It cannot control motives save indirectly. It can enjoin actions, or rather activities, but not the spirit of their fulfilment. But large classes of action are wholly dependent on the spirit in which they are fulfilled, and many associations exist simply to

foster types of ideal or spiritual values. The State *cannot* determine these associations, and it *should not* prescribe any of those actions which derive their only value from the spirit of their performance. The State can compel people to attend church, but it cannot compel them to worship, and therefore the former compulsion is folly. The State cannot create by its *fiat* a church or an artistic or literary association. It can protect and maintain and even organise such associations—to do so may be part of its function—but it cannot, if it is true to its own nature, determine and control them. Further, in its generality and externality it cannot touch (save by way of repression) that spontaneity and initiative of individual life which is the beginning of all social process and the root of all social value. The State must, therefore, be clearly distinguished from the community which creates it. Community is the common life of beings who are guided essentially from within, actively, spontaneously, and freely (under the conditions prescribed by the laws they make) relating themselves to one another, weaving for themselves the complex web of social unity. But the State works with an instrument which is necessarily formal, prescribing the general external conditions of social life, upholding the main system of those social obligations which may be externally fulfilled. Its instrument resembles, in Aristotle's phrase, no "leaden rule" which can adapt itself to the actual mouldings of the social structure, but an unbending rod which can measure only its general outlines. [3]

Because it can determine only the external forms of conduct, the law of the State must be mainly (though by no means wholly) negative. It must for the most part be content (as the neo-Hegelians themselves are forced to admit, though they do not see the significance of the admission) to "hinder hindrances" to social welfare. It can prevent or punish wrong-doing rather than endorse right-doing. It can create for men the external social conditions necessary for the well-living of their lives. It can enforce these outer obligations without the fulfilment of which the inner obligations cannot be fulfilled. For this reason the sanction of political law is punishment and not reward. We reward and honour only what the theologian called "works of supererogation," not the minimal fulfilment of external law.

It is needless to say that in thus stating the limits of political activity we are not belittling the immeasurable value of that activity. The point is that the State is not equivalent to community, that the political association does not include and can not control the whole life of men. The State is seen to be not community but a peculiarly authoritative association within it. The State is determinate, a closed organisation of social life; community is indeterminate, an ever-evolving system spreading beyond and only partially controlled within the definite framework of any State. That framework gives to the portion of community which it encloses a certain unity and definition, but neither cuts it off from a wider community of which it is essentially part nor within that portion substitutes its own external mode of action, its necessity, for the spontaneity that is the mark of all life, social and other. Social life can no longer in practice and should no longer in theory be summed up in political life. The individual should not be summed up in his citizenship, otherwise the claim of citizenship will itself become a tyranny and its essential moral value be lost. "The modern wilderness of interests" is not to be straightened out into the simple road of citizenship. For the main road of citizenship, which we must make straight as possible, though it intersects a thousand paths of social interest, cannot and should not absorb them.

These paths of social interest do not stop at the frontiers of States. The political interest is determinate and has limits, the social has none. Hence for the proper understanding of international relations it is most necessary to distinguish community and State. On the assumption of identity we can have no social unity among the nations until they are absorbed within some world-state. For each State by its very definition is a determinate and self-contained unit. In respect of the sphere of its sovereignty every State is demarcated absolutely from

every other. Consequently, if political relationship were identical with social relationship, the members of one State would remain totally alien from the members of every other State. Communities would stand to one another as Spinoza and Hobbes imagined them to stand, isolated as the pre-civil individuals of their imagination, totally irresponsible until some contract is agreed upon, even then totally irresponsible because there is no possible higher will to make agreement binding. But, of course, it is in international relations that the distinction of State and community is most clearly revealed and that the common interests of universal society most manifestly weave new unities in spite of political separation. A man may perhaps “denationalise” himself (though that is hardly the proper word) by leaving his country, but he cannot “desocialise” himself without leaving the world of men, or at least of civilised men.

Community, therefore, and not the State, is the “world the spirit has made for itself.” “The spirit” does not isolate itself in States, as Hegel’s argument assumes. [4] On the contrary, the growth of civilisation means the growth of ever-widening community, the “realisation” of social interest beyond the limits of politically independent groups. Society widens and the sense of community grows. In particular, the privileged classes of the different peoples, the authors of most past wars, become more and more allied by social intercourse, by common commercial and intellectual interests. M. Tarde has pointed out how classes of men whose occupation, even if in a competitive way, brings them into constant association with one another, develop a friendlier spirit towards one another than classes not subject to this socialising influence. The same holds of peoples. It is not civilisation but inter-civilisation that develops mutual sympathy between States. The highly socialised Greek cities, because each held to an ideal of autonomy and self-sufficiency, the ideal of “completely independent totality,” were not inter-socialised, and, accordingly, displayed the intensest hostility to one another. But the aloofness of Greek states is impossible in the modern world, which is pervaded by inter-socialising influences of literature and commerce. Common ideas and common trade have formed everywhere social bonds which cut across the line of States, and have made western Europe, looked on as a whole, an effective community. Thus an educated Englishman comes to have more in common with an educated Frenchman than he has, say, with an English agricultural labourer. The alien, shut out from his State, may yet have a closer social affinity to him than his fellow citizen. And yet the prevalent political philosophy Windy declares that “the State” is “the world the spirit has made for itself,” and that “between State and State there can be no consciousness of common good” !

If we turn for a moment from fact to ideal—two things which the neo-Hegelians constantly confuse—we may admit the desirability of a wider political co-ordination of community than at present exists. This is to be achieved not by our going backwards and cutting off the bonds of relationship which make community wider in area than any single State, but by our going forward on the road of federation and making a union of States great enough to comprehend the existing intercommunity. The recognition of likeness of interests, purposes, and needs is increasing and not diminishing in the people of different nations. It is the State that is inadequate, not community that is overstepping its due bounds. The State must always, as we have seen, remain inadequate to comprehend and regulate *all* community. But it is more inadequate than need be, so long as the political relations of States are capricious and uncoordinated. At present civilised States are like masters who maintain splendid order and discipline within their workshops, and thus feel free to go out and racket in the streets.

§3. State and other associations.

We have seen that a State is not a community but a peculiarly authoritative association within community ; we may now discuss briefly how States and other associations are related. Here, it must be noted, we are considering not what is but what ought to be, not the facts of this relationship, but an ideal which may in any particular State be wholly or partially

unrealised. We too often assume that all actual States conform to a single type which we can identify as “the State.” In fact, States present and past have adopted every possible attitude towards the other associations, sometimes heedless of them, often partial to some and repressive of others, sometimes repressive of them all, sometimes allowing certain associations (the church in particular) to share or usurp its own proper authority, and sometimes not admitting the same associations to their own proper place. All, therefore, that we can do here is to show in an introductory way how the State—by which we mean any and every State—*should*, in the light of the social ends which it can serve, stand in relation to the other associations which also after their kind pursue social ends.

If the State does not absorb into its own life of organisation the other forms of social life, the worlds of art, science, religion, and social intercourse, not to speak of the family life, in what relation does it stand to these? In the first place, because, as we have seen, the State preserves and upholds through its organisation the very existence of society, that being its primary end, it has a certain superiority of control, not merely of influence, alike over the partial organisations and over the free life of community—a control which in no way contradicts the essential claim to spontaneity made by that life. Suppose the state-authority finds that the teaching of certain religious doctrines is calculated to undermine the security of society, then it may forbid the teaching of these doctrines, and if it is right in its conception of the social danger and does no counterbalancing evil by interfering, it is right also in its interference. Suppose again that the state-authority finds that some economic association deprives its workers of the opportunity to live a reasonable healthy life, again it may interfere. It has the same right over associations of individuals as over unassociated individuals. It has to protect the whole against antagonistic acts of both alike, not only against deliberate acts of encroachment but also against such general and unintended social wrongs as deforestation, as the vitiation of the air-supply, the water-supply, and the sun-supply. Only thus can it fulfil its primary function as the guardian of community.

But of course state-action has a much wider area than that just indicated. Individualistic writers like Mill and Spencer limited the State to that kind of action, and so gave away their case. The State possesses the most complete, powerful, and centralised of all organisations. There seems no clear reason why the community should not take all advantage of the greatest organisation it has built. There seems no clear reason why this central organisation should not be utilised for the furtherance of all social ends which it is able, without detriment to any more important ends, to further. Take, *e.g.*, the economic life fulfilled by myriad economic associations. To a certain extent, as experience shows, state-organisation can develop that life without destroying its spontaneity—and so we find the State regulating forms of contract, controlling coinage, determining the conditions of limited liability, establishing banks, even assuming entire control of those industries which, so to speak, bind all other industries together and make their free development possible, the industries of intercommunication. Or again, take family life. The family is not simply an element in the State, as Plato wished it to be, but essentially something more. Yet the State does not merely recognise and protect the family. It claims a certain control, for the benefit of both family and State. It regards marriage itself as a political institution *so far as* to insist on certain regulations and conditions, and it defines to some degree the rights and duties of relatives, making them legal and not merely moral rights and duties. It might reasonably, to the advantage of both family and State, prohibit the marriage of people suffering from certain forms of disease or insanity, though here, as always, the limit of State-intervention becomes a difficult *practical* problem. Some of these problems will meet us at a later stage.

The State, we see, may control an association while yet the association remains voluntary, being, that is, no mere part of the political organisation, being freely established, freely entered into, freely directed, and in some cases freely dissolved, by its members. The right

of free association is a most important factor in the development of community, and of the State. It mediates between the necessity of political government and the casualness of wholly unregulated social relations. It ensures the expression and furtherance of those specialised interests of culture and doctrine, of art and science which are so precious in our lives. It saves the State from the alternatives of stagnation and arbitrary control, It provides a ground for endless experiments in social organisation. The voluntary association leads the way, the State follows, often taking over the organisation of those voluntary associations which have been bravely but inadequately endeavouring to supply a universal or necessary public service. The provision of hospital and other medical and charitable service is a case in point. These services, so necessary to the community, were almost invariably established at the first by voluntary associations, but gradually the need for a broader basis of organisation was realised, and they are now in great part undertaken by the State. In such a case the State comes in, not to destroy, but to fulfil the work of the voluntary association, and so long as it acts in that spirit it cannot overstep its bounds.

It is to be noted that in the degree in which the State assumes its proper function as above indicated the distinctive character of associations other than political becomes clearly revealed. In the classical and mediæval worlds the distinction of community and State was never completely realised, and consequently the meaning and value of the other associations were often misunderstood. To illustrate : the Greeks tended to find their whole fulfilment in the life of the polis, which was both city and State, and in consequence the family-association remained unhonoured, unliberated, and unfulfilled, to the irretrievable loss of Greece. Again, the mediæval States, failing to give precision and limit to the political authority, failed also to give precision and limit to other associations, such as the church or the gild. Take the gild as an example, Mediæval gilds present a striking contrast to modern associations whether of capital or of labour. The gild was hierarchical, exclusive, often owning a peculiar monopoly within the community, pursuing no one clear interest but a medley of indeterminate interests. A trade union or an employers' union is a voluntary association, an association of likes, of members who are regarded as possessing equal rights within it, who have a common interest uniting them as an association, and who usually pursue in singleness of aim that common interest. Thus in place of the old complex associations of the middle ages—inadequate, arbitrary, and often compulsive, because of their confused relation to the State—there have arisen the simple voluntary associations of to-day, each with a place of its own within the community, each with a definite relation to the State and a definite autonomy, each limited to one kind of interest and composed of members who are alike in respect of that interest. [5]

It must not be inferred that in the modern world the respective places of State and voluntary association are to-day adequately and harmoniously assigned. In the western States political evolution is certainly in advance of political theory on this question, but it is still far from being complete. In some directions, especially in the industrial sphere, as we shall see later, the need exists for a completer control by the State over the liberties of associations ; in others there is needed a completer liberation of associations from political control. For example, medical, scientific, educational, and other properly non-political appointments are in our own country-still too largely determined by political (or rather party) considerations, and are often, as everybody knows, given to less qualified candidates because they are of the right party-colour. It is folly that the selection of the head of a medical school or of a university or of a church should be determined by such considerations, and it is bad both for the association and for the State.

It must also be admitted that the associations themselves do not always recognise the limits of their proper spheres. The greater associations have in the past frequently transgressed their bounds. The church in particular has often claimed a compulsive power which is not its own but the State's alone. And the curious idea is still entertained by some that the inhabitants of a country must, presumably because they may be supposed to belong more or

less to one original stock, have a single religion co-extensive with and limited by its confines—a Church of Scotland peculiar to and co-extensive with Scotland, a Church of England peculiar to and co-extensive with England, and so on. (But even the vegetation of different countries is often the same—and human beings think !) Again, a trade-union sometimes attempts to coerce non-unionists into the association, though its proper right is limited to the denial of its privileges to those who refuse to enter. Or again, to cite a more harmless instance of transgression, when a university confers its honorary degrees, which should stand for distinguished services to literature, art, or knowledge, upon men who have otherwise made themselves distinguished names, say as soldiers, diplomatists, or merchants, but who, in respect of the ends for which a university stands, may be mere barbarians, it too is forgetful of its sphere. Such a lack of discrimination is bad for the association, because it obscures the meaning and lowers the value of the honour when conferred on the true man of science or seeker after wisdom. [6]

We have shown in mere outline that every association, including the State, is an organised form of social life within community, that each has its distinctive place and meaning, while community is greater than any of them, greater than all of them together. We may now conclude this introduction by showing how community, and not any or all of its associations, can be and is the object of our present study.

- [1] The only writer I know who stresses the distinction between community and association is Professor Ferdinand Tönnies. But Dr. Tönnies employs the German equivalents in rather a different signification. By “community” (*Gemeinschaft*) he means *reales und organisches Leben*, by “association” (*Gesellschaft*) he understands *ideelle und mechanische Bildung*. Thus he would say *Gemeinschaft der Sprache, der Sitte, des Glaubens aber Gesellschaft des Erwerbes, der Reise, der Wissenschaft*. (Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*.) The distinction here seems one of degree rather than of kind as above.
- [2] We need not delay to show that the case of federal States is only an apparent exception.
- [3] Cf. *Nic. Ethics*, Bk. VI., c. 10, § 7.
- [4] Hegel is rather confusing on this point. For instance, he says (Gr. der Phil, des Rechts, § 330) that the State is “not a private person but a completely independent totality,” and yet immediately adds that it is related to other States (331) and instances the nations of Europe as “forming a family on account of the universal principles of their legislation, their ethical usages, and their civilisation” (339). How can “completely independent totalities” form a family ?
- [5] Cf. Fournière, *L’Individu, l’Association, et l’État*, chap. 1.
- [6] The habit of the university to decorate diplomatists, military men, city dignitaries, etc., is peculiarly foolish, since for them nearly all other honorary distinctions, titles, and orders exist, and it is ridiculous and superfluous to extend to these the one distinction which stands for service in the sphere of learning—or stands for nothing.

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