

The Bigger the Government the Smaller the Citizen

The bigger the state, the bigger the *government* - the smaller the citizen. If I've come to any realizations about life, or about society and life that I think can change the way a person views society that is one of them. Yep, the **bigger** the state the **smaller** the citizen, and that has been the core, the secret to America's great success.

We know that the citizen needs to be big, important, individual, autonomous, strong. The land of the free, the home of the brave, that's impossible as the state gets bigger. Everything gets smaller. Liberty gets smaller, individuality gets smaller, goodness gets smaller, human character gets smaller, and our importance becomes smaller. Everything about us becomes smaller as the government gets bigger. This is not a political point that I want to make on behalf of one party.

There are different ways in which government can do things. You can differ if you're the left or you're the right, of course, but on this issue Americans have been virtually unanimous, until the modern period when we started taking in European ideas, such as the bigger the government the better it is for people. But it isn't better for people. It doesn't make people more important and people get, generally speaking, worse.

It's not that they become cruel or mean, it's that they stop thinking about how to take care of themselves, and how to take care of others. Taking care of myself is a moral issue. Yes, for me to take care of me and for you to take care of you is a moral demand. Not only that we take care of others, I'll come to that in a moment, but that we take care of ourselves, but the bigger the bigger the government the less we take care of ourselves.

We assume the government - the state - will take care of us. That's a real problem. If I am not for myself who will be for me? First you have to take care of yourself, then you take care of your

loved ones, and people who depend upon you, then you take care of the stranger. But as the government gets bigger you take care less of yourself, you take less care of your loved ones, and you take less care of the stranger. That's why Americans give *more charity* than Europeans. That's why Americans *volunteer* more than Europeans. I'm talking about the Western Europeans in the welfare states that they have created. Because they know, the state will take care of me, the state will take care of my parents.

I mean the notion that the state will take care of my parents? I mean the idea is so foreign to me as an American and as a religious person, whose religion demands that I honor my father and mother. Not that I have the state honor my mother and father; I have to. People do become less, when the state becomes bigger. We become less important, our character is diminished. But people don't think this way, we just think of, "Well, isn't it beautiful the state takes care of me." And then you know what happens among other things? What happens we get preoccupied with trivial things. Instead of preoccupying ourselves with taking care of ourselves, taking care of our loved ones, and taking care the stranger, we start getting preoccupied with, for example: "Gee, how much vacation time will I have?" "How much free time will I have any given week?"

That's the preoccupation so often in Western Europe. There are national strikes over vacation time. We don't have national strikes in the United States over vacation time. We actually think - among other things - that work ennobles. In the system that believes that the state should get bigger work is not regarded as ennobling, work is regarded as a big pain to be avoided when possible. So, yes indeed, if you care about liberty - and that's the most obvious, because as the state gets bigger, my options get smaller. It takes more of my money away, it takes up my own preoccupations; they become the state's preoccupations, and then I am free to go and lie in the sun during the Winter. That's what's left - and so yes, the bigger the state; the smaller the

citizen; the less we do for ourselves, the less we do for others, the less our character develops,
the less work we do.

This was not the vision of the people who founded the United States of America. It is the vision
of those who founded the welfare states of Europe. That's your choice: which you prefer.

I'm Dennis Prager.