

# Can Anybody Ever Consent to the State?

*Written by Charles Johnson, as published at C4SS.org.*

If there is no effective possibility of refusal, then there is no possibility of publicly expressing consent, and if there is no possibility of publicly expressing consent, then there is no possibility of consenting. If existing states make a standing threat to force people to submit to their terms, even if they do not agree to those terms, then governments cut off any effective possibility of refusal, and thus nobody can do anything that would count as consenting to be ruled by an existing state — even if she wants to do so, and even if she sincerely says that she agrees to the terms. Since all existing states do make that standard threat, no existing state rules by consent over any individual subject. And if governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, then no government has any just powers at all.

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