

Technology Kills the State, Over and Over

The state is “a bandit gang, writ large,” wrote economist and historian Murray Rothbard. This is demonstrably true due to the inability for people who call themselves “the state” or “government” to produce any factual evidence that their rules, including the rules to give them money (or else!), apply to anybody they claim to have jurisdiction over.

Like any other criminal enterprise, they operate within a certain temporal context. The tools they wield are limited to current state of the art technology. The first states probably used what everyone else used to hunt: sticks, stones, bows, *et cetera*. Later states added swords and axes, then rifles and cannons, and today’s states use high powered guns, missiles, and bombs.

If we identify a state as not only the particular time and place in which they operate, but also by the tools they use, then what is revealed over and over again are the many ways in which technology has killed the state. For example, hypothetical State A-Sticks enforced it’s claims of jurisdiction by sticks and stones. At some point swords were invented giving State A-Sticks’s victims more power to defend themselves. In order to maintain their rule, State A-Sticks was abolished and immediately replaced with State A-Swords. Had State A-Sticks not been abolished and replaced with State A-Swords, it likely would have been ineffectual and eventually gone away. Swords made State A-Sticks obsolete, and so the only way to survive was to replace itself with State A-Swords. State A-Sticks was killed by technology.

Once guns were invented, State A-Swords became obsolete and its survival depended on abolishing State A-Swords and replacing it with State A-Guns. At each point, the state is made obsolete, then killed, then replaced. This same type of analysis applies not only to states, but to any other organization that operates within a certain temporal context. The Catholic church operated on the basis of keeping scripture away from the layman. Once the printing press was invented and scripture was distributed, the Catholic church as it was then known was made obsolete, then killed, then replaced.

Organizations that refuse to recognize how they’ve been made obsolete will fail to kill the way the organization operates, and then replace itself using the tools necessary to continue operating. This necessarily applies to states, churches, businesses, charities, *et cetera*. Technological progress makes old ways obsolete, and survival depends on technological adaptation, if possible. The Catholic church as a monopolizer of reading scripture could not survive without a campaign of bloodshed against all non-permitted scripture producers and consumers, and likely would have failed at that. It survived because it killed it’s obsolete self, and adapted to the new technological environment.

So, what does this say about the state's future? To me, it says that the state will only cease to exist finally and permanently through technological change for which it cannot adapt. Taxi cartels are quasi-statist organizations. They will not survive the ridesharing revolution. The day will come when we look back at taxi cartels like we do the dodo bird, ie. extinct.

Technology is constantly killing organizations through obsolescence, and I hope one day the state will receive it's final shot in the chest, so to speak, and be unable to replace itself. No violent revolution necessary. That will be a glorious day for advocates of liberty, peace, and prosperity.