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GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY

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Government and Society

Since the first humans began to live together, they formed a government to regulate their society. This is seen in the basic society of a family, where father, mother, and siblings form a society. In patriarchal societies, the man becomes the government of his family. When two or more families started to live together, their behavior had to be governed. As tribes and nations developed, so did government form in their societies. Over the millenniums many different types of governments have been developed. We will look at the role of government in society and how it is best achieved.

The role of governments is universal. Frank Bealey in 'The Blackwell dictionary of political science' says a government more narrowly refers to the particular executive in control of a state at a given time¹. It is generally agreed that the most important single function of government is to secure the rights and freedoms of individual citizens. The government is to use state powers to ensure the safety of the society, order its behavior in civilized ways, and to ensure citizens can use their gifts, abilities freely without harm to their neighbors. The role of government is well stated in the Alabama Constitution, which says: "That the sole object and only legitimate end of government is to protect the citizen in the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property, and when the government assumes other functions it is usurpation and oppression."²

History has birthed societies with different forms of governments, which have followed those ideals, even when their forms were different to a democratic government. The Pharonic government of Egypt was based in a system of monarchy and religion. It gave rise to one of the

¹ Bealey, Frank. *The Blackwell dictionary of political science: a user's guide to its terms*. Wiley-Blackwell. 1999. ISBN 0631206957, p.147.

² *Ibid.*, Art. 1, Sec. 35.

most prosperous and lasting dynasties and empires.

The Roman Empire was based on different systems at different times. Republican, religious, or Emperor. Rome endured because her basic foundation of laws gave freedom, security and safety, created a society with a solid foundation.

The National Socialist government of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi's perished when the government neglected to secure the safety, freedoms, and rights of its citizens and neighboring states. Rather the citizens became exploited by the government. The Soviet Union likewise perished because ultimately it failed in its laws to provide safety, protection, and freedom to its citizens, and the citizens of the states that formed the union.

The government must also provide infrastructure for the nation's economy to prosper. To do this it is inevitable that it will have to levy taxes and return them to the people in the form of roads, railways, airports and harbors. Hospitals, schools, and universities should be developed by governments in their societies. In the democratic system, much favored today the government is placed in power by the people through campaigning for their vote in a secret ballot. Thus, the government is one that is the government of the people by the people. The democratic form of government means government governs by the consent of the people.

Secondly, it is established and the people are protected by a Constitution and a Bill of Rights that are the highest authority. This protection is guarded by an independent judiciary that can strike down laws that violate the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Nevertheless, no matter the form of the government, whether it is a monarchy, a democracy, or religious, its work is to enable the society to enjoy safety and freedom. Any government that hold to those ideals will prosper and the society will benefit and flourish. History has shown that the forms and mechanisms of governments are not the important issues if