



Bureaucracy: The Demon Controlling Our Lives

by George Lunt

What is bureaucracy?

Bureaucracy is the administration of a set of rules that are used to run an organization or a government. The more rules that are created, the more people are needed to administer them, and the more complex the organization becomes. The administrators who create the rules are themselves part of the bureaucracy. In the case of government, the rules created are called laws. As a result of the proliferation of all sorts of requirements and laws in today's society, life is becoming increasingly complex. Here are just some of the ways that bureaucracy affects us in everyday life.

Bureaucracy makes it hard to get a job.

These days to qualify for certain jobs one needs degrees, certifications, licenses, good references. Your background, credit history, medical records will be investigated. Even janitorial jobs require resumes. Besides all these requirements, many large companies are looking for someone who knows "everything" in his or her field in addition to being a "self-starter with excellent communications skills." Most human resource departments don't realize that the world is full of people and not "gods." The successful candidate usually turns out to be a "friend" of a company bureaucrat or someone who is highly skillful at lying.

Bureaucracy makes it harder to do your job.

You may have been hired to do one thing, but in a bureaucratic system, "corporate" finds a lot of extra things to do to provide you with the additional skills or motivation they believe you need. There are those morning meetings, where everyone must get up and cheer the praises of the company and listen to endless discussions about the "bottom line." Then there are the dozens of daily emails from "corporate" that require your immediate attention.

Everyone is being constantly rated, teachers are rated by students, sales associates are rated by customers, products like movies, books and articles are rated by the "stars" they receive from the public. It's quite easy to get bad ratings if you're a teacher who doesn't entertain the students enough, or if you're a salesperson who's too technical for a customer, or if you're a writer, writing about an unpopular subject.

Performance ratings also come from your supervisors. You get bad ratings when you fail to meet assigned quotas or other company requirements. These ratings can affect your salary and even be an excuse for your dismissal.

Bureaucracy makes life more complicated.

In the sixties, it took less than a half hour to purchase a car and drive off, now it takes close to a workday needed to fill out the paperwork before you can take possession of your auto. In the sixties you were able to afford to pay cash, now most cars are bought on credit. The credit checks and added government regulations make the purchase a much more complex procedure. It is also more complicated and costly to own a car. There are all the licensing fees, the insurance, the air quality tests. Any small driving mistake can cause a monetary loss as well as endless frustration. Soon there will be technology in place to issue citations automatically for every possible driving mistake you can make.

Tax forms are so complicated that many people have to hire a third party to fill them out. They were designed to make sure that the rich could find adequate loopholes to legally exempt themselves from paying, while the working class got saddled with the brunt of the tax burden.

When I first bought my property in 1986, the stack of mortgage papers was less than a half inch thick. When I recently applied for a homeowners loan for a small fraction of the property's equity, the paperwork was nearly two inches thick. If this is any indicator, bureaucracy has grown four times within the last twenty years.

Bureaucracy requires too many laws.

The more laws a country has, the more likely an ordinary citizen is to violate one. Some laws are designed to collect fines from violators to help maintain the inflated salaries of city or state officials. In an effort to make authorities do the thinking for us, many laws like seat belt, smoking, and gun control laws are passed for our supposed welfare.

There are some laws in the United States that threaten the welfare and freedom of all its citizens.

New "eminent domain" laws make it easier for corporations get your property for their pet projects.

Drug laws allow the government to seize one's property if illegal drugs were used there, even if the owner didn't know about it.

Worst of all, the "Patriot Act" can label anyone as a "terrorist" and detain that person indefinitely without due process of the law.

Bureaucracy wastes time and resources.

Since forms are the lifeblood of bureaucracy, it wastes the massive amount of trees needed to produce the paper the forms are printed upon. With the advent of the Internet, the "soul" of all bureaucratic systems, is its endless swarm of email decorating the PCs of everyone in the corporate and government offices. The added electricity to run the mail servers and the terabytes of data they transport requires some form of fuel that places a burden on our environment.

Tons of jet fuel is needed to transport bureaucrats from city to city or, even country to country as they travel to their important meetings or golf games.

Bureaucracy ruins our health.

The frustration in the everyday dealings with bureaucrats has spawned many diseases from heart attacks to assorted cancers. To "cure" us, "Big Pharma" bureaucrats use the media to push a variety of prescription drugs. Every other television commercial in the US keeps telling you to "ask your doctor" about the benefits of a this pill or that pill. Doctors, who make profits from prescribing certain drugs, tend to over medicate the population. In reality, the Pharmaceutical Corporations are really drug lords and the doctors their dealers.

Along with physical illness, there is also psychological addiction to substances like alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs. Many of us have a hard time overcoming such addictions simply because they are crutches that help us face our daily encounters with the demon of bureaucracy.

Bureaucracy in the form of "political correctness" limits our freedom of speech.

The media now attempts to control every aspect of our lives. They tell us what to wear, what to eat, how to act, and what to say. Even though they claim that there is freedom of speech, if you say the wrong thing you could lose your job and your credibility. It doesn't matter if what you say makes more sense, if it is not "politically correct," you are subject to ridicule, loss of job, or a ruined reputation.

Many people have been fired for expressing themselves "inappropriately" with blogs and videos on the Internet. Google, Yahoo, and MSN have been blocking "inappropriate" web pages in countries like China. We can look forward to the day that countries like the US, Canada, and the UK will also censor "politically questionable" content.

Conclusion

The Demon of Bureaucracy reigns throughout our civilized world. It is the manifestation of "corporate-alien" trying to control our planet. Bureaucracy pulls the strings and we dance to the whims of our "corporate masters." We are so deeply entrenched in our bureaucratic systems that it becomes exceedingly hard to combat the demon. In a subsequent article, I will try to come up with some ideas to help exorcise this demon from our lives.

George Lunt is someone who feels the world is getting too corporate. His writings relate the individual's struggle with big government and big corporations. His website is <http://www.corporate-alien.com>.

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