

FREEDOM and **SECURITY**

in Ur of the Chaldees

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THE PROBLEM of relating responsibility to freedom and security has plagued human society for countless centuries; it remains one of the most pressing burdens on contemporary civilization. Perhaps the most difficult aspect of its solution is man's persistent unwillingness to face the obvious dilemmas involved.

As far back as in Abraham's day, in Ur of the Chaldees, Sumerian society had achieved a balance to the problem which met both the demand for freedom on the part of some as well as the social hunger by others for security of guardianship. The implications of this ancient solution might be unpleasant to modern man, but they are nonetheless inescapable.

Sumerian society by law was divided into three classes, each with clearly defined legal status, privileges, and rights. The upper-class freemen, the "aristocrats," constituted the ruling elite of society. They were the priests, the government officials, and the rank and file of the army. They constituted the privileged group, and were more or less sacrosanct in person. Any

act of violence against them entailed a greater penalty than one committed against the middle class or against slaves. They were, in one sense, good examples of the overprivileged aristocrats caricatured by Marxists. But this gives only one side of the picture. The aristocrats were privileged because they bore the burden of maintaining Sumerian society. Life in Church and State was their responsibility; their social function gave them a utility which made them indispensable to the whole State.

Because they shouldered the responsibility, they therefore had a corresponding freedom. It was the aristocrat who fought and died for Sumerian liberty in the army, and was hence entitled to a greater freedom under law. He won his freedom by responsibility and accountability. When he violated the law, his punishment was severe. When he went to doctors, lawyers, and others, he paid double the fee of the middle class. Because he bore the main burden of society and assumed a greater responsibility, and legal and social account-

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ability, freedom became his prerogative.

The middle class, while free, had less social accountability and responsibility. No military service was required of them except in emergencies, such as the invasion of the land. The penalties of the law were less severe against the middle class and were essentially financial rather than personal. They were the traders, the doctors, lawyers, and other professional men, the farmers, the great body of freemen, able to function freely under law, advance their fortunes, and further their enterprises, but always beneath the law and government of the upper class. As a class, they were personally responsible and personally accountable; but because their social responsibility and accountability were limited, as compared to the upper class, their status was therefore subordinate and their participation in government limited.

Slaves were the third class, into which many were born and others came as prisoners of war and because of debt and poverty. They had absolutely no part in the life of the State, having no personal responsibility. They could be bought and sold, could be punished severely if they became fugitives, and were legal property. On the other hand, slaves had some very real privileges. They were secure

— in the sense that a ward or a prisoner is secure. They could protest their sale and submit the question to court; they could carry on business enterprises on the side and save money. They could marry, and if the wife were free, be assured of their children's freedom under law. They could purchase their freedom and enter the middle class if they had the means. The Sumerian slave had maximum security under the law, but he had little social responsibility and little freedom. To gain a greater measure of freedom and social responsibility, he had to forsake his status as a ward and live the more exposed life of the middle class.

The New Slavery

The significance of Sumerian society is obvious: Lust for security is incompatible with the requirements of responsibility and freedom. Modern man tries to gain all three by means of government action; he abolishes class lines and personal slavery, only to create slavery on a vastly greater scale. The world has not otherwise seen slavery on so vast a scope as that under Nazi German and Soviet Russian governments, and, in increasing degree, in the welfare economies of contemporary States. The omnipotent State becomes the new slaveholder, and the citizenry the slaves; and it becomes impos-

sible for any man to escape into freedom because of the vast extension of political power. The price of the guaranteed life, sometimes called security, is always the surrender of freedom and responsibility, the surrender of true accountability, to the fiat will of the State. What the Sumerians recognized in antiquity, modern man perversely refuses to accept, hoping against hope to have his cake and eat it, too.

But the lust for security destroys itself; no man is more insecure than the slave of the modern State; for he will tolerate no free classes, as did the Sumerian slave, to furnish protection for him. Freedom and responsibility still involve, as in Ur, an exposure to problems, insecurities, and social burdens which are often pressing and heavy. But, in final analysis, no greater security ever appears than the security born of freedom and responsibility.

The Sumerians exacted a price from those who yearned for security. So does the modern State. As it assumes the burden of welfare and social provisions for its citizenry, the State declares in effect that the price for subsidy is the surrender of freedom and responsibility. The State becomes increasingly free to act omnipotently, and the citizen increasingly a slave. The freedom of Sumerian aristocrats and the middle class was the guarantee of the society's basic health, and the ground for the security of all. But the freedom of the modern State from an independent citizenry spells slavery and ruin for all. The issue remains unchanged. Ultimately, the issue between freedom and security is clearly seen as responsibility versus slavery. Modern man finds responsibility burdensome; he will shortly discover that slavery is even more burdensome and less rewarding. • • •



A Change Has Occurred

IMPLICIT IN AMERICAN THOUGHT from the beginning until a few years ago was this: "Government is the responsibility of a self-governing people."

That doctrine has been swept away; only the elders remember it. Now, in the name of democracy, it is accepted as a political fact that *people are the responsibility of government*.

The forms of republican government survive; the character of the state has changed.

GARET GARRETT, *The People's Pottage*



THE RIGHT TO WORK

CHARLES I. FADDIS

THE ACTION of the Senate Rackets Committee in exposing the financial irregularities of Dave Beck and his henchmen of the Teamsters' union may serve a useful purpose in protecting the members of unions from further abuses of autocratic power; but it offers little hope that the constitutional right of a man to work without paying tribute to such racketeers will be protected. Even less hope is offered that, in case of strikes, the personal and property rights of employers and the rights of the general public will be protected.

There is no question but that many cities, as well as other political units, are ruled by an invisible empire composed of a combination of organized labor and organized crime. Such rulership is sustained by the power of labor bosses to compel men to join unions in order to earn a livelihood. An attempt to extend the jurisdiction of this empire brought about the investigation of Beck and others.

The political power of this em-

pire has hung like a pall over Washington, D. C., and many of our state capitals for more than two decades. As a member of Congress from 1933 through 1942, I saw its campaign of threats, intimidation, and browbeating result in the passing of much unjust and financially unsound legislation. I witnessed its corrupting influence upon legislators who were frightened into intellectual dishonesty in order to retain their seats.

As a member of Congress I voted for the Wagner Labor Relations Act, hoping it would promote industrial peace. It proved to be an industrial Munich. Power-mad labor barons strove with each other to construct petty empires with ruthlessness and utter disregard for the public welfare. They instituted reigns of terror in many industrial districts. Private property was seized and destroyed; intimidation, assault, and even murder were employed to accomplish the desired end. Even while the nation was at war on two

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