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Freedom: Its Complications

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WE ARE LIVING in an era in which the fundamental concepts of democracy are challenged. Communist forces claim to represent the "true" principles of a "people's" democracy. They picture the Western type of democracy as a façade behind which is concealed the brazen and ruthless reality of the dictatorship of privileged classes. The gnawing doubt of certain portions of Western populations as to the value and dignity of their governmental structures and slogans is reinforced by the fact that many of the profounder and academic analyses of politics and society seem to lend credence to the Communist accusation.

Gaetano Mosca contended that minorities which control the wealth and channels of propaganda and education impose their will upon majorities, under the representative system no less than any other.[1] Such diverse thinkers as Reinhold Niebuhr, Harold Laski, Bertrand Russell, Carl Becker—to mention but a few—agree upon the concept of "covert" or "non-coercive" power which is malevolent and abusive, though only in minor degrees in comparison with the practice of overt coercion prevailing in non-democratic countries. Thus, democratic equality seems to be no more than a myth. Similarly, liberty in a democracy apparently is no more than the liberty to express one's own opinion, without any chance for the individual or the masses to effect vital changes in the distribution of powers as long as the economic system and its fundamental inequalities are permitted to remain unchanged.

The detached observer—if there be one—will grow still more bewildered in view of the fact that most of the conservative defenders of the "Western type" of freedom insist on defending freedom on poorly concealed economic-materialistic grounds. This makes them, too, non-conscious fellow-conspirators against an ideal of liberty which was originally conceived in loftier terms. It must be confusing to the innocent bystander when left-wing liberals center their attention upon the demand that the "profit system" be replaced with a planned and "democratically controlled" economy, and when the standard reply from the opposite corner is that government interference in business is "regimentation" and the very negation of the "American dream" of freedom and democracy. The only conclusion which can be drawn from this bewildering juxtaposition of terms and

[1] "The Ruling Class," translated by Hannah D. Kahn, New York, 1939, p. 154.

claims is that the Communists are not alone in their stress upon the primary function of economic factors in the achievement of liberty and democracy. If the dominant or exclusive values of democracy, however, are in the field of economic relations, its virtues are indeed open to fundamental doubt.

I

TRUE, LIBERTY PURE AND SIMPLE can probably only be defined as absence of restraint. On this, most writers are agreed. Spinoza's idea in Part IV of his *Ethic* that free is "only that which exists according to its own nature and which determines its own actions" or Kant's formula in *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 3. Abschnitt: "Niemand kann mich zwingen, auf seine Art (wie er sich das Wohlsein anderer Menschen denkt) glücklich zu sein, sondern ein jeder darf seine Glückseligkeit auf dem Wege suchen, welcher ihm selbst gut dünkt,"[2] are, to this extent, in accord with the classical British liberal thought of non-interference, or, indeed, with T. V. Smith's formula "To do as one pleases—this alone is liberty."[3]

But the British classical liberal school as well as T. V. Smith argue along predominantly or exclusively economic lines when they wish to uphold or restrict the unqualified operation of the principles of *"laissez faire."* Once the problem of society is seen as principally an economic-political one, there is danger that the very concept of freedom may be perverted and betrayed. In this connection, it apparently makes little difference whether the ultimate objective is the preservation of the status quo or an economic-political reform.

Thus, in his zeal to overcome the obvious economic injustices of a private-capitalistic society, T. V. Smith goes so far as to lose sight completely of his definition of liberty. Consequently he ends up by proposing a tyranny amazingly close to the shams and pretenses of modern totalitarian systems. His book abounds in such suggestions as these: "No leisure except upon the discharge of productive function."[4] "Some measure of compulsion will have to be our initial dependence even though educational transformation be our ulterior reliance."[5] "We seldom allow men actually

[2] Briefly and freely translated, this formula means that everybody is free as long as he is allowed to seek his happiness on his own terms, without having others force upon him their ideas and modes of a "happy" life.

[3] "The Democratic Way of Life," Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1926, p. 69.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 108.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 113. This particular proposition cannot but remind one of the glib excuses of Nazis, Fascists, and Communists to the effect that force will only be used in a transitional phase, and until the mind of the populace is sufficiently transformed by education to a spirit of "voluntary co-operation."

to starve in our present inequalities. We shall certainly not let them starve in a more democratic regime; but we shall use the possibility of quasi-starvation to enlist men in a fair trial of the joy of productive work"[6] (sic). All these compulsions are in alleged harmony with a second definition of "freedom" which Smith tries to substitute for the one which he originally formulated. Instead of "freedom to do as one pleases," the only freedom worth talking about, he now states, is "the ability actually to try out one's desires and plans and the ability to escape unfortunate circumstances."[7]

The question immediately arises, of course, whether the people placed under compulsion or semi-starvation included these conditions in their "plans and desires" and whether such terror and coercion as here proposed have any remote resemblance to freedom and democracy. They certainly do not seem to create the conditions which make it possible for the individual to "escape unfortunate circumstances" in terms of his own free choice.[8]

II

THE REAL DILEMMA of freedom, which has been often explained, is that it is, in its pure form, unattainable among humans. Significantly, Spinoza qualified his definition of freedom by adding that God alone is really free. I am under the impression that Laski oversimplified the issue by reducing it to a problem of historical relativity. He disposes of the philosophical approach to "restraint upon freedom of behavior" by stating that "historically the best way of regarding the substance of liberty . . . is to realize that the new elements which enter into its composition at any given time have almost invariably been rationalizations of particular demands from some class or race or creed which have sought a place in the sun denied to them."[9]

If this is the "best way of regarding the substance of liberty," then it will be difficult, for instance, to refute the allegation that the rebellion of the Nazi creed against the rest of the world was only the result of the

[6] *Ibid.* p. 111.
[7] *Ibid.* p. 91.
[8] It seems to me that the previously cited quotation from Kant would provide an apt answer to Smith's dangerous speculation on freedom, particularly if Kant's quotation is cited in full and if the few words with which he concluded the sentence are added: . . . "wenn er nur der Freiheit anderer Keinen Abbruch tut." Smith's own construction resembles the wholly dogmatic, sophistical and insidious argumentation of Rousseau with regard to the treatment of an opposition to the "general will." The "general will" is a mythical expression of the will of the community. Rousseau stated in his "Social Contract" that dissenters must be "forced to be free."
[9] "Liberty" in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, New York, 1931, Vol. IX, p. 442.

repressions imposed upon the Germans who sought "a place in the sun denied to them." The question seriously arises whether Laski does not substitute a wholly subjective notion of freedom for the accomplished fact. One is especially tempted to raise this question when he reads in another of Laski's writings that the worker of Soviet Russia enjoys "positive liberty" in distinction from an "essentially negative conception" of the worker's freedom in the Western capitalistic society.[10] Does the fact that a group "feels" free actually constitute freedom as a social reality? Or, does the absence of "demands from a particular class or creed" at a given time and in a given place prove that all the demands have been met? Does absence of complaint and criticism necessarily connote freedom? I should assume that these questions can only be answered unqualifiedly in the affirmative, if past and present techniques of controlling as well as suppressing popular demands are ignored.

A factual approach cannot help but reveal that the political and economic liberties which Laski stresses particularly, are related to other than subjective factors.[11] If liberty is absence of restraint, if it is "self-determination," then absolute liberty simply does not exist on this earth. The relativism of liberty becomes all-embracing and adopts much more than a historic coloring. Whenever and wherever freedom is less than "self-determination," there is, in strictly logical terms, limitation, restraint, and a corresponding *relative* check upon freedom.

III

NOR IS THIS ALL. Absence of restraint pure and simple not only does not exist in an empiric society, but such freedom as can be discovered to operate within its generic limitations, may actually have some specific drawbacks. If the individual can be assumed to be free within the range of certain biological as well as environmental limitations, then the question is not inappropriate as to the use which he will make of such amount of freedom as is at his disposal. In other words, if everybody, within the minimum restrictions imposed by nature and society, can act according to his pleasure, what—under this condition—will happen to society, to the moral and intellectual level of the individuals, ultimately to the freedom which was originally granted them?

Here is implied the whole story of the utter frustration of freedom in a predominantly materialistic and selfish age. The higher the tide of the

[10] "Reflections on the Revolution of Our Times," New York, 1943, p. 398.

[11] It should be mentioned that the present article was written prior to the sudden death of this great political thinker.

contemporary debate on human freedom rises, the more it gets involved in contradictions of economic-political claims and counter-claims. The insights of a more primitive, yet spiritually less thwarted, age have been forgotten or are brushed aside as naïve, and irrelevant to the problem of our time. Yet, Spinoza, who handed us the classic definition of freedom while insisting that "God alone is free," developed a whole system of ethic on the presumption that there is a relative freedom of man, if man could only afford the strength "to live according to the demands of reason, and to control his passions." Kant distinguished between "vernunftloser Willkuer" (unreasonable lack of self-restraint) and "Selbstgesetzgebung der Vernunft" (self-legislation or autonomy of reason). The latter to him represented *true* freedom. Goethe decided that freedom is the ability "to act under the guidance of reason, no matter what the circumstances." And, last but not least, the early Christians' idea of freedom as a challenging, courageous stand of non-conformity to a pagan, selfish, mercenary and sensuous world made it a highly uncomfortable and self-denying business "to be free."

Obviously, John Stuart Mill, too, was not satisfied with a wholly materialistic-utilitarian approach to political freedom when he stated that "the dangers incident to a representative democracy are . . . danger of a low grade of intelligence in the representative body, and in the popular opinion which controls it; and danger of class legislation . . . ,"[12] and when he consequently argued that the first responsibility of good government is to raise the level of virtue and intelligence of the citizens.[13]

Three legitimate questions will immediately arise. First, if we accept what may be termed a *positive* conception of freedom, in distinction from the *negative* of mere "absence of restraint"—does such acceptance not introduce a dogmatic and therefore subjective element? Do we not thereby insert value judgments? Are we supposed to be agreed on what constitutes "reasonableness," "dispassionateness," "virtue?"

Second, is such strain on individual existence as was required by Paul and practiced by early Christians, or are such rigorous demands of an intelligent and moral order as were set forth in the ethical systems of

[12] "On Representative Government," London, 1886 ed., p. 53.

[13] Reinhold Niebuhr throughout distinguishes between the "creative" and "destructive" possibilities of freedom. See particularly "The Nature and Destiny of Man," New York, 1948 edition, Vol. I, pp. 99–106, 162–66 etc., and "Faith and History," New York, 1949, pp. 89, 93, 100, 180, 122 *ff.*

Arnold Toynbee also recognizes a freedom of choice in historical destiny. A civilization's destruction is really and intrinsically caused by factors closely related to a *corruption of freedom.*

Spinoza and Kant still recognizable as human freedom? Do we have to be "unkind to ourselves" in order to reach the august spheres in which freedom of a "higher type" reigns?

Third—and closely related to the second question—how many people of any age or nation can really be expected to live up to such demands as these? The answer to all three sets of questions is obvious. This "positive" concept of liberty is subjectively anchored. It imposes attitudinal strain, and relatively few people anywhere and at any time will be able to practice its standards of moral conduct and intelligent behavior. However, the amount of self-control implied in these standards does not necessarily refute their logical and moral validity. Self-restraint, as Maurice Block put it, emanates from a sentiment of our own dignity.[14] It seems to me that in the interplay of social and individual controls, it is the oppressive "control by other people" which the consistently liberal-minded citizen resents as an infringement upon his personal liberty. He will not consider his liberty to be infringed by the ideal under the impact of which he is willing to fight against the tyrannical order of an outside world, even though this fight involves sacrifice on his part. His "ideal" undoubtedly has an unmistakable subjective tinge, but so has every moral, social, legal and esthetic code. The modern problem thus becomes one of either being or not being in accord with the established codes and patterns of one's society. And with respect to freedom, it probably means that in the ages-long development of our culture, there evolved certain concepts of freedom, some "negative," others "positive," and that some of us incline toward those which imply faith, sacrifice, conviction, while other people do not incline toward them.

What we are wont to label a "free" subjective choice is often really social control of long standing and of a more or less hidden and invisible nature. Freedom, justice, beauty, and essential morality can, *for human purposes,* probably never be accurately defined. The answers to the problems they pose will, therefore, always have a subjective ring. Yet, a study of comparative culture proves how considerable and surprising, in spite of the natural range of variations, is the degree of consensus with regard to the basic answers to these problems, which emerged within a coherent culture area circumscribed by the preponderance of similar religions, institutions, and philosophies. As the power of persuasion inherent in these religions, institutions and philosophies gradually wears off, there arise the prospects of new principles of faith and of revolution. But the concept

[14] "License and Liberty," in *Cyclopedia of Political Science,* Vol. II, p. 768.

of historical relativism in relation to "positive" freedom connotes broad agreements over large areas and over relatively very long periods.[15] It is, at any rate, not synonymous with the type of historical relativism Laski favors, which allows for a wholesale change of the content and meaning of freedom with nearly every generation in the identical area and practically rules out the possibility of applying moral criteria to the passing parade of the varying concepts of freedom.

Furthermore, the "positive" definition of liberty does not cancel out the "negative" one. It only adds specific and vital, although subjective, elements to it. Liberty is still *absence* of restraint, but this restraint is now limited to consciously felt restraint *by others*. The subjective element consists of such amount of *self*-restraint as is practiced by the individual on the grounds of his moral and intellectual convictions. Without this kind of individual self-restraint, or without those degrees of moral and reasonable judgment or "self-legislation" on the part of individuals which the classic concepts of liberty imply, no free society can hope successfully to operate. In the absence of these limited self-controls, there will necessarily descend an ever increasing volume of authority and of outside restraints upon the individual members of society. In these "outside controls" even our nominally "free" and democratic societies abound.

The "positive" definition of freedom, thus, falls short of an adequate basis in reality just as the merely "negative" definition proved incomplete and futile. I cannot agree with the optimistic note struck by William F. Russell: "While moral or intellectual disinterestedness flows from wisdom, it is possible to achieve the former without the latter."[16] Nor can I accept John Dewey's solution of the subject when he states that positive liberty is essentially connected with the progress of science and that "if the economic regime were so changed that the resources of science were employed to maintain security for all, the present view about the limitation of science might fade away."[17] Dewey has failed to convince me that a change of economic regime may alone produce purer moral incentives and intellectual detachment on the part of the majority.

IV

THE PROBLEM OF LIBERTY encounters a further set of perplexing com-

[15] I like to think that this is what Reinhold Niebuhr has in mind when he traces the differences and the similarities in classical as well as modern views of meaning and freedom in history, in "Faith and History," New York, 1949, chs. III and IV.

[16] "Liberty vs. Equality," New York, 1936, p. 129.

[17] "Freedom and Culture," New York, 1939, p. 143.

plications. Some political scientists reason that liberty and equality are mutually exclusive.[18] Others argue vigorously that there can be no essential liberty without a measure of equality.[19]

There are different logical categories or phases of equality; existential, functional and legal. Of these, "existential" equality is either of a utopian, rationalistic type which claims that one human being is in substance the exact equal of any other insofar as worth, ability or potentiality is concerned; or it is of the Pauline-Christian variety which proclaims the essential brotherhood of all men, the spiritual fellowship of all believers and the intrinsic sinfulness of all human substance in the sight of God who alone is perfect. While Laski's "functional" equality implies some of the elements of the rationalistic version of existential equality, it shares with the Christian outlook the idea of the eminent dignity of the individual. The basic assertion that a man's job and position in life, no matter how menial they may be judged by his fellow men, do not detract from his functional equality with others; that one function well performed equals, in its own way, any other, definitely dovetails with some vital aspects of the primitive Christians' approach to "existential" equality. "Legal" equality—so it appears—is the final democratic contribution to a centuries-long debate dating from the Stoics and the early Christians, passing through the ponderous dissertations of the philosophers of natural law and leading to the modern answer of equality of treatment by law.

[18] William E. Rappard, "The Crisis of Democracy," Chicago, 1938, pp. 24–6. William F. Russell, "Liberty vs. Equality," New York, 1936, pp. VIII; 10–17; 29–30; 109–11. Thomas Mann, "Freedom and Equality" in "Freedom: Its Meaning," edited by Ruth N. Anshen, New York, 1940, p. 81. And, of course, there is James Fitzjames Stephen, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," London, 1874, pp. 198 *ff.*; and Lord Acton's smiliar references to the logical contradiction between liberty and equality in "The History of Freedom and Other Essays," London, 1907. Among the more popular writers of today, Walter Lippmann's "The Good Society," New York, 1937; and Frederick Hayek's "Road to Serfdom," Chicago, 1945, are examples of the modern apologia for the freedom of the market and of the modern argument against the egalitarian effects of governmental regulation of business.

[19] Harold J. Laski in all his writing, particularly in "Liberty in the Modern State," London, 1930, and "Liberty" in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. IX, New York, 1931, pp. 442–6. Bronislaw Malinowski, "Freedom and Civilization," New York, 1944. Carl L. Becker, "Modern Democracy," New Haven, 1941, pp. 67–72. Thomas Vernor Smith, "The Democratic Way of Life," Chicago, 1926, realizes that "the relation between liberty and equality . . . has been a matter of dispute," but contends that "what the equality ideal has stood for is necessary in order to make significant liberty available for the majority of men" (p. 88). Thomas Mann, though stating the logical opposition of liberty and equality, follows a line of argument closely resembling Smith's (loc. cit.). See also Joseph A. Leighton "Liberty—Weasel Word" in *The American Scholar*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Winter 1938, particularly pp. 41–5. There are other works along the same line too numerous to mention. The problem of the subtle relationships between liberty and equality has been treated in Ludwig Freund, "Freiheit und Gleichheit als Zentralprobleme der Demokratie" in *Koelner Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, Vol. I, No. 4, June 1949.

Of the three categories of equality, the first two have little, if any, bearing on the subject of liberty. Existential and functional equalities are *passive* conditions. They are interpretations of life rather than life itself. Liberty presupposes a *dynamic* modus vivendi. This condition is present in the struggle for or denial of legal equality. The theorists arguing the case that liberty and equality are inseparable win on these grounds.

But these legal grounds are not those on which either they, or their opponents, focus their main attention. There are, beyond the categories of equality, distinct areas of human activity in which the search for equality may be discovered to operate. The generic category of legal equality still rules these special manifestations of the principle insofar as law in its broadest sense may be understood as circumscribing the opportunities of most human activity in modern lands. Equality of treatment by law implies equality of opportunities in all fields governed by law. However, there are private spheres of life which law in a democratic society may not touch and in which effective discriminations and significant restrictions may be practiced. There are other areas in a democratic society in which law exercises only *partial* control. Obviously a man's choice of personal association, of business as well as life partners; social preferences expressed in the dispensation of patronage, etc. are not susceptible to wholesale regulation by law, unless we emulate the complete contempt of human privacy displayed by Nazi and Communist rulers. Thus, a certain amount of social inequality prompted by "pride" of class, race and religious separation, is difficult to combat.

It also follows logically that all other ramifications of religious, racial and cultural liberties, whether they are guaranteed by law or not, depend upon equality of opportunities, in order to realize their full status of liberty. Wherever groups or individuals are underprivileged to the extent that their opportunities are stifled at the outset, wherever restraint is placed upon them which is not incurred by their own lack of capacity for rights, their ability to compete with others on equal terms is limited.

In the broad field of intellectual freedom the ideas of "free speech" and "free press" have been pervertd into monopolies of the owners of radio chains, the buyers of radio "time," the "popular" radio commentators who talk "down" to the "people"; the syndicated columnists who write "down" to the "people"; the publishers, the editors, and the writers with "pull" or "sale." Obviously, there is neither freedom nor equality of expression here, and again the two principles are linked.

V

THERE IS, HOWEVER, a special aspect of intellectual freedom which presents an altogether different viewpoint. The problem becomes quite involved—from a democratic point of view—when it is considered that it is not only a matter of fortunate outer circumstances and propitious connections, or their absence, respectively, which creates intellectual inequalities. There are also natural differences which in a free competitive struggle among individuals will favor a few. There are—after all—different levels of intellectual abilities. Hence, not all can even begin to compete for the same opportunities in this area. It is in this area that the impossibility of the utopian or rationalistic type of "existential" equality opposes effectively the realization of both liberty and equality.

The problem of political freedom and equality is so closely related to that of legal equality that it may be dispensed with in our necessarily brief discussion. It is evident that so far in this discussion the liberals who incline toward egalitarian objectives have the advantage. In the special areas discussed, liberty obviously is related to equality and more or less dependent upon it. The surprising factor is that this faction of liberals, no less than their opponents, consider these areas only as secondary. They expect the solution of their problems primarily from egalitarian measures in the heart of economic life. Thereby their argument fails as signally to strike home as does that of the "pendulum" theorists.[20] In fact, the latters' contentions become several degrees more convincing as their much too sweeping generalities are focused upon the economic field proper.

Liberty seems to favor the economically strong, even when it is officially granted to others in the fields of social opportunities, education, publication and political influence. This adds apparent strength and logic to the suggestion that the solution of all or most of our social ills and disequilibria must be referred to the economic sphere. A closer inspection will disclose the unhappy truth, however, that the distortion of democratic behavior in other areas is largely—though not exclusively—the result of their invasion by economic values and power differentials. The basic attitudes of the "economic man," like those of the "political man," are in

[20] The "pendulum theory" has found its most concise expression in William F. Russell, "Liberty vs. Equality," New York, 1936. "If you have liberty to the full, you cannot have equality. If you have equality to the full, you cannot have liberty. If you have more liberty, you will have less equality. If you have more equality, you will have less liberty. . . . During some periods *the pendulum* (of American democracy) swung toward liberty; at others toward equality" (p. 14). The basic underlying idea is that liberty and equality are incompatible.

themselves not capable of effecting profound social remedies unless they are influenced by standards of values which are outside their own legitimate and special spheres. While Gresham's Law and the law of the "least means" do not necessarily determine all economic action, both of them point to a prevailing tendency which may be said to have occasionally been deflected by either moral or political influences. The unbridled *political* influences proved—as in the cases of the Nazi and Communist governments—more destructive of human ends than the economic interest itself. The *moral* factor has difficulty not to degenerate to the marginal or sub-marginal level in a society in which the economic or the political power interest or a combination of both is considered paramount.

The deadlock becomes more definite if it is considered that the whole structure of the economic realm leaves no opening for the entry of either liberty or equality. Economic equality as the absolutely equal partition of all kinds of wealth among all human beings "has found few defenders in the history of thought." [21] As long as there is the necessity for maintaining separate agents of production and distribution; as long as there is a need for recognizing different functions of labor, management and capital; as long as there is a demand for scarce talent in order to fill some of these functions there will be different levels of inducement and reward.

There is no possibility of equality in any developed economic system, and there is no place for unconditional liberty in it. The individual cannot escape the Scylla and Charibdis of alternative controls. If he is an entrepreneur he is—in a completely "free" competitive order—entirely dependent on market conditions of labor, raw materials, capital and finished goods. The wage earner's economic status is dependent upon these factors, too, since his earning capacity and duration of employment are largely determined by them. Besides, he is subject to the controls of management. As government or union controls over economic activities increase, management as well as labor become more dependent on them, but, while full liberty of action hardly exists for either labor or enterprise under this condition, the absence of liberty may have varying degrees.

Does this state of affairs corroborate the thesis of the "pendulum" theorists? It seems to me that in their formula "the more equality the less liberty," they equated liberty with the freedom of action of one class, namely the entrepreneurs. Their theory would be much more to the point and would possibly have reached entirely different conclusions, if

[21] Crane Brinton, "Equality" in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, New York, 1931, Vol. V, p. 579.

they would have begun to ask themselves the two additional questions "freedom FOR WHOM?" and "freedom FROM WHOM?". They might have discovered that, while the management is "freer" than the worker is in a state of greater inequality, the present higher status of equality has increased the freedoms of the workers as a class while eclipsing some, though not all, of the management. A complete eclipse of the liberty of the latter, however, as occurs under Stalin's system of State Capitalism, does not result in a corresponding increase in liberties for the worker. The traditional concept of freedom cannot be applied to workers' conditions where unions function under the complete domination of one political party, where the party reflects the interests and ideas of the absolute rulers of the State, and where the State is the supreme and uncontested lord over the functions of labor, capital and management. The example of the Soviet Union offers the spectacle of as near an eclipse of liberty of both workers and "enterprisers" as is humanly feasible. Equality as well as liberty is nearly completely absent from this scene. The analytical approach makes apparent a definite flaw in the speculation of the "pendulum" theorists, even if it is applied to the field of economic relations where their generalities had a semblance of plausibility.

Conversely, the egalitarians' view that there can be no economic liberty without economic equality, founders on the incontrovertible truth that there cannot be had sufficient of either in the world of hard facts. Furthermore, whose liberty are *they* referring to? It is easy to demonstrate that these theorists are guilty of the same error which we found to have been committed by their logical antipodes. They, too, consider only the liberty of one class. In their case it is the workers' class. The same logic which refutes the claims of the pendulum theorists, therefore, also repudiates theirs. Somebody's liberties will be necessarily curtailed if somebody else's status is improved at the former's economic expense.

Consequently, it is in the ethical, not the logical, sphere that the question deserves to be resolved whether more liberty of the few or more liberty of the many ought to prevail. It seems clear that our modern democratic value judgments tend to favor freedom for the many rather than the few. It is, therefore, understandable that the liberal position of today has approximated that of the egalitarians.

VI

THE SIGNIFICANT RÔLE of value judgments and ethical decisions in the practical solution of problems which logically lead to an impasse, under-

scores the strange and ambiguous position in which modern man is caught. The cynical vogue is toward discounting moral or religious speculations and to value high the positivist attitude. The essential answers, however, seem ultimately to be associated with "values" which escape the positivist or the materialistic approaches to the central problems of our time.

The perpetual cleavage between the democratic ideal and the democratic reality cannot be satisfactorily explained on either the utopian moralist's or the cynic's grounds. John Stuart Mill was probably right when he hinted that, regardless of its form, that government is best which fosters the virtue and intelligence of its citizens. In this sense, and despite some skeptical reservations toward Utopian notions of democratic perfection, I firmly believe that democratic government furnishes better guarantees than other forms of government, that in the "free market" of ideas those of virtue and intelligence may compete and possibly succeed.

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Inflationary Dangers in the Arms Boom

A FRIEND OF MINE is building a new home. He frankly admits he is not financially able to pay for it on the basis of his present income. He's gambling on inflation. If, because of inflation, the dollar continues to lose purchasing power, the $15,000 house my friend is building may cost him only half as much, or even only a tenth as much, as it is valued on the basis of today's dollars. In other words, if inflation continues he figures his income, in unit dollars, will be doubled within about five years without his real earning capacity or actual day-to-day purchasing power having been improved.

If my friend wins his gamble the people who hold the mortgage on his home will find his notes being paid off with 50¢ dollars for the 100¢ dollar they paid to his building contractors. Thus they would lose in proportion to his gain. But it is infinitely more serious than that. If my friend wins his gamble on a substantial degree of inflation continuing for another five years, the national economy may go on to distaster. Values would be virtually wiped out and a likely result would be economic collapse and probably panic; and in the end, he likely would lose his unpaid-for home in a severe depression.

The strength of America, as a nation among nations, is based on the stability of our economy. Our production for national defense, as well as