

Aristocracy, church and school

Aristocracy consists of a propertied and a titled class (their property usually being the land and the perquisites that go with landlordism) and of certain levels of people useful to them, with a fringe of associates who descend from former members of the propertied class. The men who constructed our American government were of a very high order of mental superiority, so high that they did not permit establishment of titles or an aristocracy. And there could be no landed aristocracy until the frontiers were reached and land monopoly could come into being.

This largely explains why there developed in America no deference to any class deemed superior because of birth,

caste, or property. It is erroneous to assume that the good fortune and the mental attitude of Americans are due solely to the widespread diffusion of washing machines and automobiles. America's greatest blessing is the comfortable easiness with which all individuals deal with each other, respectful of ability and achievement but void of deference. The importance of this great feature cannot be sufficiently emphasized. Speaking in general, America is one vast "middle class," and it is in proportion to the percentage of the population that forms the middle class that the standard of living in a country exists. Where the middle class is small, the standard of living is low.

The lack of inhibitions is a priceless, though often unrecognized, contribution to mental serenity.

The absence of established castes has contributed enormously to the powerful force of incentive. Incentive—the only hope of a free future.

Fortunately, the freedom from aristocracy exists today; it is very likely that it will continue, and it should, as it is essential to America's greatness. This should not for an instant be thought to imply that no Americans should become rich and prominent. All Americans should be as free as they once were to advance themselves to this condition as a reward for the service that they and their capital render. This can be achieved without the establishment or continuance of privilege.

CHURCH AND STATE WERE KEPT DISTINCTLY SEPARATE

Though there was much dispute and dissent, it is to the credit of the Pilgrims that they brought the principle of unqualified freedom of worship with them, despite their inconsistency in applying it, and it is a measure of the high intelligence of our Founding Fathers that they erected a wall between church and state and prevented the establishment of a state religion.

"Freedom of worship" has been jokingly rephrased as "freedom from worship." The real freedom, of course, is freedom from any possible dictation by anyone as to the action or thought on the part of anyone else with regard to religion. Authoritarian religion with political power would bring bloodshed in America as it has invariably brought bloodshed everywhere else.

Freedom from religion in government does exist today, and we must make sure that this condition will continue, for we can be positive that it is essential to America's greatness.

FREE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WERE EARLY ESTABLISHED

Our free public school pattern began to develop while we were young in our colonization of the New World and accounts for our literacy, in turn a contributor to our prosperous democracy. There can be no denying or even minimizing the propriety of a department of our government financing the development and sustention of as

thorough a public school system as all the requirements would indicate.

In the writer's opinion such a department should be on the local level for taxation reasons, if for no other; but, however financed, the public schools are a bulwark of our culture, for it has been a long time since the standard of education in this country stopped at mere literacy.

As the purpose of this book is the study of government income rather than expenditures, we can simply say of our schools that they still contribute splendidly to the greatness of our country.

It is evident that, of the five conditions listed, the first three have not changed enough to have affected the strength and progress of America, and that the changes that have taken place in the other two must largely account for the evils that confront us.

Our study, therefore, will be concentrated on *taxation* and *land*.