

## Faith in Freedom

**F**REEDOM has many detractors; but none can be more effective than its avowed friends. The danger from this source arises from ignorance of the necessary economic implementation of freedom or from lack of faith in the efficacy of freedom as the sole means for a good society.

The ignorance can be overcome by education. Whether faith—the kind that does not wilt under an emotional stress tending toward a betrayal of freedom—can be implanted by any educational process, or finds its roots in inherent traits, is in our present understanding of such things unanswerable. Certain it is that education in freedom cannot uproot contrary concepts that have the priority of long fertilization; in such cases the words of freedom can be learned, but faith in its primacy is of the fair weather kind.

Current disaffection with the doctrines of collectivism on the part of their erstwhile proponents illustrates the dangers that arise from ignorance. New Dealers, reformers, friends-of-the-people, et al., speak of freedom, liberty, democracy, the dignity of the individual, with well-rounded phrases and with gushing hearts. Yet they know not whereof they speak. For when they propose implementation of their newly acquired ideas they return to the only thing they know: a planned economy.

These well-meaning liberals are a greater danger to freedom than its undisguised enemies. For, while the position of the latter is definitely known and can be met head-on with logic and with principle, the friends-of-the-people beguile with phrases that disarm the unwary and disorganize the true forces of freedom.

They speak of increased wages, which is what everybody knows is the crux of our social malaise, and propose to tax wages to pay the increase. They proclaim the necessity of a free market, and proceed to free it by ironbound regulations; with their good selves, of course, as regulators. They denounce monopoly, but conveniently or from ignorance overlook the ownership of the earth as the basic monopoly. They talk of the benefits of free trade and propose to use trade as a political whip. They praise individual initiative, and plan to encourage it with "social controls."

Ah, but such planning—for the good of the plannees, of course—is to be democratically administered. And one wonders whether such

naivete is not psychopathic. At any rate, to the unashamed and unequivocal advocate of a society consisting of the dominant and the dominated, our "liberals" are strong allies. For their soporific phrases lead to a popular acceptance of the very principle which inures to the benefit of the privileged. And the latter know, if the "liberals" do not, that a little planning leads to a little bit more, that partial slavery is the prerequisite for total slavery.

But even knowledge of the basic principles upon which freedom rests is no assurance that its proponents believe in it. Such conviction requires faith—faith in freedom as the only end and the only means. And it must be faith, for the world has never known freedom. Here and there partial evidences of its workings have been seen, and it is from these evidences, as well as from logical deductions from principle, that the broad outlines of a free society are constructed in our imagination. We fill in the details from the deep well of our hope and aspiration.

How the unshackled man will develop, what moral and cultural lines his behavior will take, and what kind of social order such behavior will evolve—these can be projected only from our limited knowledge, from our reasoning, and from our faith.

An instructor at the Henry George School of Social Science asserts that there is no capitalist press; that the WALL STREET JOURNAL and the DAILY WORKER differ only in the degree to which they apply identical principles. Behind this hyperbole lies an important truth: that the essence of socialism is reliance upon the political method. Once we assume that the State can bring about reform—by means of legislation within its boundaries, and armed force without—we easily abandon our faith in freedom, hugging to our breasts the hope that the State will eventually wither away.

"We honor Liberty in name and form . . . But we have not fully trusted her." Faith, in freedom as both end and means, is the greatest need of the world in its present trend toward the complete enslavement of man. Of what avail is knowledge when faith is dead?

If once we lose the right direction, deluded by the mirage of a temporary refuge in some political harbor, the inevitable reefs and shoals will wreck the undermanned craft. To reach its appointed shore, faith must pilot freedom.