

The Eternal Struggle

LIFE ALWAYS has been a struggle. Always, some of the people have had to work in order that they or anyone else might live. A whole society of nonworkers is inconceivable. The great social problem has been to determine how the products of human effort are to be shared within the society. And closely related to this problem has been the matter of encouraging as much production as possible.

Throughout most of the world's history, the popular answer to these questions has been: "Might makes right." Issues were decided by force, by the power of military might, or by the political force of majority will. Rarely, as in America's past, have individuals been allowed to decide these matters for themselves, in the market place, competing and bargaining for the necessities and luxuries of life. Though material abundance and luxuriant living have been the results of competitive bargaining in America, the people of other nations seem reluctant to practice such freedom. And, indeed, we in America seem to be abandoning our own individual rights to bargain, in a backward flight to the old system of determination by force.

The modern backward trend in this country probably is not deliberate so far as most of us are concerned. We would not consciously abandon the private enterprise system which has afforded so many blessings. But

we are slipping backward, and will continue to slip until there is a renewal of understanding of individual rights and responsibilities under a system of competitive bargaining which functions according to the willingness of individuals to respect the lives and the private property of one another. There must be self-respect of such a high quality that a person is willing to compete peacefully with his neighbor, each using his own skill and his own property as the means of producing or trading for the things he wants.

Professional men and business men and other working men all must realize the inherent dangers of binding themselves into special unions as a means of acquiring political power over other persons and other groups within the society. For when any one group becomes powerful enough to sway a whole society by force, then that force is the effective government of the society. The goal of government, no matter how nobly constituted, is to govern. A government with the power to govern in small ways seems bound to seek additional powers. Apparently it can't help itself; it is incapable of limiting itself in the struggle for power. The limitation can come only from the outside. The early American concept was that individuals, in their desire for independent lives and in their respect for private property, would keep the government within bounds.

Those who promote and condone the prin-