

# Tenure

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LIFE, by its very nature is ever changing. From one moment to the next there is always alteration in the chemical and physical structure of all living matter. The fact of change applies to every level of organic organization, from the atomic to the organismic. Man, an organism, is not and cannot be an exception to this law of nature. Since organisms do change with time, the interrelationships among organisms also change, but there are those who, by mere wishing, hope to avoid their nature and the reality of change which must occur in social circumstances and thus seek to establish a static situation.

In the attempt to avoid possible change relating to employment, certain men have succeeded in establishing an artificial system which allows the human to be un-

naturally "protected" (actually harmed) by the gaining of "job security." The mania for security has gripped the human imagination, particularly in this century, and has caused many to pursue a goal, the achievement of which can only result in mental degeneration and intellectual stagnation.

In the field of education this mania for security is exemplified by the system known as tenure: the granting of a permanent position to an individual who has satisfactorily completed a trial period of a number of years. Once tenure is granted, the individual receiving tenure can only be removed from his position due to gross misconduct in the performance of professional tasks or immoral behavior of a serious nature.

There can be no rational argument presented to justify granting a permanent position to anyone in any type of profession or

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field of work. Just because a man has performed well in his work for a number of years (whether it be two or twenty) cannot be a guarantee that he will continue to perform well the next year, or for that matter, the next week or day. Man does alter his behavior constantly and there can be no assurance, no matter how stable an individual may appear to be, that he will continue to function well in a particular type of work.

In a profit-making business no sane employer could ever afford to guarantee a job to a man for any lengthy period of time, and certainly not for life (up to age 65). An employee must always be subject to evaluation by an employer if any business is to survive. If an employee did not perform his tasks well, it would mean a loss of revenue for the business; and if this behavior persisted, and an employer were not free to remove the individual from his post, the result could be the collapse of the enterprise. An employer must always be free to replace an employee who, in his judgment, is not contributing to the beneficial activities of the business or who cannot perform his tasks as well as another.

To guarantee a life-time job to one man would be to deny the possibility of a job to another man who may have superior ability. The number of positions in any

business is not unlimited; therefore, if individuals are given permanent positions in a particular business, they could not be replaced by others of superior talent and intellectual caliber until such a time as the tenured individuals completed their careers. With business expansion new people are brought into a particular business, but there would still exist a large number of tenured employees who would have to be retained until their retirement occurred which would inevitably prevent more highly qualified individuals from obtaining these occupied jobs.

#### **Business-like Education**

The business of education is not, with rare exceptions, a profit-making business, although it must become one if the quality of education is ever to be raised to the level of its real potential. This regrettable circumstance clouds the academic scene and prevents one from seeing the actual losses which must result in any circumstance which rewards mediocrity and suppresses superiority.

In her superb political treatise, *The God of the Machine*, Isabel Paterson writes: "One of the early 'cases' by which 'security of tenure' was made to seem plausible for teachers indicates the utter confusion of thought on the subject, arising from failure to rec-

ognize the political power in operation. A teacher in California, of excellent character and teaching ability, was dismissed by a corrupt school board for no good reason. The case was taken to court. The teacher was reinstated, on the proper grounds that she had a contract for the term and had not defaulted on it. This was thought a sufficient reason for urging measures by which a teacher must be considered as engaged indefinitely, for that is the only meaning for 'security of tenure'; though this is absolutely irrelevant to the original issue (enforcement of contract), and nullifies the contractual right of the employer."

No one can ever guarantee that an employer will always use rational criteria in judging the qualifications of an employee, but when there is a contractual agreement involved, one can always turn to the courts if one party fails to comply with the stipulations of the contract. No one can ever guarantee that an employee will continue to function in an advantageous manner in a particular position and so it would be foolish for an employer to engage in a lifetime contract with an employee. Change is always with us, no matter how diligently some may attempt to hold it back.

Tenured teachers and professors

realize that they do not have to broaden their intellectual scope in order to retain their positions. Consequently, many, having obtained "job security," cease to pursue knowledge in their particular discipline and become progressively outdated with every passing year.

Tenure is a practice which naturally follows from the philosophy of collectivists. It is a technique to deny individual ability for the sake of the "security" of the masses. It is a means of rewarding mediocrity and allowing it to degenerate into stagnant parasitism. Academic tenure creates scholastic somnambulism.

#### ***Security Impedes Progress***

In any dynamic system (and all businesses are dynamic systems) the alternation of circumstances must not be impeded, for if they are, this can only result in a disruption of the system and a slowing down or cessation of activity. To grant any man a permanent position simply on the basis of performance during a trial period, is to introduce a possible disruptive element into a dynamic system which could, and often does, drastically impede progress.

If an employee is efficient and performs his tasks well, it is to the advantage of the employer to retain the services of this individual. If an employee finds the em-

ployer and the job to his liking, it is to his advantage to remain in his present position. An employer-employee relationship is mutually advantageous as long as both parties are satisfied with the circumstances. Whenever either party determines that the conditions have changed and the relationship is no longer desirable, both should be free to release each other from a short-term contract.

A tenured employee is now free to seek employment elsewhere, but the employer of a tenured employee is *not* free to replace that employee with another man. Such a circumstance of necessity places a major obstacle in the dynamic situation which must exist in an employer-employee relationship, and we can now witness the results of this blockage by noting the intellectual inactivity of many tenured teachers and professors. The tragic consequences for students who study under these individuals cannot be estimated.

#### **Long-Term Employment Contracts Lead to Stagnation**

To advocate the prevention of freedom of action on the part of either the employer or the employee is to deny the existence of

individual rights. Every man must be free to choose the activities of his life which will best suit his needs. No man can, in reason, be required to maintain relationships over an extended period of time in an employer-employeesituation. An employee should not be forced to remain in a particular position for life (a practice of medieval times) and an employer should not be forced to grant a life-long position to an employee (a practice of the twentieth century). In either case freedom of action is prevented and the inevitable consequence is a degree of stagnation.

The concept of tenure is incompatible with reality. It is an idea which developed out of an irrational evaluation of circumstances and has been maintained because of the lack of intellectuals who would or could support and rationally defend the basic principle of freedom which is individual rights.

Tenure, a collectivist concept, and individual rights, a capitalist concept, are mutually antagonistic. The former is an attempt to deny the reality of change, while the latter is fully compatible with the nature of life and the interrelationships among organisms. ♦

# Training in Trust

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A NUMBER of years ago the German theologian and philosopher, Karl Heim, a man who also knew a good deal about the natural sciences, wrote a book on the question of certitude, which he called "the life-and-death question for religion."<sup>1</sup> He soon makes it clear that the question of certitude — how we can be certain of anything — is vitally important not only for religion but for the whole of human life and society.

He begins by making a distinction between two kinds of certitude: one is based on calculation

<sup>1</sup> Karl Heim (1874-1958), *Glaubensgewissheit. Eine Untersuchung über die Lebensfrage der Religion*, 3rd edition (Leipzig: J. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1923).

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(*Berechnung*), the other on trust (*Vertrauen*).

It is not only in mathematics, engineering, and the sciences that we seek to arrive at certitude by means of calculation. When a businessman, for example, considers introducing a new product, he wants to have some certitude or assurance that it will move well. Therefore, he makes a calculation of the soundness of this project, taking into consideration what he knows about his customers, their tastes and requirements, the market situation, the quality of the new product, and as many other relevant factors as he can identify and evaluate. The degree of certitude which he can obtain in this manner concerning the success of his venture is less than that obtained by an engineer calculating the weight of a bridge section, but