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论人类不平等的起源

A DISCOURSE ON INEQUALITY

[法]让·雅克·卢梭 著

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A Discourse On Inequality
By *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*
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To The Republic Of Geneva

Magnificent, most Honoured and Sovereign Lords,

Convinced as I am that none but a virtuous citizen is entitled to render his country honours it can acknowledge, I have laboured for thirty years to earn the right to offer you public homage; and the present happy occasion making up in part for what my efforts alone would fail to achieve, I have come to believe that I might be allowed in this case to act upon the promptings of the zeal which inspires me rather than with the right which ought to be my authorization. Having had the good fortune to be born among you, how could I reflect upon the equality which nature established among men and the inequality which they have instituted among themselves, without thinking of the profound wisdom with which the one and the other, being happily combined in your Republic, contribute in the manner closest to natural law and most favourable to society to the maintenance of public order and the wellbeing of individuals? In searching for the best principles that good sense could dictate on the constitution of a government, I was so impressed at finding all of them put into practice in yours that even if I had not been born within your walls, I should have felt myself compelled to offer this picture of human society to that people which, among all others, seems to me to possess the greatest advantages of society and to have guarded most successfully against the abuses of society.

If I had had to choose the place of my birth, I would have chosen a society of which the dimensions were limited by the extent of human faculties, that is to say, by the possibility of being well governed; a society where everyone was equal to his job so that no one was obliged to commit to others the functions which belonged

献给日内瓦共和国

高尚、最为光荣的、至高无上的执政者们：

我深信只有善良的公民才有权向他的祖国致以可被接受的敬礼，30年来，我辛勤工作，希望能够由此获得向你们公开表示敬意的资格；现在我很幸运地获得了这个机会，部分地弥补了我的努力所未及，因此我相信我在这里可以仅仅依靠鼓舞着我的一片热诚向我的祖国致以敬礼，而无需考虑我是否具有这样做的权利了。既然拥有如此的幸运出生在你们之间，我又怎能仅仅反映自然赋予人们的平等与人们在彼此间造成的不平等，而不去思考关于平等与不平等的最高智慧呢？这种智慧可以让平等与不平等在你的共和国中实现适当的调和，从而不但能够最接近于自然法则、最有利于维护社会秩序的稳定，而且能够保障个人的幸福。在我研究良知对一个政府的结构所能提供的最佳准则时，我是如此激动地发现所有的最佳准则都已经在你们的政府中实施，因此即使我没有出生在你们的城市中，我仍然感觉到我必须把人类社会的图画呈现给你们，因为我认为，在世界各民族中，你们从政府中获得的利益是最多的，并且最为成功地预防了政府权力的滥用。

如果我能选择我的出生地的话，我会选择这样一个国家：它的幅员并不大，限制在人们的能力能够管理得很好的范围内。在这个社会中，每个人都平等地去工作，所以没有人需要把属于他的责任

to him; a state where, every individual being acquainted with every other, neither the dark manoeuvres of vice nor the modesty of virtue was concealed from public gaze and judgement, a state where the delectable habit of meeting and knowing one another made love of country a love for fellow citizens rather a love for the land.

I would have wished to be born in a country where the sovereign and the people could have only a single and identical interest, so that all the movements of the civil machine always tended to promote the common happiness, and since this is something that cannot happen unless the sovereign and the people are one and the same person, it follows that I would have wished to be born under a wisely tempered democratic government.

I would have wished to live and die free, that is to say, subject to law in such a way that neither I nor anyone else could shake off the honourable yoke, that soft and salutary yoke which the proudest heads bear with all the more docility because they are made to bear none other.

I would have wished that no one within the state could claim to be above the law, and no one from outside could dictate any law that the state was bound to recognize. For whatever might be the formal constitution of a government, if there is one man who is not subject to the law, all the others will necessarily be at his discretion (A). And if there is one national ruler and another alien ruler, no matter what division of authority they could arrange between themselves, it is impossible for both to be duly obeyed or for the state to be well governed.

I would certainly not wish to live in a republic newly founded, however good its laws, for fear that the government might not fit the exigences of the moment, either not suiting the new citizens or the citizens not suiting the new government, so that the state would be liable to upheavals and destruction almost from its birth. For there

委托给他人。在这样一个国度里，每一个人都彼此认识，无论是邪恶的阴谋还是谦逊的美德都不能逃脱公众的注视与评判。在那里，互相交流和认识的良好习惯，将使得对于祖国的爱成为对同胞的热爱，而非对土地的热爱。

我会希望出生在这样一个国家：在那里，统治者和人民拥有的共同利益是唯一的，这样一个政治机构的一切行动将会永远趋于促进人们的共同幸福。因为所有这些只有在统治者和人民的意志是统一的时候才会发生，所以我期望出生在这样一个国度中，这个国度由一个明智、温和的民主政府统治。

我会希望自由地生活，自由地死亡。那就是说我必须如此服从法律：无论是我还是其他任何人都可以摆脱法律光荣的束缚。这是一种温和而有益的束缚，即使是最为骄傲的人也会非常温顺地接受这种束缚，因为他们生来是不被法律以外的其他东西所束缚的。

我会希望国内的任何人都不能自以为是地宣布他凌驾于法律之上，并且国外的任何人也不能制定强迫这一国家去承认其权威的法律。因为不论一个国家的政体如何，如果有一个人不遵循法律的，那么其他所有的人将会不可避免地听信于他对事物的判断(A)。同时，如果一个国家有一个本土的领导和一个外国的领导者，那么无论他们是如何划分主权的，都既不可能被人们适当地服从，也不可能将国家治理得很好。

我肯定不会希望生活在一个刚刚建立的共和国里，无论它的法律是多么的完善。因为我惧怕新建立的政府会不能应对危急时刻。无论这种不适应是政府不适应新的公民，还是新的公民不适应新的政府，都可能使这个国家在其诞生的最初阶段陷入

is in freedom, as there is in heavy and succulent food or in rich wine, something which fortifies robust constitutions used to it, but which overwhelms, ruins and intoxicates weak and delicate people unused to it. Once a people is accustomed to masters, it is no longer in a condition to do without them. If such peoples try to shake off the yoke, they remove themselves even further from liberty; for as they mistake for liberty an unbridled licence which is the opposite of freedom, their revolutions almost always deliver them into the hands of seducers who multiply their chains. Even the Romans, that model of a free people, were in no situation to govern themselves when they first emerged from the oppression of the Tarquins Debased by the slavery and ignominious toil that had been imposed upon them, they were at first only a stupid populace needing to be handled and governed with the utmost sagacity, so that in becoming accustomed little by little to breathing the salubrious air of freedom, souls which had been enervated, or rather brutalized, by tyranny, could acquire by degrees those austere morals and that noble courage which ultimately made them of all peoples the most worthy of respect. For this reason I would have sought as my own country a happy and peaceful commonwealth of which the history was lost, so to speak, in the darkness of time; one which had endured only such hostile attacks as might serve to bring forth and fortify the courage and patriotism of the inhabitants, a commonweathh whose citizens, being long accustomed to a wise independence, were not only free hut fit to be free.

I would have wanted to choose as my country one delivered by a lucky incapacity from the fierce love of conquest and protected by an even more fortunate location from fear of becoming itself the object of conquest by any other state; a free city surrounded by several nations none of which had any interest in invading it, but all having an interest in preventing others from invading it, in a word, a republic which would not tempt the ambitions of its neighbours and might reasonably count on their support in case of need.

剧变和毁灭的危险。因为就自由这个问题而言,类似于营养丰富并且多汁的食物和香醇的葡萄酒,对于习惯它的人来说是增强体质,但是对于那些身体虚弱不习惯它的人来说,就是极不合适并且最终会摧毁他的身体或者使其沉醉其中的。一旦人民习惯了他的主人,就再也不会行为上背离他。倘若这样的人民试图摆脱束缚,他们将会使自己离自由更远。因为他们错误地将与自由相背离的放荡不羁当成了自由,其结果往往是他们的革命使他们落到了那些骗子手中。这些骗子利用华丽的语言煽动群众,最终为他们戴上更加繁重的桎梏。即使是自由民典范的罗马人,在他们从塔尔干王朝强加在他们身上的奴隶制和卑贱的苦力中摆脱的初期,也是缺乏自治能力的。他们起初只是一群愚昧的平民,需要由最大的智慧来加以控制和管理,后来罗马人逐渐地学会了呼吸健康的自由空气,并且其因为暴政而变得虚弱、残酷无情的灵魂也渐渐地获得了简朴道德和高尚勇敢的精神,所有这些最终使得罗马人成为各民族中最值得尊重的民族。因为这个原因,我将寻找一个幸福而安宁的共和国作为我的祖国:这个国度里所有陈腐的东西都已经在时间的黑暗中消失;这个国度里所经受过的侵害数量恰好适合于产生和增强居民们的勇敢和爱国心;这个国度中的公民习惯于理智的自主,他们不仅仅是自由的,而且是适合自由的。

我会要求选择这样一个国家作为我的祖国:它很幸运不拥有强大的军事力量,因此也就没有征服他国的野心;同时更加幸运的是,由于它所处的地理位置,使得它不用惧怕成为他国政府的征服目标。它是一个处于几个国家之间的自由城市,这些国家非没有任何侵犯它的意图,而且所有这些国家还要防止其他的国家侵犯它。总之,它是一个非但不会引起邻国野心而且还可以指望从邻

It follows that a state in such a fortunate situation would have nothing to fear except from itself; and if its citizens were trained in arms, it would be for the sake of developing that soldierly ardour and noble courage which go so well with liberty and nourish men's taste for it rather than from the necessity of providing their defence.

I would have chosen a country where the right to legislate was common to all the citizens—for who could know better than they what laws would most suit their living together in the same society? But I would not have approved of plebiscites, like those of the Romans, whereby the rulers of the state and those most interested in its preservation were excluded from deliberations on which the safety of the state often depended and whereby the magistrates, by an absurd inconsistency, were deprived of rights which ordinary citizens enjoyed.

On the contrary, I would have desired, as a means of thwarting self-interested and ill-conceived projects and all such hazardous innovations as those which finally destroyed the Athenians, that no one should be at liberty to introduce new laws according to his fancy, but that the right of initiation should be vested uniquely in the magistrates, and that even they should invoke that right with so much circumspection, and the people, for their part, be so reluctant to give their consent to new laws, and new laws be promulgated with so much solemnity, that before the constitution could be disturbed, there would be time enough for everyone to reflect that it is above all the great antiquity of laws which makes them sacred and venerable, that men soon come to despise laws which can be changed every day; and that when the habit is acquired of neglecting ancient usages in the name of improvement, great evils are often introduced in the endeavour to correct lesser ones.

Above all, I would have fled from a republic, as one necessarily ill governed, where the people, believing themselves able either to do without magistrates altogether or to allow their magistrates only a very precarious authority, foolishly kept in their own hands the administration of civil affairs and the execution of their own laws.

国获得合理支持的共和国。因此,位于如此幸运的地理位置的国家除了担心它自己以外是可以高枕无忧的。如果它的公民需要接受军事训练,那将是为了弘扬英勇的精神和高贵的勇气,而非自卫的需要。这种英勇的精神和高贵的勇气是与自由相一致的,并且有利于促进人民对于自由的爱好。

我会选择一个立法权属于全体公民的国家作为我的祖国,因为没有谁比公民本身更清楚什么样的法律最适合于他们共同居住的社会。但是我并不赞同罗马人的那种平民公决,因为如果这样的话,国家的首领以及那些对国家安全最关心的人将不能决定与国家安全有关的事宜,而这恰恰是一个国家安全所依靠的基础。凭什么政府官员由于这么一个荒谬的措施而被剥夺了作为普通公民所应当享有的权利?

相反,为了摒弃谋取私利与构想拙劣的计划,为了阻止曾使雅典人终归毁灭的那类危险性的变革,我希望任何人都根据自己的喜好任意提出新法律的权利;我希望提案权仅仅属于政府官员;我希望政府官员能够以慎重的态度来行使这种权利;我希望人民能够以严肃的态度来认可这些法律;我希望新的法律能够郑重其事地公布。这样,在宪法被破坏之前,已经有充足的时间使得每一个人认识到是悠久的历史使得所有的法律如此神圣可敬。这将使得人们很快鄙视那些每日都在修改的法律和那些以改良为借口忽略旧习惯的人,后者往往会因为对小的方面进行改良而带来巨大的弊端。

总之,我会逃离这样一个不可能治理好的共和国;在那里,人民相信他们自己有能力可以不要政府官员,或者只给予他们的政府官员不稳定的权力,让他们愚蠢地自行掌管民政事务和执