

## **... lend me your ears.**

History does repeat itself with a rhyme. If so, are we not witnessing a decline of a republic? A nation founded to be a republic, if we can keep it, is facing tremendous political, cultural and economic turmoil. In spite of it, most are distracted by modern conveniences and engineered divisions. With a promise of free market, competition and technological advancement to prosper all, capitalism gained traction. Underneath, the system facilitated by institutions and sell-out experts created modern problems with the illusion of wealth, success, and freedom while keeping the real power in the hands of a few. A page out of Louis XIV's book on building The Palace of Versailles.

*I come not to praise our leaders, but to remind you of their deeds.  
The wealth of nations was built by the hands of the many,  
Yet now, it is hoarded by the few.  
They say they serve the people  
Yet look around you, and tell me, is this prosperity?...*

Through the decades neoliberal economic policies have benefited the oil giants, hedge funds, banks, wealthy investors ...etc. by transferring power from governments to corporations while diminishing labor protections. These have left the workers to negotiate themselves against the mega-rich for fair wages and/or job security. Except it's nearly impossible when anti-union policies and deregulation are rampant. What is keeping us from calling this Feudalism 2.0?

...  
*I do not stand here to tell you what to believe,  
For those in power call themselves wise and just.  
But tell me, have they not stripped you of dignity?  
Have they not sold your labor for scraps,  
while they build golden towers on your backs?  
And, they say they are honorable men...*

Just as medieval kings granted nobles unchecked authority over lands, modern politicians have allowed corporations monopolistic control with little oversight. Modern-day lords, Oil Co., Amazon, Google, Rideshare Co., and Meta with their grip on the digital infrastructure control information while dictating the survival of millions. The shift towards gig work, contracted employment and algorithmic management has left workers without stability, benefits, or bargaining power. Just as peasants were bound to the land, workers are bound to a digital platform. These platforms collect and sell data to the highest bidder.

...  
*They have taken your futures,  
Bound you in chains of debt and law,  
Sold your voice for profits and your freedoms for control.  
And still, they call it progress...*

Feudalism 2.0 is being propelled through technology using the same disastrous playbook based on fear and manufactured crises to create segregated classes while gradually eroding their freedom. Remember how the Volker's Fund through the Chicago School of Neoliberalism created a system that collectively benefit the top (Capitalist) while shrinking the middle class and exploiting the lower class. Currently, those corporations are collecting data to monitor, manipulate and polarize the . This systematically deters organizations, unions and political opposition from thriving. By limiting access to economic resources, electronic banking can be weaponized to punish activism and political opponents. Hallmark of Sun Tzu's, divide-and-conquer strategy.

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*Yet, I hold before you the truth:  
That power does not return itself to the people.  
That chains do not unbind themselves.  
That silence is the ally of oppression...*

History repeats itself, not because we forget, but because we refuse to accept that we are still the same species driven by the same instincts. Democracy is not self-sustaining without vigilance. It can be degraded by corruption and the gradual return to the hierarchical systems of power. With that a republic becomes an empire once people start to believe one strong leader can bring stability.

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*For if we do nothing, the future belongs to them.  
If we rise, the future belongs to us.  
And so, I ask,  
Will you remain as silent subjects?  
Or will you stand as free people?*

We can do better and learn from our past, engage in the present, and shape the future, we can harness the strengths of society to build a better world. The systems that shape our lives are not immovable forces of nature rather they are built on perception, debate, participation, and consent. Let's escape the history's repetition trap without destruction, breaking the cycle using the tools acquired through civilizations.

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