

An independent man, wanting to make a true contribution to the victory over destructive forces which have always threatened progress, must keep this in mind when he tries to judge what is the true reflection in the lives of others of ideals cherished by himself. He should never condemn others merely because they may have chosen other ways than his own to achieve freedom, and he should remember that Mephistopheles, speaking our own language and walking around in our midst, is more dangerous than the devil we paint on the wall. We can have no success in our fight against outward threats against freedom unless we vanquish tyranny and its good helper, fear, in our own societies. That truly is the duty of all favoured by and representing liberal education.

Another phrase which we often meet and which may flatter our minds is that our time is the age of democracy. Well, we have seen a remarkable development in the direction of self-determination and self-rule--by, for, and of the peoples -- and we have seen an impressive growth of democratic institutions in our own countries and in many parts of the world. But even in a restricted political sense of the word democracy we are still far from the goal. If we dig deeper we will find that we are only at the beginning of a slow and difficult process. Equal political rights, equal influence on the government -- these cannot be fully realized until and unless all voters are given equal possibilities to judge for themselves. If we recognize this, we are led on to the economic and social aspects of democracy and, looking at the problem from those angles, I think we must all admit that true democracy is still to be achieved.

On the other hand, even if we have a long way to go, it may justly be said that our time deserves to be called an age of democracy at least in the sense that at no previous stage in history has the ideal of democracy been so generally recognized and such determined efforts made to translate the ideal into reality. Let us, however, remember that the term, if we use it for this reason, should be regarded as a challenge, not as an expression of a completed task.

The problems of that vast majority of humanity which lives in the so-called under-developed countries are closely related to the question I have just mentioned. We are seeing the beginning of an era where previously dependent countries are coming into their own. With this in mind our time has been called an age of revolution. Here again a note of warning is called for. It is true that we are passing through a dramatic stage of transition in the great under-developed part of the world. But history tells us that the beginnings of this go far back in time and undoubtedly the process will stretch far into the future. It is a question of organic growth which can be delayed or accelerated, guided in a constructive direction, or left at the mercy of the strong and chaotic forces at play. What we see happening represents an acute challenge to the more highly developed nations with their greater resources. What has to be done cannot be achieved through any kind of revolution which, in a brief span of time, would give us a new world. In fact, nothing is of greater importance for a peaceful and constructive development of these lands toward freedom and an equal place in the world than to respect the laws of natural growth,