

While worship, our  
work will not be



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

While admitting that democracy has defects, Herman Finer says, that the political, social and economic gifts of democracy endow mankind with vast riches.

He observes that under a democratic government, “ we have the assurance that the sphere of our private life our family, our diversions, our worship, our work will not be invaded except by due process of law in which we have an equal say with any. We rest tranquil that officials and judges will not abuse us and that they themselves will have to answer for discrimination and bias and unauthorised invasions of our private and public life to a public tribunal in which we, as of right, sit as judge and jury. In spite of the unsparing attacks to which democracy has been subjected, it still tends to spread, conferring more and more power on the people. The Second World War was fought on the basis of democracy v. v. dictatorship. It was a victory for democracy.

With it, however, dictatorship did not vanish altogether. It did appear in some new countries other than those vanquished. But once the dictators received recognition and their de jure authority was duly established, they tempered their dictatorships with democratic processes and eventually became elected Presidents in their countries. Nasser in Egypt and Ayub in Pakistan. The United Arab Republic adopted a Republican Constitution in 1964.

Even the Communists are so much enamoured of the appeal the term “ democracy” has that they characterise the Dictatorship of the Proletariat as the best form of a democratic government. It means that democracy has a

great appeal for all people and they have not lost faith in it. It remains their beau-ideal. The problem of democracy centres on the one point: whether or not man is increasing in wisdom. The answer is in the affirmative, for while no other form of government gives so much to the citizen as democracy does, at the same time, no other form of government demands so much from him as does democracy. The rights which a democratic government confers on a citizen and the duties he owes as a result thereof, make him an active participant in the politics of his country and it is a widespread activity. He thinks over and tackles the problems facing him and his country as a rational man and rationality is one of the fundamental tenets of democracy. A corollary to this is that no one has a monopoly of reason.

No one is the sole repository of wisdom. All men have something of value to contribute, however little it may be. The process of making this contribution is democracy. Democracy will, therefore, not perish as long as there is hope in the rationality of man, that is, as long as man is free to think and reason and solve his problems. Thinkers are doers and a citizen of a democratic State does not only think for himself, but he also thinks for the fraternity to which he belongs. Faguet feels that "it is necessary to know what a people thinks, what it feels, what it suffers, what it desires, and what it hopes, and all this can be learnt only from the people itself." Democracy, as said earlier, is more than a form of government. It is a form of society as well, even an ideal or a spirit, a doctrine of human optimism.

Democracies, says Finer, "admit the pragmatic nature of their search for perfection, and recognise that of perfection there is no single exclusive principle. Yet they surmise that if such there should be, it is one yet to be

discovered in a process of evolution, and if the unfolding is to arrive at unsoundness, it must be founded on the unfettered expression and interplay of all opinion.” Democratic societies recognise and welcome change. They must evolve with the development of new points of view, new techniques, and new possibilities for human life. With the extension of the concept of democracy old egalitarian doctrines have been discarded. By equality we do not now mean that all men are alike. There are physical, intellectual and moral differences between one man and another. Granting all these obvious variations, the term equality is interpreted to mean equality of opportunity.

Democracy is that form of society in which every man has a chance and knows he has it. Democracy, therefore, has the merit of ensuring the twin principles of liberty and equality. Under it there is no class of persons possessing special privileges. All are equal amongst equals under the umbrella of equality of opportunity and equality before the law. This is the highest attainment of man’s life. The test of a government is the welfare of the people, and that form of government is to be preferred which gives full scope to the development of human capacities. Democracy makes authority a trust.

Those who exercise authority are chosen by their fellow-citizens for short terms of office and are responsible to them for the exercise of their trust. It implies recognition of the duties of the government and the rights of the people. Democracy is superior to other forms of government, as John Stuart Mill points out, for two reasons. First, the rights and interests of the individual can be safeguarded only when he is able to “ stand up” for them himself.

Secondly, there is a great degree of general prosperity which is more widely diffused as the energies and interests of all the people are stimulated and enlisted in its support. Indirect democracy does not mean actual rule by the people, " For the people rather determine the ends towards which their government shall aim, and watch over those into whose hands they have placed the actual power of administration." In short, it is claimed that popular election, popular control, and popular responsibility are more likely to ensure a greater degree of efficiency and welfare than any other system of government. There is, thus, no justification for the assertion of Sir Henry Maine that Aristocracy is the mother of all progress, that popular government " is characterised by great fragility, and that since its appearance, all forms of government have become more insecure than they were before." The critics of democracy contend that men are not rational as democracy accepts them to be and, as such, the complicated societies in which we live need the best men in government.

They insist that democracy never picks the best and often the worst instead; votes are counted and not weighed is their familiar argument. No one denies that some men are not rational. Neither are men always rational. But neither can one assert that men are always irrational or that all men are irrational. Men are men, with all their frailties.

This is true of all governments and democracy is no exception to it. But the simple question is what form of government can provide the scope for the use and flowering of rationality? It is democracy, because it is informative and is the only conduit for social forces that is at all adequate in modern times. It admits the will of all members into the determination of social

policy, secures the representation of all views and feelings and is therefore more responsive to social and economic changes. It taps sources of political talent which lie beyond the purview of other systems of government. It is best qualified constantly to adjust the supply of control to social need and favours a wholesome social equilibrium. It deepens the sense of social obligation.

Similarly, the merit of democracy does not lie in its efficiency as a form of government. Nobody has ever defended democracy on grounds of efficiency. It is defended on the grounds that the denial of freedom involves the denial of certain personal values which are more important than efficiency.

A good government, tested on the touchstone of efficiency alone, is no substitute for self-government. Democracy is the most cherished goal of self-government. It is a government by the people for their welfare and, as such, it stimulates them to self-education. The supreme test of excellence in government is not the well feeding of the people nor is it to be found in the rigidity of order the State maintains. "It is the character a polity tends to create," as Lowell remarks, "in the citizens by whom it must be sustained.

The best government in the long run is one that nurtures a people strong in moral fibre, in integrity, industry, self-reliance, and courage." Democracy elevates the character and develops the political intelligence of the masses. It is an active, growing, progressive force inspired by the ideal of service to mankind. Self-government is not a mere form of institution to be had when desired.

It demands from an average man a certain degree of intelligence, honesty, public spirit and discipline. These virtues give a people, as Woodrow Wilson points out, “ self-possession, self-mastery, the habit of order and peace and common counsel and reverence for law which will not fail when they themselves become the makers of law; the steadiness and self-control of political maturity.” Democracy, therefore, develops the potential intellectual and spiritual qualities of man. It promotes a better and higher form of national character, because the citizens feel that they are a part and parcel of government. Democracy is inseparable from a belief in the methods of peaceful persuasion, in the ultimate reasonableness of man, and his response to rational argument. A democratic society is not susceptible to revolutions.

The people know and feel that they are both sovereign and subjects. If they have any grievances, the redress is easy and can be had by peaceful and constitutional means. The political life of the community is based on complete freedom of discussion out of which emerges public opinion which is the guiding source of political authority. “ Since the law will be made and the administration be given momentum and controlled by us, voters,” writes Finer, “ and since our power can be successfully exerted by association and persuasion, the impulse of the system is to foster fellowship and a common conscience among all men”; the spirit of self-help, self-reliance, self-respect and cooperation and a sense of responsibility in the individual.

Does any other form of government offer so much?