

terest of humanity. Today is too early to tell the outcome.

The Danger to Democracy

In the last half of the twentieth century, the peril to the dynamic democratic experiment, to "the permanent revolution," seems superficially to be external. This is a planet on which the fascist bid for world domination was repelled only to be succeeded by at least an equally monstrous threat, the Russian and Chinese Soviet powers proceeding through a combination of subversion and direct aggression to swallow up Asiatic and Eastern European nations.

Yet it is part of a communist theory to rely on internal weaknesses in the practice of the democratic idea. They hope an internal failure of the democratic experiment in America and the world will do their work for them. As their guarantee that the world will fall like ripe fruit into their hands, the Marxists, true to their prophet, rely upon the collapse of capitalism, recurring economic depression, fondness for imperialist exploitation, in contrast to high Soviet production, rising living standards of backward peoples in the Soviet orbit, know-how in cultivating international relationships. They regard as essentially hypocritical American values of respect for the worth and dignity of the individual, of love for liberty and freedom, of egalitarianism, and of fraternity. In refutation they allege undemocratic practices by Americans, segregation of the American Negro, the plight of slum dwellers, persisting maldistribution of wealth, vestiges of industrial feudalism, starved social services (especially education) in an affluent society, callousness toward underdeveloped nations, use of foreign aid

as an instrument of military policy, superior attitudes of Americans abroad. The communists regard our undemocratic policies as certain to doom our democratic protestations.

The communists may be right. It is up to us to prove them wrong. The crucial test of the last half of the twentieth century may be whether the democratic way in open competition with the communist way proves to be the better permanent revolution for the peoples of the world. The crucial test of American democracy may be on an issue older than the United States, at least as old as the Greek city state—making our democratic values live in our experiences.

Emerson's Page

His neighbors scratched
stones from their land,
but Emerson with
practiced hand

rifled their secrets
as he read,
A stone is a granite
book, he said.

Stones break plows
hidden from sight
and farmers answer
with dynamite.

But will by force
is not the sun
to ripen truth,
said Emerson,

a pine tree's wisdom
speaks in cones.
He went on reading
brooks and stones.

—JAMES HEARST, *Cedar Falls, Iowa*

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