



What is the Democratic Way of Life?

JAMES L. MEADER

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Let us consider together, for a few moments, the answer to the question: "What is the democratic way of life?"

Everyone of us has his own answer to this question, I am sure, but I am also sure that if each one of us was asked to write down his answer on a piece of paper there would be no two answers alike.

How can we teach youth the principles of democracy unless we are in agreement as to what those principles are?

How can we explain to the world what we stand for unless we know ourselves?

How can we regain for ourselves the high enthusiasm and the shining faith in our form of government and way of life that earlier generations of Filipinos and Americans had—and that we now must have if we are to meet, match and surpass the fanatic fervor of those who would exchange democracy for Communism — unless we fervently believe in and hold fast to a common set of basic beliefs and make them once again a thrilling, active, guiding force in our lives, in our country and in the world?

The most helpful statement of democratic principles I have seen in recent years appeared in one of the more popular periodicals, a copy of which came to my attention a few weeks ago. The definition of democracy I now present for your consideration is based on this magazine article to which I have just referred. It has helped me to reduce my vague, general concept of democracy to a set of simple, practical guiding principles. I hope it will serve the same useful purpose with the members of this audience.

Principle No. 1. Each and every person is of importance and value as an individual. This, I believe, is the cornerstone, the foundation of our whole concept of democracy. It involves the right of every individual to live his own life, to speak for himself, to choose and change his leaders. It is the very antithesis of the Communist way of life in which the individual has no value or importance as an individual but is, only one of many faceless beings in a voiceless land called "the people" or "the masses."

In our philosophy of life, the individual is the center of our concern. It is his protection, his freedom, his development, his welfare toward which we are striving. Other societies may exist to glorify the state and, if possible, to dominate the world, or to set up totalitarian regimes where the individual's freedom is sacrificed for a few alleged material benefits. Not so democracy. (We are committed to the philosophy that what is not good for the individual is not good for a country.) We call this way of life Democracy. Some people suspect it is little, if any, different from applied Christianity.

Growing out of this first principle, is a second, which is corollary to it—

Principle No. 2. All men are created equal. This does not mean that all individuals have equal ability or develop equally or that they should be forced into an exact equality of thought, speech or material possessions. That would be equality without freedom. And democracy has always maintained that equality and freedom should go together. Equality of **opportunity** for all men is what democracy stands for, together with freedom to use that opportunity in any desired manner, providing it does not interfere with the equal rights of others or the welfare of the people as a whole.

Principle No. 3 is the right to freedom of speech, which embraces freedom of the press, of radio, of motion pictures, in fact freedom of every means by which man may express his thoughts on any subject. Again, this is the very antithesis of the Communist way of life which imprisons, exiles or

murders all who disagree with, or speak in criticism of, the government in power.

Principle No. 4 is the right to freedom of assembly. Just as democracy believes in the right of individual action, so does it believe that individuals should be free to act together for the benefit of all.

Principle No. 5 is the right to freedom of religious worship. Communism, on the contrary approves only of worship of the state, calls religion the "opiate of the people" and persecutes religious leaders.

Principle No. 6. The right to security of person and property. Your constitution and ours provide protection against illegal search and seizure, and loss of life, liberty or property without due process of law. Under Communism, the state can confiscate personal property at any time and enter one's home and search and seize its contents without permission or even warning.

Principle No. 7. The right to equal protection under the law. As individuals are equally important, so laws must apply equally to all, without special privileges for individuals or groups.

Principle No. 8. The right of the individual to work wherever and for whom he wishes. This includes the right to quit work or change jobs whenever he wishes and join whatever union he desires. Under Communism the worker is virtually a slave, being unable to quit or change his occupation except for serious physical disability without approval from the government. To leave a job without approval is considered

a crime punishable by imprisonment.

Principle No. 9. The right to vote for the person of his choice. This is the individual's most potent weapon in the protection of his rights and freedoms.

Democracy believes also that every man has—

(**Principle No. 10. The right to a good education.**)

Principle No. 11. The right to live where he pleases.

Principle No. 12. The right to join and belong to organizations of his choice.

Principle No. 13. The right to own property.

Principle No. 14. The right to start his own business.

Principle No. 15. The right to manage his own affairs.

Principle No. 16. The right to earn his own living when, where and how he wants to.

Under democracy there are also limiting principles. These are necessary because individual freedom sometimes clashes with individual equality. For this reason our rights as individuals must be limited and those limitations are themselves principles. Specifically these limiting principles are as follows:

Principle No. 17. The rights of any individual shall not interfere with the equal rights of other individuals. One's right to swing his arms stops where the other fellow's nose begins.

Principle No. 18. The rights of any individual shall not interfere with the welfare of the people as

a whole. Freedom of speech does not give the individual the right to shout "fire" in a crowded theatre where there is no fire and thus endanger the lives of others.

Principle No. 19. Every individual owes obedience to the laws under which he lives. The individual has the right to talk against a law, to work and vote to change that law, but NOT to disobey that law.

I said a few moments ago that we must be well acquainted not only with the principles of democracy but also with the beliefs and practices—the general rules of action and conduct—which are an outgrowth of the principles established by law. Several such beliefs and practices have stood the test of time and are today a part of the democratic heritage. I refer specifically to the following:

1. **Every man shall be judged by his own record.** Democracy believes that a man must stand on his own feet and be judged on the basis of his own achievements.

(2) **Every man is free to achieve as much as he can.** Democracy believes that where the laborer's son may become President, where any man may achieve greatness, there is the greatest incentive for every man to do his best.

3. **To achieve anything, a man should be willing to work.** Democracy holds that "you don't get something for nothing," that to get anything takes a willingness to work and to work hard.

4. **Achievement also depends upon the ability to do a good job.** Add to "willingness to work" the ability to produce the best possi-

ble results and we have the generally accepted basis for individual achievement in a democracy.

5. **Every man has the right to a fair share of the results of his work and his ability.**

6. **Security is the ability of a man to provide for himself.** The only true security for any individual is the opportunity, the ability, and the determination to work and plan and save for his own present and future. Self-reliance is vital to individual independence and personal freedom. No man can be "proud and free" who depends on others for his security.

7. **When an individual cannot provide his own security, the responsibility should be assumed by others.** Democracy believes that no one should starve, or be without adequate clothing and shelter. It follows from this that those who have more than their basic needs should share the responsibility of providing the essentials of security for those who need help.

8. **Every individual must deal fairly with other individuals.** Honesty, fairness, and personal integrity are virtues that help free and independent individuals get along with each other without losing their independence.

9. **Fair and free competition is a good thing.** Democracy has always believed that competition among individuals or groups encourages greater effort which in turn brings greater benefits to all.

10. **Cooperation among individuals is vitally important.** General Eisenhower has said: "The freedom to compete vigorously accompanied by a readiness to cooperate wholeheartedly for the perform-

ance of community and national functions, together make the democratic system the most productive on earth."

Individual freedom carries with it an equal responsibility to use that freedom wisely. Specifically I wish to stress that—

1. **The individual is responsible for himself and his family.** He must protect them and provide for their present and future well-being.

2. **The individual has responsibilities to the groups of which he is a part.** He must give of his best to his community, his church, his employer, his union, and to every group in which individuals cooperate for their mutual benefit.

3. **The individual has responsibilities to his country.** He must be an active citizen, interesting himself in local, provincial and national government, voting wisely, thinking, speaking and acting to preserve and strengthen freedom, equality, opportunity and justice for every individual.

4. **The individual has responsibilities to the world.** Man's horizons have expanded. What happens in the world affects him, and his actions can affect the world. Today, therefore, each man has a responsibility to act—and to encourage his country to act — so that freedom and cooperation will be encouraged among the people and nations of the world.

Finally, a democracy must have faith in itself. It does not claim perfection. But it has faith in its ability to move forward, to improve, to grow, to provide more people with more of everything

(Continued on page 26)