



DEMOCRACY

LA DEMOCRAZIA

(2009), PAGES 388

Is democracy an ideal or an achievement? While discussions in institutional politics have not got beyond democracy as an ideal, here the testimonies and the voices of men and women committed to civil rights and liberties in different countries point the way to peace on the planet

We are not content with forcing democracy to fit into a standard definition of what it is. Our intellectual concern is to remove democracy from ontology, relations of power, pressure groups, oligarchy, thanatology and hence from a predetermined destiny. Everything seems to be a foregone conclusion: everyone agrees, everyone is democratic. Is there anyone who isn't? Is there any dictator that does not profess to be democratic? Is there any republic that does not call itself democratic? But this kind of democracy is an ideal, a concept, a model, rather than a hypothesis, a device and an intellectual process. The real question is the city. What is the city's device of government? In what way do art and culture, art and invention constitute the city – the modern city, the worldwide city, the city of what is to come?

“For thirty-six years or so we have been inviting writers, politicians, entrepreneurs, artists, poets and philosophers to share their observations on the question of civilization, with a different theme each time. This is in itself a dispositive device of the city, an intellectual device. What matter are the testimonies, anecdotes, proposals and questions that, after three or four days, remain open each time. The question must be left open, never closed. That is what we live for”.

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