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BIRTHDAY FOR EVERYMAN

BIRTHDAYS are good occasions on which to look to the past and to the future—to make some sort of stocktaking. December 10 is such an occasion. It marks the third anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the first of its kind in history. Of course, many of the rights laid down in the thirty articles had been recognised in many countries, even as far back as Magna Carta. Remember? "No freeman shall be arrested or detained in prison, or deprived of his freehold, or banished, or in any way molested; and we will not set forth against him, nor send against him, unless by the lawful judgment of his peers and by the law of the land. . ."

But there were some provisions of the Declaration which still sound pretty revolutionary when interpreted quite literally. Some of these are mentioned in a special programme, *Our Present Duty*, which YA and YZ stations will broadcast at 9.15 p.m. on Monday December 10. It was prepared in Paris by the Radio Division of UNESCO to mark the third birthday of the Human Rights Declaration.

The right to take part in government . . . the right to marry without any limitation due to race or nationality . . . free choice of employment . . . the right freely to leave one's country and return to it . . . the right to enjoy the arts and share the benefits of scientific advancement . . . the right to equal pay for equal work . . . the right to higher education accessible to all on the basis

of merit—these (says the programme) are articles not so readily accepted in practice. For one thing, racial prejudice rears its head. Yet if we insist on taking a stand against sharing our rights and privileges, what have we to fall back on but motives of greed and selfishness: "We keep what we can while we can hold it."

Or take Article 25 of the Declaration: "The right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family." This sort of right has become the watchword of 20th Century thinking. It has become widely recognised that if the millions now on the breadline or below it are not to become a threat to the standards of the rest of the world basic economic security must be guaranteed to all. And that's where access to raw materials, technical knowledge, modern methods, and the right use of energy come in.

Such rights as freedom of conscience and religion, protection by the law and freedom of opinion may not (says the narrator in *Our Present Duty*) be directly dependent on economic and social progress. But the majority of these rights are never likely to be universally enjoyed while material wealth and progress is confined to less than a quarter of the world's people.

The Deputy-Director-General of UNESCO, Dr. J. W. Taylor, sees these problems as affecting all nations: "The three thousand million human beings who will inhabit this world in the year 2000 will have to be fed, clothed, housed, and educated. . . Let us measure the causes of our present disputes against the reasons we have to unite in the face of problems so vast. The future dictates our present duty."

THE REFUGE

*EXTERNAL to my world the bombers roar.
Whose addled eggs corrupt the listening ear;
But I've a nest of silence, where I live
Against the fluttering heart-beat of my love.*

*IT is our place of refuge in a night
In which the lights grow dim and flicker out;
And here, though moon and stars should cease to work,
We'll burn one tiny candle in the dark.*

—Anton Vogt.