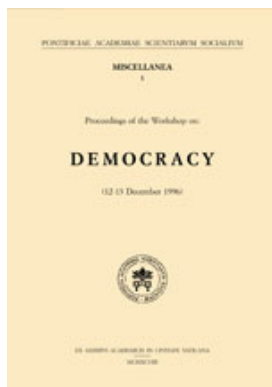




## Democracy

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Democracy today seems to represent the normal constitution of a modern State. The number of democratic States is great. And in many of these States democracy has been of a lasting success for the people living in it. On the other hand, there are still numerous States which are either undemocratic or whose democracies are in many ways imperfect. Yet for the most part they, too, are acknowledged to be democracies – be it that they declare democracy as an objective still lying in the future; be it that the deficiencies of their current constitutions are, in relative terms, considered the “most democratic” solution in the light of the given circumstances. Thus the democratic principle enjoys wide recognition – in truth or in the sense of paying lip-service. At the same time, however, democratic reality is interspersed with and surrounded by questions. This applies to countries in which democracy has been genuinely and extensively established. And, naturally, it applies even more so to countries in which democracy has in some way or another remained flawed. Democracy is often accompanied by disappointment, with the political life of democracies far too often showing deficits. Thus, on the one hand, we encounter the strong conviction that the democratic system is, as it were, the end of the story; yet on the other, there are so many fears that democracy could fail to meet up to the values of “good governance” and leave the needs of the people unfulfilled. Hence, to reflect on democracy – on how it may best serve the common weal – is a great responsibility.

Hans Zacher