

### Questions

1) What is the essential nature of academic freedom and why is it necessary for the pursuit of truth?

2) What threats to academic freedom do you see at this time?

3) What in your view are the particular responsibilities of a citizen at this time in the defense of our traditional freedoms as expressed in our Bill of Rights?

4) What in your opinion are the special obligations of an intellectual in a democratic society?

5) What in your opinion is the best way to help the victims of political inquisitions?



## Answers

- 1) By academic freedom I understand the right to search for truth and to publish and teach what one holds to be true. This right implies also a duty: one must not conceal any part of what one has recognized to be true. It is evident that any restriction of academic freedom acts in such a way as to hamper the dissemination of knowledge among people and thereby impedes rational judgment and action.
- 2) The threat to academic freedom in our time must be seen in the fact that, because of the alleged external danger to our country, freedom of teaching, mutual exchange of opinions and freedom of press and other media of communication are encroached upon or obstructed. This is done by creating a situation in which people feel their economic positions endangered. Consequently, more and more people avoid expressing their opinion freely, even in their private social life. This is a state of affairs which a democratic government cannot survive in the long run.
- 3) The strength of the Constitution lies entirely in the determination of each citizen to defend it. Only if every single citizen feels duty bound to do his share in this defense are the constitutional rights secure. Thus, a duty is imposed on everyone which no one must evade, notwithstanding risks and dangers for him and his family.
- 4) In principle, everybody is equally involved in defending the constitutional rights. The "intellectuals" in the widest sense of the word are, however, in a special position since they have, thanks to their special training, a particular strong influence on the formation of public opinion. This is the reason why those who are about to lead us toward an authoritarian government are particularly concerned with intimidating and muzzling that group. It is therefore, in the present situation, especially important for the intellectuals to do their duty. I see this duty in refusing to cooperate in any undertaking that violates the constitutional rights of the individual. This holds in particular for all inquisitions that are concerned with the private life and the political affiliations of the citizens. Whoever cooperates in such a case becomes an accessory to acts of violation or invalidation of the Constitution.
- 5) It is important for the defense of civil rights that assistance be given to the victims of this defense who in the above mentioned inquisitions have refused to testify, and beyond that to all those who through these inquisitions have suffered material loss in any way. In particular, it will be necessary to provide legal counsel and to find work for them.  
This requires money the collection and use of which should be put into the hands of a small organization under the supervision of persons known to be trustworthy. This organization should be in contact with all groups concerned with the preservation of civil rights. In this way it should be possible to solve this important problem without setting up another expensive fund-raising machinery.