

# Foreword

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For many years, aligning myself with perceptive scholars the world around, I have had pleasure in the French response to my work. My pleasure is especially strong in this collection of papers, many of them given at a gathering in Paris in September 2004. The focus of lively discussion at this Galbraith Conference was the economic world and its singular feature: the struggle between truth and personal preference. Such was the mood of the meeting in Paris; such was the source of my sorrow that age and physical instability forbidding, I could not be present.

Belief, as here made clear, is sadly subject to personally advantageous belief. The realignment of belief with reality is one of the great tasks of intellectual life. One hesitates to make the comment but I nonetheless risk it: nothing over the centuries has more strongly motivated French thought than appreciation of the truth. In the economic world, no aspect is more important than the separation of belief and prognostication from personal, group, and corporate preference and advantage. It was this aspect, I cannot but think, that brought an array of talent to the Paris meeting and continues, in the publication of this volume, to unite those who pursue truth as distinct from contrived advantage. No one can doubt my gratitude for those who proceeded with the Galbraith Conference and this volume.

**John Kenneth Galbraith**

