

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS - IOWA STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE - AUGUST 22, 1946

TOMORROW - The world

It is a distinct honor and privilege to be afforded the opportunity of addressing this graduating class of Iowa State Teachers College. Those of us who have been privileged to enjoy the experience of a college education are now called upon to assume tremendous responsibilities in our communities, our state, and nation.

Education can no longer be considered a luxury item. It is one of the necessities of democratic citizenship. Educational institutions stand as the guardians of freedom, and those who teach and those who study have a responsibility to seek the truth, and ultimately to translate their knowledge into programs of action.

This commencement exercise comes at a period in human history unequaled by its dramatic tenseness and its uncertainty as to the future. The awful specter of world-wide chaos casts a dark shadow over every home in every land.

*Hitler's youth - X
Europe today
Tomorrow
the world!*

It becomes ever more clear that the winning of the war was not the winning of the peace. Military victory, like the victory of a political party in an election, determines which group shall be in power and which group shall be dominant. Following the victory on the battlefield, the great task of reconversion and rehabilitation begins. It is here that real victory is either won or lost. It is in the attainment of peace and security where governmental and economic systems are tested as to their adequacy.

Today America is facing that test. There is no escaping it. Either we master the multitude of complex problems which beset us, or we forfeit the greatest opportunity that was ever offered to a nation and its people. Never have we faced such a crisis. Never has there been a day in history when steadfastness of purpose was more essential, and the need of leadership more imperative. It is with this background that I am privileged to

discuss with you the meaning of Americanism — *in a world setting!*
a world - that today + tomorrow looks to America!
Americanism was best defined when Thomas Jefferson penned the immortal

words of our Declaration of Independence. In a stirring message to all humanity, this great American gave us our political creed and ideology.. In the 18th Century world that was ruled by despots and monarchs, where the philosophy of the divine right of kings was predominant, Americans bluntly and boldly stated — "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

With these brief words there came a new era in human relations and political organization. The fulfillment of the objectives and purposes of this new era has not yet been accomplished because democracy is an unceasing business of progress. It ever holds before us new challenges, and requires the relentless dedication of individuals to the processes of self-government and self-discipline.

If you will accept with me that the words I have taken from our Declaration of Independence are the substance of our political and moral faith, then it becomes clear that Americanism necessitates a continuous dedication of our lives to these high and noble purposes. Bear in mind that our philosophy, and our faith, is not one that "ought to be," or "has been." Our faith is stated in the terms of the present. We hold these truths to be self-evident. This means that we hold these truths self-evident every day of our lives. Our belief in the equality of man, and our recognition of man's relationship to his God, along with his inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, is the very essence of our democratic faith.

It is around these principles that we must rally and add meaning to them by a practical demonstration of political policy and economic program.

Americanism, in short, means democracy. It means a political system in which man--the individual--is the end to be served. True Americanism requires that all institutions, governmental and economic, be devoted to the advancement of human welfare.

Just as a building must have a foundation, and a religion a spiritual creed, so must democratic government have a clear and concise set of principles and objectives. Our political institutions, and our economic system, is based upon the fundamental premise of individual freedom and the essential worthwhileness of every person. Our concept of human equality is derived from our recognition of the spiritual nature of man and his relationship to one God. Phrases such as the "dignity of man" have meaning only when we recognize that we are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights. Equality, as we understand it, does not necessarily mean physiological and mental equality, but rather is much broader and comprehensive in its application.

There is an equality amongst men in democratic philosophy which is derived from our belief in the equal protection of the laws to all persons, and our recognition of a common fatherhood in one God. Every institution of government, federal, state, and local, which serves the people of this nation, rests upon our belief in the sovereignty or the power of the people. Government, as we know it, is not above the citizen, but rather, is a servant and an agent of the citizen and his community. Government in a democracy is empowered with only such authority as those who have all power are willing to concede to it for the common good and the general welfare. This is the basis of our American political system.

A political philosophy which recognizes the fraternity of mankind leaves no room for indifference and isolationism. Americanism in its broader sense, is an expansive philosophy, and one that must grow and progress. Regardless of philosophy or theory, the economic and political

effects of today necessitate an understanding of the world about us, and our participation in the great affairs of international politics. There is no choice left to us. It is either one world, or none. It is either cooperation and understanding, or chaos and destruction. ~~It is either a world~~

There are two basic fundamental and inter-related problems which face this world, and America in particular. The first is that of post war reconversion of our economic enterprise, and the readjustment of our political institutions to peace-time living. The second, and of equal importance, is that of attaining a means of international organization which will guarantee a just and enduring peace. I repeat these two basis issues are inseparable and fundamental to the future of civilization and democratic principles.

Permit me to state a few political axioms. Democratic principles and republican or representative institutions of government cannot long endure in a world that periodically faces world-wide crisis. The philosophy of totalitarianism in both of its manifestations, Communism and Fascism, is a product of world-wide crisis, and thrives on the threat of national or international disorder. Totalitarianism lives by fear. It receives its strength and nourishes itself upon an apparent insecurity. Times like these and the days of the 1930's are, and were, fertile soil for dictatorship. Democratic government requires good will amongst men. It grows strong in conditions which are conducive to peaceful living. By its very essence democracy rests upon the respect for human personality and a regard for the laws and the cultures of men.

National or international economic confusion, mass unemployment and insecurity are the enemies of freedom and free political institutions. Only those countries which have a long history of representative government and a deep and abiding faith in man's ability to govern himself, endure the calamities of national and international insecurity which have beset us in this

past half century. Modern world history reveals that people desire political and economic freedom. Modern world history also reveals that the aspirations and the hopes of the great mass of people have been smashed by the economic and political rivalries and the subsequent international chaos.

These months since V-J Day are part of the borrowed time of democracy. If democratic institutions are to flourish, yes, even if they are to survive where they now exist, we must boldly answer and solve the problem of economic bankruptcy which faces Europe and Asia, of mass starvation which now rests heavy upon this world, and the rehabilitation of economic enterprise in other lands. Likewise, we must have the courage to support with all of our material aid and political strength, and policy, parties and governments in other nations which offer the hope of rebirth of free political institutions.

We must have the will to oppose with equal force all endeavors on the part of any nation to either jeopardize or thwart the growth of democratic government. This is Americanism

*that meets the demands of what Mr
Waltie termed - One World.*

Bluntly, this means that we must have a keen and everlasting interest in the affairs of other people. We dare not cease our vigilance nor hesitate in our decisions.

Most of us believe that we are capable of detecting dictatorship in all of its forms when we see it, or are confronted with it. Yes, I think it would be true to say that we are more keenly aware of what we term foreign threats to our way of life than we are to the causes of our own discontent and the source of the difficulties which beset us within our own nation.

Few of us have systematically analyzed the true meaning of democracy and our free institutions of government and economics. Most of us have taken these things for granted, worshiping them with a blind faith, and all too often refusing to analyze our political and economic system. It is only from a searching analysis of the political and economic principles which have guided the development and progress of this country that we can fortify ourselves

in this year and era of revolutionary change brought about by the cataclysm of World War II.

Political institutions and economic systems are living forces, not academic theories. They change as the mind of man changes. They are as effective as those who use them and understand them. They will endure only so long as they satisfy the hopes and aspirations of those whom they benefit. This is particularly true of democratic government. While democratic government has as its source of strength, the will of the people, likewise it has as its source of weakness, the discontent of the people. It was the people that created it for what they thought to be the general welfare. It can be the people which will destroy it, because of what they believe to be the abuses of the general welfare.

American business and its advocates have all too long demonstrated an indifference or an outright refusal to understand the full meaning of our governmental system. Politics to the businessman is a necessary evil. Political leadership and responsibility has been looked upon as something to avoid. When faced with economic emergency, business leadership has clung tenaciously to symbols of the past, and rested its case upon a veneration for the constitution, or what is commonly known as the "good old days".

Change has been resisted as if it were a plague. The outcry of a depressed or an impoverished people was answered reluctantly and with displeasure. If American business has lost its hold upon the minds of the American people, it is because it has refused to lead the way to general prosperity and individual well being. It has served as the resistance movement to progress until it has incurred the distrust, and at times, the outright antagonism of great forces and numbers of our fellow citizens.

In bygone days our country could survive such political reaction and ineptitude, but today, with the average citizen having a keen political

consciousness, and sensing his own power at the ballot box, resistance forces are looked upon as enemies of democracy and enemies of the people.

Here is the challenge. Will the future leaders of American ~~business~~ be the champions of democratic living, or will they, as with many of their predecessors, be the immovable objects facing the irresistible force; will young ^{people} ~~businessmen~~ of today be the champions of a progressive democracy which includes an opportunity for every man; will they be the advocates of international cooperation and express a willingness to assume the responsibility for political and economic leadership?

There is one basic conflict in the thinking of Americans today. On the one hand, there are the leaders of economic enterprise who continue to maintain that government has no right to interfere in the economic affairs. On the other hand, there is a preponderant majority of Americans who contend that the government is their government and, therefore, can act as their instrument for the promotion of the general welfare.

Yes, this conflict centers around an interpretation of democratic government. Is our government to act as but a policeman, as an instrument of force and coercion, or is it to act as an instrument of collective strength and positive purpose? There is no escaping an answer to this question, and I believe that the correct answer is quite obvious. Government that is ultimately in the control of a majority through the established electoral processes will inevitably be used as a means of fortifying the activities of the individuals of which it is comprised.

The day of "that government is best which governs least" is gone. Government today cannot remove itself from the everyday activities of the people. Government today is not a disinterested impersonal third party. It is the embodiment of the strength and the hopes of the people. It will be used to correct abuses, to direct our energies, and to formulate a plan for living.

A democracy cannot stand helpless before the torrent of unleashed power that is everywhere present in this political and economic world of ours. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of young Americans to participate in the political process so that their voice may be heard, so that they may have a part in the making of the great decisions. It will do us no good to complain of the inefficiency of government, when we refuse to enter the political arena in the cause of good government. Democratic government is like a mirror that reflects the image of the body politic. Government is as good, or as bad, as we make it. The representatives we elect to serve us are men of our own choice. If politics in America is corrupt and dirty, it behooves clean-minded citizens and those who believe in decency, to move in and clean house. To stand on the sidelines as a disillusioned critic is not true Americanism. Americanism today, as in the years past, requires eternal vigilance as the price of our liberty. It demands the active participation of every citizen, and the guidance of leadership that comes from the people.

To tie ourselves ^{to a} ~~with~~ concept of democracy which repudiates the use of the instruments of government for the general welfare is to deny ourselves of the stabilizing force of organized society.

Ask yourself if ~~an organization~~ of young Americans can remain apathetic and indifferent to the affairs of politics? This is our government -- it belongs to "we the people," it is our agent to aid and assist us in the realization of our individual aims and aspirations. I urge you to make politics and governmental affairs your personal business -- give it a "double A" priority on your agenda for today and the future. — Pauso

Your commencement is held when dark diplomatic clouds are gathering. In the minds of thoughtful people everywhere is the frightening question, "Are we to lose the peace again this time?"

Our statesmen seek frantically to inject new meaning into their efforts for international cooperation, but anxiety hangs heavy over us as after the last war. This war, some may say, may have been fought in vain. But we of this generation are not easily discouraged. There is yet an abiding faith within us that offers renewed hope. We have dedicated our efforts to a strong and democratically organized United Nations, supported by the leadership and strength of American democracy, and pledged to the world-wide realization of democratic ideals.

It should be recognized at the outset that the United Nations organization, as it is today, is but the framework around which we must build the political, economic, and moral substance that gives meaning to the phrase "one world."

As with all other forms of government, fundamental or constitutional law is within itself but a statement of principle. It is the task of statesmanship to implement these principles by the political machinery and the political and economic philosophy which makes them meaningful. We as Americans should be able to understand this.

We have demonstrated a genius in the field of political organization. We have made the Constitution of the United States -- our fundamental law -- a living force, through statute, interpretation, and experience.

The charter of the United Nations in the 20th Century is no greater challenge to the political genius of men than the Constitution of the United States in the 18th Century. Both have the unique quality of being new and different. Just as the skeptics in 1789 heaped their scorn upon our Constitution, so men of little faith in 1946 spread their cynicism about the United Nations.

We have one consoling thought. These men of little faith -- these doubters and cynics -- have always been on the wrong side at the right time.

Their blindness has deprived them of perspective. Their love of the past and their fear of the future has relegated them to mediocrity and failure.

We dare to dream and to try in this day and age because we recognize the realities of our time. We know that the sovereign nations-state, acting alone and independently, has proven its inability to either provide security in peace time, or safety from the aggressor in war time. Today we are living in one world, where our mutual interdependence is the only real fact of social organization.

World War symbolizes the breakdown of power politics with all of its antiquated devices of alliances, secret treaties, and balance of power principles. The western state system with its independent nations, its concept of absolute sovereignty, and its code of international law based upon sovereign and independent states flourished in a world that had not accepted the doctrine of human equality as stated in the American Declaration of Independence or the rights of man in the French Revolution. Once the creed of liberty, equality and fraternity spread its influence over the Western world, the foundations of power politics began to give way.

Political democracy is predicated upon a belief in the dignity of the individual and an acceptance of the brotherhood of men. Political power is recognized as resting in the people or the community. We call it popular sovereignty. The inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are to be secured and protected by government. It was with this purpose and objective that governments based upon the consent of the governed were instituted among men. The twentieth century has revealed the complete inadequacy of our sovereign and independent nation states to guarantee these inalienable rights. World War II has demonstrated that not even the most powerful nation can by its own strength stand alone.

Our freedom and liberty then rest in the recognition of our interdependence. Our equality can have real meaning only if we are permitted to survive. Survival is not possible by the continued use of out-moded and antiquated concepts of political organization which ignore the essential fraternity of humanity.

Liberty and true equality can come only in a world of law and order guaranteed by the creation of international organization resting its claim to obedience upon the will of the people. It is precisely at this point where the United Nations become the embodiment of democratic principles applied on a world scale. The rights of nations are not to supercede or destroy the rights of people. Humanity is to have a priority over nationality.

We as democratic citizens, and as Americans, should be able to understand the philosophy and the thinking which will make possible a successful United Nations. We have pledged ourselves to the doctrine of human equality. We have recognized as part of our faith that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We have come to understand that democracy is not a static thing -- It can only live if it progresses and expands. Likewise, we have come to know that democratic ideals are seldom realized in the short course of five-year or ten-year plans, but stand out as an eternal challenge to the morality of men and their dedication to high and noble purposes.

Yes, young men and women trained in the schools and colleges of this land should know that our institutions of free government were not born as if by a miracle, but are the product of centuries of sacrifice and years of development. And even today, these institutions of free government can still be classified under the agenda of unfinished business. We have much work to do!

never to weaken its authority, always to build it up, always to add to its prestige and moral power, until the time comes when it speaks for the conscience of mankind with irresistible force.

The United Nations establishes the machinery to keep the peace, if we have the will to make it work. But it can become much more than a means of suppressing aggression. Properly used, it can be a great adventure in establishing throughout the world the positive conditions for peace and progress. We must realize that peace is not merely the absence of war. It is not a static thing. It is dynamic. It is something that has to be fought for all the time -- something that will require continued sacrifice, high courage, and fanatical patience.

Peace is something that we shall be ever winning or losing. This is not a battle where final victory can ever be achieved. It is a battle without end. Mankind is forced to live precariously under the constantly menacing threat of destruction. Surely developments in science and technology have convinced us that we are in a race with our own scientific genius, with our own mounting capacity to destroy as well as to create.

It is only through irresistible and persevering determination that we can gather to ourselves a future worthy of men. Through international organization, based upon the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, nations and men can settle disputes, suppress aggression, develop friendly relations among nations, promote social progress, assist in the solution of international economic problems, encourage respect for human rights everywhere, and in the long run, establish "fundamental freedoms" respected and acceptable to all nations and all peoples.

These ideals can be realized. The organizational machinery as provided in the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretariat, the International Court of Justice, and the Economic and Social Council, provides

the means towards the realization of the principles and objectives stated so concisely and dramatically in the United Nations Charter. ¶ Those of us who long to see this great instrument of international peace strengthened, recognize the weakness that rests within the veto power on the Security Council. We recognize the inherent lack of trust and faith evidenced in the actions of the big powers. We recognize, above all, that those nations which have pledged themselves to the principles of the United Nations, have not necessarily accepted the philosophy and the doctrine of internationalism and world unity which is the very essence of a successful program of world peace.

Nation states today are, in a historical sense, like the pagan or the heathen who accepted Christianity merely through baptism, and not through understanding and faith. We should be perfectly aware of the limited jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. Likewise, we should be deluding ourselves if we thought for a moment that international trade barriers would be and could be eliminated in a few short months, or in one or two sessions of the Assembly. Men do not learn to live together easily. The idea of a world state will be as difficult to assimilate and understand as was that of the nation state. We will learn through trial and error --- we will learn through necessity.

As Thomas Paine once said, "We have it within our power to begin the world over again." The human race is not a spineless, ignorant species to be pushed around and finally exterminated by forces which it has itself created. In spite of the atomic bomb, we are still the captains of our own destiny, and we can make that destiny anything we desire. We recognize that man changes slowly, and his steps towards progress have often been checked by his own inertia and prejudice. But this time we must act quickly and decisevely. We are summoned to accomplish in perhaps two or three decades,

We must press upon our war-time allies a respect for law and order, and urge the universal acceptance of the basic rights of free speech, free assembly, free press, and free elections. We must crusade for the essentials of Americanism.

This requires strength of character, and the willingness to stand alone against the selfish tide of powerful forces. But as we make these demands upon other people and other nations, we must come forth with clean hands and an example of democratic living which can command the respect and confidence of people everywhere. This is a test of our Americanism. As the Chinese philosopher has said, "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."

In conclusion, we in this country must grow to realize that international peace and domestic peace and prosperity, are one and inseparable. There can be no peace in a world threatened by mass unemployment. There can be no peace in ^{the} ~~a~~ world ~~internationally~~ if this nation of ours suffers economic disaster. There can be no successful United Nations if by narrow and greedy American domestic policies, we thwart the progress of our economy to a point where our country finds itself fighting for its own economic existence. An America broken in spirit, disunited in its politics, disrupted in its enterprise, will deprive the world of its only hope of survival.

If this world is to have democratic leadership, it will come from America. If it is to be lost in chaos, we must accept our share of the responsibility. Now, if ever, we need faith and confidence in the instruments of international peace embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

Government policy today is too important to be left in the hands of those who have neither faith in their country nor belief in the principles of democracy. The problems of today and the policies of tomorrow can never

be left to those who despair of our future, and who believe in the inevitability of depression, chaos, and war. We need ~~a~~ new faith. We need a new determination in the ability of men and women to be masters of their own destiny and capable of designing their own future.

This is the Americanism of young Americans.



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