

File Copy

Appendix

Bennington College Commencement Address by Hon. Hubert H. Humphrey, of Minnesota

EXTENSION OF REMARKS
OF

HON. HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
OF MINNESOTA

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Friday, August 12 (legislative day of
Thursday, June 2), 1949

Mr. HUMPHREY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the Appendix of the RECORD a commencement address delivered by me at Bennington College, Bennington, Vt., on July 1, 1949.

There being no objection, the address was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Dr. Burkhardt, members of the faculty, members of the graduating class, and friends, it is a pleasure to be here at Bennington College, a great institution for progressive education, a great institution for democracy, for the building of an America free from the confines of rigid tradition and the corrosive discipline of regimented thought. It is also a pleasure to be here in Vermont, a privilege seldom afforded to a Democrat, and one for which I am grateful. It is not often that I have an opportunity to make an address at a college commencement exercise. Many is the time, however, as a student and as a professor, that I had the opportunity to listen to commencement addresses. I therefore had ample opportunity to realize how dependable many of them are. I therefore stand before you today with no illusions.

I do feel strongly, however, the importance of education in the democratic process. As such, I deplore the cynicism which often prevails in institutions of learning about that educational process. I think it is regrettable to hear a lecture described, for example, as the process by which the notes of the professor pass to the pupil without passing through the brains of either of them. I know that such a description does not characterize Bennington College. And I would hardly share the jesting skepticism of the late President Lowell, of Harvard, when he said: "There must be a great deal of knowledge in our universities because the freshman always bring a little bit in, and the seniors seldom take any of it out."

As I look at you this evening, I know that is not the case with this graduating class or with this college. Nor do I agree with Stephen Leacock's idea for education: If I were founding a university I would found first a smoking room; then a dormitory. Then, when I had a little money in hand, I would establish a decent reading room and a library. After that, if I still had some money I couldn't use, I would get some textbooks and hire a professor.

Education does have a vital role to play in the development of our democratic processes and the strengthening of the fiber of our society. The object of education is to excite the minds of the young and stir their

intellect. I know that objective is being fulfilled by this great institution of learning.

It is said of a mythical Greek hero that by extraordinary physical skill he was able to jump the surface of the earth to the planets and after accumulating the wisdom of his visit, returned to the earth to be worshipped as a god for his superior knowledge. Those we honor today have been able, not by virtue of great physical strength, but by virtue of inquiring minds and intellectual attainment, to lift themselves in the course of the past 4 years from the surface of the earth and explore the mysteries of the universe. We honor them and we honor this great institution of learning just as the ancients have throughout the centuries honored achievements of the mind.

It is the thinkers of the world who represent the real strength of mankind. The pages of history demonstrate beyond question that it is the idea, the creative idea, that survives through the ages, and not merely the creative idea, but the new idea—the nonconformist idea. Who today remembers, except with contempt, the judges who condemned Galileo, while the name of Galileo rings down through the centuries. Who today remembers the stodgy, conservatives who hounded Byron out of England for his unconventional ideas, while Byron, the poet, sings his songs to all the succeeding generations. Who today remembers the vicious attacks on Thomas Paine, while Thomas Paine even more securely becomes enhanced among the great men of our history. And even in more recent times, how seriously do we take those who slandered and libeled and traduced the character of Woodrow Wilson, of Franklin D. Roosevelt, while it is difficult already to remember the names of even their most prominent critics.

It is the nonconformist and creative idea that we need. We are faced in our times with grave new problems. Few of the old answers any longer suffice—we have to find new answers, and that is why we have to encourage bold new thinking by every means. Those who are behind the current wave of anti-Communist hysteria are in reality aiming not only at the real Communist menace which exists, but which is relatively speaking insignificant, but are aiming at every manifestation of independent, critical thought. They are aiming directly at precisely the kind of nonconformist, creative thinking that is our country's greatest need today.

Nonconformist, imaginative, creative thinking is needed in politics, in the press, and, above all, in our educational institutions. Education's chief function is to stimulate such thinking and to open the road to intellectual experimentation and discovery. The continuation and extension of this growth by our academic institutions is crucial to the survival of our democracy. Only by such uninhibited freedom and liberty of education can our society gain the insight and the wisdom and the achievement which the mind has within its grasp to produce for human society.

It is for that reason that it is necessary for those of us who are concerned with the preservation and extension of a democratic society to take note of the evidences of hysteria which are all around us. There is something dangerous and unhealthy in the

activities of some individuals and groups who are trying to whip up mass psychosis.

It is true that the symptoms I have described have cause. They can easily be explained. The policy of the Soviet Union since the end of the Second World War, the seizure by Communists of control of the satellite states, the revelations made here in the United States in trials and investigations—all these show that there is a real attack on western civilization and that some part of that attack is affecting our own country. No wonder some people are worried.

When a nation begins to worry, however, it behaves, as the New York Times recently said, somewhat like a neurotic patient who exaggerates the seriousness of his ailments, and perhaps invents ailments he really does not have. There are signs that some in this country are losing their sense of proportion.

In the hustle and stir of Federal and State un-American activities committees, they act as if there were suspicious characters on every street corner, and an attacker under every bed; we see evidence of anxiety and hysteria in the scores of loyalty investigations that are taking place in the purge of schools and colleges, in witch hunting and censorship, in attempts to censor schoolbooks, and in hundreds of other manifestations, governmental and popular.

It is not easy to suggest a remedy. We cannot pat a large part of the public on the head and tell it to be calm. What we can do, however, is to make people understand that political, illegal acts can be treated like any other illegal acts. When a crime wave occurs in any city, we do not conclude that the country is going to the dogs. Instead we urge better police protection and perhaps prompt and sterner court action. But we preserve due process of law. The same principle can be applied to illegal disloyalty. We investigate it by orderly means, taking great care to protect the innocent. We can punish it when it is clearly proved.

More than that, however, it is important for the preservation of our liberties that we do not overemphasize the problem of disloyalty. This Republic has endured for more than a century and a half. It has survived the great Civil War and enormous social and economic disturbances. Its people are intelligent and well read. There is no danger that they will sell themselves into slavery.

Never before in our history have the American people shown themselves to be as united as in the last decade. As Prof. Henry Steele Commager said, it was not always thus. During the course of the Revolutionary War only about a third of the American people were for the Revolution, a third for the King and a third neutral. During the War of 1812 a large number of our people bitterly opposed the war and actively sabotaged it. During the Mexican War opposition to the war was widespread and ardent in the North. The internal dissension of the Civil War has still not been forgotten. Yet it is an interesting fact that we fought all these wars without sedition acts or loyalty oaths.

Today we are a country incomparably the strongest, the richest, and the best protected in the world. Our Nation and our Constitution have withstood the vicissitudes of 160 years. Our people are intelligent and they are moral. They are devoted to freedom. The real danger we face is that a spirit

of fear will produce an atmosphere of timidity and suspicion that will discourage independence of thought, original investigation and association. The real danger we face is that a program of suppression will seriously endanger effective operation of our democracy; will lower the morals of the civil service by putting a premium on conformity and will discourage men and women of real ability from entering Government service.

The real danger we face is that a spirit of hysteria will endanger the morale of American science by putting a premium on mediocrity in a field requiring independence, originality, and full freedom of inquiry and communication.

The real danger we face is that a society gripped by fear strengthens the hand of the military in areas traditionally and wisely entrusted to civilian control.

The real danger we face is that freedom of teaching will be imperiled by requiring conformity to standards, by introducing the grave peril of censorship in textbooks and ideas and drive away from the teaching profession men and women of independent minds. We must guard lest it create an atmosphere in which teachers find safety not in orthodox ideas, for they will never know fully which ideas are orthodox, but safety in no ideas.

In the end this can produce a generation taught by teachers who are afraid of ideas. Such people cannot grow up into wise and competent and democratic citizens.

Yes; the real danger we face is that the right and necessity of criticism is threatened.

No government can operate successfully without criticism and no government which censors its critics can get the criticism that it needs. Finally, the real danger we face is that the hysteria we are confronted with strikes at one of the most precious of all rights, one essential to the effective operation of democracy, the right of association. As Professor Commager well points out, the practice of voluntary association is a peculiarly English and American practice. The Pilgrim Fathers associated themselves into a compact and since that time Americans have customarily operated around hundreds of voluntary associations: political parties, parent-teacher, Federal, business, fraternity, philanthropic, recreational, learned, and others. It is in these associations that the average American has found the training for government and real democracy to take the place of the town meeting. Any policy which discourages or crushes voluntary associations will totally dry up the very roots of American democracy.

Our security lies not in secrecy but in the preservation of peace and in the encouragement of free inquiry; our real long-term security lies in perfecting our own democracy. Even as our society now exists, it is the freest in the world and confers the most benefits on the humblest of citizens. We must make sure that it is kept free and flexible.

Jefferson, in his first inaugural address, said: "If there be any among us who wish to dissolve the Union or change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it."

The American system is strong enough to stand competition of communism or any other ism. The American people are intelligent enough to resist subversive doctrines.

It may be that we cannot wholly live up to Jefferson's observations, but we can maintain a society in which the activities of those who would be disloyal will be rather an annoyance than a deadly menace. That is where our real security lies.

For our security lies in the democratic philosophy, the democratic way of life and the democratic idea. That is our historical role; that is our historical mission.

Article By Thomas L. Stokes on Address by Herbert Hoover

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. CLAUDE PEPPER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Friday, August 12 (legislative day of
Thursday, June 2), 1949

Mr. PEPPER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the Appendix of the RECORD a very able article entitled "Doleful Keynote," written by the distinguished columnist, Thomas L. Stokes, and published in the Washington Evening Star of August 12, 1949. I think it will be very useful reading.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DOLEFUL KEYNOTE—"LAST MILE TO COLLECTIVISM" STATEMENT RECALLS DAYS OF HOOVER ADMINISTRATION

(By Thomas L. Stokes)

It is perhaps lese majeste to challenge our elder statesman, Herbert Hoover, on the doleful keynote of his seventy-fifth birthday address that "we are on the last mile to collectivism through governmental collection and spending of the savings of the people."

But a new generation has come along and it is only fair to point out some of the things they never knew and that some of the rest of us have forgotten.

Some of us who were around here in the dark days of 1932 and 1933 when Mr. Hoover was President thought then that we were "on the last mile," what with unemployment, bread lines, banks crashing, mortgages foreclosed on farms and city homes.

BLAMED CRUELY AT TIME

This is not to blame Mr. Hoover for that, as he was blamed cruelly and unfairly at the time. He was a victim of a previous decade of management of our affairs in which too little account was taken of the needs of our people, with the result that our economy got out of balance and almost collapsed. He entered the White House to meet the crash head-on.

The amount of shoring-up that was necessary to get the roof back over our heads shows in what terrible shape we were. Mr. Hoover manfully started this, himself, among other ways, with creation of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, that giant venture in state capitalism which still is with us. That represented an attempt to bolster up the tottering structure by loans to business and industry in the hope it would bring revival, which it didn't. Unemployment increased. So he went to a big public building program and finally acquiesced in \$300,000,000 in loans to States to feed people, still resisting direct Federal relief.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, when he took over, had to resort finally to that. Along with that he conducted salvage operations for banks, homes, farms, and investments. Later he added such protections as the agricultural program, social security, Wages and Hours Act, collective bargaining, among others, to spread purchasing power and get the economy back in balance as well as cushions for the future so the citizen could protect himself.

COLLECTIVISM NOT VISIBLE

When you look about today, in contrast to 1932-33, there is a great difference in the condition of our people. And if there is any collectivism, it is not visible to the naked eye. We still have private enterprise and it is

flourishing as never before, with profits at an all-time peak.

Mr. Hoover is due credit for an analysis of Government spending which points up factors often overlooked. In a dramatic way he treated the Federal budget, which is \$41,858,000,000 this year, and of which 76.5 percent, or \$31,923,000,000, is for the cost of past wars and protection against future wars—military establishment, veterans' care, public debt interest, and European recovery program and other foreign aid.

Without using those figures, he broke down the cost of both Federal and State and local government into the number of days we must work to pay taxes for it, a total of 61 yearly, of which 35 go for obligations from former wars, defense, and the "cold war"; 12 for other functions of Federal Government and 14 for State and local government.

Since Mr. Hoover has not quarreled seriously with the bulk of Government costs for defense, veterans, "cold war," his quarrel must lie in this area of domestic government services. He, like others, does not specify what he would eliminate here.

Red Triumph in Asia Means Third World War

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. WALTER H. JUDD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, August 8, 1949

Mr. JUDD. Mr. Speaker, under leave to extend my remarks in the RECORD, I include the last broadcast of H. R. Knickerbocker, Pulitzer prize foreign correspondent. It was written in Singapore, recorded in Batavia, Java, and aired a few days after the plane carrying Mr. Knickerbocker and 16 other correspondents crashed near Bombay, India. This broadcast was the last of a series entitled "Can Communism Conquer Asia?" A terse picture of the greatest battlefront of the not-so-cold war, this broadcast—and especially its prophetic conclusion which only wishful thinkers like those in the State Department can question—is a fitting farewell address to his countrymen by one of our finest reporters.

The broadcast is reprinted from the New Leader of August 6, 1949:

"RED TRIUMPH IN ASIA MEANS THIRD WORLD WAR"—KNICKERBOCKER'S LAST BROADCAST

(By H. R. Knickerbocker)

From Singapore, world war III looks inevitable unless the United States throws its whole weight against the advance of communism in Asia. Communism is moving so fast that within a few years Moscow may feel itself strong enough to challenge the power of the United States. We have checked Russia in Europe but the manpower and resources of Asia would weight the balance against us. At these crossroads of the Far East the sense of impending doom bears heavily on an observer who has watched the shadow of Moscow creep across the globe. Molotov, Soviet High Commissar for Asia, has good reason to report to the Great Khan: Asia is going Communist.

Every anxiety over the mounting successes of communism in Asia is heightened here in the watchtower of Singapore. From here one can look out and see in China the Communist armies of Mao Tse-tung sweeping toward southeast Asia; in Indochina the



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org