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Preserving Democracy II. Human Material for Democracy
Michigan State University Extension Service
Milton Muelder
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PRESERVING DEMOCRACY

II. HUMAN MATERIAL FOR DEMOCRACY

By MILTON MUELDER

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE :: EXTENSION SERVICE
EAST LANSING



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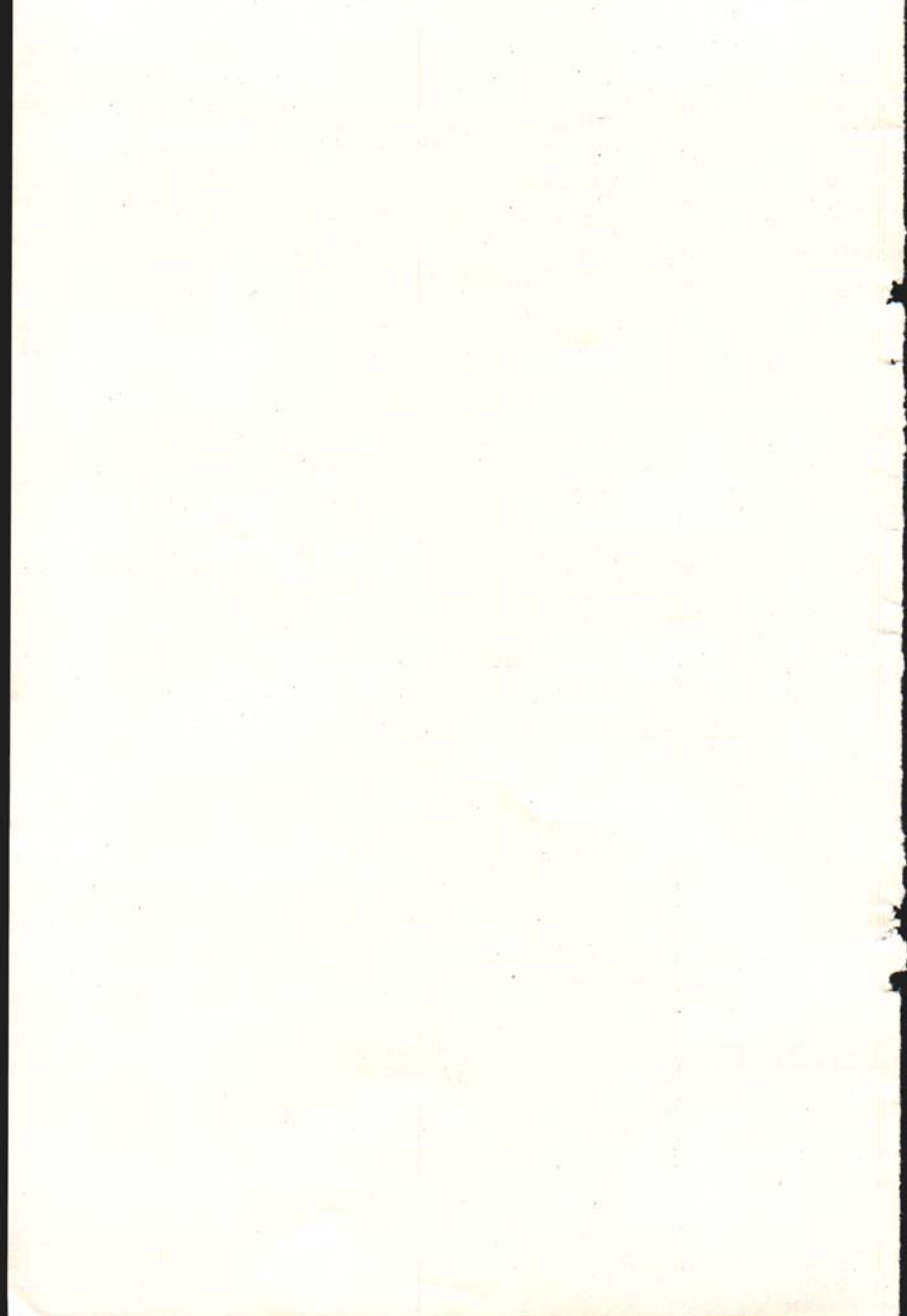
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Preserving Democracy

II. Human Material for Democracy*

By Milton Muelder**

WE want that sound and intelligent system of government which will best serve the welfare of us all. Most Americans agree that democratic government will best serve that end.

As free men in a free society, we abhor treating men as puppets. Such a tragic debasement of the human mind and character evokes in us too deep a repugnance to laugh when we see the queer Nazi salutes and march steps in news reels.

We enjoy the exercise of independent thinking. We have wills of our own. We possess great qualities of free thinking men in a free society but also—and this we can hardly with honesty ignore—significant weaknesses and shortcomings. There is much meaning and truth in the warning uttered by thoughtful men in almost every generation that no institution, society, or nation can rise above the character and quality of its members. It follows that tacit or passive approval of the democratic way of government cannot suffice. Rather, the quality of human material which is developed in our citizen-body marks the true substance of our democratic state.

PAST INFLUENCES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC IDEAS AND ATTITUDES

In building one of the greatest nations of all times, America discarded much of the old world civilization, but wisely retained much that was good. European in background and transplanted to this most blessed of all continents, early colonists brought with them institutions of the mother country. Contact with the old world, at least intellectually and culturally, has never been severed. As the old world im-

*This is the second of a series of bulletins bearing the general title: *Preserving Democracy*. Copies of the first in this series, Extension Bulletin E-240, "*Preserving Democracy: I. What Is Democracy?*" by Dr. Marshall M. Knappen, may be obtained from the Bulletin Office, Michigan State College, East Lansing.

Another of the bulletins in this series is E-247, "*Preserving Democracy: III. Civil Liberty*." It, also, may be obtained from the Bulletin Office.

**Assistant Professor of History and Political Science, Michigan State College, now on leave with the U. S. Navy.



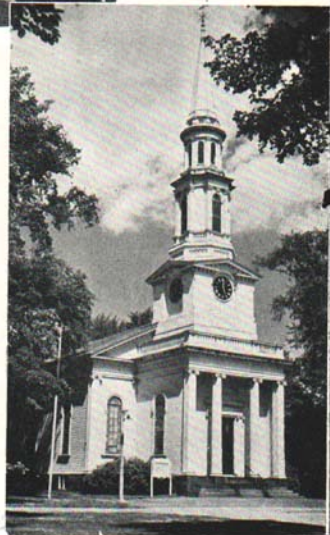
These places of worship pictured here are representative of religious life in America, which flourishes without state interference. (Left) St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, is one of the most imposing and beautiful of its kind in America.



(Center) This dignified synagogue in Cleveland presents an appearance of marked contrast with many in central Europe which have suffered from vandalism.

(Right) This typical New England Protestant church, Lexington, Mass. faces the battle green of Revolutionary War fame.

(All photographs on this page by Ewing Galloway, New York)



proved and broadened its learning and culture, we borrowed from it; as we extended learning in America, the old world borrowed from us. Only geographically are we separated from Europe, thanks to the large ocean washing our eastern shores. And far removed from both Europe and Asia, we have been able until now to develop our civilization with almost no foreign military interference.

Pre-Christian Influences

In the civilization of our European forebears, there existed an imposing body of thought, knowledge and culture, partly Christian, partly non-Christian in origin. For example, there is the Old Testament of the Jews and the writings of Greek scholars. For those pre-Christian thinkers, life had a purpose and needed guidance. Hebrew prophets proclaimed that for Jews and Gentiles alike there was but one God, that man after all was his brother's keeper, and that man's religion is inseparable from his conduct in society and his treatment of his fellowmen. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), the great Greek philosopher, taught that man found his highest expression in a society and that society should be regulated by fair, just, and intelligent laws. In addition to philosophy the Greeks made important advances in science, in literature, and art. When in a later period, Christianity spread throughout the Mediterranean coasts and Europe, Christians over the centuries drew what they considered was good from these earlier pre-Christian contributions.

Christian Influences

It may be recalled that amidst a great religious upheaval in the 16th century in Europe, Christians became divided into such prominent groups as Lutheran, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Catholic. Yet they retained much in common with each other because they all recognized that the high moral and ethical teachings of the Bible were indispensable for a sound society.

Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism were unknown in these lands and were introduced by the colonists. The makers of our constitution provided for the separation of church and state, an important and noteworthy departure from old world practices, and the exercise of religious worship has flourished without state interference in the America. Here as abroad, religion constitutes one of the greatest civilizing factors in society. In our rich heritage Christian teaching stands the highest. Christianity helps preserve the belief in the infinite worth and dignity of the individual. Without this belief democracies lack moral justification. Politically, too, it would be lamentable and disastrous, if through complacency and indifference to religion, we

allowed this cardinal belief in the worth of the individual to become overshadowed by any superstitious and harmful creeds—such as racial superiority which is exalted by the Nazis.

THE NEW SCIENCE AND DEMOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

Not until the 16th and 17th centuries did European scholars depart from the old scientific contributions of the Greeks and lay the foundations of the modern scientific world. We almost take those first



GALILEO, 1564-1642

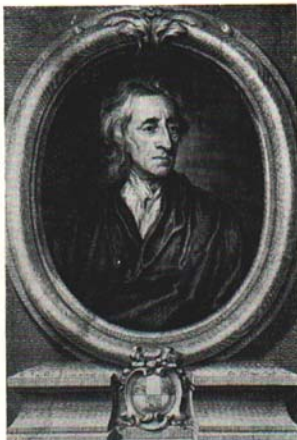
Galileo belongs to that group of European scholars such as Copernicus, Kepler, and Newton who contributed to the development of the new science of the modern world. Ancient assumption began to be challenged if experimental data and observations proved them to be erroneous.

(Photo: Pratt Institute Library)

discoveries for granted now. What pupil is not taught about the earth's rotation on its axis as it encircles the sun, about the law of gravitation, or about the use of the telescope? What particularly impressed many of the patient searchers for scientific truths was the fact that the laws of nature, such as gravitation, applied the same everywhere. They referred to them as universal or natural laws. To their joy they could see how the entire universe operated in an orderly manner. Overwhelmed and inspired by the harmony in the universe made possible through the operation of natural laws, some thinkers in the 17th and 18th centuries concluded that perhaps there were universal laws underlying a sound economic and political structure for nations throughout the world.

Englishmen and Frenchmen took the lead in developing the idea that governments should rest on a universal idea. In general, this thought was: So much had been achieved through the use of reason in science that enormous faith was to be placed in what reason might do. By reason one unveils the secrets of nature, and by his knowledge of nature and the world he is able to help mankind attain greater happiness. Everywhere man is born with reason, and through reason the world can be made a happier and saner place in which to live. The older belief held by the different theologians of whatever denomination that man by nature was inclined to do evil, was discarded in favor of the belief that man by nature was inclined to do good if allowed the free employment of his reason. Governments, it was

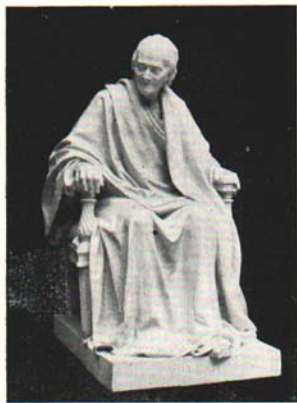
averged, exist not for the ruler but for the individual, that is, the governed. The existence of government was needed to guarantee to the individual citizen the protection of life, liberty, and property thus assuring him the pursuit of happiness. Those ideas were known and developed on this side of the Atlantic as well as in Europe. They furnished much of the intellectual background of our Declaration of Independence and in the erection of our democratic government. No one perhaps has improved on Lincoln's simple and immortal words in expressing what the essence of our political philosophy is: namely, *that our govern-*



LOCKE, 1632-1704

Deeply impressed by the discoveries of the universal laws of science, Locke posed and examined the question whether governments, too, did not rest on a universal idea. Abiding faith in achievements of reason and a belief that governments exist for the governed are significant themes in his essays.

(Photo: Bettmann Archive)



VOLTAIRE, 1694-1778

Voltaire was the most colorful of a number of French writers who followed in the main the ideas of Locke. Their stress on, and confidence in, reason for the making of a better world has given the 18th century the name: The Age of Reason.

(Photo: The Art Institute of Chicago, Elbridge G. Hall Collection)

ment is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Thus by different channels, religious and intellectual, there evolved a firm belief in the endless worth and dignity of the individual. We believe in the protection of the rights of the individual, personal and political, demanding only that he respects the rights of others. We believe in an enlightened citizen-body of all the people who through the ballot will elect intelligent leaders to our government.

THE WEATHER

Fair and Colder Monday; rain and warmer Tuesday

The Detroit

Monday, March 14, 1938. 107th Year. No. 314

On Guard for

Mysterious Set 5

So erfüllst Du Deine Pflicht: Volkstimmung und Großdeutscher Reichstag

Am 13. März 1938... Adolf Hitler?

Linie... auf dem Reichstag

Business Is Fatal to Darrow, 80

Lifelong Controversy in Courts Ends

Pastor Bishop of Law Area

phy Named Catholics' Diocese

David's Counties

William F. ... David's

Hitler A Merge Nazi K

France to Pledge Full Aid to

Fulfill Your Duty as Follows: Plebiscite and Greater Germany Reichstag

Are you agreed with the accomplished fact of March 13, 1938, of Austria's Annexation to the German Reich and do you vote for the list of the Führer

Adolph Hitler?

You Must Put Your Mark Here!

Here is a terrifying example of how individual rights of men are enslaved and their minds "made to order." "Here you must put your mark," dictates the Nazi-controlled press on the "sample" ballot. The 99-percent

favorable returns from the Hitler's Austrian annexation, That there exists a close correspondence by the state and the

Annexes Austria to Climax Coup; as Two Nations and Their Armies; Rulers Purging Enemies in Vienna

Austrian Youths Goosestep Stiffly as Hitler Looks On

LINZ, Austria, March 13—(A. P.)—Adolf Hitler, triumphantly in control of his native Austria, today reviewed several regiments of his hitherto hidden army of Austrian Brown Shirts—many of whom recently released from concentration camps.

Earlier he motored 10 miles to Linz to stand bareheaded at the graves of his parents.

For the review Hitler stood in an open touring car on the Danube bankment opposite the hotel where he made headquarters on his arrival here yesterday from Germany.

Mixed Uniforms in Lines
There was a strange review of regiments of young men goose-stepping in lines, some in military uniforms, some in blue serge business suits, and some in civilian clothes. They looked stiffly trained, sleekly uniformed, and in complete, but it was not laugh.

Another far different group was seen carrying a banner with the Austrian Imperial Austrian colors to the safe keeping.

Eats in Tourist Hotel
Hitler's first Sunday dinner in his native land was eaten in an ordinary tourist hotel. The Fuehrer ate his customary vegetarian meal and then chatted for two hours with his party.

When Der Fuehrer retired shortly



Associated Press Photo
WILHELM MIKLAS
Austria's Ousted President

Britain Taking a Bolder Part

**A Front with France
Due to Be Policy**

LONDON, March 13—(A. P.)

Fuehrer Sets Plebiscite to Ratify His Seizures

**President Miklas Ousted by Reich
and Jews Quake as New Officials
Take Over the Country**

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

VIENNA—Austria ceased to exist as an independent nation Sunday and was annexed to Germany. The coup was to be ratified at a plebiscite April 10. President Wilhelm Miklas was forced to resign, turning the nation over to the Nazis. The Austrian and German armies were merged.

LINZ—Reichsfuehrer Adolf Hitler, delaying his triumphal entry into Vienna, visited the graves of his parents, reviewed Austrian Brown-shirts and received further adulation of Austrian Nazis. Sixteen German tanks were dispatched to the Czechoslovakian frontier.

BERLIN—Acting Chancellor Hermann Goering predicted ratification of annexation in the Austrian plebiscite and said that Hitler's coup was of no concern to other nations.

PARIS—As Leon Blum succeeded in forming a new People's Front Cabinet, France took steps to expand her treaty with Czechoslovakia in order to give her democratic ally military protection from all types of aggression, as well as armed invasion.

LONDON—Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was believed preparing to announce in

intimidated citizenry, after make a travesty of the ballot, violation between the principles of treatment by the state of its

citizenry is here tragically demonstrated. Where the individual exists for the state, as in Nazi Germany, he becomes a slave of the state's ruthless leaders.

(Facsimiles: Detroit Free Press, March 14, 1938; and Munich Voelkischer Beobachter, April 10, 1938)

A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA, in General Congress assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for ^{one} people to
dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to
~~assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to~~
assume among the powers of the earth the ^{separate and equal} station to
which the laws of nature & of nature's god entitle them, a decent respect
to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes
which impel them to ~~the~~ ^{the} separation.

We hold these truths to be ^{self-evident}, that all men are
created equal, & independent; that ^{they are endowed by their creator with unalienable} ~~from that equal creation they derive~~
^{unalienable} rights, that among ^{these} ~~these~~ are ~~life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness~~
life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these ^{rights} ~~rights~~, go-
vernments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from
the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government
~~is~~ becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter
or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying its foundation on
such principles & organising its powers in such form, as to them shall
seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness. prudence indeed
will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for
light & transient causes: and accordingly all experience hath shown that
mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to
right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed but
when a long train of abuses & usurpations [begun at a distinguished period,
& pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to ~~reduce~~

That our own intellectual leaders in the colonies were fully abreast with the most advanced political philosophy of 18th century Europe is clearly demonstrated in the opening paragraphs of our memorable Declaration of Independence. This draft is in the handwriting of Thomas Jefferson, our third president, and Benjamin Franklin, one of America's greatest diplomats and thinkers.

(Facsimile: courtesy Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.; and "The Writings of Thomas Jefferson," G. P. Putnam's Sons, Publishers, New York)

CURRENT DIFFICULTIES: ENEMIES ABROAD

Emergence of democratic ideas and democratic government, as historians know, is the history of an heroic struggle for existence. The historian is keenly aware that democracy rose very slowly in England; that democratic government became possible in our own country at the price of war; and that the democratic idea suffered many setbacks on the Continent in the 19th century, both in France after the rise and defeat of Napoleon and in the German states where democratic ideas belatedly took root following the great French Revolution of 1789. The struggle for the democratic idea continues in the current attack upon our way of life which is as serious and vicious an attack as any we have been challenged to repulse.

To fight and deal effectively with the Nazis, it is well that we hate and despise their system and brutal policies, but also that we understand them. For the German people this war is a war of survival. They have been told that repeatedly by their government. Hitler and his cohorts know that when they go down in defeat, their political system is at an end. They know too that nations may sink to an inferior status, or even disappear altogether as a political entity.

The Nazi Creed

The Nazi state is a military state even in peacetime, military in psychology, organization, and methods. Unswerving obedience of the individual to the state, complete subordination of the interests of the individual to that of the state, materially and intellectually, are its principles. Whereas we proceed on the doctrine that government exists for the fullest development of the individual within his clearly defined rights, and Nazis begin with the concept that the individual exists solely for the state. They have put it very frankly and bluntly this way: "You are nothing. The state is everything." (*Du bist nichts. Das Volk ist alles.*)

Nazi youths entering advanced training school to become future leaders in the state must subscribe to such principles as these in a special initiation ceremony.

"The leader is always right."

"Never violate discipline."

"Your program is your dogma; it demands your complete surrender to the cause."

"Whatever serves the interest of the movement, and through it Germany and the German people, is right."

In harmony with such thinking they hold that education should be crowned with military training. Publications of learned works and creations of art and literature are tolerated only where they glorify

the ideals of the party or at least are not hostile to these ideals. Small wonder that many of their country's creative thinkers and objective scholars sought refuge in America. In the anti-intellectual atmosphere they have created, Nazis preach superstitious and historically untrue beliefs about blood and soil. They hold that "Aryan" peoples should be kept separated from non-Aryans, biologically and in every other way. And of the Aryan peoples, the Germans should be regarded as a leader and master race (*Herrenvolk*). By control of the educational system and other channels of propaganda, the Nazis hope to convert the German peoples to such ideas. Dr. Ley, the forceful executive of the Labor Front proclaimed in 1937, "What the church has succeeded in doing in a thousand years, we shall accomplish in ten."

Prussianism and Germany

It would be wishful thinking to assume that the Nazis are weak because we heartily reject their views. They have succeeded apparently in winning the support of many Germans who are told that if they want to live in a great and powerful country, they must have a powerful and efficient military state. Nazi spokesmen point to Prussia's growth and success. That most powerful of all German states brought about the unification of Germany in three successful wars—against Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866, and France in 1870. At one time, however, Prussia was a second-rate power in northern Germany, with her territories scattered, a small population, and insignificant natural resources. Her emergence to a position of a great European power from about 1640 to 1786 rested largely upon the creation of a great army and an efficient bureaucratic government. Her achievement, noted above, in uniting Germany through "blood and iron" stood out all the more because the republicans and liberals had unhappily failed to achieve that end in an earlier revolution in 1848-49. This famous '48 revolution which seemed at first to promise so much in the development of democratic government was in the end easily suppressed by the Prussian armies. The new Germany of 1870 to 1914 was in many ways a continuation of old Prussia. Not until Germany's defeat in 1918 did the republicans, liberals, and socialists have an opportunity to set up a German republic.

Nazi Tactics and Propaganda

It was a major tragedy that the German republic did not have the strength to solve the internal and foreign problems which confronted it, and that it was unable to give to the German people a prosperous and orderly government. By 1932 the republican idea in many German circles became as bankrupt as the state's finances and prestige. Hitler

was put in power, in large measure, by a despairing and confused people. By subordinating all interests of the individual to the state, by the use of "blood and iron" discipline, by directing the total energies of the country to the military, by surprise tactics and gambles, and finally by exploiting the desires of others for peace, the Fuehrer succeeded in achieving startling successes: the acquisition of Austria, the Sudeten territories, and Czecho-Slovakia, all without firing a shot.

With contemptuous disdain and ridicule the Nazis shouted that democracy was decadent and would soon succumb. We, of course, had never insisted that we were perfect. We never shall. Good institutions of long standing have ever undertaken reforms. Where there is orderly process in government, it is possible to mend rather than rend. Swift, violent and destructive measures are by their nature inimical to well-considered reforms.

Our opponents without restraint or scruple distort historical truths to establish a case favorable to their terrible cause.

One of the strongest and most effective weapons in their arsenal of false propaganda is the argument that Germany was not defeated in the last war, but that the front stopped fighting after Communists and Jews succeeded in breaking the inner unity and strength of the nation. Such an untruth was very heartening and consoling to a dejected and bewildered nation which, during the war of 1914-1918, had been kept in ignorance about the real military situation. Such a view bolsters the superstition that Germans are a superior race of warriors, leaders, and masters. Such a view helps explain why Jews and Communists became scapegoats in the Nazi state. Such a view also affords a specious justification for demanding absolute obedience of the individual to the state for suppressing free thought, free speech, and a free ballot.

CURRENT DIFFICULTIES: PROBLEMS AT HOME

Looking back over the many centuries in which our western civilization has come to us with its amazing achievements and unhappy shortcomings, we recognize that most countries in history evolved non-democratic forms of government. We are not given to historical distortions as are the Nazis, and we do not deny that a state built upon a non-democratic basis can exist and may even produce much that is good. But we hold firm to the belief that in America, democratic society, properly run and administered, will allow an individual the greatest opportunity for the expression of his talents. At the same time we are deeply aware that in no form of government is it more important to develop the proper human material than in a democracy. *The measure of democracy is the quality of its human material.*



NATHAN HALE, 1755-1775

This young Revolutionary War soldier, who died for his country, has become one of America's proudest symbols of sacrifice and selflessness. His heroism is being duplicated by many in our armed forces today. We need to cultivate a comparable spirit of generosity and sacrifice at home in peacetime and wartime to solve our domestic problems if we wish to remain a strong and united nation.

(Photo: General Motors Acceptance Corporation and the New York Department of Parks)

What are great human qualities worthy of and necessary for a society which seeks in principle the happiness of the individual?

1. UNSELFISHNESS

We have been wonderfully successful in promoting science, agriculture, commerce and industry. We can justly take pride in that success. Yet the production of more and finer products, or even the prolongation of life, thanks to medicine, will not solve fundamental problems in social living. Parallel with the cultivation of the mind for necessary and useful selfish ends, must come the cultivation of the mind for a generous spirit. This is difficult, extremely difficult to achieve. Aspiring at the same time to protect both the rights of property and the rights of opportunity, our state has become divided into interest-groups. Each group seeks the redress of alleged or real economic grievances, or maintenance of hard-won property privileges. Each group is inclined to see the problems of the state from the point of view of its own position within the economic and social structure of the state.

American writers have long denounced in Europe the existence of class privileges, such as those enjoyed by the nobles, as unfair and harmful to the non-privileged classes, namely, the merchants and the peasants. There has been no lack of criticism of the social and economic maladjustments, and inefficient government as important causes in the great French Revolution of 1789. We have experienced greater difficulty in seeing ourselves with the same clear and frank insight, probably because most of us fall rather naturally into one interest-group or another in the state, and in consequence have a tendency to regard the conditions of the nation as good or bad according to the manner our interests are being promoted or hindered.

In one of his first utterances to the nation after the December 7 assault on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt stated that in this war no one was to get an advantage at the expense of anyone else. That principle is sound and important because it refers to all of the people and all groups within the nation rather than to just one section. It would be cowardly, perhaps even suicidal, to ignore current antagonisms among interest-groups, and assume that somehow differences will simply be allayed in time. Problems of social and economic living call for timely action, and an enlightened social consciousness which takes cognizance of the fact that one's own and immediate welfare is extricably tied up with the welfare of others. These internal problems must be solved to keep this country powerful. A state should strive to provide at home the maintenance of peace and order, and the highest living standard possible for the entire citizenry. This is a necessary counterpart to

the strong armed forces upon which we must depend to afford protection from without.

2. FLEXIBILITY IN THINKING

Probably no greater human failing besets us than that of lapsing into a mental rut. Of the lessons in history, there is one of particular significance which we should never forget: the factor of constant change. It is not true that history repeats itself, at least not in the same identical way. Life and history are not that simple. Just as a business enterprise dies if it cannot adjust itself to ever-changing conditions of the times, so do nations succumb if they are unable to adjust themselves to ever-changing circumstances. History has long lists of states which have disappeared. History relates of many governments which acted unwisely because they were incapable of seeing and appreciating the important changes of their times. In vain did European statesmen in 1815 at Vienna attempt to re-establish the continental world as it was before the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. The world of 1914 never returned after 1918. The world of 1939-43 can never be turned back to the world of 1918-1919. We have no choice in this matter. We must cultivate flexibility in our thinking, our attitudes, and our policies, ever capable of adjusting ourselves to changing conditions, and of creating and doing what is necessary for the present and for the future.

3. INTELLIGENT LEADERSHIP

If the state is to serve us, the leaders whom we elect must be intelligently informed as to our needs and problems. Agencies and bureaus which are set up to serve us on farms, in cities, and in villages must be staffed with well-trained men and women. To the class of national leaders belong not only politicians, but educators, ministers, heads of farm organizations, heads of labor organizations, and heads of industry. It is highly important that they know social and economic needs of the entire country and that they are sincerely devoted to the maintenance of a democratic way of life. To help us obtain and develop the best leadership in our society, we should give our finest education to those who are capable and worthy. Undoubtedly we should do more in giving generous scholarships to needy students of outstanding ability.

Rightly, we extol toleration as one of the finest virtues in our democratic state. It helps protect one group or institution from ruthless destruction at the hands of another. Yet there is something higher and finer we may aspire to attain: namely, an enlightened appreciation by one interest-group of the needs and problems of other interest-groups. This pre-supposes highly intelligent cooperation and good will on the part of us all for the benefit of the entire society. Cooperation



Here at the nation's capitol is democracy at work. Here are assembled congressmen representing diverse groups and sections of the country. It will ever be our hope and concern to elect intelligent leaders capable of appreciating the common good.

(Photo: Underwood and Underwood, Washington, D. C.)

of this type is constructive and bodes well for the future. It is markedly different in character from a frequently encountered toleration which is a sufferance of others whom we may inwardly dislike and whom we may understand poorly, if at all.

In brief, we desire men of intelligence, imagination and vision, to see our needs in their complex relations; we want men well trained to do difficult tasks well; above all, we need selfless men of spiritual quality who will lose themselves in the ideals of the government we are now fighting to preserve. To remain free men in a free society, we must keep that society strong. We reject the Nazi way of fear, force, and superstition. The alternative asks that we assume obligations to the nation as intelligent, thinking and responsible citizens. When we have succeeded in establishing the best government we know how at home, we shall be in a stronger position to help establish a more lasting and workable peace abroad.

