

A NEW WORLD OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

Every class that graduates from the University is, I realize, unique in intelligence, and beauty. Every class that leaves these halls faces a world replete with new, unsolved problems. But the classes of this year and of next year have a special task before them: they must bear their part in rebuilding a world that is physically and morally shattered by the war; they must help to conceive a human society that can enjoy a peace which it has cost so much to win.

To gain perspective, let us look for a moment at some earlier generations of university graduates and the world into which they entered. Let us go back half a century, to the graduates of 1894. The world of the 90's was a singularly settled one. The steady march of progress made men believe that the process would go on indefinitely. No one believed that society was ill-organized or that capitalism was other than a boon. And surely no university graduate had any doubt that he could win fame and fortune in his chosen field, whether it was a profession or a business. The world that he saw before him was an American world; it offered opportunity to all who came.

Twenty-five years later, in 1919, another class graduated into a different world - a world in which we had fought and had our share in winning a war. We had gone out gallantly to do our bit, with fine slogans and sentimental songs. But we were really homesick all the while and once the fighting was over, we hurried home, leaving the sorry mess behind us, unsolved by

a peace that was a compromise, and the boys who came back and the boys who gathered up their sheepskins, set out to make up for lost time in a wild spree of profit-making.

You, who are graduating today, are the victims of another war. Once more we have accepted the challenge and are making our contributions to defend certain principles we count as essential, a little more grimly and more seriously than before, a little more determined to see the thing through this time, so that our children will not have to go to war again, twenty-five years from now.

I do not need to tell you that the world you enter today is radically different from that of 1894 or of 1919, both physically and ideologically. Physically it has shrunk with the development of communication. The airplane, the radio, the movies, have brought the most distant lands into easy reach. What happens today in Buenos Aires or Moscow is of intimate and vital concern to each one of us. Even more serious is the change in political and social ideas. For today there are, all over the world, people who believe passionately in totalitarian doctrines, who consider that democracy and representative government are a failure, who exalt the state at the expense of the individual. Surely such doctrines must arise and gain favor because somehow social justice has not been assured. What effect do these things have upon you and your career?

One thing, I think, is clear: you cannot afford to think only of your own personal fortune; you must think in terms of your community, your nation and your fellowmen; you must dedicate your-

selves to the task of solving the problems that vex the world today - the attainment of economic democracy and the establishment of a world of ordered decency.

I do not mean to imply that the American people is divinely charged with curing the ills of the world, but only this: that we must do our share, along with men of good will in every land, to carry over into an era of peace that spirit of sacrifice, tolerance, and devotion which makes victory possible in war. And above all, I mean that upon you, who have had the opportunity for training, rests the responsibility for leadership in this new era of service, national and international.

We must not interpret leadership to mean the capacity to make stump speeches or conduct popular songfests. Leadership today may be exercised in the laboratory, in the research library, or the newspaper office. He is a leader who can open a new path, inspire a new attitude in the clarification of our problems.

I shall not try to analyze in detail the problems that confront us at home. You know that they are legion and that the war has merely postponed the stern necessity of finding a way out of the confusion in which we have lived since 1929. At the same time, the war has multiplied our difficulties, both social and economic. We shall need all the intelligence that we can muster to see us through the years to come. What is more, we shall need an abiding faith in the ideals for which we have fought to carry us through the hard tasks of peace.

There was a time in the lean years of the '30's when many

Americans doubted whether democracy could be made to work. In the Universities, teachers and students criticized our system as hopelessly outworn. For the last year I have been living under a military dictatorship of Falangist type. I have watched individual freedom disappear. I have seen the universities stifled, their students sent to jail, their professors dismissed or muzzled. And I want to assure you that I have come to the conclusion that whatever are its evils and abuses, our democratic way is a better way. If we believe that, we must dedicate ourselves anew to maintaining our democracy, modified to meet new needs, but resting solidly on the right to speak freely, to think without restraints. For too long we have taken our freedom for granted; we must not only defend it, we must justify it in terms of the community as a whole.

On the international front, the opportunity that lies before you is unlimited. The pioneer days of mastering the wilderness are over in our own land. But the wide-world beckons you to new frontiers, a new age of discovery calls to America. We, who have been home-bodies, must tomorrow be world travelers and colonizers. Our clippers, like the clippers of yesteryear, must blaze new trails. And along those trails we shall require technicians and experts in many fields and we shall need scientists and engineers, and poets and artists to interpret these new lands.

There is another more serious, more urgent task that challenges you - the restoration of a broken world. There is first of all the purely physical phase - the feeding of the hungry, the curing of the sick, the rebuilding of cities and towns, the

renewal of flocks and fields - all the wastage of the war. But there will also be the moral and spiritual reconstruction, and here again you, as university men and women, have a special responsibility and a special opportunity. For if we are to be successful in our efforts to aid in the rehabilitation of Europe and not sow the seeds of future hatred and strife, we must send men and women trained in the understanding of other people. And I like to think that that is what this University has helped you to attain.

Education is not alone a matter of knowledge; it is something more profound which I prefer to call "understanding." It is not alone an exercise of the mind; it involves the heart and the will. We shall need more and more, both here and abroad, people trained in this broadly humane tradition. Without it, our voices will be only a cry in the wilderness.

The University is proud to send you out into the world as its grown sons and daughters. From now on, you share in the responsibility for its reputation for it is by its product that the University is judged. I am sure that you will be loyal to its tradition and grateful for what it has given you. The State and the Nation have contributed to your training in the belief that ^{an} educated citizenry is essential to their preservation.

In this critical period of human history, you can adequately repay your debt only by dedicating yourselves to the common weal. The daily life of the University has accustomed you to thinking in terms of the group - on teams, in clubs, or societies. If

you will carry on that spirit of subordinating yourself for the good of the group, into the larger world, we may look forward with confidence to a decent solution of our problems - here and abroad. It is in that spirit and in that hope that I bid you godspeed, as you leave these halls to do your part in the tasks of tomorrow.