

# THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATED

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by

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Our colleges and universities are sending forth this year hundreds of thousands of graduates who will inject fresh view points and new energies into the stream of American thought and activity. This unprecedented number is evidence of a growing faith in education and learning and, therefore, in those who are its beneficiaries. Much is expected of the products of our institutions of higher learning, that they will man adequately and more effectivly than their predecessors the various professions - engineering, law, medicine, the ministry, teaching; and that they will not only be substantial citizens but leaders in their community. But over and above these traditional expectations the American people vaguely hope for something else from education, from college and university graduates - that they will, by some magic, be able to solve our complex internal and international problems and restore order at home and abroad.

It is not enough merely to succeed in one's profession and to do one's part as a member of the community. To this personal and professional responsibility must be added the moral obligation to be sensitive to the larger issues, to be intelligently concerned about them, and to make some contribution toward their solution. What are those issues? To answer that question requires some analysis of the present situation.

The modern world is in the midst of a great transition period, occasioned partly by the shock of two world wars in a generation but due perhaps chiefly to the lag between a rapidly advancing technology and the slow march of progress in the science and practice of human relations. Whether it be viewed from the point of view of the home, the local community, the state, the nation or the international community, the problem is the same, the adjustment of the individual to a society which the advances of science and technology are continually upsetting. These advances in the course of a few decades have transformed a rural people into a nation of city dwellers, an independent self-reliant citizenry into a people three-fourths of whom are employees of others, and a vast collection of local communities largely self-contained, into a network of interdependent units, with all the difficulties in adjustment which these changes imply. Their effect on international relations is symbolized by the atomic bomb which has created an avalanche of new fears and tensions.

This then is the frontier of our modern world which calls for the most intrepid and intelligent pioneers - the science of human relations which will enable us to understand the forces at work in

our society and to direct them to the end that peace and prosperity may once again be restored. Research and experimentation at all levels are required - in the home and family relations, in communities large and small, in states and nations and in international affairs. They represent the covered wagon of the twentieth century. They may penetrate the jungle of conflicts and confusion and prepare the way for a host of workers, those who shall possess the land and convert it into a healthy dwelling place, applying the knowledge discovered to daily living.

But more than knowledge and understanding and skill in administration will be required in the successful application of principles. Character and integrity as well as intelligence, social-mindedness and a sense of social responsibility, as well as ability to administer are essential ingredients. And these elements are not derived from sociology or anthropology, from economics or political science, from logic or reason. They flow from the recognition of a Purpose in the universe and a desire to relate our efforts to its objectives, to harmonize our lives with its spirit, and to promote its dominance in the lives of others. It is only that recognition and that desire which provide an enduring sense of values basic to character and integrity.

It is this fact which our generation seems to have largely overlooked. Information, knowledge and science, however complete, do not add up to truth. The facts of life may be discovered in the test tube, in the laboratory, but truth is discovered only in the crucible of experience, in a life committed to sound ideals. The

statement so often heard, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," is a mischievous half-truth. The Great Teacher said: "If ye be my disciples ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Only by making a life commitment is one privileged to know the truth which makes men truly free. In exploring the science of human relations and in applying its principles to daily living this fundamental fact must not be overlooked or its implications ignored.

The fact that so little systematic effort is exerted and so little realistic emphasis is placed upon the need for solving our basic human problems is a matter of deep concern. Though the biological and physical sciences have already far outstripped the social sciences, they still receive major attention in appropriations for research. Through the army and navy huge sums are being spent annually for investigation in the fields of physics, chemistry and biology. Plans for the national science foundation call for more millions to advance the understanding of those fields of knowledge. No similar concern or support for investigation in the field of human relations is in evidence. This imbalance is one of the fundamental weaknesses of our age.

A vast army of physicists working together produced the miracle of atomic fission which startled the world. Working separately it would never have been possible. No such combined efforts have ever been focused on basic social issues. If cooperation can yield such astonishing results in one field, it is conceivable that it might be effective in another. At least collective research and investigation on the problems of social science would surely enhance the

chances of success in finding their solution.

That there is great need for such a realistic effort is abundantly evident. The violent conflicts between labor and management, between races and creeds, and between those representing various political doctrines, to mention only a few of the more common tensions, are proof enough of the need for organized objective investigation and study engaging not a few but many of the best minds of the country. I am not unaware, of course, of much excellent work already being done in these and other fields, but the plea is for a wider recognition of the need and for larger support of such endeavors. Even more important than support is the need for more men and women dedicated to a search for the solution of these problems.

In the past few years we have witnessed mass actions of alarming proportions against law and established order. Though it may be argued that they are but an aftermath of the war which will vanish when normal peacetime conditions return, the answer may not be as simple as that. Such events produce the uneasy feeling that orderly democratic processes may be in jeopardy with the threat of wholesale disregard of law and order. Such a threat if unchecked might ultimately force a new system of controls. Indeed, the instances involving government assumption of ownership and operation of companies whether coal mines or railroads, though demanded by the public welfare, are alarming in their implications. That route followed to its logical limits leads only to some form of absolute control which is abhorrent to the American tradition.

Thus the domestic scene presents many disturbing aspects and warning signals. Patriotic and unselfish devotion to American principles is needed as never before. But more than that is required. Fundamental studies of economic, social and political issues are essential to the maintenance of justice, equality of opportunity and harmonious progress. The tempo of social change occasioned by scientific and technological discoveries demands it.

Turning to the foreign scene and America's relation to it, one finds a host of new problems. Events of the past two years have plunged us into a vastly complicated maze of currents and counter-currents, of responsibilities and commitments, the implications of which cannot yet be fully comprehended. This much, however, is clear. Our role in international affairs is inescapable and our responsibility overwhelming. In the great debate which is going on in the world with regard to the relation of the individual to the state, between Communism and democracy, the United States is looked to, not merely for material assistance, but for political and moral leadership. To meet that challenge successfully requires a knowledge of other peoples and an understanding of their hopes and aspirations on the part of the American people which are as yet lacking.

The post-war interest in international studies in our colleges and universities is a heartening fact. The large number of institutions now developing foreign area institutes is a hopeful sign but vastly more remains to be done. Not only graduate but undergraduate courses that will reach tens of thousands of college youth

are urgently needed. The present programs represent but the beginnings of a vast development in international studies which should be encouraged by every possible means. In the light of our current responsibilities and requirements for meeting them the fact that our nation in the past has been isolationist educationally as well as politically stands out in clear relief. One of the major tasks of higher education in the years ahead is to eliminate that traditional deficiency. To do so will require greatly increased resources and support.

The need is so immediate and urgent that more than undergraduate and graduate students must be served. Programs for adults are fully as necessary. University extension departments, local, state, and regional groups devoted to this cause are making valuable contributions. The magnificent achievements of the Pacific Coast Council in this field are known far and wide. It has set an example that will be emulated by other communities and regions. In this effort institutions of higher learning can play a significant part as they strengthen their campus programs.

What more needs to be said to indicate the kind of issues which university graduates, the leaders of tomorrow, will be called upon to meet.

It doesn't require much imagination to visualize the possibilities and difficulties, the opportunities and dangers, and the profound human values at stake. We live in one of the dramatic periods of history. The graduates of 1948 have the high privilege of entering upon their careers at such a time. The first half of

the century has been frightfully destructive not only of life and property, but of moral and spiritual values as well. What will the second half be like? That will depend upon these graduates and others like them who will bear the heat and burden of the days to come. My guess is that it will be one of the greatest periods of American history, difficult and dangerous, but marked by unprecedented progress. It is the role of the educated to make it so. That is the challenge of these times to university graduates.