

F. Speckles  
Bureau

Jan. 19, 1943

Dear Miss Bateman,

I am enclosing a copy of the speech I made on "Preserving Democracy" on Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>. I hope it is of use to you.

The much handsomer handwriting is that of my wife who took over when I was attacked by writer's cramps.

I regret I cannot be at the faculty meeting on Tuesday. I am however beginning a class in Pk P on Monday, Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>. I hope to see you then.

Sincerely,

William Heymann

## Preserving Democracy.

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Ladies and Gentlemen:-

As you know my topic for this evening is "Preserving Democracy." Before I begin however, it is only fair that I tell you why I think I rate being up here talking while you sit down there listening.

I am no pedagogue, no demagogue. I am not even a very good speaker. I come to solicit no votes, collect no money and solicit no subscriptions. I have no axe to grind - not even a little pen-knife.

So far I am afraid I have said little to recommend myself as a ~~speaker~~<sup>lecturer</sup>. But you see, that too is something I am not. I am your neighbor and I have come here this evening as your neighbor to discuss some things which are of vital importance to all of us.

Democracy according to the dictionary is government by the people - a form of government in which the supreme power is lodged in the hands of the people collectively. But there is more to it than the political equality the definition implies. With democracy come high spiritual values, freedom of speech and thought, freedom of conscience and action. Before we talk of Preserving Democracy let us be sure what it is and if we want it.

The working of democracy can perhaps best be illustrated by a story I heard a few days ago.

Scientist dies and goes to Heaven. Before entering heaven he wants to visit the nether regions to satisfy his scientific curiosity as to the validity of Heaven. He is permitted to do so. In Hell he sees thin, emaciated souls sitting around a groaning banquet table. The table is laden with the best of things to eat.

but the tortured souls all starve because their arms at the elbow are bandaged (2) and in affliction. The scientist realizes that that must be Hell and ascends to Heaven. In Heaven he sees the same situation prevail except that the saved souls are healthy, well fed and happy. He asks St. Peter how come and the Saint says "The ~~few~~ souls who enter here know the secret of Democracy, of living in a community, they feed one another."

The essence of this story is that only by mutual cooperation and understanding can we survive and prosper and our civilization grow. Only by helping our neighbor stay free politically, morally, religiously and economically can we stay free. And our definition of neighbor must include all regardless of color, race or creed; wealth or poverty; strength or weakness; education or illiteracy.

The title of this discourse - "Preserving Democracy" bears the connotation of destruction. For naturally democracy need not be preserved unless it were being destroyed.

Democracy is being attacked from two directions. First from without and secondly from within.

Of the attack from without we all know. We cannot doubt that all forms of freedom would die an immediate death if we were conquered by the axis. Fascism cannot live in the same world with freedom. It is a fight to the death. The fascists know this - we <sup>all</sup> do not. They cannot plan a world of slaves, <sup>and</sup> sub-slaves tell them how and how long to live, what and how much to wear and to eat if there exists any free thought, free speech or any other increment of democracy.

I am sure that the means of combating this menace is in the best possible hands. There are a number of ladies and gentlemen in blue and in khaki, in overalls and in business clothes who are doing their best to beat off and conquer this malicious germ. And they're doing a good job too.

The destruction of democracy from within is a more insidious force. Politically we are safeguarded. Politically our rights and responsibilities, our privileges and duties are thoroughly outlined and guaranteed. We need not fear for our franchise, we need not fear false imprisonment or unjust trial. We know who writes our laws and if we don't like them - well there will be another election and as voters we can do something about it.

The danger lies, it seems to me, in the prevailing economic situation and the tendencies arising therefrom. A man with an empty stomach with hungry half clothed children in his home will give his vote to the demagogue who offers him the largest dollop of the fattest relief check. You all remember Huey Long and his Louisiana Machine built on the foundation of the depression, and the "Ham and Egg" plan of Townsend. These men got votes because their constituents were afraid, hungry and jobless. Political freedom is an empty shell if economic freedom is not the kernel. There are many instances harking back as far as history of man is known. The free citizens of Athens, the Roman freemen, the Germans of the Second Reich, the Italians after the world war. They were all originally free politically, they fell into an economic depression and sold their political freedom for what they thought was a mess of pottage. It turned out to be but a mess.

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How close were we to such a catastrophe in 1935? The Communist Party had at least 2 million ~~not~~ members with several million finks in the background waiting to jump on the bandwagon if the movement were successful. In addition we had technocrats, Ham and Eggert, Bunds, various shifty organizations and a resurgent Ku Klux Klan - an endless roll-call of half-baked schemers. Some of them innocent and misguided and some out and out malicious. They all vanished seemingly by chemical absorption with the smoke rolling from the tall chimneys of our factories. The prosperity of war production false though it is wiped them off the map.

Poverty is a horrible thing. The fear of poverty relentless, hopeless, day in day out poverty is one of the most overpowering fears known to man. A man can face physical punishment without flinching. He may bravely face disillusionment dishonor and the loss of his loved ones but the fear of inevitable abject poverty will drive some to take their very lives and at best leaves an indelible mark on the soul. Examples can be found in any newspaper or police blotter in any of the ten or twelve slum areas of the city or the slums of any city in the world.

When the war is won there will naturally be a long transition period required to change over from war to peacetime production. You have seen that it has taken two years to change from peacetime to war production. Due to this cause alone it is not difficult to imagine a depression of gigantic proportions. There are however many other causes which again are in themselves sufficient to cause

a disruption in our economic existence. To name but a few we have the return of nine million men to their peacetime pursuits. Remember the army of unemployed was about that large in 1932 and that was quite a depression we had remember. Well, some of these nine million jobs are being held by older men or women and are being done well by them. Whether we discharge the older man or the woman or do not give the soldier back his job - we have unemployment.

Another indication of a coming depression is the tremendous national debt. Someone must pay the bill and the interest on the bill. High taxes plus the inflationary tendencies that can already be seen today will put a throttle on production. Throttle production and you put men out of work. Put men out of work and their grocers, butchers, tailors, nation picture houses go under. A depression is like a pebble dropping into a quiet pool of water. Its ripples reach out and out until shore is reached. In political economy the shore is reached when anyone in the exchanging community - that is nominally the world - is embroiled.

There are several more tokens of what is to come. But there are so horribly satisfying that I am quiet.

content to rest here. Of course there are panaceas and remedies, capsules and headache powders offered by various private and public organizations. It may perhaps be well to examine the working of a few of these to see whether they can do the job that definitely has to be done to preserve Democracy as our way of life.

The Socialists say Socialism is the answer. If the state owns all the means of production and everyone receives his needs from the state - there will be no tremendous wealth and no disgraceful abject poverty - -

Socialism has been debated pro and con for well over a century and I can certainly not do the matter justice in a few words. A few devastating objections immediately come to mind, namely: The elimination of individual initiative from production. You see, although "necessity is the mother of invention" - the father is profits. Socialism condemns both the father and the mother to exile. Then imagine the tremendous self-perpetuating bureaucratic structure that would be erected and maintained in the first of repair. The waste through incompetency, graft and the laissez-faire attitude prevalent in civil service combined with the fact that man has not yet evolved into a sufficiently social being leads me to believe that Socialism will not be successful for

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Jones must buy. The Government, when it has need for money has but one well from which to draw it - the tax-payer, or Jones. Actually then, Jones is paying quite a premium and the longer and harder and more continuously he is employed the greater the premium he pays, and by the same token, the fewer benefits he actually receives. Quite in reverse of the practice of the private insurance companies, the man who pays the greater premiums receives the smaller return and vice versa. That in itself is not shocking since all our taxes are based on the Rob Peter to Pay Paul motif. The income tax, which was called a great social weapon in its time, sales taxes, processing taxes, and so forth ad infinitum.

The regrettable fact is that this scheme - heralded as a great social and economic advance is really a ~~so~~ palliative and a very temporary one. The sum total of the produced wealth of a community is the total of the production of the individuals of that community. Take some from Jones and give it to Jackson and you have not increased the wealth of the community one iota. What has been done is to make Jones conscious of the fact that he was a little foolish to work so hard and long when so little of it stayed with him. Maybe next year he'll be wiser. Again we have the same leveling process - all

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downward.

It is the same old story of the economy of scarcity; The same reasoning that plowed under cotton, that paid for not growing wheat, that called for the destruction of suckling pigs, while the President of the United States declared that one third of the nation is ill - clad, ill-fed, and ill-housed. There can never be a surplus - man's wants are insatiable. Obviously, the whole upset is due to maldistribution of wealth and underproduction. The answer is not "killing suckling pigs" and the answer is not taking thirty percent of Jones' salary to give to Jackson. The answer is giving Jackson the opportunity to work as hard and as well as Jones. If he does, he should be paid as well as Jones. Then farmers can grow their wheat and cotton and pigs. Manufacturers can even as today, keep their mills running in 24 hour shifts making autos and washing machines, instead of tanks and machine guns, and Government can remain Government - making laws, treaties, printing currency and performing its other normal functions. The Government is already in too many strange businesses - Banking, building, mortgage, guarantee, public utility - We have ever before in the horrible example of a people who more and more relied upon the Government to live its life for it.

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Such a life ordinarily winds up in a concentration camp. He need not have that here.

Now I am going to temporarily beg the question - what do you suggest be done? Instead I want to tell you something about Henry George, the school founded in his name and what you can expect to find there. Above all things, I am sure you will find the answer to the problem of maldistribution of wealth and the preservation of Democracy.

Follow with an outline of George's life and tell about the school.