



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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Outline of an address
Delivered by

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before the

Washington Birthday Conference

American Labor Education Service

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1. My assignment today is to discuss the new forces facing the labor movement in the United States. I have been asked to pay particular attention to those problems as they effect our domestic economy, and of course I shall speak on them from the particular vantage point of the Congress. Dr. Padover will emphasize in the course of his comments the new forces facing the labor movement today from the international point of view.

2. In attempting to think through this assignment, I couldn't help but recall the story of the young man who decided to have a pair of pants custom made for himself. He went to a very fine tailor who took his measurements carefully. About a week later the young man called his tailor and found that the pair of pants were still not completed. He called regularly for many days until finally after thirty days the tailor told him that he could come in and pick up the pants. When the young man came into the tailor he said: "Please tell me why it is that God is able to make the world in six days, but it took you thirty days to make this simple pair of pants." The tailor was a wise man, walked over to his window pointed outside and said: "Yes, but look at that world--and then look at this fine pair of pants!"

3. In looking at the world as I have been doing in preparing for this assignment, I find that the real question facing modern man today is whether to blow his brains out or eat his ~~ex~~ heart out. Yet those of us who work

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in education are not happy with that dilemma. We would like to provide man with other alternatives.

4. But we must be realistic about what education can attain. We must re-examine our faith in education. A wise man once said: "Faith and conviction are wonderful and are necessary, but doubt is what gets you an education." I am suggesting that it is important for us to begin examining some of the real doubts which go to the route of the effectiveness of education.

5. It is important for us to re-examine our faith in education and see if we are not being guided by myths rather than reality. We used to believe: "An educated people is easy to lead, difficult to drive, easy to govern--impossible to enslave."

6. We used to believe that simply by extending educational opportunities we were secure in our democracy; and we believed that democracy would perpetuate itself automatically. We acted as if our ancestors had succeeded in setting up a machine that had solved the problem of perpetual motion in politics.

7. But we have learned to doubt. We have learned more about the nature of man. We have learned from both Reinhold Niebuhr who has provided us with a modern doctrine of original sin, and we also learned from Sigmund Freud who has told us the importance of the irrational in man.

8. Those of us who are in education are learning this lesson. We are learning very slowly that somehow education must also appeal to the irrational--or to the nonrational, if you prefer. This has not been easy to learn. The influence of 19th century liberalism is still strong in the 20th century. We learn slowly, but somehow we learn somewhat like the man who decides to give up his principles and instead to do what is right.

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9. Workers education is going through the same labor pains of learning the same lesson. But we are learning. All of us now like to have a man like Joe Glazer attend our sessions with his guitar. Our worker's education meetings constantly talk about the need to re-evaluate our effectiveness. In discussing our new techniques, we talk about the importance of discussion groups and buzz sessions. These all reflect our awareness when something new is needed.

10. But even as we come to recognize the importance of the non-rational in the educational medium we still believe that education can help us achieve a better world. With Sandberg we agree that: "Man will never arrive. He will always be on the way."

11. But we want to help man on the way. At least we don't know anything better than education to accomplish that objective. In any event, we don't think that education does much harm! In this way we are at least in a slightly better status than the man who said that he knew the roulette wheel was fixed, but he continued to play it because it was the only one around.

12. In carrying out our objectives as educators, however, we are seriously handicapped:

a. Society does not take to teachers seriously. I need only refer you to the oft repeated thought: "He who can does,--he who can't, teaches."

b. The terrible salaries of teachers is a reflection of the fact that society does not consider that they play an important role.

c. The bad condition of our schools is further proof that society does not consider education to be important a function. We are not willing to pay the price.

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d. These same shortcomings operate within the labor movement as well. I need only remind you to compare the salaries that educational directors receive with the income that lawyers receive from trade unions.

13. In order for educators to recapture support in society they have turned to vocational training. Education has become practical. This is true in general education where we emphasize engineering training, business training, medicine, dentistry and the like.

14. This is also true in the labor movement. Our worker's education courses emphasize time study, collective bargaining, parliamentary procedure.

15. The labor movement emphasizes bread and butter courses in its worker's education.

16. These bread and butter course are necessary, but they are inadequate. The worker faces problems as a citizen much greater than the problems he faces on his job.

17. There are very serious new forces facing labor today. The task of education is to help society resolve those new problems.

18. The end product of education in a democratic society is to prepare for mature and intelligent citizenship. In essence, this means preparation for self-leadership.

19. Our objective in education is to prepare a citizenry capable of debating and ultimately deciding its own destiny. We don't want to emphasize conformity. There is a serious trend in our society. The labor movement is not free of this trend which looks upon teaching as a device to tell workers what to think and not how to think.

20. This decision ~~making~~ ^{COPY} objective ~~is~~ crucial today as the United States debates the dimensions of its new world role.

a. This responsibility is great. ~~xxx~~ Whether we assume our new responsibilities ~~effectively~~ effectively depends on whether our citizens are prepared and willing.

b. Wilson failed in his international objectives because he did not have the willing support of the American people behind him.

c. No policy in a democracy can succeed without the support of a willing citizenry.

21. The role of labor education today is to seek full citizen participation in national policy making.

22. This has serious domestic implications as well.

23. I don't stand before you as a partisan, but I am prepared to state in a nonpartisan way that the American people are about to have their birth-rights stolen from them in Washington.

24. In order to be free of any charge of partisanship, I will not tell you what political party I belong to. I am reminded somewhat of the story of Mr. Dooley who said: "When a man gets to be my age, he takes his politics more seriously. He ~~xxx~~ reads all the newspapers carefully and all the editorials. He reads the pro arguments and the con arguments, and then he calmly sits down and votes a straight Democratic ticket."

25. Here are some illustrations of the very serious difficulties we face domestically. Within the last few days, the Secretary of the Treasury

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signed a piece of paper which got very little notice in the press, but which cost the American taxpayer \$34 million for this year. What he did is to decide to refinance 9 billion dollars in bonds.

a. In four years this will mean that the American bankers will get 136 million dollars from the Treasury on the basis of this signature. This is twice as much as it would cost our government to finance ^{for} the next six years all of the medical education required in the United States.

b. This will mean higher interest rates for veterans, for home owners and for anybody attempting to make a small loan.

26. A discussion of farm prices down below 95% of parity.

27. Public power is now threatened.

28. Most of this will be done quietly. The Administration will be protected by a paper curtain through the press. Most of this action will be done by regulation and hence will escape the public eye.

29. There will, however, have to be some legislation and we can use those examples to help educate the American people. The best illustration of that will be the tidelands question.

30. This means that the American people and the American labor movement must concern itself with political matters.

31. Democratic education is essential for democratic survival.