CITIZENSHIP AND EDUCATION BY WM THURSTON BROWN
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Returning from a visit to New York and glad to get back
HOW CAN WE BEST EDUCATE FOR EFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP?
By William Thurston Brown

The great world-war has set a good many people to thinking—even people who have never done much thinking before. It has turned a powerful searchlight upon many old traditions which the mass of the world has for centuries accepted without challenge. It has shattered a good many illusions, and if it continues long, it will shatter a good many more. This, at any rate, is one important service which the war is doing. It may seem to many people a terrible thing that millions of the strongest, healthiest, most competent men in the world should be used merely as cannon fodder—that those very nations and races whose proud boast it has been for centuries that they have been the leaders of the whole world in all that makes for civilization and progress SHOULD NOW BE EXHAUSTING ALL THEIR MATERIAL RESOURCES IN THE EFFORT TO DESTROY ONE ANOTHER—which is one plain meaning of this war. But we cannot afford to do our thinking through the medium of our feelings. The task of educating humanity is no Sunday School picnic, no child’s holiday, no old ladies’ prayer meeting. It is a stern task which for the moment scatters to the winds the puny values men’s minds have conjured, and moves
ruthlessly onward to its ends, whether they suit us or not. Neither individuals nor nations nor worlds of people learn anything without effort, without some pain and struggle. Let us be thankful if in any way the stolid, stupid, ossified brains of these upright walking mammals receive impressions in this world-war that raise them ever so little in the scale of intelligence. Other generations will benefit, if we do not.

The Awakening of the English Workers

Already it can be said that this tremendous war has set large masses of people all over the world not only to thinking, but also to action, and things have already taken place which you and I and all the rest of our fellow-citizens here in America would no more have believed possible a short ten years—or even a short five years ago than the people of the American Colonies would have believed that men and women would sometime navigate the air, or than the New York Times would have believed that women would win political equality in this country. Think. The masses of working people in England—"our gallant ally"—victims for centuries of social and industrial caste, are beginning to think, to move, to organize, and even the London Times, old hidebound Tory journal that it is, regards it almost certain that the England of ten years hence will be as unlike the England of 1914, as day is unlike night. The workers of England have had one of the most tremendous object lessons in this war that was ever given to any people, an object lesson which stamps upon every mind above the level of an army mule the utter incapacity of their so-called ruling class to rule them or any one else. Both the Tories and the Liberals of England are facing the practical certainty that the end of this war will also be the end of caste rule in England, and that the future masters and rulers of England and of the whole British Empire are to be the workers, the producers of that empire.
If titled asses and hereditary nincompoops can sacrifice a hundred thousand men, as was done in the idiotic Gallipoli Peninsula campaign, as coolly as they would sacrifice a torpedo or a cartridge, the working people of England are not going to be afraid of doing a little sacrificing themselves in the future—they are going to sacrifice the luxury of their titled rulers, they are going to take the risk of managing their own affairs.

The masses of people learn things, if ever, chiefly by object lessons, and this war is giving the world the most convincing object lessons all history has recorded. Think of it. We have seen the autocrat of the largest empire in Christendom tossed from his throne and landed in Siberia with less bloodshed than ever before attended a change remotely like that—and today Nicholas Romanoff is almost forgotten. It is difficult to remember that such a person ever existed in St. Petersburg, so irrevocably has he gone with all that he symbolized. Who among us would have dared to think, much less prophesy, three years ago even, that Russia in 1917 would be the freest nation in all the earth? Why, when we have wished to damn something as infinitely bad and hopeless, we have called it Russia. "Is this Russia?" we have been saying, as we contemplated the conditions in our mines and factories. We can do so no longer. It may be that men and women in Russia will soon be saying of social evils in their national life: "Is this America?" Even the stupid American press is beginning to see that Czarism has no more chance of returning in Russia than there is prospect of skating in hell. The prestige of rulers—of all kinds of rulers everywhere—is gone, never to return. The world has surely learned the lesson and thrown the book away.

And with that discarded autocracy in Petrograd and
Siberia is as sure to go all other kinds of autocracy that now curse the earth. Let no one think that the masses of people even here in America—farmers, wage-workers, the struggling millions—with the impressive object lesson before their eyes of the shameless profiteering of American business men, big and little, while millions of men at the command of their governments are dying like flies in Europe, and of the sturdy intelligence and the resistless power of workers and peasants in Russia, are going to tolerate any sort of autocracy here. As surely in America as in Russia, we are moving toward revolutionary changes in the near future. This war has dug the grave, sounded the knell, and written the epitaph of autocracy of all kinds; and soon the grass will grow above the unmourned hole in the ground where it shall moulder to forgotten dust.

There may be some difference of opinion among us regarding President Wilson, but on one or two points we shall all agree. No President of the United States before him has had such a wonderful gift of language, and none of those that you and I can remember has shown greater capacity for learning something new. Mr. Wilson may be in his actions the victim of old political traditions often—he says so himself—but no President in our history has so aptly put into words what so many forward-looking men and women of all classes and of all modern nations are thinking, as he has. For instance, he said this not long ago:

"THE WHOLE WORLD IS NOW WITNESSING A STRUGGLE BETWEEN TWO IDEALS OF GOVERNMENT. IT IS A STRUGGLE THAT GOES DEEPER AND TOUCHES MORE OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ORGANIZED LIFE OF MEN THAN ANY OTHER OTHER STRUGGLE THAT HAS EVER TAKEN PLACE BE-
FORE, AND NO SETTLEMENT OF THE QUESTIONS THAT LIE ON THE SURFACE CAN SATISFY A SITUATION WHICH REQUIRES THAT THE QUESTIONS WHICH LIE UNDERNEATH THE SURFACE AND AT THE FOUNDATION SHOULD ALSO BE SETTLED AND SETTLED RIGHT."

There are other men among us who could be more specific than the President is in that statement, and there are other men among us who understand better than the President does, or can, SOME OF THESE QUESTIONS WHICH LIE AT THE FOUNDATION, but no other statement of the situation could be more positive or more sweeping. I do not claim that the President is a radical. But in some of his utterances at least he is becoming, more than any other public man, the mouthpiece of world-wide radical consciousness and determination. For here are the closing words of that same address:

"ALL OUR PRINCIPLES, ALL OUR HEARTS, ALL OUR PURPOSES, ARE BEING SEARCHED—SEARCHED NOT ONLY BY OUR CONSCIENCES, BUT SEARCHED BY THE WORLD, AND IT IS TIME FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE STATES OF THIS COUNTRY TO SHOW THE WORLD IN WHAT PRACTICAL SENSE THEY HAVE LEARNED THE LESSON OF DEMOCRACY—THAT THEY ARE FIGHTING FOR DEMOCRACY BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE IN IT, AND THAT THERE IS NO APPLICATION OF DEMOCRACY WHICH THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IN."

Granted the President was thinking of woman's irresistible march toward political equality. He was also surely thinking of much more, as millions of us
are thinking of so much more: of the sturdy uprising of the millions of Russian peasants and workers, of the mighty upheaval now going on in England, of the inevitable reckoning which the masses of the common people are going soon to exact all over the earth from their irresponsible rulers—**INDUSTRIAL AS WELL AS POLITICAL, YES, AND EDUCATIONAL AS WELL AS INDUSTRIAL.**

**Education and Citizenship**

Among all the discoveries which we are making as a result of this war, none is more vital or more prophetic of revolutionary change, none more important or more imperative to the future’s safety, than those relating to CITIZENSHIP and EDUCATION. Most of us, if we have thought at all, have found that what a nation is or what a movement is depends very largely upon what people’s conceptions of citizenship are, and upon what education is. To my mind, nothing is more needed in America right now than THE CLEAR DEFINITION IN ALL OUR MINDS OF WHAT WE MEAN BY CITIZENSHIP, and A COMPLETE REVISION OF OUR WHOLE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF EFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP.

We must not forget, of course, that the nation we are most immediately concerned with is the one in which we are living—the United States. I do not say we are not concerned about other nations—we are, deeply, vitally. What they may do or be affects us. Internationalism—the thing for which some of us have contended against opposition and criticism for a generation or more—is now recognized as a fundamental necessity of all correct thinking and all fruitful action, and no nation or group can escape it. But you and I are far more deeply concerned with this particular nation than with any other, and we shall forget that fact at our peril. No one’s internationalism must les-
But when you think of CITIZENSHIP in this nation, you must be impressed by one towering fact. And that is, that the quality of our citizenship has been and still is disappointing. No matter what your point of view—Republican, Democrat, Socialist, pro-war—the fact remains.

For example, Mr. Roosevelt, whom many people regard as the greatest American—AND MANY DO NOT—Mr. Roosevelt felt very sure a year ago that the citizenship of America should and would favor his program of preparedness, would share his view of national danger and duty, and adopt the plan of a large army and universal military service. You will remember that he urged that view in 1916 vehemently, vociferously, frantically from coast to coast, backed by all the prestige that goes with the office of President. He was so sure he knew and spoke for the citizenship of this country—indeed, that he embodied, incarnated, WAS the citizenship of this country as sure as the Kaiser is that he solely and all alone represents and thinks for the Almighty on this poor old earth—so sure was Mr. Roosevelt that early on the morning after election—before daylight—he expressed through the papers his gratification that the American people had taken his own view of the case almost unanimously, and announced with rare self-denial that he would not interfere with the administration of President Hughes—ONE POLITICAL PROMISE WHICH OUR AMERICAN UNDERSTUDY OF GOD HAS RELIGIOUSLY KEPT. He has interfered in no way with the administration of President Hughes—for the most excellent reasons. Mr. Roosevelt in 1916 didn’t have all the returns at hand, and a few hours later he discovered that the American peo-
people had elected by nearly half a million plurality a man whom Mr. Roosevelt had in black and white accused of near treason, a man whom in the first chapter of his latest book he lists as an enemy of the country! In other words, the citizenship of the United States at a critical time proved woefully disappointing—to Mr. Roosevelt. And if he was right—and who shall dare dispute it—the majority of the people were and are sadly and tragically—indeed, blasphemously—wrong.

But again last April the elected representatives of the nation decided that international obligation and the national honor and safety made it imperative for this government to join the war against the autocratic Central Empires and their allies. Many believed that if the question had been substituted to a referendum, the majority against it would have been overwhelming. Perhaps it would, perhaps not. Popular views and action as to war have never been very reassuring to any thoughtful man. Besides, whoever thinks that majorities are necessarily right or possess virtue or wisdom, is worshipping one of the cheapest fetiches that ever wasted anyone's time. Read Carlyle. He said: England has twenty-five million people—mostly fools!” England, to be sure, has changed since then—it now has forty-five millions. Anyhow, this government decided to enter the war, and again the citizenship of the nation as a whole has not shown itself effective in any way. It hasn’t been effective, and isn’t now, in preparation for war nor in taking part in the war—neither to the belligerent nor to be pacifist. Nothing but the most frantic efforts and millions of dollars spent in advertising—yes, and the most shameless and dastardly coercion of employes by their employers all over the United States could make the second “liberty loan” a success. I know a man—one of the finest men I ever met, one of the most valuable
citizens any nation could have, clean of body and mind, clear-brained, competent, honest, truthful, intelligent, skilled, devoted to every noble ideal that has served to hearten the race for its finest struggles. But because he would not buy a bond in the second liberty loan, his pin-headed employer, a moral and intellectual pigmy by comparison, as any unbiased person who knew both men would agree, not only discharged him—a man in the prime of life and efficiency and with 14 years of continuous service in that job—BUT BLACKLISTED HIM, so that he had no sooner again begun to show his efficiency at another job in the same city than he was discharged again, AND IF HE GETS EMPLOYMENT AT THE ONE OCCUPATION FOR WHICH HE HAS GIVEN YEARS OF HIS LIFE TO FIT HIMSELF, HE MUST IN THIS LAND OF THE FREE AND HOME OF THE BRAVE, CHANGE HIS NAME.

The man who discharged that man and blacklisted him is guilty of what should be held and will be held by every man worthy to be a citizen in a democracy as TREASON and if there is need of any shooting at sunrise or hanging to lamp-posts, that kind of person should receive that sort of attention. Will our Roots and Roosevelts and Van Dykes and Russells recommend the lamp-post or the firing squad for this kind of traitor—the kind that nullifies every principle upon which the nation was supposed to be founded, makes a farce of the Declaration of Independence, and a fraud of democracy? You know well that not one of these loud-mouthed persons, who assume that all wisdom resides under their hats, will even notice such a thing as this. They want the lamp-post and the firing squad for men and women who dare to do their own thinking even in time of war, for men and women whose motives and deeds, even if mistaken, far more resemble
those which marked the lives of all the pioneers of human freedom we know anything about, than Root or Roosevelt or Van Dyke or Russell does or can. Why don't these devoted patriots recommend severe treatment for those men in America who nullify democracy and violate every principle of fair dealing? Because not one of them ever for a minute has had a glimpse of the foundation principles upon which alone any associated life can rest securely, because justly. In every case, the political faith of these men is a TRADITION, AND IS NOTHING MORE. Their failure to denounce this kind of treason puts them out of the category of the only kind of citizenship the world can afford to tolerate. This nation can never be safe for democracy or for decency or for anything that truth-loving men can respect, until this species of viper is scotched once and forever within our domain. It can be scotched only when the whole character and program of our associated life are radically changed, only when we cease to put the stamp of law and order upon individualistic thievery and industrial autocracy, and substitute universal collective control over every function that affects the right or the happiness of any member of society. This case which I have mentioned can be multiplied by thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, in connection with that so-called liberty loan. What a travesty on everything honest, everything decent, it is to call a national monetary loan taken under such circumstances a “liberty loan!” How any man can contemplate such things and still believe that the nation which tolerates them can make anything safe for democracy, passes my understanding.

We have no such thing in America yet as an effective citizenship. America today is little more than an international boarding house, a polyglot chaos, and whoever thinks that anything the government is now
doing is calculated to produce or capable of producing a really integrated nation, needs to do some more thinking on that subject.

But the supreme need of the age is EFFICIENCY, citizen efficiency, national and international efficiency. The affirmation of that need is implicit in almost every public word and act of President Wilson, written plain and clear in every day’s events. People are efficient, or they are inefficient, which means useless for worthy end. So are nations, groups, churches, parties. There is no greater condemnation of any man or any institution than the word “inefficient,” no greater praise than the word “efficient” or “effective.” A nation’s whole standing and quality from any point of view is measured by its efficiency, and its efficiency resides in the character and intelligence of its citizenship. Political leaders, publicists, thinkers, serious men and women of America during the coming ten or twenty years are going to think more about creating an effective citizenship than they have ever thought before. And they cannot think about that without thinking of the boys and girls of the nation and about the system of education which is to be employed in the task of creating an effective citizenship. The minds of shrewd and reactionary political leaders like Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Root, Mr. Nicholas Murray Butler, and others of that stamp, are going to be turned toward the youth of America and the schools of America AS NEVER BEFORE. Greater pressure than ever before is going to be brought to bear on the schools of this country to shape them to the ends of what these men and others like them consider effective citizenship. If the minds of ordinary citizens, of workingmen, of socialists, and social reformers are not turned in the same direction and with a keener determination and a more active interest, it will be because these classes of citizens are
inferior in brain power and sagacity.

The educational problem of the immediate future—indeed, of the immediate present and future—more than that, the national problem of the coming twenty years, is going to be that which my question today raises: "How can we best educate for effective citizenship?" The answer to that question by the reactionaries is already formulated. The answer of forward-looking men and women must be formulated at once. Nothing has been so great a source of power in the Socialist movement as the fact that Socialists know exactly what they want and how they propose to get it. We must know what we want in our public school system, and we cannot know it too soon.

Before I attempt to answer the question I have raised, we must ask and answer another. It is this: Why is NOT American citizenship effective? Only one reason need be named, I think, and we should ponder that reason carefully. American citizenship is ineffective and impotent BECAUSE THE PEOPLE OF THE AMERICAN NATION POSSESS NO CONSCIOUSNESS OF A SOCIAL OR EVEN A POLITICAL MISSION OF TRANSCENDING IMPORTANCE—OF WORLD-EMBRACING VALUE. Our citizenship never can or will become effective until it gains such consciousness. The only times in human history when men as individuals or in groups have been potent and forward-moving have been when these men have possessed the sense of a world-mission of genuine and abiding value. All students agree that the only period when Christianity was really powerful AND MORALLY EFFICIENT was when, in its early beginnings, its adherents were sensible of nothing so much as of a great and beneficent world-mission. Really, that consciousness is the great-
est thing in the Bible, by all odds. And it is there as in no other human book. **NOTHING COULD STOP THOSE MEN, AND NOTHING DID, SO LONG AS THAT CONSCIOUSNESS REMAINED.** It was a mere handful of weaponless men against the most powerful empire of antiquity—BUT THE EMPIRE CAPITULATED; NOT THE MEN. When that sense of a world-mission was corrupted to Roman imperialism and later to ecclesiastical imperialism, Christianity died. Then it was better dead. It had ceased to be of any use. Nothing but the pale ghost of Christianity now walks the earth—and ghosts are not useful, except to scare children.

Why has the spread of Socialism been the most consistent as well as the most significant event of modern times—perhaps of any time? **BECAUSE SOCIALISM IS A WORLD-MOVEMENT—NO LESS.** To surrender that sense of a world-mission would be the death of Socialism. Socialism does not surrender that consciousness. It is right now the very soul of the Russian Revolution, and not Russia alone, nor Germany, but all the world must reckon with it. All the prisons, all the firing squads, all the lamp-posts, all the Roosevelts, and other Kaisers in the world can’t kill Socialism or halt its onward march to the conquest of human society. If any one thinks that the revolutionists of Russia are concerned alone with the internal affairs of that country, it won’t hurt him to do some more thinking on that subject. The one big reason why the Allied Powers in this war do not and cannot understand the new Russia is because the new Russia is conscious of a democracy which must embrace the whole world, and is supremely bent on realizing that ideal—the Allied Powers are not.

But why has the American nation no sense of a world-mission? There is just one sufficient answer to
that question: This nation possesses no sense of a world-mission because all our fundamental institutions—our politics, our religion and our schools are a tradition. They are not now and never have been the present answer to a present need. This government calls itself a democracy. Democracy for a few years in the last quarter of the 18th century in Europe and America was for some men a religion—as truly so, as nobly so, as ever Christianity was. It was the consciousness for a time in the minds of a few men—most of whom the world has since been taught by its Roosevelts and other megalomaniacs to hate and execrate—the consciousness of a world-mission. And bear this in mind: Democracy is a falsehood, a mere camouflage for some sinister form of tyranny or exploitation, unless it is shot through with a consciousness of world-mission. The loss of that keen sense of its great mission—to lead all the world to truth and love and brotherhood—marked the death of Christianity as a vital force, and what has taken its place is the merest camouflage of genuine religion. And the loss of democracy's sense of its mission: to make every human being a freeman, the equal of every other before the law and opportunity of associated life—marked the death of democracy, and an unspeakable corruption of the very souls of men has been the product of our pseudo-democracy.

Think, Americans, of the spectacle this nation has shown during all these painful years of world-wide social aspiration and struggle—this nation dedicated by an eight-years revolutionary war to the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity for all human beings, and yet calmly maintaining chattel...
SLAVERY FOR A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, INDUSTRIAL SLAVERY A CENTURY AND A HALF, AND THE ENSLAVEMENT AND HUMILIATION OF WOMAN UNTIL TODAY, AND ALL THAT TIME EXCHANGING FRATERNAL GREETINGS WITH BLOODY-HANDED AUTOCRATS LIKE THE CZAR OF RUSSIA RIGHT IN THE SHADOW OF BLOODY SUNDAY, WITH THE MURDEROUS SHOTS OF THE CZAR'S SOLDIERS ALMOST RINGING IN OUR EARS, AND FACE TO FACE WITH THE ENDLESS ARMY OF BRAVE MEN AND HEROIC WOMEN MARCHING TO DEATH IN THE FOUL DUNGEONS OF RUSSIAN PRISONS OR TO LIFE-LONG EXILE IN THE SNOW AND ICE OF SIBERIA—EVEN THROWING BOUQUETS TO THAT SAME MAILED-FISTED KAISER WHOM IT NOW ASKS US TO HATE AND OVERTHROW. What name would Mr. Roosevelt or Mr. Wilson apply to that record, if it were the record of Germany or Austria or Turkey, instead of being the record of the oldest democracy on the planet? If that record has any meaning, it means that America has been a traitor to democracy for a hundred and fifty years nearly: what wonder that so many clear-minded men today doubt the sincerity of the government's professed desire to make the world safe for democracy?

Men and women all over the world have a right to ask: “WHY WERE YOU NOT ANXIOUS TO MAKE THE WORLD SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY ALL THOSE TERRIBLE YEARS WHEN THE INFAMOUS AUTOCRAT OF RUSSIA WAS SENDING THOSE THOUSANDS OF HEROIC MEN AND WOMEN TO A LIVING DEATH—
FOR WHAT? FOR PLEADING AND STRUGGLING FOR THAT VERY DEMOCRACY WHICH AMERICA PROFESSION. WHY, WHEN MEN WITH THE WORDS OF THE FOUNDERS OF THIS NATION ON THEIR LIPS AND OUR EARLIEST POLITICAL FAITH IN THEIR HEARTS WERE FIGHTING THEIR AWFUL BATTLE AGAINST AN INFINITELY MORE SINISTER AND BRUTAL TYRANNY THAN GEORGE III. WAS CAPABLE OF—WHY IN THOSE TERRIBLE YEARS OF MARTYRDOM WERE THE SPOKESMEN OF THE DEMOCRACY IN WASHINGTON SENDING FRATERNAL GREETINGS TO THAT MONSTER IN ST. PETERSBURG AND WISHING HIM LONG LIFE AND UNBROKEN POWER? A democracy doesn’t act that way. The Russia of today—the one frank, fearless, clean-hearted nation in all the earth, doesn’t act that way.

The American government never hesitated to recognize the rightful authority of the Czar, WHOM THE PEOPLE OF RUSSIA NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO CHOOSE BY THEIR BALLOTS. Why does this government hesitate to recognize the Bolshevik government in Russia, which at least represents a part and an important part of the Russian people, AND WHICH HAS A TITLE INFINITELY BETTER THAN THE CZAR EVER HAD, AND AS GOOD AS THAT WHICH THE KERENSKY GOVERNMENT HAD? Would not this DEMOCRATIC government at once give its official recognition to some new Czar, some military dictator, provided such autocrat resumed Russia’s participation in this war? Regardless of what is the future fate of the Bolsheviks of Russia, they never have shown that treason to truth, to decency, to democracy, which was the unbroken
record of this professed democracy for over a hundred years in its attitude toward those who were making it a by-word and a hissing of human rights. The Bolsheviks may be insane, but they are incapable of the nauseating treason to liberty and fraternity which lies at the door of the American government.

Why have we this shameful record—this record that no honest man can be proud of—this record which no fair-minded man can think of without shame? Why? Because all our basic institutions are nothing but traditions. Not one of them from the beginning has been the answer of the needs of liberty-seeking men and women. We took our governmental forms from that very England with which we had fought an eight-years war for freedom and independence. And we shaped our institutions to suit the demands of a form of industrial society which then and now gives the lie to every affirmation of human rights in the Declaration of Independence and every claim of justice put forth by our political leaders today.

Our public press, and even some of those who a short time ago were mouthing the phrases of Socialism, are crying out upon the poor Russian workers because they are turning their backs upon this alleged war against political autocracy, and making an uncompromising war upon that industrial autocracy which has made the earth for three centuries a hell. We complain that they are waging civil war and menacing the freedom of the world. But what if history, which never renders the verdict of the moment nor the verdict of the powerful should some time lay its choicest laurels on the names of Lenin and Trotsky and their comrades, and say: “These men are greater than Wilson, greater than Roosevelt—oh shameful thing! Greater even than Lincoln or Washington.
For they, more than any others of all these heroes of history, SAW THE REAL ENEMY OF FREEDOM AND LIFE AND HAD THE CONSUMMATE COURAGE IN THE FACE OF THE WORLD'S CONDEMNATION TO STRIKE CLEAN, STRONG BLOWS FOR THOSE RIGHTS WITHOUT WHICH NONE OTHERS CAN EXIST? What if that be the verdict of history? And it may be. History's heroes have seldom been those whom contemporary judgment would have chosen.

How, then, can we best educate for effective citizenship? Clearly, by first knowing what we mean by citizenship. What, for example, do Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Root, Mr. Nicholas Murray Butler, and others of the same type understand by citizenship? What is their ideal for America? To what do they propose to shape our educational system? They want to make military training universal and compulsory in this country. And they propose to make that training a basic part of our American public school system. Well, what would that mean? Think. We have right before our eyes an object lesson that should make thinking easy: the Roman Catholic Church. That Church is the most powerful organization on earth—for reaction, for superstition, for the destruction of free institutions. Why is it so strong? BECAUSE IT HAS PURSUED EXACTLY THE POLICY WHICH MR. ROOSEVELT AND OTHERS WANT US TO PURSUE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS. The Roman Catholic Church is distinctly a military organization. It has applied the principle of militarism to the realm of religion absolutely. What is the basic thing in militarism? Absolute and unquestioning obedience. That is exactly what Mr. Roosevelt wants fastened on the United States. That is what the Roman Catholic Church has fastened on its benighted
subjects. How? By the ecclesiastical goose-step in the education of its children. What are children? They are born with an instinctive desire for freedom, with an infinite longing for adventure, endowed by Nature with an infinite capacity for variation, to become different from their parents instead of drab and inane replicas of their parents, and so to enrich the world with new points of view, to think new thoughts, to live new lives, to experiment, to adventure. What does the Roman Catholic Church do? IT NIPS ALL THIS IN THE BUD. I think this its deadliest crime—the crime for which it must pay with the execration and hate of coming centuries. How does it do this? By enjoining absolute obedience on pain of eternal hell. It defeats the ends of nature. It puts out the eyes of the mind. It palsies the impulse toward freedom in those who take it seriously. It creates a generation of slaves, cowards, tools, a menace to every forward-looking movement. And men will sometime think of it with greater horror than they now think of the bloody rule of the Romanoffs in Russia.

Mr. Roosevelt and others want to install exactly that sort of thing in the public schools. The Roman Catholic Church is their ideal for the nation. Universal military training means making the boys of a nation think that obedience to authority is a virtue. Suppose that idea had been thoroughly instilled into the minds of the American Colonies a century and a half ago. There never would have been any Declaration of Independence, and the British Empire would have been as unprogressive and reactionary as Spain. Suppose it had been done in Russia, and that people had taken it seriously. THERE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN A REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA IN ALL TIME. But America is different from Russia, some one will say. You are quite right—different from the
old Russia and different from the new Russia. And that is exactly the reason why universal military service here would be so much more fatal than there. In Russia tyranny was open, bald, brutal. In America, tyranny is sinister, subtle, camouflaged with a lot of high-sounding words. The old Russia had no traditions of freedom to appeal to—or if she had, they were all but lost in the dimness of a remote past. But America has these traditions, and so her boys and girls can the more easily be deceived into thinking that these traditions and freedom are embodied in the institutions of today. That has been the unspeakable misfortune of the children of America for over a hundred years.

Military discipline, as Mr. Roosevelt well knows, is the greatest menace to the very soul of a democracy—next to capitalism. For the whole force of military discipline is to set any person against change—AND CHANGE EVEN REVOLUTION, IS THE VERY BREATH OF LIFE OF DEMOCRACY. For democracy not to change, not to grow, not to make constantly new adaptations and new conquests, is to die and become the corruption and hypocrisy it has become in America. Witness the character of the average Congressman. You can’t know these men without knowing that democracy has lost its soul here, or never gained it. Besides the disciplined soldier fights for what is established, not for change.

I maintain that the only citizenship we have a moral right or a constitutional right or an historical right to set up here as the standard of education, is CITIZENSHIP IN A GROWING, CHANGING POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ORGANISM—CITIZENSHIP IN AND FOR A MORAL AND SOCIAL EVOLUTIONARY GROWTH. If I am
told that what we want to do is to make good Americans, I answer: "True. But good Americans doesn't mean blind followers of Mr. Roosevelt or Mr. Wilson or any one else." The United States today is governed by the Democratic Party—and Mr. Roosevelt shows his Americanism by criticising that party to the limit. Suppose that four years from now the nation should be governed by the Socialist Party. What will it mean then to be a good American citizen? I answer that neither then nor now nor ever does it mean to be an unthinking supporter of the powers that be, no matter who or what those powers are. Any such definition would differentiate American citizenship in no essential way from German or Austrian or Spanish or Turkish citizenship. It isn't Germany that we are fighting, if our fighting has any moral or social or political value—it is the German system, its lack of responsible democratic control. And what Mr. Roosevelt and others propose for our boys in this nation would simply Prussianize them. I object.

Do you ask what I would have done with the schools? I WOULD MAKE THEM ALL DEMOCRACIES—NOT DEMOCRACIES IN THE SHAM WAY OUR GOVERNMENT ILLUSTRATES THE WORD, BUT IN EVERY REAL SENSE OF THAT WORD. I would expel autocracy from every school in America, root and branch AND I SHOULD HAVE SOME JOB. I would "can" the Kaiser from THE AMERICAN SCHOOL SYSTEM WHERE HE IS AS REALLY ENTHRONED RIGHT NOW AS HE IS IN GERMANY, and I would send Prussianism in America to the discard along with the Czar. I would have American schools cease being a TRADITION, and make them a living, conscious, active agency in national and international life. I would make these schools, not a PREPARATION for dem-
Training in Freedom, not for Freedom. That is exactly what we are now doing in the Ferrer Modern School at Stelton, N. J., and it is being done in any real sense in no other day school for children in America.

The Francis Parker School in Chicago says in its prospectus that it is not the function of a school to train children for any particular form of society—and that is true. But it is not definite enough. You can't train children for chaos and you have no right to train them for reaction. I would train them definitely and specifically—we are doing that now at the Ferrer School—for social and political change in the direction of a greater freedom and a wider opportunity and full equality for all human beings. That we can do. And I would train children FOR that kind of social and political function by training them IN THAT KIND OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FUNCTION RIGHT NOW AND HERE. If freedom is only a word or a theory to them, it has no reality. Neither has it for anyone. IT CAN HAVE REALITY ONLY AS IT IS EXERCISED. Therefore every child who is to be educated for effective citizenship must first of all be free. They must know they are free, that no other person has any authority over them, that the spring of action is within themselves and in the needs of a social life through which freedom may become possible and real for all. Such children become effective citizens at once—effective citizenship is their life. They are effective members of the society in which they live. They have a voice in that society—it is as much theirs as anyone else's. And they discover a responsibility in and for that society which they never in the world can discover or know in any other way. You can't learn social responsibility in a book, through a theory, least of all in an autocratic atmos-
phere. You can learn social responsibility only by exercising it. Children trained in that way are finding their education to be their life, and their life to be their education. Nor are they part of an unchanging society. That would be a tragedy for children—it is a tragedy for any one. On the contrary, they know themselves members of a society that is changing steadily, a society having the habit of change in the expression of its life. Can any one say that truthfully of any part of the so-called educational system of this country—this tradition which the ignorant generations before us have handed on to us, and which an ignorant generation now proposes to hand on to the men and women of tomorrow? You know it cannot be said of this system. And yet, what right has this generation to say what the life of the next generation shall be? What right has any body of people to fix the conditions or the limits of life for those who are to come after them? Is there any wonder that the founders of the Parker School of Chicago say that these public schools “are so hampered by the weight of ignorant demand and blind conservatism that is laid upon them by a dominating public that where they WOULD they seldom ARE FREE to take such steps as might seem very sure ones toward a better education?” Is it any wonder that an intelligent man like Dr. Flexner says of the public school system: “The subjects commonly taught, the time at which they are taught, the manner in which they are taught, and the amounts taught, are determined by tradition, NOT BY A FRESH AND UNTRAMMELED CONSIDERATION OF LIVING AND PRESENT NEEDS?”

Suppose you are teaching the lesson of history—what must you hold up before their minds? A STEADILY CHANGING WORLD. History is not taught at all unless that truth is made real to the pupil.
It ought to be considered, too, an immoral thing to pretend to teach history in any other way. And if you are fit to be a teacher in a democracy, in a free society, in a society dedicated to the emancipation of human beings from all enslaving things, you will tell children HOW AND WHY THIS IS A STEADILY CHANGING WORLD. No person is fit to be a teacher of history who cannot do that—indeed, no one is a teacher of history who doesn't do that. For that is exactly what teaching history means. Perhaps the children find out that the one great period in European history marked by the least observable change is called "The Dark Ages"—the one period when the Christian Church was supreme to Europe. Is it not the business of the teacher to explain why that was the case?

Suppose you want to tell them the story of man's origin and slow development on the earth: the story of evolution. That story has great value to any one, for thinking persons, especially all who are to be effective citizens in a progressively improving society—need a long perspective in which to see the comparative values of things. What do they see in that story? The one significant thing they see is CHANGE, DEVELOPMENT, IMPROVEMENT. But I am supposing something that is not done in our public school system. The teacher who would do that would lose his job. No attempt is made to hold the true picture of history and of social and industrial development before pupils' minds. The most vital subjects are either not taught at all, or falsely taught.

The True Civics

What is taught in our public schools as CIVICS? The rules of a fixed and unchanging political system, of a system which the pupils never imagine capable of being changed. And yet, there isn't a thinking man in this country who does not know that this whole poli-
tical and industrial system must be changed, and speed-
ily, and that it will be changed. Civics can't be taught in this country unless the whole story of the labor movement is told to children, at least in high school, the story also of the Socialist movement; of every struggle for change, and of the reason for these struggles and these movements. These are civics, and they will be recognized soon as civics, and no teaching of cast-iron rules ever can be civics. And if we were trying to train the boys and girls of this country for effective citizenship, especially in those years of inevitable and radical change that lie just ahead, we should teach these facts of a living social process as civics, and not make our boys and girls mere parrots of the past and so reduce life to stagnation or slavery.

IT ISN'T OUR BUSINESS TO FIT BOYS AND GIRLS TO OCCUPY CELLS IN A PRISON, BUT TO BREAK THE BARS AND WINDOWS AND WALLS OF EVERY SOCIAL EDIFICE THAT IMPRISONS THE HUMAN SPIRIT OR SHUTS LIFE AWAY FROM FREEDOM AND EXPRESSION.

In other words, education should be a process undertaken for the purpose of developing new capacities of the individual, and new forms of social life. Here is one reason why the new Russia is utterly beyond the understanding of most of our American public men, even of the President himself. The President talks and writes about what the American people have been in the habit of doing, what the whole race has habitually done. The people of new Russia are thinking about WHAT THEY THEMSELVES PROPOSE NOW TO DO. Our public men are thinking about tradition, always about tradition. The people of Russia today have no eyes for tradition—their eyes are turned
toward the future and toward their own ideals of justice, of freedom and happiness.

Our schools, if they are to be the agencies of education, will say to the children by their whole program and teaching: "We have evolved from the long past, AND WE ARE STILL EVOLVING. We have inherited many traditions, but inheritance costs nothing and has no significance in itself. It is up to us to CREATE, not merely to inherit. WE LIVE ONLY AS WE CREATE, PERSONALLY, Socially, Politically AND IN ALL OTHER WAYS. Come, let us take this sorry scheme of things and shape it more nearly like our heart's desire. Let us learn from the past, its mistakes as well as its triumphs. We are to make the past WINGS, not WEIGHTS—an URGE to finer and bigger and better things, not FETTERS to bind or a CHAIN to moor us fast to some decaying wharf of a dead society. Life for us is not in the past—it is in the present and the future. For these and in these we must live, if we are to live at all. That would make education exactly what the deepest needs of all human life requires that it shall be—an adventure.

This is the message of the modern school—not merely the message it is speaking, but the message it is living, the message its pupils bear to all who know them—the only message they can bear, for that freedom, that release from the bonds of tradition and convention which elsewhere is a theory or a hope IS THE VERY LIFE OF THE CHILDREN. The Ferrer School, or the Ferrer kind of school, is for the schools of America what the Russian democracy is for the other nations—all of them, this as well as the rest. Politically we have been saying: "We can't go any faster than political and industrial evolution permits us. We cannot hale Utopia on by force—we can only
follow the path of historical development.” And so this oldest democracy sent such seasoned products of our free institutions as Elihu Root to tell the poor benighted peasants and wage-workers of Russia how to establish free institutions! Indeed, when the Russian revolution first broke out, like the sun from a cloud-covered sky, and dazzled us with the wonder and splendor of it, there were some Socialists, not only here but in Russia itself—Socialists whose thinking followed the smoothly grooved ruts of Marxian tradition and never dreamed of any exceptions to the well-learned rule—who said: “No, we can’t do anything yet. The workers can’t organize Russia. Russia must pass through the well-defined stages of capitalist evolution before we can have freedom and social fruition.” But the new Russia isn’t doing anything of the kind and isn’t likely to. The 20th century world is widely different from the world that Marx knew, and there are a myriad of things not found in any philosophy. The Russian revolutionists—whatever the fortunes of the Bolsheviki—are not going to wait for the slow-moving processes of a mechanical evolution. THEY KNOW THEMSELVES AS THE MOST ESSENTIAL FACTOR IN EVOLUTION. They have vision, imagination, energy, youth, boundless courage, infinite daring, resolute determination—before such things traditions fade like mists before the sun.

Some of the newspapers of this American democracy who have been hoping to see another autocrat in control of Russia are saying: “The German armies will invade and annex defenseless Russia, and her silly multitudes will become the vassals of another autocracy.” Ah, how short-sighted such prophesies are! Russia has a defense against German autocracy that no other nation on earth possesses, though all her armies were disbanded. Any such attempt by German
autocracy would snap the cords that now bind her enslaved workers, and all Germany would blaze with revolution.

We Must Act Now

Must we wait till America is conquered by the workers and for the workers before we begin the work of democratic education? As well say, we must remain in the Republican Party or the Democratic Party until they give us the co-operative commonwealth. THAT ISN'T WHAT MEN AND WOMEN IN EARNEST DO. The task of transforming this vast public school system under any circumstance is herculean in its proportions. No matter what party possesses the offices of government, the transformation of a traditional school system into a real educational agency is a tremendous undertaking. For in that task you have the dense ignorance and callous conservatism of millions of people to contend with. BESIDES, IT IS NOT A TASK FOR ANY AGENCY WHOSE TENURE OF POWER DEPENDS ON THE FRANCHISE OF MASSES OF PEOPLE WHO ARE STEEPED IN RELIGIOUS SUPERSTITION AND CONVENTIONAL PREJUDICE. But if you can show by the object lesson of a free school here and there and yonder, as we are now showing at Stelton, that such schools are the only real agencies of a living democracy, that they alone can produce human beings instinct with freedom and hope and confident determination to think for themselves and live a new, untrammeled life—if you can do that, you blaze a way for many schools to follow—AND NEVER IN THE WORLD WILL THEY GET ANYWHERE UNLESS A WAY IS BLAZED FOR THEM. A great bulky machine can't move easily or quickly. The school system is a vast machine, unwieldy, rusty with religious superstition and all the petty conceit of capitalist officialism. Besides, we move
forward, not *en masse*, but led by individuals or by potent groups. Russia didn’t and doesn’t now move *en masse*—it won’t, it can’t. And all this newspaper talk about “oligarchy” in its present government is pure camouflage. A mere handful of wage-workers made and engineered the greatest revolution of the ages, and a handful of men and women must complete that work of emancipation—a handful of Russian men and women whom the unerring franchise of long struggle and heroic faith and sacrifice has elected from out the mass for that splendid service. It may or may not be the handful now in control—but it will be a few, rather than many.

There is imperative need in America for Ferrer Schools, schools founded by men and women of vision, of modern thinking, of devotion, enthusiasm, daring, and undaunted determination. They are the only schools in which and through which this traditional system which now lumbers its stupid way over the broken spirits and misshapen lives of its most competent teachers and its most aspiring pupils can be smashed, and a new temple of democracy erected in its stead. THE MODERN SCHOOL with its back toward musty tradition and its face toward freedom and the future, is THE EDUCATIONAL HOPE OF THE WORLD.
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