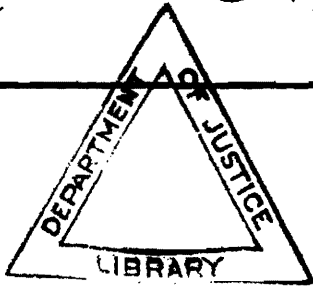




Department of Justice

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ADDRESS

BY

ATTORNEY GENERAL ROBERT F. KENNEDY

BEFORE THE

CANADIAN PRESS

ROYAL YORK HOTEL

TORONTO, CANADA

APRIL 14, 1964

I was honored to receive your invitation and I am delighted to be here with you this evening.

It is some time since I have visited Canada, and I trust you will allow me a brief personal note. My family and I were profoundly moved by the response of the Canadian people to the death of President Kennedy. We shall never forget it. Canadians will always have our heartfelt appreciation.

Perhaps your response could have been predicted. The long, close friendship between Canada and the United States has had many fine hours. But for Mrs. Kennedy and all the Kennedys nothing can be compared with the warmth of your nation's tribute and the many individual expressions of sympathy received from you.

Our tradition of Canadian-American friendship is, of course, a legend. It was twenty-five years ago that Winston Churchill referred to our common frontier "guarded only by neighborly respect and honorable obligations" as an "example to every country and a pattern for the future of the world."

And that example will continue under President Johnson as it did under President Kennedy. And it will continue after November 1964 as it does at present and as it has for 150 years.

During that time our countries have shared many common interests, pursued many common goals.

This evening I would like to suggest another interest common to your nation and mine--and to all of the West.

I would like to talk briefly about the importance of the current world-wide contest for the hearts and minds of youth, particularly the youth of underdeveloped nations.

This is a subject of unique importance to Canada and the United States together: We approach it from the same traditions of law; the same basis of representative governments. It is a subject which must be of importance to newspapermen in both our countries. It was of intense personal interest to President Kennedy who became identified with young people throughout the world to an extent that many did not realize during his life.

It is, I believe, a topic of such transcendent importance that it may powerfully influence the world of five, ten or twenty years from now.

As you know, we do not live today in a world which will guarantee gradual change. It might happen, but nobody can count on it and among the developing nations in particular, the need is felt to race through centuries to the present.

In the unsettled atmosphere of the world today, there is a premium on the qualities of young people. They are more important to themselves, to their nations and to the ideas that they espouse than ever before.

Quite apart from that, however, the young have a special importance today simply because there are so many of them. In numbers alone, they are a substantial majority in the developing nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In Pakistan, for example, 60% of the population is under the age of twenty-five. In the Congo, the figure is 54%; in Tanganyika 62%. In India-- where the population of 450 million is more than double that of Canada and the United States combined--six out of every 10 people are under the age of twenty-five. There are comparable figures for most other developing nations, higher figures for several.

I know, of course, that these figures include children, the very young. But also included are most of the university students in these countries. And students in the world today are a dynamic force with an importance all out of proportion to their numbers.

You will recall the Hungarian uprising of 1956. Students organized and led it. Of course, these movements were repressed by Russian tanks. But before the freedom fighters fell onto the bloodstained cobblestones of Budapest, the world knew them. They had rocked the structure of international communism to its very foundation. Things would never be the same again.

Students and young workers rioted in Warsaw that summer with less bloodshed and more practical success.

And then came Latin America. Many in my country reacted in shocked disbelief when Vice President Nixon was jeered and stoned by students in Peru and the roof of his car smashed by students in Venezuela.

Not long after, student riots in Japan forced President Eisenhower to cancel his visit there and Premier Kishi to resign.

Two years later 100,000 youthful rioters swirled through the streets of Seoul. More than 100 persons lost their lives in a single day, but the Korean government of Syngman Rhee was toppled.

The Menderes government in Turkey fell after the violent demonstrations of students and army cadets. Students, as you know, played a key role in the overthrow of the Diem government in Vietnam last November.

Just three months ago, the activities of Panamanian and American students led to riots in which more than a score of lives were lost and diplomatic relations between the two countries were severed.

These are but a few of the better-known examples of the impact of youth on the world scene. But young people have a special importance today for still another reason: a few of them--particularly in Africa--are leading their nations. Others are in positions of significant political power. In time, the classroom may be only a few short years away from the presidential palace.

There is Kenneth Kaunda, for example. Kaunda is 39. He has headed the Northern Rhodesian nationalist movement since he was 33. In a few months, when Northern Rhodesia becomes the independent state of Zambia, Kaunda will be its Premier. Oskar Kambona, the Foreign Minister of Tanganyika is 32. Jonas Savimbi, Angolan exile leader, is 30. Sekou Toure became President of independent Guinea at about the same age.

Tom Mboya, Minister for Justice in Kenya, has been in the front rank of his country's leadership for a number of years. He is still in his thirties as are Justin Bomboko and General Joseph Mobutu of the Congo.

The list could go on and on, and it is not limited to Africa. Rufino Heckonova, Minister of Finance of the Philippines, is 33. Fidel Castro made himself Premier of Cuba at 32. And there are others.

Although these are examples of a current trend in world leadership, it is worth mentioning that several of our early leaders in the United States would qualify for this group on the basis of age. Thomas Jefferson was only 33 when he drafted the Declaration of Independence. Alexander Hamilton was but 30 when he wrote most of the Federalist Papers and James Madison was 36 when he wrote the rest of them.

President Kennedy, of course, appointed many young men to high positions in our government. One of President Johnson's first appointments was of a 29-year-old attorney, Nicholas Johnson, as the Federal Maritime Administrator.

But I mention these young leaders only as one important aspect of the youth of the world today. Current history suggests that the leaders of the developing nations throughout the world for the next few decades will come from the young intellectuals, the students, the young labor leaders and politicians of today. These are the ones with whom we should be primarily concerned.

This is what I suggest to you, for your country and mine, for your profession, for all those who speak for the free world. We must be concerned with these young people, with who they are and where they live, with what they are thinking and saying, and with what we are saying to them.

I raise this point because I think it is not self-evident. It is easy to overlook the importance of the young in underdeveloped countries. It is the natural course for nations, and diplomats, and those who publish newspapers, to speak to the established order. Seeking out the young requires a conscious effort.

We must recognize that the young in many areas of the world today are in the midst of a revolution against the status quo. Their anger is turned on the systems which have allowed poverty, illiteracy and oppression to flourish for centuries.

And we must recognize one central fact: they will prevail. They will achieve their idealistic goals, one way or another. If they have to pull governments tumbling down over their heads, they will do it. But they are going to win a share of a better, cleaner world.

This affects us: Canada and the United States, and you and me. Our future is tied up with what they think. Like it or not, what they are going to do will have a direct impact on us.

We, in turn, are a part of their revolution. At least we should be, and I believe we must encourage them. They will not be like "sheep without a shepherd when the snow shuts out the sky." Someone will share their aspirations and their leadership. If not the West, then some other system will make common cause with them to achieve their immediate goals.

If this means that the future is perilous, I must admit that I think it is. But it is also exciting. If the odds seem long, then, as Edith Hamilton said of Aeschylus, "To the heroic, desperate odds fling a challenge." And we may recall her further statement that "men are not made for safe havens."

But I would view the odds as not long. They are really strongly in our favor--if we use the advantages that are ours.

We of the tradition are all heirs of revolution. In one way or another--from the Magna Carta through the American Revolution and Canada's Confederation--our people have achieved the changes that were the felt needs of the time.

More than that, we have achieved a form of government satisfactory for our people and capable of adjusting to change. We have recognized, as your former Governor General, Lord Tweedsmuir, said so well, that democracy "is primarily a spiritual testament from which certain political and economic orders naturally follow."

Canada and the United States are particularly good examples of this. As vigorous, young democracies with colorful histories, they are filled with men and ideas far more exciting than the rigid responses of communist doctrine.

They are tolerant of ideas and diversity, and they are strong enough to admit errors. This type of free expression is contagious. It has a sparkling attraction for young, inquiring minds, an attraction that no Communist system can match.

I emphasize these advantages because I don't think we have made enough of them. Too often in the past we have relied on a negative response to Communism and left the world with the illusion that only Karl Marx had a philosophy.

We have not been as tough, aggressive or articulate as we might have been in the war of ideas.

Beyond that we must acknowledge the temptations of self-satisfaction, indulgence and complacency here at home. Unless we resist these temptations in our own countries we cannot speak with the ringing voice that will be heard by the young struggling for progress throughout the world.

I know these are not easy words. It is hard to prepare for a challenge, maybe harder still to seek out the young from whom that challenge rises. But it is, I believe, essential -- for you and for us, for Canada and the United States, together.

As Emerson said, "God offers to everyone his choice between truth and repose. Take which you please -- you can never have both." I want to be certain we make the choice for truth. Thank you.