JOHN DEWEY
AT NINETY
As Seen at 90th 
Birthday Dinner
Remarks by
JOHN DEWEY
Prime Minister NEHRU
DAVID DUBINSKY
IRWIN EDMAN
FRANK D. FACKENTHAL
FELIX FRANKFURTER
ALICE HOFFMAN
JOHN HAYNES HOLMES
WILLIAM H. KILPATRICK
JOY ELMER MORGAN
RALPH BARTON PERRY
WALTER REUTHER
HU SHIH
REBECCA SIMONSON

Messages by
PRESIDENT
HARRY S. TRUMAN
and others
Edited by
HARRY W. LAIDLER

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JOHN DEWEY AT NINETY
Addresses and Greetings on the occasion of Dr. Dewey’s Ninetieth Birthday Dinner October 20, 1949 at the Hotel Commodore, New York by

JOHN DEWEY

DAVID DUBINSKY
IRWIN EDMAN
FRANK D. FACKENTHAL
FELIX FRANKFURTER
ALICE HOFFMAN
JOHN HAYNES HOLMES
HU SHIH

WILLIAM H. KILPATRICK
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JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
RALPH BARTON PERRY
WALTER REUTHER
REBECCA SIMONSON

Brief messages from: Harry S. Truman, Clement Attlee, Henri Bonnet, Lady Allen, Stephen Duggan, Bryn J. Howe, Alvin Johnson, Horace Kallen, Felix Kaufmann.

Edited by HARRY W. LAIDLER
LEAGUE FOR INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY
112 East 19th Street, New York, N.Y.

Price 25 cents

The White House,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Dewey:

Blessed is the man who arrives at fourscore and ten rich in the wisdom of experience and the love of friends—and endowed with the unconquered and unconquerable spirit of youth. To you a happy birthday full of cheerful yesterdays and confident tomorrows.

Very sincerely,
Harry S. Truman

JOHN DEWEY AT NINETY
Addresses and Greetings on the occasion of Dr. Dewey's Ninetieth Birthday Dinner October 20, 1949 at the Hotel Commodore, New York by
FOREWORD

On the evening of October 20, 1949, 1500 men and women from all sections of the community gathered together in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Commodore, New York, to do honor to John Dewey, America's foremost philosopher and educator, on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday. The dinner was a memorable one for all present, and was described by one of the speakers as undoubtedly the most important dinner ever tended to a private individual in the United States.

President Truman's message read at the dinner was one of hundreds received from distinguished educators and men and women of affairs from all over the world.

The John Dewey Birthday Committee had general charge of the three-day celebration held in New York October 20-22. It was assigned to the League for Industrial Democracy the task of arranging for the Thursday evening dinner, the outstanding event of this celebration. The League was happy to take general charge of the dinner arrangements, and to make the dinner proceedings available in printed form to the many who have shown an interest in this historic event.

The League wishes to call particular attention to the Dewey Ninetieth Anniversary Fund mentioned on page 28 of this pamphlet.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

HARRY W. LAIDLER

Executive Director, League for Industrial Democracy
Chairman of the Dinner Committee

The whole world these days is pausing in its turbulent course to pay tribute to the beloved philosopher, educator, and leader of democracy. John Dewey, our guest of honor tonight.

From all over Latin America, from the universities of Canada, from Europe, from Israel, Turkey, Japan, China, India, and other lands, comes word of public gatherings, radio broadcasts, articles, the translation of books, the presentation of awards, in celebration of the life and works of one who has more profoundly affected the educational life of our modern world than any other single man.

Messages have been received from the Presidents of the United States and Austria; from the Prime Ministers of Britain, India, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, and Norway, and from distinguished men and women of every democratic country, telling what John Dewey and his life and teachings have meant to them, and wishing him, for the sake of all of us, many additional years of educational leadership. Chile has bestowed on him the Order of Merit.

I like that message, among many others, from Professor Godfrey Thomson of the University of Edinburgh. It represents, I feel, something of the spirit in which Dr. Dewey is receiving congratulations on his birthday this evening. Professor Thomson stated that the Scottish educational system was an unusual combination of pioneering and conservatism and that, in its pioneering mood, it had followed Dewey, but with that caution characteristic of the canny Scot. He continued, and I quote, "May I add to my homage to the master my good wishes for many years. I am reminded of an English university don to whom on his 90th birthday someone said, 'I hope I may in due course congratulate you on reaching 100'.

"I don't see why you shouldn't", was the reply. 'You seem to be strong and in good health.' We will all, Professor Dewey, try
from now on to take good care of the health we have, so that we may be able to celebrate with the same enthusiasm as tonight your hundredth anniversary ten years hence.

I liked, in another vein, that letter from Eric Hylla, a former student of Professor Dewey, as illustrative of the hunger of other peoples for Dr. Dewey’s democratic message, and the struggle through which educators are going in more than one country to bring that greatly needed message to the attention of their people. This former student had translated into German Dewey’s “Education and Democracy” some years before the Hitler regime. The book had been read with great interest, but, after Hitler had come into power, practically all copies had been destroyed.

During the war, Hylla’s house and library had been burned to ashes. It took a long time for Hylla to find a copy of the Dewey book. He finally obtained one, but was beset with difficulties. The original publisher was located in the Russian zone. Paper was hard to get, and the currency had deteriorated. “But as soon as our money was stabilized,” writes Hylla, “I took up the matter again, and with good success. The second edition is now being printed. I cherished the hope that the first copy would be in Dr. Dewey’s hands by his birthday. But things don’t move very fast in Germany.”

“The book, when published,” he continued, “will be of great value to Germany in helping us rebuild our system of education in the spirit you, Dr. Dewey, have so admirably interpreted in this book as well as in all your life’s magnificent work. May the years to come give you additional proof that, in spite of many adversities, mankind is progressing through democratic education toward a better life, richer liberty, and a worthier happiness.”

In the United States, this 90th milestone has been the occasion for convocations and lectures in over 100 colleges and universities. The John Dewey 90th Birthday Committee, under the chairmanship of Professor Kilpatrick, has helped in a number of ventures. At its suggestion, Professor Sidney Hook of N. Y. U. is preparing a volume of essays in Dr. Dewey’s honor giving a survey of his contribution in various fields. The book is appearing next Spring under the title, “John Dewey, Philosopher of Science and Freedom.” Jerome Nathanson is likewise preparing a volume. And then there are the three significant meetings of this week-end to be addressed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower of Columbia, President Bryn J. Hovele of the New School, President Harold Taylor of Sarah Lawrence, Professor Henry S. Commager, Dean Horace Kallen, Jerome Nathanson of the Ethical Culture Society, John L. Childs of Teachers College, and others.

We are happy to begin this dinner by presenting to Dr. Dewey the message to him from President Truman.

And now, it is my great pleasure to introduce, as toastmaster, one of the youngest, most progressive and popular college presidents of the country, President Harold Taylor of Sarah Lawrence College.

( President Taylor served as toastmaster during the remainder of the evening, with rare charm and humor. He declared that the evening was being given over “to the celebration of the human mind, and in honor of one of the greatest of contemporary minds, and one of our great human beings.”

A number of participants in the evening’s discussion were called upon to present greetings from various groups in the community here and abroad. Others were asked to deal with Dr. Dewey’s contributions in the fields of philosophy, education, art, and public affairs. Besides those whose addresses follow, President Taylor asked the following to make a few remarks: Alvin Johnson, Sidney Hook, Elmer Davis, J. J. Singh, and Carlos Delabarra, Chilean Consul-General. Mr. Delabarra, in behalf of his government, bestowed on Dr. Dewey the Order of Merit.

COLUMBIA GREETS DEWEY
FRANK D. FACKENTHAL
Former Acting President, Columbia University

It is a privilege for me to have a part in this birthday celebration, yet I regret that President Eisenhower is not here tonight to represent Columbia. Fortunately, he will greet Professor Dewey on a later program.
I arrived on the Columbia campus some two years in advance of our guest of honor, though our arrivals were very different in kind—mine by petition to a committee on admissions, his by invitation from faculty and trustees.

It has, therefore, been my rare good fortune to know about and, better yet, to know Professor Dewey during his entire service at Columbia from 1901 to date—a continuing service, for to him retirement like a birthday is of little or no significance.

Many others will bring birthday greetings tonight. They are people of distinction in their several fields as their names and titles so clearly indicate. That very fact tempts me, I fear unwisely, to make comparisons:

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who came to see the elephant
(Though all of them were blind)
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

Some will, no doubt, find John Dewey very like a philosopher; others may emphasize the effect of his thinking on the pillars of the law; there will be reference to his influence on the peoples of other lands; surely someone will find in his the qualities of a great teacher and an inspiring leader in the restudy of the principles and practice of education: (his firmness on human rights and responsibilities, on the freedoms inherent in the dignity of man may to others seem very like a wall.) Under these circumstances, elephant or no elephant, it is possible for one of those handmaidens of education, an administrator, to think of John Dewey as a unit, as a colleague, a member of a university. Adding to and sharing in the pleasures and satisfactions of academic life, he has nonetheless carried his full share and more of responsibility for the chores and petty necessities. He has been always at the service of the University, ever ready to lend counsel and help outside his immediate field wherever needed, whether at one time it be in the revision of a program of study or at another in the guidance of those currents of student-faculty-administration relationships, which, when wisely and courageously dealt with, can contribute so much to the health and well-being of an institution. He has been a conscience, not always soothing.

Yet none of all this interfered with his activities inside the classroom and out, legion in number. He made good use of the freedom which was his to apply his great talents to their best advantage; he drew large numbers of students to him; he wrote prodigiously; he worked, so to speak, in the vineyard. He brought the world to Columbia and he carried Columbia to the world. His influence was far-flung. But over and above his influence stands his personification of democracy and I doubt whether, when the men from Indostan and I have done, we shall have described Professor Dewey any better than does that brief quotation from Emerson: ‘Nothing is more simple than greatness; indeed to be simple is to be great.’

John Dewey is not of one university, he is of American education, yet Columbia is happy and proud that he has for these many years chosen to hang his hat and coat at Morningside; so on behalf of Columbia I do homage to Professor Dewey and bring him our affectionate greetings and good wishes.

THE MEANING OF DEWEY TO US ALL

FELIX FRANKFURTER
Associate Justice, U. S. Supreme Court

This vast assembly has gathered to take note of the birthday of a mere professor of philosophy. To be sure, it is his ninetieth birthday. Nevertheless, I suspect that only a handful of those present belong to the American Philosophical Society, and probably not many more are philosophers, technically speaking. Every shift of society and every calling is here represented—“Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief: Doctor, lawyer, merchant, priest.”

What brings us together? Not to do honor to John Dewey; that is beyond our power. Nor has he need, as even a great thinker sometimes has, of relieving the solitude of thought by encouragement. We are here to express our gratitude for what he has given
speech and letter, Mr. Justice Holmes expressed whimsical homage, because he was a man who was exceedingly glad to pay without stint his spiritual debts.

Only very few of us were fortunate enough to have had John Dewey as a classroom teacher, but all of us went to school to him. Especially lucky have been those who have had the unpredicated teaching of his conversation. My own sense of him is best expressed by what was said of a famous Cambridge don some three centuries ago: "I never got so much good among all my books by a whole day's plodding in a study, as by an hour's discourse I have got with him. For he was not a library locked up, nor a book clasped, but he stood open for any to converse withal that had a mind to learn. Yea, he was a fountain running over, laboring to do good to those who perhaps had no mind to receive it."

I am not concerned with the winds of philosophic doctrine, for I am not competent, even were this the occasion, to define the strength and the direction of the gales that Dewey released. But this much, perhaps, I may venture without arrogance. Dewey's thinking is too pervasive to be confined within a cult or to be in the keeping of a possessive school of disciples. His philosophic outlook has not been imprisoned within a fixed system established by inexorable syllogisms. Life, with its exuberance and irony, has a way of making mockery of such systems. Dewey has taught us to use all that is fruitful in experience to gain new experience in the solution of problems that too often defy abstractions offered for their solution. Preoccupied as he has been with intellectual issues far from the maddling crowd, he is a good embodiment of homespun American optimism enlightened and tempered by a humble awareness that man's untraveled road requires pertinacity of spirit and readiness to encounter the untried. His optimism is cautious and self-testing. His belief in the possibility of man is an energy and not an anodyne.

If I have caught the robust faith behind the varied expressions of John Dewey's thinking, it has seemed to me not unlike the testament of faith, making allowances for poetic license, left to his young sons by a poet who fell in the last war. "For man is omnipotent. There is no goal he can imagine in the realm of mind which he cannot reach sooner or later in the realm of matter.
There is no force yet discovered which is strong enough to loil him; through his children he can overcome even the apparent finality of death. There is no fear so potent that it will forever deter him, nor any suffering so great that he cannot endure it for his spirit’s sake. In him is every quality that he attributes to his god: beauty, wisdom, omniscience, omnipotence, divinity.

The basis of this faith is reflected in John Dewey’s profound understanding of the governing forces of a democratic society. Not the least of his insights is his realization that civil liberties draw only limited strength from legal guarantees. Constant preoccupation by our people with the constitutionality of legislation or executive action rather than with its wisdom, tends to preoccupation with a false value. Even those who would most freely use the judicial brake on the democratic process pay lip service to the fact that a sense of proportion, the sanity of humor, and an absence of fear, are not the tests of constitutionality. But the tendency of focussing attention on constitutionality is to make constitutionality synonymous with wisdom. Such an attitude is a great enemy of the free spirit, particularly as to legislation that may raise issues of freedom of thought and freedom of speech. Much that should be rejected as illiberal, because unwise and timid, may well be not unconstitutional. The ultimate reliance for the deepest needs of civilization must be found outside their vindication in courts of law. Apart from all else, judges are apt to reflect, even if unconsciously, that impalpable but controlling force, the general drift of public opinion. A persistent, positive translation of the liberating faith into the feelings and thoughts and actions of a community is the real bulwark against the temptation to straitjacket the human mind. We must be grateful for such honest comforts as it affords but unafraid of its uncertainties. Without open minds there can be no open society, and if society be not open the spirit of man is mutilated and enslaved.

Public truth-telling is a difficult enterprise. We are admonished by the ancients not to speak ill of the dead, and I ought not to offend Vermont modesty by speaking well of the living. But this occasion will never recur and John Dewey will forgive me if I say to his face that once more he reminds me of a seventeenth century character—one of those poor creatures who lived before the scientific and technological era, the circumstances of which are so basic to John Dewey’s thinking. It was said of William Penn what I can with a clear conscience say of John Dewey, that he is “Learn’d without Vanity, Apt without Forwardness, Factious in Conversation, yet Weighty and Serious; of an Extraordinary Greatness of Mind, yet void of the Stain of Ambition.”

DEWEY: A LEADER IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES
Pastor Community Church: Chairman, American Civil Liberties Union

Some time ago I was asked, in connection with a certain inquiry, to name the five greatest Americans alive today. Number 1 was easy—John Dewey! Other names upon the list threw me into some confusion. To each one I groped, for there seemed to be attached some reservation of question. In the end I was sweating blood, and to this hour have found no sure satisfaction in any selection I have made. Which more than half persuades me to agree with the author of a current book that this is an age of mediocrity! But Dewey would be great in any age. Already he is one of the immortals.

John Dewey is usually thought of as an educationalist. Not being an educationalist myself, I have always rather resented the way my educational brethren have grabbed Dewey as their own. Of course he is a great educationalist—the greatest since Horace Mann! But if this were all, we would be attending tonight a much more modest affair. It is the inclusive aspect of John Dewey which stirs my wonder, that free spirit which has opened windows in every mansion of thought and life, that adventurous pioneer who has led the way through wildernesses of ignorance and dead tradition to the uplands of the soul. John Dewey is a man who escapes every pigeon hole, and thus defies all narrow classification.

For example, no sooner did the educationalists get Dewey’s pelt nailed securely to their cabin door, than the philosophers
came along and claimed him as a creature still very much alive, and belonging peculiarly to them. I remember how appropriate I found it that Dr. Will Durant, in his 'Story of Philosophy', ended his tale with Dewey, as he began it with Plato, and continued it with Aristotle, Spinoza, Kant, Schopenhauer, Herbert Spencer, Henri Bergson, and others of equal eminence.

But Dewey is no more to be monopolized by philosophy than by education. Running over the Dewey literature on my library shelves, I encounter his famous book entitled 'A Common Faith', and am reminded that this great thinker has written one of the outstanding religious books of modern times.

So he belongs to religion as well as to philosophy and education, and to none of these so much as to the great field of public affairs. Holding no political office, supporting no partisan campaign, John Dewey, through sheer weight of intellect and character, has exerted an enormous influence upon all movements making for a freer and fuller life for man. His leadership has been always that of a liberal who understands democracy, and would further its enlightenment and progress. Unfailing in his devotion to humane causes, he has moved always in the van, and pledged his honored name as a standard to which all forward looking persons might repair. When has America ever had a braver or wiser citizen, or the world a truer prophet?

In this, his 90th year, John Dewey stands forth as a universal man. The applause of humanity rings within his ears. This will not spoil him, for he is incorrigibly humble. But it may well comfort him and sustain him as he contemplates the wonder of his career. I think of the words of Sirach:

Let us now praise famous men;  
Men renowned for their power,  
Leaders of the people by their counsels,  
And by their understanding, men of learning for the people.  
Many shall command their understanding,  
And while the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out;  
Their memorial shall not pass away,  
But their names live from generation to generation."

DEWEY AND THE WORLD OF LABOR

DAVID DUBINSKY
President, International Ladies Garment Workers' Union (A. F. L.)

The educators here tonight and men of learning everywhere praise Dr. Dewey's great attainments as an educator and philosopher.

Those of us in the labor movement whose concept of human freedom and human values rises beyond an honest day's wage for an honest day's work, have long felt a true and warm kinship with Dr. John Dewey because of his unbroken devotion to the ideals of liberal democracy.

We know and we admire Dr. Dewey as a fearless liberal leader—and a staunch trade unionist in addition—who has never hesitated to lend his enlightened support to every cause and objective which we, in the progressive labor movement, have regarded as our own.

His abiding interest in adult labor education; his invaluable contribution to the cause of free unionism in the teaching profession; his uncompromising stand against the red and the black totalitarians at home and abroad; his deep concern with the possibilities of new political alignments in our country—have endeared him to his countless friends and colleagues in the widest labor-liberal spheres.

Our future is brighter, our thinking is clearer, our movement is sounder, because we have him in our midst. To Dr. Dewey, professor, educator, philosopher, trade unionist, we give our greetings. We hope that he may continue to enrich our American trade union and liberal movement for many years to come.

WALTER REUTHER
President, United Automobile Workers (C. I. O.)

It is a real honor to be here tonight and to participate with you in honoring a great philosopher, educator, American and citizen of the world. I bring the greetings of a lot of working people whose lives have been enriched by John Dewey.
Before I left Detroit, my little girl asked me where I was going and I told her that I was going to a birthday party in honor of a philosopher. She asked, "What is a philosopher?" and I took a book and showed her pictures of the old philosophers, such as Aristotle. She asked, "Is Mr. Dewey older than Aristotle?" and I said, "No, he is only running a close second, but history will record that he is equally as great."

In the troubled world in which we live, men's minds are filled with doubts and their hearts are heavy as they search for the answers as to how they can organize a free society in which men can achieve economic security and material well-being without sacrificing any basic human values; how they can have both economic abundance and political freedom of life in democracy's house.

In that search John Dewey has set up some very basic guidelines and tonight we honor him for what he has done. And all over the world tonight, where there is liberty and freedom, John Dewey lives in the hearts of men. In bringing him greetings, we should do more than congratulate him, we should resolve to work as hard in our day as he did in his day. We should apply to our social life a down-to-earth democratic human philosophy, and by so doing make our little contribution towards narrowing that serious gap between what democracy too often promises and too seldom practices. Congratulations, John Dewey!

DEWEY AS PHILOSOPHER
RALPH BARTON PERRY
Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Harvard

At the time when William James, anxious that Dewey, Schiller and he present a united front to the enemy, was attempting to define their shadings of difference, Dewey wrote to James that 'Even the humblest and most obscure writer has perhaps a natural reluctance, while he is still vocal, to be authoritatively explained by others, even though he recognize that he is fair game for criticism.' If Dewey has remained of the same mind, he must have suffered much during the ensuing four decades. Now that he has become a historical and celebrated personage, it is to be hoped that he has overcome this natural reluctance. Those of us who are called upon today to state what we think of him cannot very well avoid stating what we think he thinks, though we can and do disclaim any right to speak for him authoritatively.

There is no doubt that Dewey is still 'vocal.' I have just read an article contributed by him to the October number of Commentary, and I am confident that he has written something since; and has other manuscripts ready for publication. The title of this Commentary article could serve as a text for a commentary on the total Dewey—Philosophy's Future in Our Scientific Age'; with a sub-title which runs: 'Never Was Its Role More Crucial.' The substance of the article was the writer's message to the International Congress of Philosophy held in Amsterdam in 1918. There you have John Dewey: his spirit of collaboration, his vivid sense of the present, his facing toward the future, his invincible confidence, his philosophical vocation, his belief in the power of science to deal with the moral and social problems of the day, provided its scope is liberalized and its underlying motivation properly directed.

I would not dare to say this, or anything else, in Dewey's presence with any claim of authority. His antipathy to authority is one of the keys to his essential character; this I venture to say—quite authoritatively. Dewey is incorrigibly unorthodox. His humanism, his democracy, his progressivism in education and elsewhere, his moral code, all rest on his belief that man's dignity lies in his capacity to think for himself. This capacity is not limited, in Dewey's view, to a class of intellectuals or to professional investigators; he would have it recognized throughout all walks of life, and through all ages of man, beginning in the kindergarten, if not in the cradle. Thinking, thinking for oneself, thinking freshly, learning from one's own experience, drawing one's own inferences, applying thought to one's own problems—all in association and interaction with one's fellows—this is the distinguishing prerogative of man, his indefeasible right, and the only guarantee of the advancement of mankind. To list the opposites—arrogance, dogmatism, absolutism, uniformitarianism, servility, tradition, skepticism—is to define the enemy against which Dewey
has thrown the full weight of his talents and his growing prestige.

It is because of this essential character that Dewey, together with William James, has provided the leaven of American thought in the present century. It so happens that my life, fifty years of it, has been spent at Harvard, and that the greatest single influence in my life has been that of William James, whom Dewey has called his 'spiritual father.' In other words, I feel myself to be Dewey's younger spiritual brother. The comparison of James and Dewey has always been to me a fascinating topic of reflection. They are different in their philosophical antecedents, different in their genius, profoundly different in temperament and in style. Neither was a man who could possibly be duplicated. They were never rivals. They were distinguished by their tolerance, as well as by their individuality. And yet they have in a broad sense been allies, and between them they have made American philosophy what it is today. American philosophers for the last fifty years have been largely engaged in confirming, interpreting, criticizing or refuting them—in any case, profiting by them.

Between them James and Dewey broke the spell exercised by the reigning philosophy of the 19th Century, and liberated the minds of the younger men who are now the older men. When, in my early days, I sent an article to Creighton for publication in the Philosophical Review, he accepted it with a fatherly rebuke to my youthful impetuousity. 'You are,' he said, 'flippant, like James.' The time is past when any young American philosopher would be deterred from intellectual playfulness or audacity by reverence for the philosophical past, or for its dignified exponents. Nor would any older philosopher of today be disposed to administer such a rebuke. For this we have to thank William James and John Dewey—whose names I like to link together as the prophets of the new freedom in American philosophy.

James died forty years ago. Dewey keeps that spirit alive today. As a vocal and living philosopher he will presently speak for himself. And yet I venture one more unauthoritative explanation of him. I have referred to his moral code. No one can doubt that he has one. Some of us have wished that he would state this, and perhaps other matters, more in black and white. But the moral code is there, not only in the man and his deeds, but in his words.

Thus in that most recent article to which I have referred, he advocates a moral knowledge that shall serve men 'as a member of a community of free men,' and 'enable specialized and technical ways of knowing to be put to use in behalf of a common and shared good.' One of his interpreters, quoting Dewey's own words, has said of him that he uniformly approves of 'a higher quality of experience on the part of a greater number.' Here is an ideal and a standard, both universal and universalistic, to which John Dewey is committed in practice. It is rooted in his general philosophy and is a presupposition of his social philosophy. So long as I refrain from calling it an 'absolute,' I hope he will not be offended that I should impute it to him.

There is a peculiar satisfaction in paying tribute to a man who does not ask for it, and who has not already bestowed it on himself. Modest men of merit are doubly deserving of praise, for their merit and for their modesty. Never was a man of like superiority more free from the airs of superiority. He does not feel obliged to live up to his reputation; to be impressive, witty, eloquent, or even interesting: he simply says what he thinks. His character and his mind are pervaded by a quality of complete sincerity. Hence to our admiration of his work is added our affection for the man. And there are many thousands throughout the land whose feeling I express. I know no better words with which to sum him up than these, which I borrow from Carlyle:

'The Philosopher is he to whom the Highest has descended, and the Lowest has mounted up; who is the equal and kindly brother of all.'

DEWEY'S CONTRIBUTION TO ART

IRWIN EDMAN
Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University

A great many people have criticized John Dewey in the past because he has not talked as much as has been the fashion in philosophy about the True, the Good and the Beautiful. They have therefore assumed that he was not interested, as a sound
philosopher ought to be, in the integrities, the eternities, and theeauties of the world. He has talked a great deal about method
and so a great many people have thought of him as a kind of
methodological Nibelung inhabiting the dark sewers of meth-
dology. He has reminded the sentimentalists that ideals need
to be implemented and therefore his rash critics have dismissed
him as a mere instrumentalist who has no respect for ideals. He
has recognized that life and society, both constantly changing,
generate constantly new problems which demand disciplined in-
telligence and responsive imagination.

Many of his critics, therefore, since he has talked a good deal
about the discipline of the imagination, have felt he has forgotten
imagination itself. He has accentuated the fact of shared experience
so that a great many esthetes and soliquist have felt that he
failed to recognize the paramount value of the individual and
individuality in experience.

At the age of ninety, Professor Dewey must by this time be
long accustomed to the cliches of conventional criticism of him.
He has lived long enough to see how some new alleged magic under
the guise of philosophy has given illusory comfort to those who
wish to evade the hard realities of facts and the challenge of prob-
lems. He has lived long enough to see how people impatient of
thought rush to slogans, evasions and violence.

In the midst of all the clamor from the right and from the left,
Dewey has quietly continued to accent the fact that ideals are pro-
jections of human possibilities and that in the long run disciplined
intelligence of cooperative men is the only hope for human ful-
fillment and, as it turns out in our atomic age, even for human
survival. In a world on the verge of suicidal madness, he has felt
the obligation to talk about method. In a world the victim of
rhetorical ideals, he has felt it necessary to indicate the path of
disciplined and effective hope.

So conscientious, indeed so puritanical we may say, has
Dewey been, that even some of his disciples have forgotten what
his ultimate concern is, which is the realization of life in as whole,
as direct, as transparent and clarified a form as may be. It still
surprises some people that at the age of seventy—when he was
very young—John Dewey should have written a big book on art.

‘What is going on here?’ Some people asked. They suspected the
answer, ‘A pragmatist in a China shop.’

How come that a man devoted to the practicalities and the
instrumentalities should deign or should dare to talk about matters
that concern only the votaries of pure beauty, art for art’s sake,
poetry and the muses? In expressing surprise at Dewey’s interest
in the arts and the imagination, they revealed, perhaps, the limi-
tations of their own views on art and on life and they revealed
also that they had missed Dewey’s always ultimate concern. In
our regimented and mechanized society and in the rigidity of our
intellectual habits, experience becomes partial and compartment-
alyzed and distorted. The value of intelligence lies in rendering
life less opaque, dislocated and confused. Art is experience in
excess, imagination is life fully lived, and life fully lived is
individual creativeness such as art and the experience of art
illustrates.

The test of democratic institutions is the extent to which bar-
riers are broken down, vitality is liberated, life is rendered free in
each individual to achieve its own integrity and its own radiance.
Dewey has talked about social institutions, about methods in
science and in society, about intelligence in general, always in the
interest of that humane realization which he was ultimately de-
scribing in art as experience. For all the sober prose of his utter-
ance, all of us have felt the poet of life in Dewey, the poet who
recognizes a change is always going on, change that offers challenges
and possibilities which come to fulfillment in the life of art and
imagination and in free societies which make dynamic individuality
the core of their hope for mankind.

DEWEY AND EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY
WILLIAM HEARD KILPATRICK
Professor Emeritus of Education, Teachers’ College

To consider Dewey’s education we must consider his philoso-
phy. For to him the two are essentially interrelated. While educa-
tion is, for him, ‘the process of forming fundamental dispositions,
5. "Discipline, natural development, culture, social efficiency, are moral traits—marks of a person who is a worthy member of that society which it is the business of education to further." "And education is not a mere means to such a life. Education is such a life." We learn culture by living culture, we learn democracy by living democracy, we learn morality by living morality, living each of these both in heart and in act. And what about disciplines? "A person who is trained to consider his actions, to undertake them deliberately, is in so far disciplined. Add to this ability a power to endure in an intelligently chosen course in face of distraction, confusion, and difficulty, and you have the essence of discipline."

6. The child's interests give the surest sign and symptom of his growing power. Through interest the child identifies himself with the necessary effort. Thus comes discipline.

7. Education thus becomes such an ever-continuing reconstruction of present experience as adds new meaning to the process, while it widens and deepens the social content, and at the same time gives to the individual better control over the process of further experience.

8. "Every teacher should realize the dignity of his calling: that he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of the proper social order and the securing of the right social growth."

9. In the light of all the foregoing, the obligation of society to make its education all that it should be becomes the paramount social duty.

JOY ELMER MORGAN
Editor, Journal, National Education Association

The National Education Association owes much to John Dewey. The Association was just two years old when Dewey was born and, in a sense, the two have grown up together during the most amazing period of American history and indeed of the world's.

John Dewey had a deep appreciation of the American free public school and its significance as the foundation of democracy. It was his belief that what the wisest and best parent desires for his own child, that must society want for its own children.

The N.E.A. twenty years ago at a dinner similar to this presented Dr. Dewey with life membership. It was my privilege to make that presentation. During the years since he has been a member of the Committee on Social and Economic Goals for America. He has been elected to the highest honor that the N.E.A. can confer, that of a Life-time Honorary President. Some of the richest and best materials that we have published in the Journal through the years have come from his pen and much of the material that was written by others has been profoundly influenced by his teaching and thinking.

There is much in the headlines about statesmen and warriors but when the history of this epoch is written, it will not be these that will be remembered. It will be the names like Tolstoi, Gandhi, and Dewey. There is a rhyme learned in childhood which I should like to repeat:

"Kind hearts are the gardens,
Kind thoughts are the roots,
Kind words are the blossoms,
Kind deeds are the fruits."

On behalf of the 400,000 members and 30 million children in America whose living will be so different because of the teachings of John Dewey, greetings and best wishes and many years of continued useful service.

REBECCA SIMONSON
President, N.Y. Teachers Guild

I feel very humble. What can a classroom teacher say to this audience that you don't already know about John Dewey? Well, there are a few things I sense which he has done for us. Not too long ago we all witnessed and lived in an authoritarian, tight, rigid school atmosphere. Our classrooms were silent. Discipline was
SALUTE FROM THE ORIENT

HU SHIH
Former Chinese Ambassador to the United States

It is a real pleasure for me to be here tonight and to offer you, Dr. Dewey, the warmest and heartiest felicitations on your birthday, not only on my own behalf and for the group of Chinese friends present tonight, but also on behalf of the thousands of your Chinese friends who are either your students or students of your students.

We honor you and love you. We are most grateful to you for having spent more time in China than in any other foreign country. You spent over two years, to be exact, plus two months, living in our schools throughout 11 provinces, talking to our teachers and students, and bringing to us a new philosophy and a new theory of education.

We are grateful to you for having been our teacher, the teacher of young China for 40 years. You have influenced the life and happiness of millions of Chinese children in our schools.

Many of our friends tonight may recall that I had the honor of participating in the celebration of your 80th birthday here in 1939. Few of them, however, will remember that 30 years ago today, in 1919, many Chinese educators gathered with you in Peking to celebrate your 60th birthday, which, by a peculiar astronomical coincidence, fell that year on the birthday of Confucius.

Reference has been made to Aristotle who is a baby compared with Confucius. Dr. Dewey, you will recall what a happy occasion it was for all your Chinese friends to celebrate your birthday simultaneously with that of our most honored ancient sage, who preferred to describe himself as a teacher 'who is never weary of learning and never tired of teaching others.'

Dr. Dewey, you will recall that on your 80th birthday you were unable to be with us in person but on that occasion you sent us a message in which there were these solemn words: 'When I think of the conditions of men and women who are living in many foreign countries today in fear of espionage with danger hanging over the meeting of friends for friendly conversation, when I think of these, I am inclined to believe that the final guarantee of democracy is in free gatherings of neighbors on street corners, in uncensored news of the day and in gatherings of friends in living rooms and apartments where they can converse freely with one another. Ten years have passed but unfortunately men and women in many countries are still living in constant fear of espionage with danger hanging over the meeting of friends in private gatherings. Indeed, too, there are many hundreds of millions living in conscious fear where they know no such a thing as uncensored news, none of the basic freedoms, none of the elementary guarantees of democracy.

My birthday wish is that when we, your students, gather the next time to celebrate your 100th anniversary, you will have the satisfaction of seeing the guaranties of democracy realized throughout the whole world, including my own country.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
Prime Minister of India

Since visiting your country, I have had no free days at all. This very evening a special function had been organized in my honor and a large number of persons had been invited. At last after finishing, I have come here.*

It is indeed a great privilege to be associated, even for a few moments, with this function and occasion. I met Dr. Dewey for the first time two or three days ago. But there are few Americans with whom I am better acquainted and who have exercised so much influence on my own thinking and, I suppose, consequently on my action. It has therefore always been my desire to meet Dr. Dewey and if possible to learn something from him; from his ripe wisdom.

We are all of us in this world today sensitive to the needs of

* Prime Minister Nehru arrived at the Commodore Hotel following an address at the Waldorf-Astoria, during his short stay in the United States.
the times and seek to find out how we should think and act. All of us have a very difficult task before us because it is normally difficult to coordinate one's theory with action. In the peculiar circumstances of today, this coordination becomes peculiarly difficult. So one seeks wisdom.

When one is convinced of the course of action one should adopt and so acts, it doesn't, in the final analysis, really matter whether one achieves great success or not, because one goes ahead, irrespective, although, of course, one would like to attain the thing one is aiming at.

The difficulty comes when your mind is not clear as to what you should do. It is in moments like these that the ripe wisdom of men like John Dewey helps a person. So often when I am assailed with this difficulty, I go to the old and new philosophers. I don't find a way out all the time, but, nevertheless, I gain poise and some equilibrium and I feel a lowering of the temperature of the brain. And Dr. Dewey has helped me considerably in that process. Therefore, I offer him my heartfelt homage and hope that he will be with us for many years to come.

CITATION FROM THE COMMITTEE

Presented by
WILLIAM PEPPERELL MONTAGUE

TO JOHN DEWEY —
PHILOSOPHER, TEACHER, CITIZEN, AND FRIEND:

From the multitudes, whom in your long life you have influenced and are still influencing, come words of appreciation and of thanks. In every walk of life both the simple and the learned have gained from the freshness, freedom and profundity of your thinking on all matters which concern man.

You have revitalized philosophy by showing it as a vision of the basic potentials in human experience. You have shown that the world of nature is not alien to human nature but the home and source of all human possibilities. You have taught us the supreme importance of the organized use of intelligence in reconstructing the institutions of our common life so that the lives of all of us may be enriched and fulfilled.

You have taught us to see that the central reliance of democracy is on the free and intelligent choice made by all citizens. Such freedom and such choice are only possible when education is primarily the habit of critical exploration and discovery in anticipation of responsible action.

You have taught us the value of shared experience. You yourself have set an example of how human beings should participate in each other's lives. You have given yourself to aiding the growth of the labor movement, of industrial and political democracy, and of human rights.

You have fundamentally remade educational theory and the results are being increasingly accepted throughout the world. In your own life, you have exhibited the principles of your profoundly democratic philosophy, in the sturdy courage of your convictions, the generosity of your friendships, the flexibility and humor of your utterances.

On this your ninetieth birthday, may we add our voices to your host of friends the world over in extending to you our best wishes for many more years of wise and gallant service in the cause of a free and more radiant humanity.

John Dewey 90th Birthday Committee

William H. Kilpatrick
Jerome Nathanson
Frederick L. Reder
Irwin Edman
Harry W. Laidler
Harold Taylor

October 20, 1949
JOHN DEWEY RESPONDS

I need hardly say that I am overwhelmed by what has been said and read on this occasion. I cannot express adequately my thanks to the Committee and to all who have come here this evening.

I am fortunate in one thing. It is not just that I have lived to complete four score and ten but that I have reached that age in 1949 instead of 1969 or what would have been even worse, 1979 or '89. Even now one can hardly pick up a periodical without finding an article on the social and psychological problems which are due to the increase in the span of life. If the span goes on increasing at its present rate, I can imagine that twenty or thirty years from this evening there will be no disposition to celebrate one's arriving at the age of ninety. The meeting would be more likely to be called to discuss what has become the serious social issue of longevity.

In any case, it is supposed to be the habit—if not the privilege—of old age to indulge in reminiscence. I have been reminded sufficiently of my years of late so that I have been almost forced to go back over my past and to consider how the years have been spent.

After due reflection, I have come to the conclusion that, for good or for evil, I have been first, last, and all the time, engaged in the vocation of philosophy; and that it is in the capacity of a philosopher that I am a Nonagenarian. Furthermore, strangely enough, this statement is not wrong from me as a reluctant admission, but is made as a boast—though I fear many of my confreres in that occupation may regard it as unjustified bragging.

But as I look back over the years, I find that, while I seem to have spread myself out over a number of fields—education, politics, social problems, even the fine arts and religion—my interest in these issues has been specifically an outgrowth and manifestation of my primary interest in philosophy.

It has been an outgrowth in two respects—one negative and one positive. On the negative side, the demand of philosophy upon various forms of technical skill—one might say professional academic skill—are so taxing that excursions into outside areas are inviting on the old familiar principle that the berries on the other side of the fence are more numerous and brighter and bigger. The other and positive reason is that philosophy cannot flourish indefinitely nor vitally by ruminating on its own cud. Philosophers need fresh and first-hand materials. Otherwise the story of the ideas and beliefs of past philosophers will become an end-in-itself instead of a resource in dealing with the problems that are urgent in contemporary life.

It may well be that those engaged in the kind of inquiry that bears the name philosophy have exaggerated what philosophers can do in the way of solving problems. But there is a need that comes before that of solution. That is the need for getting a reasonably clear sense and statement of what the problems are that have to be met: what they arise from and where they are located. Here is a matter in which it is possible for philosophers to make good their claim that they go below the surface; go behind the ways in which things appear to be. It is quite possible for philosophers to become pretentious; but it is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of obtaining a moderately clear and distinct idea of what the problems are that underlie the difficulties and evils which we experience in fact; that is to say, in practical life. Nor is it easily possible, I believe, to exaggerate the intellectual alertness and even excitement that could attend a systematic endeavor to convert our practical ills and troubles into intellectual terms, so that plans may be developed and subjected to intelligent inquiry as a condition of remedial action. For in the technological and the medical arts, we have learned that to plunge into action before we have located what is the matter is the way to make things worse than they were before. For apart from engaging systematically in search for the source of evils, the only alternatives we can employ are acting either mechanically on the basis of routine precedent and blind habit or impulsively from fear.

At the present time, tradition and custom are pretty well broken down as dependable resources in guiding our activity.
Living as we now do in what is almost a chronic state of crisis, there is
danger that fear and the sense of insecurity become the predomi-
nant motivation of our activities.

Of the various kindly and generous, often over-generous, things
that have been said about my activities on the occasion of my nine-
tieth birthday, there is one thing in particular I should be pecu-
iliarly happy to believe. It is the statement of Alvin Johnson
that I have helped to liberate my fellow-human beings from fear.
For more than anything else, the fear that has no recognized and
well-thought-out ground is what both holds us back and conducts
us into aimless and spasmodic ways of action, personal and collec-
tive. When we allow ourselves to be fear-ridden and permit it to
dictate how we act, it is because we have lost faith in our fellow-
men—and that is the unforgivable sin against the spirit of de-
mocracy.

Many years ago I read something written by an astute politi-
cian. He said that majority rule is not the heart of democracy,
but the processes by which a given group having a specific kind
of policies in view becomes a majority. That saying has remained
with me: in effect it embodies recognition that democracy is an
educative process; that the act of voting in a democratic regime
is a culmination of a continued process of open and public communi-
cation in which prejudices have the opportunity to erase each
other; that continued interchange of facts and ideas exposes what
is unsound and discloses what may make for human well-being.

This educational process is based upon faith in human good
sense and human good will as it manifests itself in the long run
when communication is progressively liberated from bondage to
prejudice and ignorance. It constitutes a firm and continuous re-

The friendliness that is radiated from this gathering is some-
thing to be sensed, not just talked about and hence, I take it, is a
good omen for the causes I have had the privilege of sharing.
For while it is, I am aware, the conventional thing to recognize
such a tribute as one to cause, not to the person, I know in this
case that such a manifestation of friendliness as I have experienced
is a demonstration of sympathy for the things that make for the
freedom and justice and for the kind of cooperative friendship
that can flourish only where there is a freedom which we and un-
told multitudes possess in common; i.e., enjoy together.

I want to conclude with a reference to a letter from an old
friend in Texas in which he said that while he should have liked

A FEW OF HUNDREDS OF MESSAGES

"You, John Dewey and your fellow Greek philosophers are the supreme
exorcists of fear. One who has sat at your Greek feet fears not the lurking
demon, the malevolent spirit of the men of other ideas, the alleged corruption
of morals, the vast legions of ideologies. Your followers accept with gratitude
the green earth under the wide blue sky, fearing nothing, least of all death,
the one opiate of the people.

"Ninety years have stood between you and immortality. Ninety times
ninety will go by before men can think of forgetting John Dewey. And then
they will have a second thought. Who taught them to live without fears that
have no ground? And John Dewey will live for them yet again."—Alvin
Johnson, Former President, New School for Social Research.
The impact of your writings and teachings have reached thinking men and women throughout the English-speaking world, showing them the true meaning of democracy and thereby strengthening their faith in the democratic way of life. We in Great Britain, no less than your fellow-countrymen in the United States, share your confidence in education as a means of uplifting mankind and of promoting human progress."—Clement Attlee, Prime Minister of Great Britain.

"Many years ago John Dewey gave voice to a prophetic warning when he said: 'Physical science has, for the time being, far outrun psychical. We have mastered the physical mechanism ... we have not gained a knowledge of the conditions through which possible values become actual in life, and so are still at the mercy of habit and hence of force.'

"In the same way Henri Bergson used to say that for each increase in our material possibilities there should correspond 'an increase of soul'.

This harmony is a symbol of the profound unity of aspirations and ideals which holds sway between our two peoples and of the respect and admiration which they have for those who, like John Dewey, want to help them acquire 'an increase of soul'"—Henri Bonnet, Ambassador of France to the U. S.

"Dr. Dewey never lost faith in the possibility of a ragged littleurchin on the school bench having within him the talents of a Lincoln. Hence the importance of equality of opportunity as the sine qua non of a democratic system of education. And this concept has revolutionized methods of teaching and school administration—a momentous contribution."—Stephen Bogdan.

"Dear Professor Dewey:

"I am proud indeed to send you this message of greeting on the occasion of your 90th birthday.

"In Great Britain you are known as the Father of Modern Education, because you have made educationalists realize the vivid importance of the child's interest in the real world and the magic of his immediate environment. By thinking of the school as part of society and by appreciating that we do not know what will be the major problems of the future, you have taught us that we must help children to develop their powers of adaptability and be taught how to think, if they are to grow up as free and independent citizens.

"You have exposed the fallacies of the cut-throat competition that is so common in formal teaching, and have shown us instead the richness of democratic cooperation between children who work together for a common purpose, and in so doing achieve their own discipline and self-control. Above all, you have brought us back to the great principle of studying children's play and have made us conscious of the processes of thought."—Lady Allen of Hurtwood, President, World Organization for Early Childhood Education.

appreciation for the application of that philosophy to human relationships. Just as Franz Boas rechanneled the thinking of the people of the world on race, so your philosophy has contributed to clearer thinking on how people of different races, classes and cultures may live and work harmoniously and constructively together. It is reason for great rejoicing that you have been privileged to live to see the philosophy that you espoused tested and retested until it has become accepted as a principle by which millions of people live."—Channing H. Tobias, Director, Phelps-Stokes Fund.

"Far more tellingly than any other man of the present age this American philosopher has brought to the struggle of men for equal liberty, which is going on everywhere in the world, a reasoned faith in freedom and in the power of intelligence as the method of freedom which is drawn from the common experiences of men's daily lives."—Bryn J. Howde, Horace M. Ka llen and Felix Kaufmann of the New School.

JOHN DEWEY 90TH BIRTHDAY COMMITTEE

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