

Speech delivered at  
Third of May Celebration,  
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We meet to commemorate an heroic episode in the advancement of democracy. No year could be a more appropriate one in which to pay honor to the patriots of Poland and to the Constitution of May 3, 1791, than this year, in which democracy has emerged upon the international plane, and no place could be more appropriate than this city in which the Council of the United Nations is functioning today. If we trace this modern development back to its historical foundations, we come upon the honored names of those who pioneered democracy's path and fought long ago for a world in which organized debate would supersede destruction, peaceful majorities would replace armed might, and government would be animated by the spirit of human rights. We come to one of the oldest of all public systems of education, established by Konarski in Poland before our own American Revolution; we come to the Constitution, settling free the serfs, liberating and enfranchising the people of the towns, and establishing a Parliamentary form of government that was planned by Kollontay and Malachowski and Ignacy Potocki in the Polish Diet, endorsed by King Stanislaus Augustus for the good of his nation, and fought for on the field of battle by the inspired armies of Poniatowski and Kosciuszko. One hundred and fifty-five years after those great events we stand here to bear witness that the flame those men set alight in the darkest moment of their national history still is the hope of peace-loving peoples today.

Details change with times, the task remains the same. Only a few months ago in San Francisco the delegates of two score nations drew up a Charter with this determination: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war . . . to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights . . . to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples." Similarly those heroes of old, confronted by aggression without and weakness within, declared themselves as "prizing more than life, and every personal consideration, the political existence, external independence, and internal liberty of the nation whose care is entrusted to us." Similarly had like-minded men in America declared that "All men are created equal," and formulated a Constitution to "promote the general welfare," with the safeguard of that Bill of Rights which we jointly celebrate today.

Those early fighters for democracy made sacrifices commensurate with the vision for which they strove. We can complete their victory in our own time. This, it seems to me, is the central thought of this occasion. Perhaps, as we follow the progress of the British-American financial agreement, as we see developed at Savannah the international financial structures that were set up at Bretton Woods and will be completed at the meetings of the executive directors of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development which are to take place in Washington three or four days from now, and as we follow the first debates in the Security Council of the United Nations and anticipate the coming conference on international trade, our modern task may seem colder and more technical than theirs. Perhaps this or that decision may go against us; majorities imply minorities, and perfect

agreement is difficult to reach. But the underlying method, that of democratic organization as the answer to tyranny and war, must be supported and approved, and if we can but derive our strength from the spirit of freedom, as did those men of old, we know we shall not fail.

An immediate and urgent task confronts us. The people of Poland and of all war-torn Europe are starving as we stand here. We in America enjoy relative abundance. May each shipload of food that leaves our shores carry not bread alone, but the unspoken message that democracy brings abundance and that a democratic nation now shares its abundance with other lands in the spirit of humanity, of peace, and of gratitude for their great contributions in the past to the democracy that we enjoy today.