



American Field Service

113 EAST 30TH STREET, NEW YORK 16, N.Y.

AFS

Virtual Museum

THE WHITE HOUSE. *Remarks by the President to a group of American Field Service students in the Rose Garden, 12 July 1955, 12:00 noon:*

Well, youngsters, it is really good to see you. Years ago I saw some of your predecessors on the steps at Columbia, I remember. We had a big morning at that time. You have just completed your year in the United States, and I am sure that you have learned a lot here, as we have learned a lot from you, because that has been the history of these expeditions.

I understand that now 600 of our own young Americans are in your countries, sort of paying a return call. We are delighted.

It seems a bit of a fortunate coincidence that I should have an opportunity to see all of you just as I am about to depart for Geneva, where, with others, we will try to explore the reasons why this world does not seem to get closer to peace, and to try to find roads that, if the world follows, all of you may live a little bit more tranquilly than have the people of my generation.

History, of course, has left us a rather tangled network of prejudices and hatreds and suspicions that are not easy to eradicate; and these are intensified by differences in ideologies—doctrinaire positions that seem to set men one against another and make it difficult for us to live like we should like to live.

Now people don't want conflict—people in general. It is only, I think, mistaken leaders that grow too belligerent and believe that people really want to fight.

I hope that you have learned in your year here that this country does have certain basic principles—beliefs—that though not often expressed in the home and in the schools are nevertheless a very basic part of our existence.

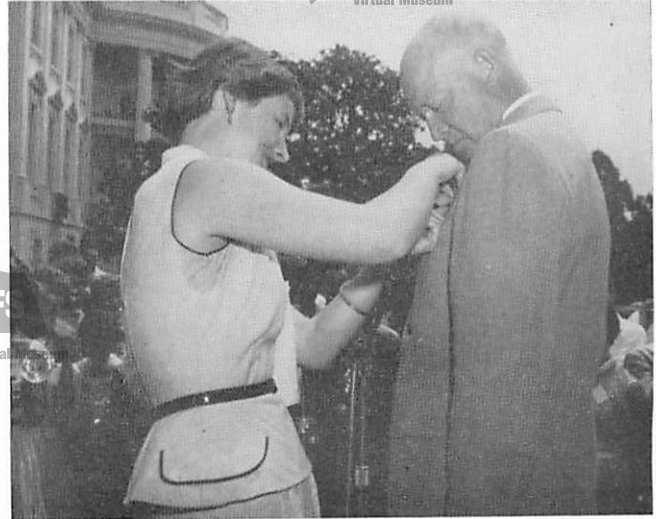
We believe in the individual. We believe that every individual is endowed with certain rights—to worship as he pleases, to think as he pleases, to speak as he pleases, to work at the kind of profession that he himself wants.

So if we live true to these principles, we are bound to have a government—country—that does not want to fight. Because it is one truly of the people and for the people.

And so, as we go to Geneva, trying to interpret this belief and this conviction, we are hopeful that there may

AFS

Virtual Museum



CHRISTINE BERENDSEN gives AFS pin to President Eisenhower.

be some way in which all of you can live out your lives tranquilly, helping over the years to promote the kind of understanding that you have gathered in the past year, that you will help to spread in your own countries when you go home, helping to spread the understanding that will lead to the peacefulness of your own lives and those that come after you. It is possible that the kind of conventions that you people have been having among yourselves, with those you have visited, and that our young Americans are having in your countries, may be far more important in the long run than the kind to which I am going.

Never forget, you have got a long time to live in this world, and so you want to make certain that you do your part with a full comprehension of the facts and with an open-minded, conciliatory attitude toward the other fellow's viewpoint. But never sacrifice the basic principle that the human being is the important thing on this planet.

I am not sure, youngsters, why I got so serious just as I came out here to see you all, but possibly it is because I have spent so much of my life with young people—young soldiers, young people. I like them and trust them. And honestly, my confidence in what you—this group—those like you—those that come after you—can do in this world is unbounded.

Don't ever let anyone tell you you are licked.

Good luck to each of you.