

[1944?]

RADIO SPEECH OF
HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, JR.

7:45 P.M.

STATION - WLOL

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HAS HAD AN OVERDOSE OF POLITICAL SLEEPING PILLS. THE ELECTIONS OF 1942 AND RECENT LOCAL ELECTIONS HAVE REVEALED A STARTLING CASE OF POLITICAL INDIFFERENCE WHICH CHALLENGES THE VERY EFFECTIVENESS OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. MORE THAN ANY OTHER ONE GROUP OR SECTION OF THE AMERICAN ELECTORATE, LABOR HAS GONE TO SLEEP POLITICALLY. WITH THE TASK OF ALL-OUT PRODUCTION AS ITS MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY, POLITICAL ACTION BY ORGANIZED LABOR HAS BEEN SHOVED INTO A BACK SEAT. YET, LABOR, AND ANY AVERAGE CITIZEN HAS EVERYTHING AT STAKE IN THE POLICIES ADOPTED AND ENACTED BY OUR GOVERNMENT. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE IN WARTIME WHEN GOVERNMENT CONTROLS ARE ESSENTIAL AND FAR REACHING. ON THE ONE HAND WE SACRIFICE MEN AND MATERIALS TO MAINTAIN OUR DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE - ON THE OTHER HAND WE SAP THE STRENGTH OF OUR DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS BY OUR INDIFFERENCE TO POLITICAL ACTION. IN A DEMOCRACY, POLITICS IS THE PEOPLES' BUSINESS - IT'S EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS OR WE CEASE TO BE DEMOCRATIC. GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, AND FOR THE PEOPLE BECOMES A MOCKERY IF AND WHEN THE PEOPLE DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION PROCESS. TO LABOR, I SAY, YOU ARE A GREAT BLOG OF THE PEOPLE -- YOUR VERY LIFE AS AN ORGANIZATION IS DEPENDENT ON POLITICAL POLICY. YOU CANNOT AFFORD FOR A SINGLE MOMENT TO BE INDIFFERENT TO POLITICAL ISSUES. AS MEMBERS OF ORGANIZED LABOR YOU HAVE MORE THAN LABOR BILLS TO THINK ABOUT. GOVERNMENT IN WARTIME DIRECTLY CONCERNS YOUR WHOLE LIFE. POLITICS AND POLITICAL POLICY CONTROLS YOUR FOOD, YOUR WAGES, YOUR TAXES, YOUR LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS AND EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, THE PROSECUTION OF THE WAR. YES, POLITICS IS INTERESTED IN YOU - IT'S TIME YOU BECAME INTERESTED IN POLITICS AND POLITICIANS. WITH MILLIONS OF WORKERS FAILING TO THINK AND ACT POLITICALLY, CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS UNSYMPATHETIC TO THE CAUSE OF ORGANIZED LABOR FORMED THE 78TH CONGRESS. THE RECORD OF THIS CONGRESS HAS NOT BEEN ONE THAT BRINGS CHEER TO LABOR OR TO THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC FORCES OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY. LIKEWISE, STATE LEGISLATURES, AND PARTICULARLY IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA, HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMINGLY ANTI-LABOR. LOOK AT THE RECORD -- THE CONGRESS HAS DEMONSTRATED ITS POLITICAL TEMPER BY THE PASSAGE OF THE SMITH-CONNELLY ANTI-LABOR BILL - A BILL

ENACTED WITH CYNICAL DISREGARD OF LABOR'S CONTINUOUS AND UNREMITTING EFFORT ON THE PRODUCTION LINE AND ITS ENERGETIC AND WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT OF EVERY PHASE OF THE WAR EFFORT. PARADING AS AN ANTI-STRIKE BILL, IT IS NOT ONLY A SLAP AT LABOR BUT ACTUALLY HAS INVITED AND PROVOKED STRIKES. TODAY RESPONSIBLE BUSINESSMEN CONFESS THAT CONGRESS ACTED IN HASTE AND WITHOUT ADEQUATE JUDGMENT. THIS SAME CONGRESS HAS OPPOSED THE ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM. IT HAS NOT ONLY FAILED TO ADOPT NECESSARY MEASURES TO ROLL BACK - OR EVEN MAINTAIN - EXISTING PRICE LEVELS, BUT THROUGH THE BANKHEAD, ^{Bill} AND SIMILAR MEASURES, HAS ENCOURAGED THE POSSIBILITY OF RUNAWAY PRICES AND AN ORGY OF INFLATION. THE 78TH CONGRESS HAS ALSO DEMONSTRATED ITS UNWILLINGNESS TO FORMULATE AN ADEQUATE AND EQUITABLE TAX PROGRAM, WHICH WILL RAISE THE NECESSARY REVENUE AND YET DISTRIBUTE THE BURDEN PROPORTIONATELY AND PROPERLY UPON THOSE BEST ABLE TO BEAR IT. THIS SAME CONGRESS - THE CONGRESS ELECTED BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL APATHY OF LABOR IN 1942 - HAS NOT HEEDED YOUR PROTESTS OR SUPPORTED YOUR PROPOSALS. LIBERAL ELEMENTS HAVE BEEN OVERRULED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM DISTRICTS WHERE LABOR COULD HAVE ELECTED A PROGRESSIVE CANDIDATE. YES, LABOR WAS ASLEEP. IT FAILED TO ORGANIZE POLITICALLY, IT FAILED TO SENSE THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, IT FAILED TO GET OUT THE VOTE. A GLANCE AT THE RECORD WILL PROVE THE POINT.

IN A LARGE INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT OF AN EASTERN STATE, A LIBERAL CONGRESSMAN WITH AN ALL-OUT WAR AND A PRO-LABOR RECORD WAS DEFEATED FOR REELECTION LAST NOVEMBER BY *a margin of* 3,800 VOTES OUT OF A TOTAL VOTE OF 140,000. HE HAD SOUGHT AND RECEIVED THE ENDORSEMENT OF ALL THREE BRANCHES OF THE LOCAL LABOR MOVEMENT. IN ONE MUNITIONS PLANT IN HIS DISTRICT THERE WERE OVER 7,000 ORGANIZED WORKERS. ON ELECTION NIGHT A SAMPLE POLL WAS TAKEN OF 200 OF THE WORKERS; ONLY SEVEN OF THEM HAD REGISTERED AND ONLY 5 HAD TAKEN THE TIME TO VOTE. LABOR HAD DEFEATED ITS OWN ENDORSED CANDIDATE. THE SAME STORY ON A NATIONAL SCALE WAS TOLD BY THE RESULTS OF A GALLUP POLL TAKEN SEVERAL WEEKS AFTER THE ELECTION. THE WORKERS JUST DIDN'T VOTE - A MUCH GREATER PERCENTAGE OF BUSINESSMEN, FARMERS, PROFESSIONALS AND WHITE COLLAR WORKERS VOTED THAN DID LABOR. THE CONGRESS AND THE STATE GOVERNMENTS FELL INTO THE HANDS OF MEN WHO OPPOSED PRO-

GRESSIVE AND LABOR POLICIES. THE FULL DINNER PAIL AND THE RETURN TO A JOB HAD OVERWHELMED THE LABORING MAN. AT A TIME WHEN GOVERNMENT ACTION WAS SURE TO BE THE ALL-IMPORTANT FORCE IN THE ECONOMY - WHEN GOVERNMENT WAS TO ESTABLISH RULES AND REGULATIONS FUNDAMENTALLY AFFECTING LABOR - JUST THEN LABOR TOOK A POLITICAL HOLIDAY. | THE RESULTS OF LABOR'S FAILURE TO VOTE IN 1942 WERE TWO: FIRST, REACTIONARY CONGRESSMEN WERE ELECTED, PRACTICALLY BY DEFAULT. SECOND, AND OF AT LEAST EQUAL SIGNIFICANCE, MEMBERS OF THE 78TH CONGRESS GAVE LITTLE OR NO HEED TO LABOR'S VOICE IN LEGISLATIVE MATTERS. ALL POLITICIANS HAVE IN COMMON A DESIRE TO BE REELECTED. SO LONG AS ORGANIZED LABOR GAVE NO REAL INDICATION THAT IT MEANT BUSINESS ON ELECTION DAY, THE MOST VIGOROUS STATEMENTS OF A.F. OF L. AND C.I.O. LEADERS WERE POLITELY READ AND FILED AWAY.

THE ALL-IMPORTANT ROLE OF ORGANIZED LABOR IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS IS NOT DUE TO LABOR'S ABILITY TO ELECT MANY CANDIDATES TO PUBLIC OFFICE, ON THE CONTRARY, THERE ARE BUT A FEW DISTRICTS IN THIS COUNTRY WHERE LABOR BY ITSELF CAN NOMINATE AND ELECT ITS OWN CANDIDATES. BUT IT IS ALSO A MATTER OF POLITICAL REALITY THAT THERE ARE EXTREMELY FEW DISTRICTS WHERE PROGRESSIVE CANDIDATES CAN BE ELECTED WITHOUT THE ACTIVE SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT. THE CHALLENGE IS CLEAR. THERE CAN BE NO VICTORY FOR PROGRESSIVE CANDIDATES UNLESS LABOR, AND INDEPENDENT LIBERAL AND GOOD GOVERNMENT FORCES GET OUT AND VOTE. THIS POLITICAL FACT IS NOW RECOGNIZED AND ACTION IS TAKING PLACE. LET THERE BE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, IF LABOR DOESN'T BECOME POLITICALLY ACTIVE AND POLITICALLY ORGANIZED, THAT WHICH HAS ALREADY HAPPENED IN THE FORM OF ANTI-LABOR AND ANTI-LIBERAL LEGISLATION BOTH IN CONGRESS AND IN OUR OWN STATE LEGISLATURE, IS BUT A TASTE OF WHAT CAN AND WILL TAKE PLACE IN 1944.

IN VIEW OF THESE FACTS, EVERY LIBERAL AMERICAN CAN TAKE HEART FROM THE PRONOUNCEMENTS AND ACTIONS OF NATIONAL LABOR LEADERS IN RECENT WEEKS. WM. GREEN, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR, HAS ISSUED A NATION-WIDE CALL TO ALL AFFILIATED UNIONS TO GET BUSY AT ONCE WITH PLANS FOR POLITICAL ACTION IN THIS YEAR'S AND NEXT YEAR'S ELECTIONS. PRESIDENT PHILIP MURRAY OF THE C.I.O. HAS APPOINTED A NATIONAL POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE, HEADED BY MR. SIDNEY HILLMAN. "ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, THERE CAN BE

NO DIFFERENCES IN OUTLOOK BETWEEN C.I.O., THE A.F. OF L. AND THE RAILROAD BROTHERHOODS," SAID MR. HILLMAN.

PRESIDENT GREEN OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR REMINDED A.F. OF L. UNIONS THAT THE FULL POLITICAL STRENGTH OF LABOR SHOULD BE MOBILIZED AND UNITED IN SUPPORT OF CANDIDATES REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL AFFILIATION WHO ARE SYMPATHETIC TO LABOR.

SAID MR. GREEN - "WE POSITIVELY CAN DEFEAT OUR ENEMIES AND ELECT OUR FRIENDS IF WE MOBILIZE AND UNITE LABOR'S FULL POLITICAL STRENGTH. THE RESPONSIBILITY LIES WITH US."

THE STEPS TAKEN BY NATIONAL LABOR LEADERS INDICATE IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT ORGANIZED LABOR HAS THE GO-AHEAD SIGN FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICES. THIS, HOWEVER, IS HARDLY SUFFICIENT TO GUARANTEE THAT LABOR CAN OR WILL DO THE JOB. POLITICAL ACTION MUST REACH INTO THE LOCAL UNION, INTO THE STATE ORGANIZATION. MINNESOTA ORGANIZED LABOR HAS ALREADY REALIZED THIS AND APPROPRIATE MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN. THE RECENT CONVENTION OF THE STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR HAS PLACED ^{the} A.F. OF L. ON RECORD AS GIRTING ITSELF FOR FULL-FLEDGED POLITICAL ACTIVITY. THE STATE CONVENTION OF THE C.I.O. PLEDGED THE CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION TO POLITICAL ACTION. AS YOU KNOW, THERE HAVE BEEN MEETINGS OF C.I.O., A.F. OF L. AND RAILROAD BROTHERHOOD REPRESENTATIVES IN ORDER TO PROPERLY COORDINATE AND UNITE THE FORCES OF MINNESOTA LABOR. OTHER LIBERAL GROUPS HAVE BEEN CONSULTED. THERE IS GENUINE ENTHUSIASM EVIDENCED BY ALL PERSONS AND GROUPS. LABOR KNOWS THAT IT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY - AMERICAN GOVERNMENT MUST HAVE MEN OF VISION, MEN OF DEMOCRATIC FAITH, OF PROGRESSIVE ATTITUDES - SUCH MEN CAN BE ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE ONLY IF AND WHEN THE FORCES OF LABOR, OF INDEPENDENT LIBERAL GROUPS, OF LIBERAL MINDED CITIZENS MOVE INTO POLITICAL ~~arena~~ ^{the} arena.

LABOR HAS PROVEN THAT UNITY CAN BE ACHIEVED IN ITS RANKS - WITNESS THE SPLENDID ACHIEVEMENTS OF ORGANIZED LABOR IN CIVILIAN DEFENSE, IN WAR CHEST ACTIVITIES, IN LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS. LABOR MUST AGAIN PROVE THAT IT CAN UNITE FOR A COMMON EFFORT ^{has been and can be again a} IN ^a POLITICAL PROGRAM. LET US REMEMBER THAT MINNESOTA ~~is~~ A PROGRESSIVE STATE. THAT THE FORCES OF LIBERALISM HAVE BEEN SPLIT APART IN THE PAST, THEREBY MAKING VICTORY IMPOSSIBLE SHOULD CONVINCING EVERY PERSON OF PROGRESSIVE POLITICS, THAT THE DEVICE OF "DIVIDE AND CONQUER" IS OUR WORST ENEMY. IT'S TIME TO UNITE -- IT'S TIME FOR LABOR TO STATE ITS PROGRAM, AND ENLIST PUBLIC SUPPORT. LABOR NEED NOT HAVE ITS OWN PARTY - OR A NEW PARTY. LABOR CAN AND WILL WORK WITH ALL SECTIONS AND GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY

THROUGH ESTABLISHED PARTIES DEDICATED TO A POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAM. THE JOB TO BE DONE, AND IT MUST START NOW, IS ONE OF AROUSING A POLITICAL ALERTNESS IN THE RANKS OF LABOR, AND A PUBLIC REDOGNITION OF ^{Policies} A PROGRESSIVE PROGRAM. THERE MUST BE A CONCERTED DRIVE TO REGISTER EVERY WORKER AND THE ELIGIBLE VOTERS IN HIS FAMILY. LABOR SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE IN ITS PROGRAM THE OBLIGATION OF SEEING TO IT THAT EVERY VOTING FACILITY IS GRANTED TO THE MEN AND WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES. THIS WAS NOT DONE IN 1942. ^{Remember, however that} POLITICAL ACTION NECESSITATES POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. COMMITTEES MUST BE ESTABLISHED TO CARRY OUT THE DETAILS. IN OHIO, FOR EXAMPLE, THE A.F. OF L. AND C.I.O., INDEPENDENTLY, BUT IN MUTUAL CONSULTATION, ARE GOING INTO THE SHOPS WITH POSTERS, BULLETINS, REGISTRATION CARDS AND GENERAL INFORMATION, ALL DIRECTED TO REGISTERING EVERY ORGANIZED WORKER. MASS REGISTRATIONS AND BLOCK BY BLOCK CANVASSING ARE BEING ORGANIZED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF SPECIAL PERSONNEL. NEW YORK, PENNSYLVANIA, NEW JERSEY, NEBRASKA, IOWA - IN FACT ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, LABOR IS ON THE POLITICAL MARCH. AMERICAN REACTIONARIES ARE IN FOR A SURPRISE IN 1944.

We have a task to perform, an obligation to fulfill. A wrecked and heartbroken world will be looking to America for guidance and leadership during the next few years. There can be no return to normalcy, there must be a vision of a better world. This vision can become a reality only if this great America has men of progressive and humanitarian ideals guiding its destiny. Remember the ~~the~~ sorry spectacle of 1920 - reaction ^{political} and reactionary politics won the victory. Humanity has suffered ever since. The election year of 1944 is a crucial year. Our foreign policy, our domestic reconstruction program, our post war policy will be decided by the next Congress. ~~Your future, your political and~~



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