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**“What’s the Future of the
Democratic Party?”**

SENATOR HUBERT HUMPHREY

Democrat of Minnesota

SENATOR GEORGE SMATHERS

Democrat of Florida

Announcer: This is the American Forum of the Air, America's oldest unrehearsed discussion program.

This week the American Forum of the Air presents a discussion of the topic "What's the Future of the Democratic Party?" Here with us to discuss this subject are Senator Hubert Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, and Senator George Smathers, Democrat of Florida. But before the debate begins, here is a message of importance.

Now, here is the founder and moderator of The American Forum of the Air, Theodore Granik.

Mr. Granik: As the Republican-controlled 83rd Congress begins its many legislative chores, the eyes of the Nation are also focused on the Democratic Party. Just how will this political group emerge from its defeat of last November? Will the conservative Southern wing or the liberal Northerners gain control? What about '54? Will that be the year when Democrats regain control of Congress? These are some of the questions that come to mind as the American Forum asks: "What's the Future of the Democratic Party?"

With Senator Hubert Humphrey representing the North and Senator George Smathers, the South, we will see how these areas are thinking on this question.

Now, Senator Humphrey, what do you feel the Democrats must do to regain control of Congress in '54?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Well, Mr. Granik, the first thing that the Democrats need to learn is to go to work, and I mean to work on the basis of political organization. In the election of 1952 we weren't only out-worked, we were out-organized. This was particularly true in the rural areas and in the suburbs, and I would call to the attention of every good Democrat if they want success in '54 they better settle down to the job of building a political party and not relying upon someone who is just a leader to get them out of their difficulties.

On the basis of program, I would suggest that we continue to follow the basic outlines of the New Deal and the Fair Deal, that we concentrate our attention upon the economic well-being of our people in such areas as agriculture, labor, and business, and that we, of course, emphasize the importance of our civil liberties and civil rights for all Americans. In the field of foreign policy, I suggest that the outlines which have been developed in these post-war years are still durable, are still sound and practical. We must continue to emphasize the importance of the United Nations by building up our programs of collective security, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and expanding our programs of ideological and psychological warfare, emphasizing in the under-developed areas such bold and courageous forward steps as the Point 4. I think these are the broad outlines. They have brought the Democratic Party great support in the past and can continue to do so in the future.

Mr. Granik: Senator, you said recently the Democratic Party faces a great challenge. Would you care to elaborate a bit about that?

SENATOR SMATHERS: I certainly would, and I find myself in some agreement with the Senator from Minnesota. I think, however, that whether or not the Democratic Party wins in 1954 and 1956 will

depend in a great measure upon how well we truly analyze the reasons for our defeat in 1952. It seems to me that we must face up to the fact that the people had lost confidence in the Democratic Party and the leadership of the Democratic Party. We ask ourselves why had they lost confidence, and I think then that we must come down to the conclusion that the people generally like the system of free enterprise, they generally like their personal liberties, and even though there are tensions and uneasiness resulting from Korea, nonetheless they can see all about them the government restrictions and regulations growing; they can feel the weight of a somewhat inefficient government coming down more heavily on them. They could see corruption spreading. And they didn't like it. For that reason they turned away from the Democratic Party for the first time in a very long time.

I would go ahead and say that I think we must also recognize that the average Democrat in the party likes the party to be a broad party inclusive of all groups. He doesn't like for one particular clique or organization to run it. He doesn't want the Democratic Party to be the tool of the A.D.A., the C.I.O.'s P.A.C. any more than he does the Southern Democrats to assume control.

At Chicago, of course, the average Democrat was able to see this when Vice President Barkley, for example, said that he would like to be President—the most loved man in public life, and probably will be for many, many years to come—we saw at that time even though he aspired to become the President, there were two leaders of the C.I.O., I think, who walked in and said they turned thumbs down on him, and he had to give up his ambition.

Mr. Granik: What about those cliques to which Senator Smathers referred?

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Let me say that the Democratic Party is truly a national party in this country. It has broad representation in every one of the 48 states and it always has had; that is one thing of which we have been proud—that it is a national party. Now, my friend, Senator Smathers refers to the cliques. Any political party has groups within it, obviously, because there are groups in American life. Volunteerism, voluntary association is a fundamental part of American life, and one would, indeed, be a poor political analyst if he thought that the labor leaders could deliver the labor vote or if he thought that the minority leaders could deliver the minority vote. None of us really believe that, but I say to my friend, the Senator from Florida, that the Democratic Party needs to represent people who work and toil for a living. It has had great support from the ranks of organized labor, and the ranks of organized labor have contributed greatly to American prosperity.

SENATOR SMATHERS: May I agree with the Senator from Minnesota right there. I do think that the Democratic Party obviously has a place in it for the labor group. We want all laboring people in it, but we do not want the Democratic Party to become the labor party. The whole point is that we must cast our appeals in the future, not for just those people in labor, not just those people in certain minority groups who want certain, particular things; we must make our appeal

broad. I think the last time it was rather well illustrated. Most of the appeals during the campaign were about class hatred and the division within the United States and fear of an upcoming depression, and things of that nature. The average American citizen does not find any place in that sort of an appeal that attracts him and, for that reason, we must change. I think that was proved by the fact that this last month in the "Reporter" magazine . . . which I do not customarily read, but I understand it is not a reactionary magazine . . . there was a very fine article in there by Arthur Schlesinger, who was the chief writer for Adlai Stevenson and his intimate advisor during the campaign. He wrote that Adlai Stevenson recognized during the campaign that they were casting the appeal to just a few groups; that they were fighting the old battles; that they were not appealing to the broad base of the American public.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: During the last election, I campaigned in 18 states. I did not go to Florida, and I doubt if the Senator from Florida covered as many states as I did. We were appealing, for example, for civil rights for all people. We were appealing for fair labor laws and not punitive labor laws. We were appealing to the agricultural economy, not because we wanted just the farm vote but also because we have learned out of the history of American economic life that when there is an agricultural depression or agricultural prices decline, it wrecks the grocery store, the hardware dealer and everyone else in the very small town in the United States, and later it works its way into the big cities. What the Democratic Party has stood for has been an integrated economy, a recognition of the balance in this economy, and we have stood for, throughout the history and at least these last 20 years, for a progressive economy where more and more people have participated. I think, as one person pointed out in this campaign, our reason for defeat was that we ran out of poor people and the fact that we had as much prosperity as America had ever known and a good deal of it came from the fact that these broad programs delivered great abundance to the American people.

SENATOR SMATHERS: I would not attempt to contest that. The American people, or any people for that matter, are too smart to take an administration or government that has been good to them, that has given them a great deal, and turn them out and take on a government which, the last time they were in power, found itself in the middle of a depression. What happened was that the people of America do not like socialism; they do not like these continual plans and programs to restrict everything in our business life and our economic life, and they began to rebel against it.

Mr. Granik: Is that what you referred to in your recent speech when you said that too many modern Democrats forgot the mission of their party?

SENATOR SMATHERS: That is right. The real mission was the recognition of States' rights; that the most important thing in government is the protection of peoples' personal liberties. We had forgotten about that, at least some of us, and we began to build up a joint bureaucracy which was actually weighing down heavily on the people.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: If this is your view of the Democratic Party's future, then it is indeed very dim. It is my opinion, Senator Smathers, that the mission of the Democratic Party has been one of emancipation. It has been one of libertinism—everyone is entitled to his day in court—and what I mean about that, Senator, is that the government of the United States, a government of the people, by the people and for the people—and I mean all of the people and not just some of them—had used its influence and weight at times to adjust the inequities in our society. It was for this purpose that we had Securities and Exchange rulings and the Federal Trade Commission to control monopolies. It is for this reason that the Wagner Labor Relations law was passed and why we have farm price supports. We did not want anyone to become a victim of the free market and find him suffering because of the so-called free market. The Democratic Party did not appeal to class prejudice. They have tried to eliminate it in the United States.

I do want to say to my friend from Florida that if they campaigned in Florida on the basis of class prejudice, they did not do it in Minnesota, or California or Washington where I was. They campaigned on the basis of a broader opportunity for the American people.

SENATOR SMATHERS: People went around all over the country talking about the necessity for having compulsory F.E.P.C. When they talked of things of that nature, you need not tell me or the American people that you are not doing it for the real purpose of appealing to class prejudice, because everybody knows that as far as discrimination is concerned in the United States, there is not a great deal of discrimination. Look at New York State where they have compulsory F.E.P.C. laws. Last year there were only 68 cases, 13.5 million people and only 68 cases of discrimination. Over a 16-year period, there have only been 227 cases—three one thousandths of one per cent, and yet why do we use those appeals. I listened to the appeals and I was in Chicago, and I heard several of the speeches on the radio. They were talking about organizing these people who were supposed to be down drawing all of these rights. I don't know who these people are. The truth of the matter is that it was being done for the specific purpose of trying to get a certain minority vote and possibly to carry Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois and some of those states.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Now, Senator, if you are saying that a political party ought not to be interested in votes, I would not want to debate that on a public forum, but I will say that there is a time when they should stand on principle. There is no greater principle in America than equal rights for all. Any political party that takes the position that it is not interested in the rights of its people is a political party that is doomed to defeat, and if Senator Smathers in his thinking feels that we should not be concerned with whether people are discriminated against, then the Democratic Party is finished.

SENATOR SMATHERS: The time has come when we should take this matter of civil rights out of the political arena where it long should have been. We should do something about making civil rights constructive like we do in the South, for example. For instance, we

have more colleges down there that take care of the colored people than they have up North. We have in our state of Florida fifty-seven counties where they give the same wages to colored teachers that they do white teachers. In one of our colleges in Nashville, Tennessee, we have more colored doctors from New York getting an education there than they do in all of the medical colleges of New York combined. We are doing something about it. The time has come to stop talking about it and start doing something about it outside of the political arena.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Your argument about the state of New York was one of the most persuasive arguments I have ever heard in reference to the efficacy of fair employment practices legislation or so-called remedial legislation. I commend you on what has been done in the South. I wish my friends from the South would get off the defensive. What we are trying to say is that it is good for the whole country, and we have made great and substantial progress. All I am saying is, that political party that wants to be a national party, Senator, must clearly go on record as saying that it believes in the equal rights and the protection of those equal rights for every citizen in America, and that is what we have done. Nobody could dispute that at all.

SENATOR SMATHERS: That is true; nobody could dispute that at all. But to say we believe in equal rights and to say, therefore, that you favor a compulsory F.E.P.C. which has for its purpose the taking away of rights of other people, you are not starting out to say what you originally meant to say. That is taking the rights away from other people and that is not civil rights.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: What you are saying then is that a man should be employed on the basis of ability and not be discriminated against because of his place of birth, national origin or race. Now, Senator, that is equal rights and anyone who says it is not refuses to understand the meaning of equal rights, and the fundamental purposes of this country. The Declaration of Independence proclaims to the world—not only to Minnesota and Florida—that there is human equality. And the Democratic Party stands on the basis of human equality; and if it does, it will be a great national party with a great future; if it does not, it will be as dead as the dodo or as the Republicans were a few years ago.

SENATOR SMATHERS: I want to say that all of these generalizations I thoroughly agree with. Obviously we are a party of civil rights and we protect everybody's interest. The fact of the matter is that the basic appeal has been made not to the broad general masses. As a matter of fact, we talked about the wickedness of the managers of Wall Street; we talked about the capitalists. As a matter of fact, right here in Schlesinger's story he said that the whole appeal was directed against the business community. That's what Adlai Stevenson and Schlesinger and those people said they were doing—maybe not my distinguished friend from Minnesota, but that is what the general tenor of the national campaign was, which I say is wrong

and which they now admit was also wrong because it was appealing to just a few people.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: Mr. Schlesinger was the one who was under severe attack by all of these people who called the Democratic Party socialist. Mr. Schlesinger was one of the main advisors to Governor Stevenson, and I think the Democratic Party in the election of 1952 gave the American people a new statement of mental philosophy under Governor Stevenson. However, regardless of what Governor Stevenson said, Senator, he was under attack in the South and he was under attack by all of the reactionaries all over America despite his liberal, concerted, integrated political philosophy.

SENATOR SMATHERS: I just want to say this, that he got 89 electoral votes and 81 of those came from the South.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: The majority of those votes came from the colored people of the South and from the American Mexicans in Texas.

SENATOR SMATHERS: From what you said, I did not think that the colored people voted in the South. That is what we have been maintaining for a long time.

Mr. Granik: And now, to our audience for questions. I see a distinguished newspaperman, Mr. Mobley of the Knight Newspapers. Do you have a question, Mr. Mobley?

MR. MOBLEY: Yes. I think Senator Smathers has partly answered my question, but I would like to restate it in this frame.

Senator, will the Democratic Party of the future be more Dixiecratic or will it become a national party again?

SENATOR SMATHERS: I would like to say that I certainly hope that it will not be Dixiecratic. I hope that it will be a national party. I think it should once again rededicate itself to the principles that were set down by Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson and the great leaders of our party, which was when they said that they wanted to continue the fight against autocracy in government, they wanted to fight big government. They wanted to keep the government close to the people. I think it was Jefferson who said "That government is best that is least government," and I think it was Jefferson who was the first states' righter who wrote to Madison and said, "Were this Union not already divided into states, we would now have to do that in order that the people could take care of those matters which directly concern them." In other words, that was the philosophy of the Democratic Party, and I say that in recent years we have gotten away from it. There will be a national party again if we go back to the teachings of our fathers.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I want to concur with the general attitude of Senator Smathers on Thomas Jefferson except that he left out one point. I have spent a little time studying his life. He was not only a states' righter but he was also a states' doer. He did not use states' rights as a means of stopping progress; he talked about states' rights as a states' responsibility as a means of forwarding progress. He did so, Senator, with this kind of an historical perspective: He did it at a time when the central government was far removed from the people by election laws, by the nature of those who served, when state govern-

ment was the closest area of government to the people. And, if one will pursue the great decisions of Justice Marshall up through Justice Tawny, for example, and see the reverse, you will see in one time Justice Marshall was the great federalist, where he was one who believed in helping to develop the central government, and you will see Justice Tawny later on, 50 years later, who believed that the state governments must take on the main responsibility because they were closest to the people. Now, the end of this trinity is the new deal, fair deal and new further area of Wilson, Roosevelt and Truman wherein the federal government became responsive to the needs of the American people and was close to the people and, therefore, was the protector of their rights rather than an abuser.

SENATOR SMATHERS: You would not go so far as to say that because the federal government is close to people that we should do away with state government.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: No, indeed.

SENATOR SMATHERS: Then we are in agreement. I say that today state and local governments should try to meet those problems which arise first.

Mr. Granik: Do you feel that the Democratic Party has strayed away from those common principles?

SENATOR SMATHERS: I very definitely do and that is the point I am trying to make. Long ago it strayed away from the principles of Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Cleveland, and Wilson and others, and the first terms of Roosevelt, and it should come back to that.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: The first principle of Thomas Jefferson, Mr. Granik, was the principle of human freedom and human liberty; that is what he dedicated his life to. No man would have known better than Thomas Jefferson that the facts of economic life must be faced by political parties, and this is not 1776 but 1953, and what we are dedicated to is human liberty and human emancipation which was the doctrine and the theme of Jefferson's life. I submit to you that the Democratic Party in its bold programs of resource development, of education, of health, of social security for the aged, of public health for the needy, of agricultural programs and soil conservation, of regional and river valley developments, all of this is a part of a program of lifting the liberty of the people and protecting the liberty of the people. People have no liberty when they are impoverished.

SENATOR SMATHERS: He started out to say that Jefferson was a great believer in personal freedom, and that is why Thomas Jefferson talked about states; that is why we put in this Tenth Amendment which says, "Those powers which are not specifically given to the federal government are reserved under the states for the benefit of the people." Why? He wanted an active state government, but he knew and he talked about the fact that if we build up all of the power in the federal government, it would become a corrupt government, for it was he who said on the debate of what kind of government we should have that "If we concentrate all powers in federal government, it will be the most corrupt government on earth." That is what Thomas Jefferson had to say.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: No doubt, Senator, we agree 100 per cent.
Mr. Granik: We have time for just about one question from the audience.

MR. BILL GATES: I am from Hagerstown, Maryland. My question is this: What part do you think ex-President Truman will play in the shaping of future policy for the Democratic Party.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: That is very difficult to say. It depends greatly upon what ex-President Truman does and says. It is my honest opinion, however, that Adlai Stevenson will be the shaper or molder of political opinion and public attitude as it pertains to the Democratic Party, and that is the way I think it should be. I want to pay tribute to this great American who spoke sense to the American people who dared get away from the cliches, Senator, and desperately tried to get away from the dogmas and the outworn cliches of the yesterdays. Governor Stevenson, in my mind, talked new politics, new political philosophies within the framework of everything we mean when we talk about human liberties, and he is our leader, and I will stand by him as a liberal and progressive leader, and I am going to stand there to help him in going forward with his program.

SENATOR SMATHERS: I have great admiration for Governor Stevenson, but my objection to the campaign and the objection of many of the people I have talked to was to the fact that around him gathered a group that did not have the same attitude about government as he personally did, and that fact is well-demonstrated in this report by Arthur Schlesinger where he says "We influenced him to do the things that he knew would not be successful."

Let me just say that I think the future of the Democratic Party is bright, if we will learn the lesson of the defeat of 1952. I think we must rededicate ourselves to the principles of the real Democratic Party. I think we must love this free enterprise system, recognize it as having given us more freedom and more opportunity than any other system. We must develop programs designed to unify the people rather than to divide the people. We must develop economic programs based on greater productivity, not based on artificial stimuli. I think, in the field of civil rights, we should prayerfully strive to eliminate from our own hearts and minds any bigotry, intolerance, or prejudice which might exist. Whenever those problems arise, we must fall back on human understanding. We must have confidence in our American system and have confidence in the American people realizing that they wish to be self-reliant, self-supporting and free. If we will place our confidence in them, they will in turn place their confidence in us, the Democratic Party.

Mr. Granik: Thank you, Senator Smathers.

SENATOR HUMPHREY: I should surely concur with every word that Senator Smathers said in that summary. However, I would like to pin-point it a bit. When we say that the future of the Democratic Party depends upon our belief in civil rights and our belief in the kind of freedom-loving government, I think we should say that the Democratic Party will build its record in Congress. If the Democratic Party sells out the peoples' rights, for example, to their tidelands, if it sells

out the peoples' rights to all of their basic human rights, if it forgets to protect the peoples' interests in the public lands and the public domain, then the Democratic Party is going to suffer. But, if the Democratic Party stands forward as the champion of equal rights for all, with legislation to back it up, if it stands forward as the believer in a balanced American economy where, on the one hand, it does promote free and competitive enterprise and checks monopoly and overwhelming corporate enterprise, and on the other hand, if it directs its attention to the welfare of our people — our school children, our aged, and those that are in need — the Democratic Party will live on as a great forward-looking, humanitarian political party.

Mr. Granik: Thank you, Senator Humphrey. I am sorry; our time is up.

Our speakers have been Senator Hubert Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, and Senator George Smathers, Democrat of Florida.

This is Theodore Granik, bidding you goodbye from Washington.

Announcer: For reprints of today's discussion, send 10 cents to Ransdell, Incorporated, Printers and Publishers, Washington 18, D. C.

Next week, our subject will be, "How Can We Best Combat Communism?" Our speakers will be Representative Harold Velde, Republican of Illinois, and James B. Carey, Secretary-Treasurer of the CIO.

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