

Excerpts from Address by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.)
before State Convention of Oklahoma Young Democrats,
Tulsa, Oklahoma, Friday night, February 18, 1955

HUMPHREY CALLS NEW GOP TACTICS "SYNTHETIC IDEALISM"

The Republican party's "soap opera publicists" have injected something new into American politics, Democratic Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota declared in Tulsa last night.

"In an era of synthetics, the GOP is trying to keep pace with industrial trends", Senator Humphrey said.

"They've introduced 'synthetic idealism' into our political life - a professed idealism without any practical approach to carrying it out.

"Lip service to such professed idealism becomes a mockery when it lacks the realism of intended accomplishment", Senator Humphrey told Oklahoma's Young Democrats at their state convention in Tulsa.

"They talk about farmers deserving 100% of parity, then slip in legislation to lower price supports to 75%;

"They talk about the urgent need for more school buildings, but fail to back it up with any practical assistance that will provide construction instead of conversation;

"They talk about 'trade not aid', then wind up providing neither to meet world needs;

"They talk glowingly about use of atomic energy for civilian purposes, then try to slip across Dixon-Yates contracts to deprive the public of the potential benefits of such low-cost energy;

"They talk great ideals, but it is all synthetic idealism - a poor substitute for the realism of Democratic accomplishment of the past few decades."

"It's really rather confusing, to some of us approaching middle age. Like old-fashioned furniture, they used to make old-line Republicans out of sturdy oak. You knew what you were getting, even

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if it was very conservative and often hard to move around. But modern Republicans seem like some of the modern furniture. They all seem to adopt the same thin veneer surface, that looks so attractive for a while, but you soon learn you never can tell what's underneath, and that good looking outer surface doesn't hold up very well!" Senator Humphrey said.

American youth should cling to its own idealism, Senator Humphrey added, because it "provides the spark progressive democracy needs".

"To preserve and strengthen our democracy, youth needs to be idealistic - but realistic too," Senator Humphrey said. "We should be proud to be called idealists, rather than skeptics and cynics. The soul of democracy is its idealism; the black heart of totalitarianism is its cynicism. But idealism needs realism, to keep it from becoming merely 'mock idealism' of the synthetic GOP variety that offers the solace of words without the firmer comfort of fact."

The Democratic Party offers a challenging opportunity to America's youth, Senator Humphrey said, because "it effectively combines idealism and realism".

"We have never sacrificed or compromised our ideals - the ideals of Jackson and Jefferson. Yet we have learned to be realistic in working toward these ideals.

"The great virtue of the Democratic Party - the very secret of its life - is its ability to adapt itself to changing conditions to meet the needs of the people in this day, and in each and every generation.

"We are not a party of rigid discipline. We do not ask from those who join with us blind obedience and disciplined reactions. Our party is not motivated by the frustrations of class warfare. It is a party of all the people. It has grown with this great Republic. It is a national party, bringing into its confines every section and every interest of this nation.

"Our party embraces every section of the nation, both geographic and economic. Within it there will be differences - differences based on economic development, social customs and political practices. Yet we work in responsible unity.

"A truly national party must represent all interests, all regions, and have that political mobility and flexibility that accommodates all."

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without losing its idealism. That's the dynamic nature of our political party today, and the secret of its responsiveness to the needs of our nation."

Senator Humphrey said "two of the outstanding examples of idealism with realism" within the Democratic party today were Oklahoma's own two Democratic Senators - Senator Robert S. Kerr and Senator A. S. Mike Monroney.



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