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LIBERALISM MUST AVOID SHACKLES OF DOGMA, SENATOR HUMPHREY WARNS

Liberalism in American political life "must itself avoid the shackles of fixed dogma and the restrictions of conformity," Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D., Minn.) warned last night in an address before a banquet of the Americans for Democratic Action in Akron, Ohio.

"Liberalism as a political philosophy is based on the assumption that freedom is essential for the full development of the human personality. This striving for freedom, this appeal to reason, is the hallmark of the liberal tradition. Those of us who have associated ourselves with that tradition often talk about the evils of conformity. We have pointed with concern to the increasing growth of conformity in modern society. We have inveighed against the inhibitions which our laws, our mores and our neighbors place against 'being different'. We have emphasized that the free expression of individualism depends upon the rightful place of non-conformity of ideas and attitudes," Senator Humphrey said.

"Yet I humbly suggest that the liberal movement itself is not free from this drive to conformity. I am afraid there is growing a 'liberal line' with regard to many social, economic and political problems which is just as rigid in its application and just as brutal in its demand for conformity as other evidences of intellectual straight-jacket thinking.

"Such rigidity, such dogma, such inflexibility has no place in the real liberal tradition," Senator Humphrey warned.

"Beyond a basic commitment to the dignity and worth of the individual, the content of liberalism from age to age and from nation to nation will vary with varying conditions.

"Liberalism may one day challenge and another day cherish government activity in the lives of men; at one time it may welcome the specific interests of the business community, and at another time it may be critical of those interests. In one era it may seek expression through one political party, and in another era it may choose other means of political expression.

"The liberal approach must be experimental and its solutions must be tentative. We must constantly be willing to re-examine and reconstruct institutions in the light of new needs."

In order for liberalism to survive, Senator Humphrey warned, "democratic self-government must survive."

"The liberal must, therefore, dedicate his energy to the protection of democracy against its totalitarian enemies from without and within.

"Liberalism, even as it recognizes the necessity to preserve the spirit and fact of dissent in the political community, must also recognize its ultimate loyalty to a democratic society and to the preservation of our nation."



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