

Young Liberals Rally N. Y. Speech
N. Y. C.
March 7, 1962
Radicals of the Right
to Liberals

I am delighted to be with you this evening to discuss the radicals of the right--or to be more accurate--of the way out right.

now In discussing the radical extremists of the right one is tempted to treat them as a great joke. For what they say and do is so fantastic and divorced from reality that it is difficult to believe that these people are not really just pulling our leg. After all, it is a little hard to take anyone serious who impugns the loyalty of President Eisenhower or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. I can tell you that there are plenty of people who are in dead earnest in making such wild charges.

but I wish you could see some of the mail that keeps pouring into my office from these self appointed patriots--these radical extremists. Their letters are no laughing matter. You get a little sick to your stomach reading too many of them at one time.

When you listen to these folks you wonder if ~~he~~ ^{they are} living in the same world as ~~we~~ ^{we} are.

Where are all these Communists--in and out of government--to which they refer?

Is the United Nations really filled with Reds and Red sympathizers bent on destroying the United States?

Is social legislation such as minimum wage, social security, medical care for the aged, aid to dependent children, public housing and REA really leading us down the road to communism?

Can't our Supreme Court be trusted? Are the members of the Court--as appointed by our duly elected President and confirmed by a Senate chosen by the people of the 50 states--really not good, solid, loyal patriotic Americans?

Are people who work for equal rights for Negroes really lending themselves to the Soviet conspiracy?

Are trade union leaders somehow less than loyal Americans?

Is it grounds for suspicion when a person defends the First Amendment or the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution?

Was the Eisenhower Administration and is the present Administration really soft on communism?

Is the foreign aid program just a clever scheme being pushed by hidden Reds to bankrupt this nation?

Are the churches and temples infiltrated by members of the Red conspiracy?

Are those who believe in promoting world law and order really following the Communist party line?

Unfortunately, my friends, there are a good many people in this country who are spouting such nonsense. And there are a good many more who swallow it hook, line and sinker.

out

~~The radicals of the right are really suffering from a serious political illness. To date we haven't found the cure for it, but I am hopeful we will, so that these poor sick souls can be brought back to the world of political reality and make a constructive contribution to the body politic, rather than spending their time and money in efforts which can only help to tear down our democratic system which we cherish in this country.~~

As you know, I have always been a great advocate of the fine work being done by the National Institutes of Health. Their work to conquer various diseases is to me one of the most exciting and heartening works of our government. I have been toying with the idea of proposing a new National Institute of Health for Political Illness. What a fascinating field it would have to explore! And think what a major breakthrough it would be when the cause of this political illness was discovered. I would not limit the Institute's study only to the radical right, but to the radical communist left as well because both extremes have so much in common.

There is just one obstacle to my proposal, though. I doubt if the Institute would be able to get many radicals of the right or left to volunteer for such studies. And as a firm believer in civil liberties I would never agree to their being compelled to serve in such experiments.

As ludicrous as the radical right is, we cannot afford to treat

them as a joke. ~~I wish we could simply laugh them off the scene, but I am~~
~~not sure that we can.~~ Nor do I think we can safely ignore them.

There were a good many people in Germany thirty years ago who thought
Adolph Hitler and his bully boys were ridiculous and no cause for alarm. But
the Germans learned to their sorrow that the goose-stepping Nazis was more
than a joke. Hitler and his cronies were politically ~~ill~~ ^{sick} too, but they
won out over the politically sane nonetheless.

I am not suggesting that the radical right in this country is going to
win out. I have no fear on this score. For I fervently believe that the vast
majority of Americans are devoted to our democratic way of life and cherish
our hard won liberties.

But we can not remove these extremists from our minds. ~~First of all,~~
we must be alert to nail down their lies and smear tactics against loyal
patriotic Americans. Their wild charges cannot go unanswered. We have a
moral obligation to stand up and answer these slanderers who would turn
American against American, and cast a spirit of fear and suspicion throughout
the land.

~~the land.~~ This is a job for each and every one of us to take on--whatever
our position in life may be.

And most important of all, we must get on with the job of making our
democratic society and our system of government ever more perfect.

We must work to wipe out inequality, ^{discrimination} based on race, color, religion, creed
or national origin.

We must work to strengthen our economic system so that all able-bodied
workers find it possible to ~~find a job.~~ ^{have gainful, rewarding employment}

We must work to see to it that every child gets the best possible
education so as to fully develop his talents.

We must ~~work to~~ wipe out the blot of poverty which still exists today
even in this affluent society.

We must remain ever vigilant to preserve our cherished civil liberties.
The right to speak and write as one chooses. The right to worship according
to one's individual conscience. The right to belong to the political
party of one's choice. The right to criticize elected officials.

To sum it all up, we must work to build a better society for all people within a free and democratic framework. We in America believe that we can make material gains, have higher standards of living, alleviate poverty, and still maintain a free and open society.

This is where we differ from the extremists of both the right and the ^{Communist} left. For they lack faith in the people's judgement and in democracy.

They would substitute a closed society for a free society, and ~~have~~ ^{They would}

^{tell} the people ~~what~~ what to do by the self-appointed "elite".

Let us not forget this basic difference. Let us not permit the fear mongers of the left and right to break down the bonds of trust and common faith which unite the American people. For if these bonds are broken our way of life will be destroyed. ~~That is the inevitable result if the radical~~
~~extremists should ever have their way.~~



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