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THURSDAY AM'S

TRANSCRIPT OF TAPED REMARKS BY  
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
FREEDOM HOUSE BANQUET HONORING  
SENATOR PAUL DOUGLAS AND ROY WILKINS  
NEW YORK CITY  
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Mr. Chairman, and my good friends, Senator Paul Douglas, Roy Wilkins and ladies and gentlemen. I am very unhappy over the circumstances that prevent me from being with you tonight. But, I have some official duties to perform and I am confident that all of you will fully understand the situation and permit me to come to you these few brief moments by means of film and television.

We are meeting tonight in the presence of two of the greatest living leaders of American liberalism -- your honored guests, Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois, and our good friend Roy Wilkins, the Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

I want to take this occasion to restate some of the positive convictions of American liberalism as I understand those convictions.

It may be true that liberals have sometimes thought of themselves as nobly bestowing their benefits on the "less fortunate." It may be that some of us seem to expect credit or gratitude for their beneficence.

If so, the militant social revolution of the 1960's effectively ended that situation.

The poor, the Negro, the slum dweller, and those whom President Johnson has called the "forgotten people" are now gaining new self-confidence. For now we hear the cry: give us a political voice, give us participation, give us our own spokesman, give us our own power.

One conviction of American liberalism is that people must speak for themselves, and liberals should rejoice whenever people are able to speak for themselves; because liberalism, above all, means emancipation - emancipation from one's fears, his inadequacies from prejudice, from discrimination, yes, from poverty.

Liberalism also means opportunity - not just opportunity in word, but opportunity in the fact of life - the opportunity to be a meaningful participant in all the affairs of life. It means self-respect that is gained by self-help, and it means human-dignity that comes from being a respected citizen with full and equal rights.

Another conviction of American liberalism is this: that the voice of the disinherited can be heard and social justice can be attained, within the institutions of American society, within the framework of the rule of law, of the constitution, of consensus and Democratic practice and processes.

Our institutions are built for change; they include within them the principles of self-criticism, of expansion, and of improvement towards a higher justice.

Who would have thought, when Roy Wilkins began his great career with the NAACP, and the public wasn't listening and didn't seem to care, that one day, Roy Wilkins would hear a President of the United States with southern roots join in saying, "We shall overcome?"

Yes, things have changed and changed for the good and changed because of a Roy Wilkins.

When Paul Douglas was elected to the Chicago Board of Alderman, who would have thought that Chicago and the suburbs would ever be fairly represented (one man and one vote) in the Illinois State legislature? Or that City government would be regenerated; cities renewed; urban blight and slums and poverty become a major focus of national action? Who would have thought that there would be such great concern and action on these matters?

But now I must quickly add another conviction of American liberalism, that the job is never done, and it takes unremitting effort and persevering patience.

It would be an historic tragedy if we thought our work was done and if we stopped now.

Too many Americans seem to believe that having passed the four Civil Rights Acts of the past ten years, we have shown our good intentions and have done enough. In fact, some people say we should pause, that we should relax. I don't think so.

Too many Americans seem to think that having started a wide variety of anti-poverty programs we have done enough.

They say it's time to re-group our forces, to hold for a while, yes - to pause when, in fact, it is just time now to move into action.

But, the real test is not how many laws we have passed or how many programs we have begun, but how many people have been helped and how many people still need help.

The primary point about liberalism is not the shifting groups that espouse it but the constant purposes that guide it.

Although we can be proud of the great liberal accomplishments of the middle 60's, many of those accomplishments, you and I know, were just first steps, just the beginnings.

Many of our new programs for education, housing, the city and its poor are experimental, are in the planning or demonstration stage, are just beginning.

Occasionally on college campuses where I love to speak, I now hear disdainful references to so-called "tired liberals", and I wonder who do they mean. With all due respect to the radical tradition - I do know some "tired radicals". There are militants of the 1930's who are the absentees in the 1960's. But I ask who are the "tired liberals?" I know Roy Wilkins isn't tired - he's never looked better. And may I say in all modesty that Hubert Humphrey isn't tired - he's just beginning to feel a surge of life. And this is most certain of all: Paul Douglas isn't tired - has never been tired and continues to lead with great zeal and vitality.

When today's extremists have long since had their moment before the TV cameras and been forgotten, I predict that Roy Wilkins and Paul Douglas will still be here, quietly, effectively and persistently working for the progress of the human race.

Radicals may insist on utopia right now, or pick up their marbles and go home; but sound constructive liberals like Roy Wilkins and Paul Douglas stay there day after day - rain or shine - working at and playing the endless game of human progress and, inspired may I say, by their steady accomplishments

and achievements.

I believe the future will need the kind of American liberalism of which Paul Douglas and Roy Wilkins are great representatives, because, to me, liberalism is the enemy of all forms of tyranny - the tyranny of prejudice and bigotry - the tyranny of intolerance.

Liberalism is the enemy of the tyranny of ignorance and of poverty and, let us never forget that true liberalism that recognizes the oneness of the family of mankind is the mortal enemy of all forms of violence, brute force and aggression.

These are the old verities of liberalism and the liberal Democracy. They were good in the yesterdays and they are sound and true today.

I am very pleased tonight to know that one of the great men of our country who carries heavy burdens and fulfills his tasks with honor and dignity and brilliance, the distinguished Secretary of State Dean Rusk, is here to be with you and to speak to you. My absence is your gain. You are going to hear from a man who has served three Presidents and has served them faithfully - ably - conscientiously - patriotically. I am very pleased that Dean Rusk can share this evening with you and that you can share it with him. Thank you.

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