

April 11, 1988

For Centrist Orthodoxy Book, Chapter on

Moderation

The following Citation comes from an article by Judge Learned Hand, published by the Massachusetts Bar Association in 1942.

... This much I think I do know -- that a society so riven that the spirit of moderation is gone, no court can save; that a society where that spirit flourishes, no court need save; that in a society which evades its responsibility by thrusting upon the courts the nurture of that spirit, that spirit in the end will perish. What is the spirit of moderation? It is a temper which does not press a partisan advantage to its bitter end, which can understand and respect the other side, which feels a unity between all citizens -- real and not the factitious product of propaganda -- which recognizes their common fate and their common aspirations -- in a word, which has faith in the sacredness of the individual. If you asked me how such a temper and such a faith are bred and fostered, I cannot answer. They are the last flowers of civilization, delicate and easily overrun by the weeds of our sinful human nature; we may even now be witnessing their uprooting and disappearance until in the progress of the ages their seeds can once more find some

friendly soil. But I am satisfied that they must have the vigor within themselves to withstand the winds and weather of an indifferent and ruthless world; and that it is idle to seek shelter for them in a courtroom. Men must take that temper and that faith with them into the field, into the market place, into the factory, into the council-rooms, into their homes; they cannot be imposed; they must be lived.