

SPEECH BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY BEFORE THE NATIONAL

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Lycurgus once said that "Citizens are the best walls of a free city." It is strange how true the words of this great Spartan law-maker of the 9th century B.C. are today. Today we live in a world which has no physical barriers. It is a world which can be traversed in a matter of hours. National boundaries are no longer safe. National interest is no longer secure. In a world such as this, where physical weapons no longer have any meaning, the only dynamic yet constant force upon which a nation can rely is its citizenship.

Yet this thing which we call citizenship is capable of many qualities. Citizenship can be a prison, or it can be a portal. It can enslave man in his loyalty to a totalitarian state, or it can free man through a realization that government and loyalty to a democratic ideal can provide for him the opportunities for individual growth and the expression of individual personality.

The state is an invention of man. It has neither intellect nor conscience nor morals. Let our world is characterized in the minds of many by a conflict of states one with another. Why this conflict? Is it sensible that man should allow his own invention, the state, to destroy him and his possessions in conflict? Is it sensible that man should allow a doctrine of citizenship to lead him and his civilization down the road to chaos and to the destruction of that civilization?

It must be, then, that the conflict the world faces is not a conflict between states. It must be then that this conflict has another interpretation. The interpretation I suggest is that the conflict is not one between states, but rather is one between ideals and ideologies. The state, as an invention of man with no intellect, conscience or morals, is an inanimate machine. As such therefore, it relies upon fuel provided for it by the loyalties of citizenship to give it strength, purpose and direction.

With this perspective, we can better understand the differences between the ideology of democracy and the ideology of totalitarianism. The democratic state is one which is mastered by man; a totalitarian state is one which is master of man. The struggle our world faces is a struggle between both ideologies.

The forces of totalitarianism which we face are not quiet. The very nature of their principles calls for agitation, activity and fanatic dedication. Their philosophy is not an attractive one. Man does not willingly submit himself to mastery by a machine of his own creation. Yet the bitter lesson we have learned is that those of us who believe in democracy cannot remain passive in the confidence that totalitarianism has no future because man desires freedom. Man desires freedom, but man also desires security. Self-government is not a luxury on which men may grow fat and indulgent. Rather it is an instrument by which men can, if they have the wisdom, safeguard their individual freedom and employ that freedom in the pursuit of happiness. It is true that democracy cannot be defeated in the theoretical struggle of ideologies, but democracy can be defeated by default. Democracy can lose if those of us who believe in it remain indifferent and neglect our personal responsibility for its security and growth. The strength of totalitarianism lies in the indifference of its people. Democratic self-government tries its people with a stronger challenge than any other system in the world. Scorning the brutal coercion of totalitarian states, it asks justice and brotherhood of its people; it asks that they co-operate well and voluntarily for their common welfare in order that each may benefit equitably according to his merits.

Democracy is an easy ideology to take for granted. We seldom consider its basic principles in a critical light, in order to formulate our reasons for upholding it. It is a tragic fact that American youth which went abroad in the war to save democracy was totally unprepared to spread its message of democracy. General Bradley, in a recent article, said that throughout Europe, wherever our armies were stationed, the people of Europe were bewildered by our American soldiers who appeared indifferent to the political and philosophical origins and nature of our democracy. Unhappily

when driven into a corner intellectually, our soldiers were forced to fall back on American wage scales, automobiles, our refrigerators, and eventually and triumphantly on the American bathroom for their defense. Here then is the danger signal. Here then is an indictment of the indifference which has lead our nation to permit this vacuum to remain.

Our democracy is much like a tall stand of timber. We cannot cut from it more than we plant in it without imperilling its survival, and forests like gardens cannot be bought. They must be cultivated by toil and nourished by the sweat of those who would keep them. We quickly forget that if freedom is to flourish, our society must re-examine its principles of education and rededicate itself to the conviction that education is that strength for freedom of democracy. It must take strength from the understanding that an educated people is easy to govern, difficult to lead, impossible to enslave. Only the educated man is a free man.

In 1945 your distinguished organization, the National Educational Association, issued a statement which said:

"Citizenship implies the effective use at every level from childhood through adulthood of the rights and responsibilities of democracy. It is based upon clear understanding and purposeful skilled action in attaining democratic goals. It is based on faith in the power of people to work together toward the solution of common problems. Democracy seeks to provide increasingly equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, creed, national origin, or social and economic status."

Education as a major social institution is the medium through which citizenship can be translated into loyalty to democratic ideals. Education for democratic citizenship means the practice of democracy. Education for democratic citizenship in the school means democratic practices in the school. Education for democratic citizenship in the community means democratic practices in the community, in the homes, churches, businesses, industries, labor organizations, community agencies, patriotic and service groups. It means direct participation in social and civic affairs. It means the training of young citizens with service responsibility in running for office, voting, jury duty, and the study of our institutions. Education for democratic citizenship means the development of knowledge and the understanding for increased participation in local, state, national and world affairs. If America and democracy are to come of age it means that we must expand our concept of the school to include not merely the formal periods of classroom instruction but also the training of the whole man, the whole individual. It means that our schools must be directly tuned to the need for vocational guidance and aptitude. It means that our schools must relate themselves to the need for psychiatric assistance even on the school level. It means that our schools must indeed be laboratories for democracy.

A generation ago Americans had a philosophy of personal and public life which said, "Take care of number one." This idea was very simple. If everyone devoted himself to his own success, if everyone took care of number one, then obviously the sum total of the success of all numbers would be prosperity and happiness for all people. This would bring an end to poverty not only in the United States but everywhere else in the world.

How wrong we were. We were wrong and that philosophy was doomed to failure because it ran counter to moral law in its glorification of selfishness; its failure was foretold by the teachings of the Bible. That philosophy is wrong because it ran counter to the democratic principles of human brotherhood, to the declaration that all men are created equal. It was wrong because it ran counter to the true nature of Americanism and American democracy. It was our country which was the first to present to the modern world a coherent political faith based upon the dignity of the individual, the equality and fraternity of mankind. We were the first to pattern a structure of government and to form a society which denied selfishness as a pattern for behaviour, and which emphasized democracy and human solidarity. This ideology was more powerful than the arms of conquest. This ideology upset thrones in Europe and convulsed a continent. It is now convulsing another. This ideology put into the hearts and breasts of Colonial people, the underprivileged, and the subjected, a consuming desire for liberty, a desire which today is emphasized by such rebellions as those in Indo-China and Indonesia, and in the fact of India's freedom. We never moved a battalion or a regiment,

in the 18th or 19th century, yet the idea of the Declaration of Independence produced the doctrine of the rights of man, the equality of man, and broke the back of oppression and the power of kings.

For a period we in the United States have forgotten the basic roots from which this democratic idea has come. We forgot that to take care of "number one" is a principle which runs counter to the principle of human brotherhood and of mutual obligation one to another, which is the basis of democracy.

We forgot and thus we failed. Proof of that failure was the frustrating depression followed by a terrible war.

Part of our neglect was translated into an indifference to political life. Why bother with veterans hospitals, or government research laboratories, or public administration, or public works, or government-paid education?

Yet when depression and war came, the whole science of self-government, the whole process of government which had seemed so irrelevant and so inconsequential to us who thought we had found the golden way, became suddenly the center of our greatest concern. Many of our leading citizens who had never before given a thought to government except as a minor irritant, volunteered or were forced to give up their business to devote themselves entirely to government in order to pull us out of economic havoc and later in order to win a war.

Let us not repeat the errors of our generation. Instead of "Take care of number one," I propose this phrase: "Take care of all." Take care of human brotherhood; take care of democracy; take care of self-government.

By that I suggest that our young men and young women be trained to qualify to spend a part of their life in some form of public service. I suggest that the youth of our nation be educated so that they can be qualified to set aside a number of years voluntarily for service in legislative or executive branches in our local or national government, for service in our engineering, medical, administrative, social, educational or foreign services of our government. I am proposing that out of the best and most productive years of each man's life he voluntarily carves a segment in which he puts his private career aside to serve a community and his country and thereby his fellow men and the cause of democracy and freedom. I am proposing that throughout his life each citizen dedicate himself to active political participation. Aristotle once said that the truest definition of a complete citizen that can be given is probably this: that he shares in the judicial and executive part of the government.

We face a crisis. This crisis is not one which military forces alone can conquer, that military forces alone can protect us from. Nor is our crisis of brief duration. Our crisis calls not only for steadfastness and faith but for great skill in self-government. We must summon all of our talents for citizenship, for self-government, for public service.

I am not urging that everyone pursue public service in some form as a life career. Not at all. What I do urge is citizen participation in politics. Only this way can democratic institutions continue to prosper and flourish.

I have stated above that citizenship can be a prison or a portal. Citizenship can confine a man within the narrow limits of the customs and traditions of his own community, or it can make him an active, productive and responsible part of a political entity much larger than the community with which he has physical contact.

In the Middle Ages, the obligations of citizenship controlled a man's relationship to the city in which he lived. By collaborating with a man from a neighbouring city he could be in violation of his citizenship obligations and thus be guilty of treason.

As modern society grew more complex, and as means of communication and transportation cut distances and eliminated frontiers, the concept of citizenship and responsibilities of citizenship has grown and developed. When the American colonies federated themselves and formed a United States, citizens of several states expanded their loyalties to include the new federation. A Virginian was no less a Virginian when he became an American.

Today our concept of citizenship is further expanded. It is further expanded because of our realization that democratic citizenship is a loyalty to an ideal and not just to a state. Democratic citizenship is a dedication to the democratic ideal, to the ideal of human rights, civil rights, freedom from insecurity for all people.

Out of every bitter experience of history, out of every tragedy, man learns in his sorrow. Out of the sacrifice of two world wars we again come back to the immortal idea of the oneness of man, of his essential unity. It was out of this conviction and out of the recognition of this eternal truth that man, with all of his limitations, his prejudices and his incapacities, created the United Nations. The United States of America is dedicated to the United Nations. The world is moving closer to one, becoming a true United Nations. It seems likely that within the next few weeks the Senate will give force to the Atlantic Treaty which by implication throws our lot in with the fortunes of the nations of Europe. And while discussion of the Atlantic Treaty is dominating our press and air waves there is even now a most serious and specific discussion of European federation - of the political and economic federation of Western Europe.

Overshadowing and running through the discussions of Europe federation, alliances and plans for internationalism, there is a rapidly increasing volume of discussion about something called world citizenship and world government. The idea of world citizenship is beginning to take form in the minds of men everywhere. The people of the world are coming to realize that they are one, that their interests are one, that our law must be one. The people of the world are coming to realize and must come to realize that if we want a society free of the agonies of war and preparation for war, free of devastation and the fear of tomorrow, then they must accept the principle that every American, every Russian, every Indonesian, every South African, is in a real though limited sense a citizen of the world, and hence should be subject to a world law.

Democratic citizenship means a realization that democracy is not a fixed, a static and an unchanging stereotype, but that it is a vital, dynamic and constantly growing force. Democratic citizenship must mean concern with the community and as our community has grown to encompass the world, so must the concept of democratic citizenship grow to encompass the world.

The idea of a world order and the United Nations is now new. It has its own immortality. Mankind from the very beginning has sought a society in which he can live in peace and security. The United Nations is a summarized expression of the desire of mankind to live in a world of law and order. American participation in the United Nations is proof of the fact that America is ready to accept its world obligations and that American citizens are ready to accept their new responsibilities as world citizens, because world law is the only ultimate hope for the survival of our ideal, and because Americans understand that democracy is an objective as a world of free and equal men who will, in their freedom, create and secure a just and enduring society.



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