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SHOREHAM HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D. C.  
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It was only three years ago that we came together here in Washington for the first time. Facing this magnificent convention today, it is difficult indeed to believe that any organization could have left so sure an imprint on American political history in so short a space of time.

But it's true. We have.

There were only two hundred of us at the start. Now we number our chapters in the scores, our members in the thousands, and we number our friends here and in the democratic forces abroad in the millions.

No matter what segment of American life you find yourself in these days--labor, the professions, farming, business, the arts, cooperatives, you'll find yourself in the company of some good upstanding dues-paying members of the ADA. And that includes the United States Senate and the House of Representatives.

Back in 1947, except to some of our friends in the dairy business and the dentists, the letters ADA symbolized nothing at all.

Today, to our friends and foes alike, those three letters have come to symbolize the voice and vehicle of a resurgent and powerful American liberalism.

The steady emergency of ADA as a profound influence on the American way of life has come about for many reasons. To begin with, the ADA idea attracted men and women of stature and wisdom who at the start generously put their time and talent at the disposal of the organization. To those fighting spirits who lent their great prestige and integrity to the job of reconstructing American liberalism, we will be in debt. To Reinhold Niebuhr who called us together, Wilson Wyatt who first took the helm, Leon Henderson who succeeded him and steered us through the strenuous days of the 1948 campaign.

Fortunately for all of us, Joe Rauh is still on the job--giving, as always, of his enormous energy and extraordinary talents. And that goes for Jim Loeb, too, who with Reinhold Niebuhr broke the ground and prepared the way, has stuck to the job. And we are also proud to have had with us this past year Charles M. La Follette, who as National Director has made a valuable contribution to the vitality of ADA.

I know my remarks about leadership will not be misinterpreted because from the start ADA has never confused leadership with any one leader.

ADA's present strength and stature are also in great part a tribute to the vision and courage of America's foremost leaders of labor who lent their support and backing in common alliance with us nationally and locally.

But this movement of ours has grown in stature and numbers mainly because of the vitality of the central idea that originally brought us together: The ADA idea that the best of all possible societies--the welfare state if you please--could be built only within the framework of political freedom; that the maximum individual freedom was obtainable within the framework of the welfare state; and finally that we could accept as allies in this battle only those whose devotion to political freedom was unqualified--rejecting all alliances--no matter how tempting or temporary with the foes of freedom--whether they be fascists, Communists or the followers of either camp. ADA meet with success because it met a great need of American liberalism.

We were well aware, three years ago, that this central ADA idea was sound in principle. Our inflexibility on this issue caused us to run into a good deal of opposition at the start, most of which has withered away under the relentless logic of events. But it wasn't until the time of the great civil rights platform fight at the Democratic Convention in Philadelphia in 1948, that we began to sense that this inflexibility of principle could turn out to be the most practical of politics. In Philadelphia that summer we refused to compromise on the great issue of human rights and freedom--and thus we made history.

But that convention merely set the stage for the two-front campaign we waged in the campaign of 1948 against the monopolists and reactionaries of the right and the totalitarians of the left. When the returns were in that November, ADA had sent 37 of its officers and members to the Congress of the United States. This hard core of ADA members has served as the nucleus and spark plug for every battle--win or lose and draw--that has been fought on the Hill. Some of the most important of those battles are still to come. As you well know, most of them can't be won without some reinforcements which ADA must help elect this fall. We will all get to this later.

We avoided the error of concentrating all our energies on the national political scene to the point of neglecting our own backyards. In the crucial municipal election of 1949, ADA virtually broke the 65-year grip of the corrupt publican city machine in Philadelphia to elect Dick Dilworth and Joseph Clark to municipal office; and actively supported winning liberal candidates in New York City, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Louisville and San Francisco.

We have made our share of mistakes. That's for sure. But out of each mistake, we learned a lesson or two.

I haven't been dwelling on this pleasant and familiar history just to gloat about the big moments in our young political lives, but to point the way to the finished business at hand.

We have a profound lesson to learn from the elections of 1948 and from the developments of the past two years. It is that the few, the privileged, the powerful who have held political power for so many years are still very much alive.

For many years the liberal movement has recognized the basic evil of economic monopoly. No less evil, however, is the political coalition which is attempting to thwart the will of the American people.

ADA has a mission to perform -- not only because the liberal movement has the obligation to solve basic economic and social problems, but also because ADA has the responsibility to smash the reactionary coalition which now rides high in Congress. This coalition is not only a coalition on the matter of civil rights, it is in fact a coalition that reaches into every aspect of our legislative and political program for the welfare of the American people. It is a coalition against social security legislation; a coalition against labor; a coalition against consumers. It is a coalition against the program of international cooperation for freedom, democracy and the preservation of peace in the world.

So long as there are injustice and poverty in America, there is a need for ADA. So long as there is a problem of unemployment, there is a need for ADA. So long as there is a France in the world, there is a need for ADA. So long as there is a Communist threat to free people, there is a need for ADA. So long as the free forces in Europe need help and friendship, there is a need for ADA.

For the coming year our task is primarily political. Our task is to bring reinforcements to Congress -- reinforcements for the Fair Deal Program of the Democratic Party and of our President, Harry S. Truman.

Everytime the going looks especially tough, I suggest you do what I do. Look across the aisle at what's left of the Grand Old Party.

The liberals are a majority in the Democratic Party -- even in the Senate. There and everywhere else the liberals are gaining strength at every election.

But in what's left of the Grand Old Party who has the majority? The Wherry-Byrd-Gabrielson-McCarthy wing. The Republican party is where it is today because its liberal wing is reduced in size and influence at every election. And because the Tory wing of the party has taken over ~~completely~~ -- with empty promises empty slogans and now empty coffers.

Their sole aim in the Congress for the past two terms has been to blockade the legislative program of the Fair Deal. In order to do that, they will stoop to anything and stop at nothing.

As a final desperate last stand, the Tory trust-busters are looking toward 1952, when they hope to work out a presidential ticket which will also be the "spontaneous" choice of the Dixiecrats.

In order for this to all work out spontaneously in time for 1952, the Tories and the Dixiecrats have to exchange a lot of political signals.

And there's one interesting theory in town to explain those flying discs seen so regularly lately. Especially in the South.

Guy Gabrielson is signalling with flying saucers and Jimmy Byrnes is answering him with trial balloons.

I hope things work out and this deal comes off. I hope they can make it a legal union. They belong together. Why spoil two political parties?

In days of chronic crises, men of integrity in both parties find themselves in fundamental agreement on most important questions. In an organization like ADA, you can find Democrats, Republicans, liberals, and socialists agreeing on a basic program.

In the important area of foreign policy, we can agree on fundamentals with the many liberal Republicans we all know about. Men of integrity and principle in both parties understand that the fundamental struggle of our time is being waged between those who believe in political freedom and those who do not, and the particular economic system favored by our allies is of secondary importance, many variants of which are compatible with a system of political freedom.

But with the Dixiecrats, and the Wherry-Gabrielson-McCarthy wing of the GOP, we find we have nothing in common. We do not even speak the same political language.

Last year the Republican know-nothings tried out a Dixiecrat slogan in the by-election in New York--the welfare state. Our good friend Senator Lehman finished that one off in short order.

This year Mr. Gabrielson turned up with a new one. -- LIBERTY OR SOCIALISM. Honest Republicans were naturally as baffled by this one as we were. They know, as well as any politically literate voter knows, that this slogan is an insult to the American voter and a gratuitous slap at some of our most stalwart allies--who have proved over the years in a democratic fashion that completely disarms Mr. Gabrielson that it is entirely possible to have both.

Mr. Gabrielson dwelt on this point further in a political science lecture last week out in Nebraska in which he explained that "Socialism is just the first step to Communism." He attacked me and the ADA for supporting the British Labor Government and defined THE THIRD FORCE as "The Socialist and Neo-Communist part of the European continent."

Thus Mr. Gabrielson, the high priest of Republican Reaction, was adding insult to our foremost allies to the injury to our foreign policy.



Our most reliable friends abroad, the staunchest foes of Stalinist totalitarianism--British Labor, the Scandinavian Socialist governments, the Christian Socialist parties of Western Europe, even Socialist Nehru of India--Mr. Gabrielson consigns them all to the enemy camp.

Even this is not enough for Mr. Gabrielson and his cohorts.

Not content to undermine confidence in the firmness and resolution of our foreign policy, they have a slanderous and sustained campaign against one of its main architects--Dean Acheson. In the phrase of Henry L. Stimson, Senator McCarthy Senator Bridges--and we are promised new attractions daily--are seeking to gain political advantage from damage to this country and its foreign policy.

Secretary Acheson is one of the ablest Secretaries of State in our history --the living embodiment of America's unpartisan foreign policy. It is the duty of every honest American--in both parties--to rise to his defense and take offensive against the pygmies who have started this vicious anti-State Department crusade. If we do anything less, the victors will be the Soviet Union and its Communist satellites throughout the world.

When we first came together, three years ago, the need for a resurgent American liberalism seemed almost overwhelming.

Our accomplishments in that time are monumental. But all the while, our problems, our total challenge has multiplied.

While Senator McCarthy and his playmates harass the State Department, harassing our foreign policy, and undermining our defenses, we teeter dangerously on the edge of losing the cold war.

While Mr. Gabrielson raises the completely false alternative of liberty vs. socialism, the real dangers to our liberty multiply, and go almost unchallenged.

FEPC is blockaded, unemployment mounts, discrimination thrives, the housing shortage plagues our middle income families.

The Tories stage a grand-stand fight against the Communists, at the same time blocking the positive job of social and economic reconstruction here and abroad which would cut away the ground in which communism thrives.

Our work for the next year is cut out for us.

Let's get on with the job.

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