

Herbert H. Lehman

A second riband of mourning now hangs on the American flag. For the death of Herbert H. Lehman closes the active career of an indomitable national and international servant. As Governor of New York, United States Senator and Director General of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, his life and activities soared in example and significance far beyond the borders of this, his native city.

He lived a private and public life that moved in a straight and true line. In the richest sense of the words, he was a liberal and humanitarian. Against the enemies of the Republic, he saw service in the United States Army in the First World War and resigned from the Governorship in the Second World War to direct foreign relief operations for the State Department. Wherever human distress existed, all over the globe, there could be found Herbert Lehman, saving lives as a representative of the best instincts of the United States and the United Nations.

Reform, sound administration and courage marked his political career. He entered politics at the side of Alfred E. Smith and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, serving one as campaign chairman and the other as Lieutenant Governor. As Governor for ten years from 1932 until America's entry into the war, he brought the state distinction and honor during difficult years for the people and nation. All this time he was a stalwart New Deal Democrat, closely affiliated with the programs of President Roosevelt.

The refinements of the Fair Deal nationally saw him in the service of New York as United States Senator, often as a quiet but not small voice speaking for legislation favoring all Americans. In Washington, he became the conscience of the Senate. When others quavered before the onslaught of McCarthyism, it was Herbert Lehman who offered the resolution for the removal of the Wisconsin demagogue from his committee chairmanships. On matters close to his heart—immigration to continue the American dream and civil rights to uphold the American Constitution—he battled relentlessly against the troops of evil.

Together with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Herbert Lehman continued to stand for the reform movement in state and national Democratic politics. After he had passed his 80th birthday, he could be found in rain and cold carrying on his crusade for political decency in every section of the city. At the end of his life he was still standing in the forefront of many charitable, welfare and humanitarian causes. This great man of private heart and public courage was not just a symbol, but an activist of noble aims and accomplishments to his last moments. These live on.