

RADIO SPEECH OF  
HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, JR.

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RADIO STATION WLOL  
Saturday, May 1, 1943  
6:00 P.M.

Possibly the most significant development of World War II is the importance of industrial production. Men and machines on the home front are but part of the army of men and machines on the battle front. Every man, woman, and child becomes an integral part of the nation mobilized for war. This is what we mean by "total war"; an entire economy, a whole nation, 130 million people dedicated to the business of victory. Everyone is important. There is no priority placed upon people. Unity and ingenuity are absolutely necessary.

The American worker, during the past generation and particularly during the recent decade, has organized himself into a gigantic labor movement. Much too often we think of American labor only in terms of membership, unions, dues, contracts, and the other symbols that identify a union movement. However, when a nation's life is at stake and, in particular, the survival of free labor, it is time to make an analysis of the responsibilities and duties that become the charge of such a powerful group. If this war is to be won it will be primarily because of the ingenuity and energy and capacity of American labor and business to out-produce and out-think the regimented minds and bodies of our Fascist opponents. There can be no doubt in the mind of any working man that democracy is the "last best hope" and that the future of the common man lies in a victory of the United Nations.

The American labor movement has made great strides in the last ten years but with this increase in economic and political power it has become evident that not only the leadership but the rank and file membership must discipline itself to the requirements of a democratic movement. A basic knowledge of economic and political issues affecting the cause of labor and the whole American community is a primary responsibility of every union leader and of every trade union member. Democracy depends upon an intelligent and enlightened citizen body. With a large proportion of the American electorate organized into powerful unions there is no denying the duty of an intelligent understanding of community problems.

The era in which we live is possibly the most dynamic period in human civilization. The rapidity of change, both in technology and the organization of society, demands close study and observation of the factors involved. It is no longer sufficient to be able to read and write. Free people must remember that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. The answer lies in "knowing the reason why" and in analyzing the causes and results of economic and political policies. With this in mind, political alertness in war time is more vital and more necessary than in any other period. The impact of war could easily bring the eclipse of progressive thinking. The danger to democracy is not only from without but also from within. We may weaken our own ranks by political apathy during the war years which will put democratic progress years behind the problems to be solved.

Laboring people know full well the dearness of freedom. It is to the eternal glory of organized labor that wherever the dictator came to power, the first group to be smashed was that of labor. Union leaders were the first victims of the firing squad or the concentration camp. The right to organize, the right to strike, the right to have independent unions -- all of these were quickly taken away from the laboring people. No other group has felt the viciousness of the dictator quite so much as the trade union movement. The dictator knew where the wells of democracy existed and he was quick in his denudation of these believers in free thought. Let those in America who cry out against unions remember that trade unionism is as much a part of the American way of life as public education, freedom of religion, and private enterprise. If in the process of waging war for the rights of the common man, we here in America unwittingly crucify the associations and organizations of the American laboring man, then for what has the battle been fought?

But, let me say to those who are devoted to the principles of organized labor that you must get your story of accomplishment, your program, before the

American people. Americans are reasonable men and women; they want to do the right thing and they have an uncanny ability to be able to make proper judgment when the facts are presented to them. The day of knock-down and drag-out fighting in labor organizations is over. The future of the labor movement depends upon public acceptance. This public acceptance can be gained not by becoming defensive in your approach but by explaining to the American public what organized labor means to the individual workers and to the community as a whole.

This war has taught us that America is not several communities but that we are one nation, a union of free people. ~~American labor must broaden its horizon.~~  
*American business must think in terms of human welfare.*

*Business + Labor*

It must think in terms of not only ~~its~~ own membership but of 130 million people equally convinced of the virtues of democracy. American labor must assume that other members of the society are as eager for a decent standard of living, for security, and for peace as is the union member. *American business must recognize its obligation to human welfare.* Finally, unless business and labor can forget their feuds and get down to the business of cooperating, our economy will be seriously jeopardized and our political system may be drastically weakened. We have not only a war to win, we have a peace to win. The victory of the peace will require even more cooperation between labor and management than the military victory. The production struggle of tanks, airplanes, and guns during wartime must be converted into a production schedule of hoses, automobiles, of refrigerators, and other goods in peacetime. Full employment must be available to the American people or an economic crash and political upheaval is inevitable. There will be neither free labor nor private enterprise if the disaster of inflation and unemployment fall upon us in a postwar world. Never before have American business and American labor had so much in common. The day is fast approaching when American labor and American industry must unite in a program of postwar reconstruction. Your government needs you and your people expect you to lead the way, not follow. Let us make this symbol of wartime unity a peacetime reality. The idea of civilian defense which has found American labor an effective partner

and has brought employer and laborer together on a basis of mutual responsibility and understanding must become the program for the new democracy. Total war means Total Democracy! No more patriotic slogans can satisfy the demands which the term Total Democracy makes upon every American. Minneapolis laboring men and women must meet this challenge! They must meet it not only by continuing to turn out the vital materials of war, but by actively participating in the American democratic political process. This means, concretely, that they must get out and vote. There has been a lot of loose talk making the rounds to the effect that the people of Minneapolis are going to take this election lightly - that their minds are too pre-occupied with more important matters during a war year. Let me say to Minneapolis labor that an effective aid in winning the war is participation in the democratic process of election. High on the list of rights for which our boys are fighting all over the world is that right of the people to choose its representatives in government. We dare not be indifferent to this election in view of democracy's peril and the sacrifices our boys are making to preserve our right to the ballot!

In this connection I am confident that on May 10th Minneapolis Labor will give a demonstration of what Total Democracy means by going to the polls. I am confident that this will be the case since the record of labor in defense of democracy the world over is an enviable one. In China, Poland, Norway - and wherever Fascist tyranny has invaded, the working people have fought to be free. American working people know of this record and are proud of it. They intend to take advantage of every opportunity to add their force to the fight against Fascism.

The record of Minneapolis labor in the war effort has been one of which any organization could well be proud. To date, organized labor has contributed thousands of dollars in war bonds and is continuing to press its membership for additional purchases on a systematic basis. Minneapolis officials entrusted with the task of civilian defense organization have repeatedly voiced their gratitude and praise of organized labor's contribution to civilian defense activities. The highly

successful scrap metal drive was in a great degree the result of planning and organization by local unions of the AFL and CIO in cooperation with the Civilian Defense organization. Such accomplishments could hardly have been realized without the discipline and direction of an organized group of workers responsive to the call of their elected officials. The recent drive for Red Cross funds again has revealed the vitality and organizational ability of labor forces in our community. Unions have intensively recruited for blood donors among their membership and have demonstrated to all groups in the community that labor has its full weight behind the war effort. All of these war activities indicate that Minneapolis labor actively is behind the war effort. And I am certain that despite the great inconveniences due to working round the clock in turning out war munitions Minneapolis labor will on May 10th continue to demonstrate its faith in democratic institutions by using the ballot.

Honorable Henry Wallace, Vice-President of the United States, has called this war the "people's war." He believes this century to be the century of the common man. There can be no doubt that the hope and life of free people is at stake in the struggle in which we are now engaged. But, that this century will be the "century of the common man" and for the common man is not a foregone conclusion. It can be - if the common man, the average man, is mentally prepared to cope with the numerous problems confronting him. Yes, this century will be the century of freedom, the century of opportunity for the common people, if the leaders and the people themselves are thinking, planning, and educating for the new day.

It would be well for us to remember that workers in Europe are fighting for the right to organize and to associate together for their collective well being. If we here in America lead them to believe by our criticism and reaction against unions that we no longer believe in free labor, we will have lost a moral weapon that no amount of production can overcome. The resistance to the Nazi terror in Norway has come mainly from two sources - the Christian church and the trade union. I for one believe that American labor is as democratic as Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, British, or any other labor of a foreign land. The record of resistance to Fascism is a continuous story of trade union activity in the form of guerrilla

[May 1, 1943]

WORKERS EDUCATION IN WAR TIME

by

Hubert H. Humphrey, Jr.

✱ Possibly the most significant development of World War II is the importance of industrial production. Men and machines on the home front are but part of the army of men and machines on the battle front. Every man, woman, and child becomes an integral part of the nation mobilized for war. This is what we mean by "total war"; an entire economy, a whole nation, 130 million people dedicated to the business of victory. Everyone is important. There is no priority placed upon people. Unity and ingenuity are absolutely necessary. ~~It is with these things in mind that we must judge the place of workers' education in war time.~~

The American worker, during the past generation and particularly during the recent decade, has organized himself into a gigantic labor movement. Much too often we think of American labor only in terms of membership, unions, dues, contracts, and the other symbols that identify a union movement. However, when a nation's life is at stake and, in particular, the survival of free labor, it is time to make an analysis of the responsibilities and duties that become the charge of such a powerful group. If this war is to be won it will be primarily because of the ingenuity and energy and capacity of American labor, <sup>and business</sup> to out-produce and out-think the regimented minds and bodies of our Fascist opponents. ~~This is labor's war. Wherever the enemy has gained the upper hand, the~~

There can be no doubt in the mind of any working man that democracy is the "last best hope" and that the future of the common man lies in a victory of the United Nations.

The American labor movement has made great strides in the last ten years but with this increase in economic and political power it has become evident that not only the leadership but the rank and file membership must discipline itself to the ~~education~~ requirements of a democratic movement. A basic knowledge of economic and political issues affecting the cause of labor and the whole American community is a primary responsibility of every union leader and of every trade union member. Democracy depends upon an intelligent and enlightened citizen body. With a large proportion of the American electorate organized into powerful unions there is no denying the duty of an intelligent understanding of community problems.

The era in which we live is possibly the most dynamic period in human civilization. The rapidity of change, both in technology and the organization of society, demands close study and observation of the factors involved. It is ~~not~~ <sup>no longer sufficient</sup> enough to be able to read and write.

~~Free people must remember that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. It is not sufficient to merely vote. It is not good trade union practice to only attend meetings.~~ <sup>Free people must remember that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty - ~~political vigilance~~ practice to only attend meetings.</sup> The answer lies in "knowing the

reason why" and in analyzing the causes and results of economic and political policies. With this in mind, ~~workers' education~~ <sup>Political alertness</sup> in war time is more vital and more necessary than in any other period. The impact

of war could <sup>easily</sup> bring the eclipse of progressive thinking. The danger to ~~the trade union~~ <sup>democracy</sup> is not ~~so much~~ <sup>only</sup> from without ~~as~~ <sup>but also</sup> from within. ~~We may~~ <sup>labor</sup> weaken ~~our~~ <sup>to our</sup> own ranks by ~~an~~ <sup>political apathy</sup> "intellectual blind spot" during the war years which will put ~~trade union policies~~ <sup>democratic</sup> programs years behind

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This can be averted only if

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*Not this*  
~~In conclusion, once again let me state that Total War means Total Democracy! Specifically for Minneapolis Labor Total Democracy means: Working harder to get our the sinews of war; Buying all the war bonds possible and then buying more; and it means going to the polls on May 10th ~~and~~ and fighting Fascism with ballots as well as bullets!~~

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