

Keynote Address

By

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Minnesota State Democratic Convention,
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Ladies and gentlemen, delegates to the Minnesota State Democratic convention:

I am, of course, profoundly grateful for the honor and privilege of being named temporary chairman of this convention, and it is a great personal gratification to be introduced by the man who has been of such value and service to the Democratic Party of Minnesota, your state chairman, Elmer F. Kelm.

In his opening remarks your state chairman has made it clear that we are assembled here in circumstances so uncommon, in the midst of world disorder so unprecedented, and surrounded by domestic obligations so compulsive as to charge us with the gravest responsibilities we have ever faced.

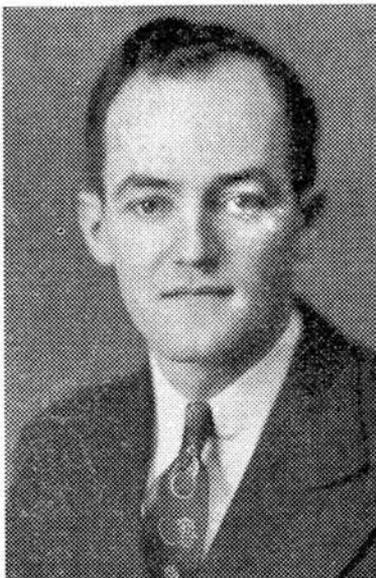
We do not come together in a spirit prompted by mere desire for partisan or personal victory, but with a concept of duty toward the future which we must face openly and with utmost confidence.

This afternoon, therefore, I wish to present to you as simply and forthrightly as I am able, our concept of duty for the future.

We must be steadfast in the program that we support, so that the people of this state and of the nation will know what we think and what we propose to do.

Let it be remembered that the history of the Democratic Party is the history of a free America. It is the history of an America that has given refuge to the oppressed, an opportunity to the common man, and a chance for plain people to become great people.

The Democratic Party is the party of Jefferson, the party of



HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Jackson, the party of Bryan—of Wilson, and of our great Commander-in-Chief, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

It was the Democrat Jefferson who proclaimed the doctrine of human equality. It was Jefferson the Democrat who reminded us of the essential dignity of man.

It was Jefferson who enunciated the great principle of democratic government—that governments are instituted among men to secure the blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We, the members of the Democratic Party, are proud of Jefferson—not only the Jefferson of the

past, but the Jefferson who is the living symbol of the future.

We can face the future with pride in the principles upon which our party was founded.

When Thomas Jefferson founded the Democratic Party, he found the nation moving rapidly away from his own concept of democracy and toward the consolidation of an aristocratic or oligarchic republic, which he abhorred.

He formed his party, then, not only to protect republican institutions, but to make the republic democratic—an instrumentality for the service of all the people.

The reason for the formation of the Democratic Party can best be given by the citation of the fundamental principles of his faith.

He stood for the legitimate rights of the states. He stood primarily for "equal rights to all and special privileges to none"—for the "encouragement of agriculture and of commerce as its handmaiden"—and for the freedom of speech and of press.

He believed that governments are not the masters, but the servants of the people; that government must be responsive to the necessities of the people; that governments which sacrifice the interests of the majority to the greed of a minority are but usurpations by the few.

He believed that society requires the protection of property in all its legitimate rights, but that in any conflict between property and men, the rights of men come first.

He believed that the Constitution must be respected, but that when time and circumstance demand amendments to make government responsive to the will of the people, who are the masters, they must be adopted to preserve popular respect for constitutional government.

This is the philosophy which caused Wilson to say that "the principles of Jefferson are the definitions and the axioms of a free society."

History tells us that Jefferson had an able lieutenant, a man destined to a place of greatness in American history—yes, another Democrat, the father of our Constitution—James Madison.

It was Madison who presented the basic plan for the federal union. It was Madison, along with Washington, who kept the Constitutional Convention in session when men of lesser faith felt that union was impossible. It was Madison who fought for the Bill of Rights. We, as Democrats, are proud of James Madison.

We offer with pride the name of Andrew Jackson. He, in truth, was a man of the people. He symbolized the strength of free men. Where Jefferson had been the philosopher of the party, Jackson became its sword. It was Jackson in his day who smashed the power of the financial aristocracy. It was Andrew Jackson who proclaimed the right of the average man to the protection and benefits of his government.

It was Jackson who stood as the representative of the farmer, the tradesman, the laborer, and who successfully crushed the forces of special privilege seeking the domination of government.

Then, as today, Jackson was constantly denounced by the press as dangerous, radical, and destructive of American institutions—but the mass of the people responded to Jackson's fight in their behalf as they had responded to Jefferson's. The victory for democracy was won, and the economic tories were scattered.

Yes, the history of our party includes the names of James Polk, Stephen A. Douglas, Grover Cleveland, and many others. Our record is not merely one of victory at the polls. Whether we have won or lost, the Democratic Party has been custodian of human rights against all odds.

Consider the record of that great American, William Jennings Bryan, who three times was honored with the Democratic presidential nomination. To him, more than any other Democrat, must be ascribed the awakening of the average man to his stake in his government and the revival in dynamic form of the principles of Jefferson and Jackson.

He appeared on the scene of American political life when the

common man was lost in a sea of indifference and hopeless cynicism.

William Jennings Bryan, the orator and crusader, revitalized the average American, and for the first time in generations made the common man a political force to be reckoned with.

Bryan transferred politics from the smoke-filled room to the platform and from the professional politician to the people. It was his crusading that made possible the reform of Theodore Roosevelt and the restoration of democracy to power.

History records that Bryan revived Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democracy and mobilized the masses against privilege.

We, the Democrats of today, are proud of William Jennings Bryan. The seeds of progressivism planted by the fearless Bryan blossomed in the idealism of Woodrow Wilson.

With the genius of constructive statesmanship, Wilson set out to curb at once the power of privilege and to direct the forces of government toward the service of the people.

Never in the annals of the nation had so much been accomplished in so short a time as during the administration of Woodrow Wilson.

There came the income tax, the popular election of senators, the extension of the vote to American women, the reduction of tariffs, the creation of Farm Loan banks.

Through the Clayton Act, labor was lifted from the indignity of a commodity.

For the protection of honest business, the Federal Trade Commission was created, an to ensure a sound financial basis for business, the Federal Reserve System was established.

Like all of his great predecessors, Woodrow Wilson was attacked for "undermining the foundations of Americanism." In the midst of his great reform administration, the tragedy of World War I came upon us—but again this great American and Democrat rose to the summit of his statesmanship.

Wilson was the greatest of Amer-

ican war presidents up to his time. Miracles of mobilization were performed before which the world stood at salute.

It was Woodrow Wilson, the proclaimer of the "new freedom," who sponsored the League of Nations.

It was Woodrow Wilson in his idealism that lifted America to the epitome of humanitarianism and morality that symbolizes the true meaning of the term nobility.

From the peak of this idealism, with the defeat of Woodrow Wilson, the country sank at once to the lowest depths of sordid materialism it had known since the Period of Reconstruction.

The twelve long years that followed are among the blackest in the triumph of selfish special interests. The voice of the people seemed lost in the battle cry of the victors—"Back to normalcy!" "Hands off Big Business! It knows best!"

Even in defeat, the Democratic Party fought against this defiant corruption—under the leadership of that great Democrat, Senator Thomas J. Walsh of Montana.

In the end, came the inevitable crash which threatened the foundations of American institutions.

Thus, in the darkest days of the nation's history—with ruin everywhere—with panic in the hearts of everyone from the wizards of Wall Street to the toilers walking the roads in search of work—with faith in democracy and American institutions shaken to the very core—the Democratic Party gave to the American people Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Yes, the Democratic Party has faced one crisis after another during this long and glorious history. It has been tested in the refinery of faith and achievement. It has never faltered in its devotion to the higher interests of the American people, and it will not falter now. We do not come together in any vain spirit prompted by the mere desire for partisan or personal victory.

Unless, by our record in the past and our concept of duty in the future we are prepared for the tasks of statesmanship, unless we remain

the progressive party, the spokesman of the common man, we have no right to expect the support of the electorate.

We lay no claim to perfection. There is no pretense that our record is without error. Nevertheless, we point with pride to the task we have undertaken and accomplished in behalf of democracy in America.

The opposition party had its "twelve long years" to prove its capacity for government and administration. Their record is one of broken promises, broken hearts and a despairing and disillusioned America.

In their appeal to the American citizen, they cite the name of the Great Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln. However, they fail to tell us that it was this same political machine that destroyed the reconstruction program of Lincoln, undermined the administration of Andrew Johnson, and gave to America eight years of the most corrupt government that our history records. It is this same party that speaks of its Theodore Roosevelt, but we as Democrats know that Theodore Roosevelt had to leave his party because of its basic reaction and affiliation with special privilege. I ask you to look at the record of those who today ask for public acceptance.

Their only two leaders suffered defeat and humiliation at the hands of their machine. The shameful period of the 1920's will go down in American history as the era of glorious nonsense.

With responsibilities for the attainment of a secure economy and world peace, they gave America over to the exploiters and the world to the dictators.

It was a Republican administration which through its greedy tariff policies destroyed American foreign trade. It was a Republican administration that repudiated American promise of entrance into a League of Nations, to ensure permanent peace. It was a Republican administration that scrapped our Navy—that denied our Army the appropriations necessary for adequate national defense. It was a Repub-

lican administration that closed its eyes to the economic realities of the inevitable catastrophe of stock-market manipulation. It was a Republican administration that broke the back of the American farm economy. It was a Republican administration that harassed the efforts of working men and women to organize into a free labor movement.

It was a Republican administration which, when faced with the glaring facts of poverty of our citizens, collapse of our financial institutions, and curtailment of our industrial production, had only a slogan to offer: "Prosperity is just around the corner."

That, I say to you, is their record of their action in the twentieth century. It will do them no good to say they have changed, that they regret the error of their ways—that they have a new vision. You know and I know, and America in control. May I say in passing—even Mr. Willkie knows!

Our political opposition has forgotten nothing and has learned nothing by the tragedy of their failure. Even today they speak of returning to normalcy—a normalcy which included as its cardinal points protection for the greedy, depression for the needy, chaos for a world, and despair for our youth.

At a time when America needs a clean-cut statement of principles and a courageous facing of issues, the Republican leadership offers glamour and the stillness of the night. Is it any wonder that today, as during the past 11 years, we, the Democrats, are ever more proud of our great leader and our great President, Franklin Roosevelt!

The Republican leadership is so addicted to a love for the past that even today they are parading on the national political scene the reincarnation of their leaders of the 20's. Again, from Ohio, comes the Harding of 1944—and from New York comes the silent Calvin Coolidge of our day.

Do they think that the American people forget so easily and remember so little? Do they not know that we are living in a dynamic world—a world that requires Amer-

ican leadership which is bold and progressive? What sort of normalcy are they now planning that we should return to?

Americans everywhere are not seeking to return to the past. The sacrifices of today are being made to ensure the fulfillment of a stronger America and a better world.

Again I say that the Democratic Party offers that hope of leadership.

Our President is not shackled down with an imaginary dream world of the past. He is intelligently and courageously meeting the tasks of today and planning the achievements of democracy for tomorrow.

It was Franklin Roosevelt who on March 4, 1933 aroused America to a new faith for living. He banished the paralyzing fear that had beset our economy by reminding us that knows, that the same old gang is that which we had to fear most was fear itself. The words were like magic.

A vigorous leader restored vitality to a resourceful America, and we began our forward march. The parade of Achievement of the Roosevelt Administration is unparalleled in American history. In the words of the poet: "Lest we forget!"

American business enterprise was salvaged from the ruin of Republican maladministration by a succession of legislative and administrative actions which created the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, to guarantee bank deposits, the reorganization of our entire banking structure, the establishment of the Securities and Exchange Commission, which prevented fraudulent practices on the stock market, and extensive government loans from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

The Roosevelt Administration and the Democratic Party have made free enterprise more than a mere slogan. Our private economy is a thriving, a growing reality. Those who today claim to be the friends of business were but yesterday the destroyers of business. They cannot deny the record of 1929 to 1933.

This administration and the Democratic Party did not offer pious platitudes to the American farmer. Instead, the Democrat's administration conceived and set up a farm program which lifted American agriculture from bankruptcy to the high plains of solvency and prosperity. With unprecedented speed and decision, a series of policies and programs were instituted. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration; the Soil Conservation Act; Crop Insurance and the Ever-Normal Granary plan; the Farm Credit Administration, and the Rural Electrification program. All of these sound and progressive programs were established to rehabilitate and revitalize our agricultural economy. These were not dreams; these were not cheap promises; these are real accomplishments. They are today a part of the American way of life!

American labor will never forget its great friend in the White House. The millions of organized workers in America who today are turning out the miracles of production know all too well that their great achievements in organization are the result of such enactments as the National Labor Relations Act and the Wage and Hour Law. American labor will not repudiate this administration. American labor remembers its friends and justly punishes its enemies. Franklin Roosevelt, more than any one man in American history, has been and is the friend of labor.

We know that it is the Democratic Administration which has given aid and comfort to the needy, the aged and the infirm. The social security legislation proposed and enacted by this administration is the greatest social advance in American democracy since the Emancipation Proclamation. The Democratic Party does not intend to rest on its laurels in this field of social service. The social security program is but a beginning. Our party and our President intend to see it extended and enlarged.

The Democratic Administration did not forget the youth of our nation. Roosevelt, like Wilson, knew

that the strength and richness of America rested in its young people. One of the greatest tragedies of the depression was the despair and cynicism of our young men and women. It was a Democratic President and a Democratic Congress that offered the American youth the assistance of the National Youth Administration. It was our President who conceived the idea of a Civilian Conservation Corps. The young people of America will remember the opportunity that has been extended to them. The young people of America are friends and supporters of the President and his party.

The amazing record of achievement is far too long for a point-by-point analysis. History will record that it was the vision and leadership of Franklin Roosevelt, along with the steadfast support of the Democratic Party, that healed the wounds of a suffering America. It was a Democratic Administration that added untold wealth to our economy through its great programs of public works, social rehabilitation, and conservation.

We today know that the peacetime program of the New Deal provided the vitality and the strength for the wartime mobilization of the Arsenal of Democracy. The highways, the bridges, the airports, the hospitals, the schools, which we constructed in spite of the "sniping criticism of the false prophets," gave America that extra reserve of power which is now so vital in total war. The victims of the depression who were saved by work relief programs, social security, and credit assistance, are today the stalwart soldiers of the home front and the heroes on the battlefield.

The financial system which was reorganized is today capable of financing the terrific cost of our war effort. "The unbalanced budgets of the thirties will provide the upsetting of the Axis in the forties." America, today, is immeasurably better off because of the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt. We have the will to fight and the means with which to carry on the battle.

The reform and reconstruction administration of Roosevelt, like

that of his great predecessor, Woodrow Wilson, has been interrupted by the spectre of another World war.

Our great President warned us of the gathering storm of aggression. He extended the helping hand of America to those who resisted the march of Fascism. It was a Democratic Administration that rebuilt our Navy in the 1930's, a Navy which the Republican leadership had permitted to become obsolete and weak. It was the Roosevelt Administration which secured appropriations for our Army in order that America might make preparations for the inevitable onrush of war. At the same time, the President and his able Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, made every effort to keep war away from our shores without sacrificing our heritage of freedom. The opposition party had nothing to offer except to say that the "President was a warmonger." The American people will remember in this election year of 1944 the defense plans and activities of 1939 and 1940. The fathers and mothers of our young men and women in the armed forces will remember the courage and vision of our President and the leaders of the Democratic Party in those fateful months of 1940 and 1941.

They will remember that it was the President who refused to admit the defeat of the Democratic cause in those desperate moments after Dunkirk. The people know that it was Franklin Roosevelt who refused to make peace with the Nazi World Order, and who retained his faith in ultimate Democratic triumph. The American people remember and will remember in the election of 1944 that it was President Roosevelt and the leaders of our party who led a stunned nation to unprecedented peaks of production and military achievement.

We, the people, are justly proud of our Commander-in-Chief. We, the people, know that this is our best-managed war. The American electorate will not be confused by the bitter attacks and the false words of those who but yesterday

were shouting "There will be no war!" and "Roosevelt is a warmonger!"

The Republican Party and its leadership cannot deny that it was the Commander-in-Chief who conceived the great plans of total mobilization of our human and material resources. The Republican leadership cannot deny that the armed forces of America are the best equipped in the world.

The opposition critics cannot honestly dispute the record of achievement and accomplishment in those days since that infamous attack upon Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Our Armies and Navies are sweeping on to new victories. The men and women who are on the battlefield believe in America and believe in President Roosevelt. It was with this in mind that the opposition to this Administration denied an effective means of voting for our armed services. The youth of America has faith in the leadership and statesmanship of our great war president.

I say to you that the opposition party dares not condemn the amazing spectacle of our military mobilization and achievement. But, they "point with alarm" to the problems on the home front. What is the record here?

The Administration program of economic stabilization, in spite of the determined resistance of those who would make this war an easy one, has held down the cost of living, has stabilized wages, has prevented inflation, and has maintained a sound economic basis for our economy.

We challenge the Republican Party to show a record in American history that anywhere equals production in this most gigantic of all wars. The program of production is the miracle of the 20th century accomplishment of this Administration.

Let it not be forgotten that it was this Administration that conceived the plans and placed them in operation. It was Franklin Roosevelt and the majority Democratic Congress that established the War Production Board. It was

Franklin Roosevelt and the Democratic leaders who selected the men responsible for our industrial mobilization. It is this Administration that so ordered our economy that today the production of war equipment flows off our assembly lines in an ever-increasing quantity.

We, the members of the Democratic Party, and we, the people of America, point with pride to the fulfillment of our pledge to our Allies that we are the Arsenal of Democracy.

It is this Administration that established Lend-Lease. It was President Roosevelt, in cooperation with the Prime Minister of Great Britain, who pronounced the declaration of the United Nations.

It was our Commander-in-Chief who gave to the world the Atlantic Charter and the goals of the Four Freedoms.

The opposition has only to say that these are "impractical dreams of a visionary man," but the people of the United States know that these dreams and aspirations are the only hope for a better world and an enduring peace. What do these critics have to offer in the name of a constructive program? They present criticism, confusion, reaction, defeatism. They shy away from a positive statement of our responsibilities as a great nation. They play upon the inevitable restrictions and sacrifices that each and every one of us must bear in order to win this war. They shout "Bureaucracy!" without ever defining the meaning of the term.

They dare not criticize those great men and women of American industry and labor who have been mustered into the service of our government and who are today working with tireless effort for total victory.

Yes, the record of the Republican opposition while they were in office is one of betrayal of the great heritage of America.

Their record today and in the past ten years has been one of "viewing with alarm" and crying out that the foundations of our republic are being destroyed, but the great mass of American people know better. They have enduring

faith in the strength of our nation, and complete confidence in the leadership of our President. They stand in admiration of our Commander-in-Chief, who at great personal risk has traveled to Casablanca, to Cairo, and to Teheran in order to more closely coordinate the activities of the United Nations.

The people of Occupied Europe, of Britain, of China, and of Russia, look to Franklin Roosevelt as the champion of democratic forces. He symbolizes to them the struggle of democracy against Fascist aggression, unemployment and economic insecurity. He is a citizen of the world. He is a leader of the people. And, the Democratic Party is proud to claim him as their own.

We here in Minnesota, assembled in this convention, are an important part of this great political force of progressive democracy. Minnesota three times has cast its vote for Franklin Roosevelt. Minnesota hopes to, and plans to cast its vote the fourth time for Franklin Roosevelt.

We do not underestimate the forces of reaction which are at work in our state and our nation. We know this election of 1944 to be the most important political event of the twentieth century. We have been besieged by those who would destroy the confidence of the people in this Administration. We have been under the influence of a barrage of oratory and propaganda on the part of the opposition that would weaken those of lesser faith. We know now that the Democratic and Farmer-Labor Parties, along with liberals and progressives of all groups, must unite into one party under one banner. The platform of this party must be sound and progressive. It must stand boldly and clearly for effective international cooperation; it must include every necessary measure to combat the threat of inflation; it must champion the principle of racial and religious toleration; it must crusade

against the Fascist ideas of hate and intolerance wherever they be found. The united progressive forces of Minnesota must be relentless in their exposure of the evils of monopoly and economic exploitation. We must demand post-war planning by our government in cooperation with industry and labor. We must not retreat one step in the accomplishments of the New Deal. Our obligation is to extend and expand the program of social security; to see to it that the members of our armed forces are guaranteed a respectable job at decent wages, along with every opportunity for education and normal community life.

My fellow Americans, the hope of democratic government lies in the wisdom and virtue of the people. Surely if this century is to be the century of the common man, then the plain people, the little people, must be intellectually and morally equipped to make the right decisions. It America is to assume her proper place in a world needing rebuilding and redirection, this America must have the impelling force of public will to carry through.

There can be no return to normalcy, no renunciation of our responsibility. We cannot repudiate a suffering humanity twice in one generation and still profess to be a democratic and decent people. Either we recognize and practice the basic principles of our moral and political faith—the dignity of the individual, freedom of conscience, and the brotherhood of mankind,—or we forfeit the privilege of freedom and the claim to decency. Our task is almost overpowering. The world expects so much. The Democratic Party must and will be ready to fulfill its destiny.

The Democratic Party and its great leader, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, will never allow it to be written that we gave too little too late!



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