

ADDRESS BY MAYOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
January 10, 1948 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Wisconsin Democratic State Convention

In the year 1948 history challenges the Democratic Party to become the militant and true party of progressivism. It is now clearer than ever before that our Party, the Democratic Party, charts the course of progressive government in America. It is our Party and the program of our President which gives hope and strength to the democratic forces of Europe and Asia.

The President's message on the state of the Union gave us the platform for American democracy in the election of 1948. The issues are now clear. The President has spoken plainly on domestic and international affairs and has called upon the representatives of the people in the Congress to stand up and be counted. President Truman's state of the union message leaves no doubt that if we present him with a liberal and progressive Congress -- a Democratic Congress -- in 1948 he will lead the fight for a new deal for a new day in a changing world.

The cool reception of Congress to the President's message was a high tribute to the liberal and progressive qualities of his national program. Had it been warmly received, the critics and the skeptics could have well said, "He didn't mean it," or it was but "pious platitudes." A warm reception by the reactionary leadership of the Tafts, the Wherrys, the McCarthys, the Joe Balls, and the old guard of the Republican party would have been the "kiss of death." The President's progressive program will not be enacted by this Congress. The leadership of this Congress will ignore his message. The leadership of Congress has ignored his call for action to stop inflation. The leadership of Congress has ignored his veto of the Taft-Hartley Bill. The leadership of this Congress has pledged itself to the hackneyed and out-moded principles of a bygone period of American politics. The spirit of Hooverism, which was so dramatically removed from the White House in 1932,

has taken squatters rights in the Congress of 1947 and 1948.

But President Truman's message will serve as a yardstick to measure the efforts and the accomplishments of this Congress. The American people are sick and tired of Congressional inaction. Our veterans are disgusted and genuinely disappointed in the failure of Congress to meet the housing shortage. Our consumers are plagued with high prices and feeling the full impact of wild cat inflation. Our workers are smarting under the blows they received from the anti-labor legislation. Our old people know full well that this Republican-dominated Congress has failed miserably in giving them a bare existence in old age pensions and assistance. Those who look with concern and care upon our lands and our forests, upon our rivers and our natural resources, realize that this Congress has failed in its responsibilities for the protection of the natural resources of land, water and forests. Our minorities--yes, our minorities--are disturbed at the failure to enact legislation that guarantees equal opportunity in employment.

In a time when problems of tremendous proportions in the field of housing, race relations, taxation, national defense, labor-management relations, and a host of others are facing us, the Congress of the United States has ground out two pieces of legislation that it points to as a sign of its accomplishment: 1) the Taft-Hartley Bill, an attack upon organized labor, and 2) The tax reduction bill, which gave pennies to the average citizens and millions for the millionaires.

President Truman and the liberal Democratic representatives in the Congress have pointed the way with a positive program for the constructive use

of government facilities in behalf of the welfare of our people. The President has outlined the program of inflation control. The President has given us a foreign policy based upon sound economic and international principles. The President has recognized the need of a living wage for the unorganized. The President has called for the extension of Social Security benefits. The President has recognized the problems that confront our people in the field of medical care and education. He has given us a call to action. The people are ready to act today. The Congress stands as a symbol of inaction and reaction. The people are awaiting their time, are awaiting the day and the hour that their willingness to act can be counted. That day will be Election Day in November, 1948, and those who have been the champions of inaction and reaction will find themselves facing the housing shortage of their own communities, retired from public life and coming face to face with the stark and dark political and economic realities which the glow and the lights of Washington dimmed from their vision.

It falls to Minnesota and Wisconsin--two great traditionally progressive States in the heartland of middle America--to spearhead the struggle to make the Democratic Party the party of democratic peace, prosperity and freedom. We are the political descendants of Floyd B. Olson and the elder Bob LaFollette. We live and work in the spirit of our late great and lamented leader, Franklin D. Roosevelt. His service to the American people and to the world has given us an eternal challenge.

The American people under Franklin Roosevelt won battle after battle against the forces of reaction. That struggle is still on. The campaign is still being waged--the total victory is yet to be won.

We have in the White House today the man whom Franklin Roosevelt chose as his running mate, the man who through the years of his service in the United States Senate unhesitatingly and unswervingly, with courage and boldness, supported the New Deal and the Great President. That man, our President Harry Truman, is calling upon the American people again to lift high the banner of democratic progress and Rooseveltian liberalism. He is not asking to be re-elected for the glory of the triumph and the victory. He is asking that the program of New Deal democracy be continued and expanded! He is asking that the defeat we suffered in 1946 be turned into a victorious march of the democratic forces in 1948.

The agents of reaction are happy these days. The man from Ohio is walking up and down in front of the White House, waiting for his chance to move in. The old guard GOP gang sees in the announcement of a third party, political victory. Yes, there is much cheer and rejoicing in the halls of the N. A. M. Out of the smoke of political battle they see at long last the possibility of fulfilment of years of frustration and longing. The Republican Party has found new support in the subtle kind of confusion of the left in the third party. As in Europe, so it is here. Reaction and confused leftism joins together in the attack upon democracy. But, lest there be too much joy in the halls of special privilege, let's take a look at the situation. The people of America are not going to be misled and duped by this political trickery. The people of America know that a third party can not and will not win. The people of America support Secretary Marshall and President Truman in their foreign policy.

Our Secretary of State has in clear and unmistakable fashion put the Republican Congress on the spot. He has told them that they must give enough

or not at all. The Republican Party is the apostle of the new kind of isolationism. The too little and too late isolationism. At a time when the collapse of Western Europe threatens the world, the Republican Congress hesitates. Nero at least made music while Rome was burning; the only sound we get from the Republicans is the clink of counting pennies!

The laboring people of America support the President in his stand on the Taft-Hartley Act. The consumers of America support the President in his anti-inflation program. The farmers of America support his farm policy.

And they are not going to be taken for a ride into the dizzy heights of third party explorations, or down into the depths of the Republican Party exploitation!

Our people had the good sense, despite a barrage of propaganda and every political trick in the book on the part of the opposition, to four times elect Roosevelt president of the United States. The same people will for the fifth time by their votes re-elect the Roosevelt program and the Roosevelt successor.

Republican exploitation and third party exploration are having their day in the newspapers--from the Chicago Tribune to the Daily Worker. The American people will have their day in the election booth!

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