

Eugene
Dr. Carson Blake

Jack Conway
Walter Reuther
Robb Hirsch

NOTES FOR REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
TO
CITIZENS' CRUSADE AGAINST POVERTY

Richard Boone
Jan Patton

APRIL 13, 1966

I had not been Vice President a full month when I addressed the first annual meeting of the Citizens' Crusade last February. I concluded that address by telling you that you and we were launching a crusade "whose noble purpose is no less than to help America keep its own soul."

I believe that both you and we have been keeping faith with that commitment. We have been working hard, as a responsible government, to run an anti-poverty program and other programs that will have real and lasting effects on our previously neglected families. And you have been doing your part as independent, private groups -- supporting us when you thought we were right and criticizing us when you thought we were wrong.

↳ This is what I urged you to do when I attended your first meeting. I said then: "We will not only tolerate criticism; we will welcome it..." But, frankly, I did not think you would take me so literally!

↳ Seriously -- I can think of no more important element in this whole war on poverty than the increased participation of the poor themselves and of their spokesmen in the evaluation and the implementation of programs designed to help them escape from the bonds of poverty.

War on Poverty is crucial stage
in civil rights revolution

We welcome your criticism.

Let's engage you
~~So we don't mind your criticism. We do welcome it. But that~~
criticism should be positive; ~~it should be~~ constructive; ~~it should~~ offer alternatives. ~~It isn't enough just to be anti-establishment;~~
it is more helpful to figure out how to shape the establishment towards worthy objectives.

↳ The Federal establishment, I and you both know, is not the easiest thing in the world to modify and shape. Neither the executive branch nor the legislative. All the more reason, therefore, for a sense of satisfaction over what has in fact been happening in the last two years. If we must dwell at times on our shortcomings and our failures, let us also take time out to count our victories and our progress.

↳ We have indeed been moving forward on a wide variety of fronts to tackle this difficult and many-faceted problem of poverty in America.

----The Economic Opportunity program was doubled last year -- and it will be increased again this year -- despite great pressures on the budget. Millions of poor people have already been reached.

----There was indeed a major breakthrough last year in the enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act -- with its emphasis on the education needs of the poor.

----We have passed vital Appalachian and Economic Development legislation to provide the basic economic development needed to eliminate a major cause of poverty.

----We did improve Social Security and adopt Medicare -- and the President has just told us this is ^{only} ~~just~~ the beginning.

----We did pass the Older Americans Act and new housing programs and new health legislation.

----And we will be improving our minimum wage laws and our unemployment insurance laws.

----And we will be rebuilding our American cities.

----And, last but not least, we have strengthened our laws and our practices towards assuring equal opportunity and equal protection.

So, my friends, I come to you today not to tell you that we have achieved the Great Society -- but that we are on the way. And we will get there -- because men and women like you throughout America are determined that we shall.



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org