

NOTES BY
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
AT NATIONAL COMMUNITY RELATIONS
ADVISORY COUNCIL
June 23, 1966

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I heard some neighbors were in town from Minnesota, so I thought that I would drop-by to say "Hello" to them and to friends from many other States.

It is so very good to see Sam Scheiner^{Phil Krelitz} and Al Firestone of Minnesota and many other dear friends.

It is a particular pleasure to be here when you are greeting our distinguished members of the Congress.

And I want you to know it is a joy to see representatives of the Council's National Agencies -- like Dave Brody of B'nai B'rith -- ADL -- and so many other good friends too numerous to mention.

What your Council has achieved is in the highest traditions of the Jewish faith:

"Behold, how good and pleasant it is that brethren dwell together in unity."

This nation is moving ahead toward unity. The unity which comes from every citizen sharing equally in opportunity -- for decent housing, good jobs, solid education. We still have a long way to go. There is not one of us from a major metropolitan center who is not familiar with inequities and with bitter seeds of strife, discord, and, yes, potential violence.

As a former Mayor of Minneapolis, it was my privilege to set up the first Municipal Fair Employment Practice Law in the nation.

I relied heavily on community relations leaders just like yourselves.

Our target was racial and religious bias -- open intolerance or, more frequently, subtle barriers, like "gentlemen's agreements."

But, today, in America's inner-cities -- in decaying tenements -- are much worse breeding grounds of despair, misery and hate. Racial-economic ghettos fester with a disease I call "slum-ism." This disease must be eradicated, or we cannot expect good will and understanding to prevail.

That is why President Johnson seeks enactment of his Demonstration City program. It is why he seeks adequate appropriations for rent supplements. And it is why I, as his liaison with the Nation's Mayors, invite your support -- your assistance -- to help us tear down the "walls" of bitterness and discord.

Overseas, there is a Berlin Wall which divides free men from serfs. There are "walls" of barbed wire and mine fields, enclosing Eastern Europe. There are "walls" -- rings of steel -- in the Middle East -- an area which instead, desperately, needs more buildings of peace, of freedom and plenty.

"There is something," Robert Frost said, "which repels us about walls -- about barriers which divide men.

Fortunately, walls of anti-Semitism have come tumbling down, although, here and there, one can still see barriers.

You are the builders of a better way. You are leaders, not just of our fellow citizens of Jewish faith, but of men and good will of every religion -- who want to make our cities the type of place in which our children can grow straight and tall.

And so, I am pleased that you are continuing your efforts for the successful prosecution of the War Against Poverty.

I wish you well. Carry on in your efforts for a healthy environment in all our cities -- healthy for the minds and bodies of all men.

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