

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

REFORM JEWISH APPEAL DINNER

New York, New York

June 9, 1977

It is an honor to be here tonight to participate in this tribute to Matthew Ross, who currently is serving as Chairman of the Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Matthew Ross has served in this capacity with distinction. He, along with other members of the Reform Jewish Appeal Cabinet, has guided this organization through a most successful year.

Tremendous strides have been achieved in meeting the religious needs of the Jewish community in this country.

-- Education and youth activities continue to expand.

-- Inter-faith activities, promoting greater understanding and cooperation among Christians and Jews, continue to be a hallmark of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

-- And the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, already a most highly regarded institution of higher education, achieved even higher plateaus of scholarship and service to the Jewish Community in America during the past year.

I also want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and Rabbi David A. Mersky, Director of the Reform Jewish Appeal. Both of these men have excelled in the leadership they have given, and continue to give, to the Jewish community in the United States.

I also participate in tonight's activities with a sense of humility and deep appreciation for the honor you have bestowed upon me. Throughout the course of my public and private life, I have been committed to the cause of education and strengthening the knowledge and appreciation of our system of government. I am deeply moved by your establishment of an institute in my name at the Religious Action Center in Washington.

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations has made immeasurable contributions to the equality and dignity of all persons in the United States. The high value the Union has placed on education of its youth has been one of the vital strengths of the organization.

Because of this involvement, I want to take this opportunity to address two deep concerns of mine -- our continuing struggle to overcome inequality in this country, and the value of education.

During the decade of the 1960's, tremendous strides were made in the promotion of civil rights for all our people. But we all know there still is a great deal of work to be done.

We live in a world of rapid change. What took decades to accomplish in the past, now takes only weeks. Years are compressed into milliseconds, and generations pass through eras and epochs at mind-boggling speed.

In an age when the world and time are shrinking the dimensions of our lives; at a moment when the power of private and public institutions is growing rapidly, the challenge of preserving democracy as we know it becomes formidable.

What is the basis of this challenge?

We have learned that the success of the civil rights struggle has not guaranteed freedom in this country.

Together, we have played a role in the unprecedented struggle of the past two decades to secure equal rights for all Americans. We have made gains in such areas as equal access to public accommodations, equal job opportunities, non-discriminatory use of federal funds, and protection of the right to vote.

Yet, despite hard-won gains in Congress and the Courts, the struggle for eradication of prejudice and bigotry in America is not over. There can be no meaningful freedom in America without freedom from poverty, freedom from hunger, and freedom from unemployment. Economic repression is as insipient an evil as political repression.

It is not enough to give a man or woman the right to sit at a lunch counter if they don't have the money in their pockets to pay for the meal.

The right to full participation in the economic life of our nation is the birthright of every American. And until we can guarantee this freedom to all Americans we cannot call ourselves truly free.

Poverty, high unemployment and widespread urban decay simply cannot be accepted or overlooked any longer. An America divided between rich and poor, white and black, old and young, is in trouble. Freedom for the comfortable cannot endure alongside misery for one-fifth of the American population.

One of our greatest national problems is that of youth unemployment. Teenagers and young adults suffer from higher unemployment rates than any other group of workers.

We have 17.9 percent youth unemployment -- almost triple the rate for adults. This enforced idleness affects 3.4 million youths today.

Joblessness tells these young people that they have no productive role to fill in our society, that they have been rejected by society even though they desperately want to participate.

We may not be able to see the psychological and emotional damage, the insecurity and the alienation that unemployment causes young people. But we can readily understand the consequences in the skyrocketing crime rate that it has caused among those under 24, and the increased drug and alcohol abuse among our nation's youth.

The danger to the future of this country should be readily apparent. It is the youth of today who will be the leaders of tomorrow. And we would leave a sad legacy if such a large percentage are completely alienated from a society they stand to inherit.

But solving youth unemployment is just a start. Until there is full employment in America, we cannot be satisfied.

Unemployment adds up to a terrible price in broken families, in the attitudes of our children, in the rising crime rate, in skills forgotten and work habits never formed, in permanent alienation from society, and -- the most costly -- in the loss of self-respect.

Of course, there are those who are telling us that we simply will have to pay this price and more -- because there just isn't any room for the unemployed in the system. In the early 1960's, three and four percent unemployment was considered too high. Now, five percent unemployment is considered full employment. Will the next decade see a 10 percent unemployment rate as being acceptable?

Full employment is the broad base on which to build our progress -- the unfinished job of securing both political and economic rights for all Americans. But there is much more to be done.

The neglect of our cities works a terrible hardship on the millions of people who live there. It is a form of national blindness -- because the city is America's tomorrow.

By the end of this century -- which is not far off -- this nation will have over 250 million inhabitants. And 85 percent of them will be living in cities with populations of 50,000 or more.

So when we talk about our cities, we are talking about nothing less significant than the future of more than four out of every five Americans. We are talking about the future of almost all our children and grandchildren.

Quite simply, nothing less than a genuine national policy of full employment, coupled with a determination to revitalize our cities and maintain their role as strong centers of trade, culture and communications, will serve to restore economic hope and the promise of productivity to all the American people.

This is our challenge, for if we cannot overcome the economic obstacles to the full participation of our citizens in our society, the hard-won political and civil rights of the last two decades will hold little meaning for millions of our people.

In essence, our democratic institutions are threatened by an acceptance of the blight of poverty in a nation characterized by its tremendous wealth.

This leads me to another matter upon which I will briefly touch -- education. The motto of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations is...and I quote: "The study of our tradition and values takes precedence over everything."

One cannot talk about nation-building, or institution building, or the American adventure, without talking about education. To any nation, a progressive and innovative educational system is its life's blood.

To a people striving to expand political, civil and economic freedoms, education is an important weapon in this struggle. And no one understands this premise better than the Jewish people.

Throughout history those who have wanted to crush the Jewish people have never succeeded.

Why? Because the emperors, the Pharaohs, the Czars and the dictators never could extinguish the spirit of Judaism as it was passed from father to son through the written and spoken word. Without the Jewish thirst for education of the young, Judaism would have died long ago.

And the Jewish people brought to the New World their age-old struggle to be free. It is here in America that the memories of tyranny have kept alive the vigilance of the Jewish people to the threats against freedom.

And it is here in America that the Jewish concept of social and economic justice as the cornerstone of freedom was joined with the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian ideals of equality. Together, they form a potent force -- a force capable of guaranteeing that we remain a free, vibrant, open society in which all men and women can make the most of their God-given talent.

The Jews of the world have made indispensable contributions to the humanity, freedom and civilization of mankind. These values have been translated into our own values as a nation.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to interject a note of optimism as to where we are going as a nation.

America is still a young country.

The American people are builders.

They are restless. They are energetic. They are idealists -- eager to put their ideals to the test.

We are the most heterogeneous mixture of races, religions and nationalities ever to coexist peacefully under the tent of democracy. And we are the world's oldest democracy, having just completed celebrating two centuries of freedom.

There is no reason to believe that our third century cannot be one of expanding freedom and opportunity for all Americans.

There is every reason to believe that the progressive forces in America can make great gains in the struggle to eradicate injustice, hunger and poverty wherever they are found.

I know that the men and women of will and vision here this evening are ready to join hands and work for the kind of America which is in our hopes and dreams. I know that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations will continue to point the way toward achieving a better quality of life for all our people.

#

^{Jack}
Mr. Jacques Stone
Mr. Alexander Ross

Telephone speed

BRIEF REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

REFORM JEWISH APPEAL DINNER

VIA TELEPHONE

NEW YORK, N. Y.

JUNE 9, 1977

W. H. Young
+ Spirit

Jack - and Alex Ross

I DEEPLY REGRET THAT I WAS UNABLE TO BE WITH

YOU TONIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR TRIBUTE TO

MATTHEW ROSS.

~~apologizing for~~ I know I am missing
a beautiful evening with distinction
with distinction

MATTHEW ROSS HAS SERVED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

OF THE UNION OF HEBREW CONGREGATIONS, WITH DISTINCTION.

HE, ALONG WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE REFORM JEWISH

APPEAL CABINET, HAS MADE 1976 A MOST SUCCESSFUL YEAR

FOR THE UNION OF HEBREW CONGREGATIONS.

UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP:

--EDUCATION AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES CONTINUED TO

EXPAND.

L -- INTER-FAITH ACTIVITIES, PROMOTING GREATER
UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION AMONG CHRISTIANS AND
JEW_s, CONTINUES TO BE A HALLMARK OF THE UNION OF
AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS.

L -- AND THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE -- JEWISH
INSTITUTE OF RELIGION IN CINCINNATI, ALREADY A MOST
HIGHLY REGARDED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION,
ACHIEVED EVEN HIGHER PLATEAUS OF SCHOLARSHIP AND
SERVICE TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN AMERICA DURING
THE PAST YEAR.

(I have an honorary degree)
I remember visiting Hebrew Union
College many years ago +
receiving an Honorary Degree.

*Your letter of
amnesty -
forgive me for
not dealing
with your
traitor*

and

I ALSO WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PAY

TRIBUTE TO RABBI ALEXANDER SCHINDLER, PRESIDENT OF

THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS, AND

RABBI DAVID A. MERSKY, DIRECTOR OF THE REFORM JEWISH

APPEAL. BOTH OF THESE MEN HAVE EXCELLED IN THE

LEADERSHIP THEY HAVE GIVEN, AND CONTINUE TO GIVE, TO

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES

*and to the
cause of Israel's independence & security.*

ALTHOUGH WE ARE UNDER SOME TIME RESTRICTIONS

BECAUSE OF MY INABILITY TO BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT TO

ADDRESS YOU, I DID WANT TO TOUCH UPON A COUPLE OF

POINTS.

h THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS HAS
MADE IMMEASURABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EQUALITY AND
DIGNITY OF ALL PERSONS IN THE UNITED STATES. h THE
HIGH VALUE YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS PLACED ON EDUCATION
OF YOUR YOUTH HAS BEEN ONE OF THE VITAL STRENGTHS OF
THE UNION.

h TOGETHER, WE HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN THE UNPRECE-
DENTED STRUGGLE OF THE PAST TWO DECADES TO SECURE
EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL AMERICANS. h WE HAVE MADE GAINS
IN SUCH AREAS AS EQUAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC
ACCOMMODATIONS, EQUAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES, NON-DISCRIM-
INATORY USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS, AND PROTECTION OF THE
RIGHT TO VOTE.

*And we have worked together
in behalf of the freedom, independence & security
of Israel - this common effort*

and the ~~struggle~~ ^{search} for true peace in
the Middle East ~~is not over~~
is continuing struggle -

↳ YET, THE STRUGGLE FOR ERADICATION OF PREJUDICE
AND BIGOTRY IN AMERICA IS NOT OVER. THERE CAN BE

NO MEANINGFUL FREEDOM IN AMERICA WITHOUT FREEDOM FROM
POVERTY, FREEDOM FROM HUNGER, AND FREEDOM FROM
UNEMPLOYMENT. ECONOMIC REPRESSION IS AS INSIPIENT AN
EVIL AS IS POLITICAL REPRESSION.

↳ THIS IS OUR CHALLENGE OF THE '70s. IF WE CANNOT
OVERCOME THE ECONOMIC OBSTACLES TO THE FULL PARTICIPATION
OF OUR CITIZENS IN OUR SOCIETY, THE HARD-WON POLITICAL
AND CIVIL RIGHTS OF THE LAST TWO DECADES WILL HOLD LITTLE
MEANING FOR MILLIONS OF OUR PEOPLE.

L BUT I AM OPTIMISTIC L IN TRAVELING AROUND THIS
COUNTRY ~~THE PAST FEW MONTHS~~ ^{over the years}, I HAVE FOUND THAT WE
ARE STILL A YOUNG COUNTRY — ~~vital, restless, and adventurous~~

L --THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE BUILDERS. —

L --THEY ARE RESTLESS. THEY ARE ENERGETIC.

L THEY ARE IDEALISTS--EAGER TO PUT THEIR IDEALS TO THE
TEST. WE ARE UNIQUE - AND SO WONDERFULLY

L WE ARE THE MOST HETEROGENEOUS MIXTURE OF RACES,

RELIGIONS AND NATIONALITIES EVER TO COEXIST PEACEFULLY

UNDER THE TENT OF DEMOCRACY L AND WE ARE THE WORLD'S

OLDEST DEMOCRACY, HAVING JUST COMPLETED THE CELEBRATION

OF TWO CENTURIES OF FREEDOM.

*This is no small
achievement when we see the threats
what has been happening to
countries in this period of terrorism*

~~to~~ other countries - Govt by free elections -
is an endangered species.

- 7 -

But,

THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT OUR THIRD

CENTURY CANNOT BE ONE OF EXPANDING FREEDOM AND

OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL AMERICANS.

and,

THERE IS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE

PROGRESSIVE FORCES IN AMERICA CAN MAKE GREAT GAINS

IN THE STRUGGLE TO ERADICATE INJUSTICE, HUNGER AND

POVERTY WHEREVER THEY ARE FOUND.

~~yes, a big order, but
therefore, the~~

~~Should look upon the remaining
years of the 20th Century - as the
Era of Human Rights - raising
high the banner of freedom by
our deeds of democracy at home
and our foreign policy abroad.~~

We must come to realize that
the real strength of America is
not in our wealth or our weapons
it is in our people and our heritage

of democratic Principles and
Social Progress. ~~But~~ The
work of democracy is never
done - it remains the unfinished
business of a free people!

Keep

~~Wherever there are people who
aspire to be free, there we find
friend + ally. Wherever there
are governments that oppress
+ harass violate human
rights, let them know they violate
the laws of God and free man.~~

Therefore, we should look upon the
remaining years of the 20th Century
as the Era of Human Rights

Raising high the banner of freedom
by our deeds of Democracy at
home, and our foreign Policy
abroad. ~~It is within this
political framework that we give
our sup. Stand in common defense
with our allies in Nato, with
Japan, Australia + the~~



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