

EXCERPTS FROM SPEECH BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY AT TESTIMONIAL  
DINNER IN HONOR OF DR. RALPH J. BUNCHE TENDERED BY THE NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS, WALDORF ASTORIA, NEW YORK,  
JUNE 9TH, 1949.

yes, It is altogether fitting and proper that we here this evening join our minds and hearts in a common tribute to a great American and citizen of the world, Dr. Ralph Bunche, and a great institution interested in developing a concept of human brotherhood, the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Throughout the centuries there has been a constant struggle between the forces which would advance civilization, and those that would retard it. There have been the great warriors and the great humanitarians. We are proud to have as our guest this evening a man who combines in his being and in his life's work the ideals and aspirations of humanitarians throughout the ages; who epitomizes the basic religious teachings of human brotherhood expounded, championed and strengthened by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. When the history of these times is written, the name of Ralph J. Bunche will rank with the great humanitarians of the world. His calm, reasoned and scientific approach to human suffering has earned for him the respect of all peoples everywhere.

Many honors have recently been his. More than any other man, he deserves credit for ending the war in the Holy Land. Grandson of an African slave, he has contributed to the establishment of freedom and peace for hundreds of thousands of human beings in the Near East. In the island of Rhodes, where the Israeli-Egyptian armistice was signed, he heard Israeli's Walter Eytan praise his "superhuman labor". He heard Egypt's Seif-ed-Dean call him "one of the world's greatest men". He was the recent recipient of a Spingarn award for the most distinguished achievements in 1948 by an American Negro. The American Association for the United Nations bestowed its annual award for outstanding service to the world organization upon him. Only recently he was chosen the "Father of the Year". Only recently Then, too, he was given the honor of being offered the opportunity to be Assistant Secretary of the State Department.

These tributes are more than just personal tributes. They are more than the recognition of a great man, a great diplomat and a great peacemaker. They are the recognition of the fact that there is a positive force in the world which is for peace, that there is a determination in the peoples of the world that never again will there be war. There is a conviction in the minds and hearts of all peoples and all nations that with constructive effort, intelligent thinking, bold and courageous action, peace and freedom will be a reality.

We in America are therefore proud that an American citizen personifies in himself these great aspirations. We are, of course, disappointed that Dr. Bunche chose not to provide his services through our own government, and we abhor the circumstances which led him to this decision. We are grateful, however, and proud of the fact that he chose to continue giving his services to the world. For that the world will be all the richer, and as citizens of the world we, too, will share in that wealth.

✓ American Dream - Decl. Indep.

✓ Equality - Our Weapon -

✓ Internat. Rel. - Colonial Policy -

Human Rights - Local State

(Good signs)

Church - Schools

Industry - Labor

Civil Rts - Nations Capital

People Want Freedom  
Emancipation

Dr. Dunphy  
Mr. Baruch  
Mr. Walden

Weil (Why-I) Dr. Bunche -  
Kane - why I have indicated Mrs. Bunche  
one local level

I have attended these National Conference of Christians and Jews meetings for many years now. Usually I find that we meet either to commemorate an achievement, a step toward realizing the values we hold, or we meet to seek out new remedies for the old problems of human relations.

Tonight we must combine the two kinds of meeting. We meet to honor a man and praise his achievements - a man whose personal efforts, knowledge and great skill and diplomacy made possible one of the truly outstanding victories of our generation - a peaceful victory. Here is a man who has surely caught the imagination of the American people, a man who is known and shall be known as a soldier of peace and understanding in a time when the wisest statesman and most schooled diplomats have had nothing but failures in seeking peace. Here is a man honored throughout the world, respected in his own nation, for he has brought new meaning to the ancient Hebrew word - Shalom - peace - in the land where the word has its truest meaning.

He is the symbol of the effectiveness the United Nations can achieve; the symbol that world problems are not without means of solution.

< Yes, Especially is Dr. Ralph Bunche a symbol of all that we here believe.

— (mimeo sheet)

< But one thing strikes disharmony. With all the respect due him and paid him, he cannot live in self-respect in the capital of his own nation. Our government has asked Dr. Bunche to be Assistant Secretary of State for the United States. Dr. Bunche refused because the capital of our country is not a fit place for his children or for his wife or for himself.

So even as Dr. Bunche stands for all we here respect and work toward, he has suddenly become another kind of symbol - and we must see in

our nation's treatment of him the dreadful ambivalence, the American Dilemma.

It is perhaps fitting here to liken this ambivalence, this dual vision, of the evening celebration to the Hebrew wedding ceremony where the custom is that the groom shall break a glass during the ceremony to remind the people ~~celebrating~~ that all is not yet Utopian even in a joyous hour.

Whenever I am asked to speak, I in turn ask myself the question: "Just what is it that these people want to know that I as a Senator would be in the best position to tell them?"

It occurs to me that one thing most notable about a Senator (if he intends to remain a Senator, that is) - is that he is in touch with the people. No one, who has ever walked into the offices in the Senate Office Building can possibly doubt that we are on plenty of mailing lists and that the people are making certain that we know what they are thinking. When we are fortunate to be invited to meetings and dinners around the country, we cannot help but sense in some degree the mood of the people, the feeling of the nation. And I can say, I think, that the mood of the nation is brotherly.

There are bad signs, of course. The economic pressure that can bring on bad human relations is increasing now with unemployment. Only this week a trade union leader from Germany who is on a study tour of this country told me that he - a German of our generation - was concerned because he had noticed some instances of anti-Semitism in this country. It is possible that economic insecurity can bring new tensions. ~~Last fall when we were arguing about when civil rights measures should come before the Senate, we said, essentially, the whole thing boils down to civil rights. Just~~ How close the economic programs dealing in human rights ~~and personal movement~~ are related to the actual anti-lynching, anti-poll tax, FEPC legislation may become clearer if unemployment increases.

While economics now affect the human relations picture, we can ultimately make our human attitudes immune to the business cycle. In the efforts we have made toward equal rights in the past years nothing, I believe, has formed as strong a foundation for brotherhood as the acts of brotherhood itself - getting people together as the Conference of Christians and Jews does and seeks to do. The beginnings are understanding and the goals are respect.

The movement we are trying to bring about - through acquaintance to understanding, then to mutual respect - is taking hold around the country. The political manifestations of this growing movement are clear. The President's Civil Rights report, the fight ~~on~~ the Democratic convention floor, the unsuccessful fight for cloture in the Senate this winter - these are signs of a growing movement. And let me say that ~~the~~ political action of this kind ~~takes place~~ <sup>seldom takes place</sup> without a healthy beginning push from back home. The landmarks of political achievement throughout the nation on the road to human equality are the road signs of how far the people - not the politicians - have progressed.

These battles in Philadelphia, in Washington and in state capitals around the ~~country~~ <sup>nation</sup> record not only the parliamentary debate of democratic ~~governments~~ <sup>government</sup>. More important, they record, the human relations councils set up in dozens of cities. They record the drive now on in Virginia to register to vote those who have never before been encouraged to cast a ballot; they record the coming together of the people in our population who once were split apart. They record the success of grass roots citizens' committees. They record, if you will, the success of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. This is the ~~substance~~ <sup>substance of which</sup> success is made of - political success as well as ~~local success~~ <sup>community progress</sup>.

Steady  
Progress  
State  
Local  
Community  
Schools  
Churches  
North-  
South

Dr. Bunche should represent to us something more than a man of high respect, of peace, of victory in achieving ~~national~~ <sup>International</sup> cooperation. His paradoxical position on the American scene has further and perhaps more frightening implications. Dr. Bunche is regarded as a representative of the United Nations, a representative of the world. He is accepted by the United Nations and the world on the basis of his achievements. We know those achievements are worthy of the highest respect. Here in the United States that background and success which is based upon the highest characteristics of human culture and development is not enough to secure him even an equal place among his fellow men. >

We Americans ~~are~~ <sup>accustomed</sup> to being out in front in the world. We are used to enjoying the smug feeling that we lead the world in every way. Surely the situation of Dr. Bunche refusing to work for his own government because of the inhuman backwardness of some of our citizens should shock some smugness from us. It should warn us that we cannot stay ahead unless we move forward. There is no defense of a position of moral leadership. We must simply keep moving forward. Today the United States is not ahead in the market of human morality. The position of Dr. Bunche makes this clear. And there are those in the world who must deal with us, who should live with us in trust and friendship - who see the position of Dr. Bunche also. Here - certainly - is the American dilemma, the great American problem in sharp relief. It is as clear to the rest of the world to the Indians, the Chinese, the Africans and the peoples of the Near East as it should be to us. >

It seems that there is no more appropriate <sup>honored</sup> ~~guest~~ ~~speaker~~ for this Conference than Dr. Ralph Bunche. His achievements are our own goals, for he has literally brought together Jew and Gentile in peace and understanding. But he must represent too, those goals we must yet attain. The carrying out of our respect for him in the actions of our daily living. We can do no

more than to push forward the brotherhood of man wherever we have strength until it reaches our own hearts.



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