

Excerpts from Address by the Honorable Hubert Humphrey to the Convention of the International Association of Machinists, September 9, 1952:

I am here to discuss with you a program of political action, one that has been undertaken during the past 20 years, and another that needs to be undertaken in the next four years. All of us should be grateful for the political maturity of the American people. Out of the election charges and counter-charges the American voter, in the main, is able to separate truth from fiction, fact from falsehood. These election periods give us a chance to take inventory over the past few years and to make some plans for the future. I am sure many of you have been "bewitched and bewildered" by what you have been hearing. If one were to believe all the headlines you would think our country was on the verge of bankruptcy, weak and dis-united and heading down the road of socialism, confusion and chaos. Strange as it may seem, these cries of fear and anguish come from those who have suffered the least, profited the most and enjoyed the good life in ever-increasing abundance.

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My Republican friends, -long on slogans and short on program - have come forth with that motheaten old cry of the frustrated office-seeker - "it is time for a change". There is some substance to this demand but the change that is needed is not the one they are recommending. We need a change in our Government, a change that will bring to the Congress men and women committed to a ^{real} ~~repeat~~ program of fair play to the worker, fair prices to the consumer, and a sense of compassion for the unfortunate and under-privileged. I recommend a change, a change of about 50% of the Republican representation in the Congress. It is in the Congress that the laws are made; it is in the Congress where public policy is formed, and it is and has been in the Congress where the American worker received the foul blow of an unfair and prejudiced Taft-Hartley Law. This was the reward that American labor received from the hands of a reactionary Congress for its patriotic service during

World War II. It is in the Congress where tax bills are passed and it is in the Congress where the tax loopholes are written into the law which benefit the rich and penalize those least able to pay. It is in the Congress where the issue of civil rights has been denied, where the issue of equal treatment for all persons, regardless of race, color and creed has been denied. It is in the Congress where the human cry rises up demanding that our President use the Taft-Hartley injunction. Yes, my friends, it is in the Congress where discriminatory immigration legislation has been passed and where the Tide Lands oil, priceless resources of the people, would have been granted to the few and not the many, so I say to my Republican friends, it is time for a change - a change in the representation in the Congress which has blocked the programs of the New Deal and the Fair Deal. I can well understand that the distinguished General who is the Standard-bearer of the Republican Party may be unaware of some of these activities since he has but recently become a Republican and has not had the opportunity to become fully acquainted with his political relatives, ~~but~~ if the illustrious General wishes to lead a crusade, may I suggest that reform begins at home in one's own household and the saving of political souls should begin at the fireside. There are a lot of blotches on the hide of the Republican elephant that need cleansing. In all humility I propose to that great American, General Eisenhower, that as he goes forward on his crusade he can obtain a good deal of experience and worthwhile information by examining the the record of some of his sternest critics who reside in that political household of Republicanism.

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If American labor wants a fair deal from its Government it must wholeheartedly enter into this campaign and election not only on the Presidential level but on the Congressional level. If American labor wants repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law, that can be done only in the Congress and it needs to be done. Let those who propose to maintain this inequitable and evil piece of legislation ~~fight~~ cite one example where

it has improved labor-management relations. Let them, if they can, justify the indiscriminate use of injunctions in state and federal courts - injunctions that break the back of the union; Weaken its power to bargain and in the end all too often destroy the local union in community after community. The burden of proof rests upon its sponsors. Committees of the Congress have produced volumes of evidence that the Taft-Hartly Law was not only conceived in the spirit of prejudice but it has promoted and extended this same spirit of philosophy. I call upon organized labor to request every candidate for a Congressional seat his or her stand on this basic labor-management issue. Let those who are raising their voices against the so-called high corporation taxes, justify the innumerable loopholes in our tax laws which continue to benefit but the few and place an unfair burden upon the many. I call upon organized labor to request of every candidate for Congress his position on the basic subject of taxation. American labor has a great stake in the political policies of our country. American labor represents a significant proportion of our total population. You have a vital interest in education, in programs for the protection of your health, in social security, in fair and equitable taxation, in wage and price policies. Those who have weakened your price control program and at the same time ^{wrecked} ~~licked~~ your wage stabilization program have proven themselves to be your enemy. You can find who these public officials are by checking the record. It isn't campaign promises that count - it is the record of performance. As Al Smith used to say - "Let's look at the record". I am not laying all of this burden on the doorstep of Republicans. There have been a few Democrats that have been weak-kneed and have been tempted into the paths of reaction. They too, need to be talked to and informed as to the needs and wants of the American people.

The issue in this campaign is whom shall we trust - in what Party shall we place our confidence. No fair-minded person can claim that everything good is in one Party and everything bad in the other, but when one votes he must make definite choices. You judge persons and parties on the basis of their overall record, their general trend

and the sum total of their accomplishments. It is interesting to note that the leader of the so-called Republican crusade has step by step repudiated the Republican Platform and nailed his flag on the Democratic standard. Less than a week ago in Minnesota the Republican Standard-bearer at high noon, before God and man, wrapped his arms around the Democratic farm program. It is easy to do that in the broad sunlight of a Minnesota farm, but fellow Americans, just wait and see what they do in the air-conditioned, artificially-lighted chamber of the United States Congress. Now, who are we to believe - Eisenhower, the candidate, or the record of 20 years of Republican votes? They stand in repudiation of one another. Then, how about the statement of the Republican Standard-bearer when he said he would consult labor on Taft-Hartley? It is one thing to consult but it is another thing to act. Our Republican friends have always been long on consultation and short on constructive action. I am sure my friends in labor will be happy to know that they will be consulted. This will only add to the insult because after the consultation it will be Robert Taft and Joe Martin that write the labor law. Consultation or no consultation, it will be Mr. Republican of the Old School, not General Republican of 1952 that will determine the policies of the Congress if we should lose our good sense and entrust them with political responsibility.

I have another question to ask those who seek a change. Every American is concerned about our foreign policy. Whether you agree with the Democratic foreign policy or not - at least we have one, and it is pretty well understood. Our Republican critics call it the Truman-Acheson policy. ~~At least~~ this indicates that we have two people, at least, who agree upon it. In fact, it has been overwhelmingly supported by the Democratic majority in the Congress. In a spirit of scientific research, I ask the Republican Crusader which one of the many foreign policies of the Republican grab-bag are we to have in case of a Republican victory. There is no shortage of choice - it ranges all the way from the bi-partisan policy of a Senator Wiley of Wisconsin to the stone-age policy of the Malones, the Jenners, the Capeharts and the

McCarthys. Surely, we have a right to expect that the Republicans agree on something. The Eisenhower-Taft split on domestic policy we could endure - that is understandable since Mr. Eisenhower is new to the Republican ranks and Mr. Taft is the ancient architect of its record and program, but in the field of foreign policy we not only have a split personality but we have one that is splintered. There are as many Republican policies in foreign affairs as there are advisers to the Republican Candidate. The simple truth is that the great crusade has but one objective - to get into office, and as Governor Stevenson recently said - he did not resent the illustrious General being a hitch-hiker on the Democratic platform but it was those one-eyed knaves with knives in their mouths that were climbing aboard with the General that caused him concern. American labor better be on the alert for these political pirates. The last time they ran the Ship of State it ended on the rocks. I dare say that their sense of direction and their skill at political navigation has not improved with age - it has suffered from lack of experience and the inevitable ravages of time.

I fully recognize that many people like to live like a Republican; in fact, I enjoy that social habit myself; it is comfortable, pleasing and secure.

American labor has a tremendous responsibility. Its membership represents millions of families. The great tragedy of our generation is not what we have done but what we haven't. All too often we have failed to be participants in the political process. All too often we fail to register, fail to vote. The first responsibility of every good citizen is to be an informed and an active voter. I suggest that we spend more time and effort on getting people interested in the business of democracy, and less time and effort telling them how to run their business. The American citizen is capable of making fair and honorable political judgments.



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