

Address by
Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey
Vice President of the United States
at Temple University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
June 16, 1966



*"By pressing the good fight against poverty both
at home and abroad, we identify ourselves with the
deepest aspirations of the whole family of man."*



Two years ago this nation launched a new kind of war—the war against poverty . . . not only poverty of the purse, which is bad enough, but poverty of the spirit, which is worse.

In one way or another, we Americans have been fighting poverty throughout our history. Indeed, it has always been the American dream to create a society in which each citizen would have unfettered opportunity to lift himself and his family to something better.

Yet it was not until this century that government played a real part in the struggle. Those who in the past held industrial and political power long rejected any government intervention on behalf of the poor.

Their attitude was not unlike that which Anatole France had flayed in Europe with bitter irony:

“The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread.”

The tide began to turn with Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, and came in strong with Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the social and economic advances of the New Deal.

It is on these beginnings that we are building today.

The Poor Now Visible

“The poor of the earth,” says the Book of Job, “hide themselves together.”

And, here in America, they were so well hidden in urban and rural slums that it was all too easy, even for men and women of good will, not to see them—although they make up almost one-fifth of our population.

They were not only invisible, they were largely inaudible. Except in the civil rights movement, they had no voice.

Now they are standing up and speaking for themselves. Sometimes their words may sound harsh and angry. But that is infinitely better than bitter and frustrated silence.

Yes, we can see and hear the poor nowadays.

They are very much on our minds and consciences—and this is all to the good. It's very much to the credit of this great and rich nation to remember the needy and the disadvantaged among its people.

In America's cities, poverty takes a form we know all too well. I call it slumism.

Slumism is more than old and rundown buildings.

Slumism is ungathered garbage and inadequate sanitary facilities.

Slumism is second-rate schooling for children who urgently need the best that we can give them.

Slumism is danger on the stair and violence in the street.

Slumism is the bitter feeling that nobody cares.

Slumism is the voice of a Negro mother telling why her sons went wrong:

"I wonder, do people who never have to worry about work know what happens to you when you keep knocking your head on a stone wall and there's still no work? . . . I'll tell you what happens, you just fold up and die. That's what drugs and liquor mean. They mean you've died. They mean you've hung up on the world, because you just keep calling and there just ain't no answer on the other end of the line."

The Call We Must Answer

This is the call we Americans must answer—with human kindness, with understanding, and, above all, we must answer it *now*.

We have ample reason today to heed Aristotle's grim warning that poverty is the parent of revolution and crime.

No people should know this better than we, for violence and crime are daily realities in our cities, and revolution racks the poverty-stricken two-thirds of the world.

The reason for crime and violence in our cities is all too clear—the degradation and rank injustice that pervade our urban ghettos. And things may get worse, not better, unless we win our war against poverty.

Poverty takes many forms and arises from many causes—and we are learning that no single answer will suffice.

We are seeking the answers for every age of poverty—from our pre-school youngsters to our senior citizens. We are seeking answers for every place of poverty, from the city slums to depressed rural areas like Appalachia. Poverty is the only common denominator that binds these people to-

gether in sorrow, in resentment, and in rebellion against their lot.

Civil rights legislation is an essential part of the war on poverty.

So is aid to our elementary and secondary schools, focused particularly—as it is—on the children of the poor. So is aid to depressed areas. So is Medicare.

So are the new undertakings generally called the Poverty Program—community action, Head Start, the Job Corps, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and others.

We are moving into new ground, and there are no blazed trails for us to follow.

Some of the approaches we try may not work out, and you may read about them in blaring headlines. This is bound to happen. Doctors have tried for years to find a cure for cancer, and we are not dismayed that they haven't; we simply ask them to try and try again.

On the other hand, some of the things we try may work out far better than we expected.

We must change or discard those programs which are not making headway, and we must expand those that are.

There can be no dogma or doctrine about this. We must find out from experience what works.

Four Ways Forward

We have already made a significant impact on poverty.

For example, Department of Labor figures show that the Great Society programs, in their totality, accounted for half the substantial reduction in unemployment in 1965.

And we have also, I think, begun to identify the major directions in which we must move forward. I would stress four in particular—education, income maintenance, job development, and the enhancement of human dignity.

The more we examine the facts and figures, the more we confirm what Americans seem always instinctively to have known—that education is, has been, and always will be our soundest and most productive investment as a nation.

And this is as true of the war on poverty as of every aspect of our life.

Perhaps the biggest gain we have scored so far against poverty has been in keeping hundreds of thousands of young Americans in high school and college, so that they can meet the stricter standards for employment in this technological age.

At the other end of the spectrum, we need to do more to assure an adequate income to those who are too old or too handicapped to work.

Just this month, the President reiterated his commitment to "the basic right of every older American to a decent income."

We should look forward to a time when these deserving people not only receive enough to live on, but share in the continuing rise of our standard of living.

We must do more, too, about jobs for the poor.

No Wasted Americans

We must regard the untrained and unemployed *not* as drags on our society, but as unused national resources.

Our nation needs and wants the services these "wasted Americans" can provide.

Today there are at least five million jobs waiting to be developed and filled in the expanding field of human services—health, education, welfare, and recreation.

That is why our government programs are training people for them. In doing this, we do three important things at once: provide jobs for the unemployed; provide essential services for all Americans; and provide the professionals in these fields the non-professional support they need.

There is opportunity, too, for the employment of the poor in the poverty program itself—and great advantage, as well. No one can understand poverty so well, or bring to people who suffer from it such intimate and sympathetic understanding, as those who have known it at first hand.

Toward Real Human Dignity

This brings me to the most intangible, but most important, direction in which we need to move—the enhancement of human dignity.

That is why community action programs are so important a part of the war on poverty. That is why the participation of the poor in the development and management of these programs is absolutely vital. For the essence of human dignity is the right of people to have a say in determining their own future. That's what the Declaration of Independence is about, and that's what the Constitution stands for.

We need to use a new kind of grammar in speaking and writing about poverty—a grammar in which the poor are the subjects, the people who act, rather than the objects, the people who are acted upon.

We need to involve the poor actively because we need to learn from them.

We need to find out why it is that our schools are not reaching many of their children, why urban renewal is not really eliminating slums, and why welfare programs are not breaking the cycle of dependency.

And I think we would do well to listen to people who have hard, practical knowledge about all this.

Moreover, we must apply the basic principle of democracy—that people, in their wisdom and even in their folly, know what is best for them. We need to bear in mind George Bernard Shaw's cautionary words:

"Do not do unto others as you would they should do unto you—their tastes may not be the same."

The Participating Poor

Today there are 8,000 new leaders in communities throughout the country—in less than two years! They are men and women from areas of poverty serving on community action boards—men and women previously unrecognized, unheard, unheeded.

Today they meet, consult, and make decisions along with their communities' bankers, labor leaders, and public officials. This is democracy at work.

And there are today over 30,000 additional men and women from the ranks of the poor serving as paid workers in community action programs.

Progress is being made. The poor have a major role to play in their own escape from poverty. But they cannot do it alone.

There is a place in this war for every American. There is a place, particularly, for our universities.

The American university cannot be an oasis for quiet meditation in a desert of human need.

We must go back to the early European idea of the university as part of the city, and away from the English idea—so prevalent here in the 1800's—that the institution of higher learning must be isolated from life by acres and acres of well-tended lawn.

The Role of the University

Universities need to be involved in everyday life. They need to be where the action is, where people live and work.

American universities have much to give to American cities, and our cities have a great deal to give in return.

There are many community problems which would benefit more from research than from argument, and the university should be in the midst of all of them.

The learning of its faculty should always be at the service of the community. University expertise is urgently needed for the solution of dozens of complex problems—problems of transportation, of housing, of management, of law enforcement, of urban and area planning, of public welfare—yes, and of human relations.

The university can—and should—become an integral, catalytic part of the community.

Indeed, the most important laboratory of today's university can be the community itself.

Temple University has recognized this responsibility for some time. And recently, as you know, Temple has received a 500,000-dollar grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity to become part of a network of seven universities that will help train both the officers and the foot soldiers in the war against poverty, many of them recruited from the ranks of the poor themselves.

The university can be even more than a center of learning and enlightenment in the community. It can be a well-spring of progressive social action.

It can be a center of ferment for good, not merely ferment for ferment's sake. And to those of you in the faculty and student body who feel deeply about man's inhumanity to man—let me say there's work to be done and a peace to be won.

This Volunteer Generation

Now, a word to you who are graduating today.

Of those to whom much is given, much is expected.

This generation of young Americans is living and acting in this fine old tradition. Many of you have already enlisted in the battle against poverty in communities throughout the country.

Almost two-thirds of all VISTA volunteers to date have been college students—or recent graduates—taking a year off for this service.

Just this week, 500 college students boarded a so-called Troop Train at Union Station in Washington. They were VISTA Associates—devoting their summer to work in the Appalachian hills and hollows.

VISTA offers great scope for service in the war on poverty. But there are other opportunities too. And there is

of course the opportunity for service abroad—in the Peace Corps and in other international programs.

You have earned the right to be called the volunteer generation.

I hope that all of you will see such service as an essential part of your responsibility to your country—and to yourselves.

From Poverty to Peace

Finally, let me place this all in a wider context—an international context. As we tear down the tattered tarpaper that separates the poor from the rest of us in our own fortunate land, we must rededicate ourselves to the fight against poverty and injustice in other parts of the world.

Two-thirds of mankind—nearly all the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America—are beset by hunger, disease, and misery every day of their lives. It is in soil like this that the seeds of violence, despair, and revolution take root.

As the late Pope John so often said, where there is constant want, there is no peace.

If we seek peace, therefore, we must fight want. To achieve peace is not easy, and it will not come merely from our wishing it. Peace is work and sacrifice. It is education, overseas aid, the Peace Corps, the United Nations. It is food and medicine and engineering work. It will not come because you ask for it, but because you live for it—and, if need be, die for it.

More than ever, what we do here at home is intimately related to what we can accomplish abroad. People everywhere urgently seek and demand human dignity.

By pressing the good fight against poverty both at home and abroad, we identify ourselves with the deepest aspirations of the whole family of man.

Therefore, let our nation be known not only for its power, but for its compassion—not only for its brave soldiers but for its creative scholars—not only for its wealth, but for its willingness to share it with those less fortunate.

Let us show, in deeds as well as in words, the warm humanity and the spirit of brotherhood which have always characterized America at its best—an America which is not a global gendarme, but a giver of life and of hope to the dispossessed of the earth.

80th Annual Commencement

REMARKS

President Willard
Hladfelter

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

July 4, 1776

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Mayor Tate

190 yrs Ago

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Govt of the People

JUNE 16, 1966

Free Public Institutions

Judge Charles
Klein -
Ch. Bd. of Trustees

18 yrs Ago this Hall -

Lacked - shadows of state Rts - Sanction of
Human Rts -

struggle for
Equal opportunity

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Economic Poverty
Spiritual -

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Yet it was not until this century that government

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Their attitude was not unlike that which Anatole
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as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg
in the streets, and to steal bread."

↳ The tide began to turn with Theodore Roosevelt and
Woodrow Wilson, and came in strong with Franklin Delano
Roosevelt and the social and economic advances of the
New Deal.

↳ It is on these advances that we are building today.
"The poor of the earth," says the Book of Job, "hide
themselves together." 

And, here in America, they were so well hidden in
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they make up almost one-fifth of our population.

↳ They were not only invisible, they were largely inaudible. Except in the civil rights movement, they had no voice.

But today, we can hear and see the poor!
Now they are standing up and speaking for themselves.

Sometimes their words may sound harsh and angry. But that is infinitely better than bitter and frustrated silence.

Yes, we can see and hear the poor, ~~nowadays~~.

↳ They are very much on the minds and on the consciences of most Americans -- and, I say, it is all to the good.

↳ In America's cities, poverty takes a form you know too well. I call it slumism.! *you have seen it often - deplored it and all too often ignored it.*

↳ Slumism is more than old and rundown buildings.

↳ Slumism is ungathered garbage and inadequate health and sanitary facilities.

↳ Slumism is second-rate schooling for those who need the best.

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"I wonder, do people who never have to worry about work, know what happens to you when you keep knocking your head on a stone wall and there's still no work? . . .

I'll tell you what happens, you just fold up and die.

That's what drugs and liquor mean. They mean you've died. They mean you've hung up on the world, because you just keep calling and there just ain't no answer on the other end of the line."

∟ This is the call we Americans must answer -- with human kindness, with understanding, and above all, now!

∟ We have ample reason today to heed Aristotle's grim warning that "poverty is the parent of revolution and crime."

∟ No people should know this better than we, for violence and crime are daily realities in our cities.

∟ The reason is clear: The degradation and injustice in our urban ghettos have brought these evils upon us.

∟ And things may get worse, not better, before we win our war against poverty.

∟ Poverty takes many forms and arises from many causes -- and we are learning that no single answer will suffice.

∟ We are seeking the answers for every age of poverty -- from our pre-school youngsters to our senior citizens.

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↳ So are the new undertakings generally called the Poverty Program -- community action, Head Start, the Job Corps, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and others.

↳ We are moving into new ground, and there are no blazed trails for us to follow.

↳ Some things we try will not work out; others will do far better than we expected.

↳ We must change or discard those programs which are not making headway, and we must expand those that are.

There can be no dogma or doctrine. We must find out what works. and then apply it!

We have already made a significant impact on poverty. ~~For example~~, Department of Labor figures show that the Great Society programs, in their totality, accounted for half the substantial reduction in unemployment in 1965.

And we have also, I think, begun to identify the major directions in which we must move forward. I would stress four in particular -- education, income maintenance, job development, and the enhancement of human dignity.

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And this is as true of the war on poverty as of every aspect of our life.

Perhaps the biggest gain we have scored so far ~~against poverty~~ has been in keeping hundreds of thousands of young Americans in high school and college, so that they can meet the stricter standards for employment in this technological age.

At the other end of the spectrum, we need to do more to assure an adequate income to those who are too old or too handicapped to work.

Just this month, the President reiterated his commitment to "the basic right of every older American to a decent income."

We should look forward to a time when these deserving people not only receive enough to live on, but share in

the continuing rise of our standard of living. *Surely this is a worthy challenge to this generation and our prosperous America!*

↳ We must do more, too, about jobs for the poor.

↳ We must regard the untrained and unemployed not as drags on our society, but as unused national resources.

↳ Our nation needs and wants the services these "wasted Americans" can provide.

↳ Today there are at least five million jobs waiting to be developed and filled in the expanding field of human services -- health, education, welfare, and recreation.

↳ That is why our government programs are training people, ~~for them~~. In doing this, we do three important things at once: provide jobs for the unemployed; provide essential services for all Americans; and provide the professionals in these fields the non-professional help they need.

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∟ We need to use a new kind of grammar in speaking and writing about poverty -- a grammar in which the poor are the subjects, the people who act, rather than the objects, the people who are acted upon.

∟ We need to involve the poor actively because we need to learn from them.

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↳ The American university must abandon some of its aspirations for isolation. - ~~Not an island of meditation~~
~~But~~ ~~But when the Act com~~
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↳ There are many community problems which would benefit more from research than from argument, and the university should be in the midst of all of them.

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The university can -- and should -- become an
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Indeed, the most important laboratory of today's
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Temple University has recognized this ^{opportunity and} responsibility
for some time. And recently, as you know, Temple has
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Opportunity to become part of a network of seven universities
that will help train both the officers and the foot soldiers
in the war against poverty, many of them recruited from
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The university can be ^{more than a} ~~not only the~~ center of learning
and enlightenment in the community. It can be the center
of progressive ~~activism~~ social action. Indeed, it
should be.

and those on faculty and student body feel and see the inhumanity to man, ~~the things that~~ ~~exist~~ there is ~~is~~ to be done here - a peace to be won here - ~~peace~~ to be saved here.

Now, a word to you who are graduating today.

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Almost two-thirds of all VISTA volunteers to date ~~have~~ ^{have} been college students -- or recent graduates -- taking a year off for this service. Volunteers in Service to America.

Just this week, 500 college students boarded a so-called Troop Train at Union Station in Washington. They were VISTA Associates -- devoting their summer to work in the Appalachian hills and hollows.

VISTA offers great scope for service in the war on poverty. ~~But there are other opportunities too.~~ And there is of course the opportunity for service abroad -- in the Peace Corps and in other international programs.

You have earned the right to be called the Volunteer generation.

~~I hope that all of you will see such service as an essential part of your responsibility to your country -- and to yourselves.~~

Finally, let me place this all in its wider international context. As we tear down the tattered tarpaper that separates the poor from the rest of us in our own fortunate land, we must rededicate ourselves to the fight against the conditions of poverty ^{injustice} in other places.

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Cabinet meeting

to heal the sick, feed the hungry, and teach the illiterate?

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To achieve peace is to build, to work, to seek further.

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By pressing the good fight against poverty both at home and abroad, we identify ourselves with the deepest aspirations of the whole family of man.

And ~~we~~ ^{let us} show in deeds, as well as words, the warm humanity and the spirit of brotherhood which have always characterized America at its best -- an America which is not a global gendarme, but a giver of life and of hope to the dispossessed of the earth.

Let America be remembered not only for its power but for its compassion -
Not only for its brave soldiers but also for its scholars
Not only for its wealth but also for its charity.



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19122

NEWS RELEASE

ALBERT R. CARLISLE, Director
Office of Public Information

787-7476 VI 3-0541
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FOR RELEASE AFTER 10:30 a.m., THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 1966

Following is the text of an Address by The Hon. Hubert H. Humphrey, Vice President of the United States, at the 80th Commencement of Temple University in Philadelphia's Convention Hall on Thursday, June 16, 1966. Make no release of the material until after 10:30 a.m. on that date.

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Yet it was not until this century that government played a real part in the struggle. Those who held industrial and political power long rejected any government intervention on behalf of the poor.

Their attitude was not unlike that which Anatole France had played in Europe with bitter irony --

"The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread."

The tide began to turn with Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, and came in strong with Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the social and economic advances of the New Deal.

It is on these advances that we are building today.

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(and)

add one/TEMPLE VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

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(more)

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Civil Rights Legislation is an essential part of the War on Poverty.

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So are the new undertakings generally called the poverty program -- Community Action, Head Start, The Job Corps, The Neighborhood Youth Corps, and others.

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At the other end of the spectrum, we need to do more to assure an adequate income to those who are too old or too handicapped to work.

Just this month, the President reiterated his commitment to "The basic right of every older American to a decent income."

We should look forward to a time when these deserving people not only receive enough to live on, but share in the continuing rise of our standard of living.

(more)

add four/TEMPLE VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

We must do more, too, about jobs for the poor.

We must regard the untrained and unemployed not as drags on our society, but as unused national resources.

Our nation needs and wants the services these "wasted Americans" can provide.

Today there are at least five million jobs waiting to be developed and filled in the expanding field of human services -- health, education, welfare, and recreation.

That is why our government programs are training people for them. In doing this, we do three important things at once -- provide jobs for the unemployed -- provide essential services for all Americans -- and provide the professionals in these fields the non-professional help they need.

There is opportunity, too, for the employment of the poor in the poverty program itself -- and great advantage, as well. No one can understand poverty so well, or bring to people who suffer from it such intimate and sympathetic understanding, as those who have known it first-hand.

This brings me to the most intangible, but most important, direction in which we need to move -- the enhancement of human dignity.

That is why community action programs are so important a part of the War on Poverty. That is why the participation of the poor in the development and management of these programs is absolutely vital. For the essence of human dignity is the right of people to have a say in determining their own future.

(more)

add five/TEMPLE VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

We need to use a new kind of grammar in speaking and writing about poverty -- a grammar in which the poor are the subjects, the people who act, rather than the objects, the people who are acted upon.

We need to involve the poor actively because we need to learn from them.

We need to find out why it is that our schools are not reaching many of their children, why urban renewal is not really eliminating slums, and why welfare programs are not breaking the cycle of dependency.

And I think we would do well to listen to people who have hard, first-hand knowledge about all this.

Moreover, we must apply the basic principle of democracy -- that people, in their wisdom and even in their folly, know what is best for them. We need to bear in mind George Bernard Shaw's cautionary words --

"Do not do unto others as you would they should do unto you -- their tastes may not be the same."

Today there are 8000 new leaders in communities throughout the country. They are men and women from areas of poverty serving on community action boards -- men and women previously unrecognized, unheard, unheeded.

Today they meet, consult, and make decisions along with their communities-- bankers, labor leaders and public officials.

And there are today over 30,000 additional men and women from the ranks of the poor serving as paid workers in community action programs.

The poor have a major role to play in their own escape from poverty. But they cannot do it alone.

There is a place for every American. There is a place, particularly, for our universities.

(more)

add ~~six~~/TEMPLE VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

The American university must abandon some of its aspirations for isolation.

We must go back to the early European ideas of the university as part of the city, and away from the English idea -- so prevalent here in the 1880's -- that the institution of higher learning must be isolated from life by acres and acres of well-tended lawn.

American universities have much to give to American cities, and our cities have a great deal to give in return.

There are many community problems which would benefit more from research than from argument, and the university should be in the midst of all of them.

The learning of its faculty should always be at the service of the community. University expertise is urgently needed for the solution of dozens of complex problems -- problems of transportation, of housing, of management, of law enforcement, of urban and area planning, of public welfare -- yes, and of human relations.

The university can -- and should -- become an integral, catalytic part of the community.

Indeed, the most important laboratory of today's university can be the community itself.

Temple University has recognized this responsibility for some time. And recently, as you know, Temple has received a 500,000-dollar grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity to become part of a network of seven universities that will help train both the officers and the foot soldiers in the war against poverty, many of them recruited from the ranks of the poor themselves.

The university can be not only the center of learning and enlightenment in the community. It can be the center of progressive activism.

(more)

add seven/TEMPLE VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

Now, a word to you who are graduating today,

Of those to whom much is given, much is expected.

This generation of young Americans is living and acting in this fine old tradition. Many of you have already enlisted in the battle against poverty in communities throughout the country.

Almost two-thirds of all Vista Volunteers to date have been college students -- or recent graduates -- taking a year off for this service.

Just this week, 500 college students boarded a so-called Troop Train at Union Station in Washington. They were Vista Associates -- devoting their summer to work in the Appalachian hills and hollows.

Vista offers great scope for service in the War on Poverty. But there are other opportunities too. And there is of course the opportunity for service abroad -- in the Peace Corps and in other international programs.

You have earned the right to be called the volunteer generation.

I hope that all of you will see such service as an essential part of your responsibility to your country -- and to yourselves.

Finally, let me place this all in its wider international context. As we tear down the tattered tarpaper that separates the poor from the rest of us in our own fortunate land, we must rededicate ourselves to the fight against the conditions of poverty in other places.

Two-thirds of mankind -- nearly all the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America -- are beset by hunger, disease, and misery every day of their lives. It is in soil like this that the seeds of violence, despair, and revolution take root.

(more)

add eight/TEMPLE VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

As the late Pope John so often said, "Where there is constant want, there is no peace."

More than ever, what we do here is intimately related to what we can accomplish abroad. People everywhere urgently seek and demand human dignity.

By pressing the good fight against poverty both at home and abroad, we identify ourselves with the deepest aspirations of the whole family of man.

And we show in deeds, as well as words, the warm humanity and the spirit of brotherhood which have always characterized America at its best -- an America which is not a global gendarme, but a giver of life and of hope to the dispossessed of the earth.

ADDRESS OF VICE-PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY
Temple University, June 16, 1966

President Gladfelter, distinguished Mayor of the City of Philadelphia Mayor Tate, Judge Charles Klein, and the other members of the Board of Trustees, the graduates of this class of 1966, their friends and families, my fellow Americans. Yes, and my fellow classmates of the honorary degrees.

I want to say a word immediately to those of you who have struggled for your respective degrees, whether in graduate school or undergradutate school, as one who has been through both, and in recent years has had the privilege of these honorary degrees -- I recommend the honorary degrees, they're a lot easier! And they look every bit as good on the walls, except that I'm not sure everybody feels the same way about them.

It's a rare privilege to be invited to participate in this 80th annual commencement of one of America's truly great universities. And I can't think of a better place to make a commencement address than Philadelphia, because many things have commenced here. It was 190 years ago that this Republic was commenced, started on its way right here on July 4th, 1776, a most amazing beginning. And it emphasized for us once again the importance of beginnings and the building that is necessary once those

beginnings have been made.

And if you'll permit a personal word, it was just 18 years ago in this very hall -- and it was much hotter, and television was in its infancy -- that I stood on this very platform in another sort of commencement. It did have a sort of partisan tinge to it. There were a number of Democrats here of all varieties and I was one of the members of the Platform Committee. I stood on this platform and asked my party and indeed once again this nation, to commence to walk out of the shadows of states' rights into the bright sunshine of human rights. Eighteen years ago. (Applause)

And I must tell you that it did stir up quite a fuss! The hall wasn't nearly as full when I completed as when I started. There were those that thought they needed some exercise -- and they left. Eighteen years ago.

But this university has within its own history started many things and has been the commencement in America of the involvement of the university with the people, the involvement of the university with the city, the involvement of the university with the days and the times that we live in, and indeed the involvement of the university with the major problems that confront humanity. I'm

talking to an action-oriented university and I pay my respects to the great faculty of this university and to its Board of Trustees and to everyone associated with it. And how honored I feel today to have some association because of the honors that have been given to us on this occasion.

I want to report to you today about a struggle taking place in our country. Franklin Roosevelt once said: "We hate war." And we do. Harry Truman said: "The only war that we want to fight is the war against man's ancient enemies: disease, hunger, illiteracy." And two years ago this nation launched a war, a new kind of war, a war that we must win -- a war against poverty. Not merely the economic poverty, which is more readily correctable, but the poverty of the human spirit, the poverty of not being wanted, the poverty of rejection, the poverty of feeling that you're on the outside and no place to go and no one with whom to associate.

But you know, in one way or another we Americans have been fighting this kind of poverty throughout our history. It has always been the American Dream to create a society in which every citizen would have the unfettered opportunity to lift himself and his family to something better, to be the best that he could within the

limits of his abilities and talents. Yet it was not until this century, in fact, that government played any role in that great endeavor and adventure. Those in the past who had held industrial and political power had rejected any type of government intervention. Their attitude was not unlike that of Anatole France -- and you remember his words and his bitter irony with which he flayed Europe -- "The law, in its majestic equality forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, to steal bread." That was the way it was -- but no longer.

The tide began to turn with Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, and then came the strong voice of Franklin Roosevelt and the social and economic advances of the New Deal. And it is on these beginnings, these first steps which are the longest journey, that we're building today.

The Book of Job says: "The poor of the earth hide themselves together." And here in America they were so well hidden, our fellow Americans so well hidden in the urban and rural slums, that it was all too easy even for men of compassion and good will not to see them, although this part of the American family makes up one-fifth of our population. They were not only invisible, they were largely

inaudible; except in the Civil Rights movement, they seemed not to have a voice. But today, my fellow Americans, and particularly these graduates, they are heard and they can be seen, they are on the march here and throughout the world. Now they are standing up and speaking for themselves. Sometimes their words sound angry and harsh, but this is infinitely better than the bitter and frustrated silence that was known for so long.

Yes, we can see and hear the poor, even the poor of spirit. They are very much on our minds and consciences. And this is all to the good. It's a mark of character that this great, rich nation can remember that it has within its family the needy, the disadvantaged and the poor.

Let me talk to you about an area that you know very well --our cities -- where most Americans are going to live and now do live. It's there that poverty takes a form that you know well; you have seen it; you've deplored it; you've written about it, studied about it; talked about it. And regrettably, most of us have ignored it.

I tried to coin a word for it that puts it all in one concept: I call it "slumism." Now slumism is

more than just old broken-down buildings. Slumism is the ungathered garbage, the inadequate health and sanitary facilities, which in a real sense shows the disdain for the poor. Slumism is second-rate schooling for those who need the best. Slumism is the danger on the staircase and violence in the streets, the attack in the park. Slumism is that bitter, bitter feeling that nobody cares. Slumism is the voice of that Negro mother testifying in court why her sons went wrong. What a pathetic story! Here's what she said:

"I wonder. Do people who never have to worry about work know what happens to you when you keep knocking your head on a stone wall and still there's no work? I'll tell you what happens. You just fold up and die. That's what drugs and liquor mean -- they mean you've died. They mean you've hung up on the world, because you just keep calling and there just ain't no answer on the other end of the line."

It couldn't have been said more directly, simply and poetically -- and tragically. That is what we mean by poverty.

This is the call which we Americans who are better off, who have been privileged to have an education

paid for, in a sense, by many generations, must answer. And we must answer it with kindness, and above all with understanding. And we must answer it now. We have ample reason to heed Aristotle's grim warning that poverty is the parent of revolution and crime. No people should know this better than we, for violence and crime are daily realities in our cities, and revolution grips the poverty-stricken world.

The reason is clear. Degradation and injustice in our urban ghettos have brought these evils upon us. And I remind you that things may get worse, not better, before we win our war against poverty. Therefore the urgency of the struggle, the necessity of citizen mobilization to win this war.

Poverty takes many forms, it arises from many causes, and we have learned and are learning that there is no single simple answer. We are seeking answers, looking for them, for every age of poverty, from the pre-school youngsters to our senior citizens. And we're seeking answers for every place of poverty, from the city slums of Philadelphia to the depressed rural areas like Appalachia. Poverty is the common denominator that binds these people together in rebellion, in resentment, in anger and in sorrow.

Civil rights legislation, of course, is an essential part of the war on poverty. But it is only a part. So is aid to our elementary and secondary schools, focused particularly on the children of the poor. So is the work of this university that focuses its attention upon the needs of the young people of this state. So is the aid to the depressed areas and so is Medicare. All of them are building-blocks, all of them are ammunition, in the war on poverty. So are those new undertakings generally called "The Poverty Program," "Community Action," "Head-Start," "The Job Corps," "The Neighborhood Youth Corps," and other things. These are somewhat foreign to our experience because we've never had to be in them or endure them.

We're moving to new ground, however, and there are no blazed trails, no road-maps for us to follow. Some things that we will try will not work. And I come to this platform today to tell you that some of them will not work, and I know that I shall read of them in glaring headlines. But there are doctors on this platform who have tried for years to find the cure for cancer, but it has not yet worked. But we ask them to try and try again.

Other efforts that we make will do better than we had expected. So we must change and discard those

programs that are not making headway and we must expand those that are. There can be no dogma or doctrine in this land. What Americans must do is find out what works. Try. Experiment. And if it works, try it again, apply it.

We've begun to identify the major directions in which we must move forward. And I stress four: Education, Income Maintenance, Job Training and Development, and above all, the Enhancement of Human Dignity.

The more we examine and face the facts, the more we confirm what Americans seem almost instinctively to have known since the earliest days of our Republic -- that education is the wisest and the soundest and the most productive investment that this nation has ever made. In fact, no nation has ever educated itself into insolvency. Perhaps the biggest gain we have scored so far in our struggle on poverty has been in keeping hundreds of thousands of youngsters in the grade schools and high schools, and young people in our universities, so that they can meet the stricter standards of employment in this technological age.

At the other end of the spectrum we need to do more, much more, to assure adequate income to those who are too old or too handicapped to work. And I mention this to this graduating class, because in your lifetime most

Americans are going to be young or old; the middle group will shrink. And it's to the young that we offer opportunity and it's to the old that we offer security. Just this month, the President reiterated his commitment of the basic right of every older American to a decent income. We need to look forward to a time when these deserving people will not only receive enough to live on, but to share in the continuing rise of our standard of living and also to participate in all the life of this nation, its culture and its economy. Surely this we can do. The richest of all nations on earth, unbelievably rich, producing almost 50% of all that mankind produces, 6% of the world's population with over 30% of the world's income, -- we can do it.

And we need to do more about jobs for the poor. We must regard this untrained and unemployed group -- and we have over three-and-a-half million of them -- as not drags on our society, but as unused national resources. Our nation needs, with its responsibilities in this world, and wants the services that these wasted Americans can provide. Today there are at least 5,000,000 jobs waiting to be developed and filled in the expanding field of human services -- health, education, welfare and recreation.

This is why our government programs are

training people for these jobs. In doing so, we do three important things at once: provide jobs for the unemployed, provide essential services for all Americans, and provide for the professionals, -- for you -- some of the non-professionals that can stand alongside of you and aid you in your endeavors. There is opportunity, too, for the employment of the poor in the poverty program itself.

But the most important direction in which we need to move is in the enhancement of human dignity. People want to be wanted. They need to be needed. And above all, they deserve respect. This is why community action programs are so important these days and why the participation of the poor in the development and the management of these programs is absolutely vital. For the essence of human dignity is the right of people to have a say in determining their own future. That's what the Declaration of Independence was all about. That's what the Constitution of this country stands for.

So we need to use a new kind of grammar in speaking and writing about the poor, a grammar in which the poor are the subjects, the people who act, rather than the objects, the people who are acted upon. This is going to take some reorientation of our thinking. You see, we

need to involve the poor actively. Because it is only from them that we can really learn what it means to be poor. We need to find out why it is that our schools are not reaching many of their children, why the dropouts, why urban renewal -- into which we put billions -- is not really eliminating slums, and why the welfare programs are not breaking the cycle of dependency but in a sense extending it. I think we could well listen to the people who have had hard and first-hand knowledge about all this.

Moreover, we must apply the basic principle of democracy, that people in their wisdom, or even in their folly, know what is best for them. You know, you need to keep in mind what George Bernard Shaw's cautionary words told us: Do not do unto others as you would they should do unto you; their tastes may not be the same. It's worthy to ponder.

Today there are over 8000 new leaders in the communities throughout America -- in less than two years, 8000 new leaders who have come to the forefront! And there are men and women in the areas of poverty, serving on community action boards -- they were previously unknown, unheard and unheeded. Today they meet, consult and make decisions. This is democracy at work, the strengthening of

the political body. There are today over 30,000 additional men and women from the ranks of the poor serving as paid workers, training workers, in community action programs. Progress is being made. The poor do have a major role. But they cannot do it alone. And this is where you come in.

There is a place in this struggle for social justice for every American. There is a place particularly for our universities and thank goodness, this university knows it. The American university cannot be an island of meditation in a desert of need. The American university must abandon, if it has them, some of its aspirations for isolation. I think we need to go back to the early European ideas of the university as part of the city, and away from that comfortable English idea, so prevalent here in the 1800s, that institutions of higher learning must be isolated from the life of the people by acres and acres of well-tended lawn and fields. Universities need to be involved in life. They need to be where the action is. They need to be close to the sidewalks where the people walk and work. And this university fulfills that function.

American universities have so much to give to American cities. And our cities have a great deal to give in return. There are many community problems which

would benefit much more from research than from argument, and the university should be in the midst of all of them. The learning of its faculty should always be at the service of the community because it's the community that pays the bills, and it's the community where people live. University expertise is urgently needed for the solution of dozens of complex problems that beset us -- transportation, housing, law enforcement, management, urban and area planning, welfare and yes, human relations.

And the graduate of the university is the very person to whom we must look for help. The university can, in other words, become an integral, catalytic part of community life. Indeed, the most important laboratory of today's university can be the community itself. Temple University has recognized this responsibility. Temple University is now a part of a network of seven universities that will help train both officers and foot-soldiers in the War on Poverty. Many of them will be recruited from the ranks of the poor themselves and brought to this university. Yes, the university can be more than a center of learning and enlightenment in a community, important as that is. It can be the center of progressive social action. It can be the center of ferment for good and not ferment for the

purpose of fermentation. And indeed it should be an action institution. And those in the faculty and student body who feel deep in their souls and consciences man's inhumanity to man, let me say to you there's work to be done and work to be done here. A peace to be won, and a peace to be won here. Lives to be saved, and lives to be saved here. From those to whom much is given, much is expected.

I know that this generation of young Americans is living and acting in this fine tradition. Many of you have already enlisted in the battle against injustice and against poverty in communities throughout our nation. Almost two-thirds of all the Vista volunteers have been college students or recent graduates taking a year off for Volunteers in Service to America. Just this week 500 college students boarded a so-called troop train at Union Station in Washington, DC. They were VISTA troops, college trained, devoting their summer work, devoting their energies this summer to work in the Appalachian hills and hollows, out fighting man's enemies.

And there is, of course, the opportunity for service abroad. I would be derelict if I did not ask you to think of the Peace Corps or the many other international agencies that reach out to help people help themselves.

You have earned the right to be called the "volunteer generation" and I salute you.

Finally, let me place this all in wider context, in the international context. Because as we tear down the tar-paper that separates the poor from the rest of us in this, our own fortunate land, I submit that we must rededicate ourselves to the fight against the conditions of poverty and injustice in other places. Man is not an island unto himself -- he's a part of a brotherhood. Yet two-thirds of that brotherhood, nearly all of Asia and Africa and Latin America, are beset by hunger and disease and misery beyond our calculation or comprehension. It's a fact of their everyday life.

This is the seed-bed for violence, despair and revolution. No amount of military, no amount of diplomacy, no treaty, can prevent a holocaust unless this seed-bed of despair and misery is uprooted and unless change for the good comes. As the late, beloved Pope John so often said: Where there is constant want, there is no peace.

So to this nation that says it loves peace, let it fight want. To achieve peace is not easy, nor does it come by the wishing. Peace is building, peace is work, peace is sacrifice, yes -- it's education, it's foreign aid,

and it is the Peace Corps and it is the United Nations, it is food, and it is medicine and rehabilitation and engineering. Peace does not come because you ask for it. It becomes a fact because you live for it, and if need be, die for it.

Peace is healing the sick, feeding the hungry, teaching the illiterate, and more importantly, helping people to feed themselves, to teach themselves, and to heal themselves.

More than ever, therefore, what we do here at home is intimately related to what we can accomplish abroad. People are watching us. We're on the spot. People everywhere urgently seek and demand human dignity, a better life. And I submit that by pressing the good fight against poverty both here and abroad we identify ourselves with the deep aspirations of the whole human family.

So my fellow Americans, let our beloved land be remembered not only for its power, but for its compassion; not only for its brave soldiers, but for its creative scholars; not only for its big buildings, but for its magnificent art and culture; not only for its wealth, but let America be remembered for its charity. Let us show in deeds as well as words, the warm humanity and spirit of brotherhood which has always characterized America at its

best, an America which is not a global policeman and gendarme, but an America that is a giver of life, a beacon of hope to the dispossessed of the earth.

This is the work of a great nation. It will be in our humility and in our charity, in our understanding and in our sharing, that our mark of greatness shall be revealed. This is your opportunity.

I congratulate every one of you and say to you quite candidly: You live in the most exciting of times. Make the best of it.

Good day.

(Applause)



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