

REMARKS OF  
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
B'NAI B'RITH  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
SEPTEMBER 8, 1968

I choose this occasion to make the opening address of my campaign for the Presidency of the United States.

I intend to lay before you -- and before the American people -- my thoughts on what I conceive to be one fundamental issue of this election to the future of this country.

These are somber and difficult times -- times ill-suited to exaggerated rhetoric or traditional campaign appeals.

We must look frankly and openly at our problems. And we must be equally candid in presenting our thoughts on how these problems can be resolved.

These are decidedly not the times for silence or evasion or artfully constructed appeals to fears or emotion.

However great the temptation ... however attractive the short-run gains, the dangers of anything less than complete forthrightness are too grave to countenance.

It is in this spirit that I lay before you my convictions on the choice which confronts the American people in this Presidential election.

The choice is simply this: Shall we -- as a nation -- move forward toward one society of opportunity and justice, or shall we abandon this commitment out of fear and prejudice and move instead toward a fractured and separated society -- black against white; rich against poor; comfortable against left-out?

The decision we make this year will, in fact, answer this question for ourselves, for our children, and for all those who have believed and sacrificed in the building of this nation.

It is my belief that the modern movement for human rights in America is one continuous struggle ... that it is still going on ... and that for us to survive as a free nation, it must continue.

For about a quarter of a century, our nation has been making steady progress toward equal treatment under law and social opportunity for all Americans. In the last decade, it has been rapid progress.

Think how far we have come in the past generation in civil rights alone: the wartime FEPC; the desegregation of the armed services; the adoption of a strong civil rights plank at the 1948 Democratic Convention; the Truman civil rights program; the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing legal segregation; the Montgomery bus boycott; the 1957 and 1960 Civil Rights Acts; the sit-ins movement; the freedom rides; the Voters' Education Project; the comprehensive 1964 Civil Rights Act; the Voting Rights Act; the Voting Rights Act of 1965; the Civil Rights Act of 1968.

There has been historic progress in lifting the level of health, of education, of housing for every American. Not enough progress, but nonetheless historic progress.

And there has been a great deal more than governmental action. There has been action by local and state governments, business, labor, the churches, schools and universities and by many other institutions and associations.

B'nai B'rith holds a proud and honored place among those who have stood in the forefront of this struggle.

Seen in the perspective of history, and of the perennial problems of humans living together, this quarter century of American progress has been one of mankind's great stories.

It has been too slow.

It came very late.

But it did come.

It came in a lawful and non-violent way.

\* \* \*

Until now, we have been moving steadily forward -- making progress under law together, Republicans and Democrats, black and white, rich and poor. The North united with a growing part of the South -- in fact, slowly and steadily all Americans increasingly pulling together.

But now in 1968, there comes a crossroads: A dangerous election, a hazardous national choice.

Opponents and some who were once supporters of the movement for equal rights and social opportunity now disdainfully write it off. Some Americans of all races, creeds and colors, look upon that movement as finished -- maybe even as a failure.

Ugly riots, ugly rumors, ugly racisms divide and frighten the people. Burning, looting, and white and black terrorism make headlines.

But I believe that the human rights movement represents America more truly than any terrorism, extremism, or violence.

And I believe that this nation must not be misled into believing that a few extremists and preachers of hate represent anything but the tiniest minority of those who still live with less than truly equal opportunity.

And I believe that those who still have less than the rest of us have shown remarkable patience and good will in resisting the calls of extremism.

Of course, the movement for equal rights must now change.

The old objective was to use the law to strike down legal barriers.

The new objective is to build real equality, especially in the city slums and pockets of rural poverty which still exist.

This new objective is harder.

At the same time -- largely because of the success, not the failure, of the older movement -- it has become much more urgent.

For years I have defended the cause of human rights against reactionaries and extremists of the Right. Now, I defend it against extremism of both Left and Right.

I defend the purposes and methods of the human rights movement not because they are "moderate" or "gradual" or "compromise" ... not because they represent a "slower" way than some other alternative ... but because they are the only alternative.

We must move with the greatest possible speed and energy -- forward.

My disagreement with black extremists is not that they want to go "fast" and I want to go slow -- but that I don't think their direction is forward.

Grabbing guns, throwing fire bombs, cynically discrediting America's institutions and insisting on racial epithets is not progress -- nor will any of this lead to progress.

To the violent few who, through their words and actions would join guerilla movements, I say that you are as mistaken and anti-American as the

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extremist white groups that would equally spread fear and violence through the land.

If this trend toward guerilla bands -- and that is what they are -- continues, there is no question in my mind but that strong legislation is inevitable to stop their activities.

As President I would propose such legislation.

We cannot tolerate in America armed terrorist groups of any color or persuasion.

\* \* \*

I believe the majority of Americans know that their prosperity and their security do not depend upon these things being denied to others.

We cannot deny the full privileges of citizenship to any group in our midst -- especially after that group has been rightly awakened to those privileges -- unless we are then prepared to hold that group down by force and repression.

Force and repression breed more force and repression. We know they offer no long term - only short term -- answers.

Beyond this, every single citizen in this country has a stake in the human dignity and full productivity of every other citizen.

We must ask ourselves: Which costs less -- on the one hand crime; delinquency; welfarism; unemployment and pent-up emotion in our people? ... or, on the other hand, positive, constructive programs to build opportunity for every American?

Make no mistake about it: All of us have a stake in the economic betterment of all Americans. It is in our dollars-and-cents self-interest to get this done.

Decent education is almost the only road to a decent job.

Decent jobs, in turn, are almost the only way that a society has to provide the means for betterment through self-help.

We must be willing to help provide the education ... the jobs ... the economic opportunities that form the base on which everything else must be built.

That is the economic aspect of what we face.

But there is an even more important aspect. It is the moral aspect.

We must realize that we are living at the threshold of a world-wide revolution toward human emancipation.

Either we lead this revolution peacefully, or we shall be inundated by its coming wave.

This revolution is nothing less in truth than the revolution begun in our own country by Thomas Jefferson. It is our revolution.

And it is our obligation that it shall be carried forward through democratic, peaceful processes and not fall victim to those who would make it just one more of history's promising false starts.

We must create social opportunity in America because it is right and because it is what this country is all about.

\* \* \*

The third-party candidate for President owes his political existence to the fears and hates aroused by this issue.

My Republican opponent is no racist. He is a fair and just man.

But he and the Republican Party have chosen this year to join forces with the most reactionary elements in American society.

This compact was signed and sealed in Miami Beach in full view of the American people.

They have adopted a Southern Strategy very similar to Mr. Goldwater's in 1964. And, I mean the Old South -- not the New South I mean to win.

They are openly competing with Mr. Wallace for the votes of people who at very best want to put the brakes on our progress toward full opportunity.

They have made a calculated decision to ignore the demands of left-out Americans within their own party and in the nation.

The opposition needn't have turned from the road of true justice and opportunity for all.

They could have returned to the tradition of Lincoln.

They could have joined with us in a declaration on human rights and fought this election out on urban issues and foreign policy and agriculture, and much else. I should have welcomed that contest.

But instead we are confronted not only with third-party extremism, but with the old Republican-reactionary coalition that has always held America back.

So the question before us this afternoon -- the question which I believe must be elevated to the fore in this Presidential election -- is: What would happen in America if a President were elected on a campaign and a strategy essentially designed to exploit the fears and tensions that grip significant portions of our people?

Look at the open tension in our cities.

Listen to the talk of white vigilantes and of black revolutionaries.

Watch the sale of guns and the making of firebombs.

Look at the flight of white people and mounting anger of black people.

Is that the way America ends? - After all the years of faithful work and the high hopes of the voyagers who came here ... all the dreams that mankind had for this nation in a "new world."

Does the land of the free and the home of the brave turn into an armed camp?

Which way shall we go?

I think it is a fateful choice.

I don't see how the momentum of such a choice can be altered, once taken.

Either we turn backward into a continually increasing polarizing of the nation and a widening spiral of fear -- or we continue to go forward into a new day of justice and order.

Which way: Apartheid or democracy? Separation or community? A society of ordered liberty or a society of fear and repression?

If we are to make the wrong choice, the next four years would not carry us all the way downhill. But I do say that we will choose now the direction for the long future.

\* \* \*

I have proposed a comprehensive program of action to deal directly with problems of crime and violence in America.

This is a serious problem -- one which demands immediate attention by government at all levels and the people.

But I will waste no time -- and arouse no passions -- through irresponsible attacks on the courts ... on our laws ... or on the Attorney General of the United States.

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I categorically reject such appeals.

I do so recognizing fully the short-run political dangers -- I also read the public opinion polls on this issue.

But I would prefer to have been right, and to have spoken in this cause during the campaign, than I would prefer to be silent and win the Presidency.

I therefore intend to make this election a referendum on human rights and opportunity in America.

I intend to lay before the American people the things we must do together in terms of jobs, education, housing, income maintenance, and health care to avoid the fate of separatism and division.

I intend to give the American people a clear and conscious choice about which direction we are to travel in the years ahead.

I believe American citizens do not want to live in a land where every man fears his neighbor.

This nation has a great moderate majority within it.

That vast preponderance of the people believe neither in racism and repression, nor in revolution and riot.

They want to extend to every man equal treatment -- and they want to do it peacefully and lawfully.

I believe that great moderate majority will prevail.

I believe we shall face our moment of truth and come through on the other side: One nation, under God, still indivisible, with a renewed devotion to liberty and to justice for all.

# # #



Dr. Wexler Pres. B'nai B'rith

B'nai B'rith, Wash. D.C.

Sept. 8, 1968

✓ This afternoon I want to talk with you about peace,

justice and opportunity -- in this country and abroad.

~~Danger - S E Asia - M.E. Europe~~

✓ The turbulent events of the past year in the Middle

East have demonstrated one fact beyond dispute: we can no

longer be content merely with Israel's "right to exist."

✓ Israel must now have the right to live -- in peace  
and security.

✓ It is an axiom of our troubled times that strength  
enhances the prospects of peace and that the want of it whets  
the appetite for war.

✓ The Middle East is no exception to this rule. ✓ A strong  
Israel and the striving for peace are hardly contradictory but  
rather they are complementary.

✓ Israel has the right to be strong enough to deter  
aggression and, ~~failing that~~, to be able to defend herself  
successfully. ✓ Moreover, Israel has the right to come to the  
United States and ask to be provided with what it needs in order



to achieve a credible deterrent strength.

*— she means to defend herself.*

↳ The U. S. has the duty to respond favorably to such requests on grounds of political wisdom and responsibility as much as those of human decency and morality.

*(I've already spoken out on this.)*

↳ The American people also view with distress and sadness the recent events in Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union's crude effort to crush out the New Day of liberalism and freedom behind the Iron Curtain will not--in the end--prevail.

↳ We should be particularly outraged by the Soviet's use of the shabbiest and most discredited of all political tactics -- a blatant appeal to anti-Semitism -- as justification for their invasion of this nation.

↳ This tactic only dramatizes for mankind the cynicism and ruthlessness of the Soviet Union's decision to occupy Czechoslovakia.

↳ We are also dismayed at the revival of anti-semitism in the Communist regime of Poland. . . especially when read against a sad and tragic history.

What a mockery it is that anyone on this earth should regard the advocacy of more democratic rights as something evil and dangerous.

         *has + will continue to*  
America ~~will~~ make clear its revulsion of such policies.

         Mankind's quest for justice and opportunity has also reached a moment of crisis in this country. *o*

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issue ~~of this election~~ *in this election as it pertains* to the future of this country ~~in this election~~.

These are somber and difficult times -- times ill-suited  
to exaggerated rhetoric or traditional campaign appeals.

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we must be equally candid in presenting our thoughts on how  
these problems can be resolved.

These are decidedly not the times for silence or evasion  
or artfully constructed appeals to fears or emotion.

↳ However great the temptation. . . however attractive the shortrun gains, the dangers of anything less than ~~complete~~ forthrightness are too grave to countenance. ○

↳ It is in this spirit that I lay before you my convictions on the choice which confronts the American people in this Presidential election.

↳ The choice is simply this: Shall we -- as a nation -- move forward toward one society of opportunity and justice, or instead toward a fractured and separated society -- black against white; rich against poor; comfortable against left-out?

↳ The decision we make this year will, in fact, answer this question -- for ourselves, for our children, and for all those who have believed and sacrificed in the building of this nation.

↳ It is my belief that the modern movement for human rights in America is one continuous struggle. . . that it is still going on . . . and that, for us to survive as a free nation, it must continue. ○

For about a quarter of a century, our nation has been making steady progress toward equal treatment under law and social opportunity for all Americans. In the last decade it has been rapid progress.

Think how far we have come in the past generation, in civil rights alone; the wartime FEPC; the desegregation of the armed services; the adoption of a strong civil rights plank at the 1948 Democratic Convention; the Truman civil rights program; the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing legal segregation; the Montgomery bus boycott; the 1957 and 1960 Civil Rights Acts; the sit-ins movement; the Freedom Rides; the Voter's Education Project; the comprehensive 1964 Civil Rights Act; the Voting Rights Act of 1965; the Civil Rights Act of 1968.

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And there has been a great deal more than governmental  
action. There has been action by local and state government,  
business, labor, the churches, schools and universities and  
by many other institutions and associations.

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progress under law, together, Republicans and Democrats, black and white,  
rich and poor, the North united with a growing part of the South --

in fact, slowly and steadily all Americans increasingly pulling together.

↳ But now in 1968 there comes a crossroads: A dangerous election, a hazardous national choice.

↳ Opponents, and some who were once supporters, of the movement for equal rights and social opportunity now disdainfully write it off. Some Americans of all races, creeds and cdors look upon that movement as finished -- maybe even as a failure. !

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The new objective is to build real equality, <sup>*in our social, economic & political activities*</sup> especially in the  
city slums and -- pockets of rural poverty which still exist.

This new objective is harder *in more difficult!*

At the same time -- largely because of the success, not the  
failure, of the older movement -- it has become much more urgent.

Alexis de Tocqueville:

"The sufferings that are endured patiently, as being  
inevitable, ~~become~~ become intolerable the moment that it  
appears that there might be an escape."

For years I have defended the cause of human rights against reactionaries and extremists of the Right. Now I defend it against extremism of both Left and Right. !

I defend the purposes and methods of the peaceful human rights movement not because they are "moderate" or "gradual" or "compromise". . . not because they represent a "slower" way than some other alternative. . . but because they are the only alternative. !

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Grabbing guns, throwing fire bombs, cynically discrediting America's institutions and insisting on racial epithets is not progress -- nor will any of this lead to progress.

To the violent few who through their words and actions would  
join guerilla movements, I say that you are as mistaken and anti-  
American as the extremist white groups that would equally

spread fear and violence through the land.

*Extremism is the mid-wife of anarchy - another invitation to repression and totalitarianism*

If this trend toward guerilla bands -- and that is what they are --

continues, there is no question in my mind but that strong legislation  
is inevitable to stop their activities.

As President I would propose such legislation.

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↳ But there is an even more important aspect. It is the moral aspect.

↳ We must realize that we are living at the threshold of a world-wide revolution toward human emancipation.

↳ Either we lead this revolution peacefully, or we shall be inundated by its coming wave *of violence & war*.

↳ This revolution is nothing less in truth than the revolution begun in our own country by Thomas Jefferson. It is our revolution.

↳ And it is our obligation that it shall be carried forward through democratic, peaceful processes and not fall victim to those who would make it just one more of history's promising false starts.

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✓ But he and the Republican Party have chosen this year to join forces with the most <sup>*certain*</sup> reactionary elements in American society.

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