

HUBERT HUMPHREY: THE POLITICS OF PEOPLE

Hubert H. Humphrey walked slowly down the deserted main street. Up and down the three block stretch of a once prosperous farm community were boarded and crumbling storefronts.

The bank had closed four years ago. All that was left in the drug store was a dust covered soda fountain. The general store was still open. Its elderly proprietor stood on the sidewalk talking to the town barber. Both were awaiting the occasional customer.

This dying town was not the Humphrey birthplace of Wallace, South Dakota. And the man walking down the street was not the young pharmacist trying to survive the Great Depression on the edge of the dustbowl.

The scene of despair was Culbertson, Nebraska. The date was September 9, 1971. The man walking down the decaying main street was the junior Senator from Minnesota conducting a field hearing for his Rural Development Subcommittee.

Humphrey had seen and lived in many towns like Culbertson. But Culbertson is different. It and thousands of similar rural communities are dying at a time of unprecedented prosperity. And the people of the Culbertsons are leaving rural America for the overcrowded cities at the rate of millions per year. Seventy-five percent of the American people now live on less than two percent of the land.

The inseparability of the rural and urban crisis and the unwillingness of most Americans to understand this phenomenon brought Hubert Humphrey to Culbertson in the heart of the Great Plains. And it was Hubert Humphrey's own realization that the solutions of the past decade won't

work to end urban-rural decay in the 70's or 80's and won't work to end the troubling divisions in American society that brought him back to the Senate.

There is a new Hubert Humphrey walking down Senate corridors, talking to students on campuses, listening to angry Chicanos and trying to understand the needs of welfare mothers.

What makes this so? What makes Senator Hubert Humphrey in January 1972 different from the defeated candidate on November 1968?

First of all, time. But most important, a period out of power -- away from Washington -- in an environment where he could really listen to the young and think about what he and this nation were unable to do, shouldn't have done and what must be done in the last third of this century.

Hubert H. Humphrey is the only Democrat of national stature who has had his career interrupted by a period of reassessment and self-probing. And anyone in political life will tell you that such a hiatus can work fundamental change. It certainly has in Hubert's case.

He is not a man who has been recast in a different mould. But he has been able to spend time with people and the reality of everyday life in America -- something that few of his colleagues who have continually held office since the 1950's or early 1960's have been able to do.

Since returning to the Senate, the same dynamism and thirst for action which have been hallmarks of the Humphrey career have been carefully channeled into the formulation of a unique legislative program.

Humphrey has taken the fundamental liberal concern of providing for the well-being of all people and has developed legislation that will both meet their needs and begin to make government -- at all levels -- more responsive to them.

He refuses to believe that people make subtle distinctions about the governments that touch their lives every day. He says: "What we must learn is that government must serve people, not a system or a board or an authority, but people."

He has developed a legislative program which reflects his intense desire that government begin to work for, rather than against people. Hubert Humphrey has seen too much of government to view federal and state bureaucracies and legislative bodies as purely beneficent institutions standing ready to meet people's needs. He believes they must be prodded, cajoled and forced to act. And in four essential areas I believe he is leading the fight to make the federal government take the lead in responding to urgent needs and unfulfilled promises.

Although the essence of the Humphrey program -- new credit and loan systems, rural and urban development plans, community coalitions, federal trust funds, national growth policies -- sound rather academic and mechanistic, they are in fact the instruments needed to establish programs that will begin to serve people neglected by government.

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT

Hubert Humphrey has become the chief advocate in the Congress and the nation for the development of an overarching set of national policies to guide the future development and growth of the United States.

By the time this article goes to press, he will have introduced the Balanced National Growth and Development Act of 1971. This landmark legislation will create new machinery in the Congress, in the Executive Branch, among the states and in the business and institutional sectors which can begin to deal with the formulation of national growth policies. These policies will provide for interrelating solutions to the problems we have regarded for too long as distinct and separate entities.

Humphrey does not regard the design and control of future growth as an esoteric subject that is solely the property of the planners. "America has shamefully neglected its future," Humphrey says. The Senator believes strongly that government can no longer view uncontrolled growth as a good thing in and of itself.

Other important Humphrey initiatives in the area of domestic development include:

- * The National Domestic Development Bank Act to provide a major new source of capital funds through long term loans and technical assistance to cities, towns, counties and other jurisdictions. These funds will enable communities of all sizes to move ahead on vitally needed public projects. Humphrey says the legislation could begin to end the dilemma of "a nation privately rich and publicly poor."

- * The Consolidated Rural Development Act which has been cosponsored by 49 Senators establishes a new financial and credit system within and for rural America. It will provide billions of dollars in new capital

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needed to improve community services and facilities. It will also stimulate rural industrial expansion and provide jobs in rural America. Humphrey believes that opportunities off the farm must be provided in rural America to break the cycle of outmigration to cities unable to accomodate increasing populations. This is no back to the farm bill. It is aimed at ending the decline and deterioration of economic and social opportunities for millions of rural Americans.

* Senator Humphrey has introduced the Community Coalitions for a Clean Environment Act which would provide for federal grant assistance to communities of all sizes to enable them to identify environmental problems and prepare plans to eliminate them. The bill calls for the community to have a full-time federal funded environmental coordinator. The special grant program of this bill will be funded by an Environmental Trust fund which will in turn be funded by direct federal appropriations and Series E type Environmental Saving bonds.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The issue of child care and child development best illustrates Hubert Humphrey's concern for what might be called equal opportunity for human development. Since returning to the Senate he has been actively strengthening his past record in social legislation. Here are some of the highlights of this legislative program:

* In October, 1971, the Senator sponsored the Universal Child Nutrition and Nutrition Education Act which ends once and for all the patchwork of legislative and administrative measures which comprise national school lunch and other child feeding programs. This bill insures

each school child at least one nutritious meal per day at no cost --- regardless of the child's family income. Humphrey wants to end the economic caste system of the school lunch program. He has said on many occasions that "we must provide school lunches on the same basis we provide books, teachers, and other educational services, namely from tax revenue."

* Before the end of the first session of the 92nd Congress, Senator Humphrey will have proposed the establishment of the Children's Trust Fund to provide for a large financial commitment to meet the needs of 75 million American children and their families. The creation of a Children's Trust will insure that funds for child related programs cannot be diverted to other purposes.

* The Senator has introduced legislation calling upon the Department of Labor and Agriculture in cooperation with the Census Bureau to provide better indicators of the social and economic condition of the more than twelve million Spanish speaking Americans in urban and rural America. I know that Senator Humphrey is personally committed to providing vastly improved social and economic opportunities for minority groups -- particularly those he believes were forgotten in the civil rights and anti-poverty movements of the 1960's. He views an assessment of their needs as an important first step before a major federal and state commitment can be made.

* Senator Humphrey believes the Social Security system must be reformed because inflation has made the present benefit levels totally

inadequate for recipients. As he says: "American working men and women, particularly lower income earners, have been saddled with what is becoming one of the most regressive taxes in the nation." He has offered four amendments to the Social Security Act which will: end the system of 50-50 employee-employer financing and replace it with one-third each from employer, employee and federal revenue; establish a minimum benefit level of \$100 instead of the present \$70 minimum; increase benefits by ten percent across the board; and increase the employees' contribution wage base from \$7,800 to \$15,000. The Social Security Administration classifies nearly thirty percent of the aged as officially poor. Humphrey's legislative proposals begin to lift the burden from the poor of participation in a system that is supposed to benefit rather than squeeze them financially.

INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The one issue at the heart of government unresponsiveness and insensitivity to people is the inability of government institutions to recognize need and to effect change.

Hubert Humphrey has been able to see the failure of the federal government to respond from both a legislative and executive perspective. In the year he has been back in the Senate, he has expressed a strong interest in making the federal government accountable to the people it is supposed to be serving.

* Senator Humphrey has introduced legislation to create a Citizen's Committee to Study Congress. Humphrey believes that an outside, independent vehicle for the analysis of Congressional rules, operations

and procedures is badly needed to reform and change an institution that resists all fundamental change. In introducing the legislation Senator Humphrey told the Senate that he was reacting to both the inability of Congress to examine itself from within and to an erosion in the balance of power between a modern, fast moving Executive and an ill-informed, sluggish Legislative branch.

* Senator Humphrey has sponsored legislation that would create a Joint Congressional Committee on National Security. The Congress has no effective way of keeping pace with the policy making bodies in the Executive Branch in the area of national security. Humphrey believes there is an urgent need to have a Congressional institution paralleling the President's National Security Council to focus on such issues as defense needs, arms control, and national priorities.

The Joint Committee on National Security would also evaluate and make recommendations for reforming the maze of classification and declassification procedures of our government. The Committee would be responsible for continuing review of the operations of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Departments of Defense and State and other agencies intimately involved with American foreign policy.

* Senator Humphrey has sponsored the Tax Expenditure Awareness Act which would require the federal government to send everyone who pays federal income tax an exact dollar breakdown of how that money is being spent. Taxpayers could not only question priorities, but the issue of citizen participation in the budgetary process would be raised.

* Along these lines of public accountability, Senator Humphrey has proposed the creation of a National Budget. Today's budgetary process is conducted in obscurity away from the people or their representatives. The National Budget Act would open the budgetary process by requiring the President, his Office of Management and Budget and Cabinet officials to hold open budget hearings across the country. Citizens would be invited to tell elected officials or their representatives how they believe their tax dollars should be spent.

* Senator Humphrey has proposed the White House Regional Ambassadors Act because he believes that the President should have a personal representative in various regions of the country. Humphrey insists there is a great need for such a man to make federal departments and agencies directly and quickly accountable to both the President and people in the communities.

TAX REFORM

Hubert Humphrey has long been on record for an equitable tax structure. He believes the present one must be reformed. He is taking steps to see that this is done now.

In November, the Senate passed the Humphrey low income allowance amendment to the President's Revenue Act. This amendment increases the low income allowance (standard deduction) for 1971 to \$1,300. The Senator has estimated that seventy percent of the benefits of his amendment will go to families with incomes under \$4,500. The amendment comes very close to eliminating taxes for the poor by making tax

free income levels close to official poverty levels. Attacked by those who saw the Treasury losing close to \$1 billion for this reform, Humphrey said: "The Treasury loses from those who can least afford to pay -- and, I may say, those whom society can least afford to tax."

But the Humphrey amendment also increases the purchasing power of the poor serving to stimulate the economy and reduce debilitating unemployment.

He has introduced other legislation aimed at reforming the American tax system.

- * He has introduced a bill to tax single persons on the same basis as those taxpayers filing a joint return.

- * The Senator has introduced legislation that would increase the low income allowance whenever the official poverty level increases.

- * Senator Humphrey was successful in his efforts to have the Senate pass an amendment that provided for retroactivity to January 1, 1971, of the investment tax credit for agricultural machinery.

- * The Senator plans to introduce legislation that would change the exemption rates by making them progressive with both a ceiling and a minimum exemption.

I believe that Hubert Humphrey's legislative program is an accurate measure of his commitment to change. It is a strong indication of his desire for substantive action. It tells me that he is a man unwilling to rest on his record. And it offers liberals who feel he has strayed

visible proof that he is a man not satisfied with the liberal solutions of the past decades.

But legislation is only one vehicle that a man holding public office uses to accomplish what he believes must be done. The other route that is open to a public man is one of moral and political leadership. And in this area, Hubert Humphrey has clearly begun to reassert his past record of leadership. He has spoken of a "quiet revolution" occurring in this nation. And he has said the "it is a revolution of people demanding accountability and sensibility from leadership."

Since his return to Washington twelve months ago he has spoken out forcefully and candidly on such issues as the Vietnam war, political reform, civil rights and civil liberties, arms control, environmental quality and economic and fiscal equity. He has consistently supported the liberal position on the Senate floor on these important issues.

Hubert Humphrey has been willing to go to the Senate well to offer amendments that he knew were unpopular, for example, his amendment to place MIRV funds in escrow for fiscal 1972.

Senator Hubert Humphrey has clearly reasserted his liberalism and his independence. He says that it was an "honor and a privilege to ^{be} Vice President" and that he served as a member of a ~~team~~^{team}. But he adds: "Now I have a new sense of freedom -- no one is looking over my shoulder. I speak for Hubert Humphrey."

Liberalism is certainly not part of what I referred to earlier as "the new Hubert Humphrey." Liberalism is instinctive to Hubert

Humphrey -- he was born with it and has been fighting liberal battles all his life. What is new is his desire to shape an effective liberal action program for this decade -- as he calls it, "a program for a decade of dynamic domestic development." And the elements of this program are reform, change, renewal and concern for the future. Hubert Humphrey wants to put liberalism to work in programs that begin to eliminate some of the basic economic and social disparities in American life.

I know that liberal skeptics like to watch Hubert Humphrey in the Senate and around the nation and say: "How can he do this?" What they really mean is: "How dare he do this!"

If some of those who doubt Humphrey's liberalism had been with him in late October when he spoke to a voter registration rally at Providence College, they could begin to understand how those who see and listen to him are not going to question the sincerity of his commitment to liberal goals in the 1970's.

As Hubert Humphrey moved into a crowd of nearly 2,000 blue jeaned students sitting on the grass listening to a rock concert, he heard cries of "We want Hubert." By the time he reached the podium, the audience of students from six Rhode Island colleges was applauding.

Humphrey urged them to register, to organize and to vote. But he also told them that students must begin to care and do something about the millions of young Americans -- the "invisible youth" as he called them -- who are not in college but on farms, in factories, in the

service, in high school, or out of work. He told them that they must recognize that they are a privileged minority of the young. He urged them to secure greater opportunity and justice through the power of the vote for those not able to attend a college or university.

Hubert Humphrey was trying to tell these students about his understanding of what being a liberal in 1971 was all about. For him it means a commitment not to stand still while millions of Americans are being deprived of equal and basic economic, social and political opportunities.

As he stepped off the platform to sit on the grass to listen to his friend Joe Duffy speak, he was mobbed by hundreds of students wanting to meet him and speak to him.

This has been the way he has been received in colleges and high schools across the nation.

The young are listening to Hubert Humphrey because they know he has something to tell them about the way things must be done in America.

He concluded his Providence speech with these remarks:

" The future is now. What you do or do not do now determines what will happen or will not happen tomorrow."

I am reminded of a recent conversation I had with the Senator. In talking about the failure of many of his colleagues to be future oriented he said: "Any man worth listening to in this country from here on out should be a man of tomorrow, not of yesterday." It is clear to me that Hubert H. Humphrey is a man of tomorrow.

November 1, 1971

The Editor
THE WASHINGTON POST
1515 L Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20005

Dear Sir:

Mr. Gary Wills, writing under the headline "The Regulars' at it Again" has not only missed the symbolic importance, but also the substance of the reforms put in motion at the 1964 Democratic Convention to write and enforce uniform national party law governing the selection of Convention delegates.

I write as one who has been directly involved with these efforts since 1964.

Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer was seated at the 1964 Convention and Hubert Humphrey played a key role in this accomplishment. Far more important than the symbol of Mrs. Hamer's seating was the Convention's subsequent action establishing an Equal Rights Committee to set national party standards for ending racial discrimination in selecting delegates.

Under the chairmanship of Governor Richard Hughes of New Jersey, that Committee's six basic standards became law for state parties selecting delegates to the 1968 Convention. The 1968 Democratic Convention applied those standards in the Mississippi credentials challenge and as a result the Aaron Henry-Charles Evers delegation was seated as the official delegation and became the recognized Democratic Party in Mississippi.

Following the precedent in the 1968 Convention's ratification of the Equal Rights Committee's standards that Convention created a Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection. The McGovern-Fraser Commission's national guidelines for the selection of delegates to the 1972 Democratic Convention have now been unanimously adopted and are in the Call to the 1972 Democratic National Convention. They are the law of the party setting the reform standards every state party must meet in selecting delegates. There is every reason to believe that the

1972 Convention and its Credentials Committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. Patricia Harris will be as firm in applying these standards in credentials contests as the 1968 Convention was in applying the guidelines on racial discrimination to the 1968 Mississippi case.

In 1964 Hubert Humphrey helped set in motion the substantive reforms governing delegate selection. He advocated the application of those reforms to the Mississippi credentials case at the 1968 Convention. He was the first national party leader to go to Mississippi in 1969 to help the newly recognized Henry-Evers Democratic Party launch its work. He has continued to endorse and support the work of the two Democratic reform commissions working on the 1972 Convention as well as the Democratic National Committee's implementation of these reforms.

The election Tuesday in Mississippi this week represents substance and accomplishment based on years of commitment by many men and women.

The 1964 seating of Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer was both symbolic and significant, but more lasting was the national party's commitment at that time to begin reforming delegate selection procedures through national standards. These reforms are a critical part of the effort by which the Democratic Party and its national nominating conventions will hold the confidence of the electorate.

Sincerely,

William B. Welsh
Executive Director



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