

# REMARKS UPON ACCEPTING THE NOMINATION

LYNDON B. JOHNSON (1908-1973)

AUGUST 27, 1964

...We are in the midst of the largest and the longest period of peacetime prosperity in our history. And almost every American listening to us tonight has seen the results in his own life.

But prosperity for most has not brought prosperity to all. And those who have received the bounty of this land—who sit tonight secure in affluence and safe in power—must not now turn from the needs of their neighbors.

Our party and our Nation will continue to extend the hand of compassion and the hand of affection and love to the old and the sick and the hungry. For who among us dares to betray the command: “Thou shalt open thine hand—unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.”

The needs that we seek to fill, the hopes that we seek to realize, are not our needs, our hopes alone. They are the needs and hopes of most of the people.

Most Americans want medical care for older citizens. And so do I.

Most Americans want fair and stable prices and decent incomes for our farmers. And so do I.

Most Americans want a decent home in a decent neighborhood for all. And so do I.

Most Americans want an education for every child to the limit of his ability. And so do I.

Most Americans want a job for every man who wants to work. And so do I.

Most Americans want victory in our war against poverty. And so do I.

Most Americans want continually expanding and growing prosperity. And so do I.

These are your goals. These are our goals. These are the goals and will be the achievements of the Democratic Party. These are the goals of this great, rich Nation. These are the goals toward which I will lead, if the American people choose to follow....

Our problems are many and are great. But our opportunities are even greater.

And let me make this clear. I ask the American people for a mandate—not to preside over a

finished program—not just to keep things going, I ask the American people for a mandate to begin.

This Nation—this generation—in this hour, has man's first chance to build the Great Society—a place where the meaning of man's life matches the marvels of man's labor.

We seek a nation where every man can find reward in work and satisfaction in the use of his talents. We seek a nation where every man can seek knowledge, and touch beauty, and rejoice in the closeness of family and community.

We seek a nation where every man can, in the words of our oldest promise, follow the pursuit of happiness—not just security-but achievements and excellence and fulfillment of the spirit.

So let us join together in this great task.

Will you join me tonight in rebuilding our cities to make them a decent place for our children to live in?

Will you join me tonight in starting a program that will protect the beauty of our land and the air that we breathe?

Won't you join me tonight in starting a program that will give every child education of the highest quality that he can take?

So let us join together in giving every American the fullest life which he can hope for. For the ultimate test of our civilization, the ultimate test of our faithfulness to our past, is not in our goods and is not in our guns. It is in the quality—the quality of our people's lives and in the men and women that we produce.

This goal can be ours. We have the resources; we have the knowledge. But tonight we must seek the courage.

Because tonight the contest is the same that we have faced at every turning point in history. It is not between liberals and conservatives, it is not between party and party, or platform and platform. It is between courage and timidity. It is between those who have vision and those who see what can be, and those who want only to maintain the status quo. It is between those who welcome the future and those who turn away from its promises.

This is the true cause of freedom. The man who is hungry, who cannot find work or educate his children, who is bowed by want—that man is not fully free...

