

VOICE READERS COMPRISE a \$30,000,000 MARKET

EDITORIAL

LBJ Message on Vote Bill Hailed

PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON'S inspiring message to a joint session of the United States Congress calling for "no delay, no hesitation, no compromise" in the enactment of federal legislation to assure every American citizen the right to vote "in all elections" without being subject to contrived and discriminatory restrictions has been acclaimed as one of the most brilliant expositions on human rights in the history of mankind.

(There have been delays, there has been hesitation, and there will be compromise—but all this does not detract from the President's eagerness to correct a grievous wrong or the eloquence of his demand for justice.)

With this address, the VOICE believes that Lyndon Baines Johnson has taken his place among the great humanitarian statesmen of all time. We are, therefore, presenting the full text of his message. It appears below.



AFRICA in Today's World

(From the NEW YORK TIMES)

HE is a volatile, restless man, likely to burst into song and dance even at a public gathering. This aspect of his character often leads opponents to underestimate the political shrewdness of Jaramogi Ajuma Oginga Odinga, Vice President of Kenya. Since his youth Mr. Odinga had been an annoyance to British colonial officials. Since Kenya's independence he has repeatedly been accused by his own countrymen of espousing the goals of the Soviet Union and Communist China. Yesterday Mr. Odinga called a news conference in Nairobi to denounce his detractors as "imperialist propagandists" bent on undermining the new Government.



OGINGA ODINGA Lefty, but no Commie

Despite his frequent use of Communist rhetoric and phraseology, however, informed observers do not label Mr. Odinga as a Communist. They cite a speech he made three years ago in the style of the traditional African parable.

"It is not the issue of the Communists which is at stake," he said. "We are struggling with the snake which is already in the house [colonialism], not with the one which is still in the forest [Communism]. The snake which is in our house we must get rid of first.

"We will wait for the snake in the forest until it gets in the house, and if it becomes a danger we will deal with it in the same manner. While it is still in the forest it might be useful to us because it may kill some of the vermin which is troubling us in our gardens."

On another occasion, he asserted: "In the cold war we belong to neither camp. We belong to Africa."

Mr. Odinga was born in 1912 at Sakdwa Location in Central Nyanza, near the shore of Lake Victoria. His father, a woodworker, chose him as the only child the family could afford to send to school. He attended Maseno Secondary School, Alliance High School and Makerere College in Uganda, where he was graduated with a degree in education in 1939.

He taught in missionary schools until 1947, when he founded the Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation, a construction and printing business.

In 1948, Jomo Kenyatta toured Nyanza, preaching the need for a national African political movement. Mr. Odinga gave his unqualified support and turned his energies to building the Nyanza branch of the Kenya African Union.

Mr. Odinga has remained fiery loyal to Mr. Kenyatta ever since. Last December, while unveiling a statue of Mr. Kenyatta in Nairobi, he called the President "God's

masterpiece" and "a living legend."

Mr. Odinga's several trips to Moscow and Peking have embroiled him in controversy both before and after Kenya's independence. In October, 1960, the British revoked his passport when he returned from a visit to the two Communist capitals.

He visited both countries again in the spring of 1964, and in Peking asked the Chinese Government to help Kenya "break the back of imperialist domination of our country." On his return, he announced that China had given \$3 million to help balance Kenya's budget and that Russia had promised medical and technical aid.

Those who doubt Mr. Odinga's allegiance to Communism say he is using his connections in Peking and Moscow as a weapon in his struggle with Tom Mboya, a fellow member of the Luo tribe, to become Mr. Kenyatta's successor.

Little is known here about Mr. Odinga's private life. In 1963 it was reported that a son was attending school in Moscow.

Mr. Odinga came to the United States in 1963 to accept formally Kenya's seat in the United Nations. While here he became involved in a civil rights incident in Georgia. A group from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was arrested in Atlanta after meeting with Mr. Odinga in a hotel.

Later his name was incorporated in the lyrics of a civil-rights song. The phonetics of his name—"Oginga Odinga of Kenya"—probably had more to do with it than anything he had done for the movement.

Mr. Odinga is a man of medium height and weight. Even when wearing western clothes, he puts on a beaded hat and carries the fly whisk that symbolizes a chief's authority.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, members of the Congress, my fellow Americans: I speak for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy.

I urge members of both parties—Americans of all religions and colors—from every section—to join me in that cause.

At times history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Ala.

There, long-suffering men and women peacefully protested the denial of their rights as Americans. Many were brutally assaulted. One good man—a man of God—was killed.

There is no cause for pride in what happened in Selma.

There is no cause for self-satisfaction in the long denial of equal rights of millions of Americans.

But there is cause for hope and for faith in our democracy in what is happening here tonight.

For the cries of pain, the hymns and protests of oppressed people, have summoned into convocation all the majesty of the Government of the greatest nation on earth.

Our mission is at once the oldest and most basic of this century: To do right, to do justice, to serve man.

Moments of Crisis

In our time we have come to live with moments of great crisis. Our lives have been marked with debate about great issues—issues of war and peace, of prosperity and depression. But rarely, in any time, does an issue lay bare the secret heart of America itself. Rarely are we met with a challenge, not to our growth or abundance, our welfare or security—but to the values and the purpose and meaning of our nation.

The issue of equal rights for American Negroes is such an issue. And should we defeat every enemy, double our wealth, conquer the stars and still be unequal to this issue, then we will have failed as a people and a nation.

For with a country as with a person, "what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

There is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem or Northern problem. There is only an American problem.

And we are met as Americans to solve it.

The Dignity of Man

This was the first nation in the history of the world to be founded with a purpose. The great phrases of that purpose still sound in every American heart, North and South: "All men are created equal"—"Government by consent of the governed"—"Give me liberty or give me death." Those are not just clever words or empty theories. In their name: Americans have fought and died for two centuries and today are risking their lives.

Those words are a promise to every citizen that he shall share in the dignity of man. This dignity cannot be found in a man's possessions or his power or his position. It rests on his right to be treated as a man-equal in opportunity to all others. It says that he shall share in freedom, choose his leaders, educate his children, provide for his family according to his ability and merits as a human being.

To apply any other test—to deny a man his hopes because of his color or race, his religion or the place of his birth—is not only to do injustice, it is to deny America and to dishonor the dead who gave their lives for freedom.

Our fathers believed that if this noble view of the rights of man was to flourish, it must be rooted in democracy. The most basic right of all was the right to choose your own leaders. The history of this country is, in large measure, the history of the expansion of that right to all our people.

Many of the issues of civil rights are complex and difficult. But about this there can be no argument. Every American citizen must have an equal right to vote. There is no reason which can excuse the denial of that right. There is no duty which weighs more heavily on us than the duty to ensure that right.

Yet the harsh fact is that in many places in this country men and women are kept from voting because they are Negroes.

Every device of which human ingenuity is capable has been used to deny this right. The Negro citizen may go to register only to be told that the day is wrong, the hour is late, or the official in charge is absent.

If he persists, and manages to present himself to the registrar, he may be disqualified because he did not spell out his middle name or because he abbreviated a word on the application.

Registrar Sole Judge

If he manages to fill out an application he is given a test. The registrar is the sole judge of whether he passes this test. He may be asked to recite the entire Constitution, or explain the most complex provisions of state law. Even a college degree cannot be used to prove that he can read or write.

For the fact is that the only way to pass these barriers is to show a white skin.

Experience has clearly shown that the existing process of law cannot overcome systematic and ingenious discrimination. No law we now have on the books can ensure the right to vote when local officials are determined to deny it.

In such a case our duty is clear. The Constitution says no person shall be kept from voting because of his race or color. We have all sworn an oath before God to support and defend that Constitution. We must now act in obedience to that oath.

Wednesday I will send to Congress a law designed to

eliminate illegal barriers to the right to vote.

This bill will strike down restrictions to voting in all elections—Federal, state and local—which have been used to deny Negroes the right to vote.

It will establish a simple, uniform standard which cannot be misused, however ingenious the effort to flout our Constitution.

It will provide for citizens to be registered by officials of the United States Government if state officials refuse to cooperate.

It will eliminate tedious, unnecessary lawsuits which delay the right to vote.

Finally, this legislation will ensure that properly registered individuals are not prohibited from voting.

I will welcome suggestions from the Congress on ways to strengthen this law and make it more effective. But experience has plainly shown that this is the only path to carry out the command of the Constitution.

Rights of Citizens

To those who seek to avoid action by their national Government in their communities—who seek to maintain purely local control over elections—the answer is simple:

Open your polling places to all your people. Allow men and women to register and vote whatever the color of their skin.

Extend the rights of citizenship to every citizen. There is no constitutional issue here. The command of the Constitution is plain.

There is no moral issue. It is wrong to deny any American the right to vote.

Heart Eliminated

There is no issue of states' rights or national rights. There is only the struggle for human rights.

I have no doubt what will be your answer.

Last time a President sent a civil rights bill to Congress it contained a provision to protect voting rights. That bill was passed after eight long months of debate. And when that bill came to my desk for signature, the heart of the voting provision had been eliminated.

This time, on this issue, there must be no delay, no hesitation, no compromise with our purpose.

We cannot refuse to protect the right of Americans to vote.

We cannot wait another eight months. We have al-

ready waited a hundred years and more. The time for voting is gone.

I ask you to work long hours, nights and weekends to pass this bill. For outside this chamber is the outraged conscience of a nation—the grave concern of many nations—and the harsh judgment of history on our acts.

But even if we pass this bill, the battle will not be over. What happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement which reaches into every section and state of America. It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life.

Their cause must be our cause too. It is not just Negroes, but all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome.

As a man whose roots go deeply into Southern soil I know how agonizing racial feelings are. I know how difficult it is to reshape attitudes and the structure of society.

But a century has passed since the Negro was freed. And he is not fully free.

A century has passed since equality was promised. And he is not equal.

A century has passed since the day of promise. And the promise is unkept.

The Time of Justice

The time of justice has now come. No force can hold it back. It is right—in the eyes of man and God—that it should come. And when it does, that day will brighten the lives of every American.

For Negroes are not the only victims. How many white children have gone uneducated—how many white families have lived in poverty—how many white lives have been scarred by fears because we have wasted our energy and substance to maintain the barriers of hatred and terror.

Those who ask you to hold on to the past do so at the cost of denying you your future.

This great, rich, restless country can offer opportunity and education and hope to all—black and white, North and South, sharecropper and city dweller. Those are the enemies—poverty and ignorance—and not our fellow man. And these two shall be overcome.

Let no one in any section, look with prideful righteousness on the troubles of his fellow man.

(See LBJ, page 11)

Advertisement for LAS VEGAS VOICE newspaper, including contact information and staff list.