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BEFORE: SIXTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF
THE JEWISH-AMERICAN SECTION,
INTERNATIONAL WORKERS ORDER, INC.

RELEASE:
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MR. CHAIRMAN, HONORED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

National
~~Annual~~ Convention. It is a real honor to join with you tonight on the occasion of your Sixth
Convention. We are assembled here to celebrate the birthday of our country.
We are here also to affirm anew our faith in the principles of Democratic Govern-
ment under which we have arisen to the greatest and happiest Nation on the earth.
The spirit of patriotism animates every heart in this great audience.

Fortunately, for the fulfillment of the high destinies of our proud Nation,
our people have always lent a sympathetic ear to the appeals of the distraught
and oppressed peoples of the world. Free men -- those who are conscious of their
human quality, and who value dignity as an essential attribute of mankind are
ever found on the side of those struggling against the barbarism of despotic rulers.

In every period of our History, America has stood staunchly on the side
of decency, of tolerance and of justice. Our country has spoken fearlessly for
the hunted and persecuted races of the earth.

It is well to remember, however, that none of us would be able to speak
our minds had it not been for that immortal document, THE DECLARATION OF
INDEPENDENCE, adopted by our forefathers on the Fourth of July, 1776.

We there laid down the eternal principle, "That all men are created
equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalien-
able Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of
Happiness."

That great Declaration of human rights ushered in an era of liberty and
not only set this country on its course as a Nation of free men, but acted as a

ferment for enslaved races and nationalities throughout the world. The banner of freedom thus raised by the fathers of our country One Hundred and Sixty-eight years ago has ever since served as a beacon light for liberty-loving peoples everywhere.

It is therefore a privilege to join with you tonight in saluting this great Nation fighting with all its soul and all its tremendous power for the preservation of those ideals of freedom in the world.

We stand today as a united people, writing glorious pages in the history of our times under the distinguished leadership of our Commander-in-Chief, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Together with the brave people of Russia, Britain and China and the other members of the United Nations, we are joined in a solemn pact determined to set this world free of dictators and oppressors of mankind and keep it free for all time to come.

On this anniversary of our independence, it is fitting that we should salute also the men and women of the United Nations who are fighting side-by-side and making superhuman sacrifice in the common cause -- complete victory over our enemies.

X Great Britain owes her salvation after Dunkirk to her unbreakable morale. Notwithstanding the disaster she suffered at the beginning of the war, she has spared no sacrifice in the valiant effort to save the world from Fascism.

The United States received with painful sacrifice the unexpected and treacherous blow at Pearl Harbor, but our morale far from diminishing quickly received a stimulus which translated our country into the greatest military power on earth.

The conversion of our country from an economy of peace to an economy of total war has been one of the most astounding happenings in this great world conflict.

It is now recognized that the war is being won because we in America have outproduced our enemies in all the fields of modern warfare. We have virtually flooded the earth with our planes, tanks and ships. America has faithfully kept her pledge to the embattled Nations of the world and, in addition to serving as an arsenal of the United Nations, has taken the burden of the offensive in the Pacific and is making a major contribution to the winning of the war in the European theater as well. Hitler and Hirohito are now tasting the devastating effects of our deadly weapons and the destructive might of the world's best-equipped Army.

But let us not fail to recognize the tremendous contribution made by Russia in this great war. The heroic armies of Russia are progressively destroying the so-called invincible German Forces. They have given generously of their blood and toil and treasure to make certain that freedom shall again reign over our earth and that the so-called German Master Race shall never again threaten the peace of the world.

When this war is over and a lasting peace has been enthroned, let us insure the cooperation of all nations of the earth in the same spirit of friendship and confidence which has governed our relations in the war.

It is particularly gratifying and encouraging to our American citizens to know that you are here tonight commemorating the fulfillment of your pledge to purchase one million dollars' worth of war bonds to provide four giant bombers for our gallant fighting forces of the air. I am sure that to many of you factory and office workers, the purchase of extra bonds represents a considerable sacrifice. But as the descendants of a long-suffering people -- the Jewish people -- you are making this sacrifice cheerfully because you know better than most of

us the significance of the present world upheaval. These four bombers and the many other bombers and fighter planes you will make possible in the future, will go forward to avenge the Nazi murderers in Warsaw, Kiev, Kharkov, Kovno, Vienna and the numerous other places where Hitler's legions have perpetrated their unspeakable crimes upon defenseless peoples. May those bombers play a noble part in stamping out forever the detestible Nazi plague now afflicting the world.

As a fraternal benefit society with a membership close to two hundred thousand, you have been concerned not only with the care of the sick, the unemployed and the widows and orphans of your own society, but you have made notable contributions to the cause of American National unity, and you have concerned yourselves with the human problems of our working masses.

Your Order was one of the very first to give unqualified endorsement to the broadening of our social security program which was first sponsored by the able and distinguished Senator from New York, the Honorable Robert F. Wagner. I had the great honor of joining with Senator Wagner, along with Congressman Dingell, in presenting that bill in the Congress. But Senator Wagner was its real author and sponsor. He was the pioneer in the struggle for workingmens' compensation. For over thirty years he fought for it in your own state and thanks to his great ability and tireless effort, forty-seven States of the Union now have workingmens' compensation laws on their statute books. With this task out of the way, he led the fight for unemployment insurance and Federal Work Relief programs, slum clearance, and public housing -- public health measures and the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively.

In every major battle for the betterment of the life of the working men and women of America, your distinguished Senator from New York has been in the vanguard. A strong and comprehensive social security program such as is proposed

by Senator Wagner is essential for a modern Democratic society.

Democracy has always needed economic freedom as well as political freedom. Without the one, the other freedom loses its vitality and eventually perishes.

X Social security, of course, is not the whole of economic freedom. Full employment at decent wages, full use of our resources, freedom of opportunity for small and independent business, public provision of necessary community services and facilities -- these conditions are basic to economic freedom in the modern world. But social security is also basic.

By social security, I mean the assurance to every individual and every family of a continuing cash income adequate for maintenance and the assurance of access to all needed medical services. In our capitalistic economy, this assurance cannot always be achieved, even with the highest possible measure of employment. There will always be some unemployment, as processes and techniques change or as individual workers shift about in search of better jobs. At any time, moreover, there are large numbers of persons who are unable to work and many families who have no income from earnings. It is therefore necessary to the smooth functioning of our economy and to the preservation of our democracy that such families continue to have food and shelter and the other necessities of life. The problem is to equitably distribute among all persons in the community the goods and services which are produced by those persons who can work and have work. The abundance which modern science and technology today makes possible can provide enough for those who are working and also those who happen to be idle through no fault of their ~~own~~^{own}. The problem is to find a system which will bring this about with justice and fairness.

The solution to this problem is simple and well-known. Our principle reliance must be on social insurance, to provide a continuing cash income in case

of sickness or disability, old age, death of the breadwinner or his unemployment, and also to provide in case of sickness needed medical and hospital care.

Social insurance means, in the first place, a system of prepayment. Workers can set aside small regular amounts each pay period while they are working, and in return be entitled to cash benefits if they cannot work and to medical care for themselves and their families whenever it is needed. In the second place, social insurance means averaging of costs. Instead of trying to save enough to take care of whatever misfortune may overtake him, each worker pays out of his wages a share of the total costs of providing medical care and hospitalization to all persons who become sick or disabled. In the third place, social insurance makes it possible for the community as a whole to help pay for the security of persons who are least able to contribute from their earnings.

Medical care is one of the necessities of life which a democracy should provide to all members of the community. It is just as essential as a system which guarantees education to all. Theoretically, we might more surely make medical care available to every member of the community if we provided it as a public service, like free public education. We should not forget how much free public medical care is available today through our State and municipal general and special hospitals and through the extensive Federal provisions for medical and hospital care for veterans. If the doctors of the country preferred to offer their services through a complete system of public medical care, the rest of us would surely go along. But it is clear the doctors do not favor such a development, which would mean a radical change in many existing practices.

Medical and hospitalization insurance, on the other hand, involves very little change in the professional aspects of medical practice. I say this advisedly and in contradiction of the hysterical prophecies of impending doom

X for American medicine which are coming daily from some spokesmen for the medical fraternity.

X Because the costs of medical care are uneven and unpredictable for the individual, the social insurance method of paying those costs is particularly applicable. Workers can pay in advance and pay at an average rate. The pooled funds thus accumulated are available to pay doctors and hospitals and laboratories for all the services which may be needed by insured persons and their families. The professional aspects of medical practice need be in no wise affected. That is to say, every individual can freely choose his own doctor from among all those in the community who are participating in the insurance system. Doctors remain free to accept or reject patients. The treatment of the patient is entirely the doctor's responsibility. And doctors can receive payment for their services according to the method they prefer. Where groups of doctors prefer to work together to give more competent and more economical service, they can do so under an insurance system more easily than today.

If we had medical and hospitalization insurance, however, the medical care received by the American people would be vastly improved. Many people who now receive no care or who delay in going to the doctor because of the costs, would, under the insurance system, have paid in advance and be entitled to care when they needed it. Many others who now get inadequate care would have thrown open to them all the benefits of modern laboratory techniques and of specialists' services. Doctors also would have the satisfaction of practicing better medicine, while earning, at the same time, more adequate incomes than most of them earn today.

Thus far, I have talked in general terms about the kind of social security program we need. For those of you who have not had an opportunity to

study S. 1161, I shall summarize very briefly the provisions of our bill. Legislation of this kind is necessarily complex. No one can understand the bill simply by reading it through hastily. That is one reason it is possible for opponents of the bill to make so many false statements about its provisions, I cannot do more tonight than call your attention to the main features.

The bill would establish a unified national social insurance system, a national employment service and a Federal-State unified public assistance program. The social insurance system would build upon our existing old-age and survivors insurance, but would extend coverage to agricultural and domestic workers, workers in nonprofit organizations, farmers, small businessmen, professional and other self-employed persons, and -- through voluntary compacts -- to State and local government employees who are not covered by special retirement systems. Men and women in military service would be covered, with the Government paying their contributions for them. The bill as written would not cover Federal employees or railroad workers; these two groups have their own retirement systems. Should either of these groups wish the continuity of coverage and the right to all the other benefits of the unified insurance system, the bill could easily be amended to include them.

Each of these protections will be needed in the post war period. Quite as important as the benefits that are paid, however, will be the security of mind, the freedom from fear of insecurity -- that a comprehensive program such as that in this bill would bring. With this security firm beneath our feet, we shall have the freedom and the strength to build the other parts of that better world we want for ourselves and our children.

We stand on the threshold of a new era. This country can go forward with the rest of mankind to a life of peace and security and abundance, or it can

fall back into chaos, want and continued strife. Increasing the freedom and opportunity for the individual must be built upon a basic essential of security for all. Many conditions must be met if we are to achieve and maintain full employment.

There is no disagreement as to the need for social security. By acting now to establish an adequate social security program, we will place our American economy on a safe and sound basis. What we need more than anything else is a tolerant and united people to assure the future welfare and the economic and political freedom of America.

Let us keep our ranks closed and permit no influence from any source to destroy that unity and harmony which is indispensable to a happy and prosperous future for our country.