

MAYOR



A shirt-sleeved Mayor Humphrey in his city-hall office with a prominently displayed photo of Franklin D. Roosevelt

Hubert H. Humphrey

GARY W. REICHARD

DESPITE HIS POPULAR IMAGE as a left-leaning Democrat, Hubert H. Humphrey had a long and successful political career that demonstrated his ability to maneuver between extremes and find compromise solutions to challenging problems. This singular skill manifested itself repeatedly during Humphrey's service as a U.S. senator and as vice-president. But never was it more evident than during his emergence into politics as mayor of Minneapolis, a period often overshadowed by his national career.

Elected in 1945, the 34-year-old political neophyte had to contend with the daunting challenges that faced most large American cities immediately after World War II: a drastic housing shortage, reconversion to a peacetime economy, labor-management strife, widespread vice and police corruption, the flight of affluent taxpayers to the suburbs, and outdated governmental infrastructure. Humphrey approached these problems in ways reminiscent of the Progressive movement of the early twentieth century. Eschewing traditional ward-based tactics to avoid being labeled partisan, he succeeded in building a base of support in Minneapolis that included business leaders, civic groups, labor

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unions, and veterans' organizations.¹ Amazingly, he accomplished this feat despite having played a leading role in the successful merger in 1944 of Minnesota's Democratic and Farmer-Labor parties. Indeed, Humphrey's achievements during his two terms as mayor were perhaps the greatest tour de force of his brilliant political career.

AT THE TIME OF HIS ELECTION IN 1945, Humphrey had already run unsuccessfully for the mayor's office. Entering the 1943 campaign at almost the last minute, he brought no political experience and limited funds. On the other hand, incumbent Mayor Marvin L. Kline was highly vulnerable to challenge, since he was distrusted by labor and, though a Republican, lacked personal support among the city's business leaders. In addition, Kline's passivity in dealing with corrupt liquor and gambling interests made him an inviting target for a reform candidate.² When the affable young Humphrey decided to run, therefore, he received encouragement not only from his fellow students and teachers in the political science department at the University of Minnesota but also from such diverse quarters as George P. Phillips of the Central Labor Union, George E. Murk of the musicians union, and prominent business leaders.

In these circumstances Humphrey's challenge was to build a broad base of support among usually incompatible economic interests while promising active government leadership. Though a strong proponent of New Deal policies, he was not yet publicly identified with any political party and could thus maintain the nonpartisan stance needed for such a campaign. He attacked Kline for failing to deal with crime and police reform but also focused on politically neutral issues such as the need for postwar planning, economic development, and reform of

the city charter. On charter reform, especially, Humphrey played to many political camps, admitting that he had no "concrete proposal for governmental reorganization" and calling for a "period of time for study [to] guarantee that conservatism and progressivism may each have its day in court . . . [and] that the decision we reach will be a mature one." Like reformers of the Progressive era, he emphasized the need for "comprehensive governmental machinery to supervise a planned program of development." And he did surprisingly well for a novice: after finishing second to Kline in a field of eight candidates in the primary, he lost the June 1943 runoff by only 6,000 votes out of 115,000 cast.³

Despite some reporters' speculation that Humphrey might try for a higher office, he immediately set his sights on taking city hall in 1945. Now his partisan leanings became more visible and pronounced. While supporting his growing family and paying off a \$1,200 campaign debt by teaching political science at Macalester College in St. Paul, he rose to leadership within the state's ailing Democratic Party. Playing a notable role in the party's 1944 convention as state campaign manager, he helped the Roosevelt-Truman ticket carry Minnesota by more than 60,000 votes in the November elections. His key role in the merger of the state's Democratic and Farmer-Labor parties into the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) enabled him to line up important labor supporters in the Twin Cities and across the state and to secure direct assistance from Democratic State Chairman Elmer Kelm and, through Kelm, Democratic National Party Chairman Robert Hannegan. Within Minneapolis political circles, however, he continued to strike a nonpartisan posture, concentrating his efforts in the months before the May 1945 primary on learning more about "the formal structure of city government"

¹ Minneapolis municipal elections were nominally nonpartisan, but survivors of the primary were usually the Republican and Democratic candidates.

² Businessman Bradshaw Mintener reported that FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover had said Minneapolis was "one of the four or five worst crime spots in the country" in the early 1940s; Mintener, interview by Arthur Naftalin, Aug. 3, 1978, transcript, p. 3, Hubert H. Humphrey Oral History Project (hereinafter OHP), Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), St. Paul.

³ Unidentified clipping, Apr. 26, 1943, and *Minneapolis Daily Times*, clipping, June 1, 1943, unprocessed Supplemental Files; radio statement, transcript, Apr. 29, 1943, and press release, May 5, 1943, both Box 24, Political Files—all Mayoralty Files, Hubert H. Humphrey Papers (HHHP), MHS. Unless otherwise noted, citations to Subject Files, Newspaper Clippings (Supplemental Files), Publicity Files, General Correspondence, Political Files, and Speech Text Files are in the Mayoralty Files, HHHP.

Humphrey received 16,088 out of 73,078 votes cast (22.0 percent) in the primary to Mayor Kline's 29,565 (40.5 percent); Kline won the runoff by 60,199 (52.6 percent) to 54,215 (47.4 percent). Unidentified clipping, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings.

and becoming better acquainted with Minneapolis's most powerful business leaders.⁴

In his second mayoral campaign, Humphrey put together an effective team and perfected the “consensus strategy” he had tested out two years earlier. He named attorney Ralph E. Dickman, a member of both Hennepin County’s board of commissioners and the city’s planning commission, his campaign manager; Arthur E. Naftalin, a friend from the university, signed on as publicity director; and William Simms, formerly office manager of the Hennepin County Welfare Department, agreed to be a “plant” in the county attorney’s office, gathering evidence of police corruption in preparation for the cleanup that Humphrey had pledged to undertake if elected. The candidate’s persistent courting of John Cowles, publisher of the *Minneapolis Star-Journal* and *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, paid particular dividends, as the Cowles papers repeatedly stressed the breadth of Humphrey’s coalition and, late in the campaign, endorsed him. The highly positive press coverage he received was due at least partly to Naftalin’s success in feeding finished pieces to friendly political reporters such as Matthew W. (Mike) Halloran of the *Star-Journal*. Labor organizations, veterans’ groups, and business leaders all rallied to Humphrey’s cause. Leaders of the Central Labor Union, the Hennepin County CIO, and the Minneapolis Railroad Brotherhoods, as well as the 800-member United Veterans of America and the even larger Veterans Committee for Good Government all proved helpful. The most influential supporter from the downtown business establishment, J. Bradshaw Mintener, general counsel for Pillsbury Flour Mills, responded succinctly to concerns expressed by fellow Republicans about the young candidate’s DFL ties: “Do you want the gangsters in here or do you want a decent administration?”⁵

Businessmen Laud Humphrey's Program for Industrial Growth

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To the Voters of Minneapolis:

The businessmen of Minneapolis we believe the election of Hubert H. Humphrey as mayor will be a sound investment in the future of our city.

His positive program for business expansion and community redevelopment offers a realistic pattern for post-war industrial expansion.

Mr. Humphrey holds the confidence and respect of both business and labor. This ensures a period of harmonious labor-management relations, which is an essential for community progress in the post-war.

His businessmen we applaud Mr. Humphrey for his intelligent campaign and for the constructive manner in which he is dealing with civic matters.

Minneapolis Businessmen's Humphrey for Mayor Committee

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Paul Jackson, Chairman First National Bank First National Bank	George A. Thoms The Alvarado The Alvarado	A. E. Benson Benson Brothers Benson Brothers	A. G. Jenks Jenks Brothers Jenks Brothers	Joe Smith Smith Brothers Smith Brothers
Tom Landon Landon Brothers Landon Brothers	John J. Thoms Thoms Brothers Thoms Brothers	W. A. Thoms Thoms Brothers Thoms Brothers	W. A. Thoms Thoms Brothers Thoms Brothers	W. A. Thoms Thoms Brothers Thoms Brothers

Members of the Executive Committee

A. L. Tamm Tamm Brothers Tamm Brothers	John J. Thoms Thoms Brothers Thoms Brothers	W. A. Thoms Thoms Brothers Thoms Brothers	W. A. Thoms Thoms Brothers Thoms Brothers	W. A. Thoms Thoms Brothers Thoms Brothers
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A June 1945 newspaper advertisement showing business support for Humphrey's candidacy

Throughout the 1945 campaign, Humphrey emphasized the issues of government reform, law and order, urban development, and housing shortages, calling for leadership to “make this community act like a community.” As would be true so often in his later career, he chose to

⁴ Humphrey, interview by Norman Sherman, Sept. 26, 1969, p. 6, Box 2, Autobiographical Files, HHHP; Carl Solberg, *Hubert Humphrey: A Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1984), 93–98; Dan Cohen, *Undeclared: The Life of Hubert H. Humphrey* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Co., 1978), 100–102; Hubert H. Humphrey, *The Education of a Public Man: My Life and Politics* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1976), 89. Humphrey masked his early partisan leanings so well that *Minneapolis Star-Journal* editor Gideon Seymour and other business leaders urged him to declare himself a Republican, in which case they would back him without reserve; Solberg, *Humphrey*, 93–94.

⁵ Solberg, *Humphrey*, 102. County Attorney Mike Dillon cooperated in Simms’s appointment and information-gathering activities; William Simms, interview by Arthur Naftalin, Jan. 16, 1978, p. 6, OHP. Humphrey had written Cowles that “the influence of the press in arousing an intelligent interest in our municipal organization cannot be overestimated”; Humphrey to Cowles, Feb. 14, 1945, Box 1, General Correspondence. According to Mintener, Humphrey’s press coverage was much more favorable in 1945 than two years earlier; Mintener interview, 7, OHP. On Naftalin’s tactics, see Evron Kirkpatrick, interview by Norman Sherman, Mar. 13, 1969, p. 19, Box 1, Autobiographical Files, HHHP.

be relentlessly upbeat, adopting as his campaign slogan the words of the contemporary hit song, “Accentuate the Positive, Eliminate the Negative.” He trounced Kline in the May primary election by almost two-to-one (49,550 to 26,091), carrying all but one of the city’s 13 wards, including Kline’s home ward, and ran ahead of most of the victorious aldermanic candidates. In the June general election, Humphrey won resoundingly, receiving 86,377 votes (61 percent) to the mayor’s 55,263 and again carrying every ward but one.⁶



The 34-year-old Humphrey being sworn in as mayor on July 2, 1945

Momentarily departing from the nonpartisan posture of the campaign, the ebullient mayor-elect characterized the outcome as a decisive victory for liberalism. “The recent municipal election,” he remarked after his triumph, “indicates that the political trend in this area is toward progressive and liberal policies.” More

revealingly but with less basis in fact, he suggested that the results represented “a broad endorsement of the entire Roosevelt program.” Even had this been the case, Humphrey would have faced a difficult task. Although 8 of 13 winners in the aldermanic races were labor-endorsed liberals, the liberal-conservative balance on the city council remained so close—14 to 12—that any mayor would have to work for consensus to be able to lead the city in new directions.⁷

Minneapolis faced major problems in 1945, as did nearly all of the nation’s metropolitan centers. Historian Philip Funigiello has observed that, at the end of World War II, “American cities—even the land on which they rested—appeared more war-weary than the people themselves. They had stood the test, but they had not been built for such a strain.” Even though *Business Week* described the Twin Cities in April 1945 as the “cities the war boom forgot,” by the last months of the war Minneapolis and St. Paul nonetheless were affected by all of the major forces facing other large American cities. On the day of Humphrey’s inauguration as mayor, the *Minneapolis Daily Times* described the daunting problems facing the city: “Employment, housing, community redevelopment, traffic control, the veteran’s readjustments to civilian life, industrial expansion, municipal finance, law enforcement, the sound building of our park and library and school systems—such are the difficult and diverse problems that confront Minneapolis as Mr. Humphrey takes over at the city hall.”⁸

DURING THE CAMPAIGN, HUMPHREY HAD identified the city’s most pressing problems as widespread crime and a dire postwar housing shortage. Soon these challenges were joined in importance by a series of labor-management conflicts that threatened to cripple key local industries. These three critical areas of concern consumed much of Humphrey’s attention during his first term. By the time he ran for reelection

⁶ Griffith, *Humphrey*, 114. On Humphrey’s broad “consensus” approach, see Solberg, *Humphrey*, 100; *East Minnesota Argus*, June 1, 1945, and unidentified clipping, June 9, 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings. On the campaign song, see press release, Mar. 16, 1945, Box 24, Political Files. For analysis of the primary victory, see *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, May 22, 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings.

⁷ Unidentified clipping, [June 1945], Box 22, Subject Files. See also Humphrey to Ellis Arnall, Apr. 19, 1945, Box 1, General Correspondence. On the precarious balance in the council, see *Minneapolis Daily Times*, June 12, 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings; *Star-Journal*, July 6, 1945, Box 15, Subject Files.

⁸ Philip J. Funigiello, *The Challenge to Urban Liberalism: Federal-City Relations During World War II* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978), 246–47; *Business Week*, Apr. 14, 1945, p. 42; *Minneapolis Times*, July 2, 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings.

tion in 1947, he had made major progress in dealing with each of them.

Humphrey's conception of how communities worked led him to make police reform his top priority when he took office in July 1945. As he explained in his inaugural address, enforcement of the law was "not merely a matter of police administration" but a vital ingredient of community health. "A peaceful and harmonious and law-abiding community," he told the city council,

comes only when people live in conditions which are conducive to normal and healthy community relations. There is a direct relationship between a high level of employment at decent wages and a respect for law. There is a direct relationship between good housing, adequate parks and playgrounds, progressive schools, modern library facilities, and respect for the laws and ordinances of this city.⁹

The new mayor set two goals for improving law enforcement: to end police corruption and to increase the size of the police force in order to combat rising levels of violent crime and juvenile delinquency. His first step was to name a new police chief whose integrity and loyalty would be above reproach. Humphrey's choice was his friend and former neighbor, the FBI-trained head of the department's internal security division, Edwin Ryan. The confirmation battle proved to be contentious, however. Ryan had strong support from the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Law Enforcement, headed by Bradshaw Mintener, but organized labor opposed the nomination, fearing that Ryan's FBI background might dispose him to launch witch hunts against the city's unions. Liberals closely aligned with labor thus joined with conservatives, who hoped to embarrass the new mayor, and managed to stall the confirmation for a week. Mayor Humphrey finally won the battle, with only three liberals and one conservative voting nay. Decisive support on the labor side came from the powerful Robert I. Wishart, leader of the city's largest CIO union and chairman of the Hennepin County CIO. Humphrey's victory in this struggle was crucial in establish-

ing credibility as a leader, and he demonstrated superb tactical skills in winning the necessary votes from the divided council.¹⁰

Ryan proved to be a bold and effective chief, forcing the resignations of several members of the force he knew to be "on the take" and vigorously implementing Humphrey's order to smash the city's illegal gambling operations. This order was followed literally, as detectives raided gambling establishments and physically destroyed roulette wheels.¹¹ In late July, while the police department was carrying out these



Humphrey (seated at center) with advisors, including Robert Wishart and Bradshaw Mintener (standing first and second from right, respectively)

raids, the mayor asked the grand jury to examine the city's nearly 300 liquor licenses, checking especially for multiple-licensing violations. The object of eliminating multiple licenses was to end organized crime's control of most liquor establishments and thereby to improve Minneapolis's unsavory reputation. The grand jury's late-August report charged gross negligence in the issuance of licenses and called for establishment

⁹ Humphrey, inaugural address, July 3, 1945, p. 9, Box 1, Speech Text Files.

¹⁰ *Star-Journal*, July 10, 13, 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings. On Ryan's background and reasons for his selection, see Griffith, *Humphrey*, 117–18, and Humphrey, *Education*, 95. On Wishart's role, see comments by Naftalin and Mintener in Mintener interview, 23, 25, 27, OHP; Humphrey, *Education*, 96; Solberg, *Humphrey*, 102.

¹¹ Simms interview, 7, OHP; *Tribune*, Aug. 11, 1945; *Minneapolis Times*, Aug. 31, 1945; *Star-Journal*, Jan. 18, 1946; and unidentified clipping, Jan. [12], 1946—all Box 1, Newspaper Clippings.

of a separate licensing bureau in the police department and a liquor-license committee in the city council. In the end, this campaign met with only partial success. Although some of the city's most visible vice operations were shut down during Humphrey's tenure as mayor, the notorious racketeers Kid Cann and Tommy Banks continued to hold multiple licenses.¹²

With Humphrey's support, Chief Ryan also took decisive steps against juvenile delinquency. He vigorously prosecuted liquor sales to minors, increased evening patrols in areas frequented by young offenders, and enforced the city's 9:30 P.M. curfew for minors. Complementing these aggressive actions, the city council approved addition of a social worker and four patrolmen to the juvenile division of the police force, and Humphrey established a civilian juvenile-welfare commission to oversee the activities of all youth-related agencies. The mayor also pressed for improved recreational facilities in the city.¹³

Humphrey also urged the city council to approve enlargement and reorganization of the police department. He pointed out that many cities of comparable size had police forces twice as large as the one in Minneapolis. To strengthen his case, Humphrey linked the need for more patrolmen with the goal of reducing unemployment among returning veterans. These arguments met with only limited success, however, due to the projected cost of expanding the force. Instead of agreeing to the 30 percent increase in personnel (an addition of 150 officers to a force of 500), the council augmented the number of uniformed police by only six percent (to 531 officers) by late 1946. This battle continued into Humphrey's second term, when the council finally approved an increase to 581, still far short of the mayor's original request.¹⁴

By contrast, efforts to reorganize the police department were much more successful. In May 1946, citing recommendations from a law-enforcement advisory committee, Humphrey issued an executive order establishing a chain-of-command system to replace the chaotic and

inefficient structure in which virtually every division of the force reported directly to the chief. This change, together with Ryan's insistence on modern, FBI-inspired record-keeping techniques, dramatically improved the efficiency of Minneapolis law enforcement.¹⁵

A signal of Humphrey's growing credibility as a crime-fighter was the ease with which he won council confirmation of Glen W. MacLean as police chief when Ryan resigned to run for county office in May 1946. Another important indicator of Humphrey's success can be found in FBI statistics. While the rapid postwar population growth in Minneapolis was accompanied by increases in the number of robberies, both murders and aggravated assaults declined during his final two years as mayor. Homicides, which had totaled 9 in 1945, 10 in 1946, and 12 in 1947, numbered only 6 in 1948 and 3 in 1949. In that same five-year period, aggravated assaults totaled 31, 47, 46, 26, and 23, respectively.¹⁶ Violence and vice, of course, did not disappear from Minneapolis during Humphrey's mayoralty, but the city made significant progress in shaking off its reputation as a crime capital.

THE PERVERSIVE POSTWAR HOUSING CRISIS commanded even more of Humphrey's attention than did crime and police reorganization. Like most other urban centers, Minneapolis was overwhelmed by a flood of homeless veterans returning from service, many with young families. In September 1945 the city's housing needs were estimated at 80,000 units; according to the *Star-Journal*, the shortage was even worse than in war-boom cities such as Washington, D.C. Before his election, Humphrey had visited with federal officials and studied housing programs in New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, Louisville, and Cleveland. Soon after his inauguration he offered a three-point plan to deal with the crisis. It included: a door-to-door campaign "to list every available room and every possible living quarters now unused in the city"; action "by all responsible federal, state, and municipal authorities along with private social agencies to

¹² Unidentified clipping, July 28; *Minneapolis Spokesman*, Aug. 3; *Tribune*, Aug. 23—all 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings; Humphrey to City Council, Aug. 1, 1945, Box 15, Subject Files; Solberg, *Humphrey*, 104.

¹³ *Minneapolis Times*, Aug. 31, 1945; *Star-Journal*, Sept. 8, 1945; *Tribune*, Sept. 9—all 1945, Box 1; and unidentified clipping, July 1, 1946, Box 2—all Newspaper Clippings.

¹⁴ *Star-Journal*, July 7, 24, 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings. See also, Humphrey messages to city council, Dec. 13, 1946, Dec. 11, 1947, Box 15, Subject Files.

¹⁵ *Tribune*, May 5, July 1, 1946, Box 3, Newspaper Clippings.

¹⁶ See U.S. Department of Justice, FBI, *Uniform Crime Reports for the United States and Its Possessions* (Washington: GPO), vol. 16–19 (1945–49).



Trailers and other temporary housing in North Minneapolis to help alleviate postwar housing pressure

obtain temporary pre-fabricated and emergency-type housing” under terms of the wartime Lanham Act; and “immediate action by responsible authorities to secure a greatly increased number of private housing units.” The mayor also traveled to Washington again in an effort to secure federal funds for the city.¹⁷

Progress in solving the problem was slow. In October 1945 the federal government ended controls on building-material allocations, thus freeing private developers to begin new construction, but shortages persisted. Moreover, builders strongly preferred to construct more profitable higher-priced housing than badly needed low- and moderate-price units. Nor was federally sponsored housing forthcoming.

Despite strong lobbying by the United States Conference of Mayors and various veterans’ organizations, Congress failed in both 1945 and 1946 to pass the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill, which would have provided for construction of low-rent public housing.¹⁸

Undeterred, Humphrey worked to obtain surplus wartime housing for the city. Targeting 107 government-owned trailers in Lima, Ohio, he appointed a planning committee to work on the project. The Mayor’s Housing Committee, including representatives of government agencies, business, labor unions, and the construction industry, established a nonprofit corporation, Minneapolis Veterans Trailer Housing, Inc., to set up a colony in north Minneapolis.

¹⁷ *Star-Journal*, June 6, 1945, and *Tribune*, June 12, 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings. On shortages, see Richard O. Davies, *Housing Reform in the Truman Administration* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1966), 40–41, 50–51. On Humphrey’s visits with federal officials, see undated press release, Box 24, Political Files; *Tribune*, July 9, Sept. 17, 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings.

¹⁸ Mark I. Gelfand, *A Nation of Cities: The Federal Government and Urban America, 1933–1965* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 265, 415; *Minneapolis Times*, Aug. 27, 1945, and notes for Humphrey’s radio show, “The Mayor’s Report,” Sept. 27, 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings; Walter Chandler (chairman of the Conference of Mayors’ Committee on Legislation) to Humphrey, Nov. 2, 1945, and Humphrey to Chandler, Nov. 12, 1945, Box 13, Subject Files.



With returned serviceman (and governor-to-be) Orville L. Freeman, Humphrey publicizes the need for veterans' housing in front of a sign asking, "Are you hoarding an extra room?"

Because the city was barred by state law from financing housing, the costs of moving the trailers were met by a \$30,000 revolving fund provided by the Hennepin County chapter of the American Red Cross, reimbursable from trailer rentals.¹⁹

The surplus trailers reduced the housing shortage only slightly. "The housing crisis in Minneapolis continues to intensify at a most alarming rate," Humphrey told the city council in December 1945, "and the need for immediate and effective action becomes more and more urgent with the passage of each day." Predicting that the number of homeless would swell during the spring as more war veterans were discharged, he urged the council to declare a housing emergency and empower the board of pub-

lic welfare to handle the problem. Additional funding would be necessary, he continued, for a number of vital activities: to provide sites for free, demountable dwelling units available from the federal government; to conduct a survey of "vacant or partially vacant public buildings"; to convert these spaces into living accommodations; and to keep the war housing bureau functioning. Like the proposal to expand the police force, these ambitious aims ran into the problem of lack of city revenue. The most the council would do was to approve a city referendum for fall 1946 on a charter amendment to establish a municipal housing authority capable of issuing bonds for housing.²⁰

In early 1946 Humphrey went directly to the people for help, launching an elaborately

¹⁹ *Tribune*, Oct. 23, 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings; Humphrey to George Phillips, Dec. 5, 1945, Box 1, Subject Files; Humphrey to Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr., Jan. 2, 1946, Box 4, General Correspondence. See also *Tribune*, Dec. 19, 1945, and *Times*, Oct. 24, 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings.

²⁰ Message to city council, Dec. 28, 1945, Box 1, Speech Text Files; *Minneapolis Times*, Jan. 11, 1946, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings.

orchestrated “Shelter-a-Vet” campaign that urged Minneapolis residents to open their homes to veterans and their families. Staffed by volunteers, the drive evoked patriotic themes and utilized modern advertising techniques, including full-page illustrated advertisements in Minneapolis newspapers captioned “Wanted: A Friendly Door for a Homeless Vet!” and “Where Do We Sleep Tonight, Daddy?” The campaign even had a theme song, “A Place to Hang My Hat,” written at Humphrey’s request by a returned Minneapolis veteran, Jack LaSalle. The drive produced steady, though unspectacular, results and provided housing for about 3,000 veterans and family members by the end of 1946, less than a third of what was needed, by the mayor’s estimate.²¹

Although Humphrey believed that only passage of a charter amendment setting up a city housing authority would allow Minneapolis to meet its housing needs in the long run, he continued to seek short-term relief. In August 1946 he created yet another special panel, the Mayor’s Emergency Housing Commission, with the multiple charge to: determine local emergency-housing needs and goals; facilitate relations among government agencies, veterans’ groups, and builders; coordinate the work of local housing-referral centers; and investigate changes in building codes and zoning ordinances to expedite construction. Admitting later that he lacked the legal authority to do so, Mayor Humphrey also obtained from the federal government more than 400 additional trailers, prefabricated houses, metal barracks, and quonset huts for use by families of veterans attending the University of Minnesota.²²

In November 1946 Minneapolis voters defeated the proposed housing-authority charter amendment by nearly 6,000 votes, and at year’s end the housing crisis remained unresolved. Humphrey continued to press for federal action and tried repeatedly to get the city council to approve the issuance of housing bonds. Eventually the council approved 72 housing starts but appropriated no funds.²³ Only gradually was

Minneapolis’s housing shortage resolved. As in many other cities, a major factor was the migration of affluent residents to the suburbs, taking much of the tax base with them. But few metropolitan mayors were more energetic, more creative, or more visible than Humphrey in the struggle to solve the postwar housing crisis, and his actions gained him national attention as a “can-do” political leader of tremendous promise.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT STRIFE WAS ANOTHER critical issue that repeatedly demanded Humphrey’s attention as mayor. His statewide efforts on behalf of the Roosevelt-Truman ticket in 1944, his well-publicized role in creating the DFL Party, and his close association with Robert Wishart and other local labor leaders all stamped him initially as a friend of organized labor. Upon his inauguration, despite his campaign emphasis on consensus politics, an influential labor organ named him a “voice” for unionized labor in city government, pointing



Quonset-hut emergency-housing project for veterans with families at 1500 Buchanan Street Northeast, about 1947

²¹ *Star-Journal*, Feb. 6, 8, 1946 (Box 2), Mar. 9, 1946 (Box 4), *Tribune*, Dec. 29, 1946 (Box 3), Newspaper Clippings. Humphrey had first appealed to citizens to give veterans space in their homes; *Minneapolis Times*, Oct. 24, 1945, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings. For estimated housing demand, see “Basic Facts for Use in the Housing Appeal, February 4 through 8” [1947?], Box 9, Subject Files.

²² Press release, Aug. 11, 1946, Box 17, Subject Files; unidentified clipping [Oct. 1946], Box 5, Newspaper Clippings. See also *Minneapolis Tribune*, Jan. 31, *Star-Journal*, Jan. 26, and *Minneapolis Times*, Feb. 9—all 1946, Box 1, Newspaper Clippings.

²³ See unidentified clipping, Nov. 11, 1946, and *Tribune*, Dec. 5, 1946, Box 3, Newspaper Clippings; Humphrey to City Council Special Committee on Housing, May 11, July 29, 1948, Box 15, Subject Files.

out that he was a card-carrying member of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).²⁴ But whatever his private sympathies, Humphrey had no intention of confronting management on behalf of the unions. Conscious that he needed to retain business support, he chose to serve as a mediator in the many labor disputes that erupted during his first term in city hall.

Accordingly, Humphrey met with local labor leaders in October 1945 to develop procedures to be followed when strikes threatened. He followed up with a letter to Chief Ryan clarifying the role of the police in labor-management relations. The rules called for unions to give the mayor advance notice of any potential strikes and for the mayor to inform Ryan that a police presence might be needed. "We will not choose sides or act as a means of force to settle a dispute," Humphrey wrote to Ryan. "It is the responsibility of labor and management through the offices of Federal and State government to settle all industrial and labor disputes." Seeking to reassure both sides, he continued, "We should ever keep in mind that if police officers are used promiscuously in labor disputes, neither management nor labor will assume the responsibilities that belong to them in settling such disputes."²⁵

There is no doubt, however, that Humphrey sympathized with striking workers in nearly every case and considered it unjust that wages failed to keep up with price increases after the war. This was obvious in the innovative "Minnesota Formula" he developed to deal with labor-management strife: in any situation where a breakdown of collective bargaining threatened, a mayorally appointed committee (with equal representation from labor and management) would intervene to "eliminate any known inequities in the conditions of work and wage classifications." This was to be followed by an automatic 10 to 15 percent increase in "straight-time hourly earnings . . . given in the form of the same cents-per-hour boost to all workers." Relative wage increases would be greatest for lowest-paid workers. At the end of the year, the situation was to be reviewed and the contract revised, if necessary.²⁶

The Minnesota Formula got a thorough trial when Minneapolis experienced postwar labor

unrest as severe as anywhere in the nation. No work stoppage tested Humphrey more thoroughly than the protracted Minnesota teachers' strike of early 1948, led by his own union, the AFT. It posed special difficulties not only because it affected citizens all across the city but because it broke out just after Humphrey had committed himself to run for the 1948 Democratic Senate nomination and was therefore spending considerable time out of the city. The immediate cause for the strike was a proposal by the board of education to shorten the school year by two weeks in both spring and fall of 1948 to make up a projected \$2 million deficit. The AFT countered this transparent pay cut with a demand that the minimum salary be raised from \$2,000 to \$3,000 and the maximum be raised from \$4,200 to \$6,000. The city's non-union teachers, though not joining the strike, supported AFT demands for restoration of normal school terms and higher pay.²⁷

Humphrey, who for two years had been advocating a one-percent city payroll tax to enhance revenues, saw the teachers' strike as vindication of his advocacy. It also provided him further evidence (along with the continuing housing crisis) that the city needed to modernize its charter by granting more power to the mayor to deal with crises. Only such reform, he argued, would permit the management changes necessary to produce adequate funding for schools. "It is absolutely essential that it be clearly understood," he announced as the strike began on February 25, "that the City of Minneapolis either through its City Council or through its school board, is powerless to meet the financial requirements of providing decent education for its children. . . . Frankly, our hands are tied." When the strike dragged on, the mayor intervened directly. Two weeks into the walkout, on March 10, he wrote to the school board president, Morris C. Robinson, to urge settlement, arguing, "We can't operate schools without teachers." Calling for raises for the lowest-paid teachers to be funded by a bond issue, Humphrey once again sounded the theme of community responsibility: "The issues involved in this dispute can be and must be resolved. . . . Surely we must have faith in each other. A contract is no better than the integrity of those who

²⁴ *Guild Reporter*, Aug. 10, 1945, Box 22, Publicity Files.

²⁵ Humphrey to Ed Ryan, Oct. 17, 1945, Box 10, Subject Files.

²⁶ See draft press release for President's Conference on Labor-Management Relations [Oct. 1945], with Humphrey's notation that it be sent as a telegram. It was not sent; Box 10, Subject Files.

²⁷ *Tribune*, Feb. 23, 1948, Box 12, Subject Files.



A crowd of exasperated parents urging Assistant Superintendent Robert S. Gilchrist to settle the strike

sign it and negotiate it. . . . The people of this city have every right to expect that a settlement will be reached within the next day or two.”²⁸

The teachers’ strike ended on March 22 with an almost complete victory for the AFT. The board rescinded the four-week cut in the school schedule and agreed to increase both the minimum and maximum teachers’ salaries over the next two years. Humphrey may have moved things along by calling for mediation, but in the end a more important force in producing settlement was an ominous warning from District Court Judge Lars O. Rue that the parties should “use the best conciliatory methods you can for the welfare of the city.”²⁹ Mayor (and Senate candidate) Humphrey, however, received credit for the role he had played, which in turn enhanced his credentials with organized labor at a critical political juncture.

As mayor, Hubert Humphrey may have wanted to side with the workers in times of labor-

management conflict, but he was consistently pragmatic in his response to the city’s major strikes, including stoppages by communications workers, electrical workers, and hospital workers, among others. He later recounted: “I constantly used . . . the prestige of the mayor’s office, what talents I had, to keep the whole situation flexible, to keep it from jelling and solidifying into irreconcilable positions.” As Humphrey saw it, employers, as the more powerful party, bore special responsibility to decide “what kind of America they wanted.” Speaking at a labor rally in Duluth during November 1946, he asserted that “labor is here to stay and it is not going to be shoved around.” Union-busting, he added, would “only lead to the kind of dictator-led mob rule such as we saw in Hitlerite Germany and in Russia following World War I.”³⁰

Combining idealism with pragmatism in his handling of labor issues, Humphrey successfully walked the political tightrope between unions

²⁸ Statement on school crisis, Feb. 25, 1948; Humphrey to the Rev. Morris C. Robinson, Mar. 10, 1948, Box 12, Subject Files.

²⁹ *Minneapolis Teacher*, Apr. 5, 1948, p. 2, Box 12, Subject Files.

³⁰ Humphrey, interview by Norman Sherman, Sept. 26, 1969, p. 10, Box 2, Autobiographical Files; *Labor World* (Duluth), Nov. 7, 1946, p. 1, Box 22, Subject Files. Major strikes are well documented in folders labeled “Labor Disputes” and “Labor-Management Correspondence” in Box 10, Subject Files.

and employers. His empathy for workers, especially the lowest paid, ensured that his union support remained strong. The city's business leaders, too—whatever their private suspicions—appreciated his ability to keep peace between unions and management. Humphrey's success in producing the community harmony about which he so often spoke proved to be an important political asset when he ran for the Senate in 1948.

As mayor of Minneapolis, Humphrey had no choice but to deal with the issues of crime, housing, and strikes, but in two other important areas—race relations and municipal-government reform—he acted out of the strength of his personal convictions. This commitment to using government to bring about social justice would characterize Humphrey's political approach throughout his career.

Deeply committed to erasing Minneapolis's image of racial and religious intolerance, Humphrey had been so outspoken in his 1945 campaign that his most prominent black supporter, publisher Cecil E. Newman of the *Minneapolis Spokesman*, had advised him to “soft-pedal this civil rights stuff,” adding that he would rather see Humphrey securely elected “than to let some of these bigots start attacking you as a Negro-lover.”³¹

Once elected, Humphrey turned quickly to the problems of the city's minorities, especially blacks. After a brief trip to Chicago to consult with Mayor Edward Kelly, he forwarded a draft Fair Employment Practices (FEP) ordinance to the chair of the city council's committee on ordinances and legislation. In doing so, as aide Arthur Naftalin pointed out to him, he had committed a serious faux pas: “The proper procedure,” Naftalin admonished his boss, “is for you to address it to the Council and let the Council decide which committee it ought to be referred to.” Furthermore, added Naftalin, “The way ought to be cleared on publicity before a premature release is made that may embarrass the Council and accomplish nothing.” Even after Humphrey reintroduced his proposal through proper channels, the council stalled, delaying adoption of the fair-employ-

ment measure until January 31, 1947. In the end, however, Humphrey's victory was complete. The ordinance passed by a vote of 21 to 3 and in its final form put Minneapolis “in the lead nationally in the penalties provided for discrimination in employment.” In contrast to similar measures in Chicago and Milwaukee, the only other two U.S. cities with them at the time, the new regulation prescribed jail terms as well as fines for violators. Still, the extent of the breakthrough for black employment in Minneapolis was very limited for the first few years and was perhaps due as much to pressures from the city's Urban League as to any other factor.³²

One of the most important forces behind enactment of the Fair Employment Practices ordinance was yet another appointed committee of experts, the Mayor's Council on Human Relations. Established in 1946 and chaired by Lutheran clergyman Reuben K. Youngdahl (brother of a Republican federal judge who was soon to become governor of Minnesota), the panel included representatives from business, labor, and government, as well as one black and one Jewish member. Charged by Humphrey to investigate “all cases involving discrimination,” the human relations council was highly productive. In addition to sponsoring educational programs on race relations across the city, it assisted in a training program for the police department, helped to establish nondiscrimination programs in veterans' housing projects, and secured city-council endorsement of two other race-relations ordinances. The first of these, adopted in mid-1946, called upon real-estate brokers “to eliminate restrictive provisions [covenants] from plats submitted to the City Council for approval,” and the second, passed in early 1947, banned the dissemination of hate literature in the city. Perhaps the most significant commission activity was its extensive community self-survey of attitudes and practices affecting “intergroup relations” in Minneapolis. In the spring of 1947 Humphrey succeeded in getting the city council to establish the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations as an official body of city government, thereby assuring its

³¹ Cecil Newman, interview by Charles MacDonald, 21, Box 1, Autobiographical Files.

³² Solberg, *Humphrey*, 105; Naftalin memorandum to Humphrey, Oct. 17, 1945, Box 15, Subject Files; *Minneapolis Times*, Jan. 31, 1947, Box 3, Newspaper Clippings. In his careful study of the effect of fair employment, Robert O. Blood Jr. reports that only “16 employment breakthroughs occurred in 29 stores” in Minneapolis in the years 1947–49, while the record in neighboring St. Paul, which had no ordinance, was only somewhat less; Blood, *Northern Breakthrough* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1968), 7.

existence beyond his tenure in office.³³

Humphrey continued to press the issue of civil rights for minorities after his easy reelection over a little-known Republican opponent, attorney Frank Collins, in 1947. The continuing contributions of the city's human relations council took on special importance. Much of the council's work was informal. For example, Chairman Youngdahl met with employers to encourage them to remove questions about race and religion from employment applications, and assistance was given to nonwhites seeking veterans' housing. In early 1948 Mayor

Humphrey acknowledged the council for its contributions and reported with pleasure that several other cities had established similar bodies. "Minneapolis and the Mayor's Council," he wrote to Youngdahl, "have become a symbol of positive action to insure human rights on the local level." Meanwhile, the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC), which had been established to enforce the fair-employment ordinance, followed up on discrimination complaints and worked with the city attorney to draft a nondiscrimination clause for inclusion in all municipal contracts.³⁴

The practical results of these efforts, however, were limited. Formal complaints to the FEPC



Humphrey's fair practices in bowling effort called for eliminating whites-only bowling lanes, 1947

worked successfully to end segregation in Twin Cities bowling alleys. As president of the National Committee on Fair Play in Bowling, he tried to build upon his local successes by getting the white-only American Bowling Congress (ABC) to permit the 75,000 alleys operating under its sanction to open men's competition to all bowlers, regardless of race. When the ABC did not yield, at Humphrey's urging the Minneapolis and St. Paul Committees on Fair Play in Bowling sponsored nondiscriminatory "All American Bowling Tournaments" in April 1948 to dramatize the issue.³⁶

It does not negate the sincerity or importance of Humphrey's early civil-rights efforts to

were few—only 56 between June 1, 1947, and December 31, 1948—and the agency settled only 19 in favor of the complainants, while dismissing 16 for lack of evidence. It is not clear that these low numbers reflected improved conditions; rather, they may reflect fear of reprisals on the part of those who suffered reportable instances of discrimination.³⁵

Throughout his mayoralty, Humphrey maintained high visibility in the area of civil rights. On a number of well-publicized occasions, he took black guests with him to previously segregated restaurants and service establishments, and he

³³ Naftalin to Curtis Campaigne Jr., Feb. 7, 1947; Wilfred C. Leland Jr. to Campaigne, Feb. 21, 1947; Humphrey to City Council, Mar. 13, 1947; and Mayor's Council Report, Sept. 1, 1947—all Box 16, Subject Files. See also *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 6, 1946, Box 3, Newspaper Clippings. A statewide poll found that 60 percent of Minnesota's whites favored residential segregation and would refuse to sell their homes to a black person even if it meant taking a lower offer; *Tribune*, July 27, 1947, Box 16, Subject Files. Blood describes the self-survey as "a one-shot affair . . . designed to stir the public conscience and initiate moves toward equal opportunity" but adds that its "chief influence . . . was on the committee members who carried it out." Blood, *Northern Breakthrough*, 88, 98.

³⁴ Mayor's Council Report, Sept. 1, 1947, and Humphrey to Reuben K. Youngdahl, Feb. 19, 1948, Box 16, Subject Files. Political novice Collins never found a viable issue and lost two-to-one in the primary and general elections; unidentified clipping, May 16, 1947, and *Star-Journal*, June 12, 1947, Box 4, Newspaper Clippings.

³⁵ Leland to Roy H. Owsley, Mar. 10, 1948, Box 16, Subject Files; Blood, *Northern Breakthrough*, 99.

³⁶ Humphrey to Charles Johnson, Dec. 11, 1947, and press release, Minneapolis Committee for Fair Play in Bowling, undated, Box 16, Subject Files.

recognize that, as he looked forward to climbing higher political peaks, he saw great advantage in maintaining his image as a leader in race relations. If the results of his efforts in Minneapolis were limited, nonetheless his leadership held symbolic and educational value for the city's white majority. Humphrey took pride, as he noted to Youngdahl, in his membership in such national civil-rights organizations as the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capitol and the National Committee for FEPC. He boasted that "in each instance these national committees look to the Mayor of Minneapolis because Minneapolis has done pioneer work in the field of human relations." Similarly, he wrote to black publisher Cecil Newman in early 1948 to describe his activities on behalf of civil rights, including speaking appearances in 27 states, and to emphasize his continuing commitment. He wanted, he told Newman, to dispel "idle rumor and gossip that I am letting down on my enthusiasm for such programs."³⁷ Only a few months later, what would become his lifelong public identification with civil-rights issues was cemented by his galvanizing speech to the 1948 Democratic national convention.

IN HIS FINAL MAJOR MAYORAL CRUSADE—TO secure reform of the city's charter in order to strengthen the hand of city hall—Humphrey met with little success, despite the fact that he was probably right on the issue. When he became mayor in 1945, the Minneapolis city council was virtually all-powerful because of the existing charter, adopted in 1920. From the beginning he advocated a transition to a council-mayor form of government that would strip the council of its existing boards and agencies and give to the mayor sole appointive authority. An important additional ingredient in his plan was the establishment of centralized financial control through an executive budget. To that end, in October 1945 he had appointed a Mayor's Tax and Finance Commission to "examine the finances and administration of the governmen-

tal departments of Minneapolis and to make recommendations for a long-range financial program." At the same time, a 15-member charter commission was established to examine the possibility of revising the organization of city government. In September 1947 the tax and finance commission issued its final report, concluding that Minneapolis's "serious financial situation" was primarily due to "a badly organized city government, woefully lacking in financial control and weak in its administrative setup, which is a severe handicap to any efforts at solving the city's problems."³⁸

In December the charter commission submitted its own 84-page report recommending revisions of the sort the mayor had been requesting. The report's synopsis captured the spirit of what was being recommended: "The proposed charter gives the elected Council all legislative powers, centering executive responsibility in the Mayor. . . . It sets up a finance department along business organizational lines. It requires that each city activity be confined to its proper department." The proposal also recommended four-year terms for the mayor and aldermen and an expanded structure of 14 administrative departments.³⁹

Humphrey faced a hard sell with business leaders and the public at large because the cause of charter reform became inextricably linked with the prospect of higher taxes and municipal spending for services. To the mayor, that was the point. The city's inability to deal with the continuing housing crisis, the deficits in city workers' pension funds, and the inadequacy of funds to expand police and recreation facilities, for example, had convinced him that city government had to be restructured. City hall had to be empowered to act decisively in matters of public welfare and to permit a coordinated strategy for raising revenues through taxation and issuance of bonds. Popular fears of higher taxes frustrated Humphrey; he wrote to the chair of the citizens charter commission that "the proposed charter offers other means of raising revenues which will reduce the property taxes." He added that "practically every

³⁷ Humphrey to Reuben Youngdahl, Feb. 19, 1948, and Humphrey to Newman, Feb. 9, 1948, Box 16, Subject Files.

³⁸ Mayor's Tax and Finance Commission, *A Program for Minneapolis*, Sept. 27, 1947, p. 4, Box 14, Subject Files; *Star-Journal*, June 5, 1945; *Minneapolis Times*, Oct. 4, 1945; *Tribune*, Oct. 26, 1945, Feb. 12, 1946—all Box 1, and *Minneapolis Times*, Dec. 10, 1946, Box 3—all Newspaper Clippings.

³⁹ "Synopsis of Proposed Charter," Sept. 10, 1947, Box 14; *Star-Journal*, Dec. 23, 1947, Box 15—both Subject Files.

other city in the country has these powers of revenue raising except Minneapolis.”⁴⁰

There were other potent sources of opposition to charter reform, too. Labor leaders, usually reliable supporters of Humphrey initiatives, had never been enthusiastic about revision of the charter, fearing that a strengthened mayor’s office could fall into enemy hands. Others, particularly Republicans worried about the mayor’s future plans, charged that Humphrey was making a power grab in order to strengthen his personal political position. (In fact, after the 1947 municipal elections, there was such concern in the evenly divided city council that Humphrey would go on to higher elective office in 1948 that a deal had to be struck about which faction would control the council presidency and, thus, succession to city hall after his inevitable statewide victory.)⁴¹

Such criticisms made the mayor understandably defensive. “What in the dickens are you talking about when you say that the proposal of the City Charter Commission for a central finance office means a dictatorship and a political machine for the mayor?” he wrote to one such skeptic before the commission reports had become public. “I am not at all interested in this charter proposal for my future political life.” A cartoon that appeared in a pamphlet opposing reform captured these political themes: Humphrey appears as a monarch pulling the strings of city council and virtually all city agencies, with the local press shown as court jesters. In the lower corner of the cartoon, John Q. Public, crying, “I voted wrong on [the] charter!” dangles helplessly from a string held by the tax assessor.⁴²

Charter-reform forces, headed by the citizens charter committee led by the ever-useful Bradshaw Mintener and Humphrey’s friend John C. Simmons, hoped for a vote in late March 1948 but ran into complications in the courts. A lawsuit filed on behalf of taxpayers charged that revision could not be accomplished as its proponents planned, that is, by submitting it to voters as a new charter (which, under Minnesota’s home-rule statute, would have required a four-sevenths majority, or 57.14

percent of the vote), but should be treated as an amendment to the existing charter (which would require a 60-percent positive vote). Although District Court Judge Albert H. Emerson ruled against the challenge in early February, his decision was overruled by the Minnesota Supreme Court on March 15, just nine days before the scheduled vote. The charter commission was forced back to the drawing board to recast the measure as an amendment (actually, 80 amendments) to the original, and the timetable for the charter vote was pushed back to December 1948.⁴³

The court’s decision proved the death knell for charter reform. As revealed by a poll at the end of February, public support for the revision was soft at best; survey results found that while 56 percent of the voters supported revision and another 4 percent were “inclined” to support it,



⁴⁰ Humphrey to George Ludcke, Mar. 2, 1948, Box 15, Subject Files. See also *Tribune*, Sept. 24, 1945, Box 1; Humphrey’s analysis in *Tribune*, July 2, 1946, and *Star-Journal*, July 16, 1946, Box 2—all Newspaper Clippings.

⁴¹ Glen W. Wallace and Leonard T. Ramberg, interview by Arthur Naftalin, Jan. 25, 1978, p. 22–23, OHP.

⁴² Humphrey to Al Hansen, Feb. 25, 1947; *The Property Owner* 11 (Mar. 1948), back cover—both Box 14, Subject Files. On the varied nature of opposition to reform, see also Solberg, *Humphrey*, 109.

⁴³ Unidentified clipping, Jan. 17, 1948; *Star-Journal*, Feb. 3, 1948—both Box 15, Subject Files.



Mayor Humphrey campaigning for the Senate, 1948

only about half of those questioned were paying attention to the issue. The delay necessary to reframe the revision promised to interrupt whatever momentum had developed in focusing voters' attention on the question. Even more problematic was Humphrey's own shifting focus as 1948 unfolded. Speaking at the annual Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner in late February 1948, he clearly signaled his intent to run for the U.S. Senate, pledging to "dedicate all my time and all my ability to remove from office the senior senator from Minnesota, Joseph A. Ball." To the frustration of his statewide supporters, however, he held back from formally announcing for the Senate, pleading that the teachers' strike and the charter-revision struggle made it inopportune to do so. But in late April, seeing the political necessity to make his choice clear, Mayor Humphrey announced his candidacy over a special 11-station statewide radio hookup.⁴⁴

There was no way that even a dynamo like Hubert Humphrey could both wage a successful campaign to unseat an incumbent senator and at the same time lead the fight to overcome the formidable phalanx that opposed charter revision in Minneapolis. Thereafter, while touching base in city hall as often as he could, the soon-to-be senator was caught up in a frenetic speaking campaign both inside and outside the state, and revision forces had to carry on their fight without much help from their charismatic leader. One month after Humphrey's landslide victory over Ball in the November Senate race, the charter-reform proposal, to no one's surprise, went down to defeat at the hands of Minneapolis voters.⁴⁵

DESPITE THE OUTCOME OF THE CRUSADE FOR charter revision, there can be no doubt that Hubert Humphrey was an outstanding mayor. Certainly he received much admiring comment

⁴⁴ Clipping, *Tribune*, Feb. 29, 1948, Box 5, Subject Files; clipping, *Duluth Herald*, Feb. 20, 1948, Box 6, and radio address, Apr. 23, 1948, Box 2—both 1948 Senate Campaign Files, HHHP.

⁴⁵ Solberg, *Humphrey*, 109–10.

from the national media for his performance. In January 1949 *Time* placed the newly elected freshman senator's picture on the cover and summarized Humphrey's accomplishments in city hall. Minneapolis had been "a wide-open town" in 1945, *Time* observed, but

Humphrey moved into the Victorian-looking mayor's office and started to rattle the stained-glass windows. . . . Minneapolis closed down overnight, even to the slot machines at American Legion hall. He pushed through a city FEPC which made it a misdemeanor . . . to discriminate in employment. He warned management that he would not use police to break up picket lines.⁴⁶

The more liberal *New Republic* focused on Humphrey's outstanding leadership in improving race relations in his city, a role that had been heightened in public attention by his rousing civil-rights speech at the 1948 Democratic national convention. These assessments were appropriate. Hubert Humphrey's two terms as mayor produced significant gains for the city of Minneapolis. Moreover, his experience there shaped much of his subsequent political career. "For Humphrey," wrote longtime assistant Max Kampelman, "government meant the city and the state, and not just Washington. His commitment to local government was basic and yet frequently overlooked in later years by both his allies and his opponents."⁴⁷

Just as important as the shaping of political principles, however, was the honing of innate political abilities and leadership skills that occurred while Humphrey occupied city hall. "He had the genius for creating interest in public issues," remembered businessman Bradley Morrison years later. "He would dramatize issues that he advocated—a wider range of issues such as, well, housing had been kind of a feeble issue up to the time that Hubert seized it." Perhaps Kampelman best summed up the special skills

that Humphrey first displayed as mayor: "His style was a combination of candor, persuasion, and then conciliation. It was inclusion and involvement. Civility and decency did not mean skipping over disagreement, but finding a common ground." Humphrey himself later analyzed his approach as mayor as trying to be

the voice of the community, to try to bring to the attention of people of the community the scope and nature of the problems that confronted our city, what the possibilities were for their solution, to present alternative programs, to mobilize public support, and above all to organize the committees and commissions which would actually follow through on specific proposals. . . . So the mayor became, in a sense . . . the conscience of the community.

And while Humphrey's bipartisan support did ebb during his second term in city hall, that falling away seems to have had much more to do with his rising star in state (and even national) Democratic Party politics than with a departure from his consensus approach to solving the city's problems.⁴⁸

Hubert Humphrey never lost interest in city government. His capacious love for public service would not allow him to do so, and urban problems held a fascination for him throughout his years as senator and as vice-president. He did, however, begin to chafe at the restrictions of the mayor's office. While ubiquitous and active as ever in Minneapolis politics through 1947 and 1948, he was already launching his next campaign. He later recalled that as mayor he had begun "to feel restricted, limited to a local scene when my own interests were increasingly national."⁴⁹ But by early 1949 he had arrived in Washington, D.C., where most of the rest of his working life would be spent. The first, and critically important, part of Humphrey's political training had been completed, and the city of Minneapolis was far better for it.

⁴⁶ *Time*, Jan. 17, 1949, p. 21.

⁴⁷ Max M. Kampelman, *Entering New Worlds: The Memoirs of a Private Man in Public Life* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 61.

⁴⁸ Bradley Morrison, interview by Charles MacDonald, May 1969, p. 21, Box 1, and Humphrey, interview by Sherman, Sept. 26, 1969, p. 1–2, 4, Box 2—both Autobiography Files; Kampelman, *Entering New Worlds*, 63.

⁴⁹ Humphrey, *Education*, 108.

The photo on p. 61 is from the Minneapolis Public Library Special Collections; on p. 53, from the Minneapolis Daily Times, June 7, 1945, p. 12; on p. 54, Minneapolis Star-Journal, July 2, 1945, p. 1; and p. 55, Minneapolis Morning Tribune, June 28, 1945, p. 1. All others are in the Minnesota Historical Society Collections, including the photos on pages 50, 58, 59, and 66, from Box C1, Hubert H. Humphrey Photo Collection, and on p. 63 and 65, from Box 16 and 14, respectively, Mayoralty Files, Hubert H. Humphrey Papers.



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