

George Wallace Inaugural Speech as Governor of Alabama, January 14, 1963.

George Wallace was elected governor of Alabama in 1963, and gave an inaugural address which became a rallying cry for those opposing integration and the Civil Rights Movement. In his speech Wallace challenged the attempts of the federal government to enforce laws prohibiting segregation.

Wallace was governor of Alabama from 1963–1967, 1971–1979 and 1983–1987. He made four runs for U.S. president (three as a Democrat and one on the American Independent Party ticket). He influenced the way many future politicians talked about issues, especially race and the federal government. Wallace was known for stirring crowds with his rhetoric, sometimes even frightening himself and his advisors with his power to excite crowds.



[...] This is the day of my Inauguration as Governor of the State of Alabama. And on this day I feel a deep obligation to renew my pledges, my covenants with you, the people of this great state. General Robert E. Lee said that *duty* is the sublimest word on the English language and I have come, increasingly, to realize what he meant. I shall do my duty to you, God helping, to every man, to every woman, yes, to every child in this state. I shall fulfill my duty toward honesty and economy in our State government so that no man shall have a part of his livelihood cheated and no child shall have a bit of his future stolen away.

[...]

Today I have stood, where once Jefferson Davis stood, and took an oath to my people. It is very appropriate then that from this Cradle of the Confederacy, this very Heart of the Great Anglo-Saxon Southland, that today we sound the drum for freedom as have our generations of forebears before us done, time and time again through history. Let us rise to the call of freedom-loving blood that is in us and send our answer to the tyranny that clanks its chains upon the South. In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say,

Segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.

The Washington D.C. school riot report is disgusting and revealing. We will not sacrifice our children to any such type school system, and you can write that down. The federal troops in Mississippi could be better used guarding the safety of the citizens of Washington D.C., where it is even unsafe to walk or go to a ballgame, and that is the nation's capitol. I was safer in a B-29 bomber over Japan during the war in an air raid, than the people of Washington are walking to the White House neighborhood. A closer example is Atlanta. The city officials fawn for political reasons over school integration and then build barricades to stop residential integration, what hypocrisy!

Let us send this message back to Washington by our representatives who are with us today, that from this day we are standing up, and the heel of tyranny does not fit the neck of an upright man; that we intend to take the offensive and carry our fight for freedom across the nation, wielding the balance of power we know we possess in the Southland; that WE, not the insipid bloc of voters of some sections will determine in the next election who shall sit in the White House of these United States; that from this day, from this hour, from this minute, we give the word of a race of honor that we will tolerate their boot in our face no longer, and let those certain judges put that in their opium pipes of power and smoke it for what it is worth.

Hear me, Southerners! You sons and daughters who have moved north and west throughout this nation, we call on you from your native soil to join with us in national support and vote, and we know, wherever you are, away from the hearths of the Southland, that you will respond, for though you may live in the farthest reaches of this vast country, your heart has never left Dixieland.

And you native sons and daughters of old New England's rock-ribbed patriotism and you sturdy natives of the great Mid-West, and you descendants of the far West flaming spirit of pioneer freedom, we invite you to come and be with us, for you are of the Southern spirit, and the Southern philosophy. You are Southerners too and brothers with us in our fight.

What I have said about segregation goes double this day. And what I have said to or about some federal judges goes triple this day.

Alabama has been blessed by God as few states in this Union have been blessed. Our state owns ten percent of all the natural resources of all the states in our country. Our inland waterway system is second to none and has the potential of being the greatest waterway transport system in the entire world. We possess over thirty minerals in usable quantities and our soil is rich and varied, suited to a wide variety of plants. Our native pine and forestry system produces timber faster than we can cut it and yet we have only pricked the surface of the great lumber and pulp potential.

With ample rainfall and rich grasslands our live stock industry is in the infancy of a giant future that can make us a center of the big and growing meat packing and prepared foods marketing. We have the favorable climate, streams, woodlands, beaches, and natural beauty to make us a recreational Mecca in the booming tourist and vacation industry. Nestled in the great Tennessee Valley, we possess the Rocket center of the world and the keys to the space frontier.

While the trade with a developing Europe built the great port cities of the east coast, our own fast developing port of Mobile faces as a magnetic gateway to the great continent of South America, well over twice as large and hundreds of times richer in resources, even now awakening to the growing probes of enterprising capital with a potential of growth and wealth beyond any present dream for our port development and corresponding results throughout the connecting waterways that thread our state.

And while the manufacturing industries of free enterprise have been coming to our state in increasing numbers, attracted by our bountiful natural resources, our growing numbers of skilled workers and our favorable conditions, their present rate of settlement here can be increased from the trickle they now represent to a stream of enterprise and endeavor, capital and expansion that can join us in our work of development and enrichment of the educational futures of our children, the opportunities of our citizens and the fulfillment of our talents as God has given them to us.

To realize our ambitions and to bring to fruition our dreams, we as Alabamians must take cognizance of the world about us. We must re-define our heritage, re-school our thoughts in the lessons our forefathers knew so well, first hand, in order to function and to grow and to prosper. We can no longer hide our head in the sand and tell ourselves that the ideology of our free fathers is not being attacked and is not being threatened by another idea, for it is.

We are faced with an idea that if a centralized government assume enough authority, enough power over its people, that it can provide a utopian life; that if given the power to dictate, to forbid, to require, to demand, to distribute, to edict and to judge what is best and enforce that will produce only "good," and it shall be our father and our God. It is an idea of government that

encourages our fears and destroys our faith, for where there is faith, there is no fear, and where there is fear, there is no faith.

In encouraging our fears of economic insecurity it demands we place that economic management and control with government; in encouraging our fear of educational development it demands we place that education and the minds of our children under management and control of government, and even in feeding our fears of physical infirmities and declining years, it offers and demands to father us through it all and even into the grave. It is a government that claims to us that it is bountiful as it buys its power from us with the fruits of its rapaciousness of the wealth that free men before it have produced and builds on crumbling credit without responsibilities to the debtors, our children. It is an ideology of government erected on the encouragement of fear and fails to recognize the basic law of our fathers that governments do not produce wealth, people produce wealth, free people; and those people become less free as they learn there is little reward for ambition, that it requires faith to risk and they have none as the government must restrict and penalize and tax incentive and endeavor and must increase its expenditures of bounties, then this government must assume more and more police powers and we find we are become government-fearing people, not God-fearing people.

We find we have replaced faith with fear and though we may give lip service to the Almighty, in reality, government has become our god. It is, therefore, a basically ungodly government and its appeal to the pseudo-intellectual and the politician is to change their status from servant of the people to master of the people, to play at being God without faith in God and without the wisdom of God. It is a system that is the very opposite of Christ for it feeds and encourages everything degenerate and base in our people as it assumes the responsibilities that we ourselves should assume. Its pseudo-liberal spokesmen and some Harvard advocates have never examined the logic of its substitution of what it calls "human rights" for individual rights, for its propaganda play on words has appeal for the unthinking. Its logic is totally material and irresponsible as it runs the full gamut of human desires including the theory that everyone has voting rights without the spiritual responsibility of preserving freedom. Our founding fathers recognized those rights but only within the framework of those spiritual responsibilities. But the strong, simple faith and sane reasoning of our founding fathers has long since been forgotten as the so-called "progressives" tell us that our Constitution was written for "horse and buggy" days, so were the Ten Commandments.

Not so long ago men stood in marvel and awe at the cities, the buildings, the schools, the autobahns that the government of Hitler's Germany had built, just as centuries before they stood in wonder of Rome's building. But it could not stand, for the system that built it had rotted the souls of the builders and in turn rotted the foundation of what God meant that men should be. Today that same system on an international scale is sweeping the world. It is the "changing world" of which we are told it is called "new" and "liberal". It is as old as the oldest dictator. It is degenerate and decadent. As the national racism of Hitler's Germany persecuted a national minority to the whim of a national majority, so the international racism of the liberals seek to persecute the international white minority to the whim of the international colored majority, so that we are foot-balled about according to the favor of the Afro-Asian bloc. But the Belgian survivors of the Congo cannot present their case to a war crimes commission, nor the Portuguese of Angola, nor the survivors of Castro, nor the citizens of Oxford, Mississippi.

It is this theory of international power politic that led a group of men on the Supreme Court for the first time in American history to issue an edict, based not on legal precedent, but upon a volume, the editor of which said our Constitution is outdated and must be changed and the writers of which, some had admittedly belonged to as many as half a hundred communist-front organizations. It is this theory that led this same group of men to briefly bare the ungodly core of that philosophy in forbidding little school children to say a prayer. And we find the evidence of

that ungodliness even in the removal of the words "in God we trust" from some of our dollars, which was placed there as like evidence by our founding fathers as the faith upon which this system of government was built.

It is the spirit of power thirst that caused a president in Washington to take up Caesar's pen and with one stroke of it make a law. A law which the law-making body of Congress refused to pass, a law that tells us that we can or cannot buy or sell our very homes, except by his conditions, and except at his discretion. It is the spirit of power thirst that led the same president to launch a full offensive of twenty-five thousand troops against a university, of all places, in his own country and against his own people, when this nation maintains only six thousand troops in the beleaguered city of Berlin.

We have witnessed such acts of "might makes right" over the world as men yielded to the temptation to play God, but we have never before witnessed it in America. We reject such acts as free men. We do not defy, for there is nothing to defy since as free men we do not recognize any government right to give freedom or deny freedom. No government erected by man has that right. As Thomas Jefferson said, "The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time; no King holds the right of liberty in his hands." Nor does any ruler in American government.

We intend, quite simply, to practice the free heritage as bequeathed to us as sons of free fathers. We intend to re-vitalize the truly new and progressive form of government that is less than two hundred years old, a government first founded in this nation simply and purely on faith, that there is a personal God who rewards good and punishes evil, that hard work will receive its just deserts, that ambition and ingenuity and inventiveness, and profit of such, are admirable traits and goals that the individual is encouraged in his spiritual growth and from that growth arrives at a character that enhances his charity toward others and from that character and that charity so is influenced business, and labor and farmer and government. We intend to renew our faith as God-fearing men, not government-fearing men nor any other kind of fearing-men. We intend to roll up our sleeves and pitch in to develop this full bounty God has given us, to live full and useful lives and in absolute freedom from all fear. Then can we enjoy the full richness of the Great American Dream.

We have placed this sign, "In God We Trust," upon our State Capitol on this Inauguration Day as physical evidence of determination to renew the faith of our fathers and to practice the free heritage they bequeathed to us. We do this with the clear and solemn knowledge that such physical evidence is evidently a direct violation of the logic of that Supreme Court in Washington D.C., and if they or their spokesmen in this state wish to term this defiance, I say then let them make the most of it.

This nation was never meant to be a unit of one but a united of the many. That is the exact reason our freedom loving forefathers established the states, so as to divide the rights and powers among the states, insuring that no central power could gain master government control.

In united effort we were meant to live under this government, whether Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Church of Christ, or whatever one's denomination or religious belief, each respecting the others right to a separate denomination; each, by working to develop his own, enriching the total of all our lives through united effort. And so it was meant in our political lives, whether Republican, Democrat, Prohibition, or whatever political party, each striving from his separate political station, respecting the rights of others to be separate and work from within their political framework and each separate political station making its contribution to our lives.

And so it was meant in our racial lives. Each race, within its own framework has the freedom to teach, to instruct, to develop, to ask for and receive deserved help from others of separate racial stations. This is the great freedom of our American founding fathers. But if we amalgamate into the one unit as advocated by the communist philosophers then the enrichment of our lives, the freedom for our development, is gone forever. We become, therefore, a mongrel unit of one under a single all powerful government and we stand for everything and for nothing.

The true brotherhood of America, of respecting the separateness of others and uniting in effort has been so twisted and distorted from its original concept that there is a small wonder that communism is winning the world.

We invite the negro citizens of Alabama to work with us from his separate racial station, as we will work with him, to develop, to grow in individual freedom and enrichment. We want jobs and a good future for both races, the tubercular and the infirm. This is the basic heritage of my religion, if which I make full practice for we are all the handiwork of God.

But we warn those, of any group, who would follow the false doctrine of communistic amalgamation that we will not surrender our system of government, our freedom of race and religion, that freedom was won at a hard price and if it requires a hard price to retain it, we are able and quite willing to pay it.

The liberals' theory that poverty, discrimination and lack of opportunity is the cause of communism is a false theory. If it were true the South would have been the biggest single communist bloc in the western hemisphere long ago, for after the great War Between the States, our people faced a desolate land of burned universities, destroyed crops and homes, with manpower depleted and crippled, and even the mule, which was required to work the land, was so scarce that whole communities shared one animal to make the spring plowing. There were no government handouts, no Marshall Plan aid, no coddling to make sure that our people would not suffer; instead the South was set upon by the vulturous carpetbagger and federal troops, all loyal Southerners were denied the vote at the point of bayonet, so that the infamous, illegal 14th Amendment might be passed. There was no money, no food and no hope of either. But our grandfathers bent their knee only in church and bowed their head only to God.

Not for a single instant did they ever consider the easy way of federal dictatorship and amalgamation in return for fat bellies. They fought. They dug sweet roots from the ground with their bare hands and boiled them in iron pots, they gathered poke salad from the woods and acorns from the ground. They fought. They followed no false doctrine. They knew what they wanted and they fought for freedom! They came up from their knees in the greatest display of sheer nerve, grit and guts that has ever been set down in the pages of written history, and they won! The great writer, Rudyard Kipling wrote of them, that: "There in the Southland of the United States of America, lives the greatest fighting breed of man in all the world!"

And that is why today, I stand ashamed of the fat, well-fed whimperers who say that it is inevitable, that our cause is lost. I am ashamed of them and I am ashamed for them. They do not represent the people of the Southland.

And may we take note of one other fact, with all trouble with communists that some sections of this country have, there are not enough native communists in the South to fill up a telephone booth, and that is a matter of public FBI record.

We remind all within hearing of this Southland that a Southerner, Peyton Randolph, presided over the Continental Congress in our nation's beginning, that a Southerner, Thomas Jefferson, wrote the Declaration of Independence, that a Southerner, George Washington, is the Father of our country, that a Southerner, James Madison, authored our Constitution, that a Southerner,

George Mason, authored the Bill of Rights and it was a Southerner who said, "Give me liberty or give me death," Patrick Henry.

Southerners played a most magnificent part in erecting this great divinely inspired system of freedom and, as God is our witnesses, Southerners will save it.

Let us, as Alabamians, grasp the hand of destiny and walk out of the shadow of fear and fill our divine destination. Let us not simply defend but let us assume the leadership of the fight and carry our leadership across this nation. God has placed us here in this crisis, let us not fail in this our most historical moment.

You are here today, present in this audience, and to you over this great state, wherever you are in sound of my voice, I want to humbly and with all sincerity, thank you for your faith in me.

I promise you that I will try to make you a good governor. I promise you that, as God gives me the wisdom and the strength, I will be sincere with you. I will be honest with you.

I will apply the old sound rule of our fathers, that anything worthy of our defense is worthy of one hundred percent of our defense. I have been taught that freedom meant freedom from any threat or fear of government. I was born in that freedom, I was raised in that freedom, I intend to live life in that freedom and, God willing, when I die, I shall leave that freedom to my children as my father left it to me.

My pledge to you, to "Stand up for Alabama," is a stronger pledge today than it was the first day I made that pledge. I shall "Stand up for Alabama," as Governor of our State, you stand with me and we, together, can give courageous leadership to millions of people throughout this nation who look to the South for their hope in this fight to win and preserve our freedoms and liberties, so help me God.

And my prayer is that the Father who reigns above us will bless all the people of this great sovereign State and nation, both white and black.

I thank you.

FROM 1959 Speech

"There's some people who've gone over the state and said, 'Well, George Wallace has talked too strong about segregation.' Now let me ask you this: how in the name of common sense can you be too strong about it? You're either for it or you're against it. There's not any middle ground as I know of."

"This civil rights bill will wind up putting a homeowner in jail because he doesn't sell his home to someone that some bureaucrat thinks he ought to sell it to. My friends, a man's home is his castle...and he ought to be able to sell it to people with blue eyes and green teeth if he wants to; it's his home."