

8th Polka Day

Weldon Wilfahrt - Chr

Dr Ted Fritzsche  
former mayor

aug  
Oct  
1960

Coggie Nieman - Chamberg  
Pres. Comm.

Mayor Tony Eckstein

REGAINING THE AMERICAN INITIATIVE

New Ulm, Minnesota

KNUT - Polka Station

W. J. Kral President  
City Council

My fellow-Minnesotans and fellow-Americans

Russell  
Schwandt

In the bright sunshine of a brilliant  
Minnesota summer, it is hard to realize what  
a cold and dark path our nation is treading  
this year.

Jerry  
Nichtoff

Yet it is true that in this year of  
1960, our nation has been humiliated, cast  
down and degraded in a way that has not  
happened since the early days of the Republic,  
when we were a tiny new nation huddled  
between the mountains and the Atlantic.

Clarence  
Tower  
(Tower)  
Presid  
Brown  
County  
Farmers  
Union

The great and powerful American people,  
this proud and sensitive American nation,  
has been let down by its political leadership.

It has not been just the driving thrust  
of the Communists.

It has not been the continuing struggle  
of the downtrodden peoples of the world to  
find a new life that has overthrown American  
power and prestige in the world.

It has been the abdication of American  
leadership.

It has been the failure to apply even  
a small measure of intelligence to deal with  
the great problems that thrust themselves  
before us.

It has been the total abandonment of  
the initiative to the surly and arrogant  
overlords in the Kremlin, the total dependence  
of our political leadership on reacting --  
instead of acting.

And it has been, finally, the fruit of a basic misunderstanding in the White House about the nature of our own people, of our resources, and the forces at work in the world about us.

Negative thinking caused the national policies which have reduced our Armed Services and lessened our ability to defend ourselves and the Free World.

Blindness to reality permitted the disastrous situations in Korea and Cuba to fester and deteriorate -- despite the repeated warnings of some of us that something would have to be done to prevent utter collapse.

Narrowness and lack of imagination has

prevented the Administration from  
planning our military and foreign policies  
as an integrated, coherent unit. And the  
results are the chaos that culminated in  
the great diplomatic disasters of the year --  
the U-2 incident, the collapse at the summit,  
and the humiliation of Tokyo.

We need some hard-headed thinking about  
the caliber and the determination of our  
adversaries -- and a searching out of our  
own spiritual and economic resources.

We must recognize some facts of life --  
and then design new policies which are based  
not on myth and slogans, but on reality.

Here are some hard facts:

# Soviet Challenge

-5-

↳ Russia's present and planned annual  
rate of economic growth is estimated at  
nine to ten percent. Over the last half  
decade, the overall U. S. rate of economic  
growth has been less than two percent. They  
already claim to match us in some areas of  
industrial activity -- in tool production,  
for instance.

↳ By 1965, the Soviet Union will be  
producing the equivalent of 85 to 90 percent  
of America's 1957 output of steel, about  
70 percent of our 1957 output of electrical  
power and fuel energy and about half again  
as much cement as we produced two years ago.

↳ Soviet coal output is about 70 percent  
of ours. Their steel production is about half

what we produce, but for a short time in 1958 the combined steel production of Soviet Russia and Communist China exceeded the steel output of the U.S.!

The U. S. Central Intelligence Agency reports that Russia last year produced only one automobile to every 10 produced by the U.S., but in the same year she produced four machine tools for every one produced here. In the long run, of course, machine tools contribute far more to the growth of an economy than automobiles.

Since our administration changed in 1953, Soviet economic growth has been at a rate roughly three times that of the United States.

It was an experience to sit across the table from Mr. Khurshchev -- as I did two years ago --

and to listen to him tell of the future plans of the Soviet Union. He says he will "bury us" and says it with almost arrogant confidence.

I do not share the pessimistic view that Khrushchev will bury us. Yet it is discouraging to see in this country an administration which shrinks from the Soviet challenge instead of rising to meet it -- a government so obsessed with balancing the budget at whatever price that it tells us we cannot afford to build schools or decent houses or dams to harness the energy of our great rivers.

We must learn again to know the real sources of our national strength, restore our sense of

balance and direction, regain the understanding of what it takes to be a free and secure nation in a world in which savage forces are loose.

We have only to look eighty miles from the Florida coast to see how close the tides of Communism are washing. For in Cuba today we are seeing a savage political and economic battle emerging -- a ruthless attempt being made to establish a Communist political beachhead in Latin America.

This great struggle with Communism must be understood for what it is -- a total struggle, involving not only military planning, but economic, political and ideological planning and programming.

If Russia beats us in some scientific field -- Russia's ideological and political prospects are bolstered.

If Russia shows a rapid increase in her standard of living -- as she has already done -- she strengthens her hand in dealing with the uncommitted peoples of the world.

We can match and over-match the Communists in every field of effort.

We will do it by having an ever-expanding standard of living, by bringing us closer to the goal of eliminating poverty.

And we will do it by helping the under-developed peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America to move toward these same goals -- and far more rapidly than they are now doing.

We must recapture the mantle of the peace-maker, restore to the people of the

world the vision of an America of intelligent compassion, of wise generosity, the vision of an America which feels deeply for people in trouble, an America ready to help from the fullness of our resources.

With our magnificent food and fiber  
production we can make war on hunger. In a world filled with disease and suffering we can muster our tremendous resources to heal the sick.

*Food*

We could build -- as I have proposed  
-- a White Fleet of mercy ships -- demothballed Navy ships which could be formed into groups that would be able to rush massive assistance in cases of natural disaster such as the recent Chilean earthquakes and floods. And these ships could be used between

*White Fleet*

disaster assignments as teaching and training units, to teach the peoples of Asia, Africa and South America how to raise their health standards.

We could form -- as I have also proposed in the Congress this year -- a Peace Corps of young men who would go into the villages and rural areas of the developing nations of the world to work with the peasants and the villagers in projects to help themselves.

We could invest much of the great ~~store~~ of so-called "soft currencies" which we have received from the sale of our food and fiber overseas under Public Law 480, in long-term loans and grants for schools, scholarships, libraries, hospitals, ~~clinics~~, to help stabilize the newly-independent

societies in the continents and islands of Africa and Asia.

Above all, we must remember that the principal task of those who would keep this nation of ours free and secure is to build the kind of world in which poverty and ignorance are not forcing men to violence.

As Aristotle commented, "Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime."

The more desperate the poverty, the more violent is the inevitable reaction -- mob action, revolution, and war are the results.

Peace and security for America -- even with the finest military weapons in the world -- are not possible for us in a world of the hungry, the sick and the illiterate!

Those of us in the Congress who have been insisting for four years -- over the objections of the Administration -- on a far greater investment in Polaris-missile nuclear submarines have been justified by the first successful firing of the Polaris from a submerged submarine last week.

We have been insisting that our deterrent force against attack by enemy missiles must be one that cannot be knocked out by a sudden surprise attack. This is only common sense. Yet again this year we had to jam through Congress, against the opposition of the Administration, funds for new Polaris-type submarines -- to insist that we must put a priority on this major defense weapon.

We have not been content simply ~~to~~

to criticize our military lack of preparedness. We in the Democratic majority in the Congress have acted, in the absence of any leadership or initiative from the White House.

Similarly, we have acted to provide additional funds for the study of the problems of disarmament and arms control -- when the Administration has sat back and done virtually nothing to seek the answers to the enormously complicated technical problems of a safeguarded agreement to reduce weapons and armed services.

We in the Congress have been doing all in our power to get our nation off dead center. There is a constitutional limitation, of course, on what the Congress can undertake in matter of foreign policy.

But in a few short weeks the American people will have an opportunity to put America back on the track.

For the national ticket of the Democratic Party is a team of two tough, brilliant, experienced men -- men who are dedicated to the preservation of a free America, and who are equipped by nature and training to lead America back to national greatness.

Senator John Kennedy and Senator Lyndon Johnson are two men who -- as I am -- are burning with shame that our country has been permitted by the absent leadership of the past eight years to appear as a stumbling, inept and incapable giant.

Senator Kennedy is determined, as I am determined, to do everything in his power to

demonstrate to the world -- and especially to those power-hungry groups within the walls of the Kremlin and the older walls of Peking -- that the real America is an America that stands upright.

The real America is a proud America, a strong America, a people of courage, determination, and imagination.

We will not permit our nation to take a back seat to any nation.

We will not permit it to be said that our nation has grown old and tired.

We will not permit our nation to be humiliated and defeated.

We will work tirelessly, and earnestly, and perseveringly . . . for peace in the world.

But there will be no peace without courage.

There will be no peace without American  
initiative, without American leadership.

This is what the American people long  
for and pray for.

This is the leadership that we will have  
in January, 1961.



# Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



[www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)