

*June C. Retrospect Feb*

Los Angeles (Palladium)  
W. Draft

Let's talk politics -- and the purposes of politics: 1968.

I hope you Californians won't take exception to the fact that as things stand now someone from Minnesota is going to represent the Democratic Party come August -- next month.

But let's get this clear: The politics that count in this country are not the politics of August. They are the election results in November.

We don't know who the opposition candidate will be. We do know that a leading contender -- a Californian by desertion -- announced yesterday that he is now putting his "primary emphasis on winning in November."

Well, he won't win. And the reason he won't win is because a united Democratic Party will close ranks in August in support of a policy and a program that have made America a mighty nation -- and that still look to the future wholly uncontent with the past.

I want to make it clear that I attach major significance to the assurance that the Democratic candidate for the Presidency is selected in such a manner that he will lead -- not command -- his Party.

broadest involvement and participation of the Party's rank and file.

In this spirit:

-- I have proposed that open hearings on the Party's platform be held in all sections of the country prior to the convention.

I propose further that all elements of the Party be fully involved in drafting the platform planks that ultimately must be acted upon by the National Convention itself.

As a Democrat, I pledge myself to support the final result -- whatever my personal opinion may be on any given plank.

-- I will press vigorously for implementation of the standards adopted by the 1964 National Convention relating to full participation and representation of all persons in the selection of state delegations.

-- I support fully the notion that persons who are candidates for the Party's nomination as President and Vice President and who are delegates to the Convention be permitted to address the assembled delegates.

I pledge today -- as I have in the past -- my active and enthusiastic support of the National Convention's nominee for President. I take this pledge without qualification, amendment, or condition.

-- Finally, I state without qualification that I do not want the support of a single delegate who is personally unconvinced as to my qualifications or ability to lead the Party in the general election or to fulfill the office of President if I am elected.

My commitment is measured by my concern: to build a Democratic Party which is fully responsive to the needs and demands of all persons who call themselves Democrats, and more importantly, to build a Party which is truly responsive to the needs of the American people.

It is time for Democrats -- yes, for Americans -- to get out of the shadows of division and doubt and to walk with strength and purpose in the full sunshine of democracy.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next President of the United States will face a new period in history -- a period in which all the old premises ... the old policies ... all the old ways of doing things are in question.

He will face not only a new world map -- but a world containing dozens of countries and millions of people who have, until now, almost literally lived outside history.

He will face what modern communication and technology have wrought -- a highly sensitized, "in touch" and impatient

family of people and nations who will no longer accept the status quo when it means hunger ... injustice ... lack of participation ... subjugation of one man by another.

The next President will confront nothing less than the need to re-examine -- and to change, where necessary -- our national priorities ... the allocation of our resources ... even the structures and framework in which we conduct the business of this country.

All the doctrinaire arguments about yesterdays -- or even rightful pride in recent accomplishments -- will mean very little against the challenge of the next decade or the year 2000.

\* \* \* \* \*

What is on our new agenda?

First in the minds and hearts of all of us is the civilizing of the community of the world -- nothing less. It won't be truly civilized until nations, and people, stop building fences ... stop stocking weapons ... stop settling their disputes by force.

This means ending at the earliest effective moment the war in Viet Nam. I know the price of the view that we have to have the steadfastness to see the negotiations in Paris all the way through. I know the disagreements among us about this -- and that they are irreconcilable.

It means that in the world at large we have to slow down the arms race.

We have to get to the table as soon as possible with the Soviet Union to talk about mutual reduction of both offensive and defensive weapons.

With our allies, we need to talk to the Soviet Union and her allies about a mutual thin-out of troops in Central Europe.

We need to actively build bridges to Communist China -- to do our best to break the Chinese people out of their unhealthy isolation.

We have to get down to the hard work -- right now with the Soviet Union, and in the future, with Communist China -- of reducing the tensions that increasingly take our resources for the wrong things.

Once Vietnam is over, the nations of Southeast Asia can get down to the work of peaceful development, without regard to ideology. I think we should help.

We must set as a high priority the closing of the gap between rich and poor nations -- a gap that is growing larger every day, and one that I believe is far more a threat to our ultimate security than any other, with the possible exception of the arms race itself.

We can get on, too, with the work of building better peace-keeping machinery in the United Nations and in regional organizations so that the United States will not find itself standing alone as world policeman. We do not have that role now. But it is a danger, unless international machinery can be built to help prevent it.

We must, here at home, come face to face with ourselves -- with our shortcomings, but also with our assets.

From this self-confrontation, I believe we can develop a new social morality -- a morality that will no longer tolerate racial discrimination in democracy ... hunger in the midst of plenty ... or joblessness and under-employment in a prosperous society.

This means the placing of national priorities and resources against the problems that keep ordinary people from living a freer, more rewarding existence.

I reject the idea that we have to be two nations, black and white ... or two nations, north and south ... or two nations ... rich and poor.

No responsible person wants that.

There is a vast, silent group of Americans -- a majority of many millions -- that wants to make this country work ... that wants safety and equal rights for everyone ... that bears no ill

will against other Americans.

I think this Silent America -- an America still unaroused -- can be aroused.

I mean to try ... to build bridges ... to show fortunate Americans that many of the claims of the poor are legitimate ... and to show them that they are not shut off from the leadership of this nation ... that the democratic system can work.

We can bring both security and opportunity to the people of this country -- not one without the other, but both.

There is no reason in America -- with unequalled wealth and agricultural productivity -- for anyone to go hungry. It is immoral to allow some children to suffer from malnutrition while others in America are concerned about the dangers of overeating.

I submit that the recommendations of the President's Commission on Civil Disorders are right, and that they should be carried out.

We must look to the full meaning of civil rights.

We must recognize the civil right of every American to earn a living -- to work and earn.

I don't believe that anyone wants a welfare check or a hand-out.

I believe people want the dignity and the self-respect that comes from an honest job.

I believe it is our responsibility to help everyone who wants a job to have that job. I think the private sector can come up with the jobs.

I also believe the government must do whatever is necessary to back that effort up with financing or subsidy.

We must provide the civil right to a full education for every American -- from age four through college -- and the civil right to grow up in a decent home and neighborhood.

We must, once and for all, devote ourselves to the reinvigoration and renewal of our urban environment through a new Marshall Plan for the American city.

And at the same time we can help build a rural America where people can and will be able to earn a living, and to live a satisfying life, rather than being thrown unprepared into the alien environment of the urban slum.

\* \* \*

Those are big goals.

They will require big commitments -- commitments in money; commitments in determination by federal, state and local government . . . by the free institutions of this country . . . by every single person.

I am betting my personal future that the American people are ready,  
and willing, to do this.

Eight years from now this country will celebrate its 200th birthday.

By then, this nation can be torn . . . divided . . . withdrawing  
within itself and from the outside world.

Or it can be open.

It can be safe.

It can be free.

It can be filled with opportunity -- for every single citizen.

I think we can do that. I think we can build that kind of country.

We can do it if those of us who believe in political action will dedicate  
ourselves to it.

This nation has the resources.

This nation has the money.

This nation has the strength.

This nation has the power to do whatever it needs to do.



# 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)