

~~SPEECH FOR MINNESOTA STATE CONVENTION OF THE JUNIOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE~~

ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA - MAY 26, 1946

It is a distinct honor and privilege to be afforded the opportunity of addressing this annual ~~state~~ <sup>national</sup> convention of the ~~Minnesota~~ Junior Chamber of Commerce, an organization composed of young men of recognized ability and leadership. It is upon organizations such as this that a share of the responsibility for world peace and domestic security and prosperity rests. ¶ This is our first ~~state~~ <sup>national</sup> convention since VJ Day. We meet in a period of human history unequaled by its dramatic tenseness and its uncertainty as to the future. The awful specter of world-wide chaos casts a dark shadow over every home in every land.

It becomes ever more clear that the winning of the war was not the winning of the peace. Military victory, like the victory of a political party in an election, determines which group shall be in power and which group shall be dominant. Following the victory on the battlefield, the great task of reconversion and rehabilitation begins. It is here that real victory is either won or lost. It is in the attainment of peace and security where governmental and economic systems are tested as to their adequacy.

Today America is facing that test. There is no escaping it. Either we master the multitude of complex problems which beset us, or we forfeit the greatest opportunity that was ever offered to a nation and its people. Never have we faced such a crisis. Never has there been a day in history when steadfastness of purpose was more essential, and the need of leadership more imperative. \*7 (a)

Taken: ( There are two basis fundamental and inter-related problems which

face this world, and America in particular. The first is that of post war reconversion of our economic enterprise, and the readjustment of our political institutions to peace time living. The second, and of equal importance, is that of attaining a means of international organization which will guarantee a just and enduring peace. I repeat these two basis-issues are inseparable and fundamental to the future of civilization and democratic principles.

Permit me to state a few political axioms. Democratic principles and republican or representative institutions of government cannot long endure in a world that periodically faces world-wide crisis. The philosophy of totalitarianism in both of its manifestations, Communism and Fascism, is a product of world-wide crisis, and thrives on the threat of national or international disorder. Totalitarianism lives by fear. It receives its strength and nourishes itself upon an apparent insecurity. Times like these and the days of the 1930's are, and were fertile soil for dictatorship. Democratic government requires good will amongst men. It grows strong in conditions which are conducive to peaceful living. By its very essence democracy rests upon the respect for human personality and a regard for the laws and the cultures of men.

National or international economic confusion, mass unemployment and insecurity are the enemies of freedom and free political institutions. Only those countries which have a long history of representative government and a deep and abiding faith in man's ability to govern himself, endure the calamities of national and international insecurity which have beset us in this past half century. Modern world history reveals that people desire political and economic freedom. Modern world history also reveals that the aspirations and the hopes of the great mass of people have been smashed by the economic and political rivalries and the subsequent international chaos.

These months since VJ Day are part of the borrowed time of demo-

cracy. If democratic institutions are to flourish, yes, even if they are to survive where they now exist, we must boldly answer and solve the problem of economic bankruptcy which faces Europe and Asia, of mass starvation which now rests heavy upon this world, and rehabilitation of economic enterprise in other lands. Likewise, we must have the courage to support with all of our material aid and political strength, and policy, parties and governments in other nations which offer the hope of rebirth of free political institutions. We must have the will to oppose with equal force all endeavors on the part of any nation to either jeopardize or thwart the growth of democratic government. *This is Americanism.*

Bluntly, this means that we must have a keen and everlasting interest in the affairs of other people. We dare not cease our vigilance nor hesitate in our decisions.

Most of us believe that we are capable of detecting dictatorship in all of its forms when we see it, or are confronted with it. Yes, I think it would be true to say that we are more keenly aware of what we term foreign threats to our way of life than we are to the causes of our own discontent and the source of the difficulties which beset us within our own nation. ✓ Few of us have systematically analyzed the true meaning of democracy and our free institutions of government and economics. Most of us have taken these things for granted, worshiping them with a blind faith, and all too often refusing to analyze our political and economic system. It is only from a searching analysis of the political and economic principles which have guided the development and progress of this country that we can fortify ourselves in this year and era of revolutionary change brought about by the cataclysm of World War II.

Political institutions and economic systems are living forces ~~not~~ academic theories. They change as the mind of man changes. They are as effective as those who use them and understand them. They will endure

only so long as they satisfy the hopes and aspirations of those whom they benefit. This is particularly true of democratic government. While democratic government has as its source of strength the will of the people, likewise it has as its source of weakness the discontent of the people. It was the people that created it for what they thought to be the general welfare. It can be the people which will destroy it, because of what they believe to be the abuses of the general welfare.

American business and its advocates have all too long demonstrated an indifference or an outright refusal to understand the full meaning of our governmental system. Politics to the businessman is a necessary evil. Political leadership and responsibility has been looked upon as something to avoid. When faced with economic emergency, business leadership has clung tenaciously to symbols of the past, and rested its case upon a veneration for the constitution, or what is commonly known as the good old days.

Change has been resisted as if it were a plague. The outcry of a depressed or a impoverished people was answered reluctantly and with displeasure. If American business has lost its hold upon the minds of the American people, it is because it has refused to lead the way to general prosperity and individual well being. It has served as the resistance movement to progress until it has incurred the distrust, and at times the outright antagonism of great forces and numbers of our fellow citizens.

In bygone days our country could survive such political reaction and ineptitude, but today, with the average citizen having a keen political consciousness, and sensing his own power at the ballot box, resistance forces are looked upon as enemies of democracy and enemies of the people.

Here is the challenge. Will the future leaders of American business be the champions of democratic living, or will they ~~continue to be~~, as with

many of their predecessors, the immovable objects facing the irresistible force; will young businessmen of today be the champions of a progressive democracy which includes an opportunity for every man; will they be the advocates of international cooperation and express a willingness to assume the responsibility for political and economic leadership?

There is ~~only~~ basic conflict in the thinking of Americans today. On the one hand, there are the leaders of economic enterprise who continue to maintain that government has no right to interfere in the economic affairs. On the other hand, there is a preponderant majority of Americans who contend that the government is their government and, therefore, can act as their instrument for the promotion of the general welfare.

Yes, This conflict centers around an interpretation of democratic government. Is our government to act as but a policeman, as an instrument of force and coercion, or is it to act as an instrument of collective strength and positive purpose? There is no escaping an answer to this question, and I believe that the correct answer is quite obvious. Government that is ultimately in the control of a majority through the established electoral processes will inevitably be used as a means of fortifying the activities of the individuals of which it is comprised.

The day of "that government is best which governs least" is gone. Government today cannot remove itself from the everyday activities of the people. Government today is not a disinterested impersonal third party. It is the embodiment of the strength and the hopes of the people. It will be used to correct abuses, to direct our energies, and to formulate a plan for living.

A democracy cannot stand helpless before the torrent of unleashed power that is everywhere present in this political and economic world of ours. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of young Americans to participate in the political process so that their voice may be heard,



so that they may have a part in the making of the great decisions, <sup>(c) P</sup> To  
tie ourselves with concept of democracy which repudiates the use of the  
instruments of government for the general welfare is to deny ourselves  
of the stabilizing force of organized society.

All of this means that we must accept government planning because  
it is our government that plans. We must accept full employment because  
it is our means of attaining it. We must embrace expanded programs of  
social security because we had designed them. We must use the strength  
of <sup>our</sup> government to develop our physical and human resources because that  
strength is our own.

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Will the Junior Chamber of Commerce fear the thrill of new ideas - will this organization give lip-service to American ideals, but hesitate to take a forthright position in behalf of progress. Let me specify - Jaycees are justly proud of their excellent Committee work - Committees on Health, Youth Activities, Agriculture, Conservation, Post-war planning, Americanism, and governmental affairs. Much good has been accomplished through these activities - but are we willing to meet the broader issues? Recognizing that the U.S. has 500,000 single room schools, ~~for~~ are

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Will we be the Champions for  
a more extensive, a more progressive  
Educational System? Will we  
take the lead, or do we feel that  
this is too controversial?

Recognizing that three out  
of every 5 counties in America  
are without adequate hospitals  
& public health facilities, will  
we be the Champions for  
extensive public health facilities  
or do we leave this to someone  
else?

Recognizing the value of <sup>such</sup>  
<sup>programs as</sup> Rural electrification, ~~of~~ Soil  
conservation, ~~of~~ forest  
rehabilitation, are we to  
~~again~~ <sup>only</sup> give lip service to ~~such~~  
~~these programs~~, or will we say



(9)  
that progressive democracy  
demands ~~the~~ realization of  
such activities and we will  
give them our fullest support?

Convinced, as we are, of the  
necessity for planning, and  
knowing, as we do, the interdependence  
of our economy, are we to  
oppose government planning,  
in behalf of American enterprise  
or will we seek to give it  
aid + direction —

Can we be indifferent to  
racial discrimination +  
intolerance, or shall we  
become the fighting advocates  
of equal rights + privileges for

all regardless of race color  
or creed?<sup>(10)</sup>

Ask yourself if an organization  
of young Americans can remain  
apathetic & indifferent to  
the affairs of politics? This  
is our government - it belongs  
to 'us the people'; it is our  
agent to aid & assist us  
in the realization of our  
individual aims & aspirations.  
I urge you to make politics  
& governmental affairs your  
personal business - give it  
a "double A" priority on  
your agenda for today &  
the future.

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Your <sup>convention</sup> ~~conference~~ meets when dark diplomatic clouds are gathering.

In the minds of thoughtful people everywhere is the frightening question, "Are we to lose the peace again this time?"

Our statesmen seek frantically to inject new meaning into their efforts for international cooperation, but anxiety hangs heavy over us as after the last war. This war, some may say, may have been fought in vain. But we of this generation are not easily discouraged. There is yet an abiding faith within us that offers renewed hope. We have dedicated our efforts to a strong and democratically organized United Nations, supported by the leadership and strength of American democracy, and pledged to the world-wide realization of democratic ideals. ~~It is with~~

This is not a perfect world. World war alone does not remove from our minds the prejudices and the symbolism of centuries of misguided effort. People do not change by the stroke of a magic wand. That which we know as civilization has been a long time in the process of creation. It should be recognized at the outset that the United Nations organization, as it is today, is but the framework around which we must build the political, economic, and moral substance that gives meaning to the phrase "one world." ✓

As with all other forms of government, fundamental or constitutional law is within itself but a statement of principle. It is the task of statesmanship to implement these principles by the political machinery and the political and economic philosophy which makes them meaningful. We as Americans should be able to understand this.

We have demonstrated a genius in the field of political organization. We have made the Constitution of the United States — our fundamental law — a living force, <sup>through</sup> ~~the~~ statute, interpretation, and <sup>experience</sup> ~~tradition~~.

The charter of the United Nations in the 20th Century is no greater challenge to the political genius of men than the Constitution of the United States in the 18th Century. Both have the unique quality of being new and different. Just as the skeptics in 1789 heaped their scorn upon our Constitution, so men of little faith in 1946 spread their cynicism about the United Nations. (17)

We have one consoling thought. These men of little faith — these doubters and cynics — have always been on the wrong side at the right time. Their blindness has deprived them of perspective. Their love of the past and their fear of the future has relegated them to mediocrity and failure.

We dare to dream and to try in this day and age because we recognize the realities of our time. We know that the sovereign nations state, acting alone and independently, has proven its inability to either provide security in peace time, or safety from the aggressor in war time.

People everywhere sense this inherent weakness in our world of individualistic, nationalistic nation states. People, yes ordinary people, are not much interested in such high sounding concepts as sovereignty and balance of power, or spheres of influence. The plain citizen of today is searching for economic security and personal safety without sacrifice of individual liberty.

This same citizen has witnessed two world wars in one generation. He is convinced that something is wrong, and that it is time to try new ideas — new or improved plans of political and social organization.

(out) Americans are not going back to normalcy. They remember all too well that normalcy in this past generation has been an era of unrest, unemployment, insecurity, and war. Men and women know today that there has been no peace. There has been no general security. We have had a false belief in America first, or Britain first, or Russia first. The principle of today and tomorrow must be humanity first. Today we are living in one world, where our mutual interdependence is the only real fact of social organization.



(13) We as ~~democratic citizens, and as~~ Americans, should be able to understand the philosophy and the thinking which will make possible a successful United Nations. ~~We have pledged ourselves to the doctrine of human equality. We have recognized as part of our faith that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.~~ out

We have come to understand that democracy is not a static thing that can only live if it progresses and expands. Likewise, we have come to know that democratic ideals are seldom realized in the short course of human events, but stand out as a challenge to the morality of men and their dedication to high and noble purposes.

Yes, ~~young men and women trained in the schools and colleges of this land~~ <sup>we</sup> should know that our institutions <sup>for the preservation of freedom</sup> ~~of free government~~ were not born as if <sup>but</sup> a miracle, but are the product of centuries of sacrifice and years of development, and even today, these institutions of free government can still be classified under the agenda of unfinished business.

After better than a century and a half of political democracy, we still have men and women in this country who are not permitted to vote. We still suffer from racial discrimination and economic exploitation. Our political processes do not always lend themselves to majority will or respect for minority rights. In other words, we, as Americans, with better than 150 years of political progress, have not realized the ideals as outlined in the Declaration of Independence or the Preamble to our Constitution. Yet we proudly acclaim our freedom and our individualism.

We can justly make this claim because we are moving ahead, not retreating. That is the essence of democratic development. So it is



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with this United Nations that now is in its infancy. This child of peace has yet to develop and grow. It has just seen the light of day. It is now suffering from the cruel reality of a world that it never had a chance to direct. It is the product of an unhappy civilization. It is the result of a frantic effort for survival, and it was baptized by the fire of the atomic bomb.

Its entrance into this world of power and selfishness was not an easy one. It came as a stranger into a strange land. It seeks to learn the vocabulary of our age, and by living in an environment foreign to its purposes, to so grow and develop that it can redirect the thinking and the policies of mankind everywhere.

That is a big order. It is a tremendous challenge, and yet there is not a one of us who would dare say that it shall perish or not survive.

One determined purpose must govern the development of the United Nations organization in all stages of its evolution. Yes, ~~I say evolution~~ because ~~political organization~~ can never remain static: never to water it down, never to weaken its authority, always to build it up, always to add to its prestige and moral power, until the time comes when it speaks for the conscience of mankind with irresistible force.

The United Nations organization is not an automatic device under divine guidance. It is a man-made structure which must be guided and nourished by men. It is merely a tool, and even the most perfect piece of machinery is valueless unless there is a will to make it succeed.)

Like the muscles and flesh of the human body, it grows strong with care, discipline, and exercise. The machinery of the United Nations organization is absolutely essential. Without it, there can be no concentration of aim and effort. But this organization must be built on a realization of the common interests and the common denominators which

bind men together everywhere, yes, and of the common dangers which confront us as members of the same human family.

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As Thomas Paine once said, "We have it within our power to begin the world over again." The human race is not a spineless, ignorant species to be pushed around and finally exterminated by forces which it has itself created. In spite of the atomic bomb, we are still the captains of our own destiny, and we can make that destiny anything we desire. We recognize that man changes slowly, and his steps towards progress have often been checked by his own inertia and prejudice. But this time we must act quickly and decisively. We are summoned to accomplish in perhaps two or three decades, or even less, what we have failed to do in all the long history of the human race. ~~This time it is one world, or none.~~

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We should not close our eyes to our differences with other nations. This may be one world, but few have learned to know it. To ignore the differences that now exist between the major powers, is not to strengthen the United Nations. It is to weaken it by hypocrisy and outright dishonesty. Our task is not to play upon these differences — not to chastise and criticize, but the task of our nation and our people is to state clearly and concisely that which we believe, and press for its acceptance.

A clear-cut statement of American foreign policy is a basic essential for a successful United Nations, and for world peace. We are the nation to which the world looks for leadership. We are the people who must assume responsibility for political, economic, and social direction. It is upon this nation that the major burden of a war-stricken and impoverished world will rest for many a year.

If we are not prepared to assume this task — if we are but to talk peace and not implement it by sound economic and humanitarian measures, then again we will have destroyed the hope of world peace. We find ourselves in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, we are rich and powerful,

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respected and feared; yet we live in a world that asks us to share our blessings, to give of our strength, and to exercise our political leadership. If we want a successful United Nations, we must be prepared to assist in the rehabilitation of Europe and Asia. We must be prepared to feed, or at least share in the feeding of millions of starving people. We must demand respect for treaties and the rights of smaller nations. We must repudiate economic nationalism and political imperialism. We must know and come to understand the peoples of other nations. We must be prepared to stand firmly in defense of the right of the smaller and less advanced nations, to be free of domination and exploitation by their larger and more powerful neighbors. We must press upon our war-time allies a respect for law and order, and urge the universal acceptance of the basic rights of free speech, free assembly, free press, and free elections. *We must Crusade for the essentials of Americanism.*

This requires strength of character, and the willingness to stand alone against the selfish tide of powerful forces. But as we make these demands upon other people and other nations, we must come forth with clean hands and an example of democratic living which can command the respect and confidence of people everywhere. *This is a Test of our Americanism.* As the Chinese philosopher has said, "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."

In conclusion, we in this country must grow to realize that international peace and domestic peace and prosperity, are one and inseparable. There can be no peace in a world threatened by mass unemployment. There can be no peace in a world if this nation of ours suffers economic disaster. There can be no successful United Nations if by narrow and greedy American domestic policies, we thwart the progress of our economy to a point where our country finds itself fighting for its own economic existence. An America broken in spirit, disunited in its politics, disrupted in its

enterprise, will deprive the world of its only hope of survival.

If this world is to have democratic leadership, it will come from America. If it is to be lost in chaos, we must accept our share of the responsibility. Now, if ever, we need faith and confidence in the instruments of international peace embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. Now, if ever, ~~there must be a true and sincere respect for individual differences and personality for all races, political creeds, economic views and religions.~~

Government policy today is too important to be left in the hands of those who have neither faith in their country nor belief in the principles of democracy. The problems of today and the policies of tomorrow can never be left to those who despair of our future, and who believe in the inevitability of depression, chaos, and war. We need a new faith. We need a new determination in the ability of men and women to be masters of their own destiny and capable of designing their own future. — ~~That This is Americanism —~~ *strong and*

~~substant!~~

*This is the Americanism of  
young Americans.*



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