

4/20/66

Sylvia: Thanks so much for the letter. I want to answer you on the Snyder-Johnson-McVickers thing, and also in regard to the Kennedys and "power." First, what did you think of the Cromley article? You didn't say and I am so anxious to have your opinion. Let me know.

Your reservation~~x~~ on the Kennedys is familiar to me. I hear it all the time in this part of the country--but always from the right-wing. You say of the Kennedys "...but is it principle or power that motivates their public service?" And, of course, to this, I can reply: "Both." In the first place, I can't imagine one without the other.* You write affectionately of Staughton Lynd, and I'm assuming you approve of AJ Muste, Dellinger, etc., and of the peace demonstrations. But, Sylvia, all these are "power," too--or in fact an ATTEMPT to take power. Many of us say with conviction that this attempt to take power is based on "principle." (We say this because at the moment the demonstrators are doing what we approve.) Yet, when the Kennedys move in any direction at all, both the left and the right scream: "Power-mad!" Why? Why is it O.K. for the street demonstrators and for Staughton Lynd and Muste, etc., why is it O.K. for these activists to do what they must and to be what they are and still to escape any kind of "power" censure? yet when the Kennedys try to do what they think is right, when they try to implement what they think is good for this country (and the world), they are immediately accused of doing away with principle and seeking only power?

(* I want to repair the above remark. When I say I can't imagine one without the other, I mean, of course, that I can't imagine their separation IN ORDER TO BE EFFECTIVE. We know that principle can exist without power--and vice versa--but it seems to me that in order for principle to triumph effectively in the short range political picture, then it must be accompanied by power. A Christ can recover in 2000 years; but we are looking at modern day-to-day action, I expect.)

One other reason why I trust the Kennedys so much is that I am familiar with their training, with the discipline they exact from themselves. Here, again, is a feature that I find lacking in most of my contacts on the extreme left and right. A Deirdre Griswold and a Staughton Lynd are well and good, but they are little fish without either the power or the training to resist being swallowed by the sharks. Every day of their lives is a fight for power of a sort; they have principle, they seek power; but if power ever falls into their hands, their effectiveness is over. They won't exist politically for five minutes past this point. Please, Sylvia, remember "power" is NOT a dirty word. If it were, then Muste, Lynd, Ho Chi Minh, all the people you admire, would they be seeking it?

Yes, I agree with you about the irony of Edward Kennedy and Motts autopsy report in light of the lack of same on Tippit in the WR and the poor performance by the Commission in regard to the President's autopsy. But, Sylvia, it is just possible that Edward Kennedy feels exactly as we do; the Motts autopsy request shouldn't throw you off. After all, Motts was a constituent of Edward Kennedy; Edward Kennedy does represent the state of Massachusetts in the US Senate; requests made of him along this line must be attended to; whereas, personal inequities, such as the autopsy on his brother, could be by-passed by him for reasons which we may not understand yet.

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At any rate, I promise you I won't be too idealistic if you will promise me the same. Human nature hardly shifts at all as it crosses political and ideological lines. People are people. Ideologies are cold and historically contradictory things. Put your faith in discipline. Look closely at the people you want to trust. Are they faithful to the things they ~~xxxx~~ claim they want YOU to live by?

I trust the Kennedys. In every instance where I have been told by someone on the left or right that the Kennedys did a dirty, all I have had to do is examine the record, write to them, ask questions, read the reports. I have yet to find a "spot on their garments." As for Robert Kennedy and his abrasive (?) attitude, I trust him 100%. I think he'll "prove more true than those with cunning to be strange." (Terrible quote from a terrible memory!)

My remark on Snyder was only an incidental one. Snyder claimed P. Johnson had given him the information that the press had been informed on Oswald's defection and he inferred she learned of this from an interview with Lee. Yet, the Johnson-Oswald interview did not take place until nearly two weeks after the Snyder-Oswald interview. Therefore, if Snyder was informing the home office that the press had been informed, he obviously informed it himself--or knew that Oswald had. Really not important, but an indication that the whole Oswald defection was a set-up. The Frances Knight bit is almost hilarious if it weren't so tragic. Here again is what the Kennedys want so much to control--and what the President and his brother were trying to control--the rabid use of government facilities by men and women with political views unbecoming to a liberal government. There were so many things the President had planned; a clamp-down on people such as Hunt, for example; the "resignation" of J. Edgar Hoover (Schlesinger's remark); the reorganization and control of the CIA and other far-fetched agencies. Why do you suppose John F. Kennedy is dead? Because he was trying to move in this direction. He had to gain the power you hate so much in order to do it. Lynd and Muste and Deirdre want that particular "power," too; they hope to win through street demonstrations and ultimately through bloody revolution. Yet, in the final analysis, the Deirdres, the Lynds, the Mustes, will all lose their heads, victims of the horror they seek to unleash. We saw it all before--in France, in other violent upheavals. Perhaps it is necessary in some places where the deprivation is so terrible. I am too torn in my heart by the sufferings of humanity to deny it the right to redress its own evils. But, Sylvia, there is still a large number of who hates the thought of murder and destruction, who fights against the thought that Lynd and Deirdre MUST come to power by way of blood. No, I don't trust Lynd; I am sorry for him, because he will go down under the ~~xxxx~~ same fist that he is forcing into existence. But even if we were to imagine the impossible (that Lynd's own people for example would let him survive once he had achieved power and deplored further excesses), even if we were to imagine this, how long do you think Lynd would survive in an absolute position if the President can be shot and killed in Dallas for "radical" leadership?

I must close. As I told you, this problem has to be solved without me. I think I have some good files on the Oswald case; I certainly have a working knowledge of the assassination. My interest will remain; but in so far as being active in this regard, I can't, until I see the Kennedys take the lead. I have written to them many times; they receive my communications with courtesy, but they have never indicated to me that I was either right or wrong. I have thought a great deal about the political picture in this country. My sympathies are always with the poor and the

afflicted. I think the Vietnam mess is a military adventure on the part of America, a war that John F. Kennedy would NOT have accelerated, would not have made such a bloody pageant. I think perhaps his death was tied in with this military adventure. These are my opinions only. At first after his death I wanted to find who had killed him because I wanted revenge. Thank God I have moved away from this. Now I want what he would want, which is to do what is the best thing for everybody in the long run; and the only way I can take my cue along this line is to watch what his brothers do. As I told you before, if I loved him, imagine what they feel. So many people have said: "Those brothers aren't interested in finding out who killed ~~them~~ the President; they just want to be President themselves." A remark like this makes me so mad I can't see straight. I have learned not to tremble when it is made and have gotten to the point where I can only pity the speaker. Yes; the Kennedys want to be President (one or both); they want to be in a position of ~~power~~ where they can activate their principles. They want to be where they can again begin to control the CIA, the FBI, the Hunts of America, etc. They realize they stand a good chance of being killed in the process. And especially since the far left which owes them so much continues to exoriate them.

But we are talking from opposite poles, I'm afraid. Mostly those people who fear the Kennedys fear something else unexpressed--a fear (shyness, lack of poise) of the very rich, a distaste for Catholics, distrust of youthfulness, misunderstanding of the Kennedys sincere altruism, etc., etc. I remember years ago when I was very young and ignorant; I thought it was terribly smart to doubt God, and I enjoyed nothing so much as making fun of the Catholic Church. But God will not be mocked. He made a ~~xxxx~~ fool of me, a Catholic fool, for now I can't exist without his Church and the sanctuary I find there. Still, looking back, I realize if the Kennedys had been in politics back in those days I would automatically have discredited them on the basis of Catholicism alone. So it goes. There is always a reason tucked hidden somewhere to account for the animus against the Kennedys. It doesn't pay to be wealthy, dedicated, religious and handsome in this jealous world.

ENOUGH! Breakfast time. I think I am not building a house after all. I think we are going to buy one ready-made. This removes many many worries. But, oh!, the interest rates! Mark was a Major in the Air Force in WW2; we never used his GI Bill on housing, so we hope to do this. But we are buying at a bad time. The house is small, but it has five acres, which will be good for my 4 kids, 13 dogs, 2 cats, one bird--and two horses! I will be only ten minutes from the Tulsa SPCA, too, which will keep me busy. I asked the ladies there the other day if I could donate free time to them and they almost danced. It's nice to be needed somewhere in the outside world.

Speaking of interest rates, I must tell you what my husband said. I don't understand money things at all, but after he had talked to a loan-man, he said: "My God! Johnson's monetary policies are what I would have expected if Goldwater won the election." I don't know how right he is, but isn't it an interesting thought? We are going right-wing in this country under the *allegis* of a "liberal" President. What a thought.

Much sincere love, Sylvia--even if we do disagree on the Kennedys. I am your friend whether you want me to be or not. S.