

What's To Be Done?

Start Building Now

As McCarthy and Kennedy bumper strips fade, the question for the thousands from New Hampshire to California who comprised "the movement" is what happens now and in the foreseeable future?

The most amazing political phenomenon of 1968 – besides the movement itself – is that the McCarthy and Kennedy supporters are willing to fight another day in the established party arena.

There are several reasons for this pertinacity. First, the goals of the struggle have become more diverse and are therefore more attractive to sustained effort. Although the Vietnam war remains the cruelest barrier to a moral and progressive America, what began as a political effort to end that war has branched into a three-pronged attack: 1) to create a rational foreign policy with peace in Vietnam as the first objective; 2) to rework national priorities so that racism, poverty and degradation can be lifted from the poor of all races; and 3) the newest element, to reform the political process within the Democratic Party so that by 1972 the majority will prevail.

The small victories, the taste of success, the near-miss of it all, have whetted the political appetites of the once near-hopeless. In Chicago, the unit rule was killed at all levels. Most of the reforms for 1972 were passed. There was no sellout. The deaths of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, the unreasoning opposition to Eugene McCarthy and the peace plank, the duplicity of Southern delegations, and the final brutality of Chicago hardened the shock troops of liberal democracy in a way in which walking precincts never could have done. As McCarthy, almost boastfully, said: "This campaign has set America free" – and it was true.

In gauging the future course, there is one assumption that must be made: Hubert H. Humphrey is going to be defeated by Richard M. Nixon. This is not a matter of desire, but reality. The five polls issued since the convention indicate Humphrey will be lucky to run ahead of Wallace in electoral votes.

Only by striking the fetters of Lyndon Johnson, calling for a bombing halt, speaking in modern terms on civil rights and proving that he is a free American, can the Vice President redeem the party and himself and win. Those who fly into the arms of their phantom lover, Humphrey, are relinquishing whatever bargaining powers they might have to change him.

Gothic horror tales about Nixon, lectures about party unity (while cutting off funds for Ohio's John

Gilligan and leaving Wayne Morse out to dry), and LBJ's negation of a bombing halt, are not going to attract McCarthy-Kennedy-McGovern troops. Nor are charges that the liberals will be blamed for party disloyalty and Humphrey's defeat. This crisis was created by those in Chicago who turned their backs on a probable winner (or winners, if one includes Edward Kennedy and George McGovern).

Today, the liberals must put their talents into the key races which face the Democrats in some 30 states. This is essential to secure the base from which a more progressive policy and party can be built. With Nixon in the White House, it is vital to hold the Senate for the Democrats, as well as the House if possible.

The resources comprising "the movement" are formidable: a hardened band of political "semi-pros"; a new group – many recruited from peace activities – who got their baptism of fire this year; the students who will be back in 1970 and 1972 if they find something "relevant" to do; the most highly political of the Blacks and Browns; an embattled group of Southern whites struggling to make the Democratic Party not just a front for Wallaceites; progressive labor, restless under Meany's leadership; those intellectuals who have not given up, and a coterie of liberal officeholders. McCarthy undoubtedly will remain the spiritual leader for much of the work ahead. But how candidates sort out by 1972 must be left to the future.

Organizationally, the next steps must be taken locally within the several states. Last December, the National Conference of Concerned Democrats served a useful purpose, showing to hundreds that they were not alone and starting them along a somewhat uncertain trail. However, until state organizations are strengthened, further national conferences are just exercises in nostalgia.

The tested format for permanent Democratic volunteer organization is the club structure. The primary example is the 15-year-old California Democratic Council (CDC) which "survived victory" in 1958 and 1960, championed the Freedom Democratic Party in 1964, opposed the Vietnam war in 1965, and organized a campaign for a peace delegation in 1967 before McCarthy announced. In New York, the Committee for Democratic Volunteers (the Reform Democrats) has provided leadership, but is limited to New York City and environs. The New Mexico Democratic Council was formed a few years ago on the CDC pattern and the Washington Democratic Council held its first convention on September 7. Embryonic council efforts also exist in New Jersey, Connecticut, Florida, Oregon and Iowa.

Essentially, the Democratic council system is a statewide organization of Democratic clubs which endorses in primaries, takes positions on issues, holds

state conventions and operates year-round. They are not ad hoc or single-issue and work with the official party where possible.

The official party structures are now in progressive hands due to the primaries in Wisconsin, New Hampshire, and to a degree, Oregon. In California, the legislative leadership represented by Speaker Jesse Unruh, much of the official party and the volunteer leadership are cooperating. In New York and other states, the possibilities of a new, vital coalition are open.

State volunteer organizations directed by those familiar with the local scene, can create an inclusive operation in which McCarthy and Kennedy workers, minority and labor people, intellectuals, officeholders friendly to modernization of the party, and liberal Humphrey supporters can work together. If Nixon becomes President, this inclusion will be imperative.

By early 1969, a National Democratic Council can be created by the leadership from those states which have formed councils, together with those anxious to emulate the pattern. Such a National Council can develop issue positions for the party out of power or influence the party in power) and administer growing local, regional and national efforts to reform the party. Already a western council alliance is being discussed. Capture of precinct organizations and county conventions is the next goal in those states where this avenue is available. By 1970, a large volunteer organization can be operating in all sections of the country.

A special national Democratic Convention should be called for 1970 to bring the platform up to date, set the ground rules for integration and fair representation in state organizations and delegations, and tackle the restructuring of the national party.

If the National Committee will not call such a convention, then it should be convened by the council and cooperating officeholders. This "party in exile" may constitute the real Democratic Party. On the crest of this drive, the presidential nomination for 1972 can most surely go to a progressive reformer.

In summary, the steps urged are: 1) concentrate on key local races; 2) develop permanent state volunteer organizations; 3) establish a national council for liberalizing the party; 4) prepare organization and candidates for 1970; 5) develop alliances with progressive forces among minorities, youth and labor; 6) call for a 1970 national Democratic Convention—official or unofficial—to modernize the party; and 7) virtually guarantee that the next Democratic candidate will be a progressive liberal.

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Wallace in Ohio — Who Will Get Hurt?

Columbus

George C. Wallace has hurled a wrench into the two-party machinery of the industrial belt running from the Pennsylvania coal fields through the Midwest. All he has done is introduce his version of Southern politics—the one-man show which reduced Alabama politics to chaos in six years—up north. You can hear it clanging its way through the machinery. It will get noisier before November 5.

A one-man show doesn't allow for a supporting cast. Thus, Wallace's American Independent Party (AIP) doesn't have candidates for the US Senate or House in the major industrial states. The result: in state after state, people say the "Wallace vote" could decide a given contest. What, for instance, will the union member who votes for Wallace do in the congressional races? His decision could be decisive in the senatorial contest between ex-Rep. John J. Gilligan and Attorney General William B. Saxbe in Ohio. It could decide the fate of Sen. Birch Bayh (D) of Indiana and Sen. Joe Clark (D) of Pennsylvania.

It is already affecting the strategy of candidates. They are asking themselves what happens if the voters don't go beyond Wallace, leaving the rest of the ballot blank. Who gets hurt then? There is no accurate way to measure the Wallace vote here (it isn't even certain his name will be on the ballot since the Supreme Court won't decide until Oct. 7, but he is expected to win his case). Still, all the visible and audible signs are scary. Take two recent polls. The *Cincinnati Inquirer* printed a ballot and invited its readers to respond. Wallace received 50.3 percent. A similar "call in" poll in Cleveland gave Wallace 46.9 percent. Vice President Humphrey ran a miserably poor third in both. One can say such polls are a measure of the enthusiasm of backers of each of the candidates, rather than an accurate gauge of what will happen on election day. But the rationalization is chilling.

New white registration is heavy. Often, white residents showing up for the first time say they're doing it to vote for Wallace; many of them have lived in the community for years without voting. A lot of new names on the registration lists come from communities along the Appalachian stream that runs from Cincinnati through Dayton to Toledo and Detroit. When local observers list the Wallace strongholds in Ohio, they name these towns plus Akron, to which many West Virginians were drawn to work