

SUGGESTED POINTS FOR FOREWORD TO ANTHOLOGY OF ALLARD LOWENSTEIN'S  
SPEECHES AND WRITINGS.

The threshold question we have to answer in the foreword is: why should anyone be interested in reading a collections of speeches and articles by and about Allard Lowenstein?

A convincing response to this question at the start of the volume is of paramount importance. It will help establish the book's context, its purpose and perhaps, attract potential readers.

We suggest a threefold answer to the question: 1) Al Lowenstein's experiences, influences and insights shed important light on the developments of the last 30 years in American history; 2) His commitments and perceptions have major implications for change in the present and the future and 3) It will be a valuable historical record which will serve to clarify who Al was, what he did and the kinds of things he said. Obviously, these three items are interrelated.

Al generally operated at the cutting edge of change and he had a seminal role in many of the most significant political and social movements of the last three decades. This, we think, gives the book historical importance. Among the subject covered are: 1) The civil rights movement; 2) the antiwar movement and the "Dump Johnson" campaign; 3) sectarian conflict on the political left; 4) the nature of Congress and the role of the individual member; 5) electoral politics, its flaws and its relevance to strategies of change; 6) institutional problems and impediments in the system and ways of reforming them; 7) the major political assassinations 8) the relevance of ideological categories and the possibilities of dialogue across the political spectrum;

9) human rights, international relations and the foreign policy experiences of the Carter Administration; 10) the dilemmas of personal political commitment, styles of action and the deeper abiding issues of the direction of American life. Obviously, this book cannot exhaust any of these subjects. But it does provide valuable and often neglected insight into all of them.

We believe the foreword also should highlight the quality of Al Lowenstein's perceptions on the pressing issues of our time. His voice and his record are extremely relevant to understanding our past and addressing the future. His experiences help illustrate the tensions and pressures facing insurgents and those who would defy or question political orthodoxy. His life suggests the responsibility for creativity in public life and the necessity of balancing continuity and change; it challenges many common assumptions of routine political thinking; it addresses the underlying question of whether "democracy is a racket" and how basic social change can be achieved; it explores the possibilities of intellectual exchange which transcends labels and dogma; it illustrates the role of the political actor as a catalyst in galvanizing fundamental aspirations that are often latent, inchoate or unsuspected; it probes the relations and distinctions between principle, strategy and tactics; it touches on deep questions of individual lifestyle and effectiveness and challenges the complacency which ignores the responsibility of privilege.

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The material in the book covers a diversity of specific and transient issues, but in a way which has implications for most of these more durable questions. In that sense, we see the book as a resource for future thinking and one which can be approached at both deep and specific levels.

Finally, and most obviously, Al Lowenstein was a public personality whose life and advocacy deserve direct documentation. This should be true for both those who want to remember him from the past and those who are learning about him for the first time.

Parenthetically, it is worth mentioning that a book which will paint a portrait of Al's life which is likely to be distorted and adversarial in tone, is scheduled to be published in the next few months. This makes it especially useful and important to provide some authentic evidence from which informed and considered judgements can be made. We hope in this way to let Al Lowenstein speak for himself both to the present and the future.

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