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LIFE BOOK REVIEW

Do the old saws need sharpening?

CHANGING SOURCES OF POWER
by FREDERICK G. DUTTON
(McGraw-Hill Book Co.) \$7.95

The convulsions which rack America are neither temporary, aberrational nor restricted to a handful of the cultish young cheered on by a cadre of "with it" elders. Such convulsions promise to dislodge an incumbent President every four years, engender a series of successors elected by a minority of the voters, and wipe out nearly every political verity of the past half-century. And most of the clichés, too.

What turbulence the nation has witnessed is merely prelude, Fred Dutton writes in this perceptive *vade mecum* for the '70s. We have seen new forces struggling for power. But these forces are mere pebbles in an avalanche of whose existence no one so far is clearly aware.

The scope of Dutton's *Changing Sources of Power* carries it beyond the purely political. It is an analytical preview of irreversible cultural, social and educational forces whose effect will be to change our lives, our na-

tional directions and to render obsolete the political process as we have known it. (

Fred Dutton is a Washington lawyer whose baptism took place in the strong currents of California electoral politics. He came to Washington with the John Kennedy victory of 1960, and in Robert Kennedy's primary campaign was clearly the most relied-upon political adviser.

His book, certain to be compared to Scammon and Wattenberg's *The Real Majority* and Kevin Phillips's *The Emerging Republican Majority*, is broader gauge than either. Dutton sees America close to "another grisly showdown" comparable to that of the Antebellum period of the 1850's and '60s and the depression years of the early 1930s. After decades of temporizing first over slavery and later over a crumbling economic system, the nation was forced to overcome problems and forces threatening its destruction. But first it had to recognize them.

It must do so now, Dutton writes. "Power is rarely shared willingly," he concedes, "but this country could risk the dangers of instability and repression for a very prolonged period if it does not open up and share much more than presently is the case."

In the 1970s, record numbers of new voters (25 million in 1972 alone) will be eligible. Their comparative affluence, sophistication and generally high level of education will create electoral blocs that may not vote alike but



Cliché-challenger Dutton

will be repelled by the sophistry and lack of candor that has characterized past campaigns. The new generation of voters is impatient, intolerant of cant and hypocrisy and refuses to share such older generation obsessions as white supremacy and the menace of Communism. Since two of the three presidential elections of the 1960s were decided by a half-million or fewer votes, its power potential is undeniable.

At the same time, Dutton argues, the traditional power blocs are crumbling. The South is no longer solid for the Democrats; the farmers are declining in importance and reliability to the Republicans; the labor oligarchy is still Democratic, but the hard-hats are Wallaceite or at best Nixonian in large numbers; Republican big businessmen often find the Democrats more to their liking. More and more, voters express disgust with both ma-

ior parties and despair over the lack of choice. For the next several elections, Dutton forecasts, there almost certainly will be at least four choices—the major party candidates plus a Wallaceite on the right and a McCarthyite on the left. The victor may achieve less than 40% of the vote.

Dutton dismisses the Phillips thesis that Republicans can win by appealing to the enduring racial bigotry of the South and sun belt states. The Scammon-Wattenberg thesis that successful politicians must cater to a stagnant “center” he rejects as “more a gloss for stalemate and indecision than the means of achieving stability or an invigorating sense of national direction.”

So what lies ahead? Revolution? Possible, but not likely, Dutton contends. Repression? The signs are already there.

But Dutton ends on an upbeat. If politicians will stop ducking and meet the urgent problems head-on—survival at least within the framework of the nation’s historical development is likely. He writes: “Whatever of the old persists . . . will prevail not by social rigidity and political stalemate but through adaptation and regeneration, two processes applying as much to a society and its politics as to nature and life itself.” He might have added a phrase from the President he once advised: “Let us begin.”

by Hays Gorey

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