

Dear Js,

7/10/72, 7:30 p.m.

Mine is probably a minority view among "critics" this election. I say this without having discussed it with any of them, based merely on my knowledge of them of the past. I believe there are constructive influences within the McGovern movement and positive results that have already been achieved by it. I don't think revolution is imminent, and I do think that some talking revolutionaries have swallowed their past rhetoric. For now, I believe what hope there may be in the country can come from change only, non-revolutionary change. I haven't followed the papers, spent little time with TV, not much more on the radio, so I'm not really close to any of it. What to me is analysis may be wishful thinking and before the sun dawns I may be proven a poor prophet.

I don't see much choice between any of the Democratic candidates and Richard Nixon. I'd rather see changes in the Democratic party than have Humphrey, for example, win. He may be a much more dangerous President than Nixon, I think would without doubt be in the early part of the regime. And I think McGovern can win.

There are several clues on which I base this thinking. The egg-laying by the party fund-raisers. The party's traditional money support has no reason to support the machine. They're happy with Nixon, don't think any candidate but McGovern can beat him, and don't want McGovern. If they'd had any faith in HHH, there would not be this enormous deficit. And I don't see the people who have financed McGovern paying off the debts of those who stood for everything they oppose. They're saving their \$\$\$ for McGovern. If he doesn't get the nod, they'll not waste it, not many of them. If there was a hearty support for the party as such, it would have fewer financial problems and their ABC fund show would have done better.

The I think reasonable hierarchy decision to ordain that all non-contested delegates vote on challenges on the floor means they are genuinely afraid that they'd go under big if he walks out or any substantial part of his following stays home or votes 3rd party. The machine has had to give. If it doesn't, it will be a machine without a future. Understanding that its future is with change is not easy. There is hope for the party only if it is sharply different, not like Nixon in any major way.

Wallace's today's move makes me think he is threatening from his side and does intend to third-party it. Unless he gets the v-p nod from HHH or someone else. In turn, this leads me to think that he regards the outcome as close enough to influence it by this kind of threat or that McGovern will win and he's leaning on the hacks.

McGovern's decision not to have a closed-door meeting on compromise can be interpreted as feeling strong. It can also be because he knows it might turn off much of his following. He is the first serious candidate I can recall who can't control his following and both knows and admits it. That, I think, is healthy, even if it can't continue after the election. But this is part of what makes him come through on TV as Mr Clean, something even conservatives want in politics, Real ones, not nuts and rock-bound reactionaries. HHH has been so openly Mr. Bad it has to mean he knows he's fighting a losing battle and can depend on deals only. He has been terrible on TV, a sincere-seeming Nixon, just as dirty. I was surprised at Shirley Chisholm on Meet the Press yesterday. Asked if she thought McG could win, she answered a different question, and said what she had heard members of Cong. say they think a McG candidacy will do for them - bad. Natch. Most of them are very bad. They don't want change, either. But this disappointed me in her. I found myself wondering if she expects some kind of non-McGovern offer.

I don't think there is the probability of party ruin in substantial change. I think this would mean hack leadership end, basic changes, the greater likelihood of some choice in this and future elections. Opposite, I think this kind of change is the only Democratic hope, but the pols put their personal interests first and pretend they are the interests of the people and the party. With reactionary candidates, I don't think McG will or can help. With others, I think he will, and that's the problem of the pols. They have no base except in the baddies, so they are busily engaged in trying to lose the Presidency to retain not control of Congress but their influence with the right-wing office-holders. A new machine may emerge from this. If it will be a machine, I think it will be an entirely different kind, whether or not it develops the same bad habits. That will take time.

I do think that if McG doesn't get it on the first ballot it is crookedness and corruption that denies it. If he doesn't get the nomination, I hope he leads a new party. The failure of McCarthy to give the kids any kind of real leadership was too disillusioning for too many of them. Had he, had he continued, Dirty Ricky would have had more trouble. H