



### Robert Kennedy and the 1968 Presidential Campaign

Robert Kennedy occupies a special place in the life of the Sixties. Third son of the Joseph Kennedy clan, he was in some ways the most Irish. Joe Junior, the oldest, killed in combat in World War II, had had the smooth qualities of the ambitious executive. John, the president, was the debonair sophisticate, the family intellectual. Ted, the youngest, was the pampered rich boy who believed Daddy's money would buy anything. It was Bobby who retained the combativeness and the passion that we associate with Irish-American ethnicity.

RFK served his brother as attorney general and stayed on after Dallas under Lyndon Johnson for some additional months. As the nation's chief legal officer, he was considered a tough enforcer of the laws, at a time when the federal government was fighting massive resistance of the white South to federal civil rights rulings by Congress and the courts. He had also played a constructive role in Ex Comm, the small circle of advisers who had successfully maneuvered the nation through the dangerous Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

Robert Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson were not friends. Their antipathy went back at least to 1960, when RFK, as his brother's campaign manager, had opposed Johnson's choice as Jack Kennedy's vice-presidential running mate. He had stayed on in the cabinet after the assassination, but he became the rallying point of JFK loyalists who could not accept the legitimacy of Lyndon Johnson. In 1964, he left to run for the Senate from New York and won, though he was accused of being a "carpet-bagger" who had no real connection with the state.

As a senator from New York, Bobby acquired a whole new set of advisers, young men more liberal than he who influenced his views on race, student dissent, and Vietnam. He developed a special rapport with the young and with blacks and Hispanics, and somehow, perhaps because of his scrappy Irish temper, he retained the support of the blue-collar whites who were defecting from the Democratic Party.

Bobby was the obvious choice of the "Dump Johnson" forces who wanted to challenge the president's bid for reelection in 1968. But at first he refused to consider it. He was reluctant to disrupt the Democratic Party, he said, and besides, replacing Johnson was a forlorn hope. Only after Eugene McCarthy's stunning upset of the president in the New Hampshire primary did he reconsider.

The selection here is Robert Kennedy's announcement of his candidacy on March 16 in the room of the old Senate Office Building, where he had first come to public attention as counsel of the McClellan Committee on organized crime and where, eight years before, his brother had thrown his own hat into the presidential ring. In it, he tries to deflect impressions that he is involved in a grudge fight against LBJ and that he is a spoil-sport for McCarthy. But both charges would stick—with good reason.

# the times were a changing!

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*In the next three months, from Indiana on, Kennedy and McCarthy would battle it out on the primary trail. California was the last primary state, and there, on June 4, he narrowly defeated McCarthy. After a brief victory statement to his supporters, as he was leaving the Ambassador Hotel, he was shot and killed by a Palestinian immigrant who resented his pro-Israel views.*

[*"Robert Kennedy Throws His Hat into the Ring," Washington Post, March 17, 1968.*]

#### ROBERT KENNEDY THROWS HIS HAT INTO THE RING

I am announcing today my candidacy for the Presidency of the United States.

I do not run for the Presidency merely to oppose any man, but to propose new policies. I run because I am convinced that this country is on a perilous course and because I am obliged to do all I can. I run to seek new policies, policies to end the bloodshed in Vietnam and in our cities, policies to close the gaps between black and white, rich and poor, young and old, in this country and around the world. I run for the Presidency because I want the Democratic Party and the United States of America to stand for hope instead of despair, for the reconciliation of men instead of the growing risk of world war.

I run because it is now unmistakably clear that we can change these disastrous, divisive policies only by changing the men who are now making them. For the reality of recent events in Vietnam have been glossed over with illusions. . . . The crisis in gold,\* the crisis in our cities, the crises on our farms and in our ghettos, all have been met by too little and too late.

No one who knows what I know about the extraordinary demands of the Presidency can be certain that any mortal can adequately fill that position. But my service on the National Security Council during the Cuban missile crisis, the Berlin crisis, and the negotiations on Laos and on the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty have taught me something about both the uses and the limitations of military power, about the value of negotiations with allies and enemies, about the opportunities and dangers which await our nation in the many corners of the globe to which I have traveled. As a member of the Cabinet and a member of the Senate, I have seen the inexcusable and ugly deprivation which causes children to starve in Mississippi, black citizens to riot in Watts, young Indians to commit suicide on their reservations because they lack all hope and feel they have no future, and proud, able-

\*The reference here is the recent wave of gold hoarding, owing to an American balance of payments problem which had already developed—ed.

bodied families to wait out their lives in empty idleness in eastern Kentucky. I have traveled and listened to the young people of our nation and felt their anger about the war they are sent to fight and the world they are about to inherit. In private talks and in public, I have tried in vain to alter our course in Vietnam before it further saps our spirit and our manpower, further raises the risks of wider war, and further destroys the country and people it was meant to save.

I cannot stand aside from the contest that will decide our nation's future and our children's future. The remarkable New Hampshire campaign of Senator Eugene McCarthy has proven how deep are the present divisions within our party and country. Until that was publicly clear, my presence in the race would have been seen as a clash of personalities rather than issues. But now that the fight is one over policies which I have long been challenging, I must enter that race. The fight is just beginning and I believe that I can win.

I have previously communicated this decision to President Johnson, and late last night, my brother Senator Edward Kennedy traveled to Wisconsin to communicate my decision to Senator McCarthy. I made clear through my brother to Senator McCarthy that my candidacy would not be in opposition to his, but in harmony. My aim is to both support and expand his valiant campaign in the spirit of his November 30 statement.\* Taking one month at a time, it is important that he achieve the largest possible majorities next month in the Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts primaries.† I strongly support his effort in those states and urge all my friends to give him their help and their votes. Both of us will be encouraging like-minded Democrats in every state to select like-minded delegates to the National Convention, for both of us want above all else an open Democratic convention in Chicago, free to choose a new course for our party and country.

To make certain that this effort will still be effective in June, I am required now to permit the entry of my name into the California primary to be held in that month; and I do so in the belief, which I will strive to implement, that Senator McCarthy's forces and mine will be able to work together in one form or another. My desire is not to divide the strength of those forces seeking a change, but to increase it. . . .

Finally, my decision reflects no personal animosity or disrespect toward President Johnson. He served President Kennedy with the utmost loyalty and was extremely kind to me and members of my family in the difficult

\*McCarthy's own statement of candidacy—ed.

†RFK was not on the ballot in those states and so could not compete there—ed.



months which followed the events of November 1963.\* I have often commended his efforts in health, education, and many other areas, and I have deep sympathy for the burdens he carries today. But the issue is not personal; it is our profound differences over where we are heading and what we want to accomplish.

I do not lightly dismiss the dangers and difficulties of challenging an incumbent President; but these are not ordinary times, and this is not an ordinary election. At stake is not simply the leadership of our party or even our country—it is our right to moral leadership on this planet.

#### *Eugene McCarthy and the "Children's Crusade"*

*Senator Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota was a Catholic theologian manqué. He received his undergraduate education in Catholic colleges and taught in several before running for Congress as a Democrat. Though he would find himself in the middle of the political storm during the Sixties, he never ceased to be in temperament the man of thought.*

*McCarthy represented a liberal state, but he was never a flaming liberal. In the Senate, he had not been an influential figure and seemed restless and dissatisfied with public life. When approached by Allard Lowenstein in late 1967 to challenge Johnson in the Democratic presidential primaries, he at first demurred but then, out of conscience, accepted.*

*Few believed that the McCarthy campaign was more than a personal expression of dismay at the evil war. No one had ever successfully displaced an incumbent president from the party ticket. But this time the skeptics were mistaken. Although the senator was an indifferent, even reluctant campaigner, his challenge to LBJ struck a resounding chord. To young men and women, especially, his cause seemed a way, finally, to do something practical and consequential to end the war. Hundreds of young idealists flocked to his campaign, many to follow it all the way to the Democratic convention in Chicago in late summer.*

*It was the March presidential primary in New Hampshire, the first of the series, that made McCarthy a viable candidate. The McCarthy forces had little money at first and were compelled to rely almost entirely on volunteers. This proved to be an advantage in the Granite State, where the enthusiastic young men and women were able to get past the flinty Yankee skepticism and talk to the voters about their candidate. As one New Hampshire Democrat noted: "These college kids are fabulous. . . . [They] knock at the door and come in politely, and actually want to talk to grown-ups, and people are delighted."*

*But the students had to make concessions. Few were flamboyant hippies, but many wore their hair long and dressed in the grungy way typical of the youth culture. Under the direction of Curtis Gans and Sam Brown, the campaign managers, they went "Clean for Gene," putting on skirts, jackets, ties, and slacks, and shaving off or cutting off excessive hair, if they expected to do active canvassing among New Hampshire's conservative voters.*

*In this selection below by Ben Stavis, we observe the Children's Crusade, as the New Hampshire McCarthy campaign was soon called, through the eyes of a young Columbia graduate student and his wife, who came to help in mid-February and in the end stayed all the way to the August national convention.*

*[We Were the Campaign by Ben Stavis. Copyright © 1969 by Ben Stavis. Reprinted by permission of Beacon Press, Boston.]*

#### *THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE*

When Roseann and I took a bus for Concord, New Hampshire, in early February 1968, we saw no other way to help end the war in Vietnam. With countless other Americans we had watched with horror and frustration as our country unleashed an ever larger war on the people of Vietnam, rendering modernization of backward countries impossible and preventing racial progress at home. There seemed no other way of stopping it. Newspaper advertisements, demonstrations, and protests were ineffective; even important senators were discovering [their] powerlessness. The supposed safeguard of democracy, the presidential election, seemed irrelevant. Throughout 1967 it seemed that the choice would be between Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, leaving no choice to vote for peace. . . .

Thus, when Senator Eugene McCarthy . . . revealed interest in challenging the incumbent president for his party's nomination, I was encouraged. . . . I knew of Senator McCarthy because I had met him about six years earlier and liked him. He had visited Haverford College when I was a student there, participated in classes, and informally chatted about American foreign and domestic policy with students for several hours over coffee. He impressed me as a man of decency and integrity. . . .

During December and January after McCarthy announced [his candidacy], while I stayed at Columbia University and studied for oral examinations for my doctorate . . . , I followed with some concern the debate about McCarthy's candidacy. . . . McCarthy had not been a leader in the Senate against the war as [Wayne] Morse from Oregon and [Ernest] Gruening from Alaska had. . . . Even after the announcement of his candidacy, McCarthy's position remained weak. . . .

\*That is, after the assassination of John Kennedy in Dallas—ed.

Despite these misgivings, the logic of a presidential challenge remained. . . . Then, at the beginning of February, Roseann and I had a block of free time. . . . So on February 14, St. Valentine's Day, we took a bus to Boston and, next morning, another one to Concord, New Hampshire—almost four weeks before the New Hampshire primary. We walked into the headquarters about 10:30 A.M., suitcases in hand. Headquarters was an old electrical appliance store and, although it bore a sign MCCARTHY FOR PRESIDENT, it was not yet functioning.

We were quickly put to work. We shoveled rubbish from a side room, taped extension cords to the ceilings to support light bulbs, and carried pails of water to the basement to serve as fire extinguishers. A large wooden spool that had once held heavy wire was set on end to become a table for a borrowed coffee maker. Posters were put up to cover holes in the walls. Tables were placed over holes in the floors. We then began to stack cartons of literature and sort piles of posters. The campaign existed in the national press and on television, but it had barely begun in New Hampshire.

Roseann and I thought we might be able to coordinate some sort of office work, do some of the envelope stuffing—that sort of thing. We expected to stay for a week or two, on the assumption that the campaign would have many effective workers from the Senator's staff and from New Hampshire. An assignment the next afternoon forced me to reassess drastically. I accompanied two other students to Rochester, New Hampshire, about an hour's drive from Concord. We were to annotate voting lists with party affiliation, so as to avoid canvassing or sending mail to Republicans. The people of New Hampshire, seemingly not trusting any centralized bureaucracy, had no single location for party registration records. . . . At Rochester the records for one ward were at the police station; for the second ward, in the official's isolated farmhouse; for the third posted on the outside of a school. I volunteered to transpose party information from the latter list. For about two hours I stood outside in 15-degree weather shivering, carefully noting who was a Democrat and who was an Independent. . . .

While we were driving back to Concord, I began to understand that the McCarthy campaign was not the property of Senator McCarthy or the people of New Hampshire. If I was willing to stand in the cold, freezing wind and take down information, it was my campaign. . . . With this realization, we decided to stay, at least until the . . . election. Beyond that we made no plans. . . .

### Original Staff

I should clarify what the word "staff" meant at that time in New Hampshire. A staff member was essentially anyone who worked during the week. He

prepared materials to be used on weekends, then supervised the people who came on weekends. . . . The concept of staff involved no financial distinction. The full-time workers thought it likely that if the campaign got money, they would be fed; but that would come only when the wallets grew thin and the stomachs empty.

The original staff was composed almost entirely of graduate students. There were a few undergraduates, but generally their class schedules prevented them from spending great amounts of time with the campaign.

The office was headed by Sam Brown, a former National Student Association official, who knew a great number of students. He was registered at the Harvard Divinity School to keep his student standing. He kept his hair at perfect length: long enough so that he could pass as a student radical but not so long that he would be mistaken for a hippie. . . .

The counterpart to staff was volunteer. Of course everyone was a volunteer in the strict sense, but in New Hampshire volunteer meant part-time worker. Volunteers were the college students who came to work for the weekend. On weekends, the office quickly became cluttered with sleeping bags, portable typewriters, textbooks, and term papers in various stages of completion. The most important item of logistical support was a record player and hard-rock records. Each weekend meant a new set of records. After a week of the Beatles, Country Joe and the Fish came as a welcome change in the office environment. By the next weekend, everyone was overjoyed at having the Grateful Dead for a week.

At that time there were two major projects for volunteers. The first was to put out a mailing to all Democrats and Independents in New Hampshire. During the week, we philosophers, theologians, sinologists, economists, lawyers, and a few people with only bachelor's degrees all tore mailing labels, pasted them on envelopes, stuffed, sealed, stamped, and sorted by zip code. When masses of volunteers came for the weekend, we learned how to supervise. . . . All this work was geared to the throbbing rhythm of the hard-rock records. . . .

At the same time a small group of weekend volunteers experimented with another method of getting votes. We tried to canvass. Roseann and I went out with an experimental canvassing group to talk with the people of New Hampshire on the weekends of February 17 and 24. It was a chilling experience in many ways. First, it was cold and windy. The problem was partly overcome with long underwear, heavy clothing, and boots. Sunglasses helped reduce the intense glare from the snow. Second, people often had huge dogs near their houses, whose barks replace doorbells in alerting the household to the approach of a visitor. Only courage and



careful checking of the length of tethers helped here. The reception by the voters was also chilly. There were numberless excuses for not talking with us. The people had guests, were eating, were getting ready for a funeral, or had sickness in the house. This kind of coldness could not be combated with gloves; it needed quick response. One man would not let me in his house because he was hanging wallpaper and his house was a mess. He immediately agreed with me when I observed that the country was in a mess also. I didn't get into the house but did give him McCarthy literature and a smile. . . .

During the first attempts at canvassing the only adult interested in hearing about it was a stocky bald man who said he was a motivational analyst hired by the campaign. . . . He suggested ways of explaining to the voter how the war was related to tax increases and inflation. He urged us to try conversing with the voter instead of merely offering literature. . . .

Roseann started out as an assistant office manager. She helped Pat Reiley, a New York girl with flaming red hair. Pat had worked for a month at New York Coalition for a Democratic Alternative (as the New York McCarthy campaign was called). . . . Roseann, driven by her home economics training and her experience as a program director for a girls' camp, enlarged the job of assistant office manager. She kept the office well stocked with vitamins, enriched peanut butter, jelly, and bread. She solicited fruit from the sympathetic groceries and made everyone drink orange juice in the mornings. She kept a crude first-aid kit. . . .

Roseann's responsibilities included calling up mothers of the youngsters who came to the office and assuring them that their children were being helpful. . . .

### The Staff Grows

After about a week and a half, our headquarters was tremendously strengthened by the arrival of several members of the Washington staff. We now had a campaign director in Curt Gans. Since he was thirty years old, he could rent cars. He could always be located by following some telephone wire or a trail of opened Pepsi bottles. . . . He was short and frail, with a crew cut. . . . and looked more like a mechanic than an organizer of a great political campaign. . . .

Although he had never run a large campaign, he had spent the previous several months traveling around the country organizing Concerned Democrats. Before that he had arranged peace rallies and sit-ins, so he had more organizing experience than anyone else in the Concord headquarters. . . .

The new staff was a major addition to the Concord headquarters. Our work now had direction, breadth, and money. We started getting more telephones, tables, cars, literature, and even money for eating. . . .

Gans wanted to project a campaign that was based on two elements: (1) local support and leadership, and (2) innocent students. There was something of a contradiction in both these images, for most of the students and staff were from out of state, and the innocence of the students could not be guaranteed. Thus Gans was often frightened that press stories would destroy the impression he was hoping to create. He even tried to keep his own existence a secret from the press. When the *Concord Monitor*, the local daily, carried a five-page story announcing that the McCarthy campaign had sent its key workers, Curt Gans, Sam Brown, and Harold Ickes to New Hampshire, Curt was infuriated and promised to fire whoever leaked the story to the press. The canvassers, the core of the campaign, might produce a bad press: they might get into fights or get caught smoking pot. A story revealing such behavior could puncture the entire image of the McCarthy Kids. Thus Gans carefully kept the press away from our canvassers frugging\* at a Manchester party on a Saturday evening. He also insisted that only one thousand out-of-state students be allowed to canvass for the last weekend. This meant "turning off" about ten busloads. Gans carefully selected New York buses to be stopped, on the guess that heavy New York accents and a hard-sell semi-radical approach that might have been learned canvassing in New York would alienate the proud, independent, conservative New Hampshirites.

For the same reason, Gans tried to prevent people with beards from canvassing. Such men were assigned to help me, so they were out of sight in the basement, helping prepare maps and file cards for canvassing. The public image of the McCarthy campaign was "Clean for Gene" and marginal change in foreign policy (later it was radical change). But bearded students, SDS militants, officers of the New York's Twelfth Street Peace Action Committee, and unmarried couples were all helping prepare for canvassing. The few black volunteers were used fully and publicly in canvassing. . . .

When election day finally came, I slept through it, having worked all night until the polls opened getting maps and lists ready in Manchester. As the results came in that evening, I worked an adding machine and slide rule to tabulate those that were telephoned by field offices. We were hours behind the media. None of us had a confident prediction of the vote. Staff guesses of McCarthy's vote ranged from 8 percent to 60 percent. I had no

\*The Frug was a popular dance of the day among college students—ed.



idea what we would get. Nor did anyone know what would be considered a good vote. We had to rely on the press after the vote was in to tell us whether it was respectable or not. If the press called 25 percent a strong showing for McCarthy, it would be that. Thus one reporter asked me what vote would satisfy me. I asked him how the press would interpret the vote. He said that 30 percent would be regarded as a very strong showing, so I figured that would be satisfactory to me, but publicly I said nothing. Gans insisted that no one either make a prediction or drop a hint as to what would be considered a good vote. He did not want the press to be able to say that we did not do as well as we expected to.

When the votes were tallied, I was somewhat surprised that a full 48 percent of the voters liked LBJ enough to write in his name. But since all the newscasters said that our 42 percent was a great victory for McCarthy, we were ecstatic. A heavy snowstorm had prevented our joining the main staff celebration in Manchester, but we watched it on television and celebrated with a pizza. On Wednesday someone attached a chair to the ceiling and labeled it "the overturned presidential seat." At a noon meeting Curt Gans told a joyous staff that we had changed the presidency and maybe the next president would be McCarthy. . . .

### The Yippies Go to Chicago

Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, and Paul Krassner called the week-long demonstration they concocted for the Chicago Democratic convention a "Festival of Life." The three some had long been agitators and gadflies, Krassner as publisher of the adversarial Realist, Hoffman as a civil rights activist, and Rubin as a Berkeley antiwar leader. Sometime in the middle of the decade, they were all swept up in the counterculture wave and deposited on the coast of hippiedom. In 1967, Rubin and Hoffman orchestrated the Mobe's march on the Pentagon that opened with a zany Buddhist ceremony to levitate the building. By 1968, Hoffman was calling himself "a revolutionary artist."

According to Hoffman's whimsical account, the three political cutups, coming down from an LSD trip on New Year's Day 1968, decided to create the Yippies, \* a blend of counterculture and the New Left that would undermine the establishment through humor and ridicule. In their first escapade, the Yippies scattered money from the trading floor balcony of the New York Stock Exchange while the capitalists below awkwardly scrambled for the bills raining down. Then, in March, six thousand Yippies celebrated the spring equinox by invading New York's Grand Central Station and smashing the information booth clocks, the symbol of the nine-to-five commuter rat race.

\*Supposedly an acronym for Youth International Party, but actually a blend of *yippie*, meaning "hooray," and *hippie*.

The big show would be Chicago, however. There the Democrats' "Festival of Death" would be turned into a "Festival of Life." Thousands of Yippies would descend on the Windy City during convention week and create a "perfect mess." The liberated young would divert themselves with "poetry readings, mass meditation, flycasting exhibitions, demagogic Yippie political arousal speeches, and rock music and song concerts." They would also disrupt the proceedings. Several hundred Yippie male studs would seduce the wives, daughters, and girlfriends of the Democratic delegates, and according to Krassner, to enhance the fun, the zanies would dump LSD into the city's water supply. Most of this was fantasy, but the Festival of Life was a clear attack on a sacred political ritual of the republic.

The promoters claimed they would draw thousands to Chicago. In fact, warned by Abe Peck of the Chicago Seed and by other underground press editors that Mayor Daley and the Chicago police would happily smash heads, only about two or three thousand Yippies came. But they were enough to trigger the chaos and street drama that the American public saw on their TV sets during the convention.

The government indicted Hoffman, Rubin, and six other antiwar leaders\* for conspiring to incite a riot at the convention. After an unruly trial that continued the hijinks of the convention, all were convicted but acquitted on appeal.

This article, published six weeks before the convention, was Hoffman's call to action. It appeared in Krassner's *The Realist* on July 7, 1968.

[Abbie Hoffman, "The Yippies Are Going to Chicago," *Realist*, July 7, 1968.]

### THE YIPPIES ARE GOING TO CHICAGO

Last December a group of us in New York conceived the Yippie idea. We had four main objectives:

1. The blending of pot and politics into a political grass leaves movement—a cross-fertilization of the hippie and New Left philosophies.
2. A connecting link that would tie together as much of the underground as was willing into some gigantic national get-together.
3. The development of a model for an alternative society.
4. The need to make some statement, especially in revolutionary action-theater terms, about LBJ, the Democratic Party, electoral politics, and the state of the nation.

To accomplish these tasks required the construction of a vast myth, for through the notion of myth large numbers of people could get turned on

\*The others were: Dave Dellinger, Tom Hayden, Rennie Davis, Lee Weiner, John Froines, and Bobby Seale. Seale's prosecution was later legally severed from the trial of the others.





and, in that process of getting turned on, begin to participate in Yippie! and start to focus on Chicago. *Precision was sacrificed for a greater degree of suggestion.* People took off in all directions in the most sensational manner possible:

"We will burn Chicago to the ground!"

"We will fuck on the beaches!"

"We demand the Politics of Ecstasy!"

"Acid for all!"

"Abandon the Creeping Meatball!"

And, all the time: "Yippie! Chicago—August 25–30."

Reporters would play their preconceived roles: "What is the difference between a hippie and a Yippie?" A hundred different answers would fly out, forcing the reporter to make up his own answers; to distort. And distortion became the life-blood of the Yippies.

Yippie! was in the eye of the beholder.

Perhaps Marshall McLuhan can help.

This is taken from an interview in the current Columbia University year-book:

MCLUHAN: "Myth is the mode of simultaneous awareness of a complex group of causes and effects. . . . We hear sounds from everywhere, without ever having to focus. . . . Where a visual space is an organized continuum of a uniform connected kind, the ear world is a world of simultaneous relationships. Electric circuitry confers a mythic dimension on our ordinary individual and group actions. Our technology forces us to live mythically, but we continue to think fragmentarily, and on single, separate planes."

INTERVIEWER: "What do you mean by myth?"

MCLUHAN: "Myth means putting on the audience, putting on one's environment. The Beatles do this. They are a group of people who suddenly were able to put on their audience and the English language with musical effects—putting on a whole vesture, a whole time, a *Zeit*."

INTERVIEWER: "So it doesn't matter that the Pentagon didn't actually levitate?"

MCLUHAN: "Young people are looking for a formula for putting on the universe—*participation mystique*. They do not look for detached patterns—for ways of relating themselves to the world, à la nineteenth century."

So there you have it, or rather have it suggested, because myth can never have the precision of a well-oiled machine, which would allow it to be trapped and molded. It must have the action of participation and the magic of mystique. It must have a high element of risk, drama, excitement, and bullshit.

Let's return to history. Remember a guy named Lyndon Johnson? He was so predictable when Yippie! began. And then *pow!* He really fucked us. He did the one thing no one had counted on. He dropped out. "My God," we exclaimed. "Lyndon is out-flanking us on our hippie side."

Then Go-Clean-for-Gene and Hollywood-Bobby. Well, Gene wasn't much. One could secretly cheer for him the way you cheer for the Mets. It's easy, knowing he can never win. But Bobby, there was the real threat. A direct challenge to our theater-in-the-streets, a challenge to the charisma of Yippie!

Remember Bobby's Christmas card: psychedelic blank space with a big question mark—"Santa in '68?" Remember Bobby on television stuttering at certain questions, leaving room for the audience to jump in and help him agonize, to battle the cold interviewer who knew all the questions and never made a mistake.

*Come on, Bobby said, join the mystery battle against the television machine.* Participation mystique. Theater-in-the-streets. He played it to the hilt. And what was worse, Bobby had the money and power to build the stage. We had to steal ours. It was no contest.

Yippie stock went down quicker than the money we had dumped on the Stock Exchange floor. Every night we would turn on the TV set and there was the young knight with long hair, holding out his hand (a gesture he learned from the Pope): "Give me your hand—it is a long road ahead."

When young longhairs told you how they'd heard that Bobby turned on, you knew Yippie! was *really* in trouble.

We took to drinking and praying for LBJ to strike back, but he kept melting. Then Hubert came along exclaiming the "Politics of Joy" and Yippie! passed into a state of catatonia which resulted in near permanent brain damage.

Yippie! grew irrelevant.

National action seemed meaningless.

Everybody began the tough task of developing new battlegrounds. Columbia, the Lower East Side, Free City in San Francisco. Local action became the focus and by the end of May we had decided to disband Yippie! and cancel the Chicago festival.

It took two full weeks of debate to arrive at a method of dropping-out which would not further demoralize the troops. The statement was all ready when up stepped Sirhan Sirhan, and in ten seconds he made it a whole new ball game.

We postponed calling off Chicago and tried to make some sense out of what the hell had just happened. It was not easy to think clearly. Yippie!,



still in a state of critical shock because of LBJ's pullout, hovered close to death somewhere between the 50/50 state of Andy Warhol and the 0/0 state of Bobby Kennedy.

The United States political system was proving more insane than Yippie!. Reality and unreality had in six months switched sides.

It was *America* that was on a trip; we were just standing still.

How could we pull our pants down? America was already naked.

What could we disrupt? America was falling apart at the seams.

Yet Chicago seemed more relevant than ever. Hubert had a lock on the convention: it was more closed than ever. Even the squares who vote in primaries had expressed a mandate for change. Hubert canned the "Politics of Joy" and instituted the "Politics of Hope"—some switch—but none of the slogans mattered. We were back to power politics, the politics of big-city machines and back-room deals.

The Democrats had finally got their thing together by hook or crook and there it was for all to see—fat, ugly, and full of shit. The calls began pouring into our office. They wanted to know only one thing: "When do we leave for Chicago?"

What we need now, however, is the direct opposite approach from the one we began with. We must sacrifice suggestion for a greater degree of precision. We need a reality in the face of the American political myth. We have to kill Yippie! and still bring huge numbers to Chicago.

If you have any Yippie! buttons, posters, stickers, or sweatshirts, bring them to Chicago. We will end Yippie! in a huge orgasm of destruction atop a giant media altar. We will in Chicago begin the task of building Free America on the ashes of the old and from the inside out.

A Constitutional Convention is being planned. A convention of visionary mind-benders who will for five long days and nights address themselves to the task of formulating the goals and means of the New Society.

It will be a blend of technologists and poets, of artists and community organizers, of anyone who has a vision. We will try to develop a Community of Consciousness.

There will be a huge rock-folk festival for free. Contrary to rumor, no groups originally committed to Chicago have dropped out. In fact, additional ones have agreed to participate. In all about thirty groups and performers will be there.

Theater groups from all over the country are pledged to come. They are an integral part of the activities, and a large amount of funds raised from here on in will go for the transportation of street theater groups.

Workshops in a variety of subjects such as draft resistance, drugs, commune development, guerrilla theater and underground media will be set

up. The workshops will be oriented around problem-solving while the Constitutional Convention works to developing the overall philosophical framework.

There will probably be a huge march across town to haunt the Democrats. People coming to Chicago should begin preparations for five days of energy-exchange. Do not come prepared to sit and watch and be fed and cared for. It just won't happen that way. It is time to become a life-actor. The days of the audience died with the old America. If you don't have a thing to do, stay home, you'll only get in the way.

All of these plans are contingent on our getting a permit, and it is toward that goal that we have been working. A permit is a definite contradiction in philosophy since we do not recognize the authority of the old order, but tactically it is a necessity.

We are negotiating, with the Chicago city government, a six-day treaty. All of the Chicago newspapers as well as various pressure groups have urged the city of Chicago to grant the permit. They recognize full well the huge social problem they face if we are forced to use the streets of Chicago for our action.

They have tentatively offered us use of Soldiers' Field Stadium or Navy Pier (we would have to rename either, of course) for our convention. We have had several meetings, principally with David Stahl, Deputy Mayor of Chicago, and there remains but to iron out the terms of the treaty—suspension of curfew laws, regulations pertaining to sleeping on the beach, etc.—for us to have a bona fide permit in our hands.

The possibility of violence will be greatly reduced. There is no guarantee that it will be entirely eliminated.

**This is the United States, 1968, remember. If you are afraid of violence you shouldn't have crossed the border.**

This matter of a permit is a cat-and-mouse game. The Chicago authorities do not wish to grant it too early, knowing this would increase the number of people that descend on the city. They can ill afford to wait too late, for that will inhibit planning on our part and create more chaos.

It is not our wish to take on superior armed troops who outnumber us on unfamiliar enemy territory. It is not their wish to have a Democrat nominated amidst a major bloodbath. The treaty will work for both sides.

There is a further complicating factor: the possibility of the Convention being moved out of Chicago. Presently there are two major strikes taking place by bus drivers and telephone and electrical repairmen, in addition to a taxi strike scheduled to begin on the eve of the Convention.



If the Convention is moved out of Chicago, we will have to adjust our plans. The best we can say is, keep your powder dry and start preparing. A good idea is to begin raising money to outfit a used bus that you can buy for about \$300 and use locally before and after Chicago.

Prepare a street theater skit or bring something to distribute, such as food, poems, or music. Get sleeping bags and other camping equipment. We will sleep on the beaches. If you have any free money, we can channel this into energy groups already committed. We are fantastically broke and in need of funds.

In Chicago contact *The Seed*, 837 N. LaSalle St.; in New York, the Youth International Party, 32 Union Sq. East. Chicago has rooming facilities for 25 organizers. Write us of your plans and watch the underground papers for the latest developments.

The point is, you can use Chicago as a means of pulling your local community together. It can serve to open up a dialogue between political radicals and those who might be considered hippies. The radical will say to the hippie: "Get together and fight, you are getting the shit kicked out of you." The hippie will say to the radical: "Your protest is so narrow, your rhetoric so boring, your ideological power plays so old-fashioned."

Each can help the other, and Chicago—like the Pentagon demonstration before it—might well offer the medium to put forth that message.

### *Violence in Chicago*

*In June 1968, that clamorous year of assassinations and riots, Lyndon Johnson created the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence headed by Milton Eisenhower, brother of the former president and respected ex-president of Johns Hopkins University. The commission would "examine this tragic phenomenon" of violence in the nation's life and recommend ways to lessen it.*

*The Democratic convention in Chicago had collapsed into a bedlam of thudding nightsticks, flying bottles, tear gas, Mace, and broken bones before the commission could finish its investigation. The commission quickly authorized a special panel to look into the Chicago disorders under the direction of Daniel Walker, a prominent corporation attorney and president of the Chicago Crime Commission.*

*The Walker report, issued on December 1, was over 230 pages long. Based on fourteen hundred eyewitness accounts, as well as films, photographs, and news stories, it did not deal gently with the Chicago police. Though subject to great provocation by antiwar demonstrators, they had failed to exercise the self-restraint and discipline that citizens had reason to expect. They had responded with "unrestrained and indiscriminate . . . violence . . . often inflicted upon persons who had broken no law, disobeyed no order, made no threat."*

*This excerpt from the Walker report describes the disorders on August 28, when the antiwar protesters, though denied a permit, tried to march on the convention amphitheater at the very time the delegates were choosing the Democratic presidential nominee. Having battled with protesters on the Chicago streets and in the parks for a week, the police were particularly hard on activists that day and, as the Walker report asserted, displayed a shocking lack of discipline. The account makes it clear why the media called the events of that afternoon and evening "a police riot."*

[From *Rights in Conflict: The Walker Report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968)*, pp. 246-61.]

### *RIGHTS IN CONFLICT*

Vice President Humphrey was now inside the Conrad Hilton hotel and the police commanders were afraid that the crowd might either attempt to storm the hotel or march south on Michigan Avenue, ultimately to the Amphitheater. The Secret Service had received an anonymous phone call that the Amphitheater was to be blown up. A line of police was established at 8th and Michigan at the south end of the hotel, and the squads of police stationed at the hotel doors began restricting access to those who could display room keys. . . .

At this time, says [a] police sergeant who . . . was now on duty at the Hilton, people were screaming foul language of every type at the police and shouting, "Who's your wife with now?" . . . "Where's your wife tonight?" Some were spitting on the officers and daring them to come and hit them. "The obscenities," says an attorney who was present, "were frequently returned in kind by the police. . . ."

The demonstrators . . . seemed bent on making their march to the Amphitheater. Obscenities and vulgar epithets were shouted at the police. There were also chants of "One, two, three, four; stop this damned war"; "Dump the Hump"; "Daley must go"; "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh"; "The streets belong to the people"; and "Prague, Prague, Prague!"\*

A policeman on Michigan later said that about this time a "female hippie" came up to him, pulled up her skirt and said, "You haven't had a piece in a long time."

A policeman standing in front of the Hilton remembers seeing a blond female who was dressed in a short red minidress make lewd, sexual

\*The reference is to the recent invasion by Soviet troops of the Czech capital to put down a regime supporting the "Prague Spring," a political and cultural revolt against Soviet dominance since the 1948 Communist takeover. The chanters were implying a resemblance between the Chicago police and the brutal Red Army in Central Europe.—ed.



motions in front of the police line. Whenever this happened, he says, the policemen moved back to prevent any incident. The crowd, however, egged her on, the patrolman says. He thought that "she and the crowd wanted an arrest to create a riot." Earlier in the same general area a male youth had stripped bare and walked around carrying his clothes on a stick.

An attorney who was present at the intersection, a member of the ACLU, later said that "perhaps ten people were on lampposts and shoulders of other people, waving at the cameras. . . . The noise was very loud. . . . I felt this was a violent crowd that came to fight and was looking for trouble."

The intersection at Balbo and Michigan was in total chaos at this point. The street was filled with people. Darkness had fallen, but the scene was lit by both police and television lights. As the mule train\* left, part of the group tried to follow the wagons through the police line and were stopped. According to the deputy superintendent of police, there was much pushing back and forth between the policemen and the demonstrators. He said that this was where real physical contact began. . . .

The crowd was becoming increasingly ugly. The deputy superintendent states that demonstrators were pushing police lines back, spitting into officers' faces and pelting them with rocks, bottles, shoes, glass, and other objects.

While this was happening on Michigan Avenue, a separate police line had begun to move east toward the crowd from the block of Balbo that lies between Michigan and Wabash along the north side of the Hilton.

About 7:45 p.m., the police radio had crackled with a "10-1," an emergency code for "police officer needs help." A police captain was reporting imminent danger in front of the Hilton, and in response to his call, a reserve platoon had been ordered to the northwest corner of the hotel on Balbo. Shortly after that, all available vans in the vicinity were ordered to converge on the Hilton.

The reserve platoon, numbering some 40 policemen, had arrived by special . . . bus at Wabash and Balbo . . . under the command of a deputy chief of police. The men came from a skirmish with demonstrators at 14th and Wabash, several blocks southwest of the Hilton. . . .

As the bus unloaded, the unit formed up building-to-building across Balbo in four ranks of ten led by a deputy chief and a lieutenant.

\*A feature of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Poor People's Campaign, the mule train was scheduled to take Ralph Abernathy to the amphitheater that evening to speak to the Democratic convention—ed.



At the same time, Sidney Peck\* with his bullhorn was urging people to follow him west on Balbo in an effort to flee the Michigan intersection. "We saw the police approaching," Peck states. He says he called people back and urged the police "not to move against them." Over the loud-speaking equipment, Peck shouted, "Sit down and no violence will happen. Don't use any violence."

The deputy chief states, on the other hand, that he saw marchers coming toward his men. He felt that "a disorderly mob surging west on Balbo from Michigan, taking up the whole street and sidewalks, shouting and screaming slogans and insults [was] taking over the Blackstone and Hilton Hotel entrances with the intention of taking over these hotels."

The police moved east on Balbo toward Michigan Avenue at a fast walk. As they did so, the throng on Balbo backed east toward the intersection or crowded onto the sidewalk. By the time the officers reached the west edge of Michigan, they slowed to a determined walk. . . .

As a response to seeing the police phalanx . . . , says a law student who was standing near the front of the mob, the chant, "pigs . . . pigs . . . pigs" went up.

Policemen in the line of march claim that they suffered from more than verbal abuse. One officer states that in the vicinity of the Haymarket, a cocktail lounge in the Hilton's northeast corner with an entrance on Balbo, a bottle shattered about 18 inches behind him. He thought it was dropped from a hotel window. When the line reached Michigan, he said, he heard someone say, "Mother fucker, I'm going to kill you." He saw a man, about 33 years old, bearded and wearing a helmet, standing with a wine bottle in his hand, . . . ready to swing at me. I knocked the bottle out of his hand at that point, someone behind me hit me with some heavy object in the back and I fell on one knee. . . .

The Balbo police unit commander asserts that he informed the sit-downs and surrounding demonstrators that if they did not leave, they would be arrested. He repeated the order and was met with a chant of "Hell no, we won't go." Quickly a police van swung into the intersection immediately behind the police line, the officers opened the door at the rear of the wagon. The deputy chief "ordered the arrest process to start."

"Immediately upon giving this order," the deputy chief later informed his superiors, "we were pelted with rocks, bottles, cans filled with unknown liquids and other debris, which forced the officers to defend themselves from

\*Peck, an academic sociologist, was a leader of the Mobilization Against the War in Vietnam, or Mobe—ed.

injury... My communications officer was slugged from behind by one of these persons, receiving injuries to his right eye and cheekbone."...

A patrolman who was in the skirmish line states that "the order was given to remain in position." But then, he says, one of his fellow officers "ran into the crowd, he was surrounded and I lost sight of him." At this point, the patrolman and other officers in the line "broke into the crowd, using their batons to "push away people who had gathered around" their fellow officer....

The many films and videotapes of this time period present a picture which does not correspond completely with the police view described above. First, the films do not show a mob moving west on Balbo; they show the street as rather clean of the demonstrators and bystanders.... Second, they show the police walking east on Balbo, stopping in formation, awaiting the arrival of the van and starting to make arrests on order. A total of 25 seconds elapses between their coming to a halt and the first arrests....

To many... witnesses, it seemed that the police swept down Balbo and charged, with clubs swinging, into the crowd without the slightest pause. What these witnesses may, in fact, have seen was a second sweep of the officers, moving east on Balbo after the first arrest....

"There was just enough time for a few people to sit down before the cops charged," says the law student quoted earlier. "The guys who sat down got grabbed, and the cops really hit hard. I saw a pair of glasses busted by a billy club go flying through the air."

"The crowd tried to reverse gears," a reporter for a St. Louis paper says. "People began falling over each other. I was in the first rank between the police and the crowd and was caught in the first surge. I went down as I tried to retreat. I covered my head, tried to protect my glasses which had fallen partially off, and hoped that I would not be clubbed. I tried to dig into the humanity that had fallen with me. You could hear shouting and screaming. As soon as I could, I scrambled to my feet and tried to move away from the police. I saw a youth running by me also trying to flee. A policeman clubbed him as he passed, but he kept running."

"The cops were saying 'Move! I said, move, god dammit! Move, you bastards!'" A representative of the ACLU who was positioned among the demonstrators says the police were cursing a lot and were shouting "Kill, kill, kill, kill!" A reporter for the *Chicago Daily News* said after the melee that he too heard this cry....

"People were trying to move but were clubbed as they did," the reporter for the St. Louis paper continued. "I fell to my knees, stumbling over somebody...."

The crowd frantically eddied in a halfmoon shape in an effort to escape the officers coming in from the west... At first, says [a] McGovern worker,\* "the police just pushed the demonstrators with their nightsticks. The demonstrators [nearest the police] tried to move, but couldn't because of the press of the crowd. There was no place for them to go...."

Thus, at 7:57 P.M., with two groups of club-wielding police converging simultaneously and independently, the battle was joined. The portions of the throng out of the immediate area of conflict largely stayed put and took up the chant, "The whole world is watching," but the intersection fragmented into a collage of violence.

Re-creating the precise chronology of the next few moments is impossible. But there is no question that a violent street battle ensued.

People ran for cover and were struck by police as they passed. Clubs were swung indiscriminately....

"I saw squadrons of policemen coming from everywhere," a secretary... said. "The crowd around me suddenly began to run. Some of us, including myself, were pushed back onto the sidewalk and then all the way up against... the Blackstone Hotel along Michigan Avenue. I thought the crowd had panicked."

"Fearing that I would be crushed against the wall of the building... I somehow managed to work my way... to the edge of the street... and saw police everywhere."

"As I looked up I was hit for the first time on the head from behind by what must have been a billy club. I was then knocked down and while on my hands and knees, I was hit around the shoulders. I got up again, stumbling and was hit again. As I was falling, I heard words to the effect of 'move, move' and the horrible sound of cracking billy clubs...."

"After my second fall, I remember being kicked in the back, and I looked up and noticed that many policemen around me had no badges on. The police kept hitting me on the head...."

In balance, there is no doubt that police discipline broke [down] during the melee. The deputy superintendent of police states that—although this was the only time he saw discipline collapse—when he ordered his men to stand fast, some did not respond and began to sally through the crowd, clubbing people they came upon....

While violence was exploding in the street, the crowd wedged behind the police sawhorses along the northeast edge of the Hilton was experiencing

\*George McGovern, the Democratic senator from South Dakota, was a dove on Vietnam who had some delegate support against Humphrey—ed.



a terror all its own. Early in the evening, this group had consisted in large part of curious bystanders. But following the police surges into the demonstrators clogging the intersection, protesters had crowded the ranks behind the horses in their flight from the police.

From force of numbers, this sidewalk crowd of 150 to 200 persons was pushing down toward the Hilton's front entrance. Policemen whose orders were to keep the entrance clear were pushing with sawhorses. Other police and fleeing demonstrators were pushing from the north in the effort to clear the intersection. Thus, the crowd was wedged against the hotel. . . .

Films show that one policeman elbowed his way to where he could rescue a girl of about ten years of age from the viselike press of the crowd. He cradled her in his arms and carried her to a point of relative safety 20 feet away. The crowd itself "passed up" an elderly woman to a low ledge. But many who remained were subjected to what they and witnesses considered deliberate brutality by the police.

"I was crowded in with the group of screaming, frightened people," an onlooker states. "We jammed against each other, trying to press into the brick wall of the hotel. As we stood there breathing hard. . . a policeman calmly walked the length of the barricade with a can of chemical spray in his hand. Unbelievably, he was spraying at us." Photos reveal several policemen using Mace against the crowd. . . .

"Some of the police then turned and attacked the crowd," a Chicago reporter says. The student says she could see police clubbing persons pinned at the edge of the crowd and that there was "a great deal of screaming and pushing within the group." A reporter for a Cleveland paper said, "The police indiscriminately beat those on the periphery of the crowd. . . ."

As a result, a part of the crowd was trapped in front of the Conrad Hilton and pressed hard against a big plate glass window of the Haymarket Lounge. A reporter who was sitting inside said, "Frightened men and women banged. . . against the window. A captain of the fire department inside told us to get back from the window, that it might get knocked in. As I backed away a few feet I could see a smudge of blood on the glass outside." With a sickening crack, the window shattered, and screaming men and women tumbled through, some badly cut by jagged glass. The police came after them.

"I was pushed through by the force of large numbers of people," one victim said. "I got a deep cut in my right leg, diagnosed later by Eugene McCarthy's doctor as a severed artery. . . . I fell to the floor of the bar. There were ten to twenty people who had come through. . . . I could not stand on the leg. I was bleeding profusely.

"A squad of policemen burst into the bar, clubbing all those who looked to them like demonstrators, at the same time screaming over and over, 'We've got to clear this area.' The police acted literally like mad dogs looking for objects to attack.

"A patrolman ran up to where I was sitting. I protested that I was injured and could not walk, attempting to show him my leg. He screamed that he would show me that I could walk. He grabbed me by the shoulder and literally hurled me through the door of the bar into the lobby. . . ."

In the heat of all this, probably few were aware of the Haymarket's advertising slogan: "A place where good guys take good girls to dine in the lusty, rollicking atmosphere of fabulous Old Chicago. . . ."

### The Wallace Campaign

*Few people outside of Alabama knew Governor George Wallace until the spring of 1963, when he denounced Martin Luther King's drive to desegregate the stores and businesses of Birmingham. Later that year, the governor defied the federal government when it sought integration of the University of Alabama. Wallace had already announced his racial stand in his inaugural address as governor: "Segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!" By 1964, he had become the prime symbol of the irreconcilable racist South.*

*Wallace soon became spokesman of the backlash movement as a whole. Backlash voters considered blacks pampered by the government. Many undoubtedly were racists. But the backlash movement also swept up men and women with deep resentments against the other "excesses" of the decade—the antiwar movement, the student power movement, the counterculture, the liberalization of sexual attitudes and practices, the centralization of political power, the breakdown of law and order.*

*The backlash mood also expressed a populist resentment of elites—those who had imposed preferential racial programs on the nation; who defended the civil liberties of criminals; who wanted pupils bused from their own neighborhoods for the sake of racial balance; who called pornography free speech; who denounced their country's efforts to stop Communism in Vietnam—these were primarily members of the privileged classes, "limousine liberals" who were indifferent to the cost to common folk of their theories and programs while they themselves escaped the consequences. If backlash voters had been asked to specify the culprits by class, they would have listed college professors, intellectuals, rebellious students, media liberals, foundation officials, and federal bureaucrats.*

*Backlash voters were, not surprisingly, numerous in the South. But they were also common among blue-collar whites in the northern cities, especially among the children and grandchildren of eastern and southern Europeans.*



Wallace drew on the backlash pool of social, political, and cultural resentment to advance his political career. In 1964, well before the Sixties turned ugly, he ran in several Democratic presidential primaries and did surprisingly well in a number of northern states. By 1968, he was ready to mount a serious effort to achieve national power. The election laws of the United States are rigged against any third national party. But Wallace and his lieutenants managed to get his name on the ballots of all fifty states under the American Independent Party label. Financed by funds from Texas oil tycoon H. L. Hunt, from Kentucky Fried Chicken millionaire Colonel Sanders, and from the actor John Wayne, among others, he started his drive for the presidency with a bang. At the outset, he was almost neck-and-neck with Hubert Humphrey.

By the time Wallace arrived in New York in late October, his campaign had slipped as blue-collar workers, responding to labor leaders' attack on him as a union-buster and an enemy of the working man, returned to the Democratic fold. The speech excerpted here was delivered at Madison Square Garden on October 24, some two weeks before Election Day.

*New York City was the heart of the enemy's country and, as the address reveals, Wallace was heckled aggressively. The speech was custom-tailored for the audience, however. Wallace scrupulously avoids mention of nuclear weapons to end the war in Vietnam. His running mate, General Curtis LeMay, had recently raised a storm by proclaiming that the world would not end "if we exploded a nuclear weapon." The governor was not going to repeat the proposal. Wallace also paraded on his stage that night every union official who dared to support him publicly. Most telling, he carefully avoided making a blatant racist appeal. Open racism did not sell as well in New York as it did in Alabama or Maryland.*

*Despite the guarded tone, however, enough of the backlash message came through to satisfy the angers felt by his constituents. Wallace did not carry New York, but he won 360,000 of the state's votes, about five percent of the total.*  
[Speeches of American Presidential Candidates, by Gregory Bush. Copyright © 1976, 1985. Used and reprinted by permission of The Continuum Publishing Company.]

#### GEORGE WALLACE CAMPAIGN SPEECH, 1968

Well, thank you very much ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much for your gracious and kind reception here in Madison Square Garden. I'm sure *The New York Times* took note of the reception we've received here in the great city of New York. I'm very grateful to the people of this city and this state for the opportunity to be on the ballot November 5, and as you know we're on the ballot in all fifty states in the union. This is not a sectional movement. It's a national movement, and I am sure that those who are in attendance here tonight, especially of the press, know that our move-



ment is a national movement and that we have an excellent chance to carry the great Empire State of New York. . . .

[At this point and at other points, as suggested by his responses, Wallace was interrupted by protesters.]

Well, I want to tell you something. After November 5, you anarchists are through in this country. I can tell you that. Yes, you'd better have your say now, because you are going to be through after November 5, I can assure you that. . . .

And, you came for trouble, you sure got it.

And we have R. H. Bob Low president of the MBC\*— We—why don't you come down after I get through and I'll autograph your sandals for you, you know?

And Charlie Ryan, recording secretary of the Steam Fitters Local 818, New York City. We have been endorsed in Alabama by nearly every local in our state: textile workers, paper workers, steel workers, rubber workers, you name it. We've been endorsed by the working people of our state.

Regardless of what they might say, your national leaders, my wife<sup>†</sup> carried every labor box in 1966, when she ran for governor of Alabama in the primary and the general election. And I was also endorsed by labor when I was elected governor in 1962.

Now, if you fellows will . . . sit down, ladies and gentlemen, I can drown that crowd out. If you just sit down . . . all he needs is a good haircut. If he'll go to the barbershop, I think they can cure him. So all you newsmen look up this way now. Here's the main event. I've been wanting to fight the main event a long time in Madison Square Garden, so here we are. Listen, that's just a preliminary match up there. This is the main bout right here. So let me say as I said a moment ago, that we have had the support of the working people of our state. Alabama's a large industrial state, and you could not be elected governor without the support of people in organized labor.

Let me also say this is about race, since I'm here in the state of New York, and I'm always asked the question. I am very grateful for the fact that in 1966 my wife received more black votes in Alabama than did either of her opponents. We are proud to say that they support us now in this race for the presidency, and we would like to have the support of people of all races, colors, creeds, religions, and national origins in the state of New York.

\*The Mobile Building and Construction Trades Council, a south Alabama trade union—ed.

†Lurleen Wallace, who ran as a stand-in for her husband because state law forbade him to serve another term—ed.





Our system is under attack: the property system, the free enterprise system, and local government. Anarchy prevails today in the streets of the large cities of our country, making it unsafe for you to even go to a political rally here in Madison Square Garden, and that is a sad commentary. Both national parties in the last number of years have kowtowed to every anarchist that has roamed the streets. I want to say before I start on this any longer, that I'm not talking about race. The overwhelming majority of all races in this country are against this breakdown of law and order as much as those who are assembled here tonight. It's a few anarchists, a few activists, a few militants, a few revolutionaries, and a few Communists. But your day, of course, is going to be over soon. The American people are not going to stand by and see the security of our nation imperiled, and they are not going to stand by and see this nation destroyed, I can assure you that.

The liberals and the left-wingers in both national parties have brought us to the domestic mess we are in now. And also this foreign mess we are in. . . . Now, what are some of the things we are going to do when we become president? We are going to turn back to you, the people of the states, the right to control your domestic institutions. Today you cannot even go to the school systems of the large cities of our country without fear. This is a sad day when in the greatest city in the world, there is fear . . . in every school building in the state of New York, and especially in the City of New York. Why has the leadership of both national parties kowtowed to the group of anarchists that makes it unsafe for your child and for your family? I don't understand it? But I can assure you of this—that there's not ten cents worth of difference with what the national parties say other than our party. Recently they say most of the same things we say. . . .

It's costing the taxpayers of New York and the other states in the union almost half a billion dollars to supervise the schools, hospitals, seniority and apprenticeship lists of labor unions, and businesses.\* Every year on the federal level we have passed a law that would jail you without a trial by jury about the sale of your own property. Mr. Nixon and Mr. Humphrey, both three or four weeks ago, called for the passage of a bill on the federal level that would require you to sell or lease your own property to whomsoever they thought you ought to lease it to. . . . † When I become your president, I am going to ask that Congress repeal this so-called open occupancy law, and we're going to, within the law, turn back to the people of every state

\*That is, for purposes of detecting race or gender discrimination, though the latter had not yet become a major issue—ed.

†The reference here is to the Open Housing law passed in April 1968, prohibiting discrimination in the sale or rental of a large proportion of the nation's houses and apartments—ed.

their public school system. Not one dime of your federal money is going to be used to bus anybody any place that you don't want them to be bused in New York or any other place.

Yes, the theoreticians and the pseudo-intellectuals have just about destroyed not only local government but the school systems of our country. That's all right. Let the police handle it. So let us talk about law and order. We don't have to talk about it much up here. You understand what I'm talking about in, of course, the City of New York, but let's talk about it. Yes, the pseudo-intellectuals and the theoreticians and some professors and some newspaper editors and some judges and some preachers have looked down their nose long enough at the average man in the street: the pipe-fitter, the communications worker, the fireman, the policeman, the barber, the white-collar worker, and said we must write you a guideline about when you go to bed at night and when you get up in the morning. But there are more of us than there are of them because the average citizen of New York and of Alabama and of the other states of our union are tired of guidelines being written telling them when to go to bed at night and when to get up in the morning.

I'm talking about law and order. The Supreme Court of our country has handcuffed the police,\* and tonight if you walk out of this building and are knocked in the head, the person who knocks you in the head is out of jail before you get in the hospital, and Monday morning, they'll try a policeman about it. I can say that I'm going to give the total support of the presidency to the policemen and the firemen in this country, and I'm going to say, you enforce the law and you make it safe on the streets, and the president of the United States will stand with you. . . .

You had better be grateful for the police and firemen of this country. . . . Yes, the Kerner Commission report, recently written by Republicans and Democrats, said that you are to blame for the breakdown of law and order, and that the police are to blame. Well, you know, of course, you aren't to blame. They said we have a sick society. Well, we don't have any sick society. We have a sick Supreme Court and some sick politicians in Washington—that's who's sick in our country. The Supreme Court of our country has ruled that you cannot even say a simple prayer in a public school,† but you can send obscene literature through the mail,‡ and recently they ruled that

\*A reference to the *Miranda* and *Gideon* decisions, among others, on the rights of accused felons—ed.

†A reference to *Engel v. Vitale*—ed.

‡A reference, probably, to *A Book Named "John Cleland's Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure" v. Attorney General of Massachusetts*. This decision liberalized the publication and sale of books formerly considered obscene—ed.





a Communist can work in a defense plant.\* But when I become your president, we're going to take every Communist out of every defense plant in the United States, I can assure you.

The Kerner Commission report also recommended that the taxes of the American people be raised to pay folks not to destroy the country, and not to work. I never thought I would see the day when a Republican and Democratic report would call for taxes on the already overtaxed people of our country to pay people not to destroy. . . . Now the Kerner Commission report—who is it writes these reports, ladies and gentlemen? It's usually some pointed head from one of those tax-exempt foundations. When they recommend that taxes be raised on you and me, they don't have to pay taxes because they're tax-exempt. When I become the president, I'm going to ask the Congress to remove the tax exemption feature on those . . . foundations and let them pay taxes like the average citizen of New York pays also. . . .

We have a comprehensive platform that I hope you get copies of before the election, in which we have dealt with every problem that faces the American people. But let me tell you briefly about foreign policy. The Democrats and Republicans are always saying: "What do the folks at Madison Square Garden supporting the American Independent Party know about foreign policy?" I ask them: "What do you know about foreign policy? We've had four wars in the last fifty years. We've spent \$122 billion of our money on foreign aid. We are bogged down in a no-win war in Southeast Asia, and anarchy in the streets. What do you know about foreign policy? You haven't been so successful in conducting American foreign policy in the last fifty years yourself. . . ."

We are in Vietnam whether you like it or not. I sincerely hope and pray that the conflict is soon over, but we should have learned one thing about our involvement in Southeast Asia—the same thing that Mr. Humphrey now says in his speeches: we should not march alone. I said last year in California that we should never have gone to Vietnam—by ourselves. We should have looked our allies in the face in Western Europe and our non-Communist Asian allies and said to them: it is as much your interest as it is ours, and you are going to go in with manpower, munitions, and money, and if you don't go and help us in Southeast Asia . . . we are not only going to cut off every dime of foreign aid you're getting, but we're going to ask you to pay back all you owe us from World War I right to this very day. . . .

\*Refers to *Afroyim v. Rusk*, a Supreme Court decision invalidating a federal law excluding a Communist from working in a defense plant.—ed.

I sincerely hope and pray that we have a successful negotiated peace. Well, I'll drown them out, come on. I sincerely hope and pray that we have an honorably negotiated peace to arise out of the Paris peace talks. . . . But if we fail diplomatically and politically in Southeast Asia, we're not going to stay there forever, we're not going to see hundreds of American servicemen killed every week for years and months to come. If we do not win diplomatically and politically in Paris . . . then in my judgment, we ought to end it militarily with conventional weapons and bring the servicemen home. If we cannot settle it diplomatically and politically, and could not win it militarily with conventional weapons, then I wonder why we're there in the first place? We're going to conclude this war either through honorable negotiations or conventional military power.

There's something else we ought to talk about and you see some of it here in the state of New York. We should stop the morale boost for the Communists in our own country. In every state in the union, this treasonable conduct on the part of a few, and their speeches, are printed in Hanoi, Peking, Moscow, and Havana. General Westmoreland\* said it is prolonging the war, and it is causing New Yorkers and Alabamans to be killed in Southeast Asia. When you ask the Attorney General of our nation: "Why don't you do something about this treasonable conduct," do you know what he says? "We are too busy busing schoolchildren in New York and Los Angeles and we don't have the time." We also have some college students who raise money, food, and clothes for the Communists and fly the Viet Cong flag in the name of academic freedom, and free speech. We didn't allow that in World War II; we did not allow for anybody to call for Nazi victory, or Fascist victory.

There is such a thing as legitimate dissent. . . . But if you . . . say you long for Communist victory, every citizen in New York knows that one is dissent and the other is something else. I want to tell you that when I become your president, I'm going to have my Attorney General seek an indictment against any professor calling for Communist victory† and stick him in a good jail somewhere. When you drag a few of these college students who are raising money for the Communists and put them in a good jail, you'll stop that too, I can assure you. . . . We're going to destroy academic freedom in this country if we continue to abuse it. . . . Whether you agree with the war or not, we should agree that whatever we say or do

\*William Westmoreland, the U.S. commander in Vietnam through 1968—ed.

†A reference to professor Eugene Genovese of Rutgers, who created a storm when he called for a Communist victory in Vietnam in the course of an antiwar rally in October 1965—ed.

should be in the national interests of getting the American servicemen home safely. . . .

That's all right. That's all right honey—that's right sweetie-pie—oh, that's a he. I thought you were a she. . . .

Well, don't worry what the newspapers say about us. . . . Not a single thing have I said tonight that anybody can argue logically with, and that's the reason they call us extremists and want to say we're Fascists. . . . They want to say, well, they're evil folks. I want to tell these newspapers something. These large newspapers that think they know more than the average citizen on the street of New York haven't always been right. I remember the time *The New York Times* said that Mao Tse-tung was a good man, and he turned out to be a Communist. . . . They were mistaken about Castro.

They [the newspapers] are mistaken about our movement, and they are mistaken about the good people of New York State who are here tonight supporting our candidacy because the two national parties. . . . have paid no attention to you. But they are paying attention to those who are making the most noise here at Madison Square Garden tonight and every other place in the country. . . .

Four years ago our movement received thirty-four percent of the vote in Wisconsin, thirty percent in Indiana, forty-four percent in Maryland. We have won nearly every radio and television poll in every state in the union, so we don't pay attention to the pollsters. . . .

You know, I like to tell this because. . . you've heard it before, but it's very good. Down in the state of Maryland that night four years ago in the presidential primary, I was leading up until about 9:30 with several hundred thousand votes in, and they called the mayor of Baltimore to the television and asked him what he thought about this man from Alabama running first in the presidential primary in our free state. . . . He said: "It's sad; it's sad. We'll never live this down. What has come over the people of the free state of Maryland?" Well, if he had gone out and asked a good cab driver of Baltimore, he could have told him. You vote for me, and you are going to be through with all that. Let me tell you now, you continue to support our movement until November 5, together we are going to change directions in this country, and we are going to return some sanity to the American government scene. I do appreciate you being here in Madison Square Garden tonight. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.