

RFK speaks: but to whom?

There is definitely no place like Nebraska. Or so Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and his speech writers and his local backers apparently believe.

In what other state does a leading presidential aspirant go before 12,000 enthusiastic college students and then appeal to their interest in agriculture?

And in what other state would Kennedy's promoters attempt to excite the Coliseum crowd with bluegrass guitar picking and yodels?

There were definitely some very important things said at the Coliseum: the Senator presented his views on the war, the draft and the president, all matters of concern to college students today.

Sen. Kennedy also chose Nebraska, where Republican Richard Nixon has considerable popularity, to take his first swipe at the former vice president.

But despite these important matters, and besides Kennedy's occasional appeals for campaign aid, the brunt of his words seemed directed away from the University crowd and towards the agricultural interests of the state.

Somewhere between his sweeping entrance and his strong finale, Mr. Kennedy bogged down with agricultural economics and philosophy.

While this may be an area of general importance to the state, only a small minority of the students will ever be involved directly in agriculture. And the vast majority are interested in many other, more vital subjects.

As reflected in the post-speech questioning, the students were not satisfied with the Senator's too brief treatment of racial disturbance, the draft and exactly how to negotiate peace in Vietnam.

With all this in mind, it is evident that Kennedy was speaking at the University, but he was speaking to the mass of Nebraskans involved in farming.

For this reason, Bobby Kennedy was a let-down. The charm was there. The enthusiasm was there. But that enthusiasm ebbed as the Senator slighted the issues of interest to the students.

There may be no place exactly like Nebraska, but it is not that out of step with the rest of the nation.

Ed Icenogle
News Editor

He descended upon a cloud

"I hold it a paramount duty of us in the free States . . . to let the slavery of the other states alone. . . ."—Abraham Lincoln.

It was the spirit of Big Red and Lennon-McCartney combined. It was the Second Coming on the first visit. For both the doubters and the believers it was just too much to comprehend. That seemed to be the reaction Sen. Robert Kennedy made here yesterday.

Kennedy's appearance in the Coliseum was a show that a whirlwind organization set up in four



Outlook

days and it was a show that some people waited over three hours to see.

The show was carefully planned, even to the point of having a rotund Kennedy supporter come on stage and coach the audience on how to applaud.

Yet, after waiting 45 minutes longer than they were supposed to and after being entertained by jazz groups and guitarists the crowd's enthusiasm was wearing off. Finally the Senator was introduced and an unbelievable roar filled the coliseum.

His speech had its spots of eloquence but Kennedy occasionally fumbled in his delivery. His voice was strained and hoarse. He seemed to be tiring of his strenuous campaign.

After the initial excitement had worn off, would Kennedy fail? No, he did not. The cynics were amazed.

Kennedy played with his audience. He made hecklers a joke and he made applauding a game.

Only Kennedy could come into Nebraska and ask how many Republicans were in an audience of 12,000, ask for their support, and receive a strong ovation.

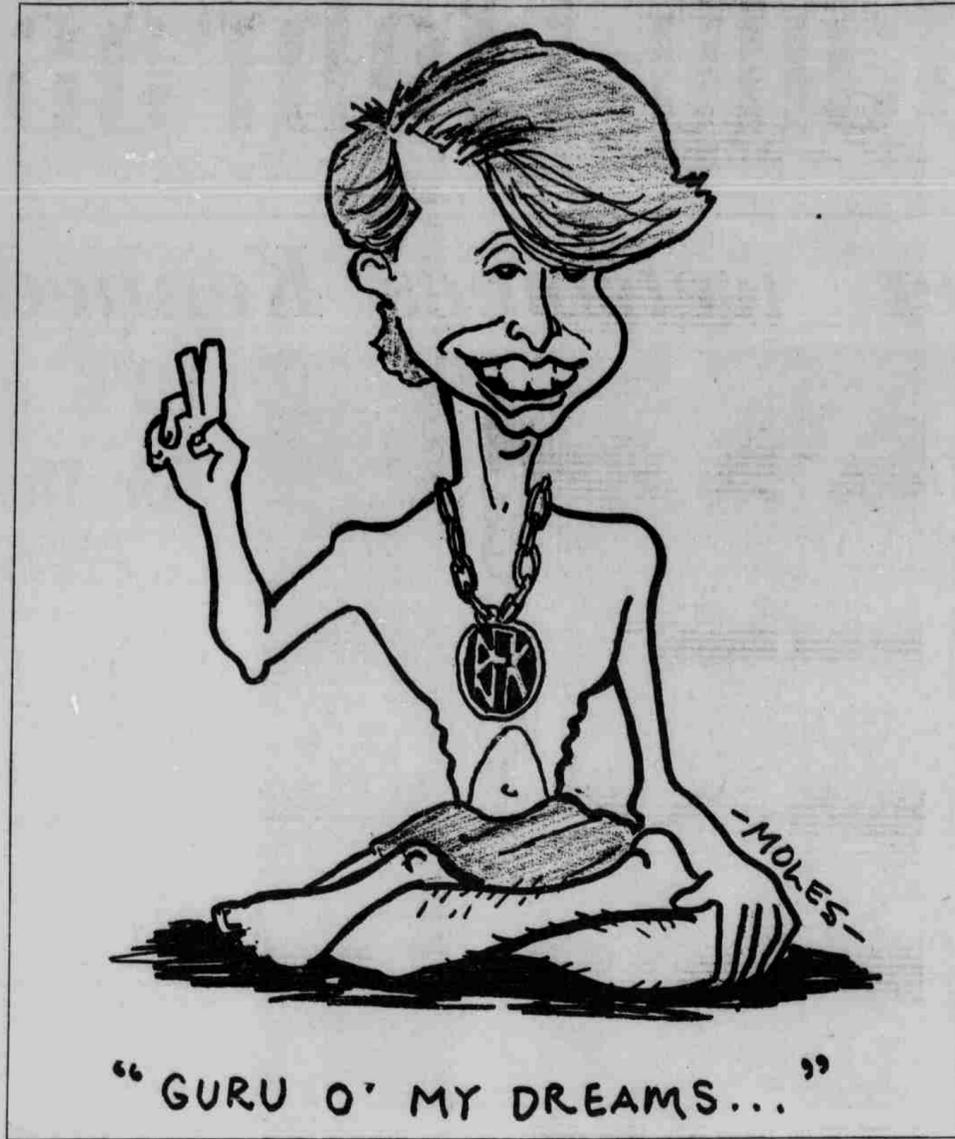
His speech was toned down somewhat on the war and was geared to the interests of Nebraska. He mentioned the farm problem, made appeals to patriotism and criticized Johnson. Yet, what always got the best response was any mention of his own candidacy.

How could this happen? Kennedy is the opportunist, the cynical politician. College students are disillusioned, stubbornly idealistic and fed up with politicians, so how could this happen?

The answer may be that young people aren't all that idealistic. Some of America's greatest leaders from Abraham Lincoln to Franklin D. Roosevelt were atrocious schemers and opportunists. The college student may be idealistic but he probably realizes that idealistic goals sometimes have to be reached by skillful maneuvering.

We saw a show Thursday that was professional, glittering, and coldly calculated. This must have been obvious. Yet, it was what the crowd wanted.

The word today is charisma. Is that what the people will want next November? Is it right that they should want that? And will they get that next November? Who knows?



William F. Buckley

On nixing the Asian communists

I do not share the amused disdain with which the critics have greeted Richard Nixon's statement that he will not disclose the details of his program for ending the Vietnamese War. That is the statement of a serious man, that is to say, a man who believes that in fact he may end up with the responsibility for administering the war.

What it comes down to is this: knowing what we know about Nixon, is it likely that he would, upon being elected, dramatically reverse himself concerning our commitment to Vietnam as bearing directly on the prospects for the national security? The probabilities are very much against

any such tergiversation. That's why so many of the people who dislike Nixon dislike him.

They know that his anti-Communist resolution is as firm as just about anything in national politics. They don't like that. And they don't like Nixon, who affects them the way Adlai Stevenson used to affect some conservatives.

Now how about Rocky? Even though he has ritualistically withdrawn he does remain a contender for the presidency. There is a rough one for those critics who continue to clamor for his nomination. Why? Forget the domestic record for a moment, though of

course the liberals take the same pleasure in viewing his domestic record that a narcissist would. On the matter of Vietnam, Mr. Rockefeller is saddled with a resonant statement given in 1964. "Winning the fight for freedom in Vietnam," he said in Oregon during the primary campaign, "is essential to the survival of all of Asia. The Communist Viet Cong guerrillas must be defeated."

Now Mr. Rockefeller is speaking vaguely about the need for an "accommodation" (who's against that?). But get this important difference: his vagueness comes off as statesmanship, in sharp contrast with Nixon's, which is

taken as cynicism—and for a reason no more complex than that Rockefeller rubs liberals the right way, and Nixon doesn't.

What the hell, so everybody is talking, so will I. I have had exclusive interviews with Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Nixon in recent weeks. Mr. Nixon answered in considerable detail questions on what he would do in Vietnam, and the whole of it was plausible, responsible, non-gimmicky, and a sound projection of the strategic posture that took us into Vietnam in the first place, i.e. that Southeast Asia is a place where rampaging Communism should be contained.

Professors Speak

Election portends the future

Editor's Note: Today's contributor, Phillip Scribner, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy.

The 1968 Presidential campaign is taking place under a cloud of apprehension about the future. We do not know where the war is leading nor how much more deeply our leaders will involve us there. Our effective abandonment of the ideals of social justice jeopardizes the future of our cities and, indeed, the future of our society. The younger generation is increasingly alienated, not only from our paranoid political leadership, but from a whole socio-economic system which supports it and threatens to repress them.

No one seriously doubts that the war is the primary source of these long range worries. In the eyes of the world, the United States is the aggressor in Vietnam. Our unrelenting willingness to destroy that small people precludes establishing the sort of international cooperation which could preserve the peace and spread the prosperity.

One wonders what would have happened if John Kennedy had lived. Such speculations are precarious and often self-serving (the reason Robert Kennedy avoids this sort of conjecture, but they are not arbitrary).

Johnson hopes to share the burden of his war policy with the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations by claiming his policy is not different from

theirs. But Johnson is simply not telling it like it happened.

NO SEATO requirement

Before Johnson the United States had not committed itself to sending combat troops to Vietnam. The SEATO treaty requires only that we consult with our SEATO allies and consider intervention in accordance with our constitutional procedures. But our SEATO allies in the West have not intervened, nor have we followed our constitutional provisions for waging war.

All the evidence indicates that the policy of military intervention is strictly Johnson's. According to General Gavin, who was privy to the policy debates and the positions of individual policy makers, Kennedy was absolutely opposed to involving the United States in any Asian war. There is no reason to think he would have changed that attitude. Johnson's effort to escape the responsibility for this war is nothing less than a hypocritical attempt to bury his guilt with a dead President.

So what would have happened if Kennedy had lived and the war had been avoided? With the test ban treaty as a precedent, the nations of the world could be developing institutions of international cooperation. There would have been far brighter prospects of an economically unified Europe capable of assisting less advanced nations in their own development.

Russia would likely have

found that far more can be gained through cooperation with the U.S. than through opposition. We could be trying to bring China into international institutions which would give her a stake in non-military means for achieving her ends. The people of North and South Vietnam could be cooperating to build a viable political and economic system.

Funds would be there

There would have been funds available to begin to deal with the domestic crisis in racial relations, and with a Democratic congress elected in 1964, there is every reason to believe there would have been a will to undertake such programs.

Instead, however, we endure examples of a Johnsonian interpretation of American ideals in action: billions of dollars diverted from programs which would alleviate in some measure the cruelty of a thoroughly racist society to a program designed to destroy systematically the social structure and livelihood of a yellow nation 10,000 miles away.

We have instead a Texan's interpretation of fidelity to commitments: profuse expenditure of money and men to keep a questionable commitment to a rightist dictator we ourselves set up while unashamedly refusing to recognize a commitment made to millions of our own people to grant them equal citizenship. And the tragedy of all this is

that no one expects anything more of the present administration.

The war is the paramount cause of concern. No doubt our foreign policy reflects mistaken assumptions which lie far deeper than the character of the President. But even if we cannot be absolutely sure that Kennedy would have avoided this war, it is certain that Johnson, if reelected, will continue it. And that the war will go on to destroy our society.

Guerilla warfare not all

Guerilla warfare in the cities is only part of what the future holds for us. The gold crisis is only the beginning of the international isolation the United States will have to endure. The draft system which forces our youth to become murderers in the name of American imperialism and the repressive drug laws which transforms their harmless curiosity into criminality will further alienate the younger generation and undermine their allegiance to our political and social institutions.

We all know who is responsible, and we all know who wants us to continue on this course. The cynics never cease to tell us that an incumbent President cannot be denied renomination. And if this nation of ours has no firmer spirit nor deeper values than a bunch of middle aged cynics, secretly enjoying their self-fulfilling prophecy, how can we avoid the impending disaster?

Doorbells ring liberals' demise

Early in 1965, I received a letter from a friend who was bitterly disappointed with the course the Republican party had taken in 1964.

My friend discussed the dilemma of whether or not to remain a Republican and added, "What is the Republican party going to do? What am I going to do? Perhaps you can give me the answer to the first question, and that and the next few months and years will help me to decide about the second."

Now it seems we have the party's answer to that first question. The conservatives are still in the driver's seat, although willing to make at least the concession of nominating Dick Nixon rather than Barry Goldwater again.

Who is at fault for this state of affairs? Liberal Republicans, that's who.

For it was the Liberal Republicans who waited, as did my friend, for the first question to answer the second. But the answer to the first question was determined by the liberal response, or lack of it, to the second query.

It was liberal Republicans who wanted control of the G.O.P., but who did not sacrifice the time, the work and the money to get that control and to put the party back into the "mainstream."

We have no one to blame but ourselves, because we were naive enough to believe the right-wing leopard would change his spots. I answered the letter which I quote with the warning that this would not come to pass and indeed it did not.

There was no lack of Republican liberals willing to draft policy statements, draw up platforms, and participate in strategy conferences. But there were precious few of such people willing to take part in the nitty-gritty of the political process — taking over county organizations, ringing doorbells, addressing envelopes and the like.

As a result, conservatives held on to most positions of leadership within the party by default. They rationalized away the defeat of 1964. And now they call the shots on who the party's nominee will be this year.

Perhaps now liberal Republicans will believe that the only way to change the course of a political party is to work hard for that change.

Other assorted comments:

... It's foolhardy to make predictions, but—Nebraska sounds to me a lot like "Kennedy country."

... Your best chance to indicate support for the progressive legislative program of Governor Tiemann is to vote for him in the race for delegate-at-large to the G.O.P. National Convention. Moderate-liberal Republicans should ponder this before jumping parties to participate in the Democrats' intra-party fray. Your vote can help.

... Mail a letter to your Congressman today in support of the 1968 Civil Rights Bill, with the all-important open housing section.

... Bryce Bartu, campaign manager for Phil Sorensen in '66, passes along an insight into the Ted Sorensen speech-writing technique. Watch Bob Kennedy's speeches for sentences beginning with "action" verbs—"give me your hand," "let us work. . .," "ask not what your country. . ." and the like.

... Most eastern Nebraska Republicans feel confident an energetic campaign will bring victory for Congressman Bob Denney over Clair Callan. I think so too, barring a major change.

Campus Opinion

Dear Editor:

The enclosed statement by the male seniors is just one example of the action being taken here at Reed College to oppose the draft and the Vietnam War. We have also set up a draft counseling service and have organized the Reed Draft Union to centralize information about the draft, to coordinate activities with other schools, and to unify draft resistance.

A legal fund has been set up to hire lawyers and pay court costs to help students who are brought to trial. The faculty has already been contributing generously to this fund; in addition, thirty-nine have signed the following pledge:

Opposition to our government's policy in Vietnam compels me to support those draft-eligible Americans who have pledged to refuse induction. I believe that their decisions are legitimate acts of conscience opposing an unjust and immoral war. I pledge to support those young men with encouragement, counsel, and financial aid.

Similar action has been taken at hundreds of schools throughout the country.

Many of the students graduating from college this spring will be drafted by the end of the summer. We, comprising 66% of the male seniors of Reed College, Portland, Oregon, will not serve in the armed forces of the United States.

Our decision is irrevocable. Our consciences do not permit us to participate in this senseless and immoral war.

We are sure that tens of thousands of students throughout the country will join us in resistance.

Signed,
70 Male Seniors of Reed College

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