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J. Hayden Lynford  
Chicago: Convention Eve

How WILL THEODORE WHITE in his quadrennial project, *The Making of a President*, report this unusual election year? Will it be possible for him, or anyone else, to capture the spontaneous style and spirit of the McCarthy movement? It is White's capsuled-moment technique of recounting smoke-filled backroom meetings that provides the fascination most readers feel for his chronicles. It is in these meetings that the political "masterminds" decide the winning strategy for a Presidential campaign. But the McCarthy movement has been different. There have been no Larry O'Brien's or Jim Rowe's in our campaign with whom Theodore White could talk and then portray as "wheeler-dealers."

Since last December, when the Chicago Conference of Concerned Democrats first endorsed Senator Eugene McCarthy for President, any similarity between the McCarthy campaign and a "professional" political organization has been purely coincidental. The word "professional" is here used to connote not only an efficient, well-financed machine, but also a closed, rather dreary and uninspiring approach to the political process. Yet this unprofessional tone has been the virtue and the hallmark of our experiment in politics.

But back to Theodore White. I can recall at the Concerned Democrats' Conference a rather mild innocuous-looking gentleman at the press table asking for credentials. Diane Weinberg, a pretty coed from Cornell and one of the original members of the "Children's Crusade," was inspecting all press cards. The man presented himself for accreditation, and Diane in her friendly but efficient manner said, "May I please see your press card?"

"I'm sorry, I don't have one."

"Well, what newspaper do you write for?"

"I don't write for a newspaper."

"Well, what magazine do you write for?"

"I don't write for magazines."

"Well, what do you write?"

"I write books."

"Books about what?"

"Books about Presidents."

And suddenly Diane realized that Ted White was Theodore White and that this signified that maybe we had launched a real Presidential campaign.

Five months later I arrived back in Chicago to set up my advance post for Convention operations. I had no idea of how to pay for my hotel room. It would be an understatement to say that the McCarthy campaign suffered from a lack of funds. My first step was a visit to the Chicago Hotel Bureau. They asked me about my budget; and since, of course, there wasn't one, I made up a figure. Upon hearing my imaginary financial allotment, they suggested I try the YMCA. Since then I have managed to reserve over one-thousand rooms for Convention delegates, in all the better hotels.

Even so, the "new" politics in Chicago are now emerging from extremely old surroundings. Our Convention staff moved into a blighted building in the heart of the Loop for the sake of a low rent and a working switchboard. Chicago has had a long telephone strike, and only by taking over cramped space from the Illinois McCarthy for President Committee could the Convention Committee even begin to function. Besides, there wasn't any other place to go. As a reporter for the *Chicago American* noted, she couldn't really tell if the McCarthy headquarters was air-conditioned or not: it was too crowded. Meanwhile, the Democratic National Committee had established its Convention operations last January in the opulent setting of the Conrad Hilton.

The rationale for selecting Chicago as the Convention city is interesting. The two chief contenders for host were Miami and Houston. The first was rejected because its time zone was not conducive to live national prime television coverage. Houston had the Astrodome, but there too television played a role in the decision. Party officials thought that there would be no show for the public (little did they know), and that cameras panning on 40,000 empty seats would not produce a positive image of the Democratic Party as the "party of the people."

Of course, the most important factor influencing the choice of the Convention site was Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley. Besides providing \$750,000 to the DNC, 250 free automobiles, and free use of Soldier Field for President Johnson's birthday party, he also offered the International Amphitheatre, which is sufficiently small to fill and yet large enough to give the appearance on television of containing big crowds. This strategy may ultimately work to the benefit of Daley and the

DNC, since the galleries are not large enough to get out of control, and there can be no repeat performance of the 1940 Willkie demonstrations.

It was a warm day in June when Martin Gleason, the deputy of Stephen Mitchell (McCarthy's Convention Chairman) and former Illinois State Central Committeeman, and I went to see John Meek, Coordinator of the Democratic National Convention. It got warmer as the two men fenced verbally. Marty asked for definite assurance of "just" and "equal" treatment for Senator McCarthy. Mr. Meek replied that the privileges accorded to Vice President Humphrey could not be divorced from candidate Humphrey and that it was a "utopian concept" to believe that he and McCarthy would receive equal treatment in all respects.

Then came a "very interesting" sequence of letters and telegrams between Stephen Mitchell and John Bailey. At one point in the exchange, Bailey wired, "More even than you, I am desirous of a good Convention that will terminate with all Democrats supporting the nominee of the Convention." But it soon became clear that one aspect of the Democratic National Committee's idea of an "unencumbered" Convention was to reserve all major facilities so that no one else could have access to them. It was their intention "to engage all large meeting places in Chicago and, if necessary, hold them idle during the National Convention."

Throughout July we constantly called for a "free and open" Convention, and the McCarthy forces plan to proceed accordingly. Our concept of the "politics of participation" means that the Convention should be "open" from the beginning; therefore we intend to challenge not only the unit rule and the designated Permanent Chairman of the Convention but also many of the temporary rules. We will try to combine our credentials fights in such key states as Connecticut (John Bailey's home state), Oklahoma (Fred Harris's home state), and Minnesota (Humphrey's and Walter Mondale's home state) with an attempt to insure equal rights for all delegates by the abolition of the unit rule. We aim to win as many battles as possible on non-partisan but politically "just" issues before any platform fights and the actual nomination. We thus hope to achieve both the victory of our candidate and the revitalization of the entire Convention process.

Because of the Convention—open or closed—Chicago is becoming the Mecca for McCarthy volunteers from all parts of the country. They all seem to have a peculiar spiritual urge to make a pilgrimage here to

support their candidate. I have received hundreds of letters from energetic young students offering their services for our cause. One letter, written by an exuberant high school girl from New Rochelle, New York, contained a resumé which proudly stated that she had traveled to New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania, and had supported the Senator and worked for his cause since last October. I thought this was especially noteworthy since the Senator declared his candidacy on November 30th. But their zeal is boundless. One girl arrived from Lincoln, Nebraska with 9 cents in her pocket; for ten weeks she existed on peanut butter and crackers sent from Grand Rapids, Nebraska.

Like that of these volunteers, the IQ of the staff members of the Convention office is above average for a political headquarters. But we still have only one trained stenographer in Chicago: she has a B.A. in Political Science and represents one-third of the total number of stenographers on the National Staff here. Our Chicago office does, however, include a former night club manager, a White House Fellow, and a Playboy bunny.

The Convention operation has not only served as a refugee center for young people from across the country but also as a dating agency. I can remember one Friday evening when the Assistant Coordinator for Transportation came to me and asked for Monday off. I told him that I didn't think I could spare him—was it an emergency? "No emergency," he explained. "I met this girl last Monday and we are getting married in two days." There was no allocation in the budget for wedding receptions, but we celebrated with watermelon and good wishes.

We've come a long way since we started campaigning in the wilds of New Hampshire, when a National Staff member called information in Concord to get the phone number of the McCarthy for President Headquarters. He was asked, "What is the party's first name and how do you spell the listing?" Those were the days when our candidate needed exposure. All of us, including our candidate, have been exposed too much since then. But we have tried to make our society more cognizant of its responsibilities and to remind it that it can function honestly and justly.