

Nicholas Von Hoffman

One less Nixon campaigner

WASHINGTON — Last Monday Lane Dwinell, the former governor of New Hampshire, cut the ribbon and opened Nixon's re-election campaign. How many millions of dollars, media wise guys and organizational sharpies the President's got has already been reported, but Nixon will be going into this campaign with the loss of one worker. Probably Nixon doesn't care, although in 1960 when Lloyd Jay Kantor was 12 years old, he licked envelopes for him. In 1967 he spent his own money having Nixon campaign buttons made up. "He was my idol," Kantor says. "I had pictures of him in my bedroom. I admired him as a humble man who'd worked his way up."

During the '68 campaign the young man from Mount Vernon, N.Y., who was studying to be a teacher worked even harder for the defrocked Quaker from Whittier, Calif. He won't be doing it this time, but that could hardly matter to Nixon-Mitchell because in the meantime Kantor has lost both feet, both hands, one eye and part of his hearing, and although he'd done very well mastering the prosthetic devices on the remnants of his limbs, he might spoil the campaign image.

In September, while he was still in the VA hospital, Kantor wrote the president a letter, wrote it on his old "Nixon For President—'68" stationery, stationery that has Kantor's name on it, too. He sent the letter by certified mail to the White House, but he never got an answer. When you read

it you'll know why.

"Dear Mr. President:
"As I write this letter I think back to September 1967. At that time I organized one of the first Students For Nixon clubs in the country, the Hunter College Students For Nixon in New York City. I was filled with idealism about your plans for a better America. I was convinced that you would end the terrible war in Vietnam and reunite the people of America. Although we received little help from the Nixon For President Committee in Washington, we worked hard and built up our organization.

"We campaigned throughout the New York area and became one of the largest clubs on the Hunter campus. We constantly faced hostility and harassment. We were called warmongers and Fascists. We were told that Nixon wouldn't and couldn't bring about an early end to the Vietnam war. After the convention we continued to work hard and were elated when the results were in. That was the first election I was able to vote in, and I considered it an honor to cast my vote for a man who . . . had a plan to end the war and bring about a better life for us."

"After the inauguration, students on the campus would come up to me and ask, 'when is Nixon going to end the war?' My answer was always the same; 'give him a chance.' The war continued. You announced that Vietnamization was working well. A year after your inauguration, I received my draft notice, was inducted

into the Army, and less than five months later I was fighting in the jungles of Vietnam after only a two week leave.

" . . . In the fall of 1970 I read in my hometown newspaper that the president and vice-president felt that the war was no longer an issue. It was at this point that I realized how insensitive you really were. As long as one American was risking death in Vietnam, the war was certainly an issue. My opinion of your actions was representative of every soldier I came in contact with. I even had guilt feelings because I had worked for your election so vigorously.

"In November 1970 I was badly wounded and suffered the loss of parts of all four limbs and an eye. This was the better life I had worked so hard for. This was what Nixon's America was all about.

"The war still goes on Mr. President. I think you owe me and every other American an explanation. I would like to know if you feel that American lives are worth so little that they should be sacrificed for the corrupt, undemocratic dictatorship ruling South Vietnam. Think about it when you go to sleep tonight.

"Sincerely,
Lloyd Jay Kantor"

This was not an easy letter for Lloyd Jay Kantor, or what's left of him, to write. When you talk to him on the phone he immediately impresses you as a straight, serious, young man, not given to big outpourings. As he himself says, "I

believed in the principles of the Republican party," so that the letter was profoundly out of character. "I planned to write it for a long time, but I thought maybe it would get me into trouble, well not exactly trouble, but you know—with John Mitchell running things."

Yet the disillusionment is so strong. To have sacrificed so much for so little. He can't help saying things like, "instead of taking time to cheer up the Washington Redskins, he could go to a VA hospital. . . He could take a little trip to an Army hospital in Japan and hear the pain when they change the dressings in the morning."

These days the political experts are predicting that young people aren't going to be important in this campaign. They may well be right. Lloyd Jay Kantor says there's not a one of 'em he'd work for this time. He lost his hands and his feet and his enthusiasm, too.

Perhaps he'd get it back if the Nixon people would answer his letter. They say the campaign computer has a form letter for every category of person. There must be one for quadruple amputees. It might begin something like "Dear Mr. Kantor, as a handicapped person, we're sure you'll be interested in learning about the president's proposed medical insurance program . . ."

Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service

On the right . . . William F. Buckley Jr.

Amnesty—the good guys and the bad guys

Concerning the question of amnesty for American deserters and draft-dodgers, a few observations.

1) It is becoming a question of the good guys (let's grant amnesty) against the bad guys (let's not). That is a pity, because unless one argues that amnesty should be instantaneous for the offense of dodging the draft, then there is a case for weighing the merits of amnesty. Otherwise what you come up with, in effect, is that service in the military should be voluntary. I happen to think it should be, except in times of national crisis, but Congress has ruled otherwise, and it is Congress that makes the law.

2) Precisely because the question is insinuating itself in moral terms, there are those who suspect that the pro-amnesty people are trying to make a sneaky point. Even as a lot of people who in recent years came out for a voluntary military were in fact attempting to do anything they could to embarrass the war effort in Vietnam, so a lot of those who are nowadays heard arguing for amnesty are really saying something on the order of: let us finally admit that this was an immoral war, and

that therefore the use of the draft to harness young men to an immoral enterprise was wrong. Therefore, any young man who in pursuit of his conscience evaded that draft, ought not to be punished.

Those who oppose amnesty feel the vibrations of this analysis, and their opposition is based in part on their reluctance to ratify a piece of moral analysis which they do not endorse. History will one day tell us, however ambiguously, whether we were right to do what we did, but in an age tempted by antinomianism, the president should be careful before telling people, in effect, that they were correct in making up their minds to disobey the law.

3) The image of Abraham Lincoln is often cited as the exemplar who sought conciliation, sought, in his words, to bind the nation's wounds. Mr. Nixon is asked, in effect, to follow the example of Lincoln by granting amnesty.

The historical situation is, however, significantly different, if not conclusively so. At the time of his Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln could see the end of the war weeks away. He had previously

granted a highly contingent amnesty. He asked, then, for a spirit of forgiveness with respect to a defeated enemy. The draft dodgers are not exactly in the category of a defeated enemy. The English showed themselves, on the whole, forgiving towards the Germans and the Japanese. Lord Haw Haw, they hanged; while we locked up the world's most famous poet in a loony bin for a dozen years. As regards what we chose to call "war criminals," we promised amnesty in 20 years. But when 20 years went by, those who would not either forget or forgive, insisted on extending the term, on the grounds that there were as yet too many undiscovered Nazi war criminals.

Those Americans who deserted or who went to Canada or Scandinavia to avoid the draft are not in a class with the Nazi war criminals, but they are most definitely criminals in the eyes of the law. And the problem Mr. Nixon or his successor will face, is how on the one hand to display generosity, and on the other, to uphold the sovereignty of the law.

The men in question are not, as we noted, in the category of a defeated people.

On the contrary, reading about them suggests that they tend to the opinion that what is happening isn't that they are slowly coming around to realizing the full extent of their perfidy, rather that the United States is coming around to realizing that they were right, while we were wrong. There are those in this country who agree with them. If Senator McGovern is still running for president a few years from now, he will no doubt be proposing that we grant the deserters and draft dodgers a Medal of Honor and a life pension.

4) In short, the conditions are not ripe for amnesty. We do not have contrition, in any palpable sense. We do not have the corporate sense of having achieved our purpose, permitting us therefore to be charitable towards the defeated. And we have not rediscovered the loci of stability, which among other things tells us quite clearly when we are engaged in magnanimity, and when we are engaged in historical and moral revisionism.

Washington Star Syndicate Inc.

