

## Commentary

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

# George McGovern: the new religion

MIAMI BEACH — There are those who say that the politics of George McGovern is a new politics based on great shifts in ideological sentiment. Professor Galbraith, using to be sure a kind of shorthand, says that the new issues are 1) global communism, 2) the redistribution of wealth, and 3) economic growth. Concerning which the Democratic avant garde believes 1) that we have done quite enough of containment, 2) that we should have more of it; and 3) that it isn't a cure to all human problems.

But there is something else in the McGovern Spirit, and it is quite countable here in Miami. It is the sense of absolute, total self-righteousness. It is manifestly intolerant of different opinions, and disposed, towards those who hold them, to dismiss them as cretins. It was worth noting, for instance, the attitude of typical young McGovernites toward Hubert Humphrey. They hate him.

It seems an odd word to use but it is something like the appropriate word. They feel an utter contempt for him. I

attempted to probe this attitude, in talking with a young delegate who is highly placed in the youth-McGovern hierarchy, and I said to him: Why are you so very much opposed to Humphrey? After all, his ideological rating, as handed down by the Americans for Democratic Action on the basis of his lifelong record, is 97, which is higher even than McGovern's 92. Ahh—said the young man quick-wittedly—but the record in question was earned during the period that Senator Humphrey was a senator, mostly before he took the Vice Presidency in 1964. We hate him for the positions he took while he was Vice President.

This of course has to mean the position that Humphrey took on the Vietnam war, since on all domestic matters, Lyndon Johnson was an exemplary liberal. So I said, but isn't it to be expected that a Vice President takes the same position as the President? That has been the case since the great disengagement of Vice President Calhoun from President Jackson. Well, said the youth, but the fact of it is that Humphrey took

Johnson's positions enthusiastically. Well, I said, Humphrey takes every position enthusiastically—it is his mode. One could hardly stand up before a crowd as Vice President to President Johnson and speak listlessly one's orisons to President Johnson's policies.

No, the thing of it is that Hubert Humphrey opposes George McGovern, and in the New Politics that isn't as simple as that Humphrey's emphases are different from McGovern's. What it is, is sacrilege. McGovernism is something of a religion, and the test in the days ahead will be whether the McGovern shock troops can move with sufficient tact.

It will have to a cultivated tact. It will not, that is to say, come naturally. Because they do not feel it naturally. The young man in question told me that he would desert the Democratic Party rather than back Humphrey, in the event the Convention chose him. Note the interesting failure to meditate the symmetry. The distance between McGovern and Humphrey is no greater than the distance between Humphrey and

McGovern. Yet although they expect that Humphrey people will work for McGovern they would not make a commitment the other way around.

The reason is quite simple: they are right, the others are wrong. It is to be expected that the heathens will work for the saints if the saints are confirmed. It is not in prospect, failing that, that the saints would turn to the cause of the heathens.

Now George McGovern, notwithstanding the great seismic fault in his temperament revealed the week in which the Credentials Committee applied to California the democratist principles of George McGovern, knows how to be conciliatory. And he is going to have to do a lot of that kind of thing in order to conceal from the mass of Democratic voters the priggishness, the ethical chauvinism, of his followers. It is off-putting to be asked to vote for McGovern as a religious exercise. It is one thing to reduce the Humphrey Democrat by appealing to his party loyalty or to his disapproval of Richard Nixon. It is something else to try to coopt him into a new religious order.

## Letters

### Telephones

On June 30 the Housing Department and the telephone company implemented a decision to discontinue off-campus phone service to the phones located on each floor of the dorms. The main reason behind the action, rumor has it, is that too many collect calls were being accepted by the dorm residents, costing the University large amounts on its phone bill.

The floor phones now may only be used for on-campus communication. For off-campus calls (local calls included) a pay phone is located on the first floor of each hall. This phone must be used for both making and receiving local calls, and in the east of Hamilton at least, is located in a closet in the first floor lounge.

This new phone service (disservice) raises the following questions and concerns: 1) It is unfair that, while residents of Hamilton must pay to make local off-campus calls, those people in Carson do not (their phone service was not cut on the 30th). 2) It is an unjust expense to have to pay every time you want to call a friend or teacher, who may very well live within

blocks of the school. 3) Because there are not phones on every floor that are equipped to receive outside calls, those people living on the upper floors of the dorms are not getting their calls or messages of the calls, because people won't come up to find you. And they shouldn't have to. 4) It does not seem that calling out has anything to do with receiving and accepting collect calls. The University would be in no danger of unwanted phone bills if it allowed students to be able to make calls from their floor.

Residents would at least like a pay phone on every floor so we can get calls that have been made to us. This is especially necessary in cases of emergencies or long distance calls.

Other schools in the state have gotten around the collect call problem by installing Centrex switchboards with trained operators to weed out collect calls, and still make phone service available to all floors. It seems unreasonable to think that one pay phone per dorm, located in a closet on the first floor is adequate to the needs of dorm residents. It also seems unfair, that while some students must make do with

that limited phone service, others enjoy full service from phones on every floor at no cost.

Bob Schatz  
Boynnton-Hamilton  
and 41 co-signers

### Greater knowledge

The front-page story, "Speaker Claims Women Ignored" (June 26), which has just been called to my attention, certainly shows the need for greater knowledge of the role of women in American history and society.

The anonymous author—possibly a "male chauvinist pig?"—managed to make both himself and the speaker, Isabel Welsh, appear very ignorant. Welsh may have actually been responsible for some of the errors—it is impossible to say—but, even if so, an adequately informed journalist would not have permitted some of them to get into print.

Welsh is quoted as saying that "Anne Hutchins" (sic) was "expelled from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for political

heterodoxy" and also that she was "a witch." Hutchinson was indeed exiled in 1637 but for the religious heterodoxy of claiming that God spoke to her "by an immediate voice" rather than for political errors. The controversy over her teaching did, to be sure, result in a political cleavage. To say that she was "a witch" is nonsense. Not even her worst enemies so called her.

Reference was also made to "the Grimpy sisters" (sic), presumably Sarah and Angelina Grimke, abolitionists and pioneer advocates of women's rights. If uncertain as to the pronunciation or spelling the speaker or writer should have checked.

Welsh was also quoted as saying: "Women were not allowed to speak in public." But such a statement is meaningless unless it is specified when, where, and by whom women—what women?—were "not allowed" to do thus and so. Quaker women, Sojourner Truth, Carry A. Nation, Emma Goldman, and many other women mentioned and unmentioned certainly did "speak in public."

Kenneth W. Porter  
Professor emeritus of history

### Re: DOGS

I approached the young woman whose dog, I had been told, had recently killed a squirrel on campus and, wanting to make certain she knew of this act mentioned it to her.

Her reply was that she was "rather proud of him, considering that he'd been chasing squirrels for two years."

I made some remarks about how it would be too bad when all the proud dog owners had let their animals run loose, in open violation of the law, until all the squirrels were killed. She made no reply, apparently contemplating how her pride will grow when her "pet" kills again.

It is beyond my comprehension why the administration allows this situation to continue. Eighteen dog bites (reported) Spring term and no one but the Emerald seems to give a damn.

If the county Animal Control officers are too busy rounding up dogs in rural areas, it is the duty of the University authorities to do something about the problem.

Until they do, prudent people on campus can only stay away from the dogs and WATCH THEIR STEP!!

Jim Higgins  
Junior, English

Thursday, July 13, 1972

