

Humphrey or Nixon: Is There Any Difference?

Campaign year 1968 is rapidly educating the American people to the futility and the undemocratic nature of the electoral process. For in the face of all the polls and other expressions of public opinion that reveal McCarthy and Rockefeller as by far the most popular of their respective parties, the party hacks who run the Democratic and Republican conventions are determined to nominate *their* choices: [Hubert H.] Humphrey and Nixon. This blatant flaunting of the will of the oligarchy in the face of popular choice shall not be forgotten this time; and many millions will become permanently disenchanted with the entire American political process.

It is also more evident than ever before that there is hardly a smidgin of difference between the two major party candidates. Both Humphrey and Nixon are pre-eminently the spokesmen of hawkishness and aggression abroad and of the welfare-warfare corporate state at home: Both want to continue the New Deal-Fair Deal and both want to combine the carrot of federal funds with the stick of armed suppression to deal with the urban ghettos. The fact that Humphrey's rhetoric is slightly more progressive-statist and Nixon's more conservative-statist is purely a function of their respective constituencies within the broad Corporate State consensus. The difference is purely that: a matter of rhetoric only.

And yet the disquieting thing is that Nixon, over the years, has shown the ability to attract a number of people who even call themselves "libertarians."

I remember well the campaign of 1960, when a whole slew of my friends and acquaintances, many self-styled “libertarians,” began popping up in the Nixon camp, some high among his staff of advisers. Their story was always the same: “Privately, Dick really agrees with us; he told me this many times. ...” Etcetera. What malarkey! Why didn’t these fools realize that being all things to all men, that agreeing with whomever is last in your office, is the politician’s stock-in-trade? Put not your trust in princes: consider only their public performances, and not their private promises. One would think that libertarians, at least, would be sensitive to this truth.

And now the whole farce is being repeated once more; again, self-styled libertarians are high up in the Nixon campaign and again they proclaim his devotion to liberty, privately and down deep. Men who have loudly trumpeted their refusal to work with anyone who deviates one iota from the pure libertarian cause are now gleefully paid advisers to Nixon; the deadly smell of power is doing its work. It is almost a good enough reason to take sides in this repellent campaign: to thwart the corrupted ambitions of “libertarians” who have surrendered to the siren song of power.