

John Lindsay — Prettiiness in Politics

John Moscow

OVER THE YEARS he has been in public office John V. Lindsay has been called many names, ranging from the unprintable to the idolatrous. He has had massive public exposure as the most glamorous Mayor of the nation's most glamorous city; he is currently running for President of these United States. In the interests of fair play and honest journalism it behooves us to examine the Lindsay record to see what makes this man such a uniquely qualified candidate for the nation's highest office. On the basis of his record we can see what sort of administration we would have were John Lindsay President.

Obviously we would have a beautiful administration. John Lindsay is the prettiest candidate to receive serious attention in the Presidential races in a long, long time. His staff are very much like him in that regard; although they lack the natural beauty that is his, they too have the style that goes with working in Madison Avenue public relations and advertising firms. We could be assured of having pictures of nothing but exceptionally attractive cabinet officers, together with their beautiful boss, on the television picture tube in the evenings. That would be a great improvement over current pictures of the dead in Vietnam, or depressing economic graphs.

There are serious political advantages to having a beautiful President, aside from the important domestic lift in morale that Lindsay's beautiful profile would bring every evening. As must be obvious to everyone, women are playing an ever more prominent role in world affairs. Women already rule countries in difficult trouble spots like India, Ceylon — important for its naval bases in the Indian Ocean — and Israel. It will surely help our national position to have a beautiful President talking with the women leaders of such countries; Kosygin is hardly any competition.

Apart from the advantages of having a beautiful President, we could be sure that a Lindsay administration would have good taste and style. We would not have to suffer the agonies that many of us went through when it was revealed that Lyndon Johnson liked barbecues — so gross and gooey. We will not have to smart under the knowledge that our President admires football heroes. John Lindsay is above such things. We will, instead, be able to rest assured that JVL, as his aides affectionately refer to him, will seek a revival of lawn tennis as the national sport. It is merely a question of taste, but questions of taste are sometimes important. If the United States wants to prove to the rest of the world that we are not a rough, tough bunch of barbarians we will have to project a more elegant image. Clearly such games

as tennis, without the old-fashioned body contact implicit in such grubby games as football, are far more in line with our noble image; no one is better qualified to lead a change in national style than John Lindsay.

As for economics, surely John Lindsay's credentials here are exemplary. In an age where budget deficits are popular John Lindsay has shown himself a master of the unbalanced budget. Not merely does Lindsay come up with unbalanced budgets — as other presidential candidates have done — but he has hidden current expenses away in the capital construction budget. Thus New Yorkers have learned that job training programs and school books are capital expenditures, like bridges and schools. With Lindsay as President the United States will not only lead the world in the size of the governmental deficit, it will have the most imaginative budgets anywhere. Whereas currently we complain about how much money various departments spend, we will not complain when Lindsay is President, because *we will not know*.

More to the point, with Lindsay as President we will be able to remedy the balance of payments problem. Lindsay will simply ask the United Nations for aid, showing them that if other nations did not ship their goods here we would not have a balance of payments problem.

To back him as President John Lindsay would undoubtedly appoint a marvelous cabinet. As Mayor of New York his selections were the worst since Caligula made his horse Consul in the decadence of the Roman Empire. We were all amazed by the poor background investigations President Nixon had made on his defeated Supreme Court nominees. Lindsay would never have a background investigation made.

One of the most attractive of the Lindsay Cabinet appointees was James Marcus — a good tennis player, and phony who was in debt to the Mafia. No sooner did Lindsay give Marcus one of the top ten jobs in the city than Marcus made a crooked contract with a mafioso contractor.

Lindsay learned from the furor resulting from the Marcus investigation that background investigations were necessary. More important, he learned that appointees had to be expert in their line of work. With that background, in his successful endeavor to outdo Caligula, he appointed Mr. Anthony Scotto to a position on the New York Waterfront Commission.

The Waterfront Commission is a special group in New York. It was established a quarter of a century ago to fight corruption and thefts on the waterfront, as they were threatening to strangle the entire Port of New York. At that time the chief crook was

a man named Albert Anastasia. Given Mafia inheritance patters, and the passage of time, "Tony" Scotto, who is Anastasia's son-in-law, now is chief crook on the waterfront. Lindsay claims that he did not know that Mr. Anthony Scotto and Tony Scotto were the same person, but it certainly thrilled the hearts of the honest longshoremen to know that their Tony was going to regulate their behavior.

John Lindsay has a special strength as a presidential candidate that would serve him well, for a while, as president. He has *chutzpah* — a very special kind of nerve. (*Chutzpah* is the quality shown by the man who, having been convicted of murdering his wife and children, pleads for mercy on the grounds that he is a widower, and childless.) John Lindsay runs best by claiming as his special strength his greatest weaknesses. Since he has so many weaknesses, he makes the most extravagant of claims, and few people believe that the Hitler-Stalin technique of the "Big Lie" is still in use today. It makes some of the New Yorkers nostalgic for the good old days of the 1930s.

Although John Lindsay has a poor record as Mayor, it is because, as he will undoubtedly be willing to tell you, New York City is absolutely ungovernable. I am not sure how he knows, as he has never tried to govern New York, but who am I to doubt him? I remember, in January of 1970, walking through City Hall Park in New York on the day the Mayor was being inaugurated the second time. I had trouble walking, because there had been a snowstorm a week earlier, and the snow had not been cleared from in front of City Hall.

I had gone down to City Hall with a friend to see if we could go into the museum in City Hall, but it was closed, for security reasons. I went back six months later, but courageous Mayor Lindsay had closed that museum to the public. The last I heard of the Mayor's courage he had installed bullet proof glass in City Hall, in addition to the many policemen on duty, the fact that City Hall is now closed to the public, and the existence of a burglar-alarm system. Everyone who wants to visit the White House should hurry up and visit there before John Lindsay takes office; the courageous Mayor will undoubtedly close it.

These are the Lindsay strengths: now for his weaknesses.... □

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Professionalism vs. Student Power

Dr. Edward A. Hacker

THERE ARE CERTAIN academic matters such as teaching, curricula, examinations, grading, etc., which traditionally have been the prerogative of the faculty. Lately this prerogative has been challenged, for it is now considered fashionable, by a certain vocal minority, to have undergraduates teach credit courses, to have students grade themselves in some courses and to have students as voting members of curriculum committees of departments and colleges.

It is understandable why some students should agitate for academic privileges hitherto regulated by faculty. After all, teaching a course is more of an "ego-trip" than taking one. Self-grading (how many students give themselves "D's" or "F's") assures a passing grade. And rubbing elbows with faculty at a curriculum meeting gives the warm feeling of egalitarianism.

What is not understandable, on rational grounds, is why some faculty condone and even encourage these unorthodox, unnecessary and unprofessional practices. The unorthodox is welcome, if its superiority over the orthodox is demonstrable; the unnecessary is bearable, if it is innocuous; but unprofessional practices within a profession cannot be justified by either love or logic.

By talking to faculty who favor giving undergraduates professional privileges, I have found that their arguments fall into three categories, which I name: (i) The Argument from Democracy, (ii) The Argument from Communication and (iii) The Argument from Relevancy. I shall critically address myself to each argument.

The Argument from Democracy

This is a favorite argument of those who champion student power. It is used to justify student-taught courses, self-grading and student voting membership on both academic and administrative committees. The argument comes in two forms. The first form is, "Since this is a democratic country, every institution in it should be democratically governed; therefore, colleges should be democratically governed, which means that students should share power with faculty and administration." This argument commits the fallacy of division, since it assumes that what is true of the country, as a whole, must be true of every institution within the country. This assumption is false, since it is perfectly possible (and, indeed, is generally the case) that the type of government which determines the policies of a country need not be the type of government which determines the policies of institutions within that country.

The second version of The Argument

from Democracy goes something like this: "Colleges should be democratically governed and a basic principle of democratic government is egalitarianism; therefore, students being equals to faculty and administration should share their power." This argument goes astray in assuming that the principle of democratic egalitarianism means that all people are equal in knowledge and experience. Knowledge cannot be conferred by definition.

The general refutation of all versions of The Argument from Democracy consists in asserting that colleges are not, and should not be, democratic institutions, and in revealing the absurdity in the argument that a democratic form of government is one in which non-professionals are competent to make professional decisions. No form of government can *ipso jure* make ignorance equal to knowledge, inexperience equal to experience, or folly equal to wisdom.

The Argument from Communication

This argument is generally used to support student voting membership on academic and administrative committees. It goes like this: "Communication between students and faculty, and students and administration, is academically important; therefore, students should have voting membership on all committees of their choice." The premise of this argument has merit, since effective two-way communication between the three factions of a college is a prerequisite for sound education. However, the conclusion of this argument is a *non sequitur*. When this fallacy is pointed out an *ad hoc* argument is invariably given to remedy the situation, which generally takes this form: "If students aren't given voting membership on committees of their choice, then they will be resentful and will not communicate with faculty and administration." For the vast majority of students, I do not believe this statement is true. Students are never reluctant to express their opinions to faculty or administration when they know that their opinions are seriously being sought. The judgment that students have to be bribed to communicate indicates a view of the student body as morally askewed as it is false.

In general The Argument from Communication is refuted by pointing out that voice and vote are not necessary correlates. It is desirable to have both formal and informal channels of communication between students and faculty, but such channels of communication should not become pathways to power.

The Argument from Relevancy

This argument is based on the assumption that the interests of students should be given priority in all educational

matters, especially curricula matters. This argument usually takes the following form: "College and department curricula are not relevant to students' interests; therefore, students, in order to bring about the required reforms, must have voting membership on all curriculum committees."

Reading and experience have revealed to me that students' interests, currently in vogue, fall into three categories: Mystical, Experiential and Social. Their mystical interests are shown by their fascination with astrology, tarot cards and other magical devices. Their experiential interests are shown by their concern with drugs, sex and the participatory aspects of religion, communes and 'togetherness' groups. Their social interests range over such topics as ecology, politics and problems of social justice.

In my opinion it would be a travesty on college education to teach courses in astrology, tarot cards, etc., simply because some students have an interest in such irrationalities. There is, and should be, a relevancy gap between college curricula and systematized superstitions, unless one is asking for a return to the Dark Ages, a request no rational person would seriously consider.

Should college curricula be altered to meet the students' need for meaningful and significant interpersonal relationships? I think not, since a college classroom is not a psychological clinic, nor is the instructor a trained psychological counsellor. I am in no way denying that the lack of such relationships is a serious problem for many students (as well as for others in our society), but I am denying that the classroom, in a course in sociology, philosophy, history, etc., should become an encounter group or a "rap session" in which the personal problems of the students are discussed. If a student's personal problems are of such a nature that he feels compelled to discuss them in every classroom situation, then he should seek qualified psychiatric help, instead of advocating that the curriculum be changed to meet his needs. The tail should not wag the dog.

Some students are correct when they complain that college education is irrelevant to their needs, but the converse then must be also true, their needs are irrelevant to college education.

Perhaps the most common complaint the advocates of student power have is the irrelevancy of college curricula to their social and political interests. This complaint formerly baffled me, for I could not think of a single course in humanities or sciences that was not relevant to understanding our present culture and civilization. I am no longer baffled, since subsequently I have learned what students mean by social and political relevancy. "Relevancy," to the students who use this word as a slogan, does not mean that which helps us to understand current issues. These students think they know what the issues are; they have no use for under-

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