

too, that the triumph came without the leadership of the SP. At last report (a letter in the *New York Times*, August 13), Paul Feldman, editor of the SP's paper *New America*, was publicly "agonizing" over whether to vote for McGovern or, implicitly, for Nixon.

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## 2. DOUGLAS DOWD

I WANTED MCGOVERN TO WIN the California primary, and worked for him. I want him to beat Nixon, and will work for him. There can't be many people on the Left who wouldn't be happy indeed if Nixon were to be beaten (and who, like me, didn't give a damn as between Nixon and Humphrey in 1968); and, for those people, there is work to be done. It can be done in good conscience, and with good politics; and if it can't be, what vision must the Left have of the American political condition?

McGovern is, of course, a populist, Prairie version, with more reservations on American imperialism (he doesn't have to *call* it that to have reservations about it) than any presidential candidate since Herbert Hoover (and I include Henry Wallace in the roster). He is a politician, and a successful one; and that means, of course, that he has learned how to compromise, and to speak with more than one voice. But, he is *less* dishonest than anyone on that roster in my memory, and what he compromises on is less disastrous in terms of long-run prospects than any other past or present *presidential* possibility. In saying this, I am conscious of his weakness on sexism, on racism and on Israel; and of populism in general. But we are talking about *presidential* possibilities; and the Left cannot sanely ignore the importance of that office, not in these times. There are some things the Left has to do itself; there are others where who is president makes it easier, harder, or impossible for the Left to do what it must do.

The struggle against racism and sexism must be a bottoms up struggle; it is something we have to do. But it is also something we cannot do well, so long as the Indochina War continues, and so long as a cagey imperialist occupies the office of president of the U.S.A. McGovern will end the war in Indochina. He will create a climate of discussion in this country *about* this country. He will trim the horns of the FBI, the Justice Department and probably even of the C.I.A. He will talk about income redistribution. The New Left came into existence largely through

struggles against racism and the Indochina War; it began to sputter and die as its own racist and sexist traits were revealed and as its tactics of protest ran up against the very strong wall of power in this country, the wall of monopoly capitalism. Just at the time when the forces of the Left (new and old) began to identify the main characteristics of the enemy, it also found itself fighting to stay alive, as the repression came down. Watching the war continue, and worsen, watching its people get thrown in prison, watching vocal and visible protest dribble away, the forces of the Left fragmented, turned inward, sought new and better ways to move ahead and up. We're finding them; but we need an assist and that assist will be substantial if McGovern beats Nixon. I'm convinced he will.

NIXON BARELY WON, in 1968; and against virtually no opposition. (Did *anybody* work for Humphrey?) McGovern's first major step will be registration of the 25 million unregistered young and black potential voters, at least 75% of whom will vote against Nixon, if they vote at all. McGovern won't be running against moderate Democrats, as in the primaries; he'll be running against Nixon-Agnew-Connally. It will be a savage campaign, all Nixon stops pulled out. There will be a polarized electorate by November, 1972. If the Left does not believe that the pro-McGovern end of that pole can be made to outnumber the pro-Nixon end of it, what can the Left believe about the possibilities of something better, now or ever, in the U.S.?

I intend to campaign for McGovern in every which way. With moderate people, I will make moderate arguments against Nixon, certainly not difficult to do. With liberal-left people, I will argue that a McGovern victory will open up possibilities for the Left that it cannot dream of under four more years of Nixon. And I will point out that the Left has always fared badly and declined when men like Nixon have been president; and that it has always revived and flourished under people like McGovern (Teddy Roosevelt, Wilson, FDR, Kennedy); and that if it has always gone down again, that has been due to the shortcomings of the Left, not of the president. We cannot expect any president to bring socialism to the United States; of course. But we can expect that some presidents make it easier for socialism to be fought for than others. McGovern is such a one.

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### 3. JIM McCLELLAN

THERE WERE BASICALLY TWO OPTIONS open to the People's Party when it held its National Convention late in July. The first option was for the Party to abandon its own presidential campaign in order to avoid dividing the anti-Nixon vote. This was a very unorthodox idea for a political party to be considering. After all, had the political calendar been reversed and the People's Party held its convention two weeks prior rather than two weeks following the Democratic Convention, it is hard to imagine the Democratic Party in a quandary about doing something that might hurt Benjamin Spock's chances against Nixon. The second possibility—and the one chosen by a vote the chairperson announced as "an overwhelming majority to one"—was for the People's Party to continue with its independent national campaign. The danger of the first option was that once again the left would become so embroiled in the struggle to be rid of a despised incumbent that it would lose sight of its goals and ideals. Certainly as important as defeating Nixon is the task of building something worthwhile to replace him. The People's Party Convention felt that electing the Democratic Party presidential nominee over the Republican candidate would not move the country very significantly and decided to carry on organizing a movement that could.

Only three groups claim George McGovern to be a radical: the press which for fun and profit would like to sensationalize a campaign between lackluster candidates; the Committee to Re-elect the President which hopes to use the radicalism issue to scare Middle-Americans toward Nixon; and many radicals who through wishful hoping see McGovern as they want him to be rather than as he is. McGovern himself stoutly denies he is a radical. And since most people concede he is a cut above most politicians when it comes to honesty, he should be believed. Certainly his rhetoric is not radical. He even took out an ad in the *Wall Street Journal* to give assurances of his complete faith in the free enterprise system. Though his supporters praise his courage and forthright stands on the issues it was through his urging that such items as a minimum income of \$6,500 for a family of four, a maximum income, unconditional amnesty for war resisters, women's liberation, gay liberation, legalization of marijuana and tax reform were kept out of the Democratic Party platform and therefore out of the campaign. In fact, the only courageous stand he has taken is his pledge to withdraw from Vietnam. On that courageous stand he is joined by four-fifths of the American people. He may appear to have a radical stand on the war when compared to his colleagues on Capitol Hill, but it should be kept in mind that the Chambers of Congress are about the only places left