

Messiah from the Midwest?

by Nick Kotz and James Risser

As Harold Everett Hughes sat waiting to be sworn into the United States Senate, an incumbent Senator and fellow Democrat poked him in the back and whispered emphatically, "I don't like you."

"Why?" demanded the incredulous freshman at this strange introduction to a chamber fabled for its elaborate if often meaningless courtesies. "You don't even know me."

"Anyone who would nominate Gene McCarthy has to be a goddamn nut," the veteran Senator rasped.

Hughes, a three-term governor of Iowa, had deeply offended many established party regulars by denouncing Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam war policies and delivering the presidential nominating speech for Senator Eugene McCarthy at the chaotic 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

But something in the older Senator's manner and the familiar odor that accompanied his whispers told Hughes—a recovered alcoholic—that presidential politics had little to do with the apparent malice the Senator bore him. He suspected what it was. That night, the same Senator telephoned Hughes at

home and offered a semi-apology. Obviously reluctant to hang up, the Senator told Hughes he didn't really know why he had called. "I know why you called," said Hughes. "You have a drinking problem and you think I can help." Denials were followed by admissions and finally the arrival of a car to take Hughes to the Senator's home. They talked into the night, and at Hughes's suggestion the Senator was hospitalized under an assumed name. During Hughes's first three weeks in the Senate, he spent as much time with this Senator as he did learning his new duties. At last report, the Senator was not drinking.

Harold Hughes will be mortified and angered that this story has been told; he will worry about betrayed confidence and hurting someone he tried to help. The story, nevertheless, tells a great deal about the man most often mentioned as the leading darkhorse candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1972—the man the party might turn to if Muskie, Humphrey, McGovern, Kennedy, and McCarthy are all found wanting.

It is his personal involvement in problems—you don't intellectualize about the evils of alcohol; you go out and help a victim turn loose of the bottle—that has marked Hughes's development as a public official. Always at the root is a sensitivity to pain and suffering and an em-

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Photograph by Okamoto

pathetic identification with sufferers and underdogs.

Hughes is in one sense a fundamentalist reformer—"There are a couple of members here I'd like to work on. . . . People should quit worrying about electing a recovered alcoholic to Congress and start worrying about electing those who are still drinking," he confided to a visitor—but he also is an exceedingly cautious and deliberative politician. Although never hiding the fact that he once had a drinking problem, Hughes was well established as a successful governor before he ventured to discuss publicly his own past alcoholism and his role in Alcoholics Anonymous.

The trademark of the Hughes political style has been an outspoken forthrightness on issues, presented with all the charismatic advantages of rugged good looks, imposing physique, deep bass voice, and compelling personal intensity.

Yet his arrival at clearcut positions on these issues has been a far more complex process than his strongly stated beliefs would indicate.

Practitioners of the new politics and opponents of the Vietnam war may not know, for instance, that Harold Hughes, the dove who opposes the Vietnam involvement, is the same man who four years ago successfully built support for the war effort by organizing a governors' tour of Vietnam in which George Romney received his much-publicized, self-admitted "brainwashing."

The Senator Hughes who fought President Nixon's closing of Job Corps centers in 1969 also was the Governor Hughes who badly dragged his feet on initiating the first anti-poverty programs in his state in 1965.

The Hughes who fights for civil-rights causes in 1970 is the same man who just three years earlier watched passively, if benevolently, as Negroes struggled to pass open housing legislation in Iowa.

These contrasts are not to suggest that Hughes is an opportunist or that he has made wild swings in the political pendulum in the classic manner of true believers. Rather they illustrate that he

has exhibited a remarkable capacity for growth as a public official, that he has carefully measured the distance that a liberal Democrat can lead a conservative Republican state, and that broadening personal experiences have sharpened and sometimes totally reshaped his politics.

Hughes is intelligent but he is not an intellectual, and he makes decisions after seeing, experiencing, feeling what is right or wrong.

This explains why, despite the urgings and threats of his liberal advisers and fund suppliers in Iowa, Hughes could not turn against his President on the Vietnam war issue until he had experienced LBJ's personal crudities and had decided that he dangerously "wasn't listening to anyone anymore."

It shows why he could not strongly identify with the agony of the poor and the black ("The first time I ever saw a Negro I wanted to drive around the block and take another look because I'd never seen one in my youth.") until 1967 when he walked the streets and looked into the faces in the small but despairing ghetto areas of Des Moines and Waterloo, Iowa.

It was the personal experience of seeing the Iowa delegates for McCarthy frustrated at every turn by party machinery (plus recollections of his own political beginnings opposed by the party rulers) that led him to head the successful floor fight in Chicago creating a Democratic reform commission.

Harold Hughes sometimes is a little slow in getting the message—and he broods unhappily when he wanders through the complex gray area of a problem—but when he develops a personal focus on the issue he responds with a religious fervor which is another essential ingredient of his nature.

There is little doubt that Hughes would like to be President of the United States, that he feels an enormous desire to lead the country, and that in his own way he is both seeking and preparing for

the job of President.

His remarkable journey began 48 years ago in the "American midlands where the corn and wheatfields extend farther than the eye can see. . . the land of the great populist tradition." He grew up in the Depression in a kind of leveling rural poverty where you never felt poor or deprived even though survival meant trapping for food in the winter time. The house had no plumbing or electricity and the first family Christmas tree was one Harold won in a school raffle.

He graduated from high school in his native Ida Grove, a county seat town of 2,300 people where he distinguished himself as an all-state football and tuba player and was known as "Packy"—short for "Pachyderm" and based on his big, blocklike physique.

The next 15 years were unhappy, turbulent ones. He dropped out of college after less than a year as the bottle began to loom large in his life, briefly cut grass in Des Moines to support his teenage bride Eva Mercer, and then went off to the personal horrors of combat infantry in North Africa and Italy. He was no leader of men then; personal survival was the issue. He left the Army four years later still a private, returning to his wife and two infant daughters he had scarcely seen. The big man drove trucks and settled down to serious drinking, finally quitting in the mid-1950's, jarred by the realization he could awake in a hotel room 100 miles from home and not know how he got there.

What emerged was not the distinguished public official who was to become his state's most popular and successful governor, but a rough-hewn man of limited knowledge whose first political drives were fed by the religion of Methodism and Alcoholics Anonymous and by an aggressive desire to help small truckers like himself who were being victimized by the big boys and by the Iowa Commerce Commission.

He formed his own trucking bureau to represent the little trucker, but discovered that he could not make a dent in unresponsive government. His frequent

complaints to Democratic Governor Herschel Loveless produced the suggestion that Republican Hughes switch political parties and try to change the Commerce Commission by getting elected to it. Eighteen months prior to the 1958 election, Hughes announced his candidacy on the Democratic ticket and haltingly began a political career.

"He looked like a porpoise in a fish-bowl" to Loveless's assistant, Park Rinard, who watched the giant man in lumberjack shirt sprawl out in his tiny \$2 hotel room and pour out his grievances against "the goddamn big truckers." It was political love at first sight for idealistic and intellectual Rinard, who sensed the very raw makings of a great politician. Integrity, passion, and commitment brimmed over, and Rinard knew these are qualities that come in no political make-up kit. So they began a unique partnership, in which Rinard has been an all-important backroom adviser and confidante. Theirs is a deceptive combination—Hughes, tough on the outside and perilously gentle underneath; Rinard, the misty idealist, writer, and gentle secretary on the outside but inwardly tough as steel and politically shrewd.

Hughes was elected. He did a fair job of ending discrimination against the small truckers and stopped, by his mere hulking presence, the most obvious political corruption on the Commerce Commission. Within two years Harold Hughes was running for governor. For it had been borne home to him that government can help or hurt underdogs beyond the ones he knew well: in the prisons and mental hospitals where the alcoholics ended up, still other losers were being ground down.

He discovered the prisons and the mental hospitals from Rinard and two other men who served on the state board charged with administering them. John Hansen and George Calenius were natural attractions—big, tough men like himself, personally conservative, but with their conservatism moderated by deep strains of populism.

Hughes and Hansen sat down one night, and a Hughes still filled with political innocence said "one of us ought to run for governor and the other for lieutenant governor." That way they could do something for drunks and convicts and other underdogs, and they could get more power and recognition for Protestant yeomen like themselves who had very little voice in Iowa Democratic politics.

The party generally was a closed machinery of Irish Catholics who handed out or were handed occasional bits of patronage without ever seriously concerning themselves with trying to win elections or to improve the state. The anointed gubernatorial candidate in 1960 was E.J. "Nick" McManus, a wavy-haired, handsome party regular whose time had come for attempted advancement.

McManus clobbered Hughes, but not before a 1960 state political convention which left a lasting impression in Hughes's mind and which actually was the beginning of his successful 1962 campaign. McManus told the convention delegates mainly of his ancestral Democratic roots—with inferential questioning of just who was this small-time Republican-turned-Democrat opponent? Hughes's ascent to the speaking platform was greeted by frenzied cheering and sign-waving for his opponent. And then something happened. Hughes read a speech calling for prison and mental hospital reform, reapportionment of the legislature, and modernization of Iowa government. He read it haltingly, sometimes stumbling over long, unfamiliar words, departing from the text only when substituting ungrammatical verb tenses for proper ones. Despite his obvious forensic defects, the bass voice was deep, the convictions came out of a natural method actor, and the ideas were sharp and clear. The audience became silent and then loudly applauded the man 80 per cent of them would vote

against in the primary election. Park Rinard had written but the first of many issue-oriented speeches; Hughes knew he could command the attention of Iowans and sensed he could win them.

In 1962, he defeated incumbent Republican Governor Norman Erbe and commenced the first of his three successive two-year terms in the gold-domed Iowa Statehouse. On the surface, it seemed ironic that reformed drunk Hughes had been elected by speaking out boldly in favor of legalized liquor-by-the-drink in Bible-belt, dry, conservative Iowa. In reality, he was igniting a revolution in Iowa politics. The state was in the throes of transition from a rural to an urban economy and urban mores, and was without any political leadership. By dodging a clear-cut stand on the issue of legal martinis, Governor Erbe tiptoed down the established path, seeking election by offending the fewest voters. The Hughes victory was termed an upset, just as his subsequent successes continued to produce amazement, but the real surprise is that so few politicians, reporters, or business leaders really understood what was happening in the state.

As he would on many future issues, Hughes tapped a latent Iowa majority who desired a more progressive state image (they were tired of jokes about the little old lady from Dubuque and about key clubs) and who wanted more of their political leaders than cautious mediocrity.

With a shrewd calculation of the real moral issue, Hughes wrote to every minister in Iowa, accurately describing to them the hypocrisy and the pervasive corruption that flowed from statewide bootlegging. In his pocket, politician Hughes also carried a poll that told him two-thirds of the state's 2.8 million population wanted legalized liquor. But the wets did not elect him, as it turned out. The victory margin came from dry, rural Iowans who identified with a man who spoke straight on the issues, even though they disagreed on the liquor question.

The budding political revolution widened in the 1963 session of the Iowa General Assembly.

Passage of liquor-by-the-drink was followed by regulation of state utilities; by partial home rule for cities and towns, by more road funds for the cities, by interest payments on previously idle public funds in the state's banks, and by a fair employment law. The Hughes platform called for all of these reforms and many others enacted by more progressive midwestern states many years earlier. But it was Hughes's sidekick Rinard, a few skilled liberal legislators, plus persistent reporting from *The Des Moines Register and Tribune* which pushed the issues.

The lobbyists for the Farm Bureau, for the manufacturers, and bankers' associations reacted ineffectually and with disbelief as Rinard (by now the executive director of the League of Iowa Municipalities but unofficially a Hughes one-man kitchen cabinet) moved forward undreamed-of state government reforms. On utility regulation and bank reform, Rinard and Hughes put together a new populist coalition of city men and farmer legislators who had their own ingrained dislike of the small-town bankers, merchants, and private utilities who so often had squeezed them hard.

Hughes stood in a mystique of leadership and political power, the new elemental force who might at any moment go to the people as he had done with the liquor issue. Often unsure of himself in those days, Hughes brooded for hours in his office, hating the easy familiarity of hand-shaking politics. He defensively berated the university board of regents who came with arrogant superiority and elaborate academic language to get more money from this truck driver fellow who never finished his freshman year down at Iowa City. The sophisticated liberals underrated Hughes, just as he reacted nervously in the presence of the polished, educated men.

"When he started out," says a member of his Iowa administration, "he couldn't even look a Democratic state

senator in the eye and tell him how he wanted him to vote. He was docile and backward." This was not the same Harold Hughes who seven years later would, with assured ease, impress Eastern intellectuals and industrialists who sought his leadership in a fight for new directions in American policy. As his syntax improved and his knowledge of public affairs increased in geometric leaps, he developed confidence in the power of his own personality.

In 1963, Hughes went into Iowa's outdated prisons, interviewed every man serving a life sentence, and commuted more sentences than any Iowa governor in history. He soaked up with empathetic horror their stories of homosexuality, contraband, and prison guard corruption. He listened to the frightened tears of a "stool pigeon" convict, freed him on parole, and later declined extradition after the young crook violated his parole. That the young criminal was a con man Hughes knew full well. But the youth was afraid to die in prison and this was a fear to which Harold Hughes's response was, though legally questionable, one of mercy.

Toward the end of 1963, Hughes went into his familiar shell, still annoyed by detailed decision-making and perplexed about a legislature-approved reapportionment plan that was going to the voters. Most Democratic political leaders advised him not to oppose the plan, which supposedly was popular with rural and small-town voters who would be given iron-clad minority control of one legislative chamber. Finally, with a click into sharp focus on the issue, Hughes plunged into the struggle and, against long odds, defeated the plan almost single-handedly. The plan was unfair and Hughes said so flatly, though there was not yet a one-man, one-vote decree to back him up.

Winning re-election in 1964 by the biggest margin of any Iowa governor in history (Hughes actually ran far ahead of

LBJ's landslide victory over Barry Goldwater) and carrying a Democratic legislative majority into office with him, Hughes shed cleanly the issue of his own past alcoholism. His victory margin was bolstered when the Republican nominee, desperate in the closing days of the campaign, slyly questioned whether Hughes had lied about the date when he quit drinking. As Iowa State University Professor James Socknat wrote: "In the Bible Belt one may attack sin, but woe to the man who attacks the converted sinner."

With his first and only Democratic majority behind him, Hughes raced ahead with the task of modernizing state government. By the end of the 1965 legislative session, his accomplishments read like a laundry list from the League of Women Voters: reorganization of state government, increased aid to universities and to elementary and secondary schools, penal reform and repeal of capital punishment, a system of vocational-technical schools, and industrial safety legislation. Politically cautious on the governor-killing issue of taxes, he deferred a much-needed tax increase and managed instead to pay the bill for improved government services by spending the one-year windfall from a new withholding system for state income taxes.

Hughes was increasingly surefooted politically in his second term (1965-66), but he still could hesitate and stumble when the issue was complex and dangerous and when his political instincts led him into a gray solution rather than a morally-based black or white one.

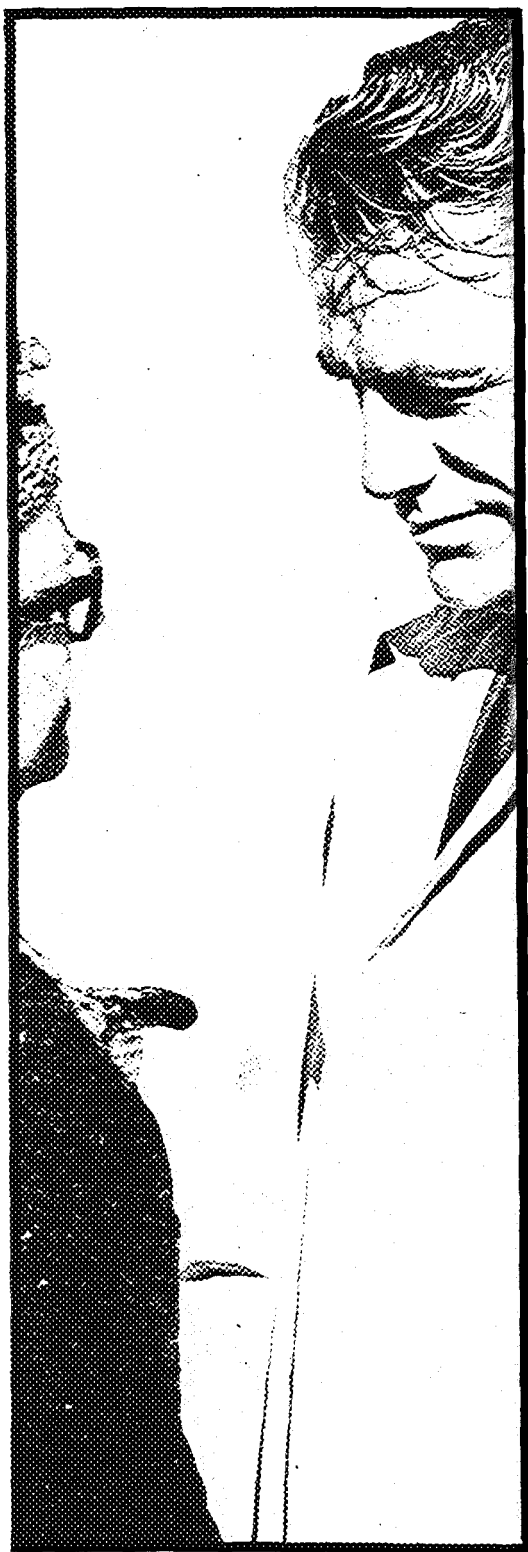
Heady with the success of Democratic control of the state, his labor supporters demanded repeal of the state's right-to-work laws. There was no populist coalition to support this position in still-conservative Iowa, and Hughes ducked the issue. In the process he temporarily got tangled in the semantics of "open shops," "union shops," and "agency shops." The latter was the gray position he adopted, but his solution satisfied neither labor nor manage-

ment and Hughes looked uncharacteristically indecisive. "He got away from the real Harold Hughes on that one," says a member of his administration. "He tried to play politics and he got into trouble." Perhaps, however, realistic politician Hughes accurately gauged the limits of Iowa liberalism. With certain knowledge that the United Auto Workers, his primary labor supporters, had their plants 100 per cent unionized and so were not concerned, Hughes simply made the best of an impossible situation.

In his final term as governor (1967-68) Hughes again chalked up legislative achievements, even though the Legislature again was largely in Republican hands. The state finally adopted a long-overdue tax increase, combined with property tax relief and massive school aid, with Hughes acting the role of mediator in the closing days of the session.

But it was another law that is more clearly illustrative of the growth of Hughes's skill as a sensitive mediator and his emergence as a civil libertarian. It exempted the Old Order Amish, a small religious group in northeast Iowa, from sending their children to state-certified schools. People of the soil, opposed to "worldliness," driving horse-and-buggy and shunning new inventions like the automobile, determined to preserve their dwindling culture, they long had operated their own schools and taught their young in their own way.

When the state began to crack down and sent school buses to take the children to the certified schools, the children fled into the cornfields. Hughes, sensing again the plight of the underdog, went into the community to meet the Amish leaders in their homes. As a temporary solution, he persuaded them to use state-certified teachers in their Amish schools, wangled \$30,000 from a private foundation to help pay the teachers' salaries, and cleared the whole arrangement with the local school district. Then, when the Legislature convened, he proposed a bill to exempt the Amish from attending public schools if they would use certified



teachers in their own schools and if the instruction met certain minimum standards. It was a long-shot settlement because of the sentiment for uniform school standards and because it could be argued that this was state support of religion. But Hughes won. "I always recognized the logic and the integrity of those who sincerely believed that such an exception should not be made," he told the Legislature after the bill was approved. "But sometimes it is wiser to be tolerant of non-uniformity and to bend laws rather than people."

The 1967 Harold Hughes who coped courageously and delicately with Iowa's rural Amish still seemed strangely insensitive to growing issues of race and poverty. Just as he hesitated at becoming involved in the quickly-maligned "war on poverty" (Iowa was the 49th state to qualify for participation in the program), Hughes did not push adoption of an open-housing law being considered by the Legislature.

"He's always had some compassion toward the races," remembers one fellow state official, "but as late as 1967 he didn't seem to think open housing was a 'must' issue. Some of the Democratic legislators wanted Hughes to push for it, but he just didn't see it."

Strangely enough, the basically conservative Legislature, goaded by the emotional eloquence of a black legislator from Cedar Rapids, did see it and passed a new law forbidding discrimination in housing.

Immediately thereafter, the education of Harold Hughes began on matters of poverty and racism. Without disputing his assertion that he always wanted to help "the underprivileged and forgotten," it is clear that few other Iowans, including Hughes, had bothered to focus on the problems of Iowa's one per cent black population, isolated in a few urban enclaves. As for poverty, it is finely masked behind the deceptive veneer of rich, rolling cornfields and Iowa-proud self-sufficiency. Hughes simply had not seen or felt the problem and could not identify with it. Obviously, he should

have read about a black revolution raging across the country, but Hughes's concerns were strictly Iowan then and his commitment on issues does not come from books.

As minor episodes of racial violence struck Des Moines and Waterloo in the summer of 1967, Hughes suddenly and secretly visited the economically-depressed ghetto areas of Iowa's cities. Just as four years earlier he had immersed himself in problems of men behind state penitentiary walls, now he went through the invisible walls of much larger prisons.

"I was humbled and I was ashamed by suddenly realizing my own ignorance," he soon publicly admitted. "For a lifetime I have lived in this state and never believed that these conditions exist. And, frankly, I have to confess that if I had cared enough, I would have looked. I found that I didn't know my state as I should. I was physically and spiritually ill. People had poured out to me their bitterness and their loss of hope. Reassessing morally my own position, I found myself bearing the guilt."

The awakened governor responded quickly, persuading key business leaders in several of the cities to set up emergency employment programs for ghetto youth. He followed through in the fall by meeting with Iowa religious leaders, then summoned lay and religious leaders in six principal cities to "convocations on crisis."

Hughes's personal and emotional confession stirred his listeners and led to creation of civic task forces and new privately-financed employment programs. Jobs were provided for 1,200 youths in the summer of 1968. It was a fascinating example of Hughes's persuasive powers which, on a person-to-person level, have a mesmerizing quality.

Watching him eloquently and powerfully lecture those businessmen about racism, one could sense that the 1958 "porpoise in the fishbowl" had burst free. The original, elemental qualities still produced the commanding leadership, but they now were refined,

broadened, and under firm, confident self-control. Once Hughes feels a problem, as one observer puts it, he exhibits "a combination of political pragmatism and social conscience" in finding solutions.

The social conscience flows out of deep religious feelings—from a lifelong Methodist who says "religion has been the motivating force in my life." It helped him quit drinking and to decide "that if God has a purpose for me I would try to follow it. I had messed up my life. Religion has taught me to love people, to be patient when I'm an impatient man, to respect the views of others whom I disagree with, to do good to others where harm has been intended to me."

Hughes describes his religion philosophically, too, and in various terms. He is to some extent a mystic, and he sees no reason why his innermost religious thoughts and beliefs should be subjected to minute public examination. Still, a messianic type of religious drive is very much a part of his nature and it has grown in recent years. Expressing his philosophy in a favorite proverb, Hughes says: "There is no solution; seek it lovingly."

In the tumultuous national politics of 1968, Hughes again seemed uncertain of direction. The logical political step was toward the Senate seat opened up by the retirement of elderly Republican Bourke Hickenlooper. For a brief period Hughes seemed plagued by doubts that he could or even wanted to cope with the more complex political atmosphere of Washington and the endless detail of the legislative process. Outdoorsman and hunter Hughes had little taste for what he imagined as the Georgetown drawing-room life of official Washington. And after experiencing power, prestige, and leadership opportunity as captain of a state ship, he wondered whether "one man in 100 can have any effect."

The doubts were resolved by Senator

Robert F. Kennedy who appealed personally to Hughes to make the race. "He convinced me that one more man down here was important," recalls Hughes. "The importance he placed on the elements of humanity, peace, and the value of the individual all affected me." On this very basic and emotional level, Kennedy touched a responsive chord and Hughes plunged into the new politics of 1968.

War in Vietnam was the overwhelming issue and it found Hughes wrestling in the throes of a new transformation.

"Until 1968 I couldn't even talk to him about Vietnam because he was such a strong hawk and I was a strong dove," recalls a fellow Iowa state official. "But Park Rinard and I predicted the change would eventually happen, because of his compassion. Harold Hughes just can't stand human suffering."

The change was a long time coming, however. The Harold Hughes of 1965 was troubled most by the new anti-war protest and was concerned how he personally could support his President and friend Lyndon Johnson. At his suggestion, the White House arranged a Vietnam trip for a group of governors scheduled to attend a conference in Japan.

"I thought of it as a way to build support for the Administration," says Hughes of the 1965 trip. And Hughes was as misled about the war as his "brain-washed" fellow governor and traveler Romney. "They showed us all the right things and I came back even more convinced that we were right," recalls Hughes. Attempting to convince his anti-war Iowa advisers, Hughes proudly lectured on how well the war was going, pointing out on the map all the villages that were being pacified.

His first misgivings developed a year later in November, 1966, after Democratic candidates around the country had taken a sound drubbing from a Republican party prematurely pronounced dead only two years earlier. Democratic woes

had been compounded by a whirlwind presidential pre-election trip to Vietnam which LBJ had planned to follow up with dramatic last-minute appearances on the political stump. Suddenly, Lyndon Johnson cancelled his political schedule and claimed it never had existed, thereby giving credence to public worry about a "credibility gap" and a growing war.

Stung by their party's losses in the governorship and Congressional elections, the Democratic governors headed for the plush old Greenbriar Hotel at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, to lick their wounds. Just before he left, Hughes stopped off at the White House intending to express his personal concerns to the President and to warn him of growing disarray in the party. He never said a word. After listening to a rambling, angry one-hour monologue from the President, Hughes left the White House shaken, fearing the President had lost touch with reality.

On the next evening, the Democratic Governors engaged in a four-hour-long gripe session which covered topics ranging from Vietnam to the President's politically unfortunate exhibition of his gall bladder operation scar.

Scattering to avoid waiting reporters, the governors left conference-chairman Hughes behind to tell about the meeting. Iowans were not surprised at the blunt way Hughes told the reporters that President Johnson had lost the affection of his party's governors, but such candor was rare in party politics and Hughes received national attention as a refreshing new voice. The next day was a personal nightmare as most of the governors refused to support Hughes's accurate portrayal of their complaints.

"I didn't want to tell him either," said Hughes, who always has recoiled at having to rebuke anyone for personal or professional failures. "Nobody wanted to tell him what was sticking in their gut. It's difficult to tell a hard man what people are saying about him."

Hughes had now told the President publicly and found that an injured LBJ

bore lasting and vitriolic enmities. Ended was the friendship in which Harold Hughes had proudly seconded the President's 1964 nomination and had been praised as "that big tough governor" and honored with an overnight stay at the White House.

As his 1968 Senate race drew near, Hughes faced new pressure on the Vietnam issue from Joseph F. Rosenfield, a millionaire Iowa department store executive who served as his crucially important campaign finance chairman and his chief individual source of campaign funds. There are few millionaires in Iowa and less than a handful interested in financing Democratic political candidates. Rosenfield was passionately committed against the war and flatly told Hughes he would have to make a choice. "Joe said that if I didn't change on the war, he would still contribute but he wouldn't run my campaigns anymore," acknowledges Hughes.

Privately, Hughes concurred that the war was wrong but he felt it would betray the fighting men to say so publicly. Rosenfield and other dove supporters persisted. Finally, Hughes began to disassociate himself from the Johnson Administration's Vietnam policy, but he did so only in slow, cautious stages, testing whether the political climate in Iowa was ripe for bolder anti-war pronouncements.

War, he says now, "is useless as a political instrument. I hate war, all war. Humanity itself is at stake." The transformation is complete.

Lyndon Johnson's withdrawal from the presidential race posed new political problems and Hughes responded by playing it cool. "I was trying to keep my state from blowing up under me," he explains of the situation in which Iowa Democrats were fiercely divided among Humphrey, Kennedy, and McCarthy. Eventually, Hughes would have come out for Kennedy, but after the assassination he tried hard to move to his old friend Hubert Humphrey. Suspicious of the so-called "new politics," Hughes wanted to stay in the mainstream of the

divided Democratic party.

"I waited and waited for Hubert to announce that he was off the damn war, but he never did," recalls Hughes. "When I talked with him I found out that he was an irretrievable hawk—worse than LBJ."

At the same time, Rosenfield negotiated with the eagerly hovering McCarthy forces, suggesting that, if they wanted Hughes's support, perhaps they would like him to make the nominating speech. Rosenfield followed the standard maxim of the Hughes team: if Hughes gets involved in an issue, he's best off going all the way. Whatever the political liabilities of a McCarthy endorsement, they would at least be partially offset by Iowans' reflected pride in seeing their governor make the nominating speech.

An insider recalls Hughes and his top advisers discussing what effect an endorsement of McCarthy would have. They felt it was vitally important for Hughes to maintain his image of decisiveness and strong leadership and that this image was slipping badly as the convention drew near with Hughes still undecided.

Hughes insists today that his decision and his nominating speech hurt him in his Iowa Senate race. "I thought at the time it would hurt me. I knew I was in a tough race and I thought this would be a crowning blow." Asked why he would take such an unconventional political risk, he responds that "politics is not conventional anymore. It has become a life and death matter."

Hughes played another important role at the convention—persuading the delegates to create a party reform commission to democratize procedures for choosing future convention delegates. The old guard fought the move, and its success further strained Hughes's relationship with Humphrey and the party chief, Oklahoma Senator Fred Harris. But as vice-chairman (Senator George McGovern of South Dakota is commission chairman) Hughes seems convinced now that the party leaders are committed to accepting the com-

mission's recommendations for reform. If they don't, Hughes predicts, 1972 will see the biggest contest over delegate seating in the history of political conventions.

From the Chicago convention, Hughes went home to wage his battle for the U. S. Senate. Overconfident, tired and ill for two weeks with the flu, and up against a tough opponent with limitless campaigning energy, he almost blew it. He edged Republican State Senator David Stanley, a lawyer, by the thin margin of 7,000 votes.

As a Senator Hughes has concentrated on relatively few issues—narcotics and alcoholism, and Vietnam. It is characteristic of Hughes that he gravitated toward one or two issues he feels strongly about rather than become immersed in a vast array of legislation. He led the unsuccessful fight against the Administration's new enforcement proposals on drugs and narcotics, protesting particularly that research and education on drugs would be placed in the hands of Attorney General John Mitchell instead of in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. His protest sparked medical experts into organizing to kill or amend the legislation in the House.

As chairman of a special subcommittee on alcoholism and narcotics, he has held hearings in Washington and in several other cities, giving both his cause and himself some exposure. The hearings have brought out dramatically the need for more humane methods of treating alcoholics and drug users, but they are at least as interesting for what they show about Hughes. Time after time, he becomes emotionally involved with the former drinkers and addicts who come before him as witnesses, identifying once again with the sufferers and reliving his own past. He has introduced legislation that takes a health and education approach to preventing and treating drug abuse. He has castigated the Nixon Administration for opposing it, accusing

it's officials of "relegating drug addicts to dying in the streets" and warning them that the bill will pass despite their opposition.

His views on the war now closely parallel those of the Senate's most outspoken "doves." He calls President Nixon's Vietnamization program "a semantic hoax" which will prolong American involvement in Asia.

Liberals outside Washington increasingly are turning to Hughes for new leadership. He was sought out last year by a group of liberal business and professional men from New York City who developed the Fund for New Priorities in America, with the objective of reducing the role of the military and shifting government spending to domestic problems. Some of the members see Hughes picking up the strands of the peace movement in 1972. They have encouraged him to speak out on Vietnam and have given him a platform.

As featured speaker at the organization's March, 1970, fund-raising rally in Madison Square Garden to raise money for incumbent Democratic Senators who stand for "peace and new priorities," Hughes brought roars of approval from the crowd of 15,000 with his declaration: "We are here to bury the false and shoddy propaganda that the peace movement in America is dead." He called for a total restructuring of national policies "to break cleanly and drastically with the past. . .not superficial change, but major surgery."

Eli Sagan, the coat manufacturer who is vice-chairman of the Fund for New Priorities, calls Hughes "the most morally committed man I've ever met in politics."

He goes on to picture Hughes as "both a moralist and a realist" and adds "you don't usually find that in one person." The New Yorkers see in Hughes the emotional commitment they felt was lacking in Eugene McCarthy and obviously are interested in him as a 1972 candidate. If Hughes started a serious drive for the nomination, he would have the poor man's usual handicap and the

wealthy New Yorkers could be a starting base to raise campaign funds.

Is Harold Hughes growing fast enough both politically and in comprehension of national issues to be presidential timber in 1972? That question is asked repeatedly by potential supporters and by doubters. The skeptics say that Hughes has expressed comprehensive interest and knowledge on too few subjects. They point out also that his staff is too inexperienced in national government to help him rapidly fill in the gaps.

Hughes's Washington staff is his Iowa staff, transplanted to the East. Park Rinard has become his official instead of unofficial aide, and the rest of the staff came with Hughes from the governor's office in Des Moines. Hughes knows that it is a green staff in Washington terms, but says "they have the capacity to grow and will leave their mark on the Washington scene."

He has no expert on foreign affairs ("If I ever became a candidate for higher office I'd get one or become one myself."). He has no one who knows much about economics and there are gaps in other important areas of specialized knowledge. If his staff is inexperienced, its members are young, bright, and idealistic. As Hughes has grown politically, he has not handicapped himself by retaining inept cronies. His first campaign manager, a hard-drinking road contractor, was curtly dismissed after Hughes found out he was using the governor's office telephones to add weight to his calls to the state highway commission.

Aside from a few hunting and relaxing friends, Hughes's inner circle of trusted advisers has remained small, with Rinard and Rosenfield its only permanent members. Hughes and Rinard already seem so close that they are sometimes indistinguishable. "Park is a sounding board for me," Hughes says. "He has become a sort of conscience for me." Rinard also insists on personally writing all the speeches that shape the Senator's policies on public issues. Despite his phenomenal capabilities and energy, there are obvious limitations to what can be

supplied by one key aide.

Far removed from the tradition of highly organized party politics, Hughes has always stood independently, a good posture for a liberal Democrat seeking election in a still-Republican state. He did not build the party machinery in Iowa and remained always a little suspicious of it. He has made good friends quickly in the Senate, but he still usually travels alone.

Harold Hughes is a man on a mission. He is running for President—not in the sense of an announced candidate or even as an active behind-the-scenes political maneuverer, but more in the manner of a man who feels some sort of distant calling and is getting ready. His inner feelings and his acute political senses tell him that the issues he is concentrating on are the vital ones in American society and ones on which a political future can be built. He knows the chance is remote that any call will come in 1972, and he is maintaining the low visibility that is sensible now. A staff member says that Hughes is available if the lightning strikes and acknowledges that he is moving toward a spot where the chances of lightning's striking are best.

Perhaps unconsciously, the Presidency was on his mind as Hughes walked with a sense of quiet exhilaration last November among the thousands of youths gathered at the Washington Monument to protest the war. He said that the peace movement is a living force which will again gain strength as there is new disenchantment with the war. And then he mused: "In 1972, these kids who are 18 now will be old enough to vote."

Most of the time, one accepts Hughes's explanation that he is simply working on the issues he believes in, with no conscious aim toward a new political future. But at that point, one has momentarily forgotten that Harold Hughes, the sensitive human being, is also very much the astute and shrewd politician. That subtle blend has been his success, and it will determine in large measure where he goes from here. ■

The Faults of Fault Insurance

by Richard E. Stewart

In America today, a typical driver has a better than even chance of having an accident every three years; just about every driver will have an accident sometime. We are all prospective accident victims. Most of us are also premium payers. Automobile accident costs are everyone's concern.

Today some of the costs of automobile accidents are transferred from the victim to others and some of those costs are not transferred at all but are borne by the victim. Which accident victims get paid, and when and how much? Which victims do not get paid and why? Who pays, and how much?

Today some of the costs of automobile accidents are covered by insurance. This year New Yorkers will pay some \$959 million for automobile liability insurance. To whom does it go, and when and why? For whose benefit are the people paying their \$959 million insurance premiums?

Richard E. Stewart is the Superintendent of Insurance of the state of New York. This article is adapted by him from a report he, Aaron Trupin, Stanley Dorf, and Abraham Blech prepared for Governor Nelson Rockefeller.

The cornerstone of the present way of handling the personal injury and property damage costs of automobile accidents is fault law which, when combined with insurance against liability for fault, becomes what we will call the fault insurance system.

Fault law is a collection of rules for determining, as between individuals, who will bear the cost of an accident. The determinations are made on a case-by-case basis, with the cost being shifted from the individual on whom it fell only if some other individual can be shown to have been exclusively at fault. Fault law became the established law of traffic cases long before the automobile was invented, and simply because it was the law of traffic cases, it became the law of automobile traffic cases.

When motorists faced the risk of being held financially liable for automobile accidents, they sought to insure against that risk. Insurance companies began to offer an indemnity policy under which the company undertook to defend its policyholder against suits based on fault law, and further undertook, in the event fault was established, to pay the damages up to the policy limit.