

000811

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CLUB

Washington, D.C.

April 20, 1960

① Sam made to quote from the classics

McCarthy  
my second

500812

Ms Fowler

National Democratic Club  
Washington, D.C.  
April 20, 1960

Graneme  
John Blat  
Joe Karth

(must kill W. VIRG - show)

4  
Irish - 3  
magnificent

The Greek philosopher Plato, over 23 centuries ago,  
described democracy as a form of government full of "variety and  
disorder." He showed remarkable gifts of prophecy, for he  
might well have been describing the process by which we Americans  
choose our candidates for the Presidency.

Just look at the picture tonight. There are declared and  
undeclared candidates. There are dark horses pawing the straw  
in their stables. And then there is the minority - perhaps not  
the most underprivileged minority in America, but certainly the  
smallest - who are submitting their case to the people in primary  
elections.

I shall tonight refrain from yielding to the temptation -  
to which all political scientists succumb sooner or later -

of devising a more orderly method of choosing nominees for the  
Presidency.

*I have a Plan*

*to select a Democratic  
candidate for president*

I don't doubt that there must be better ways. After all,

I'd be the last person to subscribe to the credo of the conservative

"Whatever is, is right." But I am far too busy participating in

this process to have the time or the detachment to devise a new

one.

Rather, I shall accentuate the positive. I shall talk  
about some of the real advantages of primary campaigns, as I

have known them from my experience, both for our Party and for

our country. And I shall stress ways by which, without any basic  
changes, they could yield greater dividends.

The greatest advantage of these primaries, as I see it, is that,  
however imperfectly and disjointedly, they put the Democratic case  
on the front pages of newspapers throughout the country. Any party

*Advantages*

*Dem  
Case*

*START  
HERE*

without the Presidency is handicapped in putting its message  
across in competition with the superb sounding board of the  
White House. And a party like ours, which represents the people  
rather than the publishers, is doubly handicapped.

I happen to believe, like all of you here, that our Democratic  
case is a sound and a <sup>convincing</sup> ~~correct~~ one. But even if I should wake  
up one morning fully persuaded that "Father Knows Best" - which  
heaven forbid - I should still consider free discussion and free  
and forceful criticism good for any President.

We need to break through the cocoon of ~~obsequious~~ silence  
in which President Eisenhower has too long been cossetted, and  
put <sup>to</sup> him and to the American people some hard and painful questions.

We need to know what has happened to the position of strength  
and of high prestige in the world which he inherited from past  
Democratic Administrations.

✓ We need to know how and when the diplomatic initiative has slipped out of our hands. We need to know why President Eisenhower has waited until yesterday to set up a disarmament agency - something which, as Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Disarmament, I have urged for years. (Andrade August)

✓ We need to know why our so-called "surplus" foods rot in warehouses and storage costs mount to staggering heights, while people go hungry in many parts of the world - yes, and in West

Virginia too.

(Why wait for 6 yrs for Peace Food Administration)

✓ We need to know why public services are starved, while private pursuits flourish.

(Why Health Service for Pres, Cabinet & Congress + no care for aged)

✓ We need to know, above all, what our national purposes and priorities are - rather than have yet another commission appointed to find out.

(A Commission without funds or staff)

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It is good that our Democratic voices are not only raised but heard - and it is good also that we do not always agree.

Whatever may be said of our Democratic Party - and there have been some harsh words during our century and a half of existence - we have never, I think, been accused of an excess of conformity.

It can do us nothing but good to remind our fellow-citizens of this.

*Debate, dissent, decision!!*

I think too that there can be real advantages to an aspect of primary campaigning which has been often criticized - its built-in bias toward state rather than national issues.

Whatever may be the balance of gain and loss in other states, for West Virginia I believe this has been pure gain.

Recently Congressman Miller, Chairman of the Republican Congressional Committee, had the incredible gall to declare that, if Americans are hungry, it is only because they have been so well fed under the Eisenhower Administration that they are dieting.

(X)  
get  
W. Virg.  
case  
before  
the people

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h By May 10, even the most casual newspaper reader, radio dial twirler, or TV viewer will know that this is arrant nonsense.

h He will know that there are ugly patches of poverty in this so-called affluent society, patches which it is otherwise far too easy to ignore. He will know that this process of technological progress - or automation, to give it its newfangled name - has tragic casualties as well as benefits.

*need to put to  
Private  
Public Good*

h Many of our citizens - and I include the first citizen in the White House - know more of the poverty of India than ~~of the poverty~~ *economic troubles* of Cabin Creek. As we talk about the problems of tomorrow, we need to be reminded that there are places where the problems of yesterday and today have not yet been solved.

I hope that this primary campaign will make it impossible for our *many State* nation to continue to leave West Virginia forgotten and neglected.

h As for me, I have made a firm resolution. If and when I move into

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, I shall make it my first order of  
business to work with the people of West Virginia and of the other  
states who have come on hard times through no fault of their  
own - to put into action a program to help these fine Americans  
help themselves. — *area Redevelop at home!*

So far, so good. But, as a member of the small minority  
of Presidential primary campaigners, I have some complaints  
to make, and I'll put them in the form of a bill of rights.

First, I respectfully request of the press; television  
and radio the right to be heard - and heard in quality as well  
as in quantity. Maybe fights and personal conflict do sell  
more newspapers. But surely it should not be necessary,

in order to receive adequate coverage in the mass media, to  
hit someone over the head. Just as the politician attempts  
through responsible behavior and attention to the real issues



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to avoid demagoguery, so, too, the press has an obligation  
to cover the efforts of the politician to lead and to educate.

Just after the Wisconsin primary, my good friend Walter  
Lippman philosophized in print about the primary system - and I  
can sum his observations up by saying that, like Queen

Victoria, he was not amused. Among other things, he wrote:

"If either Kennedy or Humphrey made one serious,  
considered speech on the great national issues it was, so  
far as my reading of the newspapers goes, not reported to  
the nation."

I speak only for myself, but the fact is that I made a number of  
such speeches. I can remember one with particular vividness -  
the Humphrey Family Party at Wausau.

Catholic School  
7

Some of you may remember this as the town where that "impartial" campaign reporter, Joe Alsop, could not - in spite of the most diligent and dedicated research - find a <sup>^</sup>scratch <sup>v</sup>handful of Humphrey supporters. I have news for you, brother Alsop. Humphrey carried Wausau. And surrounding Marathon County!

This meeting drew the biggest crowd they'd ever had in Wausau, and they had to feed them in relays. When the last plate of beans had been handed out, and I finally arose to speak, many of my audience had been waiting for over an hour.

I delivered on that occasion a serious, thoughtful, carefully written speech on disarmament - a subject to which I have given much time and thought over a period of years. I knew very well, even before my wife and most candid critic told me so, that it would not be the "right" speech for a "beanfeed" political rally.

But I happen to believe, with Walter Lippmann, that the discussion of the great issues is an essential part of a primary campaign. I was that night using the Wausau meeting as a forum for this purpose.

The people in Wausau heard me. Few others did.

Walter Lippmann didn't see it in the papers - and it obviously wasn't because he is a casual or a careless newspaper reader. He is not.

Yes, I think that we have the right to have the important things we say from time to time reported - not just the daily banter and small change of campaigning.

We have a second right, too - the right to be judged on our records, and not on the frivolous or unworthy reasons some people may give to pollsters for voting for us.

The great majority of citizens vote seriously, soberly, and intelligently. But, in the nature of things, a good many votes are cast in a somewhat less lofty spirit.

Recently a writer in a serious and highly respected liberal magazine reviewed our Democratic aspirants for the White House.

He dismissed Humphrey's chances out of hand because, he said, I didn't look like a President.

(look)

Now, I am just old enough to remember the handsomest man who ever sat in the White House. For the benefit of the youngsters here, that was Warren G. Harding - and I don't believe even the most fervid Republican partisan would claim that he was their greatest gift to the nation!

(Harding)

We can laugh at frivolities of this sort - but there are voters and even self-announced supporters who force us to spend valuable campaign time disavowing them, when we should be out

pounding away at the real issues.

L I am often reminded of a convention where someone was speaking in favor of a resolution. A stentorian voice rang out from the floor: "Point of order!"

L "What's your point of order?" the chairman asked.

"My point is that I'm in favor of this resolution too, but he's ruining our case!"

L Unfortunately, we candidates can't be everywhere, and we can't guarantee that fouls won't be committed on our behalf.

We can only blow the whistle every time it happens - whether in a sincere but sadly misguided effort to help, or with subtle malice to hurt us.

L Yes, we have the right to be judged on our record - and we also have the right to talk about the record of our opponents.

"Record" is not a dirty word - and Postmaster-General Summerfield has not yet proposed banning it from the mails.

Every decision we make in public life, every vote we cast, makes us enemies as well as friends. We pay a high price for our record. It is our sword and our shield. Is it seriously maintained that we should hang it up on the wall before we go into battle?

I believe not. I stand squarely with the late and great Al Smith and his watchword: "Look at the record!" And I remind you that he didn't say "over" or "under" or "around" and least of all "away from" - he said "at the record."

Yes, there is - as Plato said - a great deal of "variety and disorder" in democracy. Unlike Plato - who was no great admirer of democracy - I like it that way. There is a lot of

chaos out of which - even if it takes rather more than the

Lord's six days - a better world can be fashioned.

These primaries do, at least if properly used - give the people a chance to express themselves. And they give our Democratic Party a chance to express itself - an opportunity to clarify and sharpen our purposes, so that we can offer the kind of dynamic and creative leadership which America so urgently needs - and which the free world has waited these seven years, patiently although sometimes almost despairingly, for us to give.



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