Campaign '72 ... in retrospect

time was divided into factions, and the control was really up for grabs. With fights over credentials, platform, and candidates, the party was bound to be irreparable divisions.

One of the goals affected by these divisions was the Wallace delegation. On the convention floor, McGovern's leadership, officially Democratic South, they had handed the delegation selection much the same as they had for years previous to 1972, and the opposing leadership stuck to the guidelines set down by none other than "radical" McGovern. They were vehemently opposed to McGovern, whose attitudes toward welfare, defense spending, blacks, etc., were all in direct opposition with their own views, and the planks which they attempted to pass during platform disputes.

In fact, the issue of McGovern as a "radical" is perhaps the one piece of misinformation which did most to alienate the Humphrey, Wallace and Jackson opponents. Referring to McGovern as radical had begun back in California with Humphrey's attack before the primary, and continued through the convention floor. Without the vote in the Wallace, Humphrey and Jackson caucuses, the time the Convention had rolled around, McGovern and his organization had been frustrated by the fact that the more conservative Democrats were not indoctrinated to his being a radical, and they could never support him in nominating a candidate.

The activity for the Convention was high, regardless of how many disputes or factions were represented. Every one of the delegates to the Convention was there for a particular reason, and most saw the changes within the Party as being beneficial, even though the advantage was with McGovern.

Throughout the first two days of the Convention the discussions were far from being resolved. The credentials fight was the last front fought by the McGovern forces, though with the McGovern campaign'sonneniment, that was the night the nomination was really won. Nor was the battle brought back together the second night as many of the highly ideological McGovern delegates attempted to pass minority planks calling for equal rights for homosexuals, legalization of marijuana, and liberalized abortion laws. True, some of the delegates actually felt that homosexuals should not have equal rights, however, most felt the other way, though they didn't want the party to say that in the platform on which it would run a candidate for the presidency, even though the candidate may also agree.

The third night of the Convention was just a formality, as McGovern was easily nominated. The McGovern forces were jubilant, and rightfully so. After all, they had stuck with their candidate since early in the year when he was just a Don Quixote politician against the party leaders and all felt personally responsible for having brought him the nomination after a full year of campaigning.

The next day, McGovern aide Tad Pillow, announced at an afternoon press conference at the Don Cesar Hotel that McGovern would ask the Convention to ratify Senator Thomas Eagleton of Missouri as his running mate in November.

The announcement was somewhat anti-climactic, since Eagleton's name, as well as the name of almost every other Democratic politician, had been mentioned repeatedly throughout the campaign. Eagleton was reportedly chosen only after a number of others had refused the running spot with McGovern, either for personal or political reasons.

However, the Convention nominated Eagleton amidst some concern that he had had emotional or drinking problems in Missouri, and the period following the nomination was a time for celebration and unification on the floor of the Convention Hall. Ted Kennedy brought the entire body of delegates to their feet in the early afternoon of the morning, with a speech which would hopefully unify the delegates before they left Miami Beach.

There had been nothing but conflict since the Convention began, and now with the assistance of Kennedy, McGovern and Eagleton would attempt to bring their party together for a victory in November. The scene in the Convention Hall was very moving as McGovern made his "Come home, American" speech, and as the delegates streamed out of the Hall for the final time to return home, it appeared that they were somewhat unified—at least temporarily.

Following the Convention, the Democrats had free weeks to organize their campaign effort before the Republicans would meet in Miami Beach to re-nominate Richard Nixon. Broaking tradition, McGovern decided he would use the time to get a campaign organization from the Republicans, and he and Eagleton hit the campaign trail after short rests.

However, McGovern's organization just wasn't working as he had thought it would, and there were constant reports in the press of staff shake-ups. Then came the dropping of Eagleton from the ticket, which at this point needs little explanation. It can't be denied that the hesitation in dropping Eagleton hurt the campaign, and now McGovern had to face not only Richard Nixon, but also the Democrats' Deke who were dropping from his group of supporters.

The McGovern camp was also somewhat crippled by the Eagle- ton affair, and by the time it was even close to re-organizing for the campaign ahead, it was time for the Republican Convention.

(Friday - The Republican Convention and the next to Nov- ember 7.)

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