



OBERLIN MOCK CONVENTION

OUTLOOK - 1960

Senator Gore Highlights May 6-7 Convention

On May 6th and 7th the nation's political spotlight will be focused on Oberlin College as the 25th Mock Political Convention convenes to elect their candidates to head the Democratic party ticket in the 1960 election campaign.

Gore to Chair

Senator Albert A. Gore, Democratic Senator from Tennessee, will preside as Permanent Chairman of the 1960 Mock Convention. As Permanent Chairman, Gore will deliver the opening address at the Saturday evening session, and will preside over the balloting for the presidential and vice-presidential candidates. In the 1956 Convention, chaired by Senator Richard L. Neuberger of Oregon, balloting continued until Adlai Stevenson and John Kennedy were nominated on the fourth ballot at 2:15 a. m. Sunday morning.

Elected to the Senate in 1952, Senator Gore began his political career in Cart-hage, Tennessee, the home of former Secretary of State Cordell Hull, where he was the organizer and principal speech-maker for the Young Democratic Clubs in Tennessee. After becoming Chairman of the Speaker's Bureau for the state Democratic organization in 1934 and Commissioner of Labor in 1936, Gore was elected to the House of Representatives in 1938, where he served until 1952, at which time he entered the Senate, defeating Kenneth D. McKellar, incumbent of six terms.

Background of Liberalism

Senator Gore has a background of liberalism. He strongly favors public power and has also worked to liberalize international trade restrictions. Gore was active both in the framing of the Democratic case against

the Dixon-Yates private power contract, and in presenting the case to public view in a seven hour speech delivered in the Senate.

Although Gore is a straight-line Democrat, he has deviated from party policy when his convictions demanded it. In 1939, while serving on the House Banking and Currency Committee, Gore opposed a bill for additional authorization for public housing and was chosen by House Republican leaders to deliver the concluding opposition speech. In Civil Rights, Gore voted for the Civil Rights Bill and did not sign the Southern Manifesto in 1956.

100 Years of Conventions

One hundred years ago, in 1860, Oberlin College held its first Mock Convention, thus introducing into the American scene a tradition as vital as the democratic process itself, that of creating an acute political awareness among a group of individuals who are preparing to inherit the reins of the democratic process—the students of America. To study the phenomenon of the American national political convention is important and beneficial: to *create* and *live* this phenomenon is to *create* an education. This active approach to the learning process is a vital dimension of the American educational system and the primary principle underlying the Oberlin mock political tradition.

Oberlin's active participation in the politics of the day dates back to the 1840's when Oberlin President Mahan was sent as a delegate to the Free Soil Party Convention in Buffalo. From Mahan's day to the 1860's Oberlin students and faculty held such mock gatherings as a Mock House of Representatives and a mock Cabinet meeting.

But in 1860 these sporadic gatherings were replaced by a mock presidential nominating convention to be held every four years before the regular National Conventions. Since 1860 the nation has seen 25 convention years and Oberlin has seen 24 (no convention was held in 1912).

Tradition tells us that in 1860 Lincoln was Oberlin's nominee; however, no records indicate the nominee of that year. Since 1860 the Oberlin Mock Convention has been successful ten times in naming the candidates who received the National Convention nomination. (Lincoln 1860; Grant 1868 and 1872; Benj. Harrison 1892; Wm. McKinley 1896 and 1900; Theo. Roosevelt 1904; Wm. Taft 1908; Hoover 1928; Adlai Stevenson 1956.)

Prior to 1872 women were barred from attending the Mock Convention. In that year Women's Board relaxed its policies somewhat and allowed women to sit in the gallery. From that time until 1916 women could be seen but not heard in mock conventions. In response to the growing impetus of the suffragette movement, in 1916 the women decided to hold a separate convention of their own. Then after female suffrage was adopted in 1920, women joined men on equal footing at the Mock Convention.

3 Out Of 24 Conventions Democratic

Oberlin students have held 24 Mock Conventions in the 25 national election years beginning with 1860. To date all but three of these Conventions have been Republican—1932, 1956, and now in 1960, reflecting the continuing party preference of a majority of the Oberlin student body who come from the Republican belt of New England, the middle Atlantic states and the eastern middle west. Last May the students voted by a 2 to 1 majority to hold a Democratic convention in an election year when the Democratic party has produced several serious contenders who promise to fight an interesting political battle.

\$25,000 Convention Budget

Last spring Student Council chose a student Chairman and Executive Committee to coordinate the Convention machinery. With an initial staff of 250 and a working budget of \$25,000 all of which is raised by the students themselves, Convention wheels commenced turning this fall with the selection of 54 State Delegations Chairmen. These chairmen will work with their delegations for two and a half months studying the political views of their respective states or territories, hashing out national issues, outlining their strategy and selecting their candidates, and in some cases, "favorite

sons." This work will culminate on the Convention floor.

At the same time, such pressure groups as the AFL-CIO, American Civil Liberties Union, Chamber of Commerce, NAM, Farmers' Union and NAACP are preparing to battle and wrangle for their candidates and issues among the delegations and before the Resolutions Committee. This Committee, after several weeks of hearings, will review the testimony and submit a platform to the Convention on Friday, May 6th.

Butler, Reston Highlight October Forum

A series of six pre-convention forums and symposia on relevant topics of national interest will be held throughout the year to inform the campus on issues, potential and actual, which are dominating the national and political scene and will determine the course of the 1960 Democratic Convention. The first of these forums was held on October 22nd. Speaking on the topic, "Party Issues and Candidates" were Sidney Hyman, author of *The American President*; Paul Butler, Democratic National Chairman; James Reston, Chief of the Washington Bureau of the New York Times; and Elmer E. Schattschneider, professor of Political Science at Wesleyan University. Future topics will include "Civil and States' Rights," "Labor and Management," "Foreign Affairs," "Agriculture," and "Monetary and Fiscal Policy."

1 1/2 Mile Parade

A full year's preparation, months of research, political maneuvering and caucus will explode in May on the Oberlin campus into the clamor, color and heat of the Convention itself. Following a one and a half mile long parade of bands and floats, Oberlin students will throw themselves for two days and nights into fiery and exhausting rallies, all night debates and pre-dawn bargaining, stirred by marching banner-wavers and avid segregationists—an education created, and experienced lived actively, never to be forgotten.

The influence of the Oberlin Mock Convention is felt far beyond . . . the Oberlin campus . . . People gain a clear understanding of the processes upon which our nation relies for stability and through which it has become great.

Chief Justice Earl Warren

I envy you every part of it. I envy you your youth, your clear-eyed idealism, and I envy this training, which gives you a running start . . . in the processes of democratic government.

Adlai E. Stevenson

Professor Flinn Discusses Candidates

Hubert H. Humphrey

Senator from Minnesota since 1948. He first gained national attention by leading the fight for a strong civil rights plank in the 1948 Democratic Convention. Entering Congress, he became a spokesman for liberal groups and causes. He is thought to be one of the "inner club," most able to get things done.

Humphrey now serves on the Foreign Relations, Agriculture, and Government Operations Committees. He has served also on the Small Business Committee. He heads the sub-committee on disarmament, and has taken the position that an agreement with the Soviet Union can be reached. He has been notably active in regard to agriculture, favoring vigorous government assistance to farmers.

Humphrey is 48 years old. Born in South Dakota, he once operated the family drug store. An honor student at the University of Minnesota, he has been a professor of political science and mayor of Minneapolis.

Lyndon B. Johnson

Representative in Congress, 1937-1948, member of the Senate since 1948. Elected Democratic leader in 1953, Johnson is judged by many to be the most powerful figure in the Senate. Originally a New Dealer, he usually votes with the liberals, but his leadership has been criticized by liberal spokesmen. Johnson's position on civil rights is moderate.

A special interest is defense policy. Johnson is a member of the Armed Services Committee, and has headed its Preparedness Sub-Committee. He is also a member of the important Appropriations Committee.

A native of Texas, Johnson graduated from Georgetown Law School in Washington. While a student he worked on Capitol Hill; returned as a member in less than two years. Congress has been his career. He is 51.

John F. Kennedy

Three-term representative in Congress, from Massachusetts since 1952. Kennedy is well known for his work on the Senate Labor Racket Committee, plays a leading part in Senate debates on labor issues. Last summer he led the effort to repeal the disclaimer provision on the National Defense Education Act. Kennedy is on

both the Foreign Relations and Labor Committees. His voting record is liberal.

Kennedy's religious affiliation, Roman Catholic, is a factor whose effect on the convention is unpredictable. Kennedy himself opposes state aid for parochial schools, and strongly supports First Amendment separation of church and state.

Born in 1917, Kennedy is the youngest of the candidates. Member of a wealthy family, he attended Harvard; then served in the navy with distinction. He worked briefly as a journalist, and entered Congress in 1946. He has written several books, of which the best known is *Profiles in Courage*.

Adlai E. Stevenson

Democratic nominee in 1952 and 1956, governor of Illinois from 1948 to 1952. Widely respected for his thoughtful, well-phrased public statements, Stevenson's principal interest is foreign policy. Without a legislative record, he is considered by most observers to be a moderate in the liberal camp.

Stevenson has had a varied public career. In addition to being a reform governor, he has served in the Agriculture and Navy Departments; and has been an advisor to several American international missions.

Fifty-nine years old, Stevenson was born in Illinois, educated at Princeton and Northwestern Law School. Since his defeat in 1956, he has practiced law, travelled widely; and is a member of the Democratic Advisory Council.

Stuart Symington

Elected to the Senate from Missouri in 1952, re-elected in 1958. He is best known for his interest in defense policy. Usually considered an exponent of air power, he has argued also for balanced forces. His voting record is liberal, although he is not closely identified with the liberal block in the Senate.

Symington serves on the Armed Services, Agriculture, and Government Operations Committees. He has been Secretary of the Air Force, Chairman of the National Security Resources Board, and Administrator of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

Born in Massachusetts in 1901, Symington attended Yale; was later a successful manufacturer in St. Louis.



Conventions and Conventionality

by Professor Aaron Wildavsky

No one will deny that Presidential conventions are peculiar. After all, they perform a peculiar function. The task of the convention is to unite a party which is not inherently united, behind a popular candidate who is unpopular with many delegates, in order to speak for all the people after battling half of them in an election. Yet there are critics who object to some of the convention-time display which goes with these peculiarities.

Are Conventions Too American?

Are Presidential conventions too boisterous? Too flashy? Vulgar when they should be genteel, raucous rather than sedate, gay when solemnity is required? Are the conventions, in a word, too American?

Perhaps the best way to serve those who feel that grave decisions should be made by a solemn convention would be to give them what they want.

Opening to the stern strains of Wag-noven's, "Let Us Face the Future and Frown," the new convention could immediately order the abolition of certain pernicious practices of the past. First, No Smoking signs would be placed everywhere—a move cunningly contrived to eliminate the possibility of decisions being made in smoke-filled rooms. To further purify the atmosphere, all behind-the-scenes bargaining would be eliminated. Henceforth, all bargains would be struck in-front-of-the-scenes, before millions of television viewers, with each of the participants trying to score points against the other in order to impress the public. Since this kind of bargaining would require four years to reach agreement, the Prohibition Party would be the only one able to produce a candidate, and do away with our one remaining solace.

Nominations by Congress

Perhaps Congress would be the proper body to nominate a President in a decorous fashion? Realization would soon dawn, however, that the forces of the right are vastly over-represented in Congress. Somehow, the prospect of a battle between Senators Lausche and Goldwater would not be too appealing.

How about the party primary as a replacement for conventions? A national primary would certainly be a high class experience: it would have to be, since no poor man could ever raise the millions required for the first primary, the run-off primary, and the gruelling national election.

Nominating Rationale

If a frontal attack is doomed, it might still be possible to bore from within by discrediting the convention's leading rationale; the desire to find a man who can win. The slogan would then be—nominate the best man no matter how unpopular he may be. But what would this universal genius be like? He would take clearly defined, consistent stands on all public issues, thus managing to alienate every important interest group in the country. As a genius he would be unlikely to suffer fools gladly, a talent endearing him to friend and foe alike. Yet a great mind is worth much and this man would make a great President if only he could overcome two obstacles: the first being that no one would vote for him and the second that no one would support him if, by some fluke, he did get elected.

The great question is this: if we act conventional at conventions, how conventional can they be?

**AS OBERLIN GOES, SO GOES THE NATION
MAY 6 AND 7, 1960**