

Adlai E. Stevenson: Last Chance

by Richard L. Neuberger



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IN 1956, after his second defeat for the Presidency, Adlai E. Stevenson made a statement regarding the highest elective office in the free world which was both renunciatory and philosophical. He said, "I can contemplate in tranquillity the distinct possibility that I will never be President of the United States."

Because millions of his fellow Americans do not share this tranquillity, Stevenson continues to be regarded as the most likely nominee of his party for the third consecutive time. Many Stevenson enthusiasts happen to be intellectuals, civic leaders, and generous campaign contributors. They might be called the catalytic agent of the Democratic Party. They are what make the water fizz. They create public opinion. And they feel a sense of kinship with Adlai Stevenson that they seem to sense in no other Presidential hopeful in either party.

Thus, in spite of all the zeal and fervor for that brace of tireless campaigning Democratic Senators, John F. Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey, many adherents of these men continually make it evident that Kennedy and Humphrey are their first choices only if Stevenson does not actively enter the field. At innumerable Democratic gatherings, I have heard people volunteer the information that their heart belongs to Stevenson even though they happen to be wearing somebody else's campaign button on

their lapel or bosom at the moment. This was vividly demonstrated at the banquet in New York honoring Eleanor Roosevelt's 75th birthday. Most of the Democratic White House potentials were present. Stevenson received by far the most vociferous ovation. Raymond P. Brandt wrote in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* that only Stevenson and Mrs. Roosevelt herself "came away with increased popularity and respect."

Stevenson has told me that he will not spend a four-cent postage stamp to win the Democratic nomination. He is personally fond of both Humphrey and Kennedy, and he has given each of them a sort of may-the-best-man-win benediction. But if a stalemate should occur at the Los Angeles convention, it is probable that Stevenson will be available for the party's nomination—even though some of his closest friends trust this will not be the case, for they wish to see him spared the ordeal of a third nationwide campaign. "I'd die if Stevenson lost again," said the attractive wife of a wealthy and enlightened date grower near Palm Springs.

It is my judgment that most of the leaders of the Democratic Party look upon Stevenson as the nation's intellectually best prepared man to serve in the White House. Who can rival his eloquence and basic wisdom? Yet many of these same individuals confess to some doubt that Stevenson can be elected. If it were not for this

doubt, he probably would be a certainty for the nomination in 1960. But Stevenson has been beaten twice. One defeat was by a margin of 6,500,000 votes, the other by 9,500,000. These were not photo-finishes. They were landslides. Over and against this is the dry comment of Palmer Hoyt of the *Denver Post*: "Who could have licked George Washington? That was how General Eisenhower was presented to the American people."



This is the great behind-the-scenes debate within Democratic ranks regarding Adlai Stevenson. Were 1952 and 1956 fair tests of his national vote-corralling ability? If they accurately measured his appeal, then Democratic Party delegates will shy away from him as the 1960 nominee. But if the previous two elections are written off as forlorn hopes for the Democrats, regardless of the identity of the party's candidate, Adlai Stevenson could still be the overwhelming choice of those who will assemble in Los Angeles next July to make a fateful decision. I was told by a generous and liberal-minded California contributor to Democratic coffers:

"If I could appoint a President, I'd appoint Stevenson. He has what it takes to be a truly illustrious President. But if Stevenson is unable to win at the polls, I would rather succeed with a Democrat of lesser stature than to lose again with Stevenson."

It is Hamlet's dilemma repeated,

because it involves so many hypotheticals. What if the Suez crisis had not occurred on the eve of the 1956 elections? Had Republican demagoguery over the unpopular Korean War in 1952 made it impossible for a Democrat to succeed? Had the Democratic string run out after 20 years in national office? Many of Harry Truman's intimates believe that Stevenson was too indecisive, that he did not conduct "fighting" campaigns, that he equivocated on issues of vast potential appeal for the Democrats. But one of Stevenson's faithful has replied wryly, "Don't ever forget that Truman ran against Dewey. That's a whole lot different from running against Eisenhower."

The Lingering Doubt of Whether He Can Be Elected

The debate is endless, but it also narrows down to another question. How much have the two defeats by Eisenhower hurt Stevenson's political prestige, no matter how blameless he may be for what happened? One theory holds that too many voters among the present electorate cast their ballots against Stevenson for him ever to be able to reverse the verdict. Would millions of voters confess, even to themselves, that they could have been wrong twice before? Yet, arrayed against this is the fact that many political figures in America have won major offices after numerous defeats—Senators John Carroll of Colorado, William E. Proxmire of Wisconsin, and Ralph W. Yarborough of Texas, to mention only a conspicuous few on the contemporary scene. And if the British people had permitted earlier political failures to shape their attitude perpetually, they might have been denied the gifted leadership of Winston Churchill during World War II.

I am confident that Adlai Stevenson is the private 1960 favorite of the overwhelming majority of influential Democrats. But there exists among some of these same persons the lingering doubt of whether or not he can be elected.

Why is Stevenson such a favorite? What accounts for his enduring appeal to so many thoughtful men and women? He is not so liberal as Humphrey. He lacks the handsome youthfulness of Kennedy. He cannot match

the political skill of Lyndon Johnson. He has many more overt handicaps—his divorce, for example—than Symington. He is not currently in high elective office like Governors Robert Meyner of New Jersey or G. Mennen (Soapy) Williams of Michigan. Yet mere mention of Stevenson's name can inspire and thrill many a gathering of Democrats.

I have tried to locate the secret of Stevenson's appeal to intellectual and thoughtful voters. I think one of his strengths is a trait which most orthodox politicians regard as virtually his principal weakness—what they describe as his indecisiveness, his tendency to see both sides of a difficult question, his melancholy and prolonged grappling with highly complex issues.

Of some of these things there can be no doubt. In 1952 Stevenson thrashed about like a salmon in a fish ladder, trying to make up his mind whether to run for the Presidency or for reelection as governor of Illinois. His attitude on farm price supports has never quite satisfied those who favor a continuation of big agricultural subsidies; nor are public-power groups content that he is 100 per cent committed to their side. I have heard criticisms from certain labor leaders that Stevenson has seemed to encounter "difficulty" making up his mind about amendments to the Taft-Hartley Act.

Yet these very qualities, so disturbing to some groups, are a factor in endearing Stevenson to the intellectuals, teachers, and writers who predominate in quite a few Democratic circles. Here is a man who does not pose as having a pat solution for every problem of these troubled times. He rarely indulges in the glib slogans which pretend to offer such easy remedies for grim maladies. He reserves his doubts about ready answers to monumental problems like farm surpluses, competing with the Soviets, or raising the necessary funds to finance

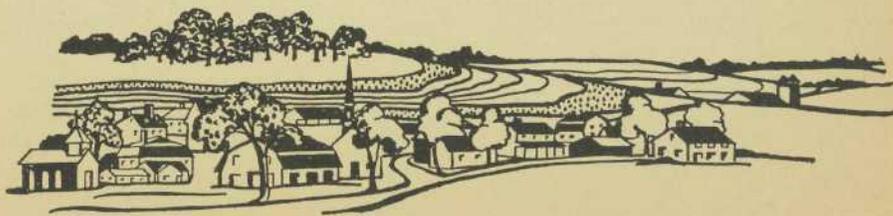
government in the Twentieth Century. This, in the minds of many people, is a welcome contrast to President Eisenhower's bland promises of 100 per cent of parity, liberation of the satellite nations, and the "unleashing" of Chiang Kai-shek. Also, these Democrats occasionally recall that certain prominent members of their own party have heralded, with much fanfare, the unveiling of a marvelous new farm program—a program which they have not yet produced.

Stevenson Weakest When He Listens to Campaign Strategists

To extreme Democratic partisans, Stevenson at times can be somewhat less than satisfying. This is probably true of any political figure who broods extensively and who often appears indecisive. Lincoln, also a melancholy brooder, was not sufficiently hard toward the South to please the Republican radicals who unsuccessfully plotted his defeat for reelection in 1864. Indeed, Judge Samuel I. Rosenman of New York, former confidant of Franklin D. Roosevelt and an intimate of President Truman, has said somewhat disparagingly of Stevenson:

"I don't think his views are those of a liberal, but more of a middle-of-the-roader. On domestic issues, there's not much difference between Stevenson's ideas and those of President Eisenhower."

This is undoubtedly an over-simplification of Stevenson's reluctance to accept felicitous answers merely because they have voter appeal. Any person who has read his book *What I Think* will know there is a gulf, vast and wide, between Stevenson's ideas and those of the war hero who has twice conquered him for the Presidency. There also have been the numerous occasions when Stevenson was ahead of his time. During the 1956 campaign he took the risk of urging a suspension of nuclear tests.



Vice President Nixon called this suggestion "extraordinary and appalling, catastrophic nonsense—the height of irresponsibility . . ." Yet today, nearly four years later, Nixon himself has opposed a resumption of nuclear testing. Nor can it be wholly forgotten that Judge Rosenman's beloved patron, Franklin D. Roosevelt, was quite universally looked upon as a conservative among Democrats prior to his brilliant unfurling of the New Deal.

Stevenson is not a particularly adroit politician, and he himself probably would be the first to admit it. Eric Sevareid relates how Stevenson, shortly before the Illinois elections of 1948, told him they had written off Paul Douglas as a possible winner and that if he, Stevenson, won at all, it would be by a very narrow margin. Actually, Douglas was elected to the Senate overwhelmingly, and Stevenson went to the gubernatorial mansion at Springfield by one of the most colossal majorities in the history of the state.

In 1952 my wife Maurine and I were visiting Governor Stevenson in the Illinois capital. He then was being casually discussed for the Democratic Presidential nomination. Maurine pleaded with him not to consider this because Eisenhower was sure to be the Republican nominee. "And nobody could beat Ike," she added.

Stevenson countered with the information that Senator Scott Lucas of Illinois, the Democratic Senate leader, believed Taft had the GOP nomination all wrapped up. "I agree with Lucas," said Stevenson.

It is probably an irony of our era that Stevenson, poor politician though he is, suffers the most when he permits his political peers to persuade him to be out of character. This occurred in the campaign of 1956. Departing from the 1952 style which had inspired and lifted so many Americans, he allowed himself to get down to such narrow specifics as the price of hogs or the cost of kilowatts. This was supposed to be shrewd politics in certain states. Some Democratic politicians also felt, with audible relief, that it removed Stevenson from the lofty plane and high ideals which had characterized his 1952 appearances. The metamorphosis didn't work. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* has observed: "In 1956 Mr. Stevenson lost the sup-

port of some of his 1952 admirers when he followed the advice of certain campaign strategists and deviated from his 1952 policy of 'talking sense to the American people.' "

No person is more thoroughly aware of this than Adlai Stevenson. "If I ever am foolish enough to let myself run for President again," he told me one day, "I will run exactly as my own man. I won't be met at the Iowa state line or the Oregon state line by people who will tell me the purportedly appropriate thing to say to win votes in that particular locality. I will relate to voters—everywhere—the blunt, hard facts about our position in the world and about the sacrifices required if we are going to improve it."

Stevenson Works Hard On His Own Speeches

Kenneth S. Davis, biographer of Stevenson in the book, *A Prophet in His Own Country*, has written that Stevenson's counselors in 1956 assumed he would delegate the writing of speeches to others while he was left free "to concentrate on public appearances and personal 'politicking.'" On many occasions in 1952 local bigwigs could not see the candidate because he was busy polishing his speeches until curtain time. The new division of labors in 1956 was an unhappy one for Stevenson. It helps to explain why the genuine Stevenson shone through so little of the oratory during that campaign. He later explained to Kenneth Davis that the actual preparation of speeches, "the 'creative' thing, is what I like to do. It's the fun of my life."

This, too, may be the key to a good deal of the basic Stevenson image. Ours is an age of the synthetic—of the ghostwriter, the tele-prompter, of makeup to hide the candidate's bald spots. We all know of the advertising agency which plans a promotional campaign for whiskey one day and a crusade for the Presidency the next. Neither is elevating nor meaningful. Candidates in both parties frequently have speech manuscripts thrust into their hands at the last moment. There is not even time in which to scan the ghost-writer's product before it is presented to the waiting audience and to the nation. People sense this and yearn for the days in our history

when Lincoln and Jefferson wrote, under crucial stress, what they themselves felt and believed in. They remember tales of Jefferson, in rented lodgings in Philadelphia, drafting the stirring and rhythmical language of the Declaration of Independence.

In our era Stevenson, alone among leaders, seems to respond to these gleaming chapters from our past. Most topflight politicians make no secret of the synthetic authorship of their speeches. Indeed, they often boast of the task force of skilled experts in each field whom they have recruited for this task. Although Stevenson has had at his disposal some of the most gifted literary talent in the land, he has a hard time relying upon it. Davis, in *A Prophet in His Own Country*, has thus described the reaction in 1952 of those who made the pilgrimage to Springfield to fortify the Stevenson cause with their pens and typewriters:

"All of them became convinced, if they were not at the outset, that Stevenson was a far better writer of Stevenson speeches than any of them ever could be. Most of them were initially perturbed by the fact that the final drafts of speeches generally bore little resemblance to the drafts they had painfully prepared, but . . . with pride and truth they could proclaim that the speeches as Stevenson finally gave them—speeches which would be gathered into a best-selling book months after the campaigning had ended—were very much Stevenson's own."

I still have my own vivid memory of Stevenson in the cramped bedroom of Portland's then only union-operated hotel in October of 1952. It was nearly midnight. He had just completed a long airplane flight. His dinner consisted of a bowl of canned vegetable soup and crackers, eaten off a lap tray. While he ate, he revised a speech on power and conservation which he expected to deliver the next day. His eyes were hollow and gaunt with exhaustion. It all seemed dreadfully inefficient for the candidate thus to drain his energies and strength, especially when I thought of Eisenhower's smoothly-functioning campaign colossus with its troupe of writers and public relations experts. I knew the General was not polishing speeches at midnight. And yet when I came away from Stevenson's room

that night with Jebbie Davidson, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, there were tears of pride in our eyes.

Just how liberal is Adlai Stevenson? This question disturbs some Democrats, as exemplified by the strictures and doubts voiced by Judge Rosenman. When former President Truman endorsed Averill Harriman for President before the 1956 Democratic convention, he said candidly that Stevenson was not liberal enough for him. Yet, by contrast, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, whose liberalism has never been diluted, constantly reiterates her admiration and affection for Adlai Stevenson. So does former Senator Herbert H. Lehman of New York, another of unquestioned liberality. It could even be a matter of temperament. The precinct liberals have rarely cottoned to Stevenson. But the intellectual liberals consider Adlai their nonpareil. They are his shock troops. Their allegiance to him seldom wavers.

Stevenson himself is definitely not a doctrinaire liberal. Many of his early affiliations, in business and corporation law, have helped to anchor him to rather orthodox economic ideas. In the grave crisis of World War II, he was assistant to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, who had been the 1936 Republican running-mate of Alf M. Landon. After Knox's death from a heart attack, brought on by assiduous adherence to duty, Stevenson said:

"I loved that man. He was brave and honest. And he made a very great contribution to his country in her hour of greatest need. It cost him a lot. I'm sure it shortened his life. He was no intellectual, God knows, but he was highly intelligent—which a whole lot of 'intellectuals' aren't, you know—and he knew his fellow man from a rough and crowded life. His loyalty to President Roosevelt, his political adversary in 1936, had a defiant quality, and his admiration and respect for his chief seemed to grow as the going got tougher."

What Kind of President Would Stevenson Make?

It is perhaps a clue to Stevenson's outlook that he took no cognizance of the fact that Colonel Knox was not a liberal, but only that he was not an intellectual. In his personal asso-



Justus in The Minneapolis Star

Adlai's Faithful Little Lamb

ciations, Stevenson does not dampen litmus paper to test if each acquaintance is simon-pure on every possible public question. This may accentuate certain suspicions concerning how far left-of-center Stevenson really dwells. Yet F.D.R. kept Jesse Jones in his Cabinet and he enjoyed cruising on Vincent Astor's yacht. Nor can Harry Truman be said to savor his bourbon and branch water exclusively in the company of those who score 100 per cent on ADA's voting score-sheet on Capitol Hill.

I first met Adlai E. Stevenson at the United Nations Conference in San Francisco in 1945. We journeyed together to Yosemite's granite cliffs and plumed waterfalls, and we hiked in the majestic fastnesses of Muir Woods. My impression of him was not necessarily of a fervent liberal but rather of a fascinating intellect, who knew not only world diplomacy but also the subtle differences between a Douglas fir and a Ponderosa pine.

What kind of President would Stevenson be?

I rather imagine he would be a President who tried the patience of every special-interest group in the nation. On agricultural legislation I would guess that he might be too conservative to please the National Farmers Union and not conservative enough to satisfy the American Farm Bureau. He would be too much of a loyal Democrat to win over partisan Republicans, but might be too fair and temperate to delight the extremists in his own party. For example, this is Stevenson talking to a Demo-

cratic National Committee dinner in Chicago in 1955, slightly later than midway between his two Presidential defeats:

"Let us be very clear that Republicans want a safe and sane world every bit as much as Democrats. And in this day, when our position is more perilous than it has been since Korea, let us also profit from our past mistakes, while we deplore them, and let us think of foreign policy not as partisans but as Americans. Let us, indeed, remember that he who plays politics with peace will lose at both."

Noble and stately words, these, but not the kind to make a partisan audience leap onto its chairs. They tell why Stevenson is a greater favorite with the PTA president than with the local ward chairman.

Excesses are frequently the fuel of political fires, but Stevenson cannot bring himself to light such faggots. On the eve of the 1956 campaign he was finally persuaded to endorse 90 per cent price supports on so-called "basics." But he did not quite let go of the lanyard. He made it evident that he was approving an expedient and not an ultimate answer:

"While firm price supports keep income up they don't keep surpluses down, and I say again, lest the dam burst and engulf us, we Democrats must press on, with Republican help, I hope, to develop the much broader national farm program which is required to restore the full parity of total farm income. At the risk of misunderstanding and misrepresentation, I will say again and again that restoring 90 per cent price supports to meet the present emergency is not to say they are a solution, but only that it is a better program than sliding supports which slide only one way . . ."

Stevenson's Record As Governor of Illinois

And there you have it, the strength of Stevenson intellectually and the weakness of Stevenson politically. He did come out for 90 per cent price supports to cope with a crisis, but he could not quite bring himself to claim for such supports any panacea status. Perhaps the statement reveals why he has never carried a state in the nation's bread basket. Zealous advocates of 90 per cent price supports rarely appreciate such gingerly back-

ing. But the statement also reveals that Adlai Stevenson is a sincere and honest man in bigtime politics.

This honesty was established for all the nation to see in August of 1952, when Governor Shivers of Texas called ostentatiously at Springfield and asked Stevenson to favor the return of the rich oil tidelands to the states. This was a major issue in the four states which stood to profit heavily from such a transfer—Texas, Florida, Louisiana, and California. Many electoral votes were potentially at stake. Stevenson could have ducked the question completely, or he could have imitated Eisenhower's ambiguous acceptance of the states' rights position. Instead, Stevenson crisply endorsed the majority Supreme Court opinion that the petroleum-laden tidelands were properly within the custodianship of the federal government. Quite obviously, this shut off his meager campaign exchequer from benefactions by the powerful oil industry.

An issue like the tidelands was no problem for Stevenson. On some other subjects, however, it has not been so simple for him to accept the traditional position of liberal Democrats. I have heard him sharply question several of my Senate colleagues from the Northwest about high interest rates. He was definitely not in favor of increasing the cost of borrowing money, but he wondered if there were anything to the claim that this might be necessary to quench the fires of inflation. I have listened to Stevenson asking the same kind of penetrating questions on the issue of Hell's Canyon Dam. He did not instantly assume the attitude that a federal dam was, *ipso facto*, better than a private utility company dam. He had to be convinced, with irrefutable figures, that the private dam would leave a good deal of the potential hydroelectricity of the Snake River undeveloped. Positions which some liberals take, almost by reflex action, do not come so automatically to Adlai Stevenson. Furthermore, I would classify him as relatively prudent on the broad issue of federal spending. Deficit financing, which is attractive to quite a few Congressional liberals, is not found in the Stevenson litany. For example, one of the accomplishments of which he boasts as a feature of his service in the Illinois governor-

ship is this: "... Kept state expenditures on a pay-as-you-go basis by ending the use of extensive deficiency appropriations at the end of a biennium."

Some liberals find it easier to propose methods of spending governmental funds than in raising revenues to finance these undertakings. Stevenson's record as chief executive of Illinois makes it likely that he would not be in this group, which perhaps accounts for the questioning of the degree of his liberality by former President Truman, Judge Rosenman, and others. A sound measuring stick of Stevenson's philosophy might be found in some of the other features of his gubernatorial reign which excite his own pride and satisfaction. Here are a few as compiled by Stevenson's staff shortly before he closed his desk at Springfield for the last time:

Put the state police force on a merit basis, removing it as an item of patronage.

Eliminated non-working political appointees with whom state payrolls had been padded.

Restored many sales-tax evaders to the rolls and insisted on equal treatment to all on tax collections.

Improved the care and treatment of the 49,000 patients in state mental hospitals, and provided for collection by the state of the cost of such care in cases where the patient or his family are able to pay.



Mauidin in The St. Louis Post-Dispatch
"Somehow I Can't Concentrate with That Guy Around"

Enforced the over-weight truck laws to protect the deteriorating highway system, and increased highway revenues.

Pressed for elimination of chiselers and cheaters from the public assistance rolls.

Initiated a program for state financing of tuberculosis sanitarium.

Avoided new general taxes so that only two states, on a per capita income basis, have lower per capita state tax collections than Illinois.

Reformed the administration of parole laws by appointing experts free from political pressure.

Brought Illinois from the lowest to one of the highest levels of state aid for common schools.

A Democratic Ticket of Stevenson and Kennedy

These acts reveal a man who has a warm humanitarian heart, who possesses fiscal soundness and prudence, who administers government without fear or favor, and who is not afraid of political pressures. They do not inevitably describe an orthodox political liberal in the conventional meaning of the term. Such a person might have tried to do away with the sales tax altogether rather than bring honesty to its enforcement. I recall talking to the late Phil Jackson, publisher of the *Oregon Daily Journal* of Portland, after his newspaper had given a luncheon in honor of Stevenson, whom the *Journal* had endorsed in the 1952 campaign.

"All my fat-cat friends at the Arlington Club have been telling me what a radical this man is," said Jackson. "Why, he's no radical at all—in fact, he's barely more liberal than I am, and I'm certainly no New Dealer, I can tell you that."

Similar episodes may have occurred elsewhere in the nation, serving to explain why some flaming liberals cool off when confronted with a third candidacy for Stevenson. Still, a thoughtful man's performance in the American Presidency never can be predicted in advance with supreme safety and confidence. Walter Lippmann might hope to expunge the column which he wrote on January 8, 1932, about the man who was subsequently to become the Democratic nominee that year: "Franklin D. Roosevelt is no crusader. He is no

tribune of the people. He is no enemy of entrenched privilege. He is a pleasant man who, without any important qualifications for the office, would very much like to be President." It may just be possible that the prophecies of F.D.R.'s amanuensis, Judge Sam Rosenman, could prove equally inaccurate about Adlai Ewing Stevenson.

Stevenson, grandson of Grover Cleveland's Vice President, will be 60 years old this February. This year, 1960, is virtually the last call for him. He either will be nominated in July at Los Angeles, the city of his birth, or he never again will be considered seriously for an office which many people regard as the natural niche for his talents of intellect, originality, and temperament.

I refuse to pass upon the dilemma of whether or not Stevenson's two previous defeats at the hands of Eisenhower stamp him indelibly as doomed to failure in quest of the Presidency. Only a seventh son of a seventh son could answer this question. It lends itself no more to authentic assessment prior to the event than does the whole question of the religion of Senator John F. Kennedy and California's Governor Pat Brown. We only can hope that the bigotry which plagued Al Smith in 1928 is no more. But can this actually be determined until it is put to the test? A casual inquiry at the front door fails to duplicate the emotions of an election in which hysteria and fanaticism might run wild. Intolerance cannot be measured apart from the conditions and atmosphere which tend to create it. The Stevenson riddle may not be quite so difficult to unlock, and yet surely the impact of previous failures is a generally unknown quantity in most elections.

I personally favor a Democratic ticket of Stevenson and Kennedy. Despite all the current flyspecking as to his record in the Senate, I look upon Jack Kennedy as one of the superior Senators of our era. Courage is a prime requisite in politics. Certainly it required courage to tackle the inflammable issue of labor reform. Regardless of the course he followed, Kennedy was damned if he did and damned if he didn't. This has been demonstrated by the fact that, although Kennedy strived successfully to pull some of the sharpest fangs in

the Landrum-Griffin Bill, he nevertheless now is enduring bitter criticism from some politicians with close labor alliances. At 42, Kennedy's youthful magnetism and personality might also be a useful foil to what some look upon as Stevenson's lack of lure to the distaff vote.

Why Stevenson for President? Franklin Roosevelt once described the Presidency as "preeminently a position of moral leadership." If it had not been that in Lincoln's time, would the 16th President have been able to persuade his countrymen to accept the first military conscription and the first income taxes in American history, so that the nation might be kept united? Stevenson, to me, possesses Lincolnesque qualities of soul-searching, of personal inner doubts, of a brooding awareness that the way ahead is stern and hard. If somebody were to ask what I think is the vital difference between Stevenson and all other candidates in both parties, I would answer that it was an almost indefinable ingredient which might be called "stature." Within Stevenson, I believe, are the essentials to be a great President. This is quite different from being a good President or a successful President, as a number of the other aspirants unquestionably could become.

America today desperately needs a great President.

Foreign policy is the supreme challenge. With his flourishes of worldwide travel and pilgrimaging, Eisenhower has substituted the appearance of a policy for policy itself, in the view of James Reston of the *New York Times*. After the cheering is over, the enigma of a divided Berlin or Soviet space supremacy still remains. Stevenson has persisted in recognizing that good-will journeys or vague platitudes are seldom substitutes for "generosity and decency in human relationships, and equality in human opportunities."

Discussing the unrest among the teeming millions of Asia and Africa, Stevenson has said, "Underneath the recriminations of diplomats and the conflicts of nation-states, there boils up today the hopes, resentments, and aspirations not just of leaders but of great masses of people seeking for themselves and their children the rights and privileges which, [Woodrow] Wilson said, 'all normal men

desire and must have if they are to be contented and within reach of happiness.'"

It is easy to be superficial about foreign policy because the guideposts are frequently so far away. The test of a farm program may be in the price of hogs, only 25 miles off at the railhead. The test of foreign policy may be in the sprouting seeds of a war which Americans a decade hence might have to fight on the opposite side of the globe. Not even 20/20 vision can discern these measurements. That is why it is so easy to promise ultimate liberation for their relatives to foreign-language voters in large American cities, or to hint that eventually the Soviets will be overthrown by revolution and thus we do not need to worry about Russia's spectacular shot at the moon or its satellites in far orbit.

Adlai Stevenson Is America's Hairshirt

Stevenson has never indulged himself in these luxuries. He is the pragmatist who threatens his own political chances by reminding audiences that we cannot thumb our noses even at countries which occasionally offend our precious sensibilities. "I know some politicians tell us that we don't need allies," Stevenson has observed. "Life would certainly be much simpler if that were so, for our friends can be highly irritating. But it is not so. We need allies because we have only six per cent of the world's population. We need them because the overseas air bases essential to our own security are on their territory. We need allies because they are the source of indispensable strategic materials. We need, above all, the moral strength that the solidarity of the world community alone can bring to our cause. Let us never underestimate the weight of moral opinion. It can be more penetrating than bullets, more durable than steel . . ."

Stevenson is America's hairshirt. He is the man who offers "blood, sweat, toil, and tears" when others are hinting temptingly at tax reduction or more federal subsidies and benefactions. Indeed, people have come to expect candor of Stevenson. One of the highest tributes which he received was when he strayed briefly from this role during the 1956 Presi-

dential campaign. Men and women instantly complained that he was out of character, that the 1956 campaign product was definitely not the authentic Stevenson. Somehow, Adlai Stevenson has come to epitomize in many minds a political figure who tells the truth, irrespective of political consequences.

Nikita Khrushchev's doorstep has become a favorite platform for American political hopefuls. It has introduced a jarring and even frightening element into our political life. The Communist Party is unable to poll a fraction of one per cent of the vote at American ballot boxes. Yet the world's top Communist, Khrushchev, may possess the power to shape an American election simply by rattling the nuclear sword or fluttering the dove of peace at appropriate moments. Bismarck did this as a calculated policy in Prussia to influence French politics. What if Khrushchev finds that the mailed fist or the gloved hand, on his part, can stampede American voters into favoring one party or the other as an instrument of supposed peace?

I think this is one of the truly disturbing developments of our era. That is why the visits of leading Americans with Khrushchev must be reported faithfully and realistically, and without self-serving embellishments. If public opinion in our country is to be unmoved by Soviet bombast or blandishments, then American statesmen must be entirely candid in analyzing their impressions of Khrushchev's motives and aspirations. Stevenson, as I see it, has come closer to such a goal than

any other important visitor to the Soviet dictator.

For example, in interviews with *The Progressive* and the *New York Times* on Khrushchev's disarmament address at the United Nations, Stevenson exclaimed: "This is the first time I have ever felt encouraged on the subject of disarmament. His replies to my questions left me with the clear understanding that in his view an international control body should have the power and facilities to control and inspect each step of the disarmament process to the extent necessary to insure compliance with the step, such power and facilities to vary according to the needs of each phase . . .

"While I wish I were more sanguine that something positive might come of Mr. Khrushchev's sweeping disarmament proposal, he certainly gave me new hope that they meant business this time. And above all, we should not hastily and cynically dismiss his proposals as 'clumsy propaganda,' 'old stuff,' or 'utopian nonsense.' For thereby we only redouble the propaganda impact—if that is all it is—of Russia's posture as the peace maker—the mighty Russia which first put a satellite in orbit and has just pinned her colors to the moon.

"We must pay attention, cautiously but carefully, to what Mr. Khrushchev says about disarmament because he has a lot to say about the life and death of all of us. And I wish we could learn that with the Communists the important thing is not always whether they are sincere but whether they are serious."

Stevenson Would Shape

A Time of Greatness

Stevenson has a nobility of spirit which is rare in politics. Lincoln said, "I shall do nothing through malice. What I deal with is too vast for malice." Alas, this counsel of restraint is frequently honored far more in the breach than in the observance. Many men in politics, flattered beyond belief and the object of constant sycophancy, whine and wail whenever matters do not suit their fancy. After a defeat at the polls, they blame everyone except themselves. I have sat beside former governors and former Senators, listening to hours of abuse against those re-

sponsible for their political downfall.

Stevenson is a different kind of bird from the usual political breed. He was twice vanquished for the Presidency under the most trying and difficult circumstances. He brought tears to millions of eyes besides his own on the night of his defeat in 1952, when he told those who had worked in his losing cause:

"Someone asked me, as I came down the street, how I felt, and I was reminded of a story that a fellow townsman of ours in Springfield used to tell—Abraham Lincoln. They asked him how he felt once after an unsuccessful election. He said that he felt like a little boy who had stubbed his toe in the dark. He said that he was too old to cry, but it hurt too much to laugh."

I have never heard Stevenson bewail his political fortunes. I have never heard Stevenson deride his conqueror or speak poorly of those who failed to support the Stevenson campaigns. His references to the President of the United States, whether spoken in public or in private, are always in terms of personal respect. This is not usual in American politics. One should listen to former Senators commenting on those who occupy their chairs.

One night at a dinner party in Washington, my wife and I heard the Dean Achesons ridiculing and denouncing Stevenson. The vilification continued for a long time and was obviously no secret. They seemed anxious to make known their utter contempt and dislike for the Democratic Party's unsuccessful nominee of 1952 and 1956. Some weeks later we mentioned this episode to Stevenson. He shook his head sadly with a wry smile. "Dean was a fine Secretary of State," he said. "I only wish he and Mrs. Acheson thought better of me." And there the topic ended.

I do not know whether Adlai Stevenson ever will become President of the United States. The path ahead of a two-time loser is pocked with perils, and 1960 is undoubtedly his last chance. Destiny often foils those who seem most prepared for destiny's climactic events. But what I do know is this—if Stevenson does not go to the White House, millions of his fellow Americans will feel they have been robbed of their opportunity to live in a time of greatness.

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