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Camp-Pain, 1988.

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THE CAMP-PAIN
Daniel Jeremy Silver
October 23, 1988

*Manil - for the
Rabbi's files*

There are now only 2-1/2 weeks left before the election and a welcome respite from the barrage of television and radio advertisements which have been filling the airways and that only millions of dollars can buy. If there is a fall-off in the numbers who vote, and there may well be, this election will go down as the most expensive per vote in history.

It takes an act of conscious will to remember the pre-convention debates and the hubbub which preceded the actual presidential nomination. Six ran for the Democratic nomination and the number was weeded down, one by one, as the primary voters rendered their verdicts. The Democratic candidates retired like gentlemen when they saw that defeat was inevitable - with one exception, Jessie Jackson.

Jackson held on to the end and he worked hard to maximize his visibility as titular head of what he calls the Rainbow Coalition - a coalition of the have-not groups of our society, the homeless, those on public assistance, gays and lesbians, Latins, and, of course, the blacks.



Jackson promised at the convention

As head of the Rainbow Coalition, Jackson demanded his place on the convention program and on the agencies that manage the Democratic Party. He received pride of place at the convention, but it did him little good.

Dukakis was willing to give Jackson all the floor time he wanted, but he was unwilling to give him the Vice Presidency or any guarantee on appointments.

Democratic Party and the more Leftist.

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Jackson promised at the convention to campaign for the Democratic ticket, but for most of the Fall he was hardly visible though he surfaced recently at several Dukakis meetings. Jessie Jackson has been busy campaigning for the Republican Convention in New Orleans and complaining that the powers of the Democratic Party do not understand black needs.

His speech to the convention in Atlanta was a rousing one which pleased the more sentimental members of the Democratic Party and the more Leftist. A fine speech by Governor Dukakis showed that he could not easily be upstaged and that he was equal to the task of running for the presidency.

Dukakis showed good judgment also in selecting Senator Lloyd Bentsen as his running mate. The Senator is an older man with a great deal of congressional and Washington experience.

The Republican Convention in New Orleans lacked the drama which Jessie Jackson helped maintain in Atlanta. It was a staid affair. The Vice President had known for weeks that he was assured of the nomination. Televangelist Pat Robertson stayed in the race, but his was a one-issue campaign and Robertson is back now where he belongs - in the 700 Club.

selection of Danforth Quayle, the junior Senator from Indiana, as a running mate.

It's interesting to note that the two persistent runner-ups were both ministers of the gospel, Jackson and Robertson. I am afraid that this says something about the growing importance of special interest blocs in presidential campaigns and of the growth of evangelical Christianity as a political force.

The tone of the Republican Convention fitted well the natural gravity of the Vice President. He, too, gave a well-scripted speech, but it was not the speech for which the Bush convention will be remembered. He will be remembered for his surprising selection of Danforth Quayle, the junior Senator from Indiana, as a running mate.

Conventional wisdom suggests that
The Senator is a light weight. He had
trouble finishing college. He had
trouble getting into law school. He
needed help to enter the Indiana
National Guard. Quayle is young and
attractive, ^{but} a man who possesses a lack
lustre mind and seems to have little
comprehension and few of the contacts
necessary for a president. I was
tempted to entitle this sermon, "3 Men
and a Boy Run For the Presidency."
In 10 years in Washington Quayle has
failed to distinguish himself in
any visible way.

Conventional wisdom suggests that the Vice President chose him for his youth, his good looks, and his appeal to the right wing of the Republican Party. Quayle is one of the most consistent defenders of the present methods of letting defense contracts. He has voted against all attempts to effect gun control. He has taken a hard line on crime, criminals, and the criminal justice system. I suspect that if the Vice President could do it over again he would not nominate Danforth Quayle. Certainly, he has had to keep him off center stage.

The campaign so far has lacked clear issues. The Vice President has accused Dukakis of being a liberal, which he is, to his credit, and a card-carrying member of the American Civil Liberties Union which, again, he is and has every right to be. He has accused Dukakis of being soft on criminals, for sponsoring in Massachusetts a prisoner release program and has made political hay of the fact that one of the many released felons murdered again.

The Vice President is adamantly opposed to abortion except in cases of rape, incest, or to protect the life of the mother.

The Vice President opposes all public spending on abortion. Governor Dukakis insists on the right of women to have an abortion. He favors Medicaid financing for abortions for low income mothers and he insists that the final decision to abort or not to abort is to be left up to the woman who is carrying the child. The governor is far more advanced in his thinking in this area than the Vice President.

The American Civil Liberties Union has a long and proud history in the United States defending those who are defenseless. The Vice President tried hard to turn membership in the ACLU into a suspect affiliation, "my opponent is a card-carrying member of the ACLU." The words remind us of the unlamented Senator McCarthy and, unfortunately, struck pay dirt.

The Vice President insists on the death penalty for anyone who kills a police officer. Governor Dukakis has accused the Vice President of being uncaring about women's rights, indifferent to the plight of the poor and homeless, and caring more for the privileges of the wealthy than for the needs of the many. He has in mind the Vice President's espousal of the 15 percent capital gains tax cut and his refusal to consider various welfare programs.

Both men agree that much more needs to be done on the war on drugs. More detectives need to be hired. Penalties need to be increased. Pushers and their bosses need to be jailed.

The Vice President insists on the death penalty for anyone who murders a policeman carrying out law enforcement duties. He insists that society has paid more attention to the criminals than to the victims of crime. The governor is opposed to the death penalty and has taken a more enlightened view of the criminal system, as shown in his support of the prisoner release program for those who qualify. Both men agree that much more needs to be done on the war on drugs. More detectives need to be hired. Penalties need to be increased. Pushers and their bosses need to be jailed.

The flow of drugs must be stopped at their source. Both men claim that there will be more investigators in the field and the United States will use its international power to cut off much of the drug trade.


A surprising amount of campaign time has been taken up with these kinds of personal issues which are clearly important to the population but certainly are not central issues for a presidency.

You have to listen carefully to hear what the candidates have to say about defense spending, ^{The} strategic defense initiative, disarmament, and foreign policy generally, areas in which the power of the presidency is paramount. The Vice President is in favor of an almost complete continuation of Reagan's defense program. He would cut out programs only when there is a reciprocal cut by the Soviets.

Dukakis opposes specific programs such as the mobile midget missile and the mobile MX. He favors only limited research on SDI. Both candidates supported the IMF Treaty, but the Vice President's position on further arms reduction seems to be "go slow." He makes a great deal of the fact that ~~because~~ because we are strong, the Russians had to agree to the IMF reductions. Dukakis would be willing to take more of a chance on Mr. Gorbachev.

We are at a crossroads in foreign policy matters. Gorbachev has pulled his troops half way out of Afghanistan, signed an IMF Treaty, and begun the destruction of missiles under that treat. He has widened the Soviet discussions with the United States to include such heretofore forbidden issues as the Gulag - which he has largely dismembered. He has permitted some increase in emigration and foreign travel for his citizens and has begun a political liberalization within the Communist Party. It's hard to whip up a cold war sweat when your enemy is saying, "the socialist vision is not working; we need to understand if some of the forms of the West can work for us."

Such issues are clearly the key issues of foreign policy for the next president. Both have spoken welcome words about glasnost. Both have been extremely cautious in the words they have chosen. Neither has found the words which would effectively echo America's desire for peace and security.



The issues that seem to separate the two candidates the most are in the area of foreign policy. The Vice President believes in supporting the contras and in taking a hard line on Ortega. He approved the American action on Grenada and the use of our naval forces in the Persian Gulf. The governor opposed the invasion of Grenada and the oil ferrying missions of the Persian Gulf fleet. He opposes all aid to the Nicaraguan rebels and is much more willing to meet the Russians half way, trusting that Gorbachev means at least part of what he says.

The President's last months were predicted to be a period of weakness but are now seen as evidence of his strength and vision. The Soviet Union is moving to liberalize its economy and its political structures. Members of the Warsaw Pact nations are restless. There have been protests in Poland and Estonia and nationalist uprisings in Azerbaijan. Russia and China seem to be on the way to their first summit in 40 years.

On the economic side, the issue is the budget deficit. The Vice President is an advocate of a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. The governor is opposed. Even if such an amendment were passed, there would be at least a decade of problems until the deficit has been whittled down.



The deficit presents a frightening prospect for America. The figures are stark. Between 1980 and 1988 the fastest growing element of the Federal budget was the annual interest payment on our national debt. It stood at 52 billion dollars in 1980. Today it is 151 billion dollars. In 1980 21 cents of every dollar paid in Federal income tax went to meet the interest on the debt.

This year more than 37 cents of every tax dollar goes for that purpose. When Reagan became president 79 cents of every income tax dollar was available to pay for ~~the~~ our domestic needs and the military. When his successor takes office on January 22, only 63 cents of every dollar will be there after the interest bill has been paid. This means a steadily increasing erosion in our ability to finance current and future needs.

Both men avoid mentioning new taxes. The Vice President says dramatically, watch my lips, and then he mouths "no more taxes." Dukakis favors a tax increase only as a last resort. But it must be clear to both men that taxes will have to be raised to meet the budget deficit. All that this particular stand means is that neither man wants to make the same mistake Walter Mondale made 4 years ago when he spoke openly about tax increases.

Neither man seems to have a plan to significantly reduce the budget deficit. The Vice President espouses something he calls a flexible freeze, hoping economic growth will eliminate the deficit. Unfortunately, we have had this freeze for some time now and it isn't working. We have had 6 years of economic growth and the annual interest payments are rising, not falling.

The governor says that he would lower interest rates. Unfortunately, Federal expenditures would keep a constant upward pressure on these rates--and foreign banks and individuals now hold about one-seventh of our Treasury notes. Until the day when we finally have a much more balanced budget, we will have to learn that we are no longer cock of the economic walk.

On domestic and foreign policy issues, President Reagan's good luck has held good. The President's last months were predicted to be a period of weakness but are now seen as evidence of his strength and vision. Congress has passed a major welfare overhaul. The Vice President can claim, and does, that this is the result of the President's effective policies. In any case, Reagan's success, deserved or otherwise, can only help the Vice President. Those who thought that the Reagan administration, beset by the Iran arms scandal, the Meese scandal and others, would go out in disarray, failed again to recognize the resiliency of this president, who will go out with flags flying.

What do I feel about this election?
I feel that the debates settled little.
Governor Dukakis did well on the first
go-round and not so well on the
second. A large uncommitted vote
hangs over this election. There is no
guarantee that people will come out
in any numbers on November 8.



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remains to be seen.

I believe that either candidate will be a passable president although I don't believe that either's presidency will be an exceptional one. The Vice President seems to be a man of competence on whose shoulders Reagan's good luck is falling. The governor seems to be a man of competence who desperately needs to articulate a vision splendid. Whether he can this late in the campaign remains to be seen.

Either man will be bound by the same restraints. The most important of these is the national debt --now approaching 2.8 trillion. Neither can make good on his initiatives --to deal with education, child care, the environment, and national security-- if he cannot spend for new programs.

And he cannot, until he can figure out how to pay for--or cut--old programs.

There are other major constraints facing the next president: the persistent deficit in the nation's external payments --that is, to foreign countries.

~~As the cost of servicing~~

As the cost of servicing the foreign debt rises, the growing dependency on foreign capital and the power of other countries to retaliate if this country were to adopt a protectionist course, also rises.

The next American president faces restrictions on his power to lead, but he also enjoys some opportunities--- principally, the recognition by the Soviets that ~~they~~ they need peace & openness for the sake of economic development. There is a growing recognition on both sides--Russia and the United States--of the interdependence of economic strength and national security.

A consensus on economic competitiveness and national security appears to be emerging, and this could provide the next president a tremendous opportunity.

I pray he uses it well.

