

POLITICAL SCENE 1964

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In traveling around the eastern half of the country during the last three months, we have been impressed by the marked differences in public reaction to the present political situation and the upcoming presidential election. We have been impressed by the extent to which the attitude of the ordinary, politically innocent, everyday citizen (a category in which I am included) is influenced by the prevailing propaganda to which he is subjected in the news and other communications media of his area.

In regard to the imminent Republican National Convention, which will be history by the time this is read, the inhabitants of New England and the large northeastern states regard Mr. Goldwater's candidacy with an unbelief akin almost to horror. To the suggestion that Mr. Goldwater might have some popular support elsewhere, the reaction is one of pained surprise: "Surely, you're not serious?" The reaction would not be much different if Fidel Castro were mentioned as a possible nominee. In the East they are not sure whom they prefer among the Republicans, but any of the others would do and probably Scranton would suit them best.

Here in the South and Southeast, while some may have reservations about the Arizona senator, the alternatives are viewed with such distaste that there is no choice but Goldwater. Scranton, viewed from the Southern standpoint, is a moderately attractive candidate but a latecomer, and strictly a local Eastern phenomenon slightly damned by his social position, Ivy League background and Eastern sophistication.

In the eastern "Mid-West" the attitude is quite schizophrenic. They can accept neither the viewpoint of the Northeastern Seaboard nor that of the South. There are misgivings about Goldwater, but, with their strong conservative leanings, they have even greater misgivings about the progressive, liberal candidates opposing him. Our amateurish observations, which were carried no further west than Minnesota, make us suspect that there is more sentiment for Goldwater, or rather for his conservative position than meets the jaundiced eye of the liberal-dominated eastern press and communications industry. "The news-people are reluctantly becoming aware of this, and perhaps this is why their reaction against the Goldwater candidacy has become so increasingly determined and hysterically vicious." At any rate, at this time, more than a week before the Republicans gather in San Francisco, it would seem that the chances of nominating anyone but Goldwater as the Republican candidate is slim.

Once the Republican issue becomes settled, there seems to be general agreement in all areas that Mr. Johnson cannot miss being elected.