

# Pages from Michael Butler's Journal

## MEMORIES BROUGHT WITH THE COMING OF THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

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HAIR opened in April of 1968. A few weeks afterwards, the authors, Jimmy Rado and Jerry Ragni, came to visit. They wanted us to do a benefit for the Yippies. I agreed, assuming that the Yippies were an offspring of the hippies. I had never seen anything but good from the hippie philosophy, and was all for being supportive.

A couple of days later, our accountant, who had become quite knowledgeable about matters of the Movement, came in quite disturbed. He said, "Michael, are you aware that the money for the Yippies is to be paid to the Judson Church?" This remark got my attention. The Judson Church was infamous for being the laundry for funds going to the radical left. I called Jim and Jerry, and asked them to have the Yippies' leaders come to see me.

We met -- Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, and (I think) Dellinger. I asked them to explain the Yippies and why they needed the money. Hoffman did practically all the talking.

"We want to train the kids in martial arts."

"In martial arts?" I asked.

"Yes," Abbie said. "We want them to meet the 'man' to do in the 'pigs' when we go to the Democratic Convention in Chicago. We will parade and camp out in Grant Park, and you know the 'pigs' will never let us do that."

I was stunned. We never did the benefit.

I called Otto Kerner, then the Governor of Illinois, and asked him for an appointment with Mayor Daley. My politics had changed markedly from the military-industrial, ruthless approach I had in the past. However, both of these men had been my patrons, and I had great fondness and respect for them. I flew to Chicago and told my story. I told them that they were being set up for a fall. They couldn't comprehend such an act. When asked, I suggested that they should smother the Yippies with t.l.c. -- let them parade, give them a band and camp-out in Grant Park. Richard Daley, with Otto concurring, couldn't see Chicago doing this. I left City Hall with great foreboding.

Well, the actual events of the confrontation in Chicago are a matter of considerable record. The "Chicago Seven" were very successful in disrupting the entire political process. Hoffman later left me a note at the box office of the Shubert, where HAIR was playing. It said, "Your stables with the polo ponies should burn down." They made a monster out of Richard Daley, who had been one of the best mayors Chicago ever had. They managed to polarize large numbers of the young people, and terrified the general population into a strong reaction against the valid complaints of the young.

Without the premeditated actions of these men, the Democratic Convention would have been able to go about its business with some reasonableness. Instead, we got Richard Nixon as President of the United States.

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