

A Resurgent Marvin Mandel?

Marvin Mandel's return to the State House for two brief days following his overturned conviction on corruption charges increases the likelihood that political Maryland, particularly Annapolis, has not seen the last of the ex-Governor. Mr. Mandel partied with old friends and cronies, many of whom would jump into the chilly Severn if he commanded. Though temporarily vanquished, by no means are they leaderless. The new spirit of integrity reflected by Governor Harry R. Hughes may invigorate other politicians, but not the members of the Old Gang who managed to escape the fallout of the Hughes sweep in the fall elections.

For now they sit silently in the Senate and House of Delegates, acquiescent to the changes wrought by the voters. But Marvin Mandel's destinies have taken a decided upturn, and with them their own. Will he seize the opportunity and seek to become a political force once more? The belief is he probably will, though somewhat slowly at first. He will try to use his influence if and when the federal government officially decides not to retry him and five co-defendants.

A Mandel resurgence would be enhanced by Governor Hughes's pledge to an independent Legislature. This leaves a void that Mr. Mandel could easily exploit. By picking up a telephone, he might round up enough support to help pass or defeat any bill where the vote is close, even though he is out of office. He now has the support of numerous politicians to re-establish the old machine that Mr. Hughes defeated.

The implications are ominous for the new administration and leadership in both the Senate and the House. Unless Mr. Hughes, Senate President Clark and House Speaker Cardin assert themselves, they could witness the development of a contravening force to their policies and programs. Mr. Mandel's appeal is not limited to East and South Baltimore politicians, but extends to some extent into other local delegations.

Mr. Mandel thrives on political association and ac-

tivity and he probably won't limit himself just to legislative matters, assuming he returns. As Baltimore gears for this year's municipal elections, major candidates no doubt will seek his counsel, if not his endorsement. His political skills are many, and if offered, would be difficult for some candidates to refuse.

Loyalists don't believe Mr. Mandel is likely to run for office in the near future. Disclosures brought out at his trial are too fresh. But he is a rallying point for those who were in, are now out, and someday may seek to return. Only the voters and their representatives can prevent it.

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