



tom braden

# Nixon's 'liberalism' brings popularity

Washington—Something very odd is suggested by the political polls which show that President Nixon—as of now—can defeat any of his prospective opponents. Surely the oddity cannot have escaped the attention of Richard Nixon, returned now to this steaming hot city after the most successful summer of his term.

The oddity must be looked at against the fact that when the summer began the polls were all against the President. They showed Sen. Muskie could beat him and that Senators Kennedy and Humphrey might beat him. But now—as one of the President's key aides

remarked, prior to packing up at San Clemente—"Things are looking up." Why?

Three major events have marked the Presidential summer. First, there was Henry Kissinger's trip to China and the announcement that the President would travel there to meet with Chou En-lai.

Second, there was the announcement of wage and price controls.

Third was the signing of the treaty recognizing the status quo in Germany.

These three events are the only possible reason for the dramatic turnaround in the polls and these three events

have one thing in common. It is that they mark an activist President, with a style nearer to Franklin Roosevelt than Dwight Eisenhower, and a set of beliefs more pragmatic than conservative.

Indeed all of the things that the President did over the summer would have maddened conservatives within his own party only a few years ago.

The trip to China and wage-price controls represent a total break with conservative ideology. The Berlin Accords have so far passed unnoticed by the right wing. It is astonishing that less than 25 years after the Berlin uprising, nobody has accused the President of surrendering the John Foster Dulles doctrine of "rolling back the Iron Curtain."

In short, the oddity is that as the President has departed conservative ideology, he has grown more popular. Democrats are running around in circles trying to find some reason for criticizing policies they were recently

recommending. Conservatives within the President's party can be put off with a few remarks against busing schoolchildren. In any event, they have nowhere else to go.

The polls suggest the oddity and the oddity suggests the future. Having found the road to popularity, Mr. Nixon is not likely to seek any other path. From now until election time, we shall be watching an activist President "doing something" about the nation's problems and making all those Democratic speeches about "drifting" exceedingly out of date.

For example, something is surely in the wind respecting an early settlement in Vietnam. Mr. Nixon cannot go before the electorate next year with any prospect of success unless he can first get American combat troops out of Vietnam. The betting here is that he will do so; that his doing so is in some way tied to his China trip, and that the China trip will take place much sooner than anyone has

suggested—perhaps as soon as mid-October.

And why not? President Thieu has made a farce out of President Nixon's promise to give a free and democratic government a chance to survive in South Vietnam. If the President cannot deal with South Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese are at hand.

Perhaps, the oddity suggested by the polls reflects another oddity, a national misjudgment of Richard Nixon. He made a name for himself as a conservative ideologue when it was highly popular to be a conservative ideologue. Along the way he has dropped an occasional hint about the inner man. For example, he once listed Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson among Presidents he most admired. That should have given us the clue that we were dealing with a man who cares a lot more about practicality than about principle.

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arthur hoppe

# The day youth seized power

Once 18-year olds had been given the right to vote, the grave question arose as where they ought to go to do it.

College students were the basic problem. Should they vote in the college communities where they lived nine months of the year? Or should they be required to vote at home, where their parents could give them a good talking-to on the way to the polls?

Needless to say, virtually every public official over 30, from Attorney General Mitchell on down, favored the latter course. And there were dire predictions that in small college communities, students could actually take over the city government if allowed to vote locally.

But the courts—heaven help us all—ruled for some reason that students lived where they were rather than where they were from. And thus the direst of the dire predictions came true.

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Typical, perhaps, was the case of the little town of Hopeville, home of Siwash University.

The university numbered 27,618 students, all of whom, according to the citizens of Hopeville were majoring in sex, drugs and treason.

Hopeville, on the other had, mustered only 1,214 registered voters, all of whom, according to the students, were engaged in connivery, price-fixing and persecuting the young.

Thus it was a bitter campaign between the incumbent mayor, Swinburne Sweeny, and 18-year old Fidel Hackensack. Naturally, Hackensack and his Youth Ticket were swept into office by a vote of 27,618 to 1,214.

The residents of Hopeville immediately bolted their doors, barred their windows and waited to be murdered in their beds.

But nothing of the sort happened. Instead, Fidel and his young supporters held a triumphant session of the City Council. "At last we have the power to create the kind of community we've always wanted!" crowed Fidel.

And, oh, they passed a lot of new laws! Like, man, they banned cars and provided free bicycles and planted flowers in all the vacant lots and held daily free concerts on Main street and made littering a felony and said everybody could do anything they wanted as long as they didn't hurt anyone else and...

Well, after a few weeks, the citizens of Hopeville emerged cautiously from their homes to find a clean, beautiful, joyous, free-spirited community. To their surprise, they rather liked it.

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"Confidentially," said ex-Mayor Sweeny, who was soon sporting a small beard, "what I like best is not having to worry about things going wrong."

And, of course, things did go wrong. The City Fire Department burned down and the City Sewer System backed up and the City Treasury, among other things, went dry.

Of course, each student had a different idea about what should be done to remedy each crisis. So this required long, dull meetings that lasted for hours and hours and hours.

After six months, Fidel and his youthful fellow officials announced en masse that they were dropping out. A special election was called. Nobody ran for any office. The final results were 1,214 write-in ballots for Fidel and 27,618 write-in ballots for Sweeny. So things returned to normal.

As Fidel said in his hour of happy defeat, "Creating ideal communities is one thing; city government is another."

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Thus, gentlemen, let me make our China policy perfectly clear