

In case of fire . . .

The startling revelation that city campus buildings have not been state inspected for fire hazards and safety-improvement work in more than 12 years is, to say the least, upsetting. It more or less confirms the fact that in coming to the University one risks not only his sanity, but also his life.

Obviously, someone has been dangerously negligent in checking up on the University's fire safety progress. Who that someone is appears to be less obvious, however.

There has been some conspicuous looking-the-other-way in the state fire marshal's office. Fire Marshal Joe Pluta can't be entirely blamed, however. When he took office in 1971 his predecessors left him with

no recorded violations.

The blame for the lack of care and compliance probably lies more with University officials. Those in whose care the University's facilities lie can only be expected to see that the entire system complies with reasonable and cautious guidelines provided by the state office.

The fact that the University has yet to comply with 1960 orders for improvements, reflects shoddily on administrative officials. In all those areas where violations were cited, 10 years worth of students have been subjected unknowingly to dangers they had the right to believe did not exist.

The University is clearly negligent in this matter.

This negligence is, however, the direct result of something other than sloth on the

part of the administration. Negligence has become necessary due to lack of funds.

For far too long the University has had to get by with inadequate funds for renovation and plant maintenance, areas vital to fire safety. The University has been forced to expand with far too little in the way of funds provided.

The blame for the inadequacy of funds must be placed with both the Board of Regents and the Unicameral for overzealous and uncautious budget-cutting. It is this fund-slashing which has forced the University to neglect necessities—including fire safety.

There must be immediate and total compliance with fire safety regulations, no matter what the cost, to avoid a fire tragedy in the tinder-box University.

Jim Gray

Gallup poll conclusively indicates Nixon win

In 1968 the state of Rhode Island had the dubious distinction of giving Hubert Humphrey his largest percentage of the vote of any state in the Union—a gigantic 65 per cent. And indicative of how bad off the Democrats really are four years later is a recent poll that shows Rhode Island, traditionally the strongest Democratic state in the country north of the Mason-Dixon line, being won 2-to-1 again—this time by President Nixon.

Indeed, if the election were held today, George McGovern would do well to capture 17 electoral votes, those of the District of Columbia and Massachusetts. The latest Gallup poll shows the President leading his Democratic opponent by 64 per cent to 30 per cent, with a very low 6 per cent still undecided.

This Nixon lead over McGovern is a mere one point short of the same lead President Johnson held over Republican nominee Barry Goldwater at a comparable point in the 1964 campaign. The new Harris survey, generally more favorable to the Democrats than is Gallup, shows Nixon leading 63 per cent to 29 per cent, an identical spread of 34 points, which, if translated into popular votes, means 54.4 million for Nixon and only 25.5 million for McGovern.

To be sure, the gap is bound to narrow somewhat as party loyalties reassert themselves and November 7 gets closer, but it should be remembered that never before in history has a candidate started as far behind as George McGovern and gone on to win by election day. Furthermore, the leader in the Labor Day polls almost invariably wins on election day, the irregular Truman upset of Dewey back in 1948 being the only exception. Indeed, most of the early poll leaders have been able to increase their victory margins by polling day, and none has dropped more than 4 percentage points during the course of a campaign.

In the always close election of 1960, Mr. Nixon's poll percentage was never lower than 45 per cent nor higher than 50 per cent in any survey taken after August of that year.

In his 1962 race for the California governorship with Edmund G. (Pat) Brown, Nixon's poll figures never changed more than three points either way.

And in 1968, a campaign in which he received far less credit for winning than blame for losing in 1960, the President was stuck at from 42 to 44 per cent of the electorate in the six Gallup campaign polls, an amazing statistical consistency. It was Hubert Humphrey who narrowed the gap by rising in the polls, not Richard Nixon by falling, that made the election so close.

But what is most amazing about these statistics projecting a Nixon sweep is the fact that they show the President's popularity to cut across virtually every social barrier—geography, education, income, occupation, religion, ethnic origin, race, age, or sex mean nothing anymore. The President leads McGovern just as much in large, industrial, and usually Democratic Michigan and New York as he does in small, agricultural, and dependably Republican Idaho and Nebraska.

Low-income people earning less than \$5,000 a year favor Nixon almost as much as a businessman making four times that sum. Manual workers and labor union families, once at the central core of the New Deal Democratic coalition, currently favor Nixon by over 2-to-1.

Nixon leads among heretofore primarily Democratic Catholic voters, 62 per cent to McGovern's 29 per cent. Substantial GOP inroads are also being made in the Jewish, black, chicano, and Indian communities. What has to be taken as most astonishing of all is that McGovern's fellow registered Democrats give him but 47 per cent of their vote, to an astounding 43 per cent of the Democratic vote for the Republican President.

Particularly disappointing to lonesome George, however, must be his wholesale reversal with what up to now has been the key McGovern group: young people under 30. Nixon leads even here, 61 per cent to 36 per cent, reflecting youth's growing disillusionment with the Democratic ticket and its leader's non-existent credibility.

The most important question, of course, is how can this be?

The reason lies in the fact that, now, more than ever (to borrow from the GOP slogan) the Republicans clearly embody the middle ground thinking of America's citizens. The American majority is just lying there, forsaken by the Democrats, waiting to be won over by the Republicans, and the GOP this fall possesses not only the power to vanquish the Democrats, but also to turn itself into the new majority party.



One of the Republican Party's major weaknesses in the past has been that it has failed to reach out to the varied groups that really make up the masses of America: the blue collar wage-earner, ethnic groups, Catholics, Jews, blacks, and the Spanish-speaking.

That is changing now, as anyone who witnessed this year's GOP National Convention could attest. Black delegates more than doubled: from 1.9 per cent in 1968 to 4 per cent this year. A third of the 1972 delegates were women—still not good enough—but much better than the 17 per cent figure four years ago. And this has been accomplished in the true American spirit—voluntarily—without artificial quotas and imposed "guidelines".

Another previous fault of the Republican Party has been its preoccupation with the negative, without offering positive, constructive alternative programs of their own. But this, too, is changing.

The 1972 Republican platform hails the Administration's positive achievements—from slowing the rise in crime and inflation, to increased funds for urban renewal and rural redevelopment, to enlarged employment opportunities and minority hiring, to arms limitation agreements with the Soviet Union. There are still more legislative proposals now awaiting action by the Congress but lying idle while the Democratic leaders are busy sniping away at the White House for supposedly doing nothing to solve the nation's ills.

It seems to us that an undercurrent of renewed hope, a rejuvenated sense of self-purpose, and with them, a regained feeling of unity and brotherhood is seeping into the American soul. For if the American people are splintered and divided, as the Democrats like to say that we are, it is because they have contributed to the feelings of mistrust and melancholy so easily exploited for cheap political gain in America.

It is they, and not the Republicans, who have fueled the fires of fear and doubt. It is they who routinely condemn the President every time he opens his mouth.

We can once again look with pride and faith to an Administration in Washington that has seized the opportunities of the present to build a better world for all in the future. We believe in President Nixon and his party, now, more than ever.

john
vinstadt
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