

Try and Stop Me

By BENNETT CERF

A POLICE REPORTER in Indianapolis named Heze Clark used to referee wrestling matches as a sideline. One night a ponderous performer was having trouble getting out of a murderous headlock, so he pretended to be choking, clutched at Referee Clark, then pointed agonizingly at his throat.

His histrionics failed to move Heze Clark. In a bellow that could be heard 20 rows back of the ring, Heze told him, "You go ahead and rattle, boy. I'm the one who'll decide when you're choking!"



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Matter of Fact

By Joseph Alsop

PREJUDICE IN AKRON

Akron, Ohio — In the great sweep of 1956, President Eisenhower came within less than 3,000 votes of carrying this bustling industrial city. This feat in Akron, remarkable for a Republican, is highly unlikely to be repeated by Vice President Richard M. Nixon. In fact, Eisenhower's heir can easily be swamped here.

This is the result that is indicated, at any rate, by intensive pavement-pounding and pulse-feeling by this reporter, in company with two able Ohio colleagues, Ray Dorsey and Bill Williams. The outlook for Nixon must be rated all the bleaker, because we found that anti-Catholic prejudice was already in full ferment among Akron's Protestant working people.

The places polled in Akron were three swing precincts, B in Ward 4, H in Ward 6, and M in Ward 8. These precincts were chosen because all three had given Eisenhower handsome majorities — 89 per cent in two of them and 56 per cent in the third — and had then turned in Democratic majorities for Gov. Mike DiSalle in 1958.

They were just the sort of neighborhoods that helped Eisenhower to cut so heavily into the natural Democratic majorities in cities like Akron, and thus to pile up his gigantic 1956 majority of more than 60 per cent of the statewide vote in Ohio. The streets were tree-lined. The gardens were well tended. The unpretentious but roomy houses were individually owned. In precinct H of Ward 6, on the hill by the reservoir, you really expected vice presidents of this or that to answer the doorbells, instead of the rubber workers who mostly populate the hilltop.

The people we polled in these precincts included no representatives of Akron's most heavily Democratic group, the Negroes. They were also Protestants by a three to one majority — 81 to 27 in our very large sample of three precincts which cast a total of 906 votes in 1958. In sum, these were just the sort of neighborhoods where Nixon really must do well, if he is to avoid being swamped in Akron.

The figures show how Nixon is doing. In 1956, the people in our sample gave 53 votes to Eisenhower and 36 to Stevenson, with 19 not voting. Yet only 45 of the same people said that if the election were held today, they would vote for Nixon; almost the same number, 43, chose Sen. John F. Kennedy; and 20 insisted they did not know how they would vote.

WHERE Eisenhower had run almost five to three against Stevenson, in short, Nixon ran only a hair better than even against Kennedy.

Consider this Republican fall-off among people who had gone heavily for Eisenhower. Remember that Akron as a whole did not go for Eisenhower. You can then see why Nixon may be swamped here. Curiously enough, this possibility is increased, as already noted, by the advanced state of the anti-Catholic ferment.

The point is that if anti-Catholicism were likely to boil up later on, Nixon might be aided thereby. But he cannot be aided, because anti-Catholicism has boiled up already. Here the contrast was startlingly sharp with the two northern Ohio country townships, also heavily Protestant, where Dorsey, Williams, and I had previously found little religious feeling and surprisingly strong Protestant support for Kennedy.

To be specific, Nixon actually owned about a quarter of his total vote in our Akron sample to anti-Catholic feeling. In addition, there were many expressions of prejudice among bedrock Republicans, but we did not count these people as influenced by anti-Catholicism, because they would have voted for Nixon even if Kennedy had been a Protestant. We counted only those — former Stevenson voters, for instance — who specifically stated they were voting for Nixon on anti-Catholic grounds and also had a Democratic voting pattern.

BY THE same token, Kennedy no doubt owed his lead among the Catholic voters to religious feelings. A third of the "don't know" vote was also composed of strongly Republican and conservative Catholics, who were reacting sharply to the current of talk among their Protestant neighbors, or of strong Democrats who did not wish to vote for a Catholic. One in the latter group was Jewish.

Such was the Akron picture, as we found it in this small but significant human sample. Its dingy aspects ought not to be exaggerated. The persons whose votes were religiously influenced were proportionally more numerous than we had thought possible. They were important, too, because their votes were swing votes, largely shaping the outcome.

Yet they were still a minority. Among them there were solid citizens, not really narrow-minded but seriously concerned about the relations of church and state and, one must add, badly informed on the topic. There were few outpourings of real venom, to mar our experience in those pleasant leafy streets full of healthy-looking children at play. All the same, this straw in the wind we collected in Akron was somewhat disturbing, and not for Richard Nixon alone.

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Jackson To Accompany Kennedy to Oregon

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