

Nixon presidency - The presidential election of 1969

Reasons for Nixon's Victory

Republican voters liked him because:

1. He was a moderate, the right wing Barry Goldwater had been soundly beaten by Johnson in 1964
2. conservative Republicans approved of his extreme anti-communism
3. liberal Republicans like his moderation on domestic issues
4. as vice president he had gained governmental experience in the administration that presided over years of peace and prosperity
5. he brilliantly articulated middle America concerns about Lyndon Johnson's leadership

Middle America:

Middle America Had offered voted Democrat but Nixon appealed to the exasperation with radicalism and disorder. War induced inflation was eroding their standard of living and they resented their taxes subsidising what they consider to be the undeserving poor. Their children were drafted while white protesters from wealthy families off and managed to avoid the draft. They Liked Nixon's promise of;

1. Peace with Honour in Vietnam
2. the restoration of Law and Order in the cities
3. less and cheaper government

Southerners liked him because:

1. While they felt betrayed by Johnson and the Democrats Nixon promised to slow down school desegregation this is cold his southern strategy
2. he supported state rights and the distribution of federal funds
3. many were social Conservatives like Nixon himself

Other reasons:

1. Nixon had learnt from his 1960 failure he did not exhaust himself kept his tan looking good and avoided hostile probing journalist.
2. Nixon's family was an electoral asset, his daughter Julie was engaged to David Eisenhower who persuaded his dying father to endorse Nixon
3. Middle America like Nixon's running mate Spiro Agnew and his attacks on the ghetto rioters Radicals and liberals.
4. There were bitter divisions within the democratic party which also assisted Nixon

Divisions within the Democratic Party

Anti War senator Eugene McCarthy opposed Johnson for the Democratic nomination, this lead to Johnson dropping out of the race. Johnson however did have some impact because he supported vice president Hubert Humphrey who eventually won the Democratic nomination. Humphrey had not entered a single primary and McCarthy had entered and won many, some Democrats with furious that Johnson had supported Humphrey and refused support have to support him and Sabotaged his meetings meaning that the party was split.

Many discontented young people protested outside the Democratic convention hall in Chicago reminding the public how violence and disorder had become endemic during Johnson's presidency meaning that faith in the Democrats was eroding further.

Despite Democrat divisions the popular vote was close with 43.4% to 42.7% in Nixon's favour. Turnout at the election was relatively low with only 60% of people voting.

Personalities of the Nixon Administration

Nixon's most influential advisors intensifies the weaknesses in his personality

1. Nixon's national Security advisor was Henry Kissinger who was willing to wheel American power with exceptional ruthlessness yet somehow still managed to win the Nobel Peace Prize
2. Bob Halderman with Nixon's chief of staff and John Ehrlichman was Nixon's domestic affairs advisor they controlled access to the president and historians note their vindictiveness cynicism and amorality. Nixon subsequently blame them for the Watergate cover up.
3. as attorney general in it since first term John Mitchell demonstrated disregard for the law he approved things like wiretapping without Court authorisation.
4. when Nixon became president of the general expectation was of peace with Honour in Vietnam and conservative social policies would restore Law and Order discourage protests and raising Johnson's expensive great Society policies and poverty