

# The Miami Herald

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*It's Only Natural*

## A Sag In LBJ's Popularity?

By HOWARD K. SMITH

THERE ARE a great many things the President might do about his sagging stock on the opinion polls. Probably the single most useful recourse would be to shrug it off with a little philosophy.

Measured by the standard of most of his predecessors, he is not doing nearly as poorly as the polls or the Washington press corps suggest. But corrosive criticism and bouts with popular disillusion are almost non-constitutional requisites for the job. And past examples suggest the present time is about right for popular favor to reach for bottom.

It was within months of FDR's 1936 landslide victory that his stock began to sink, beginning with his ill-fated court reform and ending with the ensuing and disastrous off-year election of 1938. It was about two years after Harry Truman's stunning upset triumph of 1948 that his poll rating attained what is still the record low for Presidents — 26 per cent. In 1962, John Kennedy's popularity enabled his party to confound the tradition that the in-party always loses in off-year elections and win a net gain of seats in Congress; yet a year later his influence was so low that his legislative program had completely jammed on Capitol Hill.

THE TROUBLE is, we still personalize our complaints, and what better person to blame than the one whose actions fill a third of the average front page each day and whose face appears on television more often than Walter Cronkite's? Also, when people give a man a spectacular triumph they also unconsciously hang expectations on him that no human can fulfill. So, comes the pendulum swing from charisma to disenchantment.

In this situation even the most trivial features of a



Smith

President are picked at. Not long ago I read a list of scathing comments about the President on everything from his absence of style and his cornball mannerisms to his vulgar jokes and lack of dignity in public. At the end it was revealed that not Johnson but Abraham Lincoln had been the butt of these comments by his contemporaries.

## Potomac Fever

George Wallace says LBJ can't buy Alabama for \$30 million in federal aid. That's the kind of talk that's going to bring on price controls.

Orbiter is still circling the moon, looking for Apollo landing sites. Nobody's been there yet, and already it's hard to find a parking spot.

Television's Tarzan has a dislocated shoulder, a broken rib, and two lion bites. That's awful — in that costume every little band-aid shows.

No wonder LBJ wants everybody to start saving water. He figures Congress has been pumping

Among the comforts of a philosophical attitude is the observed fact that people often tend to say one thing when airing views that won't affect national actions, and to behave differently in that periodic moment of truth in the voting booth. As a friend of mine who hated Truman said when I asked why he did not mark his ballot for Dewey, "Hell, I was only talking then; now I'm voting."

WITH voting-booth perspective, which swallows near-up wrinkles in long-trend contours, Mr. Johnson's record cannot but appear inordinately impressive. His immediate predecessor's slogan was, get the country moving. But when Kennedy died all had stalled. Johnson's job was, in Pierre Salinger's words, "about like taking over the driver's seat of a bus that had run up

too much of it into his Great Society bills.

The prisoners' art sale at Leavenworth was only partly successful. Some artists wanted to sell engravings, but Secret Service took away their plates.

Cambodians went all out to make De Gaulle feel at home. They staged a pageant showing how it was 2,000 years ago, when god-kings ruled the land.

A British worker won \$974,000, tax free, on a 51-cent football pool ticket. No ruling yet whether he can claim the 51 cents as a business expense.

JACK WILSON

against a brick wall. You had to get that bus started again, and you had to get it through that brick wall — but how?" There are not many precedents for the skill with which Johnson got it started and through the wall.

The troubles in our cities cannot be shrugged off. They demand prompt and vigorous remedy. Still, in a real sense they are the noises of progress. It is true that desperate people don't make revolutions; it is rather people who have had a whiff of success and felt the first flow of democratic power into their spirits.

The economy's main trouble is the threat of "overheating." How much more welcome a problem that is than the way the motor went cold in three recessions in the eight Eisenhower years. Then we shuddered at Allen Dulles' announcement that our economic growth rate was but a fraction of Russia's. Now, our growth rate has simply traded places with Russia's.

THE PRESIDENT'S weakness is said to be foreign affairs. Yet the intervention in the Dominican Republic, so fiercely assailed at the time (by this reporter among others,) turned out pretty well.

In a year of our really resisting in Viet Nam, the mood of all Asia has changed. The assumption that China would inevitably come to dominate the continent has been de-fused, and a kind of spiritual rebellion against Peking's influence is spreading. In fact, so disastrous has been the year for China that we have a new fear that she may resort to irrational actions to try to rescue her prestige.

The President has to face the fact that vigorous Presidents don't get an even break. Since he insists on remaining in that condition, it is going to be tough, at least until election time.

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JOHN S. KNIGHT

## Letters To The Editor

### Time For A Moral Upturn

The Constitution of the United States was documented and ratified in 1789. It was conceived and dedicated in liberty by men of integrity who felt that every person should be guaranteed the right to the pursuit of happiness, liberty and the freedom from fear.

With those beautiful sounding words ringing in our ears, many of us stupidly plunk ourselves down in an easy chair, prop up our feet as we watch television and turn the reins of our beloved democracy over to the gangsters, the pornographic dealers and the liquor lords. We feel we do not need to trouble our pretty, soft heads about the erosion of our country's morals, nor worry about the swift increase in violence and crime or the sloshing of our people in alcoholic beverages.

We anesthetize our brains by telling ourselves that we are merely enjoying the fruits of our forefathers' labors and that everyone has the right to do as he pleases. But I am of the opinion that we shall awaken suddenly to find we have sold our birthrights to the unprincipled and the underworld characters who are fast siphoning off our national integrity and strength.

The morality of America has declined to a point of alarm. We may disapprove and be disturbed by the downward trends of our nation, but when are we going to be sufficiently alarmed to rise up and demand our rights as citizens who would like to be able to step outside our doors in safety, or enjoy a peaceful walk in the park without being accosted by some crazy, trigger-happy drunk or one who has been "turned-on" by LSD?

What is it going to take in the way of a national calamity to awaken us from our lethargy to the dangers which are threatening our peace and security? How long can a loving God be patient with such an ungrateful, slothful and rebellious people? How long can He spare our country from utter destruction and annihilation?

### Sign Your Name

Letters to the Editor must bear the writer's name and address. The use of initials or pen-names as signatures will eliminate a letter from consideration for publication. All letters are subject to condensation by the editors.

tion or keep us from being taken captive by an enemy nation?

To those "who care enough": We will get up from our easy chairs and declare war on all of the menaces that are threatening our very existence as a free nation and put some teeth in our laws and demand our lax and soft-hearted judges to express their convictions via stiff punishments for those who are robbing us of our guaranteed American rights.

MAURINE CLEMENTS



### What Is Troubling Glum Schoolboys?

On the editorial page of this morning's Herald there is a photograph of some 50-odd young school children. Forty-five of these are clear enough to reveal facial expressions. Of that 45 only six are smiling. And these six are girls.

There must be some message or lesson in this phenomenon, but I do not know what it is.

MRS. E. LOCKARD ROW

### Bob Kennedy Rates Applause

I read with great astonishment The Herald's editorial that Sen. Robert Kennedy should apologize to Mayor Sam Yorty of Los Angeles.

Mayor Yorty did nothing to remedy the problems of the Negro community in the Watts section. When Kennedy asked him about the conditions in Watts, Yorty replied that Kennedy should stick to his job as senator.

This country wonders why there is unrest and resentment in the big cities. It seems to me that these apathetic mayors like Yorty, who care nothing about the plight of people in ghettos, are the ones to blame.

Sen. Kennedy, who speaks up against a person like Yorty, should be applauded, not asked to apologize.

HARVEY LEVIN

### Defends England As Our True Ally

Isn't it about time you put an answer in this column to the everlasting slurs on England? We haven't any quarrel with England. I say that she and Australia are the only true allies we have in the entire world regardless of our differences in Suez and Viet Nam.

The mention of LBJ waging war against the British to capture the Irish-American vote as one writer to your column suggested is asinine; he might lose the English-American vote.

We never hear of them, yet as I read our early American history it appeared to me that the majority of our early settlers and American patriots were English or of English forefathers. They quickly and truly became what we are so boastful of, 100 per cent American, without a prefix, and by now their descendants must truly be legion, and still without a prefix.

LIONEL D. LUSARDI  
Stuart

### Florida Milk Twice As High

Your story on the recent increase in the price of milk indicates that further increases may be expected. You naturally deal with conditions in Florida, and explain in some detail why the increases are necessary.

The price of milk is of real concern to most people. Even before the recent milk price increases, consumers in Florida were paying substantially more than in the North. Right now, for example, the retail price of milk in Indiana runs from 61 to 69 cents per gallon. In Miami we are paying this much for a half gallon. Certainly production costs in Indiana, where heated barns are required for the winter months, are as great as in Florida.

No one has even tried to explain why the differential.

M. E. RATTS

### The Bible Tells Us

THE HEAVENS declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.

PSALM 19