opinion

Elections disappointing

The national elections of 1982 must have been a disappointment to just about everyone. For the Democrats, they failed to gain majority control of the Senate, in the House of Representatives, they are still far short of the two-thirds majority necessary to override the Presidential veto and thereby hogtie the Reagan Administration on appropriation matters. Their numerical victory was not a definitive repudiation of the President's social and economic programs, besotted with incoherence and besotted with economic programs, besotted with incoherence. Their numerical victory was not a definitive repudiation of the President's social and economic programs, besotted with incoherence. Their numerical victory was not a definitive repudiation of the President's social and economic programs, besotted with incoherence.

But like the American citizenry, MIT students will allow repeated improper behavior on the part of the governmental apparatus, to the point of masochism. Isn't it strange that we allow our undergraduate Association leadership to host General Assembly meetings lubricated with daiquiris, while not even caring whether this claque has approached President Gray or Chairman Johnstone, to the point that major capital expenditures at MIT over the last four years (the Athletic Center and the Whitaker College, for example) have been funded to an unprecedented degree from student tuition?

We care so little, I guess, because the stakes have never been inside clear to the average MIT citizen. It is only when enough electrical engineers are made obsole from their corporations and are told that their creative solutions are not appropriate for a budget- and social-conscious business organization, and when research chemists, physicists and biologists are informed that their topics of interest are no longer important to a cradle-ruled Federal government, that the consequences of today's actions will become painfully clear.

Alvin Toffler, perhaps not the most authoritative source, has noted that in our transition to a technological civilization, the methods by which democracy functions must inevitably be transformed. In the industrial age the vote of the citizen was the fundamental means of participation in public affairs. Now, when we are balanced between two eras, the republican democracy will indeed seem like an awkward echo, so long as the outcome of an election does not necessarily reflect the wishes of the populace. Other forms of participation are coming to the fore, although they are unlikely to substantially increase the sense of实效ity in American public policy. In Columbus, Ohio, some residents can express their opinions instantaneously on a wide range of political, economic and social issues through their television sets and PUSH button voting system. Single issue political action committees are reverting to organized demonstrations on a scale never before seen, and some citizens find satisfaction in these events that they do not feel at the ballot box.

It is important to note, however, that these mobilizations of U.S. democracy, at this point, exclusively on a wide range of political, economic and social issues through their television sets and PUSH button voting system. Single issue political action committees are reverting to organized demonstrations on a scale never before seen, and some citizens find satisfaction in these events that they do not feel at the ballot box.

Whatever the form of individual involvement, the American republic is passing through an age of ideology and rhetoric. Politicians and citizens alike are more obsessed with ideas and their fairness than the quality of the solutions expressing these notions. We should not be happy with the likes of Ronald Reagan and Pete Wilson and Paul Tsongas and John Anderson. In feeling sorry for ourselves, let us understand that elections do not a democratic society make.

Column/David C. Lingelbach

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