

Blue-Collar Voter Tells Why He's Shifting to Nixon

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PITTSBURGH, Nov. 4—John E. Hazuda Sr., a 42-year-old boilermaker, has always voted for the Democratic Presidential candidate. This Election Day he is going to vote for President Nixon.

What is more, he is going to vote the straight Republican ticket and is even considering changing his permanent registration from Democrat to Republican.

Mr. Hazuda is one of millions of blue-collar workers—many of them from the construction trades—who are abandoning their habitual allegiance to the Presidential nominee of the Democratic party.

This massive defection of the blue-collar vote has been a major factor in the big lead piled up by Mr. Nixon during the campaign, according to the public opinion polls.

Mr. Hazuda, a dark-haired, powerfully built, pleasant man, finds it difficult to say in so many words why he is switching this year. For one thing, he just does not like or trust Senator George McGovern.

"I wouldn't vote for McGovern if he were running for an office in my local, much less for President of the United States," he said unsmilingly.

But Mr. Hazuda does not seem to have particularly strong feelings about President Nixon.

In fact, as he sat in his bright brick-and-wood kitchen, while his wife, Rose, served coffee and thick slabs of homemade cinnamon-and-nut coffee cake, Mr. Hazuda gave the impression that he was not at all excited by or even excessively interested in this election.

"I happen to think Nixon is the better man, but the country will survive if McGovern is elected," he conceded.

What was apparent as Mr. Hazuda drank his coffee, smoked filter-tipped cigarettes and talked about politics is that he is proud of the material comforts he has been able to provide for his family with his labor and determined that those comforts will not be taken from him.

As a boilermaker, Mr. Hazuda said, he has made as much as \$20,000 and as little as \$3,500 a year in the 21 years he has been at the trade. It is clear that recent years have been good ones.

His one-family home halfway up a steep hill in the working class suburb of Beech View has small rooms but is solidly built of brick. There is a big color television set in the living room and wrought-metal peacocks

and a painting by Mrs. Hazuda on the walls. There are other TV sets in the kitchen and the bedrooms.

Mr. Hazuda works very hard. He gets up at 5:30 every weekday morning to drive 60 miles to a construction project in Ohio where he is helping put antipollution devices on a power plant.

But he drives to work in a white-and-green 1972 Oldsmobile. On weekends he plays golf or goes hunting or, during the baseball season, visits Three Rivers Stadium to watch the Pirates play. In summers he has his own plot of land and a trailer at a nearby mountain lake. Every winter he spends two or three weeks in Florida and is thinking of going to Spain next year.

Working Steadily

"I've been working pretty good all through this Administration," Mr. Hazuda said. "Nixon has been making all those power plants put in the antipollution equipment and that's making enough work to keep our local busy for the next 10 years."

Having worked hard and provided well for his family, which includes four children and "my first grandchild on the way," Mr. Hazuda sees no reason why the government should help out "people who are too lazy to go out and make a living."

"If they took the people on welfare and gave them the \$500 but said, O.K., but you're going to have to work—dig ditches or clean streets or something—you'd see all those people on welfare out looking for a job," he said.

Maybe Senator McGovern would encourage people to take welfare handouts, Mr. Hazuda believes. He knows the President admires hard work as much as he does.

Busing is another sore point for Mr. Hazuda. "When I

bought this house I bought it because of the school and the convenience," he said. "If they can force me to send my kids to a different school, well, then they could force me to go to a different church."

"It's not my problem those people are living in poverty," he said. "They wouldn't be in poverty if they went out and got a job. There's no reason why a colored fellow can't buy a house here in Beach View and send his kids to our school. But first he has to go out and get a job."

Who is the "they" that is encouraging busing? It is the local government, Mr. Hazuda believes. Possibly it is Mr. McGovern, he added. Mr. Nixon is definitely against it.

Mr. Hazuda also feels strongly about the amnesty issue. "This is a good country," he declared. "I went into the service to serve my country and do my duty. These guys that went off to Canada better not come back. I'd hang them if they did. McGovern said he'd give them amnesty. Nixon said he would never give them amnesty."

But it is not so much the issues as people that seem to have influenced Mr. Hazuda's decision. An appearance by Vice President Agnew at his union's annual dinner dance recently was an important factor in his choice. "Agnew is a great guy," Mr. Hazuda said. "His wife is very nice too."

As for Senator McGovern: "I really don't see that he has anything to offer. I don't think he knows what he would or wouldn't do if he became President. He was making so many promises he is promising everybody the moon. He could never keep all those promises."

Besides he is basing his campaign on scandal and lies.

What scandal? What lies? "Well it's hard to pinpoint," Mr. Hazuda said. "But take the war. McGovern said he could end the war in 10 minutes with a telephone call. That must be a lie because if the war could have been ended so easily the President would have done it."

What about the Watergate case? "Oh, they say that was a put-up job," he said. "The Democrats did it themselves so they could put the blame on President Nixon."

He crumpled the empty package of cigarettes. "I just don't see anything wrong with this country," he asserted. "It is still the land of the free. There are no limits to what you could do or how much money you could make. What could be fairer?"

Mr. Hazuda's father, who came to this country from Slovakia, encouraged his children to go to college. Mr. Hazuda is the only one who did not. But he is content. "I got my money with my back instead of my brain," he said. "There is nothing wrong with that."

President Nixon, he feels sure, will not take away what he got with his back. About Mr. McGovern he is not so sure.