

collection of delegate votes proved more difficult. After the untimely death of Senator Kennedy, Vice President Humphrey assumed a clear lead in the support of party regulars and collection of delegate votes. In Maryland, the selection of delegates was left to state party conventions and no primary election was held, a circumstance widely criticized in the press.<sup>28</sup>

The Democratic Convention in Chicago was marred by protests which evolved into riots outside the convention hall. This scene overshadowed the party's attempt inside the building to recover from the Johnson resignation, Kennedy's death and McCarthy challenge. Seventeen credential fights and abolition of the mandatory unit rule for delegate voting not only reformed the party but also opened new and old wounds. In the end, Humphrey had his presidential nomination but the Democratic party was hardly a stable ship in shape for a difficult campaign.<sup>29</sup>

The Republicans, cognizant of the Democrats difficulties, and their own debacle in 1964, sought to present a smoother picture. By the time of the national convention in early August, the leading contender for the nomination was former Vice President Richard M. Nixon. Bouncing back from his presidential defeat in 1960 and a gubernatorial defeat in California in 1962, Nixon had performed valuable party service since the last presidential election. Nixon had won seven out of eight contested primary elections<sup>30</sup> and had a decided edge in committed delegates. Although Governors Ronald Reagan of California and Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York had considerable combined delegate support, the ideological gulf between them prevented a successful stop Nixon effort. The surprise choice for Vice President was Maryland's Spiro T. Agnew who had been an early supporter of Rockefeller but switched to Nixon shortly before the convention.<sup>31</sup>

The general election campaign of 1968 proved to be one of the most interesting in modern American politics. The major parties were represented by two nominees (Humphrey and Nixon) who had been active on the national scene since World War II and represented different styles and philosophies. In addition, the 1968 campaign featured the most formidable third party candidacy since Roosevelt's "Bull Moose" Progressivism in 1912. Alabama Governor George Wallace had announced on February 8, 1968 that he was mounting a campaign for president as the candidate of the American Independent party. Given his strong showing in several Democratic primaries in 1964, the electoral vote independence of the southern states expressed in 1948 and 1960, and the heightened tensions generated by the Civil Rights Movement, the possibilities of the first electoral college plurality since 1824 were genuine.

The Republican ticket began the campaign as the strongest, well coordinated and most unified. Nixon offered new leadership in a troubled time but was non-committal on specific programs. Platitudes on law and order and control of Federal spending rounded out the campaign themes. Humphrey and the Democrats spent much time attempting to corral splintered Democratic support but complete cohesion was never achieved. Humphrey's energetic and engaging campaign style raised his showing in the polls from 15 percentage points behind in September to virtually even by election day. Confident of his position Nixon shied away from televised debates although both sides made as much use of the media as could be afforded.

Another close election was the answer after the polls closed on November 5, 1968. This