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Commentary: Conservatives

WHY ARE THEY DESTROYING THE GOP?

Anyone wishing to understand why American parties are in trouble should examine the New Right movement in America. It seeks to extend its influence within the Republican Party at the same time it undermines the party and seeks a bipartisan conservative coalition.

Recently, a group of eight Republican senators wrote Republican National Chairman Bill Brock to complain about the New Right's tactics in seeking to depose Republican incumbents in next year's GOP primaries. They were disturbed by fundraising letters supporting the Senate candidacies of Jeff Bell in New Jersey and Avi Nelson in Massachusetts. The Bell letter (sent by U.S. Rep. John Ashbrook) attacked Sen. Clifford Case's liberal record, stating:

...we conservatives have failed in the past to get aggressive candidates into races for congressional seats early enough for victory. This single mistake has cost innumerable conservatives any chance of winning.

Conservatives nationally have recognized this error and are rapidly moving to correct it. Nowhere is this more evident than in New Jersey, and the defeat of a leading liberal senator in that state is an exciting possibility.

The Nelson letter attacking Sen. Ed Brooke of Massachusetts maintained a similar thread of attack: "To Ed Brooke, the Republican Party and the Republican Party's principles just don't seem to matter." Another letter promoting radio personality Nelson's candidacy was sent out under the signature of U.S. Rep. Steve Symms (R-Idaho).

Virtually every Republican moderate-progressive up for reelection in 1978 seems to have been targeted for elimination. Prior to his retirement announcement, Sen. James Pearson (R-Kansas) was

marked for such treatment. While she champions the crusade against the Equal Rights Amendment, Phyllis Schlafly is often rumored to be a potential opponent to Sen. Charles Percy (R-Ill.) Only Oregon Sen. Mark O. Hatfield seems thus far to have escaped a serious challenge.

There is a certain ethereal quality to the new conservative attacks on Republican progressives. First, the challengers they are backing have little real chance of winning the general election. The prime motive for their candidacies must inevitably be seen as the destruction of the party's progressive wing --- a group most notably represented in the U.S. Senate. Even the well-publicized "potential" candidacy of Phyllis Schlafly has to be taken with a grain of aspirin; she has made no visible moves to "organize" in Illinois and would be naturally leary of jeopardizing the purported popularity of her anti-ERA movement by losing a primary to Percy.

Second, the New Right has a tenuous loyalty to the GOP. One of Schlafly's most prominent boosters has been the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, one of several New Right political action funds which have stressed the necessity to work outside the existing Republican Party structure and support conservative Democrats such as U.S. Rep. Larry McDonald (D-Ga.). CSFC is one of many New Right accounts handled by the godfather of the New Right, direct mail mastermind Richard Viguerie. Viguerie is perhaps the New Right's most vocal critic of the Republican Party. His stepchildren---the National Conservative Political Action Committee, Gun Owners of America, the Committee for Responsible Youth Politics, and the Public Service Political Action Committee---tend to reflect his influence. And his influ-

ence is great because the New Right depends to a remarkable degree on the money generated by Viguerie's lists of potential contributors. It was estimated by the Associated Press' Don McLeod last summer that Viguerie is responsible for 70 percent of the country's political direct mail. But much of the funds collected by Viguerie are siphoned off for his operation. According to Scripps-Howard's Tim Wyngaard, close to \$7 million of the \$7.8 million raised by three of Viguerie's far right groups in 1975-76 went for overhead, much of it Viguerie's overhead. That's a lot of overhead that isn't of any direct benefit to Republicans of any ideological persuasion. What Viguerie says carries a lot of postage.

The growth of the New Right and its fundraising offshoots is partly a reflection of the demise of traditional party politics. Pure organizations are no longer the repositories of political cash that they once were. Fundraising is increasingly candidate-centered as new limitations on individual contributions have limited the pool of resources. As a result, the pool of small contributions available through Richard Viguerie's computers has grown enormously in importance. And this pool of contributors is primarily responsive to appeals about emotional issues. Fortunately, people do not vote the way they spend money. Therefore, the victories of Viguerie-style conservatives tend to be concentrated in states like Utah where a little money can go a long way for a candidate like Sen. Orrin Hatch.

A favorite trigger for New Right contributions is the Panama Canal. It is true that the New Right's position is currently superficially popular, but it contains the seeds of a future national and partisan disaster for the GOP, as New York Daily News columnist James Wieghart has pointed out:

Even if the Canal treaties are ratified by the Senate, the conservatives will be helped more than hurt. The angry, rock-throwing demonstrations by left-wing Panamanian students who think the treaties do not go far enough in Panama's favor show that a gradual turnover of the Canal to Panama will not end the anti-U.S. agitation in Panama. Conservatives will be able to exploit this and the strong, emotional "giveaway" issue to rally their forces over the next several years.

In the long run, however, the Canal is a no-win proposition for the conservatives because it is rooted in this

country's jingoistic past, not in the post-colonialism present. By tying the Republican Party to a foreign policy of the past by opposing a turnover of the Canal and rejecting normalization of relations with the Peoples Republic of China, the conservatives will simply drive out the remaining moderates and liberals, thus narrowing even further the party's already dangerously shrunken base.

Columnists Jack W. Germond and Jules Witcover have also written extensively on the efforts of U.S. Rep. Phil Crane, Sen. Orin Hatch, Conservative Caucus director Howard Phillips, et al to block the proposed treaties. Writing last August, the columnists observed:

Under Howard Baker, a likely rival to (Ronald Reagan) in 1980 presidential politics, the Senate Republicans have shown a remarkable ability to put aside their differences for the higher purpose of thwarting the Democratic administration so far this year.

But what they must decide in this case is whether a display of party muscle is as important as a showing of political responsibility. And what those with national ambitions, a group not limited to Baker, also must decide is whether they risk the enmity of the conservative groups that are the single most potent force in their party....

What is notably absent from all these calculations is any discussion of the merits of the agreements with Panama---or, more to the point, an alternative to simple approval or disapproval of that agreement...

Much of the conservatives' pressure cooker strategy has been directed at Senate Minority Leader Howard Baker Jr. who has refused to take a position on the treaties until next year. As a result, Baker had the target of a newspaper campaign intended to convince Tennessee voters that only the state's senior senator can prevent ratification of the canal treaties. The American Conservative Union followed up this media blitz with an airplane-towed banner over the University of Tennessee versus Memphis State University football game in early November: "KEEP OUR CANAL---WRITE SENATOR BAKER." At one point Jesse Helms suggested that Baker was "squirming like a worm on a hot brick," but later backed off from his statement.

Baker's position contradicts conventional conservative logic that opposition to the treaties is a conservative boon and that support for them is a

conservative bane---one that could cost Baker the 1980 presidential nomination.

Baker, however, has stood firm on his non-position. It may be much better politics than his conservative critics ever imagined. Writing recently in the New York Times, Tom Wicker observed:

If the treaties are ratified, what good would it do Republicans for their Senate leader to go down with a small band of bitter-enders? And if the treaties are defeated, it wouldn't necessarily be in the party's best interest to have the major responsibility appear to rest on Republican senators and their leader. Remember the League of Nations?

If, moreover, defeat of the treaties should lead, as predicted, to violence and sabotage---even guerrilla warfare ---in the Canal Zone, Republicans might be saddled with much of the blame. The party's national committee already has come out against the treaties; for Mr. Baker to refrain from doing so maintains at least some balance among Republican leaders, possibly an escape hatch from what might be, a year from now, an untenable political position.

And as a Presidential candidate, Mr. Baker won't really hurt himself by establishing the idea that he won't knuckle under to transient political moods and movements. The problem, as Baker himself has said, is to avoid the cannibalization of the GOP over the treaty issue. "We really must not cannibalize our party. We're not big enough," Baker told an ABC-TV interview panel.

Commenting on the right wing's pre-occupation with the Canal, conservative columnist George Will wrote in October: "No party can rely heavily on an issue that is peripheral to the broad range of concrete interests of the general public. Unfortunately, the warm Republican embrace of the canal issue suggests that they value it not least because it delays the evil day when they must confront the poverty of Republican doctrine regarding the public's more central interests." Wills' view is echoed by National Review columnist James Burnham, who wrote recently: "The dispute over the treaties is in considerable degree factitious. Everyone realizes that the momentum of the campaign against ratification derives less from objective analysis of the treaties' defects than from the belief that it is a hot political issue for Republicans

and conservatives to ride. My guess is that the amount of heat latent in the treaties issue is overestimated...And in truth, voting the treaties up or down is not going to decide the fate of our country or of the Canal."

More responsible national Republican leaders like Brock, Baker, and House Minority Leader John J. Rhodes recognize that emphasis on the canal is misplaced even though they themselves doubt the treaties' wisdom. And so, Rhodes, Baker, and Brock inevitably will be new targets for conservative wrath. It may even affect conservative enchantment with former Treasury Secretary John Connally, who has had the temerity to suggest that the canal need not be an overriding issue in state elections and that the GOP ought to concern itself with issues which concern people as well as ideology.

But as conservative pollster Arthur Finkelstein observed at last winter's national conservative political action conference in Washington, "It is not reality that counts so much as the perception of reality." And right now the conservatives' perception of reality is that the canal is their meal ticket.

GOP Conservatives are blinded by notions of short-term political gain. The canal may save the political shirts of southern diehards like Jesse "Senator No" Helms (as the FORUM noted in its October 1 issue), but the party will carry a heavy responsibility if the treaties are defeated and deleterious consequences ensue. In commenting on Ripon's analysis of the impact of the Panama controversy on the South, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution's David Nordan observed that GOP congressional candidate Newt Gingrich has been infected by the Panama bug in his efforts to once again unseat U.S. Rep. John Flynt. Gingrich, a bright light in the Georgia GOP, has appointed himself chairman of "Georgians Against the Panama Canal Treaty." Writes Nordan:

This is an odd role for the professor, who should know better than anyone how Teddy Roosevelt stole the canal and the international crisis the United States will face if the treaty fails.

It's hard to see how he hopes to gain any mileage on the issue against Flynt, who is as capable as anyone of recognizing political expediency when he needs it. And Gingrich's frenzy

of Republican patriotism may cost him some of the young liberal and black votes which have kept him a viable if unsuccessful, political figure in these parts up to now.

Among the constituent parts of the anti-treaty coalition is the National Conservative Political Action Committee. NCPAC could write a primer on how to undermine the Republican Party and anyone requiring enlightenment on NCPAC's political sagacity has only to look as far as NCPAC's role in its home state: Virginia. NCPAC and its Virginia offshoot, VCPAC, are truly bipartisan. In 1975, they supported a conservative Democrat against a conservative Republican for a State Senate seat from Alexandria. The Republican won. ("I think we support too many Republican candidates," NCPAC official Terry Dolan told U.S. News & World Report earlier this year, noting that about half the candidates it backed in Virginia were Democrats.)

In this year's gubernatorial contest, NCPAC, VCPAC and an offshoot known as Independent Virginians for Responsible Government did their best to doom Lt. Gov. John Dalton's chances of winning the gubernatorial race. By September, Democrat Henry Howell was doing a superb job of rhetorical overkill on Dalton and moderate votes were swinging the conservative Dalton's direction. Such political fortune is beyond the poor taste of people like Terry Dolan (chairman of IVRG, VCPAC and NCPAC), David Keene (former Reagan operative who is treasurer of VCPAC and IVRG), and Roger Stone (who was secretary of IVRG and treasurer of NCPAC, and is chairman of the Young Republican National Federation.)

NCPAC sponsored a fundraising letter under U.S. Rep. Kenneth Robinson's signature which misrepresented Howell's position on school busing. The letter allowed Howell to counterattack on the issue of irresponsible charges. The second IVRG venture was television advertising critical of Howell. The ads were so defamatory and deceptive that several stations refused to run them; eventually Dalton requested their withdrawal. The IVRG ads "have only given Henry Howell an opportunity to martyr himself... This kind of independent negative advertising is unnecessary and counterproductive," said Dalton. These tactics almost reversed the tide that was flowing in Dalton's dir-

ection. Fortunately, NCPAC's damage was minimized and Dalton went on to win a smashing victory.

But Dalton himself was not able to capitalize on his own heritage as a leader of moderate Republicans in Virginia with a record of moderation on racial issues. But elsewhere in the South, black voters' importance to Republicans was clearly demonstrated in the three other prestigious posts won by Republicans in 1977. All three courted black voters. All three were moderate Republicans. And two of the three ran without substantial party support.

Ken Harris, for example, is the new mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina. He was the upset victor by a landslide 3-2 margin over the incumbent Democrat. He received little help, however, from the ultraconservative local Republican organization, relying primarily on his own network of business, civic and GOP volunteers. Significantly, the only other citywide GOP winner, progressive Councilwoman-at-large Pat Locke, also ran without organization help. The conservative council candidate who had such help lost. The victories of Locke and Harris stand out as exceptions to the pernicious influence of Sen. Jesse Helms over the North Carolina GOP these days.

The Helms mentality was evident in Virginia where State Sen. Joe Canada (R) attempted to run for lieutenant governor by traversing the Panama Canal. He was soundly defeated by Democrat Charles Robb. Canada's fellow state senator, Marshall Coleman, started out much farther behind in the polls than Canada in his race for attorney general. Coleman lacked even the endorsement of Republican Gov. Mills Godwin, who backed his former associate in the old Byrd Machine, State Delegate Edward Lane. The latter's segregationist past proved his undoing though Godwin offered a lame post-election excuse for Lane's loss: "...he was perceived in the public mind as too close to Mr. Howell." The wide disparity in the two Democrats' views had, in fact, spawned the term "rainbow ticket" to describe the Democratic slate.

By contrast, Mitch McConnell had the benefit of a united Republican organization in his victory over Jefferson County Judge Todd Hollenbach in Kentucky. As a former county GOP leader, McConnell was himself an experienced political tactician. His campaign was a model of good organization, good advertising and good

fundraising. McConnell's election was a "time-for-a-change" type victory. It nevertheless eliminated Hollenbach as a serious contender for the Democratic nomination for governor in 1979. Had he won his election as mayor of Lexington, former State Sen. Joe Graves (R) might also have become a serious candidate for higher Kentucky office, but unlike McConnell, he did not have a united GOP organization. Graves' progressive politics apparently rubbed some conservative hides the wrong way. McConnell, however, will probably be a serious contender for governor in 1979 or, more probably, 1983. And Coleman seems a logical choice for the GOP gubernatorial nod in Virginia in 1981.

Coleman, of course, will have opposition from within the Virginia GOP in achieving any such goal. The problem was aptly summarized in an editorial in the Raleigh News and Observer. Commenting on the recent GOP southern conference at Disneyland, the paper noted:

Southern Republicans have difficulty recognizing the difference between being conservative and being obsolete. When Rep. Robin Beard of Tennessee declared at Orlando that "I'm a right-wing, hard-core, conservative reactionary!" the crowd rose to its feet to applaud. It was almost an echo of the defiant shouts from San Francisco's Cow Palace in 1964 when Nelson Rockefeller, George Romney and William Scranton were being put down. So much for breadth.

The same weekend in Houston, the Republican on whom most of the media was focusing was Phyllis Schlafly. She was leading her lily-white gathering of 9,000 plus "antis" against the goals being endorsed by a more representative coalition of women attending the International Women's Year Conference in the same city. In essence, Schlafly chose to switch rather than fight her battles on the floor of the IWY convention. She never attended the convention where she would have had to compete for media attention

with other stars and non-stars in attendance. No, at the IWY convention, Schlafly would not have been the star. She said she didn't attend because she wasn't welcome, but she didn't attend the IWY conference in Illinois either, where ally Rosemary Thomson was elected as a delegate.

On the convention floor, the only anti-feminist to really attract attention was Indiana State Sen. Joan M. Gubins, the "pro-family" floor leader. The names of Republican feminist leaders present a broader cross-section of the party than Schlafly would have the media to understand. As the Washington Post's David Broder noted:

Because the women's movement in its early years was symbolized by liberal Democrats like Gloria Steinem, the impression has been that Republicans have little part of it. But that impression is no longer accurate---as evidenced by the involvement here of former First Lady Betty Ford, current Republican National Committee Cochairman Mary Krisp, former National Chairman Mary Louise Smith, and former Co-chairman Elly Peterson, along with more than 250 Republican grass-roots delegates and alternates.

Her leadership role may cost Krisp her job. Party conservatives are upset at her active espousal of women's rights. Krisp would have to fall in the category of people that Schlafly labels "misfits and oddballs." But as Mary Louise Smith says, "Phyllis Schlafly is not a role model for Republican women." Schlafly seeks to influence the party primarily from without. Her only real competition for the "anti" limelight is Anita Bryant. And as Schlafly admitted in an interview with the FORUM, she and Bryant have never met. That is understandable since Schlafly is to the "anti" movement what Ronald Reagan is to conservative presidential hopes: the indispensable word machine.

The two clarion calls heeded most energetically by conservatives this year are opposition to ERA and the

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Panama Canal treaties. By certain weird gyrations of logic, these two movements have adopted "pro-family" and "patriotic" banners---thus insinuating that their opponents are anti-family and unpatriotic. Admittedly, conservatives have seized on two hot issues. The nature of hot issues---particularly conservative ones like hard hat opposition to the "peaceniks" and anti-busing militants ---is that their impact is relatively short-lived.

Those conservatives, for example, who seek to capitalize on Avi Nelson's anti-busing leadership in Massachusetts might meditate on the fate of Louise Day Hicks in the 1977 Boston City Council elections. The anti-busing matriarch lost. At the same time, they might consider the election of Republican Mitch McConnell as judge of Jefferson County, Kentucky. He eschewed the busing bandwagon despite the strong opposition to the use of busing in desegregating Louisville schools.

The problem with the issues on which the New Right seeks to capitalize is that important "people" issues are ignored. This point was made by Daniel Joy, a former aide to former Sen. James L. Buckley, in an article published in the Nation last January: "The Viguerie people address only those issues which tend to stir up hostilities among lower-middle-class whites. But they never address the most important concerns of middle-class Americans of all colors---joblessness and income security. That is what really matters to these people---economic issues. And these are the very issues on which the 'New Right' people say they are willing to compromise." And these are the very which the New Right's prophet of Republican gloom, Kevin Phillips, says are important to American voters, Unfortunately, says Phillips, the GOP never does well when economic issues are paramount.

Ironically, it is on the economic issues that Republicans have shown the greatest ability to compromise and agree---as Senate Republicans did earlier this year on their economic-tax plan. It is on foreign policy and social issues on which they have the hardest time reaching consensus. And the New Right is conveniently using these issues to press its own interests while torpedoing the GOP. In a recent column, the Christian Science Monitor's Godfrey

Sperling observed: "Republican leaders from all regions of the U.S. have told the Monitor---in private conversations and not for attribution---that they see a coalescing of conservatives, most behind Ronald Reagan, and that this is putting a new strain on the uneasy relationship that exists between the conservatives and moderates in the party. Thus while GOP leadership in Washington is seeking to pull the party elements together and reach out to independents and Democrats, Republicans at the state level admit that strong forces are preventing this strategy from making much progress."

Having failed to kill the Republican Party overtly, New Right conservatives are now pursuing their mission in a less direct, but equally insidious fashion. Commenting on the letter signed by the eight GOP senators, New Right guru Kevin Phillips argued: "The simple fact is that GOP conservative activists do not accept any common view or interest with the Percy-Case element. Nor do they want to be hamstrung by a label that tries to create community where there is none."

The New Right is making its own new community by creating a coalition of interest groups outside the GOP. New Times' Andrew Kopkind reported this phenomenon in an article in September and noted that Paul Russo was GOP national political director Charles Black's liaison to this coalition. The Group Research Report says this new coalition has already sent out its first fundraising appeal. But why---outside of Black's and Stone's influence---should the GOP contribute to its own destruction by cooperating with groups that have a stated interest in the party's destruction?

It is cannibalism, noted Senators Charles McC. Mathias, Jr; Jacob K. Javits; Henry Bellmon, John Heinz, Malcolm Wallop; Mark O. Hatfield; Robert T. Stafford, and Edward W. Brooke. They asked: "Why have we, as a party, steadily lost the confidence of the American people and become in danger of forfeiting our standing as a national party? Simply put, the majority of Americans no longer regard the Republican Party as willing or able to represent the rich diversity of opinion in our country. The Republican Party is not generally perceived as having a sympathetic ear for programs which the majority of Americans is certain are vital to its well being." Amen. X

Commentary: Conservatives

THE PROBLEM WITH PURISTS

by John B. Anderson

I wish with a partisan fervor matched only by the mythical "little old Republican lady in tennis shoes," that the picture were brighter. But, alas, it is not. The GOP is down on its luck, and if we're going to rectify the situation, we must first own up to it. As columnist George Will says, "the foremost conservative virtue is prudence, which involves facing facts." Let us face facts.

Having said that, I hasten to observe that I cannot be sure, for myself, of all the reasons for our party's decline over the past 35-40 years. My limitations in this respect remind me of the words of Robert Lowell:

But sometimes everything I write
with the threadbare art of my eye
seems a snapshot,
lurid, rapid, garish, grouped,
heightened from life,
yet paralyzed by fact.

Nevertheless, I will hazard some thoughts about our party's current state. In part, I am certain, the most recent push toward extinction has been caused by Watergate. And also, I tend to think that the expanding chasm that separates Republicans and the nation's professional communities is partially responsible for our present state. It is a gap, as one analyst has noted, that "first began to open when Theodore Roosevelt left party ranks to form his Bull Moose movement in 1912. It was accentuated during the 1920s and widened further during the New Deal. It was fixed most firmly by the McCarthy experience of the early 1950s. It is a gulf which as Walter Lippmann has written is "at the root of the Republican decline."

Then, too, I detect a glimmer of enduring accuracy to an observation made at the 1940 Republican Convention by the New Republic's Bruce Bliven: "In a dozen ways the delegates to this convention showed their dominating emotion was hatred---hatred of Roosevelt, hatred of the New Deal, hatred, it almost seemed of the 20th Century."

"It is only a party ignorant of its country," one contemporary journalist has written, "that could have so disdain- ed, and thrown away, the black vote since it first began to lose it in 1928. It is only a party ignorant of

its own country that could have so neglected the ethnic groups, after they first began to pull away to Al Smith in 1928, and imagined that they could be permanently brought back into the fold by trumpery appeals to 'ethnic heritage' in the late 1960s. It is only a party ignorant of its country that could have failed for so long to appeal to the fundamental conservatism of the working class in any country..."

In his book Nixon Agonistes, Garry Wills recalls the plight of a hapless monk in an obscure tale called Cardinal De Bernis. It seems the monk had developed a strong attachment for the cleric, who responded by often inviting him to dinner:

...but as the friar was so humble, (goes the story) the rules of protocol required him to sit at the bottom of the table, far removed from his host. So Bernis said to him: "When I do this (putting his finger to his nose) you can know I am thinking of you." And ever and anon during the banquet he would be seen to glance down the table along the profiles in serried rows of gobbling cardinals and scintillating duchesses, to make his little signal to the poor old man just visible through the forest of candles. And then the face of the poor toothless friar would be transfigured with joy.

Sometimes I feel that the GOP plays too much the role of the Cardinal to the voters' "poor toothless friar." There is far too much distance between the party and the people.

There are doubtless a host of other factors that have conspired to sap our party's strength, factors that I have overlooked. But there is one additional overriding factor common to all of these I've just mentioned, a factor in this ruinous equation that I, for one, feel is a key to our present state and our future aspirations. It is related to "organizational arrogance," and I grieve for our party, for it is a deadly flaw, a kind of hubris that is bound to drag us down, inexorably, toward extinction.

Over the course of the past few years, the GOP has witnessed the

growth of a faction which seeks to impose its will on the party as a whole, a faction bent on driving out of the party anyone who does not subscribe to its philosophy---anyone who, to quote William Allen White in another context, is not "spiritually photogenic."

Mind you, I am not speaking of my fellow Republicans whose philosophy may differ somewhat from, say, mine. Nor am I speaking of the great majority of Republicans whose dearly-held political views are leavened with a sense of tolerance, mutual respect, and compassion. Rather I speak about the extremist, fringe elements who claim membership in our party, those who seek to expel the rest of us from the GOP using their own, arbitrary, philosophical purgative.

I am speaking of what has become known as the "New Right," as distinguished from those who espouse the traditional principles that many of us respect and cherish. I am speaking of those who call themselves Republicans, but whose real allegiance appears to lie with organizations outside the party, whose apparent goal is to rob the party rather than revivify it, whose devotion to doctrine outstrips their dedication to party. I am speaking, to recall George Will's words again, of those whose ideology is "almost unblemished by realism."

These are people who disdain the healthy mix of competing political ideas, for whom politics is a battle, not a contest. In their distorted construct of the political process, the debate among well-intentioned men and women of legitimately differing views is supposed to give way to the relentless espousal of hardline dogma. It is the political application of the "smash-and-grab" technique of modern warfare.

In a system that functions by "majority rule," it is ironic indeed that certain elements of the minority party would seek to drive others from their midst, thereby preserving their minority status. Irony or no, it is true. In a display of hard-edged intolerance, a small, willful group of rigid, right-wing Republicans is trying to write off the rest of us, to "cleans" the party of all those who commit the ultimate apostasy of disagreeing with them.

This kind of fractious, fratricidal warfare---borne of an organizational arrogance that will turn the GOP into the nation's country club---is not only a morally-tragic, politically-foolhardy course to follow in a nation as diverse as ours. It also runs counter to the grain of American history.

The Republican Party, before it became the "aginner" party of the New Deal era, was a proud and creative force in America. Recall, in the 19th century, that the nation's intellectual life was dominated and nurtured by Republicans. As Nick Thimmesch has pointed out in his book, The Condition of Republicanism, the giants of American arts and letters in the 1800s were Republicans: Emerson, Longfellow, Melville, Whittier, Lowell, Holmes, Parkman, and Whitman. In terms of public policy, the Republicans provided the government with the cutting edge that brought the nation into the 20th century as the strongest, and at the same time, most compassionate, on earth. The GOP was responsible for much of the most important social legislation of the 19th century: the Homestead Act, the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, federal conservation statutes, the Food and Drug Administration, child labor laws, creation of the Department of Labor, and the Norris-La Guardia Act (which limited federal injunctions against unions.)

Where is the party our 19th century forebears? Where, I ask, is the tolerance and balanced sense of public good that Madison justifiably fretted over? In its place, there rests the perfervid arrogance---the "cathedral mentality"---of those who commit the extreme act of political presumptuousness---the banishment from the Republican Party of all those who do not consecrate themselves to their political philosophy. "I am sick and tired," said Gerald Ford recently, "of those who want to prove they are purer of philosophy." So am I. ■

Contributor Note: This article is excerpted from a speech given by U.S. Rep. John Anderson, chairman of the House Republican Conference, at a conference of Michigan Republicans on September 18. Anderson himself has been targeted for elimination by New Right groups and faces a vigorous primary challenge from the Rev. Donald M. Lyon in Illinois' 16th C.D.

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