

RIPON FORUM

THE
GOP

NOVEMBER 15, 1976

VOL. XII No. 22

50 CENTS

COMMENTARY: Conservatives

THE CONSERVATIVE WEED

by Dick Behn

"And what is a weed? Ralph Waldo Emerson once said. "A plant whose virtues have not been discovered." American conservatives have long been weed advocates, pretending they have undiscovered virtues which would be irresistible to the electorate if it only had a clear choice. Conservatives had talked bravely of their future for the last two years, but their future has never looked dimmer.

Putting it together for conservatives may be a bit harder than they would like to imagine. They have several problems. First, their hero is over the hill but not willing to put himself out of the picture. As the "Duly Noted" section below indicates, Ronald Reagan has not relinquished the leadership of his movement nor buried hopes of entering the White House. He has made it clear that he will continue to give "the speech" and encourage conservative organizing around the country.

Writing in the Atlanta Constitution, reporter Joseph Albright noted "Reagan's moves should be among the more significant, for his supporters hold at least 60 of the 150 seats on the Republican National Committee, and he has an estimated \$1 million in campaign funds left over from the primaries. It is understood, furthermore that Lyn Nofziger, one of his former campaign aides, has been tentatively authorized to set up a political action committee that could hire a small staff and channel the remaining funds into 1978 congressional races." Reagan may become the Republican Right's Nelson Rockefeller, the man whose mere presence makes the emergence of another challenger from his wing virtually impossible.

Reagan's ability to translate his magnetism to other candidates is very limited. On his campaign tour for congressional candidates, he spent most of his time blessing the GOP Platform. In a Memphis appearance, for example, he never mentioned the names of the candidates for whom he was supposedly campaigning, saying only, "You've got a candidate for senator, you have these candidates here." As conservative political analyst Kevin Phillips caustically notes, "I don't think Ronald Reagan is the future of anything."

Second, the Republican Right has a dearth of Reagan substitutes. Two of them, James Buckley and Bill Brock, were put out to pasture November 2. Another, John Connally, failed to deliver the Lone Star State to the Republican column. Other longtime stars ---John Tower and Barry Goldwater--- have been villified for their support of President Ford. Sen Jesse Helms is available as a speercarrier but he could be retired by the Tarheel voters in 1978. Utah's new senator, Orrin Hatch, could become a new spokesman, but the Senate ranks have thinned and dulled noticeably. The new conservative senators---Harrison Schmitt, Malcolm Wallop, S.I.Hayakawa, and Richard Lugar are hardly the ideological absolutists who make conservative spines tingle. The baton may be passed to U.S.Reps. Phil Crane and Jack Kemp, the conservatives' most photogenic young ideologues.

Conservative columnist George Will summed up the conservatives' dilemma succinctly:"Since August, the conservative wing of the party has been decapitated. Ronald Reagan has run his last race. Sens.

James Buckley of New York and William Brock of Tennessee have been beaten. John Connally failed to deliver Texas to Ford, and his campaigning for congressional candidates produced no bumper crop of grateful winners,,,It is unlikely that 1976 would have been better for Republicans if Ronald Reagan had won the nomination."

As Scripps-Howard reporter Ted Knap noted in a post-election analysis: "Beaten again, demoralized and leaderless, the Republican Party is looking leftward today in an effort to broaden its popular support while also facing increased risk of a third party on its right...With President Ford stepping aside, most of the potential national ticket candidates, both new and old, are from the progressive or moderate wing of the party."

Third, the conservatives are running out of fertile ground and demonstration cases. As conservative columnist James J. Kilpatrick wrote after the election: "What happens now to the Republican Party? What now becomes of the conservative cause? Some helpful and optimistic things can be said, and I mean to say them in a moment, but for the record, let this be said first of all: We got clobbered. There is no point in attempting to paper over the damage. As the returns trickled in last week, Republican observers knew the anguish of MacDuff. Ford defeated, Buckley lost, Brock lost, Taft lost. All our pretty ones! All our pretty chickens at one fell swoop!"

Like American Conservative Union president M. Stanton Evans, Kilpatrick argues that conservatives will now have an opportunity for unfettered criticism without a Republican in the White House. Conservatives have never been known for the critical inhibitions, however, whether or not a Republican occupied the Oval Office. Ronald Reagan was not the least bothered by his own criticism's of Gerald Ford.

But conservatives do have a problem in finding political opportunities. Sen. William Scott's decision to abandon his Virginia seat in 1978 may be an omen to the GOP of even worse tidings in the South. There are few aging southern Democrats that the GOP can hope to succeed by capitalizing on Democratic divisions. And those few Republican Senate seats still held will

become the subject of increasing pressure from newly unified Democrats. For example, Democrats in South Carolina are talking about either former Govs. Robert McNair or John C. West or U.S. Rep. John Jenrette as candidates against Sen. Strom Thurmond(R) in 1978. Either Charles "Pug" Ravenel or Lt. Gov. Brantley Harvey, Jr. will probably succeed Gov. James Edwards. Organizationally, the GOP in the South has not improved enough nor expanded its base sufficiently ideologically to threaten a revitalized Democratic Party.

The elected heart of the GOP has shifted to the Rocky Mountain states where GOP conservatives experienced their only real gains this year. They now have senators from Nevada, Idaho, Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Utah although significantly, they control not a single governorship in the entire region and lost several good opportunities this year. They did however make some key legislative gains in states like Colorado and Montana and have hopes of taking the Senate and gubernatorial posts in Colorado in 1978. On the other hand, the insistence of Rocky Mountain Republicans in fielding ultraconservative congressional candidates has cost them heavily. They gained a House seat in Montana this year, but lost one in Arizona, fell short of unseating freshman U.S.Rep. Timothy Wirth in Colorado, and were unable to budge any other Democratic incumbents. The Rocky Mountain states lack the population density to form a strong base for conservatives without a visible spokesman from a more populous state like New York's Buckley or California's Reagan.

Fourth, the conservatives still have internal wounds from the 1976 presidential contests. The true believers may not easily forgive their conservative brethren who supported President Ford. In an article in the November issue of The Alternative, Reagan operative David Keene relates his negotiations with Mississippi GOP Chairman Clarke Reed over an endorsement of a presidential contender. Reed had promised Keene he would back Reagan but needed to keep the Mississippi delegation uncommitted until the GOP convention. The Reagan campaign had respected Reed's wishes. After Sen. Richard Schweiker's selection as Reagan's running mate, Reed switched sides:



tion. I also told him that I would remember the value of his word...

I told someone after the whole thing was over that a tight political campaign is a little like a war in that it reveals an awful lot about the character of the combatants.

And character is important.

The animosity generated by Keene against his former friend is important because Reed was the unquestioned leader of conservatives on the Republican National Committee in particular and in the South in general. His wheeler-dealer leadership will be hard to replace. Although Reed remains on the Republican National Committee, his convention role will undoubtedly limit his effectiveness. California GOP National Committeeman Mike Curb may move into the vacuum---both as a conservative leader and Reagan emissary.

Reed couldn't take the pressure. He called me at home at 11:30 on Tuesday evening to inform me that he was going to endorse Ford the next morning. I told him he couldn't do it because he had given his word and because we were going to win.

'The conservatives are sticking with us,' I told him, 'and if you desert Reagan now you will be deserting them. You'll be seen as a sell-out and you won't have enough influence left after this thing is over to speak for anyone.'

Reed wasn't buying, so I made one more try. I told him that regardless of how he felt about Reagan or Ford or Dick Schweiker, he owed me something and I wanted it---24 hours. I was playing for the time we needed to further solidify our Southern and right flanks and to allow us to break loose those delegates John [Sears] was sure we'd get in the Northeast.

The Mississippian agreed. We had another 24 hours. Or so I thought. Before noon on Wednesday, Reed was back on the phone asking me to let him break his promise of the night before.

I told him that he shouldn't run around making promises he couldn't keep. 'I know that,' he replied. 'But I've made other promises to other people.'

That said it all. I knew which of the promises he felt he would have to break. For the first time I let my anger show. I told him to do what he had to do, but to spare me the rhetorical justifica-

The RNC's executive committee meeting in December may signal conservative intentions to oust Mary Louise Smith as Republican National chairman. Among those mentioned to succeed Smith have been ousted Sen. Bill Brock, former Treasury Secretary John Connally, and former Reagan campaign coordinator John Sears. Brock has indicated the most interest in the post, but he may not proven his ideological fervor to sufficient extent for Reagan's partisans. Nor does it make sense to elect as RNC chairman a man who lost a Senate election as a result of questions surrounding his financial dealings and 1970 election. If Mrs. Smith chooses to step down, her successor will undoubtedly be a step down as well for GOP moderates. During her two-year tenure, Mrs. Smith kept the GOP together and alive, a feat many thought impossible. Although the 1976 election results do not reflect the RNC's fundraising and organizational success this year, Mrs. Smith has been an effective and capable GOP leader. Her resignation would be the party's loss. Her post-election comments reflected her belief that the party has not sufficiently broadened its base and should not become a vehicle for "ideologically pure" conservatives. Mrs. Smith said Republicans "must more accurately convey our concern about people and their well being. To the extent that we have failed to do this in the past, we are reaping its ill effect." ■

DULY NOTED: Conservatives

CONSERVATIVES AND THE GOP

● "The Future of the GOP," editorial in the New York Times, November 10, 1976. Commenting on the 1976 election returns, the New York Times asked: "What do these grim statistics portend for the GOP? For the immediate future, they mean that the party heads toward 1980 with aging, battle-scarred leaders. At 65 Ronald Reagan would seem too old to contemplate another Presidential race in four years time; but with the defeat of Senators William Brock of Tennessee and James Buckley of New York, he is still the only widely known conservative...The 1976 election proved, however, what moderate Republicans had long contended. With a good campaign, their party can still win at the Presidential level, or at least make a close race in the East and the industrial Middle West. ...If [President Ford] had adopted somewhat more progressive policies in the last two years and had chosen a more sympathetic running mate, he might easily have reversed the outcome."

● "The State of the GOP," editorial in the Washington Post, November 7, 1976. "The election has shown what little contribution Ronald Reagan and John Connally can make to enlarging the party's appeal, especially as long as Jimmy Carter holds the affections of the South. The West has lots of territory but not enough votes---and too many scrappy Democrats. Continuing to look west, south and to the right may keep the GOP alive, but mainly as a frustrated perpetual minority. In order to grow, as well as govern, the GOP will have to continue to compete in the colder industrial states and the heterogeneous suburbs everywhere. Some conservatives and most Republican moderates have been preaching this gospel for years and documenting it with success at the polls. In many cases, though, these have been personal instead of party victories achieved through independent organizations and campaigns. Since the bitter intraparty struggles of the early 1960s, most moderates have taken only sporadic interest in party organizational work. Unless they involve themselves more in party fund-raising and recruitment, their own popularity is not likely to translate into durable gains for the GOP." Ripon has

said it before; the Washington Post says it again.

● "Divisive Times for the GOP," by Robert L. Healy. Boston Globe, November 7, 1976. "The real problem for the Republican Party is contained in its right wing. If Ronald Reagan had done as much for President Ford in places such as Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi as Wallace did for Carter, the results in last Tuesday's election might have given Ford the victory. Further, there was a great suspicion in Texas that John Connally who campaigned with the President on his last swing through Texas had mixed emotions about a Ford national victory. While Connally was supposed to be heading the Texas campaign for the President, he was at the same time campaigning in at least 14 states "to elect a Republican Congress." But Connally was fooling no one. He was campaigning for the Presidential nomination in 1980.

● "Can Conservatives Stop Carter Jugernaut?" editorial in Human Events, November 13, 1976. The only reason Ford did so well is because he began to be perceived as a conservative and Carter as a liberal, argues Human Events. Other than that, Human Events seems at a loss to explain November 2.

● "And the GOP," an editorial in National Review, November 26, 1976. William Buckley and company have curiously little to say about the Republican Party these days: "Kansas City constituted a watershed for the Republican Party. It was a conservatism that was incompletely defined, and it ended by nominating in Gerald Ford a genial Chamber-of-Commerce style conservative possessing little sense of the Sunbelt phenomenon and less grasp of the politics of the 1970s. In the dynamic Sunbelt, Ford was clobbered first by Reagan and then by Carter. That, in itself, tells much of the story of the 1976 election. Prior to Watergate, Nixon---himself no very astute politician, despite the reputation he once had for cleverness---had been groping his way uncertainly toward some New Majority themes. Because of the historic

failure of the GOP, first with Watergate and then with Ford, the initiative now passes to Carter. Opportunities for the Republicans or perhaps for some successor political party necessarily wait upon Carter's choice of direction."

● "GOP Gloom Could Lift in 4 Years," by Patrick J. Buchanan. Boston Herald American, November 9, 1976. Buchanan persists in seeing the silver lining in conservative storm clouds. "...the spade work must be done in building for '78 and '80. Republicans must begin peeling away the image of the party of Big Business. After all, what has IB or Xerox done for the Republican Party lately? Second, the GOP should turn a tolerant but amused ear to the national press already booming the candidacies of a Heinz of Pennsylvania or a duPont of Delaware. Those may be estimable gentlemen both, but the progressive Republicanism of pickle heirs and chemical heirs is not even a marginal improvement upon the conservatism of the Burning Tree Country Club. But then perhaps the liberal-moderate film on the top of the Republican Party will be useful. Look at that lineup. Weicker of Connecticut, Javits of New York, Case of New Jersey, Schweicker and Heinz III of Pennsylvania, Mathias of Maryland, Percy of Illinois, one and one. What better protective cover could conservatives ask, as they go about consolidating control of the grass-roots GOP and building for 1980." It is to be hoped that the attractive leaves Buchanan describes will put down their own roots.

● "The GOP Thinking of 1980," by Kevin Phillips. Boston Herald American, November 9, 1976. Phillips is not altogether happy about the prospect of another Ronald Reagan candidacy in 1980. "For many Republicans, that possibility must be a mixed blessing. Admittedly, Reagan is so skilled in communications techniques that he can take an ideological posture basically appealing to only 25 to 30 percent of the national electorate and sell it to perhaps 40 to 45 percent. But on the minus side, this very sales ability has enabled the one-time Hollywood actor to ignore broadening his conservative ideology in terms of program substance and socio-economic appeal. It probably won't add up to a winning November package in 1980 any more than it did in 1976. And at age 69 in 1980, Reagan just seems too old to run again. So if he

tried to keep his options open, like Edward Kennedy on the Democratic side from 1973-75, the probable result will be to inhibit the emergence of other potential candidates."

● "Conservatism Waits In Wings," by Ronald Reagan. Buffalo Evening News, November 6, 1976. "Party activists, mostly conservatives, have been restless. But the party wasn't quite ready this year to rechristen itself and to openly offer a permanent home to conservative independents and Democrats. It did take a big first step when its rank-and-file members hammered out a platform which recognizes that a majority of Americans, according to public opinion polls, today consider themselves conservatives. It leaves little doubt that just below the surface, the Republican Party is hankering to be reborn. And what of Ronald Reagan? This is the only prediction I can make with certainty. I heard, saw and felt this struggle for Republican reformation this fall as a I campaigned back and forth across the country. The message I got was that if the party didn't win this one, it should reshape itself into a clear-cut alternative to the Democrats. I intend to be in the thick of that effort."

● "Reagan's Last Hurrah Still To Be Heard," by Jack Anderson. Hartford Courant, November 8, 1976. Ronald Reagan is drumming up a new crusade, confirms Jack Anderson. He will work to take over the GOP rather than start a new party. Using the organization from his aborted presidential effort, Reagan will reportedly launch his effort with mid-winter meetings in the South and West. Writes Anderson: "Another top aide from the Reagan campaign pointed out that the charismatic former California governor unquestionably is the spiritual leader of the conservatives. Two other national conservative leaders, Sen. Barry Goldwater and Sen. John G. Tower lost a lot of their credibility..."

GUSTAVE L. LEVY, 1910-76

Gustave L. Levy, senior partner of Goldman, Sachs & Co., was a generous and energetic champion of civic causes and progressive Republicans. The Ripon Society was honored to be among the lucky organizations which counted Mr. Levy as a valued and loyal friend. He died November 3, 1976.

POLITICS: ILLINOIS

GOVERNOR-ELECT JAMES THOMPSON

Long before the polls closed, former U.S. Attorney James Thompson was being touted as a possible GOP candidate for President in 1980. Columnist David Broder noted: "Every four years, below the surface of the Presidential race, there are a variety of other contests where younger men, with their eyes on the White House in future years, seek to establish or improve their political credentials... this year is no different. But of all the future-book prospects for Presidential politics, none is more obvious than James R. Thompson, the GOP candidate for governor of Illinois."

On election night, Thompson benefited from an early decision in his gubernatorial race---lead time that gave him extra time to be heralded as a possible GOP star by TV pundits. Thompson's election over hapless Secretary of State Michael Howlett (D) was almost ludicrously easy. If the Illinois GOP had tried to set up Chicago Mayor Richard Daley for this year's gubernatorial defeat, they could not have done a better job.

But because of a change in Illinois law, Thompson must again seek the governorship in 1978. Outgoing Gov. Daniel Walker (D) may have left Thompson a political time bomb in the form of the state budget. A similar time bomb undid former Gov. Richard Ogilvie (R) in 1972. Thompson's budget-director designate has suggested that the state may be able to survive without a tax increase before 1978 if welfare costs can be held down. The difficulty for Thompson, as Chicago Tribune columnist Michael Kilian has written, is that Walker has "spent every available penny in the state treasury."

Furthermore, State Treasurer Alan Dixon, who was ready to run for governor this year, will be waiting for Thompson in 1978. Daley pushed Dixon aside for Howlett this year so Dixon sought and won reelection by an overwhelming margin. More immediately disturbing for Thompson is the election of Democrat Michael Bakalis over Comptroller George Lindberg. Bakalis, notes the Tribune's Kilian, is "as ruthless a political in-fighter as can

be found" and "will have his eye on every penny Thompson spends." Thompson may also find that the Springfield press can be as free with slings and arrows as encomiums, writes Kilian, who suggests that the Illinois GOP organization may also prove a fickle friend. Other press comments follow:

Michael Kilian: "As a candidate who won national fame almost overnight and has never lost an election, [Thompson] also has a natural tendency to think himself infallible. The politician who thinks himself incapable of making a mistake in judgment has just made one. Thompson's statement on teacher strikes and his failure to adequately support Lindberg's candidacy will prove costly blunders. He must determine why he made them. But there is this to be said of Thompson's Presidential candidacy. If he can solve the enormous problems, overcome the many obstacles, and successfully confront the awesome challenges unique to Illinois government---he will certainly have proved himself qualified for the Presidency."

Neil Mehler: "The similarities to New York's former Gov. Thomas Dewey, who was a hot-shot federal prosecutor before becoming governor and presidential candidate, are striking. Don't grow a mustache, Jim."

Rowland Evans and Robert Novak: "Pollster Robert Teeter compares the mass desire of Illinois voters to back former U.S. Attorney James R. Thompson for governor, his first attempt at elective office, to sentiment in Michigan 14 years ago when George W. Romney ran his first race. After grumbling about Thompson's liberal tendencies ('He'll spend the state into bankruptcy'), one conservative Republican committeeman in the west suburbs of Chicago told us Thompson's candidacy has stirred the only public interest of this drab campaign... Moreover Chicagoan Thompson can fire a street-style retort in a way liberal Republican Sen. Charles Percy could never manage. When Daley attacked him for granting immunity to a businessman as federal prosecutor in order to go after politicians, "Thompson snapped: 'The mayor has said this every time one of his pals go to the slammer.'"

COMMENTARY: Delinquency

CRIME AND THE JAPANESE FAMILY

by Frederick Kellogg

Considerable interest has been focused upon the fact that Japan, a country with so many apparent similarities to western nations, has not endured the painful dimensions of our problem of crime. We hear of decreasing crime rates despite increasing industrialization, and pocketbooks safely left unguarded in unlocked cars in downtown Tokyo, one of the largest cities in the world. The example of Japan is difficult to reconcile with the tendency to associate crime simply with economic structure or urbanization. Japan has an economy modeled on free enterprise and has undergone more rapid industrialization and urbanization than any country in the world.

Nor does the difference lie in the Japanese system of enforcement, prosecution and punishment. The Japanese criminal justice system is organized very much like that of the United States, which it has used as a model ---with perhaps two major differences. It is more centralized, and thus better able to achieve consistency, and it tends to take a more paternalistic attitude toward the offender, placing much weight on evidence of remorse. By and large, punishment in Japan does not differ substantially from the United States in severity nor indeed in the general notion of its purpose or philosophy. Such differences as exist are hardly enough to account for the disparity in crime.

Nor, finally, would it be fair to assume that the crime problem in this country derives from our uniquely American "materialism"; Japanese society treasures the products of its industry every bit as much as ours. Nor does it derive simply from our western "individualism." There is some resentment among Japanese, particularly the younger generation, of the western attitude that individual autonomy is our peculiar property. One recent study by a young Japanese sociologist, applying various indicators developed in this country to measure that elusive quality, appears to show individualism to be every bit as developed in Japan.

The crucial difference quite clearly lies in certain aspects of traditional Japanese social organiza-

tion not formally part of the economic or political structure, and amazingly resilient despite rapid industrialization. These aspects produce what has been called by social scientists "informal" modes of social control in Japanese society, and they are developed within the family, the school, the community, the peer group, the workplace. In Japan the web of relationships within each of these groups, and among them together, is highly developed and highly defined. The sense of duty and loyalty in each context is extremely strong. It is so important that it forms an integral part of the Japanese language, with special words and manners of expression that have no Western equivalents. Japanese children pass from the family into an unbroken and widening succession of such groups, to which they cannot help but feel a strong attachment and commitment.

By comparison, Western societies do not so reliably provide a succession of close group attachments for the adolescent. There appears to be a particularly crucial period in the early teens when few such attachments are very strong at all, beyond the peer group. It is in this period, as some recent studies appear to indicate, that the danger of involvement in criminal conduct is the highest. The peer group tends to operate on its own, without



guidance and support from others encompassing a range of generations and broader perspective on social reality. The United States, in particular, is a country in which the peer group attains an importance, and exerts an influence, far in excess of the Japanese pattern.

The problem is not necessarily that the family, school, and community are defective in Western countries nor that the peer group is necessarily misguided. It is simply that in Japan, the ties based on traditional culture are much stronger, and uniformly so, whereas Western families, schools, communities and peer groups are under far less influence from tradition. Where these groups receive attention and care, they are every bit as effective in fostering healthy individual development as they are in Japan. Where they are weak, the chances of delinquent conduct are greater.

This general comparison between Western society and Japan does not by any means provide a complete understanding of the problem of modern crime---Watergate reminds us that it is not purely a juvenile phenomenon. Nor does it point a clear path toward solution of the problem in the West--- unless we interpret it as displaying with greater urgency a need to revitalize our families, communities, and schools. But that is far easier said

than done. We cannot adopt the Japanese traditional culture. It is unlikely that we can devise a federal program that will have any real impact on the situation.

The Japanese example indicates that remedial action against crime in this country cannot be expected to originate with large-scale governmental institutions. The factors which principally control its development lie within the framework of traditionally voluntary organization. Government control over family, school and community has jealously been limited to matters of resource allocation; even that arose as a sensitive issue in the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates when whether federal subsidy of teachers' salaries would lead to control of teaching was questioned. Any governmental impact on structure, and especially on values, has been vigorously resisted in the United States, except at the most decentralized, local level. For those who are looking for concrete action, not relying for the pendulum to swing away from moral lassitude, it is to the local level and to voluntary motivation that they must look. ■

Contributor Note: Frederick Kellogg is a Washington, D.C. attorney who recently visited Japan.

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THE RIPON FORUM is published semi-monthly by the Ripon Society, Inc., 1609 Conn. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. Second class postage rates paid at Washington, D.C. and other mailing offices. Contents are copyrighted © 1976 by the Ripon Society, Inc. Correspondence addressed to the editor is welcomed. (Ripon FORUM, Box 226, Charlestown, Mass. 02129.)

In publishing this magazine the Ripon Society seeks to provide a forum for fresh ideas, well-researched proposals and for a spirit of criticism, innovation, and independent thinking within the Republican Party. Articles do not necessarily represent the opinion of the National Governing Board or the Editorial Board of the

Ripon Society, unless they are explicitly so labelled.

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RIPON FORUM

Published semi-monthly by the Ripon Society, 1609 Conn. Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C. and other mailing offices.