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Is it moving right? Is it realigning our politics? How will it affect ELECTIONS 1978?

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POLITICS '78: A SPECIAL ISSUE

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What's Happen

A Veteran of Shoe-Leather Reportin

Robert D. Novak

The passage of Proposition 13 by California voters in June was so complete a rejection of the governing class and its values that it clearly signalled to cloistered politicians that *something* is happening out there among the voters. Unable to define with any precision what that something is, the politicians have merely renewed an old and irrelevant debate: Is the country moving to the right?

With some notable exceptions, those engaged in this exercise have lined up in four general schools of thought:

The Conservative Revival School: According to this view, the tax fever initiated by the Proposition 13 vote marks a genuine conservative revival as long foretold by orthodox Republican prophets. Right-wing political action groups as well as significant elements of the Republican party claim that the American electorate has now embraced the principles of economic and social conservatism and will elect those conservative candidates who are packaged and presented effectively.

The Liberal Pollyanna School: Far from being a conservative revival, say the partisans of this school, the passage of Proposition 13 was a hidden protest against the tax system's maldistribution of income in favor of the rich. Joseph Rauh, an indefatigable warrior of the Democratic left, points to public support for both Senator Edward Kennedy and his national health insurance plan as proof that liberalism is alive and well.

The Liberal Chicken-Little School: Not only is liberalism dead, it is charged, but we are in an era of shoddy reaction that connotes probably irreversible decline. "The public mood is sour, cynical and self-regarding," writes Robert Lekachman in the September issue of *Change*. This appraisal is shared by many liberal politicians who think that being anti-tax is only a thin disguise for being anti-poor and anti-Black.

The Conspiracy of the "New Right" School: While denying the Lekachman thesis of moral pathology, a good many practical politicians—preponderantly Democratic but a few Republicans as well—have suggested that the appearance of a rightward shift is truly a conscious conspiracy of the "New Right" (which seems to be a resurrected version of the "Radical Right," not seen since its supposed flowering in the early 1960s). In short, Proposition 13 as well as public conservatism on other issues result from the manipulations of sinister far right forces.

* * * * *

Actually, all four of these schools reflect no more than the political biases of their sponsors and do not even faintly represent what is happening in America today. There is something of great importance afoot, but it is instinctively centrist rather than consciously ideological, it is born of desperation rather than hatred,

ing Out There?

akes a Look at Today's Political Scene

and it is neither inspired nor controlled by political parties or their factions.

This is not a widely held view among politicians (its support comes mostly from Republicans not weighed down by the heavy burden of their party's unpalatable ideology), *nor* is it based upon mountains of opinion data. It is shaped instead by the instincts of political reporting and the invaluable experience of personal door-to-door interviews with voters over the past twenty-one years. Over that time, I have found that shoe-leather reporting is usually a much more accurate guide than public opinion polls. Too many poll questions are posed in the terminology of professional politics and government which are irrelevant to public attitudes. So it is now, when polls are failing to correct the self-delusions and misperceptions of politicians. The fact is that most leaders of both parties seem to be missing the public mood today.

In reality, that mood is almost totally divorced from considerations of ideology, party, or even coherent political program. *The key point is that today's American is obsessed with his inability to cope with cancerous inflation, which is reducing his standard of living today and threatens far worse in the future.* Because he has come to view government as part of the problem instead of the solution, he is inclined to essentially nongovernment solutions—that is, tax reduction. Yet, he is not so doctrinaire as to close the door on governmental solutions, such as national health insurance or wage-price controls. On balance, however, he has markedly more confidence in the course of lesser government and tax reduction than in more government payments and regulations.

Simple though this attitude seems, it is denied and rejected by the political practitioners of both parties. Dominant Democrats still insist the American voter sees his personal salvation in government services. Dominant Republicans cannot release themselves from the adoration of the balanced budget and the condemnation of organized labor. Both are essentially irrelevant to what is happening today.

What the Polls Say . . . Or Don't Say

The limitations of public opinion polls in establishing what is relevant contributes to the delusions of the Conservative Revival School. Its adherents point to survey data to demonstrate the rightward trend. In June 1964, and again in April and November 1974, the Gallup organization asked respondents to choose between a "conservative" and a "liberal" party. The results show a gradual decline from 51 to 43 percent choosing the "liberal party" option, with a corresponding increase from 49 to 57 percent on the "conservative" side.

Similarly, the Conservative Revivalists can point to the social issues to buttress their arguments:

Table 1
TRENDS ON SOCIAL ISSUES: 1973-1978

	1973	1978
Favor capital punishment for murder		
Yes	63%	70%
No	37	30
Harshness of courts		
Too harsh	5	3
Not harsh enough	81	90
About right	14	7
Abortion for married women		
Favor	48	40
Oppose	52	60

Source: 1973 and 1978 General Social Surveys, National Opinion Research Center (NORC).

Here again, the rightward trend since the McGovern election of 1972 is clear, as is the overall tendency toward the conservative position: pro-capital punishment, pro-law enforcement, anti-busing, anti-abortion.

Yet, all of this evidence is illusory.

The use of the words "conservative" and "liberal" reveals the limitations of polling. After hearing young blue-collar workers who are self-styled "liberals" declare their support for George Wallace and middle-aged office workers who are self-styled "conservatives" declare their support for George McGovern, I became convinced long ago that the relatively explicit and coherent meanings of these labels for the political community are lost on the general populace. Goodness knows what the voters think they mean when they identify themselves as liberals or conservatives. Perhaps most are thinking in terms of individual life style or family life.

Rightward trends on social questions (abortion, busing, and so on) are significant but not nearly as significant as conservative politicians believe. The trap here is that voters do not regard social questions as seriously as they did in 1972: they now have bigger worries.

Not since World War II has a single issue so obsessed the electorate as what voters now perceive as their own economic survival. The problem is simple: For the first time since Pearl Harbor, the steady economic escalator began grinding to a halt in the early seventies. Since then, disposable income has barely stayed ahead of soaring food costs, utility rates, gasoline and property taxes and a sharply progressive federal income tax which has made short work of increases in salary. Even a working wife hardly makes up the difference. Thus, a family can either go into debt (which is only a short-term expedient) or lower its standard of living. The mood has become one of fear bordering on despair.

The average American stands innocent of the self-indulgent hedonism claimed by the Liberal Chicken-Little School. Anybody who spent any time in California shortly before the Proposition 13 balloting would understand that the mood was one of self-preservation rather than let-them-eat-cake.

The Key: How to Survive

The overriding question of politics today concerns the mode of that self-preservation—whether it is to be by government action or not. It is a question that is not explicitly asked of the voters and one that probably cannot be properly framed for them. But a hint of what is going on is provided by Patrick Caddell's poll questions to measure alienation (asked in the fourth quarter of 1975, the second quarter of 1976 and the fourth quarter of 1976, and approximated in 1977 and 1978 by Caddell samplings not yet publicly released):

Table 2
ALIENATION ON THE RISE?

	1975-IV	1976-II	1976-IV
Most politicians are so similar it doesn't really make much difference who gets elected			
Agree	42%	43%	39%
Don't know	6	3	4
Disagree	52	54	57
Despite what some people say, this country is run for the good of the average person			
Agree	36	36	41
Don't know	6	7	8
Disagree	58	57	51
Over the last ten years, this country's leaders have consistently lied to the American people			
Agree	66	69	67
Don't know	8	7	7
Disagree	26	24	25

Source: *The Cambridge Report*, 4th Quarter, 1976.

This remarkably high level of alienation leads to suspicion that Americans doubt that their government can do much to alleviate their problems and, on the contrary, is responsible for many of their woes. From here, both the Liberal Chicken-Little School and the Conservative Revival School take a great leap forward to assume a clear and obvious popular resentment against government spending of any kind on grounds that it will do no good. Yet, all polls show not only great selectivity in the public's appetite for spending—people are *against* spending for welfare and *for* spending to help the unemployed—but also many intimations of ambiguity.

Furthermore, there are other signs that the beleaguered American taxpayer has not given up on the government's ability to rescue him from economic oblivion. All polls reflect support for Senator Edward Kennedy's spectacularly expensive national health in-

Table 3

PUBLIC VIEWS ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SPENDING CUTS

Question: How serious a loss do you feel it would be if the federal government cut back its programs in (read first item) by one-third of what they are today—a very serious loss, only a moderate loss, or hardly a loss at all? (Continue with list.)

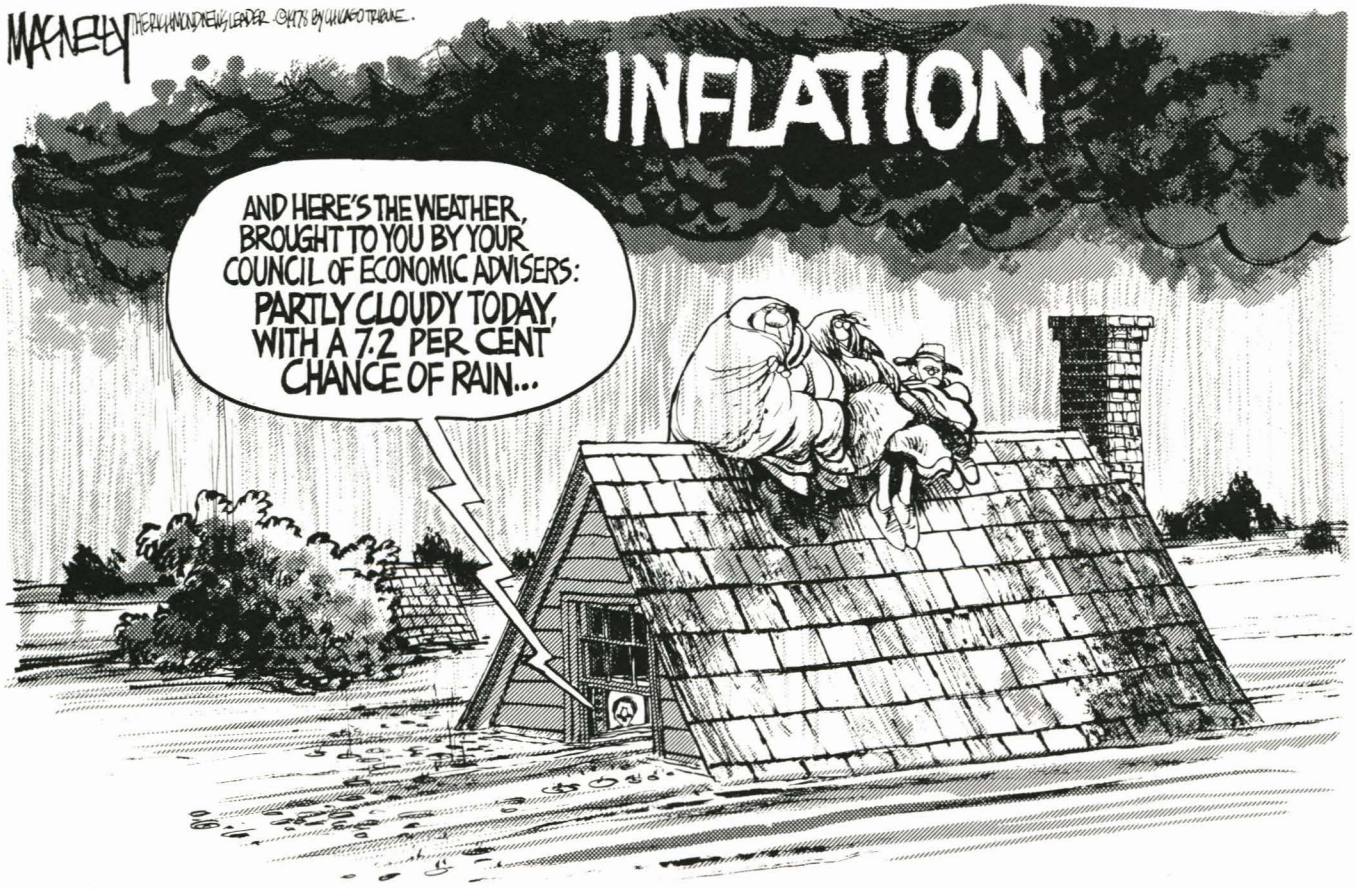
	Very serious loss	Moderate loss	Hardly loss	Not sure
Social security	87%	9%	2%	2%
Health	76	19	3	2
Education	71	20	7	2
Law enforcement	68	23	5	4
Jobs for unemployed	64	25	8	3
Defense	54	28	13	5
Aid to cities	38	40	15	7
Pollution control	36	39	19	6
Farm subsidies	34	39	17	10
Highway construction	27	48	20	5
Building of dams and other engineering projects	27	42	23	8
Business regulation	25	45	19	11
Welfare	24	36	36	4
Revenue sharing	21	41	17	21
Space programs	18	35	42	5
Foreign military aid	8	29	55	8
Foreign economic aid	8	33	52	7

Source: Survey by Louis Harris and Associates, August 13-20, 1977.

surance program—one basis for the Liberal Pollyanna School's claim that liberalism still thrives. Even more puzzling is the Gallup poll's finding, as a result of interviews last July, of 53-34 percent national support for federal wage-price controls. The growing popularity of controls flies in the face of universal business-labor opposition plus widespread polling data showing the public does not believe the federal government can regulate with competency.

Support for wage and price controls is, purely and simply, an expression of despair. Unable to keep his head above water, the voter is looking for any remedy —even one that restricts his liberties and has a proven record of failure. It is the culmination of Professor Friedrich von Hayek's prophecy that when inflation becomes intolerable, the citizen of a republic will surrender his freedoms.

As for national health insurance, its support by economically besieged Americans is natural. What is not clear is the priority given to it. All evidence points to a deep public desire for less, not more, government interference and a desire for the government to let people keep more of their money as the best means of coping with inflation. Public polls show wide support for legislation permitting tax credits for college tuition payment; what is much more important, private polls show such credits are preferred to President Carter's program of expanded government loans for college tui-



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tion. The public would much prefer to dispose of its own money than have it redistributed back to them by the government.

So, the controlling question (one that never has been asked and perhaps is beyond the capability of public opinion testing) is this: Would you today rather have a guarantee of never having to pay another doctor's bill (the Kennedy-Corman national health insurance bill), or of having your federal income tax rates reduced by 10 percent for each of the next three years (the Kemp-Roth tax reduction bill)? The answer, I am confident, is that a significant majority would prefer keeping more of their own money than having it come to them through the federal filter of free health insurance.

Of Democratic Discomfort . . .

Where, then, does this leave the practice of partisan politics halfway through Jimmy Carter's term?

In the first place, conventional Democrats are distinctly uncomfortable. The Harry Hopkins formula of "tax and tax, spend and spend, elect and elect" is threatened. Democratic politicians do not dare publicly echo Professor Lekachman's assertion that Americans are "lightly taxed," but that is what many of them feel. When Democratic politicians refer to various tax deduction programs as "tax expenditures," they also show how close they have come to the arrogant notion that all money belongs to the government. Insensibly, President Carter has fallen into this trap, referring to tuition tax credits as spending.

It seems apparent that Carter and the American people are talking two different languages. While his "energy" program calls for *higher* fuel prices, their concept of an "energy" program is to *lower* their utility and gasoline bills. While his "tax reform" would have meant *higher* taxes for everybody earning more than $17,000, their idea of "tax reform" is lowering taxes at every level; in particular, neither the President nor his aides have fully comprehended that the taxpayer is concerned about how much he pays rather than how little his rich cousin pays. The common denominator of Carter's misperceptions is an inability by the Democratic establishment to perceive the overriding theme of America frustrated by inflation.

There are exceptions. A few independent-minded Democratic congressmen such as Representative Martin A. Russo, a liberal from the Chicago suburbs, defied the party line to vote for the Kemp-Roth tax reduction. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York has fought the noxious concept of "tax expenditures" by vigorously promoting his tuition tax credit (which Carter threatens to veto). Senator Alan Cranston of California, the impeccably liberal and politically astute assistant Senate majority leader, has backed the Republican-sponsored cut in capital gains rates.

But they are exceptions. The White House and the Democratic political establishment are intent on fighting the Kemp-Roth tax reduction bill. This has led to a fatuous campaign, fostered by the Conspiracy of the "New Right" School, to link tax reduction and Proposition 13 with a scare campaign claiming the resurrection of the "Radical Right." Such usually sober and sensible Democratic politicians as Robert Strauss and National Chairman John White are promoting that campaign as a means of defeating conservative incumbent Senators Jesse Helms of North Carolina, Strom Thurmond of South Carolina and John Tower of Texas. All of them or none of them may lose their seats this year, but assuredly not as a result of the Strauss-White campaign to raise the hobgoblins of the far right.

Whatever its outcome, that campaign does reflect a basic problem of the Democratic party in coping with the mood of America today. With remarkable success over the last forty-five years, the Democrats have coalesced special interest groups—organized labor, blacks, liberal intellectuals, big cities and more recently, organized consumer groups, environmentalists and women. Yet, today they face an America that in its monomaniacal focus on inflation is essentially homogeneous.

. . . And Republican Myopia

By contrast the Republican party for the past forty-five years has been appealing to America on a homogeneous basis, cutting across interest groups. It has met with a declining degree of success, but in the circumstances of 1978, the Grand Old Party would seem to be well positioned for a belated resurgence.

Representative Jack Kemp of New York is one Republican who well understands this opportunity. The consensus of established economists, including many conservatives, that the incentives for growth contained in the Kemp-Roth bill will not generate much additional revenue may be correct (though considering the recent track record of the establishment, there really is no valid reason to think so). But from a strictly *political* standpoint, Kemp-Roth provides the hard pressed American what he wants most: (1) some additional cash in his pocket; (2) a lower marginal tax rate restoring incentive for extra work; and, (3) an offset against the social security tax increases passed into law and the hidden tax of inflation. The response by economist Walter Heller that Kemp is providing a "free lunch" equals the arrogance of Professor Lekachman's "lightly taxed" remark, considering the tax burdens imposed by multiple layers of government. Remarkably, many Democratic politicians have echoed the "free lunch" comment.

Yet, Kemp has few Republican colleagues who perceive the golden opportunity. John Sears, the insightful and sardonic political operative who managed Ronald Reagan's near miss in 1976, sees the vacant political center created by the despair over inflation, but few other names come to mind. To listen to the House debate on the Kemp-Roth bill was to hear only the famil-

iar Republican litany against deficit spending and for a balanced budget. Republican support for Kemp's bill was nearly unanimous, but intellectual arguments in its behalf were sorely missing. Despite the ambiguity of the public on public spending (as shown in the tables above and available to anybody who knocks on doors and asks questions), the Republicans—led by the Conservative Revival School—persist in the mistaken belief that their forty-five-year-old call for dismantling the federal government is about to be accepted.

Yet that is not the outer limit of Republican myopia. Republican candidates simply cannot restrain themselves from dwelling on issues—abortion, busing, crime—that make more enemies than friends and offer people more despair than hope. Many Republicans made an enormous investment, emotionally and financially, in the Panama Canal issue that has now so quickly left the public imagination.

Worse yet, Republicans cannot rid themselves of the degenerative and self-destructive habit of labor-baiting. At the start of the Carter administration, when House GOP Leader John Rhodes was asked whether there was any good Republican issue at hand, he replied to the amazement of assembled newsmen that it was the bill to permit common situs picketing. When Kemp is travelling on the banquet circuit, his disavowal of a balanced budget as top priority does not provoke as much shock among Republican audiences as his contention that labor unions are not essentially the cause of inflation.

The Vacant Center

Opposition parties frequently find it difficult to form a cohesive campaign theme in the diffuse, mid-term elections. So, Republicans show little chance of taking advantage of their opportunity this year in a campaign that boils down to personality contests where incumbent Democratic congressmen have the advantage. *The real question is whether either party will move into the vacant center in time for the 1980 presidential campaign.*

There is a sour yearning by some liberals for a recession before then that will change the political framework. In a recent issue of *The New Republic*, Irving Howe writes: "If the predicted 1979 recession materializes . . . you may be sure there will reappear a strong popular demand for effective social action sponsored and financed by the Federal Government. . . ."

But would there be such a demand?

Without the intense inflation actually ending, a recession under a Democratic president would surely change the political climate but scarcely in the direction of renewed faith in high taxation and high government expenditures, which have enraged the public. Add Mr. Howe to the list of those who do not appreciate what's happening out there.

He is joined by so many supposedly expert and practiced politicians unable to come to grips with the public mood that a few "DON'Ts" for political candidates this fall might be in order:

DON'T appeal to the public in the name of traditional party loyalties. The old Michigan slogan of "Make it Emphatic, Vote Straight Democratic" lost its appeal years ago. Even less relevant to voters are tearful Republican pleas to preserve the two-party system.

DON'T gear a campaign to a non-economic issue where sentiment is sharply divided. Except for certain special constituencies, the candidate who attempts to win on the basis of the Panama Canal, abortion, or gun control is a loser. So is the candidate who stresses environmental and consumer protection.

Even if opinion is one-sided, *DON'T gear a campaign to a non-economic issue where there is not much chance of fulfilling public demands.* School busing is the classic example; school prayer was an earlier example.

DON'T leave voters thinking that the end of Western Civilization is at hand. Taxpayers are melancholy enough without being fed a diet of more gloom and doom.

DON'T promise that government will be made more efficient and responsive to their needs. Jimmy Carter may have been the last candidate to get away with that. Neither the liberal Republican chant of better "problem-solving" nor the Democratic promise of "sensitivity to public needs" has any appeal today.

DON'T engage in class warfare. Neither labor-baiting nor corporation-baiting rouses public emotion.

DON'T get into budgetary promises. Higher spending is vastly unpopular; balanced budgets are not credible.

Above all, *DON'T oppose tax reductions!* Even before the fall campaign, the casualty list of anti-tax cut victims was considerable—consisting, peculiarly enough, mainly of Republicans. Assemblyman Kenneth Maddy lost an excellent shot at being governor of California because he not only opposed but ridiculed Proposition 13. Senator Clifford Case's stunning loss in New Jersey was in no small part traceable to his opposition to the Kemp-Roth tax reduction bill. Governor James Thompson of Illinois got himself into political trouble by opposing all tax limitations and reduction measures and then vetoing two tax cut bills.

With so many DON'Ts, what should the candidate DO?

The worried voter wants sounds of reassurance that the old American dream of growth and progress is not dead. Since, with good reason, he suspects the government cannot restore that dream, he listens most attentively to the candidate who offers hope outside a governmental framework.

Hence, the tax cut—permanent, across-the-board and without complication—becomes the compelling formula. It is surely the one safe approach this year when calls to heroism, pleas for sacrifice and promises of earthly utopias are alien to today's worried American. ☞

Is America Moving Right? Ought it?

A Conversation with Irving Kristol and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

Photographs by Marianne Pernold

On September 18, 1978, Irving Kristol and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., met with two editors of Public Opinion, *Ben Wattenberg and David Gergen, to discuss the questions: "Is America Moving Right? Ought It?" The conversation took place in the library of Basic Books in New York City. Excerpts follow.*

Wattenberg: *Mr. Schlesinger, you have been travelling across the country on a book tour for your new work,* Robert Kennedy and His Times. *Perhaps you can begin by describing the public mood as you see it today. Is the country moving right, as so many commentators believe?*

Schlesinger: I would say that we're in the political doldrums. We see today in this country a pattern of boredom with public affairs and of disassociation between the political world and the "real world." This corresponds to what has been historically a cyclical rhythm in our politics. We alternate seasons of activism, of high commitment, of intense public concern with seasons of fatigue, apathy and acquiescence. Eras of national activism and national crisis produce states of national exhaustion. After a time, people just get tired and they want to be liberated from politics and public policy. That's what we're experiencing now.

Look back over this century. The first two decades were ones of high activity: we had the Progressive period, the First World War, and demanding leaders like Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. By 1920, we were in a condition of exhaustion. There followed a decade of "normalcy," a period of indifference to public affairs, of "privatization" or narcissism or whatever.

Then we had the Depression, the New Deal, the Second World War, the Fair Deal, the beginnings of the Cold War, and the war in Korea. This brought us by the 1950s into a new state of national exhaustion and a new period of passivity and acquiescence. And then we had Kennedy and Johnson, the New Frontier and the Great Society;

we had the racial revolution; we had the most unpopular war in American history; we had turmoil on the campuses and the alienation of the young; we had Watergate and a near-impeachment of a president. So once again, there has been national exhaustion, and that's where we are now.

During these periods of hibernation, two important things happen. First, our national energy is replenished. The national batteries get recharged. Second, the problems that are neglected during the period of passivity begin to pile up, become acute and unmanageable. At a certain point, the dam breaks, and we enter a new period of activism. My guess is that sometime in the eighties, the dam will break again. It will be seen then that the only way we can deal with a lot of these problems is through the purposeful use of government, and we will enter another era of affirmative government.

It should be noted that each of these swings comes to rest at a slightly higher level of commitment to positive government. Even in our contemporary doldrums we still find that a majority favor wage and price controls, the limitation of corporate profits, government health care and so on.

Wattenberg: *Professor Kristol, we have just heard, I think, the nature of American conservatism described as weary, narcissistic, exhausted, fatigued and passive. Is that how you see what's happening in the country, and is that the nature of conservative thought?*

Schlesinger: Let me interject that I was not talking about conservative thought but about conservative eras. Conservative *eras* are the products of fatigue. Conservative *thought* may often be the product of exertion. [Laughter]

Kristol: Thank you, Arthur. I think the trouble with that question is twofold. One is the assumption that as far as opinion is concerned, there is one political community called America. I think there are several political communities and the structure of opinion, as I'm sure you are aware, really can be more accurately described in geological terms. There are layers of opinion, and sometimes—as in the 1960s—these layers move in quite different directions at the same time, setting up all sorts of stresses and strains. Where the final resting place is for all the layers during periods of quiescence is very hard to say. But more important, I think, is that the terms left and right, while they do have meaning, present only a two-dimensional picture of opinion.

In the real world of three dimensions, people move left, people move right, they move up and down, forward and backwards, and people therefore can move in several ways at once. On certain social issues—like abortion—it is difficult to define the political meaning of various changes of attitudes. You could say that American opinion has become more liberal on the issue of abortion, or you could say that the American democracy is co-opting this hitherto divisive issue and absorbing it and making it less controversial. And we don't know if these changes will be pacifying or upsetting.

The same is true of the welfare state. As things have developed—and I think this is the problem of liberalism in the United States today—the welfare state has now been constructed. The liberal agenda has been largely completed and, on the whole, people are not wildly dissatisfied with it. But they are certainly less satisfied with the extension of the welfare state that emerged out of the Great Society. If you say attitudes toward the welfare state are a definition of liberal or conservative, you could thus come up with different readings.

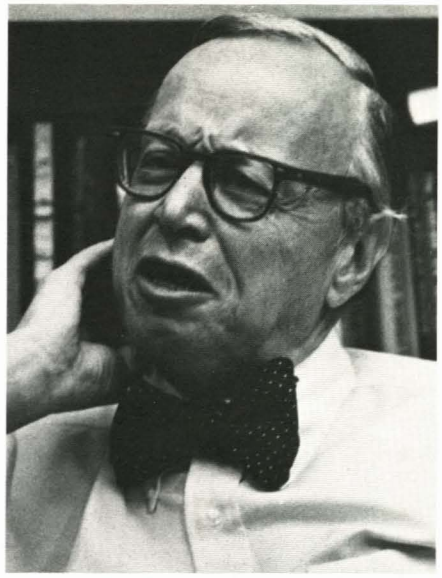
My own view is that a majority of Americans want a conservative welfare state. They want to take certain programs of the welfare state that have emerged over the past forty years—above all, the security programs such as social security, unemployment insurance, and the like—and make them a part of the American system. They are less favorably disposed to other aspects of the welfare state. I think if you look at it in those lights, you can explain a lot of the contradictory impulses that we seem to see at work in this country.

On the last point you raised, I think there's just no question that the intellectual energy has moved away from the liberal center. It has moved left. Many young people in the universities are doing a lot of what they think is exciting work, and one has to say that the radical perspective is attractive to young scholars. Incredibly enough, Marxism has had a renaissance in the last seven or eight years in the academy. At the same time, there is also a movement which can be fairly described as one to the right. If you look at the interesting young columnists coming along, they tend to be conservative, a few radicals, not many liberals.

So, my own view is that the liberal agenda, as it was when Arthur and I were young, has been completed, and we are now in a post-liberal era.

What Remains on the Liberal Agenda?

Schlesinger: I would disagree with the notion that the liberal agenda is completed. I think that in the eighties we will find a revival of liberalism in the

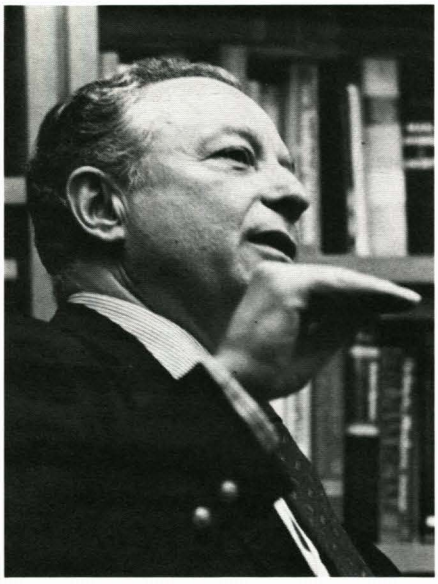


"... We're in the political doldrums.... This corresponds to what has been historically a cyclical rhythm in our politics. We alternate seasons of activism ... with seasons of apathy and acquiescence."

Schlesinger

"I would say we have entered a period in which people prize stability above all else...."

Kristol



"Once the liberal agenda of the 1930s . . . was completed, a new agenda began to emerge, and a part of American liberalism began to move left."

Kristol

sense of affirmative government.

One of the unsolved problems on the liberal agenda is the control of inflation. I'm totally unable to understand why inflation is regarded as a conservative issue. If there is anything that affects traditional liberal constituencies very directly, it's inflation. Inflation is hardest on the poor and the pensioners. The rich find ways of adjusting to inflation. Businessmen make money out of it.

Kristol: I don't think you can make inflation a part of the liberal agenda, except to the degree that the liberal response will be mandatory wage and price controls, which I predict is what it will be. And that won't work.

Gergen: *Do you also believe new controls are on the horizon, Mr. Schlesinger?*

Schlesinger: Yes, but they would work. They even worked under Nixon when they were administered by people who didn't believe in them.

Kristol: People who administer things always believe in them. I don't think controls will work. They will work temporarily, but all they do is bottle up price increases. At some point, controls are removed and prices soar.

Liberals have a problem here that, in theory, they should be able to solve, and maybe they will, but it's not easy: namely, when you get active government, there is always a tendency for government to become overly active and to spend more than it should or can. To finance this spending, it prints money. But, in order to control inflation you must have government willing to exercise self-restraint. Maybe the Carter administration will do that, but the self-restraint of government is a conservative idea, not a liberal idea.

Schlesinger: I would agree that much more discrimination is required in the uses of affirmative government, and I think that liberals are perfectly aware of this. In fact, a lot of the arguments for decentralization and so on have come from liberal sources as well as from conservative or, indeed, *rather* than from conservative sources.

Kristol: In all fairness though, Arthur, I think you have to realize liberal economic theory is what produced inflation. The conservative economists for thirty years now have been saying that that theory will lead to inflation. If you look at all the reviews of John Maynard Keynes's book when it came out, the traditional economists all said this is a prescription for inflation, which, in fact, it has turned out to be.

Schlesinger: There's no evidence that reducing government spending, or reducing the rate of monetary growth, or even reducing employment has any decisive effect on inflation. We have now developed a remarkable capacity to sustain high levels of inflation and unemployment simultaneously.

* * * *

Wattenberg: *Let me come back to our original question. There are many issues that have been traditionally and typically regarded in this country as representing right and left—the cultural issues, the defense issue, the economic issues, and so forth. On those issues, is this country today more "to the right" than it was two years ago, five years ago, or ten years ago?*

Schlesinger: In the first place, I would take out the social issues. Obviously, the country is much more permissive today than it was ten years ago, twenty years ago, forty years ago, and so on, but that doesn't seem to be a political thing. I know there are those who claim tremendous political impact for the social issues, but I have never been persuaded on that.

Defense spending has become a liberal-conservative issue only rather recently. In my youth, when Franklin D. Roosevelt was president, and later on, when there seemed a serious reason for running a large defense budget, the liberals tended to be strong supporters of military spending. I always used to favor a large defense budget. But in recent years the nature of the external threat has changed and, therefore, it seems to me, the problem of defense spending has changed. I don't think that defense spending per se is a liberal-conservative conditioned reflex issue.

The basic issue that distinguishes liberals from conservatives today is affirmative government versus negative government.

Kristol: I think that American politics has basically been moving to the right since 1970. The whole picture was obscured by Nixon and Watergate, but the election of Nixon in 1972 with a strong majority was a clear sign. Since then we've had continuing signs that the American people—I'm even willing to use Arthur's terms—want less active government. They find the activities of government, for the most part, irritating and not very productive.

Maybe this is just a cycle. The liberal impulse in our society doesn't go away, nor does the conservative. They do go through cyclical phases, and I think what's happened in American politics is that many of the traditional liberal politicians have become more conservative. It's not that the conservatives have been

swept into power; that has not happened in most cases. But looking at the liberal politicians who have been elected over the last six years, there is no question that on traditional fiscal matters, on welfare spending, or even on attitudes toward national health insurance, they are more conservative than they were, or their counterparts would have been, seven or eight years ago.

Of Happiness and Stability

Gergen: *Would you accept the thesis that Mr. Schlesinger started with, that periods of quiescence have been periods when we've been in the doldrums? I refer particularly to the 1950s.*

Kristol: Oh, no. The fifties were a lovely period.

Schlesinger: I said political doldrums. I didn't mean intellectual doldrums because periods of activity derive from thoughts that were thought during periods of quiescence: the New Deal sprang out of the 1920s, the 1960s sprang out of what a lot of people were thinking in the 1950s.

Gergen: *But the argument can be made, and many historians are now making it, that the 1950s were one of the happier periods in recent American life.*

Kristol: To Arthur, I think political doldrums mean that government wasn't particularly active. But it is true that the American people in the 1950s were perfectly satisfied with a government that was not so active.

Schlesinger: We passed one big law in the 1950s that I can recall. It was the Federal Highway Act, and for the rest, we neglected a lot of problems.

Kristol: Even that law may have been a mistake. [Laughter]

Schlesinger: I am sure it was a mistake. For the rest, however, what we didn't do in areas such as racial justice, urban decay, energy, and environmental protection stored up a lot of trouble for the 1960s.

Kristol: That is a liberal illusion. It is true that in periods of relative political quiescence—political stability, let's call it—problems build up. Of course, problems build up. That's life. Problems are always building up, but they also build up during periods of government activity, which explains the periods of political stability that follow. Sure, if government had done certain things about the environment in the 1950s, we could have been spared a lot of the follies of the present environmental movement, but no one was asking government to do very much about the environment in the 1950s. It was not an issue. If it had been, the political process would have been responsive to it.

Wattenberg: *Let me try to establish one thing. You both are generally agreed on the idea that American politics does move cyclically, and we are now on the rightward stroke of such a cycle?*

Schlesinger: A quietist stroke.

Kristol: I would say we have entered a period in which people prize stability above all else—stability of the dollar, political stability, social stability, economic stability, and stability of international affairs.

Schlesinger: I hope Irving does not mean to imply that in other periods people prize instability.

Kristol: Some people do. They call it social change. [Laughter]

Schlesinger: What happens is that life is not stable, particularly in a high-technology society. Life requires adjustment to a constantly changing environment. It's that *fact* of instability that makes periods of activism necessary.

Liberalism: A Success or Failure?

Wattenberg: *If we are in such a rightward cycle, is that caused by the notion that recent liberalism has failed? Or does this cycle just happen?*

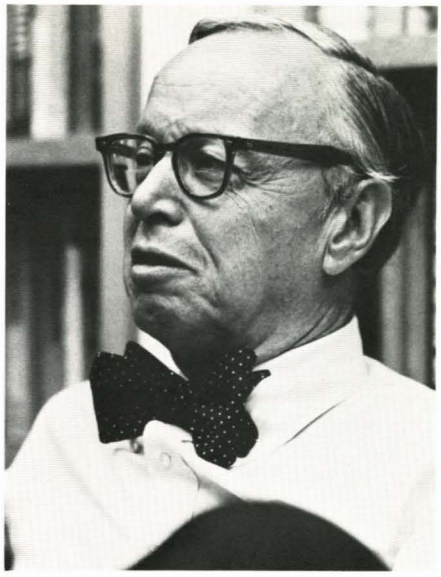
Schlesinger: Emerson once said, "In analyzing history, do not be too profound, for often the causes are quite superficial." People today are tired. They've been exhausted by what they've been through. They want respite and repose. Other people go and put a gloss on it, saying it represents the failure of liberalism or whatever, but the simple explanation is the accurate one.

Kristol: You can call it the failure of liberalism. Or you can call it the success of liberalism—the fact that the traditional liberal agenda has been largely enacted.

But something very important has also happened to liberalism. Once the liberal agenda of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s was completed, a new agenda began to emerge, and part of American liberalism began to move left. That is, it began to move more and more toward what, in Europe, would be called social democracy, and I think you can see this very clearly by looking at an organization such as the ADA, which is not the same as it was twenty or twenty-five years ago.

In Search of the "New Class"

Schlesinger: I don't see this great New



"I don't see this great New Left that you speak of, Irving . . . I am reminded of that old Chinese proverb: 'There's a lot of noise on the stairs, but no one comes into the room.' "

Schlesinger

Left that you speak of, Irving.

Kristol: Well, the New Left agenda is the agenda of the McGovernites who are in office in Washington now . . .

Schlesinger: What is the domestic agenda of the McGovernites in the Carter administration? The Carter administration seems to me the most conservative Democratic administration since that of Grover Cleveland.

Kristol: For one example of what I'm saying, look to the regulatory field. There they have brought in the Naderites, who are on the left wing of traditional liberalism.

Schlesinger: Naderites are the reversions to the old trust-busters of Theodore Roosevelt. They're the only people left who believe in competitive enterprise.

Kristol: Don't you believe that for a moment.

Schlesinger: They've even revived Herbert Croly's old proposal of federal incorporation . . .

Kristol: Nader calls himself, what, an anarchist-socialist of some sort . . . ?

Wattenberg: *We have hit that moment when we have to deal with this whole idea of labels: what they used to mean, what they now mean. Arthur, you mentioned that liberals used to believe in a strong American defense posture. That is the liberalism that I grew up with. Liberals used to think that quotas were something abhorrent. Liberal economic policy was always in favor of something called belching smokestacks, which is something now that liberal environmentalists—surely part of the solid liberal alliance now—find reprehensible. If someone believes in that old liberal triad, as I do, one is called a conservative, or a neo-conservative, or a neo-liberal, but not a liberal. So have the conditions changed to make liberalism change, or have liberals changed?*

Schlesinger: It all depends on what level you're talking about. You're talking about a programmatic level and programs are obviously not absolutes. Programs exist in a context. They're designed to achieve certain purposes. And the question is whether programs which were favored to achieve liberal purposes thirty years ago are going to achieve those purposes now. There's nothing sacred about programs.

Kristol: But certain basic changes are taking place within American liberalism. One is that the class which American liberalism aimed to help in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s was the working class. Now, it is much less concerned with the working class than with what we might call the class below the working class, and it is concerned with certain general issues—environmentalist issues, let us say—which are classless.

That leads me into the second major point, the attitude toward economic growth. Liberals, with their Keynesian economic philosophy, used to say, "We can produce better economic growth than conservatives can." And for a while, indeed, it looked as if they could, and they did. Whether the economic growth they produced was a result of Keynesian policies is a matter of dispute. But the newer liberalism is either indifferent to, or actually hostile to, economic growth. The cultural issues become important here. Looking at various parts of the New Left—the Schumacher book, all those other books coming out of California on the beauties of the pastoral life, the extreme environmentalist movement (which is very powerfully represented in this administration) and the "Naderites" in general—you'll find a basic distrust of economic growth. This is a crucial difference between what I would call the new liberalism and the more traditional liberalism. . .

Schlesinger: I would regard Schumacher as a conservative, and I think the whole "small is beautiful" movement is a conservative movement, not a liberal movement. Again that shows the difficulties of terminology.

Kristol: The question becomes: where do you set the limits to the growth of government? This is something that exercises people and has become a conservative/liberal issue in this country. Today, a lot of people, such as myself, feel that we have to start looking at this very seriously, that we do want to set some limits to the growth of government. But the way the governmental bureaucracy is behaving, the way the courts are behaving, and, intermittently, the way Congress is behaving, there seem to be no limits in sight.

Schlesinger: Honestly, if that's the issue, the two government bureaucracies which have most systematically misbehaved are the two which were, and still are, most cherished by conservatives, and they are the FBI and the CIA.

Kristol: It's not a question of misbehaving, it's a question of behaving. The objection to the other government bureaucracies is not that they misbehave, but that they behave as the law intended them to behave.

Schlesinger: I think that everyone objects to the bureaucracies that bother them. Conservatives are not bothered by the bureaucracies that serve them. It depends on whose ox is gored.

". . . It's too bad we don't have a socialist party in this country; it would make politics . . . a lot more rational."

Kristol

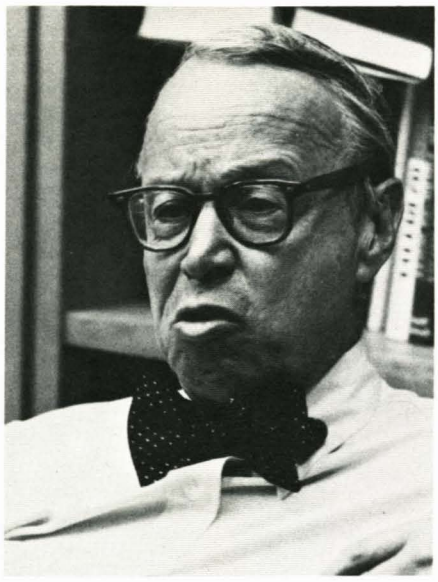
Kristol: Yes, but at some point the bureaucracy becomes large enough and state intervention becomes inclusive enough so that everyone's ox is gored. At that point—and if we're not at that point, we're near it—people say, "Hold on."

Schlesinger: Oh, no, we're far from that point.

Wattenberg: *That really is the argument: has government reached a point where, as you say, Irving, it hurts everybody? Or is it far shy of that point, as you say, Arthur?*

Schlesinger: I think in certain areas the government has gone too far and is a pain in the neck. But, on balance, the expansion of government in this century has improved the amount of personal liberty and personal welfare.

Kristol: Let's make a distinction. Social security does not involve much active intervention by government in people's lives, and the system works reasonably well. We're perhaps financing it badly, but that's another matter. Similarly,



"... Much more discrimination is required in the uses of affirmative government ... liberals are perfectly aware of this."
Schlesinger

other insurance programs of the New Deal basically tend not to be overly bureaucratic and intrusive. On the other hand, when you get into the regulatory programs of the new kind of regulators—

Schlesinger: OSHA.

Kristol: No, not just OSHA, but the SEC as it has changed over the years, busing, affirmative action programs . . . the list is long and it's growing.

I was speaking to a banker a few weeks ago and his bank has to, every month, file a huge boxful of documents which it sends to the government showing that it has not discriminated. There's a presumption of guilt in this process, unless you prove yourself innocent. One can say that it affects only the business community, but the business community is not so small if you include small business, and it is affected just as much as large business. And, of course, such intrusions are now beginning to affect universities. They will one day affect trade unions, directly or indirectly.

The real question—Ben is right—is should we stop for a moment and say, "Well, hold on; where are the appropriate limits for government involvement in the economic and other activities of the American citizen?"

Schlesinger: There's no doubt that there is a lot of nonsensical regulation, particularly with regard to small business. But I do think there are going to be problems that can't be met without governmental action.

Wattenberg: *Arthur Okun told me recently, and I agree, that perhaps the prime task of any person regarding himself as a good liberal these days ought to be to see to it that the bad programs are junked and the good ones are made to work more efficiently, because you can't go on to the 1980s unless you clear up the mess, such as it is.*

Schlesinger: I agree.

Kristol: The trouble is that there are very few programs which one could call "bad" programs, per se. OSHA is not a bad program, per se; there's nothing wrong with the government protecting the health and safety of its citizens. In principle, how could one be against that? The real question is how the people who advocated, passed, and now administer this particular reform see it. I can imagine a conservative OSHA, but it's not a conservative OSHA at the moment.

I've mentioned the "Naderites." By one count I read recently, there were fourteen on the White House staff and something like sixty spread about in influential positions in the regulatory agencies. What has happened, Arthur, is that Jimmy Carter won the election, and it turns out that the "McGovernites" are all there.

* * *

Only Noise on the Stairs?

Kristol: In a way, it's too bad we don't have a socialist party in this country; it would make politics, I think, a lot more rational.

If you look at governments in Europe, especially those that have socialist governments, you discover that members of the New Class—the "Naderites," the extreme environmentalists, and other movements—are socialists. If we had a socialist party, they'd all be in it, and it would really in some ways be so much better because I think they would then be more reasonable.

Comparing, for instance, the automobile pollution standards set up by the British Labor government with those of our own EPA, one finds that the British Labor government is much more sensible on air pollution standards and much more scientific. They're not trying to reduce air pollution from the automobile to the degree that we are because they say that after a certain point the cost-benefit ratio becomes absurd. And in any case, the benefits are always dubious. The result is that regulation of pollution in England is far more lax or generous than it is in the United States, because the socialist government doesn't have to use that issue as a mechanism of imposing the authority of government on the private sector. They have that power already, and they have that legitimacy by virtue of being socialist.

But when people who really are socialists try to achieve their socialist agenda within a traditional liberal framework—and I think this is what's happening within liberal politics in the United States today—then you get really destructive government actions. They are actions that no one would defend on traditional liberal grounds, such as an HEW regulation that not only must you have as many cheerleaders attending girls' athletic events as boys' athletic events, but the cheerleaders have to cheer just as loud. That is a real HEW regulation.

Try to figure out who puts that in and why. Arthur, you know from your own university experience a lot of the really absurd regulations that are imposed on our economy and our society. And since I don't think the people who foster such regulations are stupid and I don't think they really believe in an absurd world, I can only assume that this is part of a general strategy of involving government more and more in the economic and social life of the country.

Schlesinger: I don't believe that for a moment. It may be a dream of some, but I think, Irving, one can never underestimate the power of mindlessness in human affairs.

I must confess a skepticism—and here I disagree not only with Irving, but also with my dear friend, Ken Galbraith—on the existence of the "New Class." The New Class has been predicted forever. Veblen wrote about the soviet of engineers, and long before Veblen we had men like Saint-Simon and Comte writing about it. I am reminded of that old Chinese proverb: "There's a lot of noise on the stairs, but no one comes into the room." Take a look at the professional, technical and managerial workers; most of them voted for Nixon in 1972. I don't see that they have a common politics or a common psychology.

Kristol: Well, what the New Class is is also a matter of controversy. If one were to leave aside those who work in the private sector and consider only those who work in either government or the nonprofit sector, including the universities, then a different result

(Continued on page 58)

THE NEW LINES ARE DRAWN: CLASS AND IDEOLOGY PART II

EVERETT LADD, JR.

If Franklin Roosevelt were to return to American politics today, would he govern with any greater success than Jimmy Carter or Gerald Ford? My guess is that he would—FDR was nothing if not a political genius—but he would find that the task is considerably more difficult than in his own day, for the coalitions of the New Deal have now fractured almost beyond recognition.

In the last issue of *Public Opinion*, I argued that over the past ten years a sharp and increasingly prominent division has opened up between the lower-middle and upper-middle classes of American society. The former now comprise an embourgeoised working class who express great support for hard work, economic security, traditional lifestyles, a strong national defense, and many other goals that can appropriately be called a "new conservatism" (or, as in the accompanying cartoon, an "old-fashioned liberalism"). Members of the upper-middle class, on the other hand, have tended to form a new intelligentsia, urging relatively less emphasis on money, more on "self-fulfillment," and less on making sacrifices for one's children. They also express greater support for domestic spending programs, but indicate less enthusiasm for defense spending and a tough, aggressive foreign policy. They represent, in short, a "new liberalism."

This ideological rupture has occurred primarily *within* New Deal liberalism. In the 1930s, intellectuals and workers were solidly behind FDR and the policies he initiated. But society has long since changed, and as it has, the liberalism of the mid-twentieth century, once reasonably united, has been transformed into a battleground.

Yet, it is not just New Deal liberalism that has split apart in recent years. In this article, I shall go on to explain how the heirs of Roosevelt-era conservatism have also drifted into different camps. After examining that split, we can turn to the political consequences of all these changes.

The Contest Among Conservatives

Conservatism during the New Deal centered primarily within the business community among men and women who earned a living by owning or managing farms and companies. Conservatives of that era were virtually united in resisting the social and political changes of the New Deal. Today, the business community continues to form the bedrock of economic conservatism

in the country, but now its leaders often find themselves talking over opposite sides of the fence. On one side, as the regulatory and managerial apparatus of government has become an established part of our national life, important segments of business have made their peace with it, adapted themselves to it, and have even come to depend on it. A number of major corporations would collapse if their government contracts were cancelled tomorrow. Big business, quite as much as "big labor," "big science," and "big education," has become a claimant upon and a beneficiary of the "service state" erected since the New Deal.

Not all of the old middle class, though, has accommodated itself to the changing environment. In particular, "newer" businesses, firms recently established and still guided by the original entrepreneur rather than by the professional managers of older and established corporations, are far more likely to oppose the service state.

The divisions that have grown up between the mature, bureaucratized, professional-managerial, government-utilizing business, on the one hand, and a newer, more entrepreneurial, less bureaucratized, government-resisting group on the other hand, have a rather sharp geographic focus. The former are concentrated in those areas which industrialized first and fastest—the Northeast, the upper Midwest, and parts of the West Coast, while the latter are found disproportionately in the more recently industrial South and Southwest. There are many new industries in the old industrial areas, of course, but as in the case of the Bay Area and Route 128 around Boston, such firms often have especially close ties to the liberal academic community.

Put another way, this division is essentially *generational*. Firms that are guided by entrepreneurs rather than by managers, and those in sections of the country that have only recently experienced rapid industrial development are today, in effect, a younger generation of business than a typical "Fortune 500" corporation or one that grew up a half-century or more ago.

The two distinct business generations manifest sharply different ideological views. Recognizing that the terms are imprecise, let's refer to them here as "moderate conservatism" and "orthodox conservatism."

These two camps are most deeply divided over the service state, that still-growing offspring of the New Deal. As noted, moderate conservatives accept the service state and the governmental intervention that accompanies it. Even though they may inveigh against it at Rotary luncheons and convention banquets, back in the privacy of the boardroom they try to shape its uses, especially in promoting economic development and in advancing the immediate interests of the business middle class. Orthodox conservatives, in contrast, remain profoundly and genuinely uncomfortable with the New Deal state. As practical politicians, such conservatives usually understand full well the limits on how far they may reasonably expect to cut back government. But still, their objective is to produce a situation where government taxes less, spends less, and regulates less.

This division between moderate and orthodox conservatives is not simply over tactics. Rather, there are fundamental differences in perceptions of the state and its uses—differences based upon contrasting places in contemporary social structure. Moderate conservatives are basically willing to accept society as it is; orthodox conservatives want to change it by rolling back the New Deal and starting afresh. When Thornton Bradshaw, president of Atlantic Richfield, dismisses orthodox conservatives as "individual entrepreneurs who are ever hopeful of the day when the tax situation will be changed so that they too can build up a large fortune," he is at once enjoying a barb and making a point which is far from casual.[1]

Survey data show very clearly these differences in views of the state within the old middle class. For example, among Republicans—where the conflict between moderate and orthodox conservatives is largely waged—self-employed businessmen are far more opposed to government spending for health, urban problems, education, welfare, and environmental clean-up than are corporate managers. And businessmen of all

Table 1

SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC SPENDING, 1977-1978

	Percent expressing high support for public spending	Percent expressing low support for public spending
General population	19%	20%
Self-employed businessmen	4	35
All business managers (not self-employed)	13	18
Business managers Northeast	31	6
Business managers Southern and Mountain states	0	38

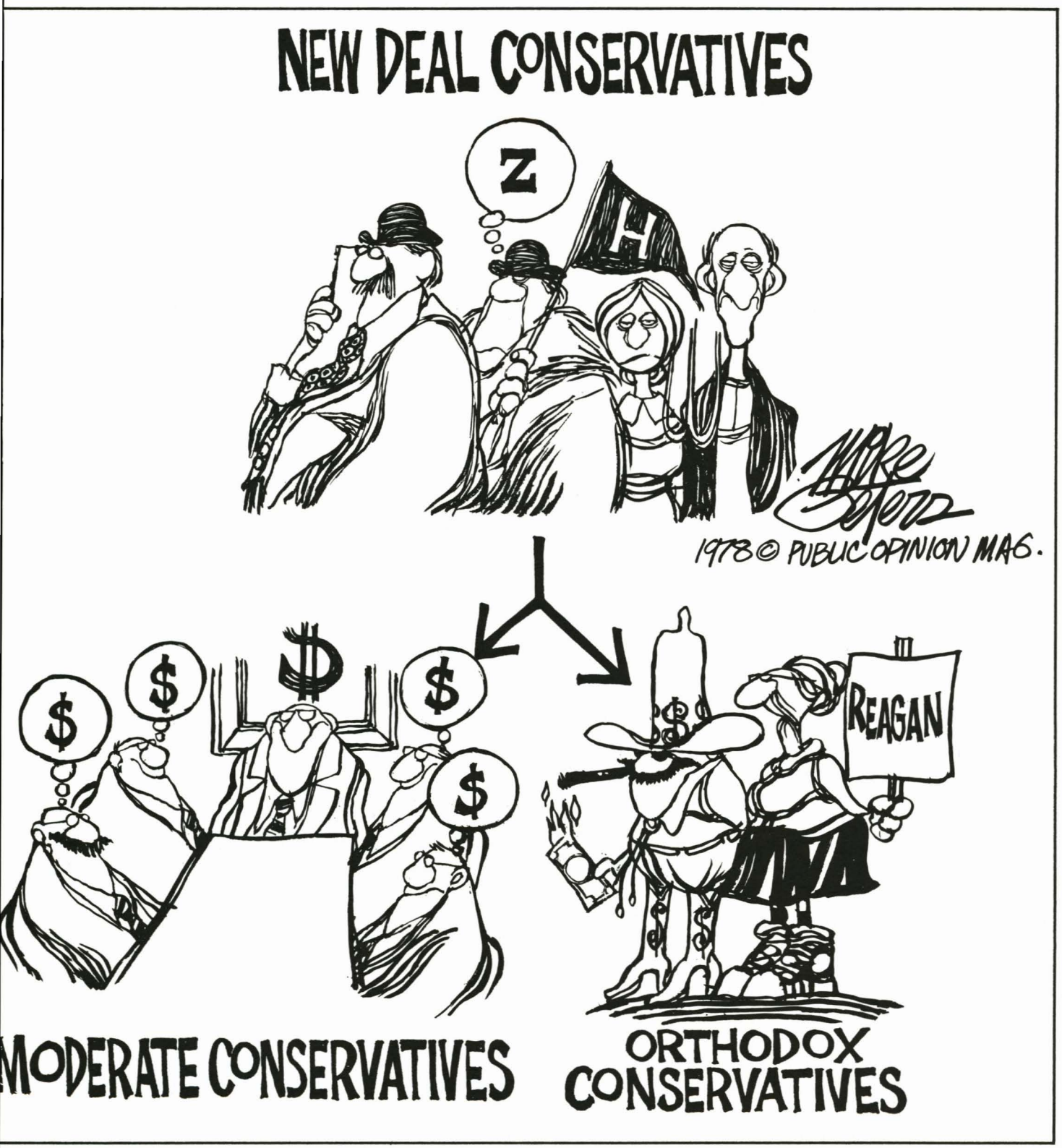
Note: These data are from the General Social Surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center. The percentages displayed are the response distributions on a composite Index of Public Spending.

The index was constructed from eight domestic spending variables. The response that the U.S. is spending "too little" was given a value of three; "too much," zero; while "about the right amount" was assigned the value of one. Each respondent's "scores" on the eight variables were then added together. The totals, ranging from 0 to 24, were divided by the number of items which the respondent answered. All respondents were located in one of five quintiles—ranging from the 20 percent most inclined to high public spending, to the 20 percent least supportive. For purposes of simplification, only quintile 1, those expressing the highest support, and quintile 5, the lowest support, are shown here.

NORC interviewers posed the general question as follows: "We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount." The eight areas included in the index involve spending (1) to improve and protect the environment; (2) for health services; (3) to solve urban problems; (4) for education; (5) to improve the condition of blacks; (6) for welfare; (7) to deal with the rising crime rate; and (8) to cope with drug addiction.

types in the recently industrializing Southern and Mountain states give much less backing to public spending in these areas than do their counterparts in the Northeast.

Table 1 employs a public-spending-support index to document the type of relationship just described. The index combines responses on whether "too much money, too little money, or about the right amount" is being expended for public needs. Eight domestic spending areas, equally weighted, are included. As Table 1 shows, business managers working for corporations in the Northeast express far more support for public spending than do business managers elsewhere; indeed, they are even more supportive than the general populace. On the other hand, self-employed entrepreneurs and business managers working for companies in the



Mountain and Southern states show a powerful bias against government spending.

Moderate conservatives are not simply another group of New Deal liberals: their roots are firmly planted in the conservative tradition of that era. For one thing, their ties and loyalties are consistent with the historical position of the old middle class. In its General Social Surveys, the National Opinion Research Corporation (NORC) has found that while labor leaders do not get especially high marks from any segment of the American public, the proportion of business managers expressing high confidence in trade union leadership is just one-third what it is among blue-collar workers. A full 48 percent of the business managers stated that they had "hardly any confidence at all" in labor leadership, while only 7 percent of this group

professed general approval. These moderate conservatives also continue to oppose various labor initiatives, as was seen recently when the U.S. Chamber of Commerce helped to spearhead the fight against labor law reform.

Moderate conservatism is a greatly diluted and generally diffuse variety of old-fashioned opposition to the New Deal. Orthodox conservatism, on the other hand, is a highly coherent, "pure" ideological reaction. Over the years, it has hardened within a narrower and more distinctive slice of the social spectrum. By the time of Goldwater's candidacy in 1964, orthodox conservatism included not just an adversary posture vis-á-vis the state, but a "hard line" position toward international communism, a strong commitment to "law and order," an aversion to social "permissiveness," and a vigorous defense of many of the older cultural values and lifestyles that were coming under assault. Today, more than any of the other ideological forces seriously contending for national support, this variety of conservatism has become a self-conscious creed, an orthodoxy.

The Political Impact

The prime ideological divisions discussed here and in my earlier article are caricatured in the drawing by editorial cartoonist Mike Peters. It identifies the social classes that provide the *main stimulus*—though not in any sense the exclusive support—for each of the contending positions. The real social and political world isn't this neat, of course. The cartoon omits some positions that are far from inconsequential. It is also clear that many political actors and commentators are hybrids, trying to reach across the categories identified. Still, for all the incompleteness and oversimplification, the summary of ideological conflict and its class origins seems defensible.

Nowhere are these cleavages in American society more vividly expressed than in party politics. The "new liberalism" and "new conservatism" are now concentrated within the Democratic party, frequently dividing the McGovernites from the Jackson-Moynihan contingent on issues such as national defense and relations with the Soviets. "Moderate conservatism" and "orthodox conservatism," by way of contrast, are centered in the GOP, causing open warfare on many domestic and social issues. There have always been contending factions within the big, amorphous American parties, and individual leaders have been found all across the ideological spectrum, but the present-day divisions are unusually sharp, wide-ranging and all-encompassing.

While the ideological struggle in the United States is not as fundamental as many of the splits within European political life—as, say between the Communists and Christian Democrats—it does have profound consequences. With each divided into two distinct political camps, both Democrats and Republicans find it exceedingly difficult to attend to matters of political integration, policy development, and coalition-building. The parties are held together, in fact, almost entirely by the practical exigencies of election laws. And as both of our last two presidents have discovered, such intra-party ruptures have made governance itself somewhat harder and more problematic.

The Democrats' Problem—and the Carter Presidency

Consider the present incumbent. In 1976, references to Jimmy Carter tended to emphasize his acuity and competence; but in 1978, at least until the Camp David Summit, "incompetence" and "fuzziness" were far more likely to be mentioned. This is hardly the place to attempt a serious assessment of the Carter presidency. It is appropriate, though, to question the extraordinary emphasis on Carter's personal attributes as opposed to the present split within Democratic ranks. Contrary to the current American mindset, it is not possible for one individual to make government work in this country. Stable alliances of governmental leaders in the executive branch and the legislature, together with groups in the mass public, are required. Historically, we have called these alliances political parties.

Not only is the Democratic party organizationally weak at present, but it is sharply divided on ideological grounds. Jimmy Carter won the Democratic nomination in large measure by confusing the leaders of the two major factions. From the outset, correctly perceiving the extent of Democratic elite *dissensus,* he strove to accommodate the ideological contenders.

This accommodation required three sets of actions —in symbols, appointments, and concrete policies. Carter's 1976 campaign was a *tour de force* in symbol usage to accommodate ideological opposites. He was a man of traditional values, of white, small-town America—who was also a devotee of Bob Dylan, a close friend of Andy Young, and a *Playboy* interviewee. Policies and appointments (to the campaign staff) could not be ignored prior to the election, of course, but attention easily gravitated to the symbolic accommodation. It was deftly achieved.

Once in office, Carter had to deal directly with the appointive and policy dimensions of accommodation; that is, in order to continue the accommodation tack, he had to appoint to his administration large numbers of people from each of the two contending factions, and he had to give something substantial to each in terms of programmatic commitments. He did both.

Foreign policy is a good case in point. There is no more substantial and coherent foreign policy dispute in the United States than that between men such as Paul Warnke, Andrew Young, and George McGovern, on the one side, and Zbigniew Brzezinski, Henry Jackson, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, on the other. These "new liberal" and "new conservative" foreign policy perspectives are sharply differentiated—but, though

the "new conservatives" may deny it, each group has received Carter's endorsement through appointments and policy choices.

Yet because it is split down the middle by ideological disputes, the Carter administration also looks fuzzy and unsure of itself on various policies. There is simply no way that two factions so at odds could be satisfied through the pursuit of a single *coherent* policy. The very act of attempting accommodation has required that the administration speak in many tongues.

Carter could, of course, have chosen to behave as a factional leader, picking up either the new liberal or new conservative banner. One senses he would have been uncomfortable from a personal standpoint doing this. But quite apart from that, there would have been enormous risks and problems in that strategy. The contending groups are so large, so evenly matched, so divergent ideologically that were a Democratic president to come down solidly on one side, the other would declare war—and it would have a fair chance of success.

One can envision, to be sure, a Democratic president more experienced and more adroit than Jimmy Carter having greater success with the accommodationist strategy. One can imagine a leader of unusual personal magnetism—the brother, perhaps of a martyred president—having somewhat greater success bridging the Democratic divisions. But most Democratic presidents of our era—not just the incumbent—will find governance notably problematic as long as the new liberal/new conservative divide dominates the party as it now does.

The Republicans' Problem

Some Republican leaders know full well what they must do to exploit the Democratic distress and raise their party from its greatly enfeebled position. They must find a new ideological stance which somehow responds to the tensions and contradictions in American public opinion—for example, the profound unease with government, coexisting with the strongest commitment to the service state. And they must reach out to broaden the makeup of their party, to make it more representative in activists and leaders, and subsequently in voters, of the pluralism which is the essence of American society. But they find it hard indeed to move in these directions, for the GOP is locked, seemingly irrevocably, in an ideological struggle that can only take it further from the party-broadening goals.

A variety of public opinion data and results of actual electoral contests suggest that "orthodox conservatism"—represented at the leadership level in the Republican party by men such as Ronald Reagan, Philip Crane, and Jesse Helms—enjoys less support at the mass public level than does "moderate conservatism," articulated by men like Gerald Ford, Howard Baker, and John Rhodes. For example, in neither 1964 nor 1976 did candidates clearly associated with orthodox conservatism—Goldwater and Reagan —fare as well in survey "trial heats" with various Democrats as did moderate-conservative Republicans. Recent Gallup data show the same thing: Gerald Ford's presidential leadership was substantially criticized and he was defeated in the 1976 election; still, in the summer of 1978 he was running more strongly against both Carter and Kennedy than was Reagan.

Despite this obvious political truth, orthodox conservatism has strengthened its position within Republican ranks. I have shown elsewhere that the activists within the GOP, who are disproportionately influential in the selection of Republican presidential candidates, are also more supportive of orthodox conservatism than are other Republicans and are much more conservative than the electorate at large.[2] There seems to be an increasing lack of fit, then, between ideological requirements for a Republican nomination—with that for the presidency obviously the most important case in point —and those for victory in general elections. Anyone who is conservative enough to be nominated may be too conservative to be elected.

The Democrats confront a variant of this problem, since supporters of the new liberalism are stronger in the activist circles of the party than among the rank and file. But the difficulty is more acute in the case of the GOP because, in its present diminished state, the party is less heterogeneous. Both opinion polls and election polls make it clear that the nomination of candidates from the Republicans' "orthodox conservative" wing weakens the party's position in national electioneering. But there is also every indication that the activist composition of the party is now such that nominations from the orthodox conservative camp will be increasingly common.

Party Realignment

Common sense might suggest that America is heading toward a four-party system. The realities of the electoral process, however, continue to encourage a *formal* two-party arrangement. As long as the country operates with a presidential rather than a cabinet type of political executive and with a single-member-district, winner-take-all system of voting and representation, politicians of either faction within each party will be reluctant to translate the present ideological splits into formal party structures.

What, then, of the prospects of a partisan realignment? One scenario that has received a lot of attention and has been rewritten in a variety of ways has been the thesis of an "emerging Republican majority" or "emerging conservative majority," articulated by strategists such as Kevin Phillips and pursued to some degree by the Nixon administration before Watergate. It is predicated on the assumption that a permanent alliance might be struck between descendants of New Deal conservatism and segments of the "new conservative" branch of New Deal liberalism. In its early manifestations, in the latter part of the 1960s and the first

years of the 1970s, there was the strong sense that diverse groups might be brought together in an "alliance of resentments"—resentment of inflationary governmental policies within the old middle class and of certain government *social policies* among embourgeoised workers. For a time, Phillips' ideal candidates seemed to be half-George Wallace, half-Ronald Reagan. Now, in the wake of Proposition 13 and discovery of a full-fledged taxpayers revolt, some think that a *shared* resentment regarding high taxation may make possible a far more stable alliance than could ever be achieved through a pooling of different sorts of resentments.

Efforts at realignment of the sort just described, however, have not made headway over the past decade, and they are not likely to gain in the future. Not only is resentment a poor foundation on which to build an enduring partisan alliance—because the American experience has shown repeatedly how quickly these resentments can pass—but more importantly, its advocates have underestimated the power and persistence of class differences separating both moderate and orthodox conservatives of the business world from the "new conservative" workers. A wide gulf in both political style and policy preferences lies between these groups. And the simple act of describing both parties to the presumptive alliance as "conservatives" does not bridge this divide. A large segment of the old working class has indeed assumed many of the properties and outlooks of a bourgeoisie, but this group is, as I have noted, strongly committed to the contemporary service state. Their commitment forbids a lasting alliance with orthodox conservatives who are so staunchly opposed to that state. Labor commands the loyalty of one, business the other, and therein lie differences of style and substance that are immense.

The leaders of "moderate conservatism" and of "new conservative" liberalism—or old-fashioned liberalism, as it may be called—do have a lot of policy commitments in common. Their foreign policies are indistinguishable. They share a skepticism with regard to the New Deal state without being hostile to it. They have comparable approaches on most social and cultural issues, agree on matters of economic growth, environmental and energy policies, and so on. But a stable alliance bringing business together with labor still does not seem possible in the United States.

To assert how difficult it is to achieve party realignment is not to minimize the divisions one now finds within both major parties. The Democratic party today represents a highly unstable alliance. So do the minority Republicans. But despite all this, tradition, inertia, and the electoral laws encourage the formal maintenance of the old party ties.

The Weakening of the Presidency

We now hear talk of an era of one-term presidents. Clearly, there is some basis for the speculation. No president since Eisenhower has served out two full terms. To be sure, a series of back-to-back, but unrelated, developments have played a substantial role in the presidential instability of the last two decades: the assassination of John F. Kennedy; Lyndon Johnson's collapse under the weight of Vietnam; Richard Nixon falling in Watergate. But when one adds to the list Gerald Ford's near defeat in pursuit of the 1976 Republican nomination and his subsequent defeat in the general election, and Carter's fall from grace in but the second year of his presidency, one senses that something more is involved than the accumulation of one-time chance occurrences.

When each party is sufficiently divided, it is very rough sledding for a highly visible executive to maintain popular recognition as a successful, decisive leader. Legislators, if they are at all adroit, can bob and weave and continue in office without trying to cement together ideological factions. But a president is expected to lead. And what he does is simply too visible for him to escape blame for actions or inaction in the context of the country's new divisions. Being a "strong president" was a manageable undertaking so long as there was a reasonably high level of consensus within the parties, but the breakdown of that consensus has inevitably weakened the presidency.

A Summing Up

The fracturing of the New Deal coalitions that I have described in these articles seems important in at least two respects. One involves the new linkage of class and ideology. Unsatisfying as the terms are, the labels "new liberalism," "new conservatism," "moderate conservatism," and "orthodox conservatism," refer to positions that will remain with us for some time in essentially their present forms because each position now has a substantial and enduring base within different social groups.

Secondly, this ideological fracturing has significant implications for the American political system. Both parties are now split, perhaps for years to come. And as a result, each finds its capacity to govern diminished. No suggestion is being made here that the problems of governance have been made intractable by the new ideological fissures. Political leaders still have the opportunity to influence the directions of American public policy, and they must be held accountable for the quality of their choices. But we will make much more reasonable demands on our leaders and more realistic assessments of their performance if we acknowledge the special constraints imposed on them by the new divisions in American politics. ☑

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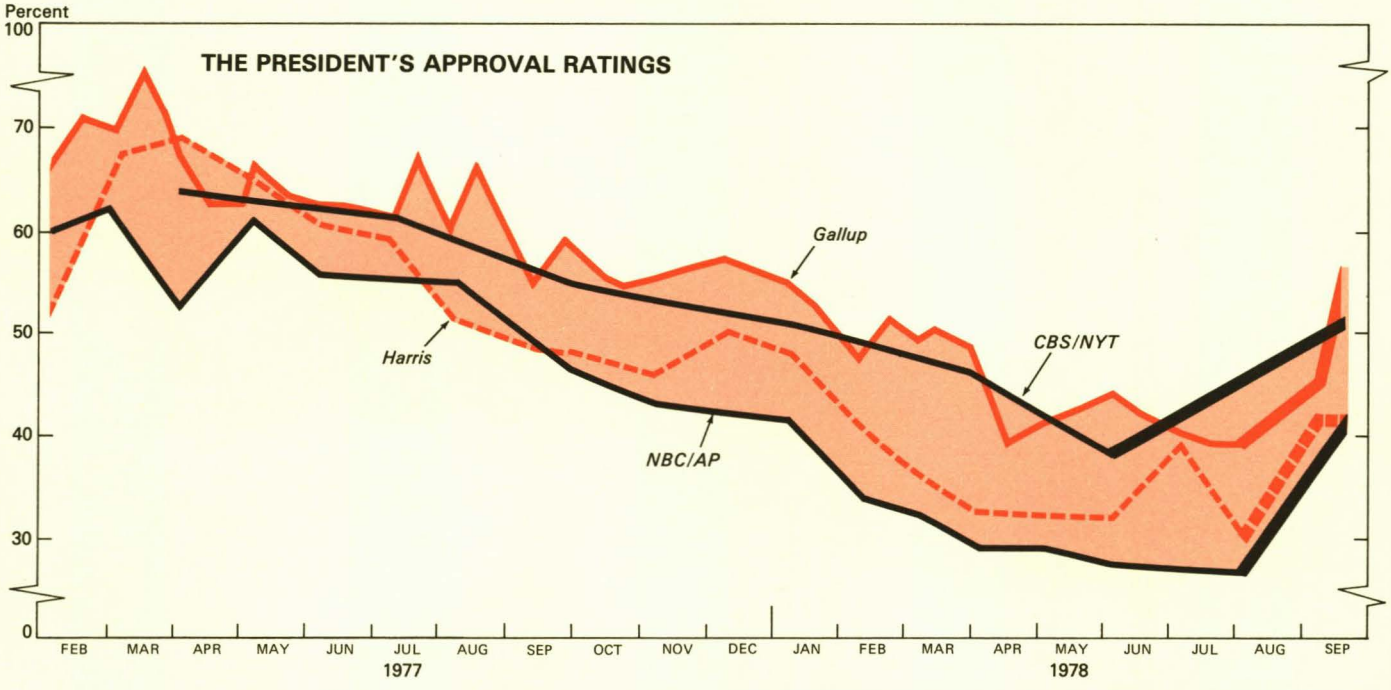
1 Interview with Thornton Bradshaw, June 7, 1977. The author interviewed a sample of business leaders in the course of a project for *Fortune* magazine.

2 See my *Transformations of the American Party System*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), especially pages 302-374; and "The American Party System Today," forthcoming in S.M. Lipset, ed., *America's Third Century* (Stanford, California: The Hoover Institution Press, 1978).

The Mood after the Summit

THE SUMMIT FOR JIMMY CARTER: A BIG BOOST

Questions: (For exact wording of questions, see *Public Opinion*, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 33.)



Approval

(For earlier figures, see *Public Opinion*, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 33.)

		Gallup	Harris	CBS/NYT	NBC/AP
1978 May	(4/28-5/1)	41%	%	%	29%
	(5-8)	41			
	(19-22)	43			
June	(2-5)	44	32	38	27
	(16-19)	42			
July	(7-10)	40	39		
	(21-24)	39			
Aug.	(4-7)	39	30		26
Sept.	(8-14)	45	(8-12) 42	51	42
	(19)	56	(19-21) 42		

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of September 19, 1978; Louis Harris and Associates, latest that of September 19-21, 1978; CBS News/New York *Times*, latest that of September 18, 1978; NBC News/Associated Press, latest that of September 19-20, 1978.

THE BOUNCE FROM THE SUMMIT

	Approval rating before the summit	Approval rating after the summit	Change
Gallup	39%	56%	+17%
Harris	30	42	+12
CBS/NYT	38	51	+13
NBC/AP	26	42	+16

HOW FAR DOES THE SUMMIT GLOW SPREAD?

Questions: What kind of job do you think Jimmy Carter is doing in handling (our foreign affairs; the economy) . . . do you think he is doing an excellent job, a good job, only a fair job, or do you think he is doing a poor job? (Approve = excellent plus good)

	Approval	
	August	September
Handling of economy	18%	19%
Handling of foreign affairs	21	56

Note: A survey by Louis Harris after the summit also finds that Carter's Middle East success has not helped his image as manager of the economy. Although approval of his handling of foreign affairs shot from 25% in June to 56% in September, his score on the economy remained in the basement: 21% approval in June, versus 22% approval in September.

Source: Surveys by NBC News/Associated Press, latest that of September 19-20, 1978.

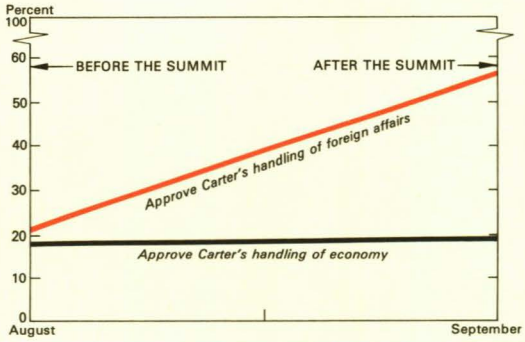


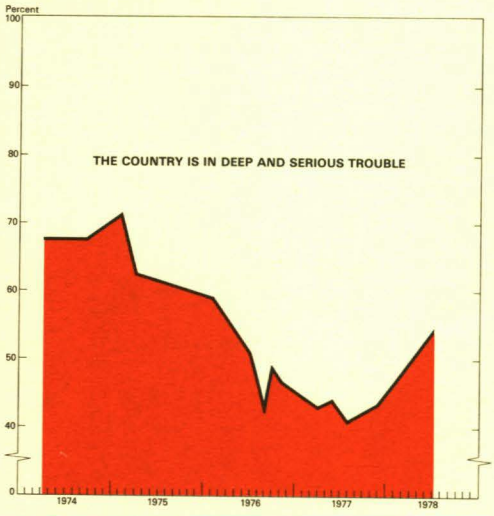
Chart illustrations by H. Karlsson

MEANWHILE, GROWING NATIONAL UNEASINESS

Question: In commenting on how things are going in the country, some people tell us that the problems we face are no worse than at any other time in recent years. Others say the country is really in deep and serious trouble today. What comes closest to your own feeling—the fact that: problems are no worse than at other times, or that the country is in deep and serious trouble?

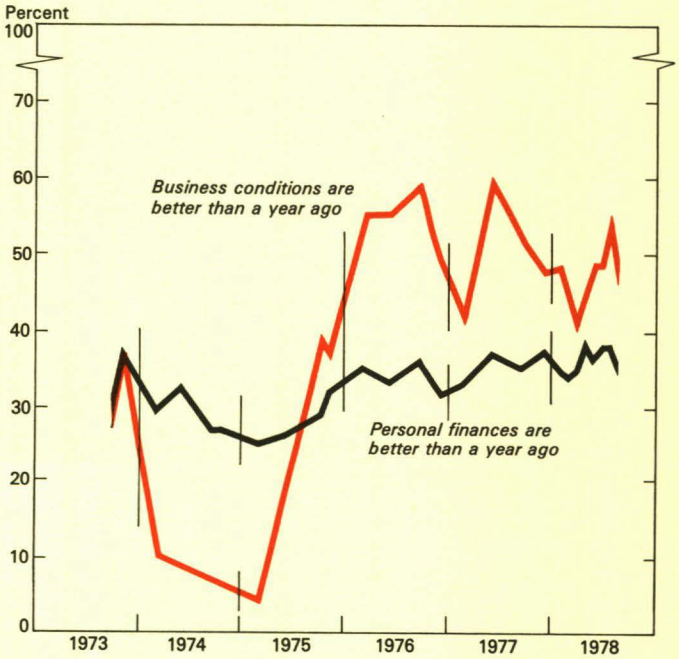
	Problems no worse than other times	Deep and serious trouble
March 1974	32%	68%
September 1974	32	68
January 1975	29	71
March 1975	38	62
January 1976	41	59
April 1976	46	54
June 1976	49	51
August 1976	58	42
September 1976	51	49
October 1976	53	47
March 1977	57	43
May 1977	56	44
July 1977	59	41
November 1977	57	43
June 1978	46	54

Source: Surveys by *Time*/Yankelovich, Skelly and White, latest that of June 1978.



A BUMPY ROAD FOR BUSINESS CONDITIONS, PERSONAL FINANCES

Question: Would you say that at the present time business conditions are better or worse than they were a year ago? We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you (and your family living there) are better off or worse off financially than you were a year ago?



	Business conditions better than year ago	Personal finances better than year ago
August-September 1973	27%	29%
October-November 1973	37	37
February 1974	10	29
May 1974	—	33
August-September 1974	—	27
October 1974	—	27
February 1975	4	25
May 1975	20	26
August-September 1975	39	29
October-November 1975	36	32
February 1976	55	35
May 1976	55	33
August-September 1976	59	36
November-December 1976	49	32
February 1977	41	33
May 1977	60	37
August-September 1977	52	35
November-December 1977	47	37
January 1978	48	35
February 1978	45	34
March 1978	40	35
April 1978	45	39
May 1978	48	36
June 1978	48	38
July 1978	54	38
August 1978	46	35

Source: The Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Surveys of Consumer Attitudes, latest that of August 1978.

NOTE TO READERS

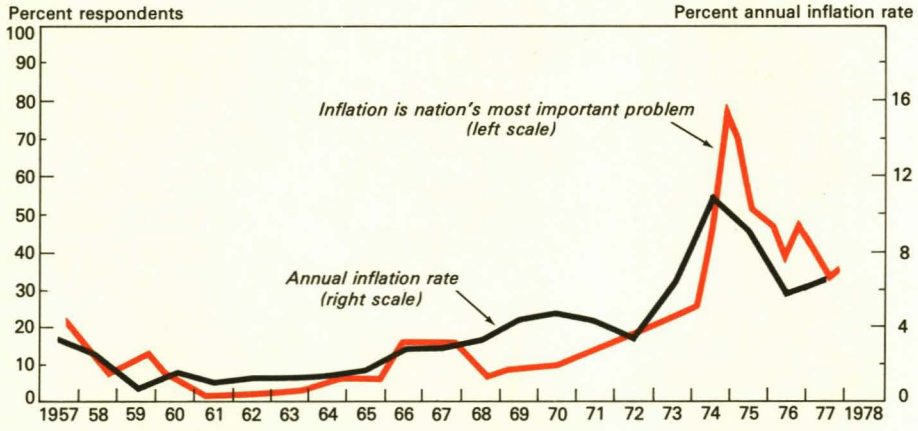
The material in this section has been prepared with the invaluable assistance of the Roper Center, the oldest and largest archive of opinion survey data in the world. The Roper Center is an affiliate of the University of Connecticut, Yale University, and Williams College. The Center's archives are open to all students of public opinion on a contractual basis. Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., who serves as Consulting Editor of this Roundup, is Co-Executive Director of the Roper Center.

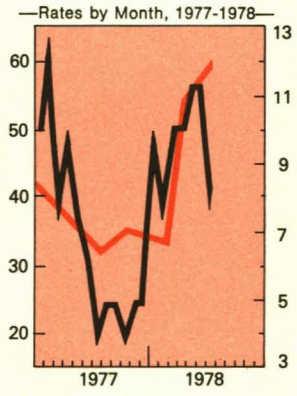
Most of the responses shown in these surveys were gathered either by personal interviews (Harris and Gallup polls) or by telephone (CBS/New York *Times* and the NBC/Associated Press polls). Unless otherwise noted, the samples usually consist of approximately 1,500 voting age men and women, chosen to constitute a representative sample of the entire U.S. population. In the typical sample of 1,500 respondents, there is a 95 percent chance or better that the margin of error will not exceed ±3 percent variation from the distribution which would appear if the nation's entire population were questioned. The possibilities for error are larger when numbers are displayed for subcategories of each sample.

The Scars of Inflation

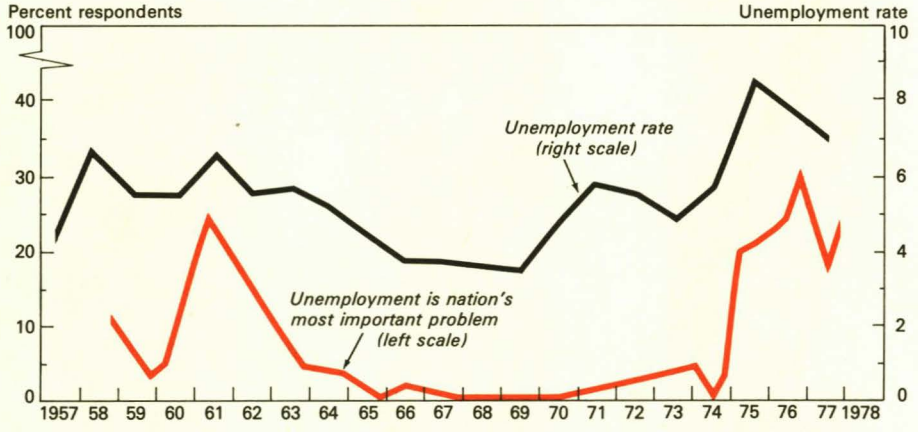
FEAR OF INFLATION CLOSELY TIED TO RISING PRICES . . .

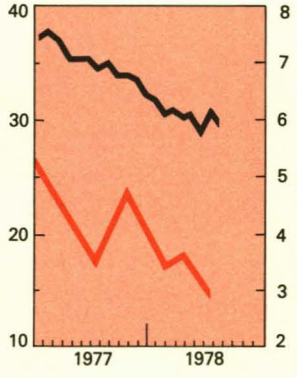
Question: What do you think is the most important problem facing the country today?





. . . AS CONCERN OVER UNEMPLOYMENT DROPS





	Inflation is the nation's most important problem	Unemployment is the nation's most important problem
August-September 1957	22%	—
September 1958	8	11%
September 1959	13	3
February 1960	8	5
February 1961	2	25
September 1963	3	5
September 1964	6	4
September 1965	5	—
May 1966	16	2
October-November 1967	16	—
August 1968	7	—
January 1969	9	—
May 1970	10	—
January 1974	25	5
May-June 1974	48	—
October 1974	79	3
February-March 1975	60	20
July 1975	51	21
January 1976	47	23
April 1976	38	24
October 1976	47	31
July 1977	32	17
October 1977	35	24
February 1978	33	17
April 1978	54	18
July 1978	60	14

	Inflation rate	Unemployment rate
1957	3.6%	4.3%
1958	2.7	6.8
1959	.8	5.5
1960	1.6	5.5
1961	1.0	6.7
1962	1.1	5.5
1963	1.2	5.7
1964	1.3	5.2
1965	1.7	4.5
1966	2.9	3.8
1967	2.9	3.8
1968	4.2	3.6
1969	5.4	3.5
1970	5.9	4.9
1971	4.3	5.9
1972	3.3	5.6
1973	6.2	4.9
1974	11.0	5.6
1975	9.1	8.5
1976	5.8	7.7
1977	6.5	7.0

	Inflation rate	Unemployment rate
	—Rates by Month, 1977-1978—	
1977 January	10.0	7.4
1977 February	12.7	7.6
1977 March	7.4	7.4
1977 April	10.0	7.1
1977 May	7.4	7.1
1977 June	6.2	7.1
1977 July	3.7	6.9
1977 August	4.9	7.0
1977 September	4.9	6.8
1977 October	3.7	6.8
1977 November	4.9	6.7
1977 December	4.9	6.4
1978 January	10.0	6.3
1978 February	7.4	6.1
1978 March	10.0	6.2
1978 April	10.0	6.0
1978 May	11.4	6.1
1978 June	11.4	5.7
1978 July	7.7	6.2
1978 August		5.9

Note: In the "most important problem" question, wording has varied slightly over the years. (See May/June issue of *Public Opinion*, page 32, for complete data.) The inflation rate is the percent change in the consumer price index for all items, year to year. Monthly rates are seasonally adjusted, month to month percent changes, and are annualized.

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of July 1978. Inflation and unemployment rates from U.S. Department of Labor.

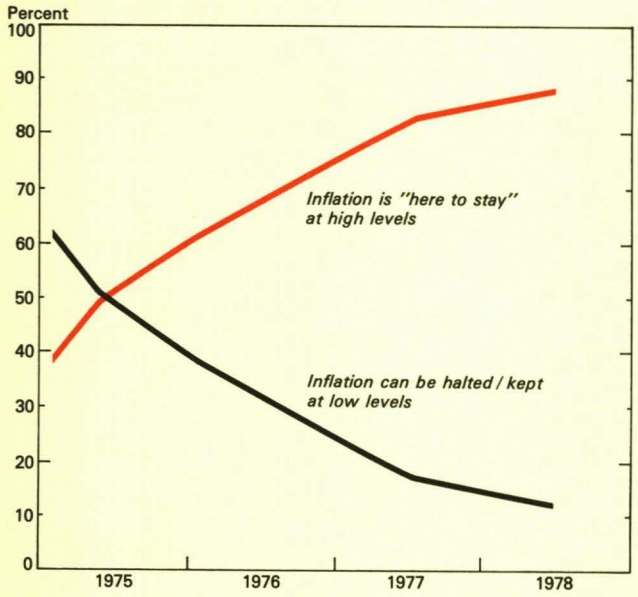
INFLATION: LIKE DEATH AND TAXES?

Question: Do you feel that inflation will be halted after a while, or that it has become one of the facts of life and is here to stay? (January 1975-January 1976) Nobody likes inflation, but different people look at it differently. Which of these statements best describes your feelings about inflation? . . . High inflation is here to stay, and we'll just have to get used to the cost of living going up 8 to 10% a year; inflation is here to stay, but it will come down to a more moderate 5 or 6% level; while some small amount of inflation is probably inevitable, we will get it back to the 1 or 2% level that it used to be. (June 1977, June 1978)

	Can be halted (at 1-2% levels)	Here to stay (at 8-10%, or 5-6% levels)
January 1975	62%	38%
May 1975	51	49
January 1976	38	62
June 1977	17[a]	83[b]
June 1978	12[a]	88[b]

Note: [a]Halted—Roper Organization response = "will get back to 1 or 2% level." [b]Total of Roper Organization responses beginning with "inflation is here to stay" above.

Source: Surveys by *Time*/Yankelovich, Skelly and White, January 1975-January 1976; The Roper Organization, June 1977 (*Roper Report* 77-6) and June 1978 (*Roper Report* 78-6).



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INFLATION

Question: By about what percent do you expect prices to go up, on the average, during the next twelve months?

	Quarterly mean expected increase		Quarterly mean expected increase
1961:1	1.88	1970:4	5.40
1961:2	1.88	1971:1	5.21
1961:3	1.91	1971:2	4.65
1961:4	1.94	1971:3	3.53
1962:1	2.25	1971:4	4.01
1962:2	1.94	1972:1	4.18
1962:3	1.73	1972:2	3.04
1962:4	1.91	1972:3	3.87
1963:1	2.54	1972:4	3.91
1963:2	2.40	1973:1	6.78
1963:3	2.27	1973:2	6.11
1963:4	2.14	1973:3	7.63
1964:1	2.46	1973:4	6.43
1964:2	2.48	1974:1	9.97
1964:3	2.50	1974:2	9.41
1964:4	2.52	1974:3	9.26
1965:1	2.54	1974:4	10.66
1965:2	2.61	1975:1	5.40
1965:3	2.69	1975:2	3.44
1965:4	2.72	1975:3	7.81
1966:1	2.63	1975:4	7.24
1966:2	3.86	1976:1	5.80
1966:3	4.78	1976:2	5.82
1966:4	4.34	1976:3	5.40
1967:1	3.91	1976:4	4.80
1967:2	4.28	1977:1	7.40
1967:3	4.65	1977:2	6.90
1967:4	5.09	1977:3	7.20
1968:1	4.78	1977:4	6.90
1968:2	4.47	1978:1	7.80
1968:3	5.11	1978:2	8.20
1968:4	3.87	1978:3	9.80
1969:1	4.53		
1969:2	5.48		
1969:3	5.49		
1969:4	4.07		
1970:1	5.51		
1970:2	6.04		
1970:3	4.32		

Note: The Survey Research Center has varied the question wording slightly since 1961, but feels confident that similarities in construction are sufficient to permit comparisons over time. Respondents were those who had replied prices "will go up" to the question, "During the next twelve months, do you think that prices in general will go up, or go down, or stay where they are now?"

Source: Surveys by Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Survey of Consumer Attitudes, latest that of August 1978.

GOVERNMENT TAKES RAP FOR RISING COSTS

Question: In your opinion, which is most responsible for inflation—government, business, or labor? (1959-July 1974)

When you think the economy is in trouble—who do you blame most—business, labor unions, the government, or is it not anyone's fault, it's just something that happens? (April 1978)

	Government	Business	Labor
October 1959	20%	21%	59%
July 1968	55	14	31
April 1972	43	23	34
July 1973	51	21	28
July 1974	58	19	23
April 1978	51	16	33

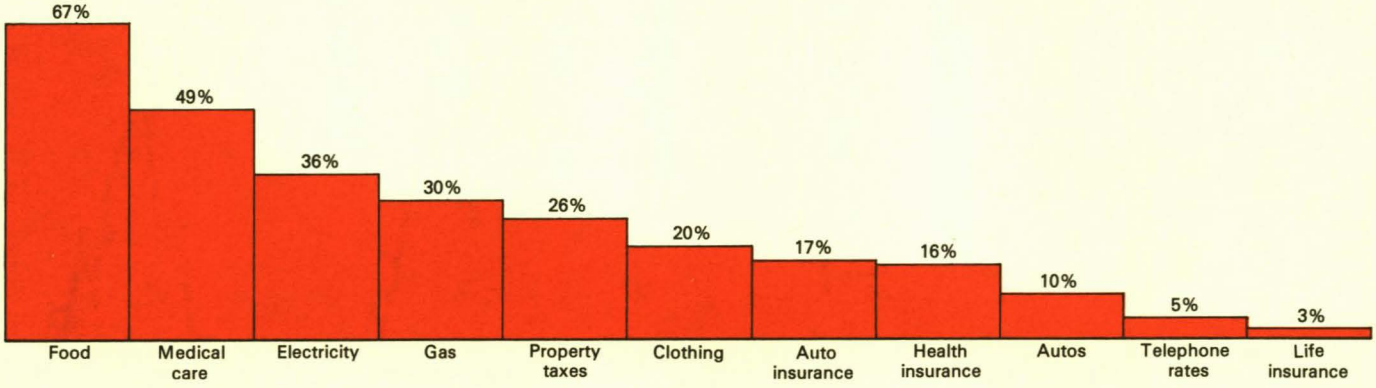
Note: For purposes of comparison, "no opinion" responses were excluded, though, in the earlier polls, they tended to exceed 10%. In addition, we have excluded those responding "government/business/labor" and "it's not anyone's fault" from the CBS News/New York *Times* results.

A July Harris survey reported that 76% of respondents believed "federal government spending" to be "a major cause" of rising prices; 60% blamed "lack of a federal policy to control prices." Other "major" sources: "increased health and medical costs," 75%; "increase in food costs," 74%; "business raising prices," 60%; "increase in energy costs," 59%; "union wage demands," 57%.

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), October 1959-July 1974; CBS News/New York *Times*, April 1978.

FOOD AND HEALTH CARE ARE MOST WORRISOME

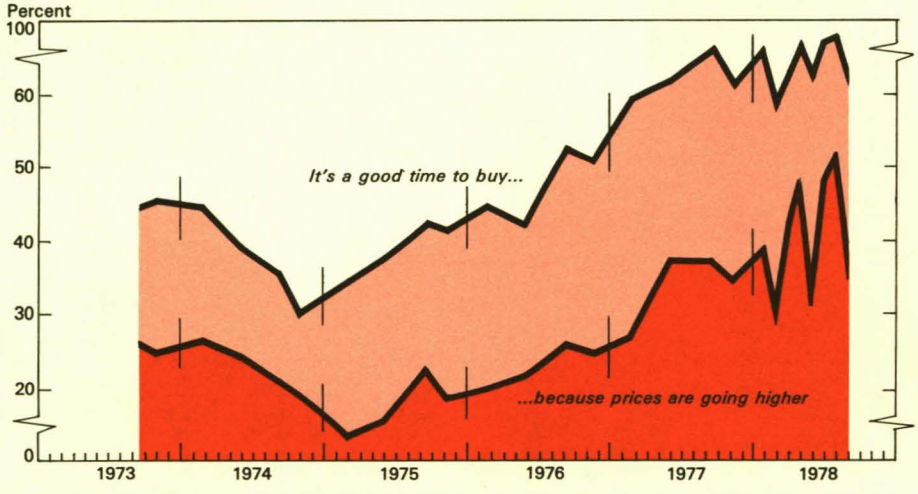
Question: Now here is that list of things we just talked about. (Card shown respondent.) Of course, everyone is concerned about rising costs for anything. But which two or three of the things on that list worry you *personally* the most as far as rising costs are concerned?



Note: Color TV sets received less than 1% of the responses; none and don't know=2%. Figures add to more than 100 due to multiple responses.
Source: Survey by Roper Organization (*Roper Report* 77-10), early November 1977.

DOES INFLATION SPUR BUYING?

Question: About the big things people buy for their house—such as furniture, a refrigerator, stove, television and things like that. Generally speaking, do you think now is a good time or a bad time to buy (major) household items? Why do you say so? (Possible responses: it's a good time to buy because prices are low and good buys are available; it's a good time to buy because prices are going higher and won't come down.)



	Good time	Prices going higher; won't come down
August-September 1973	44%	26%
October-November	45	25
February 1974	44	26
May	39	24
August-September	35	21
October	30	19
February 1975	34	13
May	37	15
August-September	42	23
October-November	41	19
February 1976	44	20
May	42	22
August-September	53	26
November-December	51	25
February 1977	59	27
May	62	37
August-September	66	37
November-December	61	34
January 1978	66	39
February	58	29
March	63	42
April	67	48
May	63	31
June	66	48
July	67	52
August	62	35

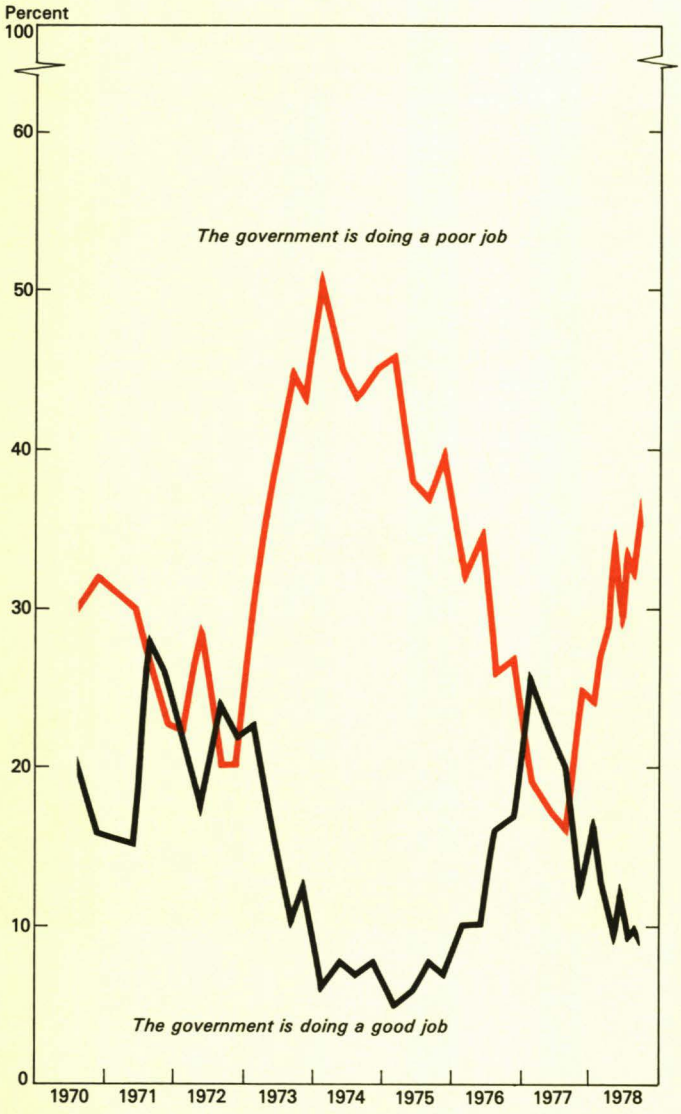
Source: Surveys by Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Surveys of Consumer Attitudes, latest that of August 1978.

A SCORECARD ON THE GOVERNMENT

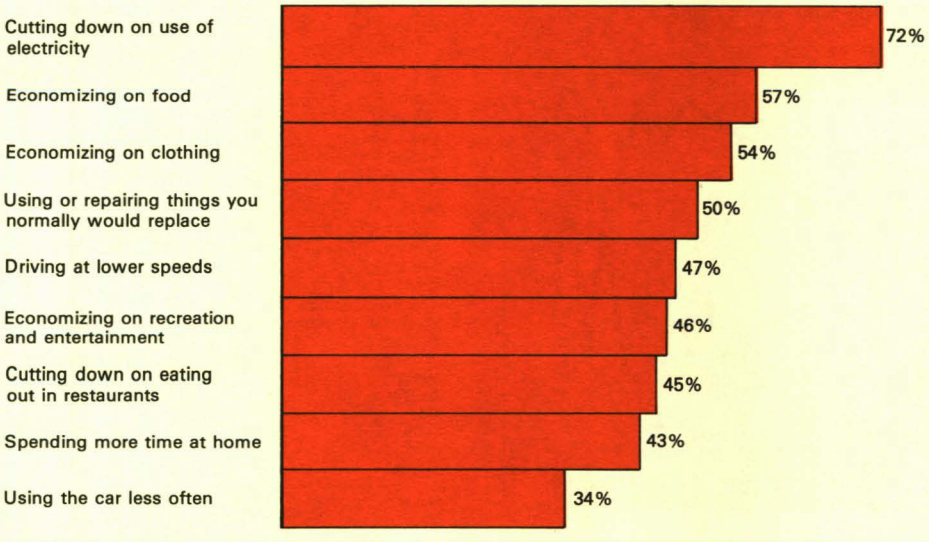
Question: As to the economic policy of the government—I mean steps taken to fight inflation or unemployment—would you say the government is doing a good job, only fair, or a poor job?

	A good job	Only fair	A poor job
August-September 1970	20%	51%	30%
November-December 1970	16	52	32
May 1971	15	55	30
August-September 1971	28	47	26
October-November 1971	26	51	23
February 1972	22	57	22
May 1972	17	54	29
August-September 1972	24	55	20
November-December 1972	22	58	20
February 1973	23	46	31
May 1973	15	46	39
August-September 1973	10	44	45
October-November 1973	13	44	43
February 1974	6	43	51
May 1974	8	46	45
August-September 1974	7	50	43
October 1974	8	47	45
February 1975	5	49	46
May 1975	6	56	38
August-September 1975	8	55	37
October-November 1975	7	52	40
February 1976	10	59	32
May 1976	10	55	35
August-September 1976	16	58	26
November-December 1976	17	56	27
February 1977	26	56	19
May 1977	22	61	17
August-September 1977	20	65	16
November-December 1977	12	63	25
January 1978	17	59	24
February 1978	13	60	27
March 1978	11	60	29
April 1978	9	56	35
May 1978	13	58	29
June 1978	9	57	34
July 1978	10	57	32
August 1978	9	54	37

Source: Surveys by Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Consumer Attitudes Surveys, latest that of August 1978.



WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING TO FIGHT IT?



Question: From time to time during this past year of high prices and shortages, people have reported that they made changes in purchasing patterns and the way they live. Here is a list of some of them. (Card shown respondent.) Would you look down the list and call off all those you have been doing, either because of high prices or shortages?

Note: None=6%. Figures add to more than 100 due to multiple responses. The data provide some indication of *how* people are cutting back, but they do not indicate *why*—whether from higher prices, shortages, inadequate incomes, and so on.

Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization (*Roper Report*, 78-5), late April-early May 1978.

The Battle For Congress

THE EARLY CHOICE VERSUS THE FINAL CHOICE

Questions: If you were voting for Congressman TODAY, would you be most likely to vote for the Democrat, the Republican, or the candidate of some other party? (1946)

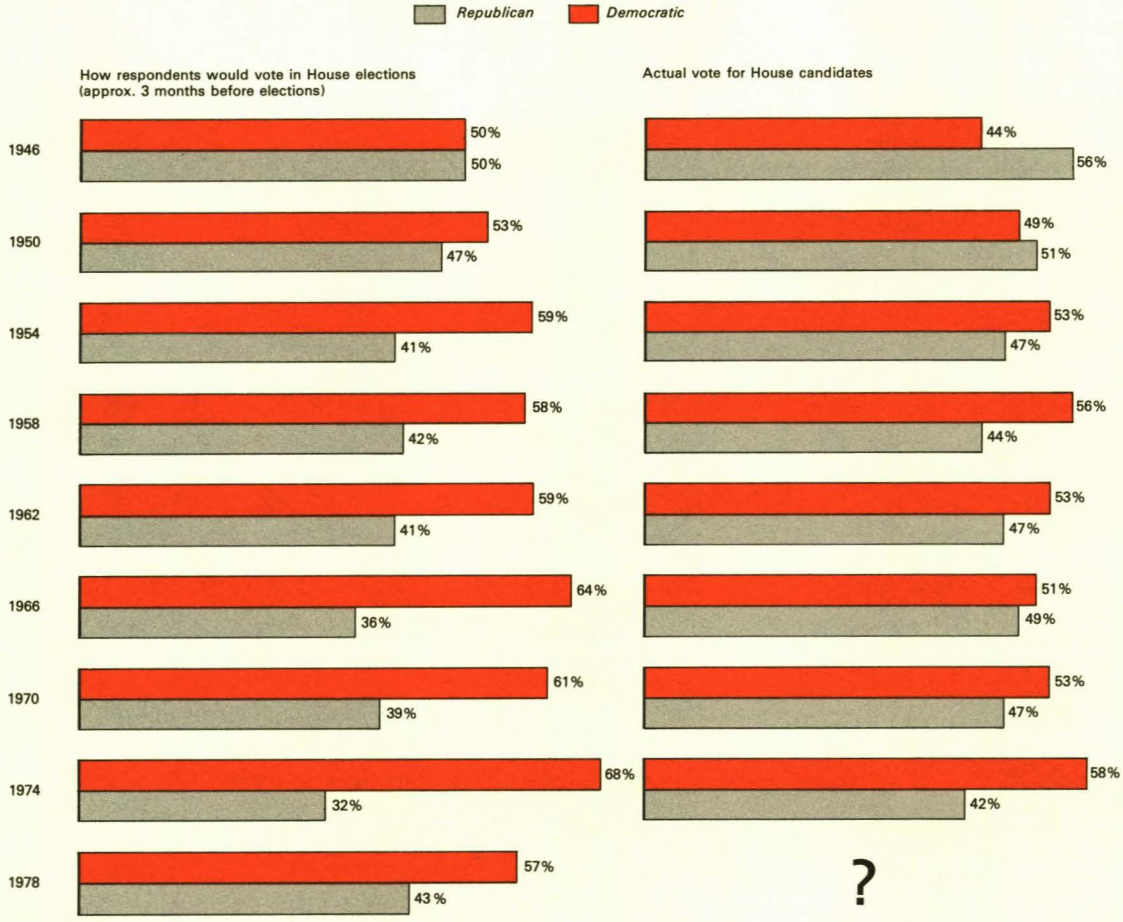
If the elections for Congress were being held TODAY, which party would you like to see win in this state—the Republican party or the Democratic party? (If "undecided" ask:) As of today, do you lean more to the Democratic party or to the Republican party? (1950, 1954, 1958, 1962)

If the elections for Congress were being held TODAY, which party would you like to see win in this congressional district—the Republican party or the Democratic party? (If "undecided" ask:) As of today, do you lean more to the Republican party, or more to the Democratic party? (1966-1978)

Note: Slight variation of question wording: in some years the "lean to" portion of the question was asked if the respondent answered "undecided" or "refused to answer" to the first portion of the question. (September 1958-1970)

In some years, party order reversed in the questions. For all surveys, "other" response excluded from the data, and "undecideds" allocated between the major parties.

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of August 1978. Actual vote for House candidates taken from *Statistical Abstract of the United States*.



As shown here, Gallup surveys since 1946 seem to indicate that Democratic congressional fortunes bloom in August, but shrivel in November's elections; polls taken in early Fall in each non-presidential election year show an enormous Democratic lead, which is then whittled down considerably in the actual voting results.

It's unlikely that Democrats become less "popular" between August and November. It's more likely that early surveys in the low-visibility congressional races just don't tell us much about the shape of the election's outcome.

Congressional races as a rule don't "heat up" until much later in the Fall: in the absence of highly visible candidates and burning issues, voters probably fall back on their party identification for a response to the pollster's question. As we know from the polls, Democrats enjoy a tremendous numerical lead, and this is likely to skew early survey results in the Democratic direction. Furthermore, many Republican congressional candidates haven't even been *nominated* by August. Only the incumbent is known to the voter, and given the shape of recent Congresses, the incumbent will probably be a Democrat. In such a situation, the survey respondent will usually stick with the familiar over the unknown.

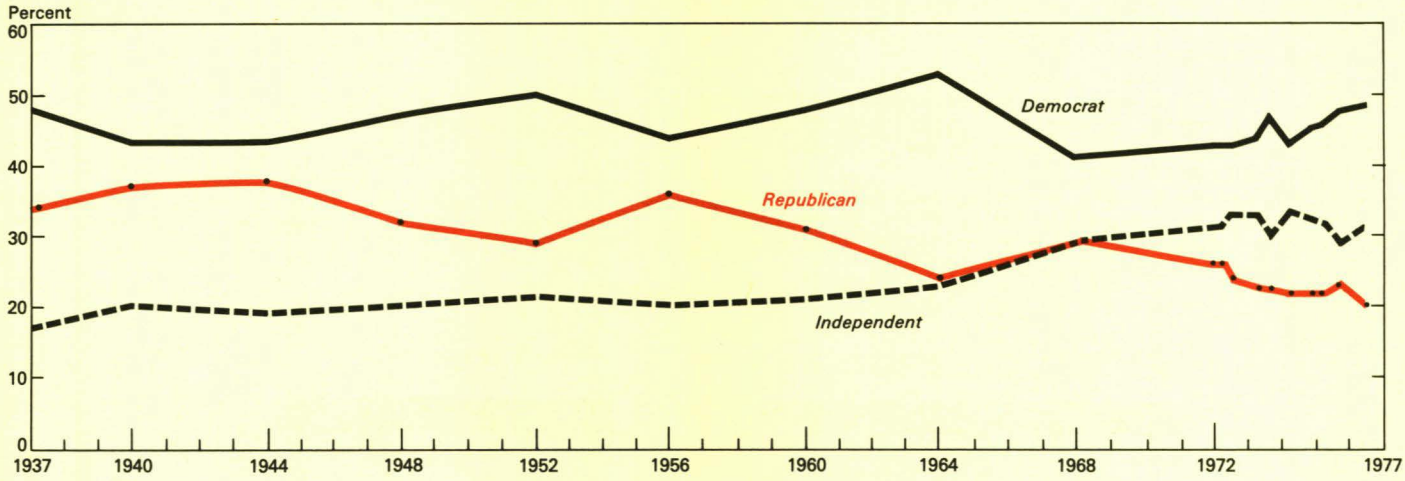
The results of all this: overestimation of Democratic strength in early surveys of congressional races.

Incidentally, you'll note that the Democratic margin in August of this year—57%-43%—was by no means as impressive as it has been in previous congressional elections. In fact, it's the smallest margin since 1950. If the Republican party does as much "whittling" on this margin as they have in past years, it could be a much better election for them than many commentators have suggested; most of these commentators feel the Republican gain in House seats will be modest.

Richard Scammon
Board of Editors, *Public Opinion*

The State of the Parties

GOP SLUMP CONTINUES . . .



Question: In politics: as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?

Year	Democrat	Republican	Independent
1937	48%	34%	17%
1940	43	37	20
1944	43	38	19
1948	47	32	20
1952	50	29	21
1956	44	36	20
1960	48	31	21
1964	53	24	23
1968	41	29	29
1972	43	26	31
March-May 1973	43	26	31
May-August 1973	43	24	33
March-June 1974	44	23	33
July-October 1974	47	23	30
March-May 1975	44	22	34
September-November 1975	45	22	33
March-May 1976	46	22	32
August-October 1976	48	23	29
May-July 1977	49	20	31

Note: A Harris survey in June-July 1978 found that Democratic party strength had dropped from 52% adherence in 1976 to 46% in 1978. The Republican party likewise slipped from 25% adherence in 1976 to 23% in 1978. Only the Independents picked up support—from 22% in 1976 to 29% in 1978.

Source: American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of May-July 1977.

. . . IN FACE OF SOLID "CONSERVATIVE" IDENTIFICATION

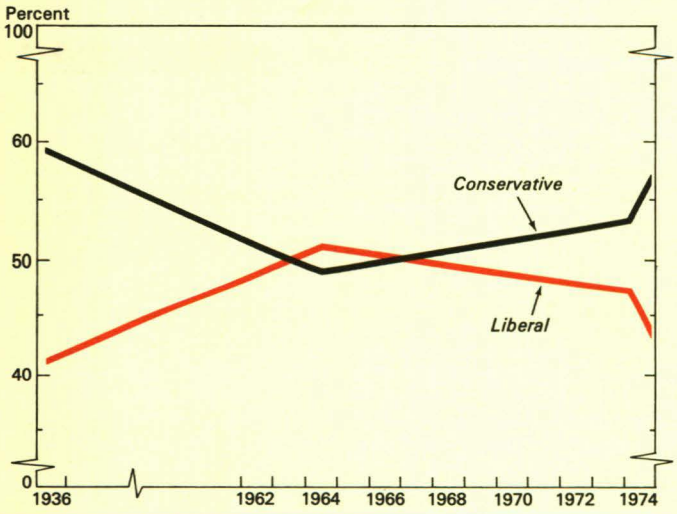
Question: Suppose there were only two major parties in the United States, one for liberals and one for conservatives, which one would you be most likely to prefer? (November 1962, June 1964)

If an arrangement of this kind (two new political parties) were carried out and you had to make a choice, which party would you, personally, prefer—the conservative or the liberal party? (May 1936, April 1974 and November 1974)

	Liberal	Conservative
May 1936	41%	59%
November 1962	49	51
June 1964	51	49
April 1974	47	53
November 1974	43	57

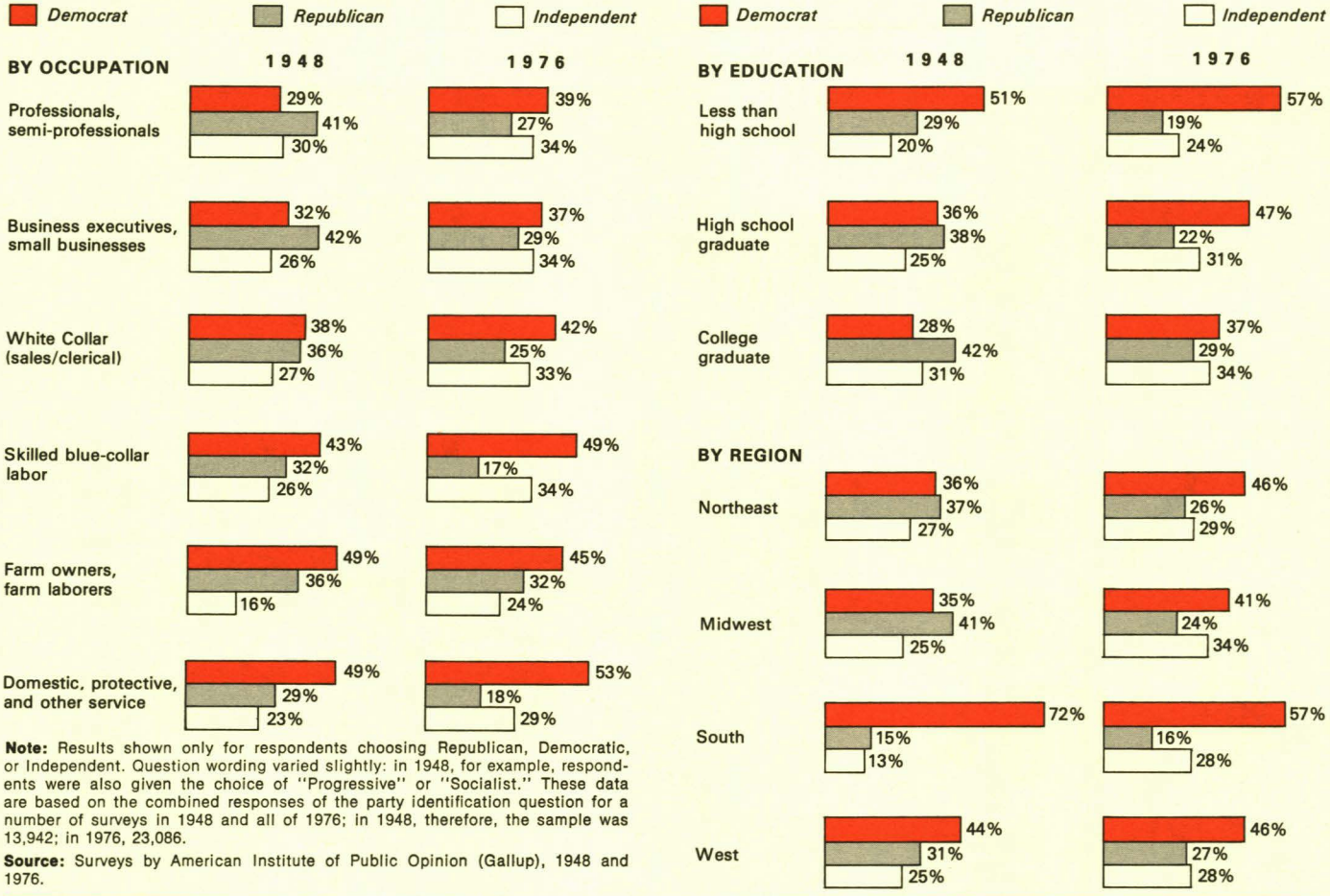
Note: Based on those making a choice. Readers are cautioned that this survey was last taken in 1974; no recent figures are available. It should also be noted that the apparent conservative "spurt" on the graph in fact represents change only over an eight-month period in 1974; it should not be interpreted as a long-term trend toward conservatism.

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of November 1974.



DEMOCRATS NOW CAPTURE ALL SUBGROUPS . . .

Question: In politics: as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?

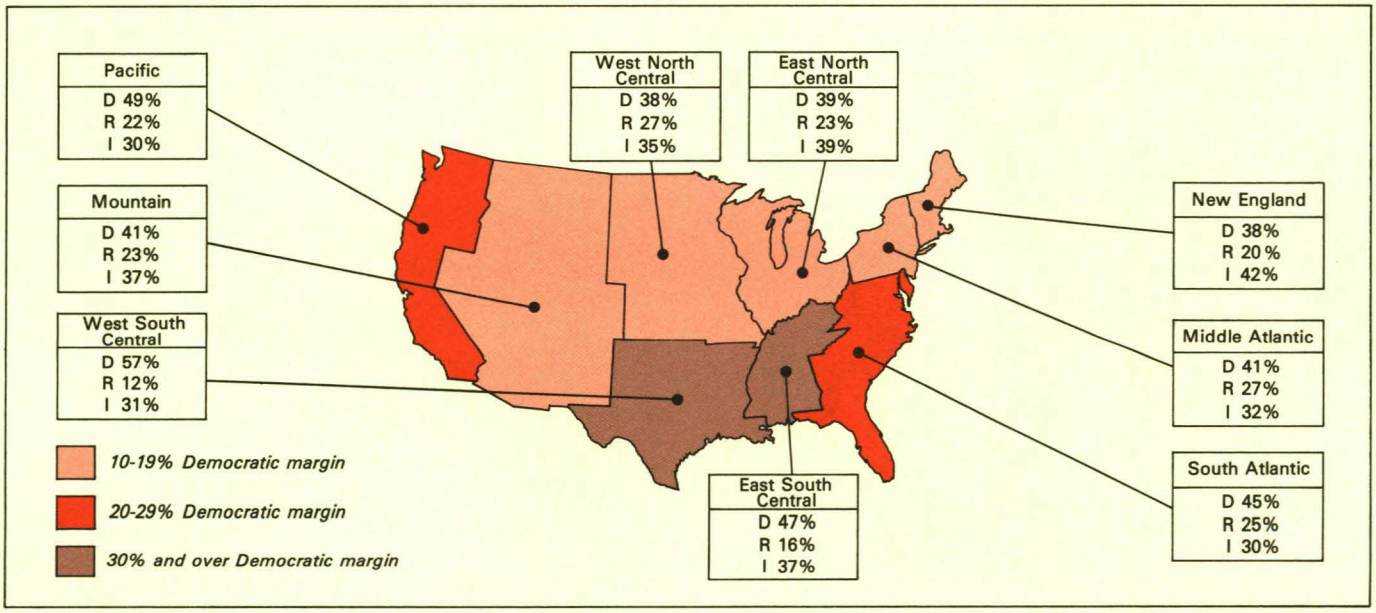


Note: Results shown only for respondents choosing Republican, Democratic, or Independent. Question wording varied slightly: in 1948, for example, respondents were also given the choice of "Progressive" or "Socialist." These data are based on the combined responses of the party identification question for a number of surveys in 1948 and all of 1976; in 1948, therefore, the sample was 13,942; in 1976, 23,086.

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), 1948 and 1976.

. . . AND ALL REGIONS

Question: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?



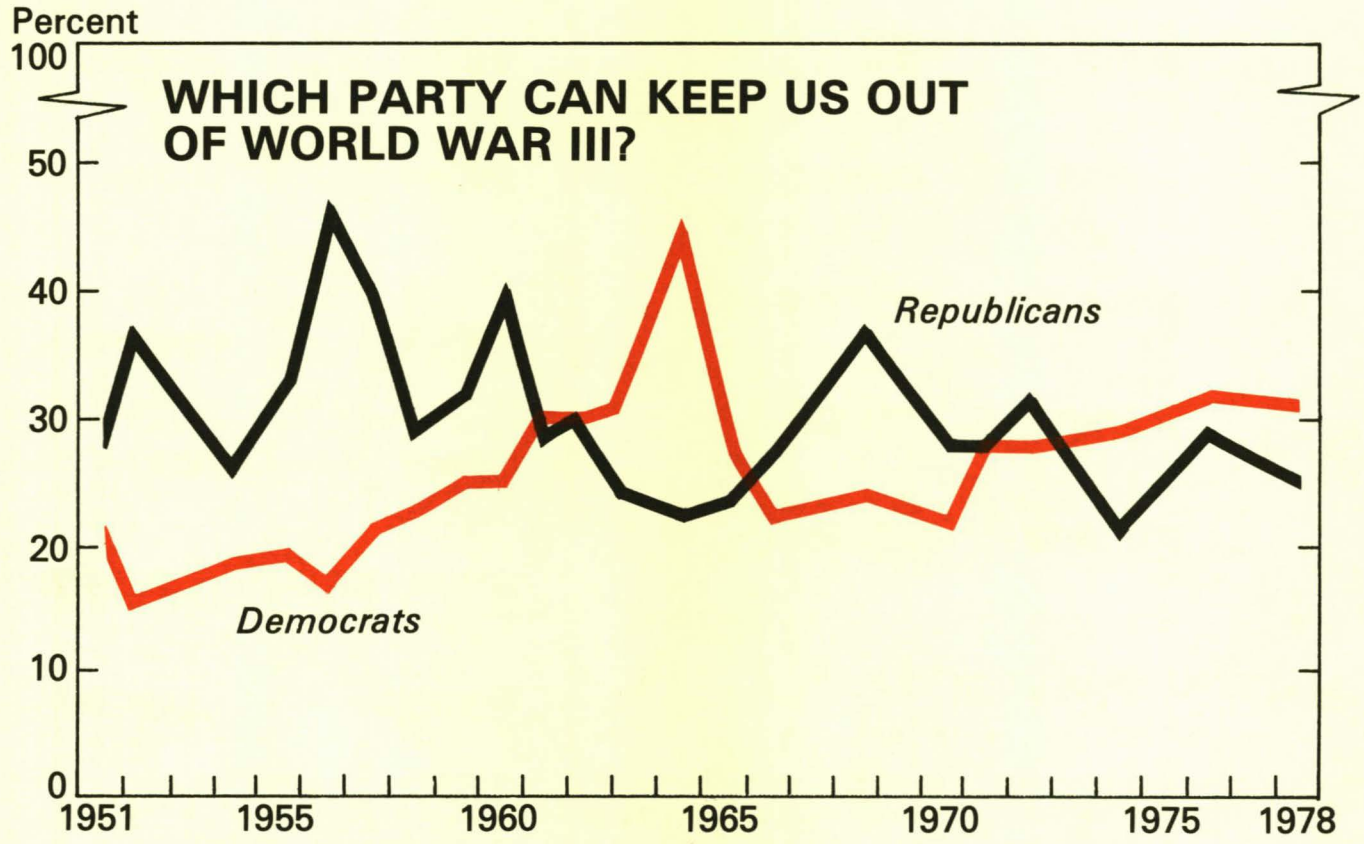
Note: Data is for 1972-1978 combined; sample size=10,652.

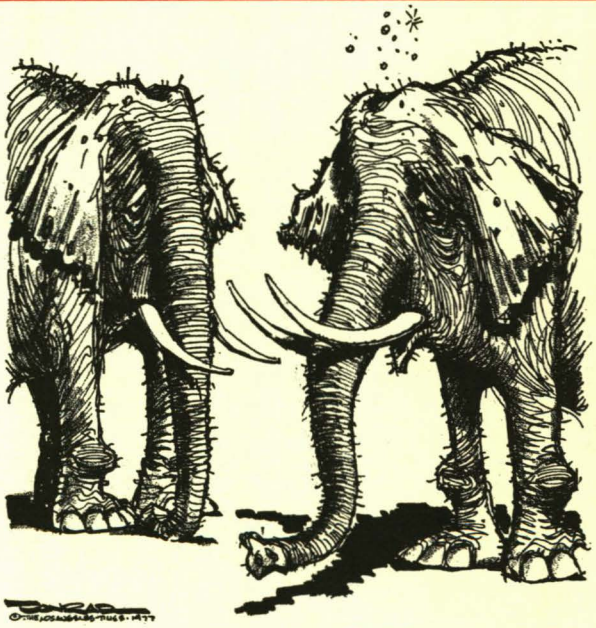
Source: National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1972-1978 combined.

Democrats Sw

TODAY'S DEMOCRATS SEEN AS PARTY OF PEACE . . .

Question: Which political party do you think would be more likely to keep the United States out of World War III—the Republican party or the Democratic party?





"Have you noticed how old and wrinkled Carter looks lately?"

Los Angeles *Times*, reprinted by permission

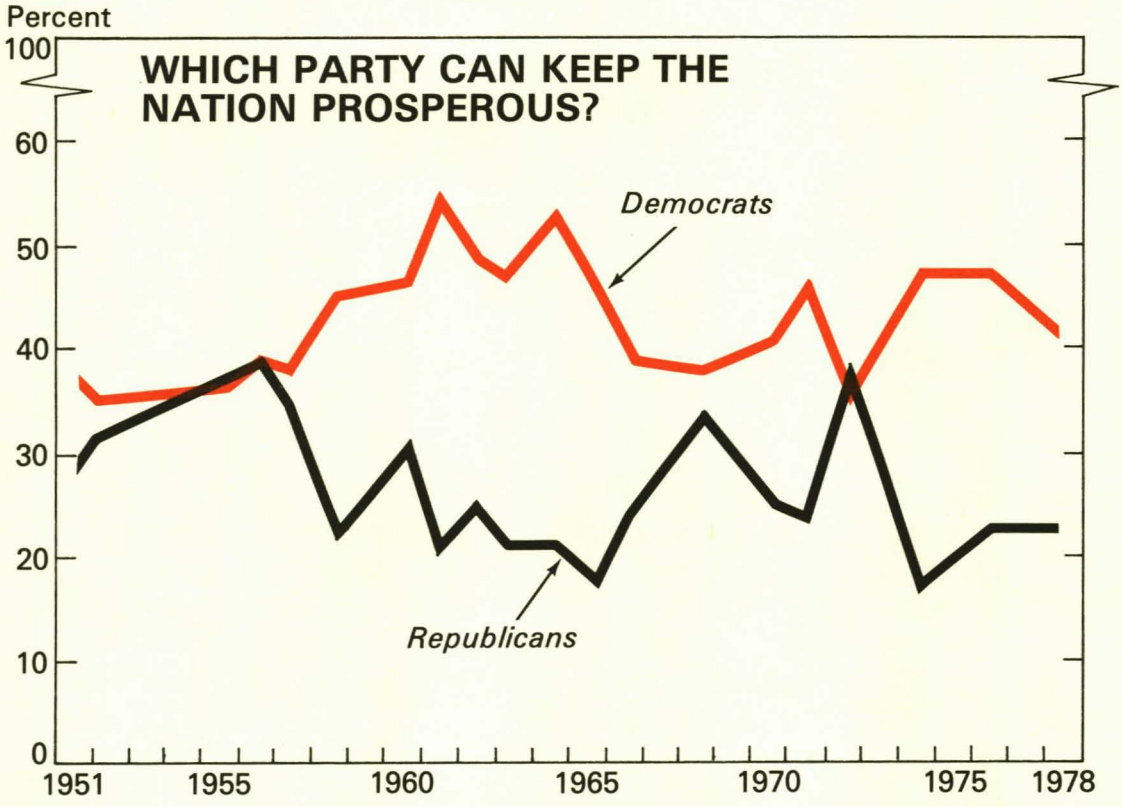
	Democratic	Republican	No opinion/ No difference
September 1951	21%	28%	51%
January 1952	15	36	49
June 1954	18	26	56
November 1955	19	33	48
September-October 1956	16	46	38
September 1957	21	40	39
March, July, August, September 1958	23	29	48
March-September 1959	25	32	43
October 1960	25	40	35
May 1961	30	28	42
May 1962	30	30	40
January-April 1963	31	24	45
October 1964	45	22	33
November 1965	28	23	49
October 1966	23	27	50
October 1968	24	37	39
September 1970	22	28	50
July 1971	28	28	44
September 1972	28	32	40
September 1974	29	21	50
August 1976	32	29	39
June 1978	31	25	44

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of June 1978.

ep 1978 Ratings

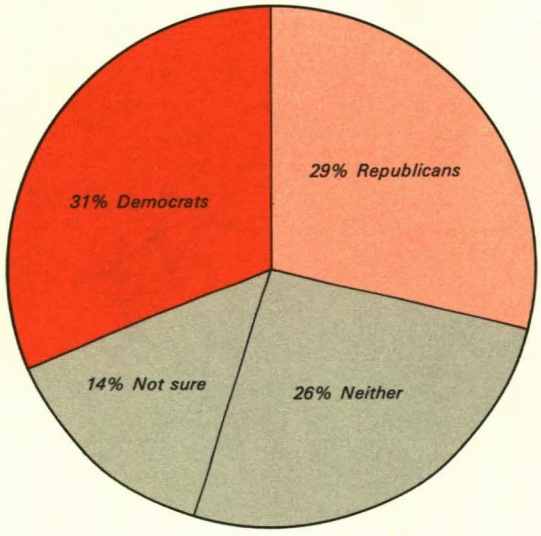
. . . AS PARTY OF PROSPERITY. . .

Question: Looking ahead for the next few years, which political party—the Republican or Democratic—do you think would do the best job of keeping the country prosperous?



. . . AND AS PARTY ABLE TO KEEP TAXES DOWN

Question: Which political party—the Democrats or the Republicans—do you feel can do a better job of keeping taxes down?



Note: Democrats held a 42%-26% margin over Republicans as the party which would do a better job "giving some relief to taxpayers," in a September 8-12, 1978 Harris survey.

Source: Survey by NBC News/Associated Press, June 12-13, 1978.

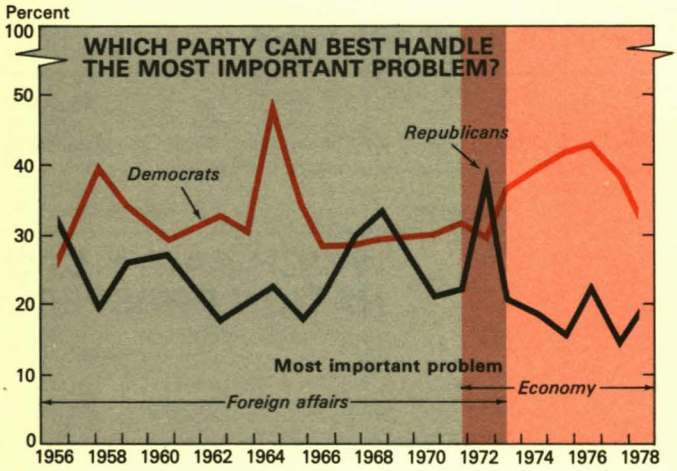
	Democratic	Republican	No opinion/ No difference
October 1951	37%	29%	34%
January 1952	35	31	34
October-December 1955	36	37	27
October 1956	39	39	22
May 1957	37	35	28
September 1958	45	22	33
October 1960	46	31	23
May 1961	54	20	26
May 1962	48	25	27
January-April 1963	46	21	33
October 1964	53	21	26
November 1965	46	17	37
October 1966	39	24	37
October 1968	37	34	29
September 1970	40	25	35
July 1971	46	23	31
September 1972	35	38	27
September 1974	47	17	36
August 1976	47	23	30
June 1978	41	23	36

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of June 1978.

WHICH IS MOST EFFECTIVE PARTY FOR MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM?

Question: Which political party do you think can do a better job of handling the problem you have just mentioned—the Republican party or the Democratic party? (Asked of respondents after they were asked what was the most important problem facing the country.)

	Democrats	Republicans	No opinion/ No difference
September 1956	25%	33%	42%
February 1958	40	19	41
February 1959	34	26	40
October 1960	29	27	44
September 1962	33	17	50
September 1963	30	20	50
September 1964	49	23	28
October 1965	34	17	49
August 1966	28	21	51
November 1967	28	30	42
October 1968	29	34	37
September 1970	30	21	49
November 1971	32	22	46
October 1972	29	39	32
May 1973	36	21	43
October 1974	39	18	43
October 1975	42	15	43
October 1976	43	23	34
October 1977	38	14	48
July 1978	33	19	48

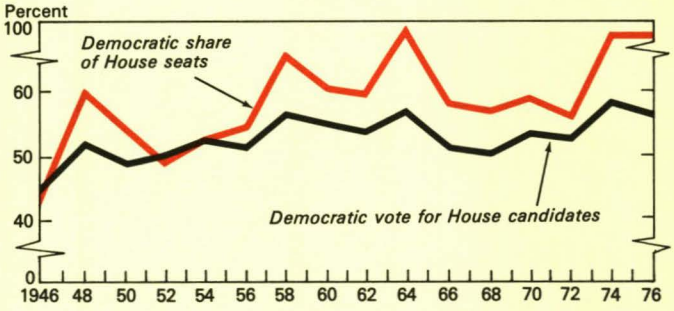


Note: As indicated in the graph, foreign affairs issues generally dominated responses to the "most important problem" question until late 1971; economic issues took over in mid-1973, after a brief transition period.

See *Public Opinion*, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 32, for exact responses to the "most important problem" question. Updating that page, Gallup found in April that economic issues were named by 72% of the respondents as the most important problem; foreign policy issues, 8%; and social issues, 10%. In July, economic issues were named by 74%; foreign policy issues, 9%; and social issues, 9%.

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of July 1978.

DEMOCRATS NEAR POSTWAR HIGH IN NUMBER OF HOUSE SEATS . . .



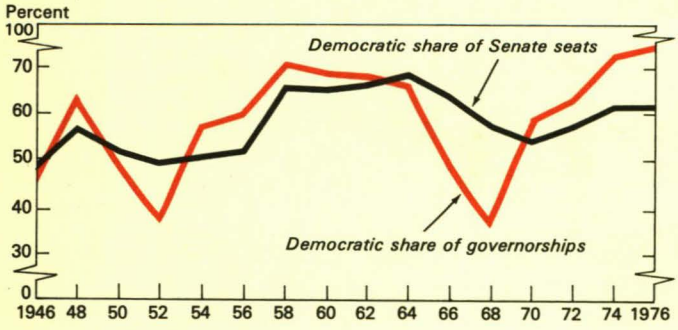
Note: "Democratic vote for House candidates" represents the Democratic percentage of the popular vote in the election year shown. "Democratic share of House seats" is the Democratic percentage of congressional seats won in the election year shown.

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, selected years, 1973-1977.

Election year	Democratic votes for House candidates	Democratic percentage of House seats
1946	44%	43%
1948	52	60
1950	49	54
1952	50	49
1954	53	53
1956	51	54
1958	56	65
1960	55	60
1962	53	59
1964	57	68
1966	51	57
1968	50	56
1970	53	58
1972	52	55
1974	58	67
1976	56	67

. . . AND DOMINATE GOVERNORSHIPS, SENATE SEATS

Election year	Democratic percentage of governorships	Democratic percentage of Senate seats
1946	46%	47%
1948	63	56
1950	48	51
1952	38	49
1954	56	50
1956	60	51
1958	70	65
1960	68	65
1962	68	67
1964	66	68
1966	48	64
1968	36	57
1970	58	54
1972	62	56
1974	72	61
1976	74	61



Note: These percentages represent Democrats elected or reelected in the election years shown, *plus* Democratic officeholders whose terms had not expired in that year.

Source: *World Almanac and Book of Facts*, selected years, 1949-1960; *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957; Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1974-1977.

Left, Right, or Center: Which Way Are We Going?

Is America Going Right? An Editor's View

Offering observations on whether the country is moving "right" or "left" is tempting—but dangerous.

For one thing, the terms themselves—right, left, conservative, liberal, and so on—have in recent history been used with many different meanings and touch upon different dimensions. A variety of contrasting positions, for example, are described as conservative.

There is also the fact that such terms as liberal and conservative are *ideological* categories—and most people do not hold views that are as coherently packaged as ideology implies. When there is an increase in the proportion of the populace responding "conservatively" on a particular issue, this need not—and probably does not—mean that a general ideological shift is occurring.

With these *caveats* in mind, let's turn to the data and see what they do show. As can be seen from the graphs on these pages, there has been a weakening of many of the old codes of personal comportment—meaning that there is now less opposition to premarital sex, to abortion, to the use of marijuana, and so on. There has been a fairly dramatic enlargement of the pro-civil liberties and pro-civil rights positions. And there is now a greater inclination than ever to use government as a provider of services and generally as a problem solver.

These trends are clear over the past three or four decades. It is not accurate to describe them in terms of movement either right or left, but surely one cannot say on the basis of the data here—and these data are very representative—that the U.S. has moved to the right, overall, compared to where it was in the 1930s or the 1960s.

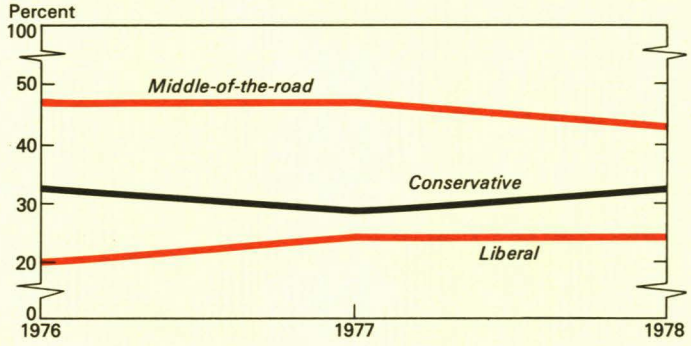
It must be acknowledged that many observers of the American scene *think* the country "is moving right," and more than a few political leaders are now *acting* as though it were. This in itself is enormously consequential. And surely there are some components of the complex mix of public opinion that sustain the sense of a "conservative" mood. Americans are unhappy about "welfare spending," school busing, and a perceived insufficiency and unreliability in the punishment of criminals. Above all, they reject some features of the big governmental apparatus which has been established since the New Deal—even as they are profoundly supportive of a high level of public service. Government is seen as terribly inefficient. There has been a general loss of confidence in the leadership of public institutions. And high inflation plus the absence of gains in *real* income have made the public more resistant to rising taxes.

Such is the stuff of which tax protests are made. But this is *not* the basis of an overall ideological swing in the conservative direction.

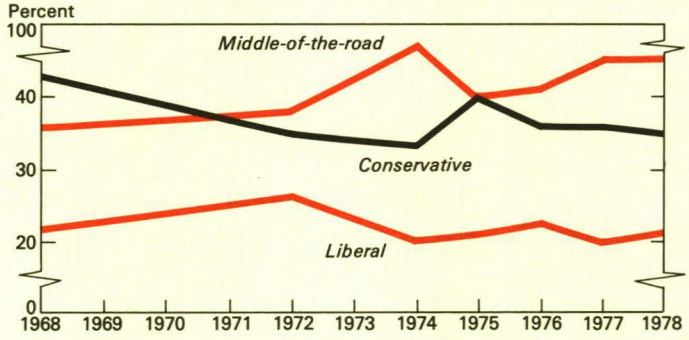
—Everett C. Ladd, Jr.
Consulting Editor
Opinion Roundup

HOW PEOPLE DESCRIBE THEMSELVES

Gallup's view . . .



. . . and Harris's view



Gallup question: People who are conservative in their political views are referred to as being right of center and people who are liberal in their political views are referred to as being left of center. (Respondents were handed a card with eight positions on a left-right continuum.) Just your impression, which one of these categories best describes (your own) political position?

Harris question: How would you describe your own personal political philosophy—conservative, middle-of-the-road, liberal, or radical?

Cautions to the reader: Although most surveys *do* indicate that people are willing to apply ideological labels to themselves, great care must be exercised when trying to estimate *how many* "conservatives" or "liberals" there are and how totals change over time. Question wording may dramatically affect results: earlier Gallup questions, for instance, did not offer a "middle-of-the-road" alternative, which would inflate percentages of liberal/conservative responses. We're not displaying the earlier Gallup questions due to just these problems.

The current Gallup question offers respondents an eight-point scale, instead of two or three alternatives. This method presents complications of its own: we have to decide how to divvy up the results. Is "just slightly right of center" a conservative or middle-of-the-road response? We've said "middle-of-the-road": but if we consider "middle-of-the-roaders" *just* those who select the center of the scale, then a conservative majority appears: 52% would be right of center, 12% middle-of-the-road, and 36% left of center.

Finally, of course, we have to wonder: what do people mean when they say they are "conservative" or "liberal"? (See note by Everett Ladd, this page.)

Gallup [a]

	Conservative	Middle-of-the-road	Liberal
1976	33%	47%	20%
1977	29	47	24
1978	33	43	24

Harris [b]

	Conservative	Middle-of-the-road	Liberal
1968	43%	36%	22%
1972	35	38	26
1974	33	47	20
1975	40	40	21
1976	36	41	23
1977	36	45	20
1978	35	45	21

Notes: [a] Conservative = "moderately right of center," "substantially right of center" and "far right"; middle-of-the-road = "just slightly left of center," "middle-of-the-road," and "just slightly right of center"; liberal = "moderately left of center," "substantially left of center," and "far left."

[b] Liberal = "liberal" and "radical."

For the sake of comparison, all figures reflect only those respondents with an opinion.

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of August 11-14, 1978; Louis Harris and Associates, latest that of December 27-January 10, 1978.

Left and Right on the Issues: Three Decades of Change

BOX SCORE ON IDEOLOGICAL SHIFTS

Shift Toward "Conservatism"

★ Growing feeling that the government is "too powerful"

★ Rising opposition to taxes

★ Hardening attitude toward treatment of criminals (*Public Opinion*, Issue 1, p. 24)

★ Increase in support for the death penalty since early 1960s

★ Sustained widespread opposition to busing

★ Support for defense spending rises to pre-Vietnam war levels (*Public Opinion*, Issue 1, p. 14)

Shift Toward "Liberalism"

★ Growing support for government medical programs and employment guarantees

★ Recent growth in support for wage and price controls (*Public Opinion*, Issue 2, p. 25)

★ Increasing support for legalized marijuana

★ Growing feeling that premarital sex is not wrong

★ Increase in numbers who would vote for Black or woman as president

★ Rise in support for right of Blacks to live anywhere they want

★ Growth in tolerance of "anti-establishment" figures, like atheists and socialists

Mixed Signals

★ Legalized abortion and easier divorces may be losing support after an initial liberal shift in the late sixties

★ Wavering support for ERA

★ Mixed views of SALT and détente (*Public Opinion*, Issue 3, pp. 24-25)

★ Mixed views of government regulation: on the one hand, the feeling that government has gone "too far" in regulating business (*Public Opinion*, Issue 2, p. 26); on the other, the belief that government should limit corporate profits.

GROWING DISSATISFACTION WITH BIG INSTITUTIONS . . .

Government too powerful question: Some people are afraid the government in Washington is getting too powerful for the good of the country and the individual person. Others feel that the government in Washington is not getting too strong for the good of the country. Have you been interested enough in this to favor one side over the other? (If YES) What is your feeling, do you think—the government is getting too powerful, the government has not gotten too strong?

Government too powerful

1964	1968	1972	1976
44%	55%	57%	69%

Note: Question wording varied slightly.

Source: Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Election Studies, 1964, 1968; Center for Political Studies of the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Election Studies, 1972, 1974.

Limitation of corporate profits question: In all industries where there is competition, do you think companies should be allowed to make all the profit they can or should the government put a limit on the profits companies can make?

Should limit profits

1946	1948	1953	1955	1962	1971	1973	1975	1977
31%	40%	28%	28%	25%	33%	40%	55%	55%

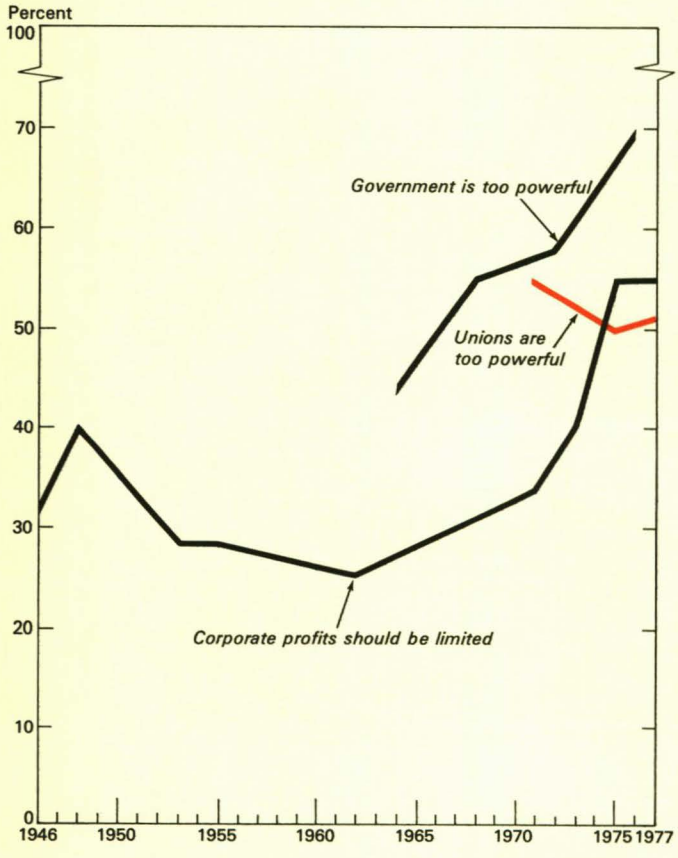
Source: Surveys by Opinion Research Corporation, latest that of 1977.

Unions too powerful question: Please tell me which one statement best describes the way you feel about labor unions in this country: Labor unions today are not strong enough, I would like to see them grow in power; labor unions have grown too powerful, I would like to see their power reduced; the power the labor unions have today is about right, I would like to see it stay the way it is.

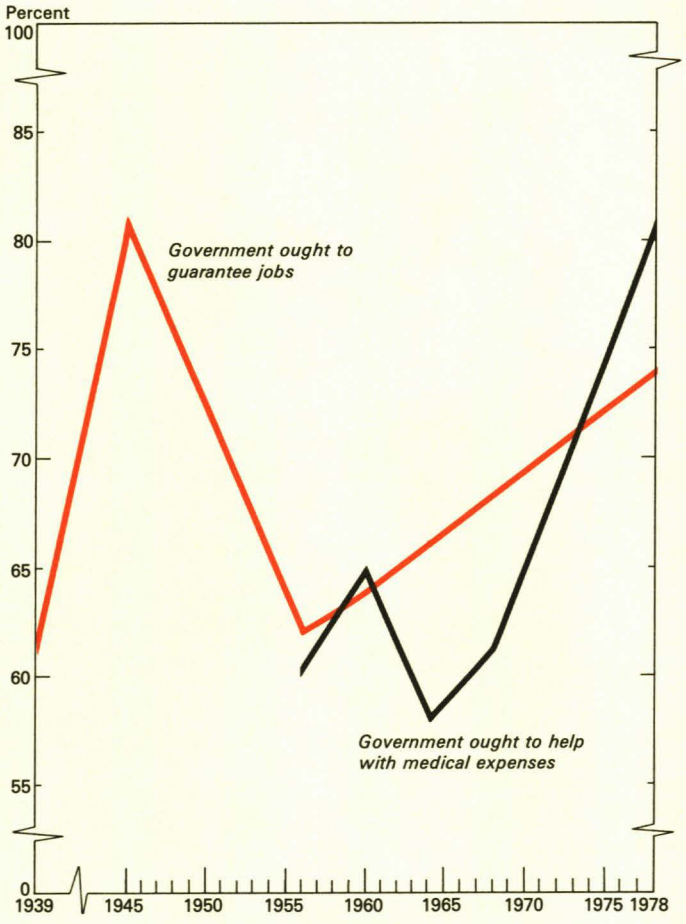
Unions are too powerful

1971	1975	1977
55%	50%	51%

Source: Surveys by Opinion Research Corporation, latest that of 1977.



. . . BUT CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR SOME "BIG GOVERNMENT" PROGRAMS



Government help with medical expenses questions: The government ought to help people get doctors and hospital care at low cost. (1956, 1960, 1978)

Some say the government in Washington ought to help people get doctors and hospital care at low cost; others say the government should not get into this. Have you been interested enough in this to favor one side over the other? (If YES) What is your (opinion/position?) Should the government in Washington—help people get doctors and hospital care at low cost, or stay out of this? (1964-1968)

	Agree			
1956[a]	1960[a]	1964[b]	1968[b]	1978
60%	65%	58%	61%	81%

Note: [a]Agree="agree strongly" and "agree but not very strongly."
[b]Agree="help people get doctors and hospital care at low cost."

Source: Surveys by Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Election Studies 1956, 1960, 1964, 1968; CBS News/New York *Times*, January 8-12, 1978.

Government guarantee jobs questions: People feel differently about how far a government should go. Do you think our government should or should not—see to it that everyone who wants to work has a job? (1939)

Do you think it should or should not be up to the government to see to it that there are enough jobs in this country for everybody who wants to work? (1945)

The government in Washington ought to see to it that everybody who wants to work can find a job. (1956, 1960)

The government in Washington ought to see to it that everybody who wants to work has a job. (1978)

	Agree			
1939	1945	1956	1960[a]	1978
61%	81%	62%	64%	74%

Note: [a]Agree=total of responses "agree strongly" and "agree but not very strongly."

Source: Surveys by Roper Organization conducted for *Fortune*, 1939; National Opinion Research Center, 1945; Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Election Studies, 1956, 1960; CBS News/New York *Times*, January 1978.

MIXED SIGNALS ON SOCIAL ISSUES

Death penalty question: Are you in favor of the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?

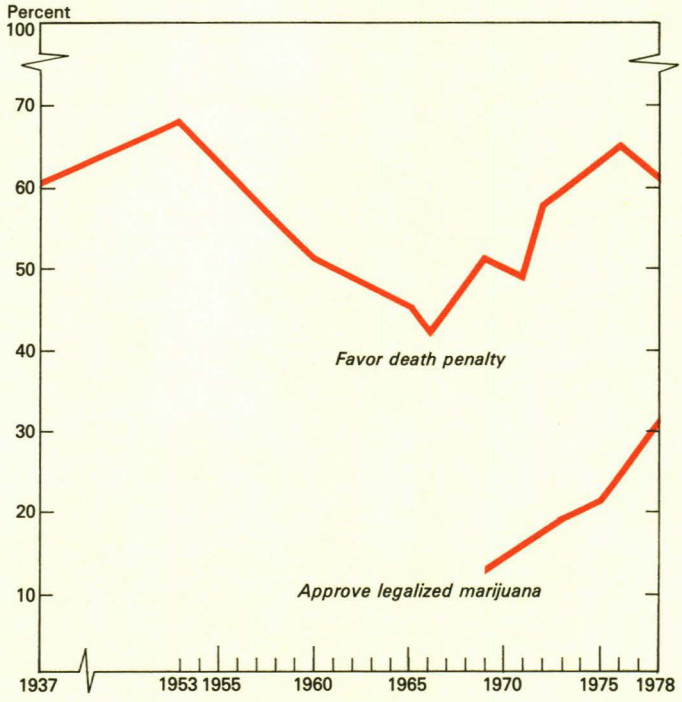
		Yes		
1937	1953	1960	1965	1966
60%	68%	51%	45%	42%
1969	1971	1972	1976	1978
51%	49%	57%	65%	62%

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of March 3-6, 1978.

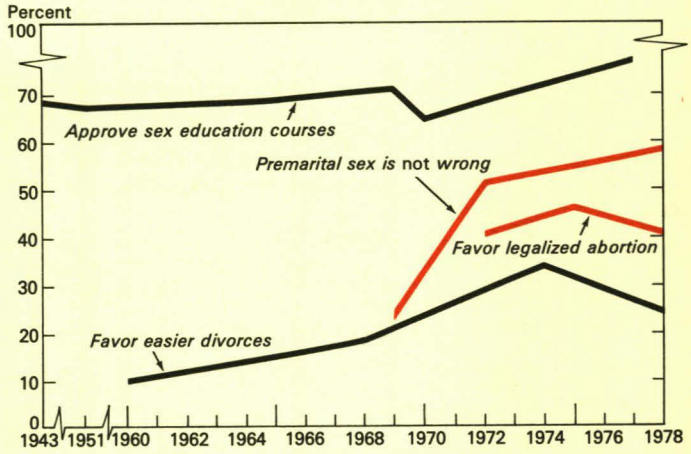
Marijuana question: Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal or not?

Legal			
1969	1973	1975	1978
13%	19%	21%	31%

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), 1969; National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1973, 1975, and 1978.



THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION: HAS IT CRESTED?



Sex education questions: It has been suggested that a course in sex education be given to students in high schools. Do you approve or disapprove of this plan? (1943, 1951)

Do you approve or disapprove of schools giving courses in sex education? (1965-1977)

Approve

1943	1951	1965	1969	1970	1977
68%	67%	69%	71%	65%	77%

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of December 9-12, 1977.

Premarital sex questions: There's a lot of discussion about the way morals and sex are changing in this country. Here is a question that is often discussed in women's magazines. What is your view on this . . . do you think it is wrong for a man and woman to have sex relations before marriage or not? (1969)

There's been a lot of discussion about the way morals and attitudes about sex are changing in this country. If a man and a woman have sex relations before marriage, do you think it is wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all? (1972, 1978)

Not wrong

1969[a]	1972[b]	1978[b]
23%	51%	59%

Note: [a] In 1969, response="no is not."
[b] In 1972 and 1978, not wrong="not wrong at all" and "wrong only sometimes."

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), 1969; National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1972, 1978.

Abortion question: Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if . . . she is married and does not want any more children.

Yes

1972	1975	1978
40%	46%	40%

Source: National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1972, 1975, and 1978.

Divorce questions: Should divorce be made more difficult to get, easier to get, or should things be left as they are now? (1960)

Should divorce in this country be easier or more difficult to obtain than it is now? (1968, 1974)

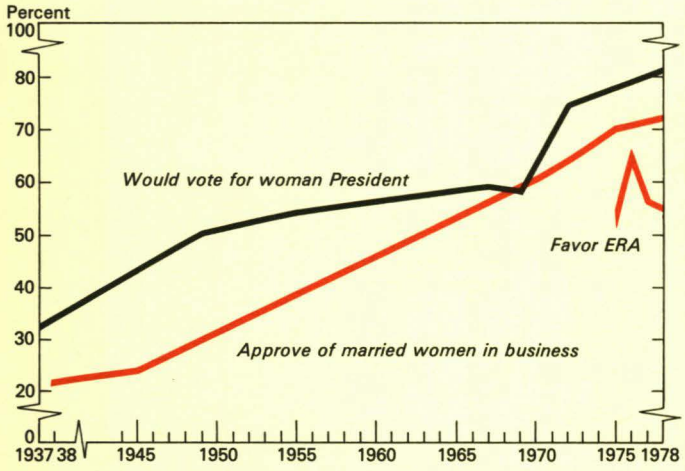
Should divorce in this country be easier to obtain, more difficult to obtain, or stay as it is now? (1978)

Easier

1960	1968	1974	1978
10%	19%	34%	24%

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), 1960 and 1968; and by National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1974 and 1978.

NEW WOMEN'S ROLES WELCOMED



Married women in business question: Do you approve of a married woman earning money in business or industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her? (1938, 1970)

Do you think married women whose husbands make enough to support them should or should not be allowed to hold jobs if they want to? (1945)

Do you approve or disapprove of a married woman earning money in business or industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her? (1972-1978)

Approve

1938	1945[a]	1970	1972	1975	1978
21%	24%	60%	64%	70%	72%

Note: [a] Approve = "should."

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), 1938, 1970; Roper Organization for *Fortune*, 1945; National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1972, 1975, and 1978.

Woman for president questions: Would you vote for a woman for president if she qualified in every other respect? (1937)

If the party whose candidate you most often supported nominated a woman for president of the United States, would you vote for her if she seemed qualified for the job? (1949, 1955)

If your party nominated a woman for president, would you vote for her if she were qualified for the job? (1967-1978)

Yes

1937	1949	1955	1967
32%	50%	54%	59%

1969	1971	1972	1978
58%	69%	74%	81%

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), 1937-1971; National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1972 and 1978.

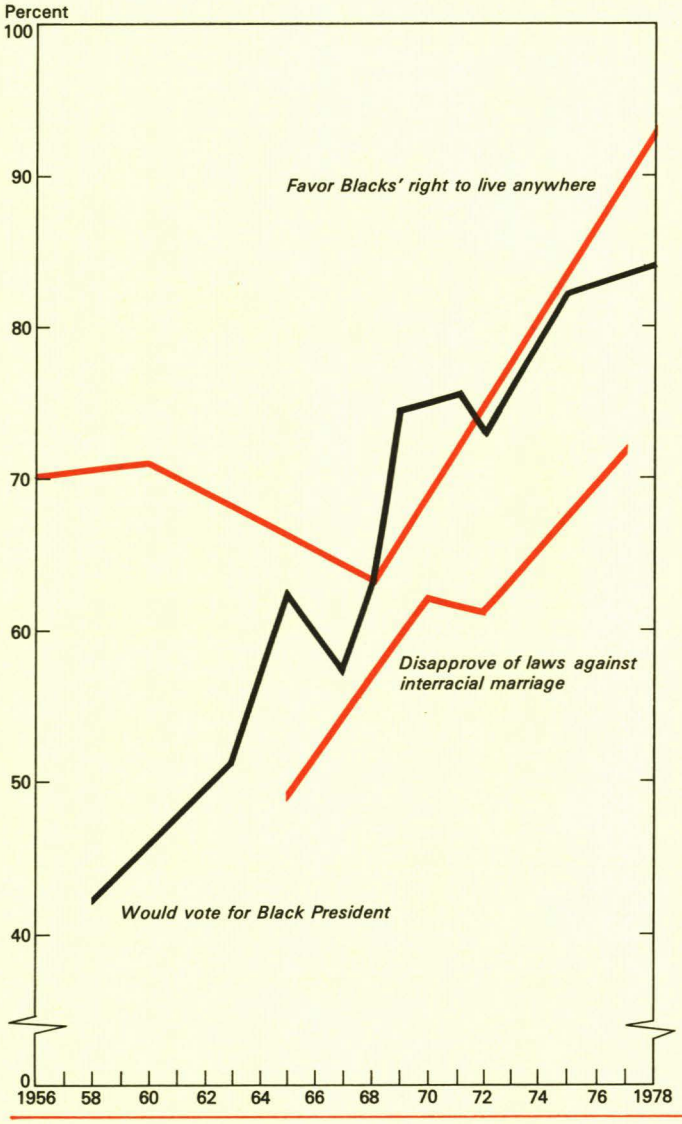
ERA question: Many of those who favor women's rights favor the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment would establish that women would have rights equal to men in all areas. Opponents argue that women are different from men and need to be protected by special laws which deal with women's status. Do you favor or oppose the Equal Rights Amendment?

Favor

1975	1976	1977	1978
51%	66%	56%	55%

Source: Surveys by Louis Harris and Associates, latest that of June 27-July 1, 1978.

SEVERAL RACIAL BARRIERS DISAPPEARING



Black for president questions: There's always much discussion about the qualifications of presidential candidates—their education, age, race, religion and the like. If your party nominated a generally well qualified man for president and he happened to be a Negro would you vote for him? (1958-1971)

If your party nominated a (Negro/Black) for president, would you vote for him if he were qualified for the job? (Asked of non-Blacks only) (1972-1978)

Yes

1958	1963	1965	1967	1969	1971	1972	1975	1978
42%	51%	63%	57%	74%	75%	73%	82%	84%

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), 1958-1971; National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1972, 1975, 1978.

Laws against interracial marriage questions: Some states have laws making it a crime for a white person and a Negro to marry. Do you approve or disapprove of such laws? (1965, 1970)

Do you think there should be laws against marriages between (Negroes/Blacks) and whites? (Not asked of Blacks) (1972, 1977)

No laws against

1965[a]	1970[a]	1972	1977
49%	62%	61%	72%

Note: [a] No laws against = "disapprove."

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), 1965 and 1970; National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1972 and 1977.

Blacks right to live anywhere questions: If Negroes are not getting fair treatment in jobs and housing, the government should see to it that they do. (1956, 1960)

Which of these statements would you agree with: first, white people have a right to keep Blacks out of their neighborhoods if they want to, or second, Blacks have a right to live wherever they can afford to, just like white people. (1968, 1978)

Agree

1956	1960	1968[a]	1978[a]
70%	71%	63%	93%

Note: [a] Response categories were changed for comparison purposes so that "Blacks have a right to live" = agree.

Source: Surveys by Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Election Studies, 1956, 1960; Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, under the specific direction of Professors Angus Campbell and Howard Schuman, 1968; CBS News/New York *Times*, February 16-19, 1978.

SUPPORT FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES GROWS DRAMATICALLY

Questions: There are always some people whose ideas are considered bad or dangerous by other people. For instance, somebody who is against all churches and religion . . .

If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community against churches and religion, should he be allowed to speak, or not?

If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote against churches and religion should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?

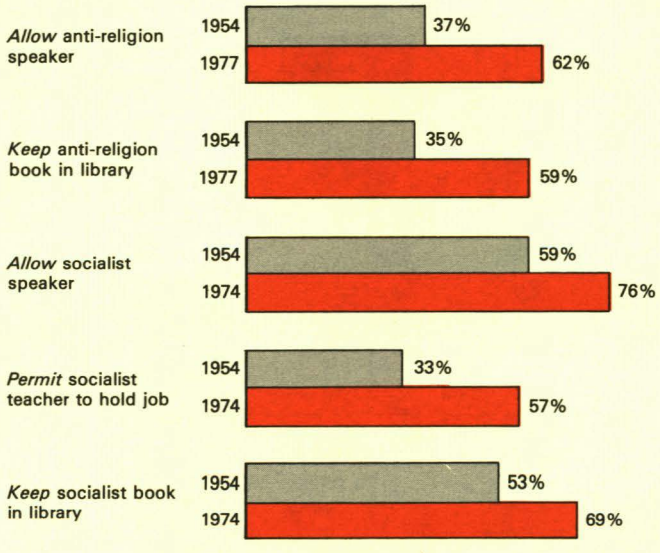
Or consider a person who favored government ownership of all the railroads and all big industries.

If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community favoring government ownership of all the railroads and big industries, should he be allowed to speak, or not?

Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university, or not?

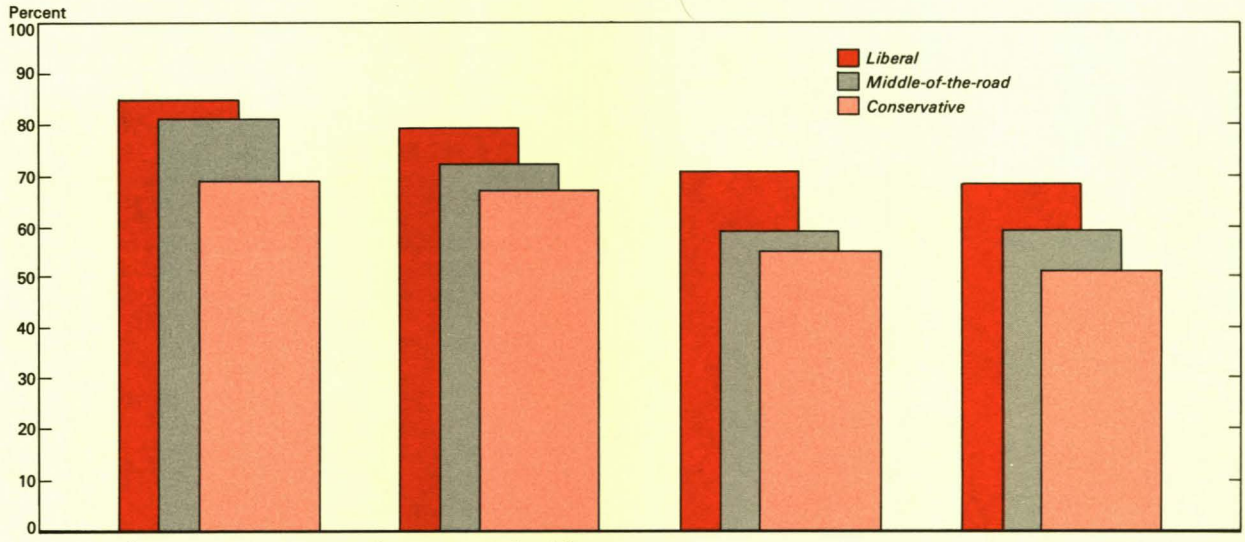
If some people in your community suggested a book he wrote favoring government ownership should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?

Source: Survey by Samuel A. Stouffer, in *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955); and National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, latest that of 1977.



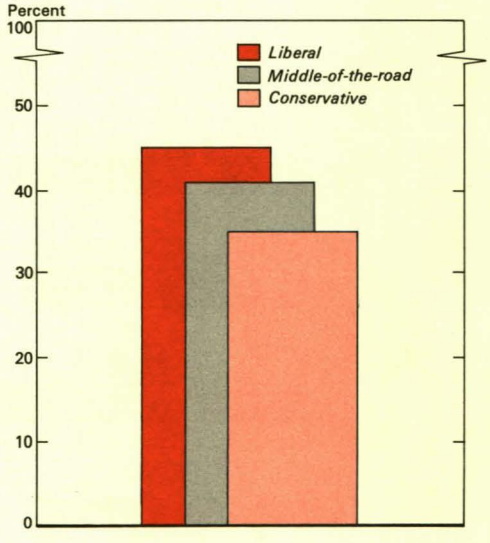
Do the Labels Mean Anything Anymore?

ON SOME SOCIAL ISSUES, MANY CONSERVATIVES ARE "LIBERAL" . . .



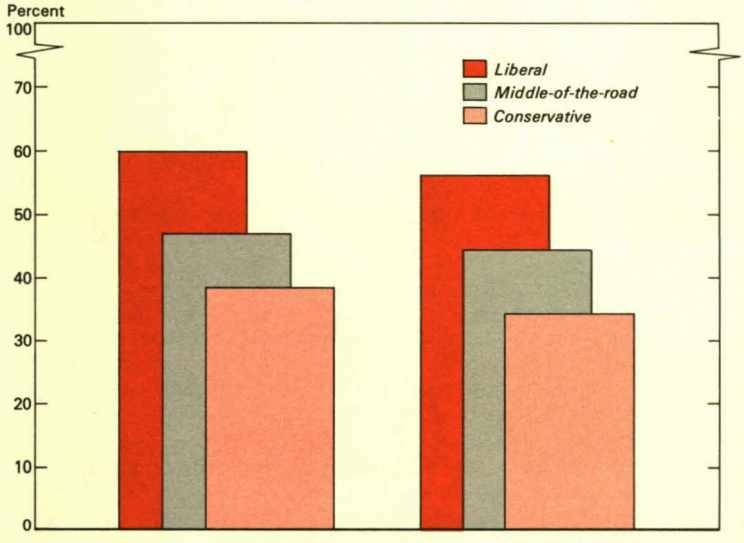
	Approve **sex education courses**	**Government *should* guarantee fair jobs/housing for Blacks**	***Should*** **restrict sale of handguns**	***Allow*** **sale of pornography to adults who want it**
Liberal	85%	79%	71%	68%
Middle-of-the-road	81	73	59	59
Conservative	69	67	55	51

. . . ON SOME, MANY LIBERALS ARE "CONSERVATIVE" . . .



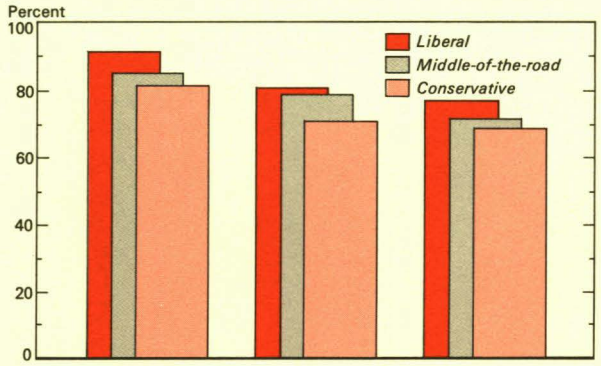
	Approve **quotas for minorities**
Liberal	45%
Middle-of-the-road	41
Conservative	35

. . . AND ON SOME, LIBERALS ARE "LIBERAL" AND CONSERVATIVES ARE "CONSERVATIVE"



	Government *should* help poor with abortions	***Shouldn't*** **restrict sale of marijuana**
Liberal	60%	56%
Middle-of-the-road	47	44
Conservative	38	34

IN ECONOMICS, SOME TRADITIONAL "LIBERAL" PROGRAMS DRAW ACROSS-THE-BOARD SUPPORT . . .



	Government *should* help with medical costs	Government *should* guarantee jobs for all	Government *should* set safety standards for factories
Liberal	91%	81%	77%
Middle-of-the-road	85	79	72
Conservative	82	71	69

Note: For comparison purposes, above data are only for respondents with an opinion.

Questions: Are you in favor of increasing government spending for domestic programs, reducing government spending, or keeping it about the same? (Graphed response: Increase spending)

The government should help a poor woman with her medical bills if she wants an abortion. (Graphed response: Agree)

The government in Washington ought to see to it that everybody who wants to work has a job. (Graphed response: Agree)

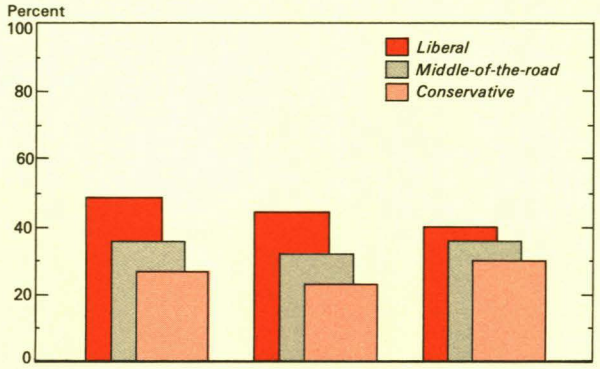
The government has gone too far in regulating business and interfering with the free enterprise system. (Graphed response: Disagree)

The government ought to help people to get doctors and hospital care at low cost. (Graphed response: Agree)

If Blacks are not getting fair treatment in jobs and housing, the government should see to it that they do. (Graphed response: Agree)

There were many government programs created in the 1960s to try and improve the conditions of poor people in this country. In general, do you think these programs made things better, made things worse, or do you think they didn't have much impact one way or the other? (Graphed response: Made things better)

. . . OTHERS FAIL TO RALLY EVEN LIBERALS



	Support government regulation of business	*Increase* spending for domestic programs	Great Society programs made things better
Liberal	49%	44%	40%
Middle-of-the-road	36	32	36
Conservative	27	23	30

What about marijuana? Should the government restrict the sale of marijuana if it thinks it's dangerous, or should it warn people and let them make their own decisions? (Graphed response: Let people decide)

What about pornography? Should government, at some level, restrict the sale of pornography to adults, or should adults be permitted to buy and read whatever they wish? (Graphed response: Allow adults)

What about handguns? Should government restrict the sale of handguns, or should adults be able to buy any gun they feel they need? (Graphed response: Restrict sale)

Should government set safety standards and require changes in job conditions, if it thinks they're harmful, or should each factory set its own rules? (Graphed response: Government set standards)

What about requiring a business to hire a certain number of minority workers. Would you approve or disapprove if it meant some white workers might not be hired? (Graphed response: Approve)

Do you approve or disapprove of schools giving courses in sex education? (Graphed response: Approve).

Source: Survey by CBS News/New York *Times*, January 8-12, 1978.

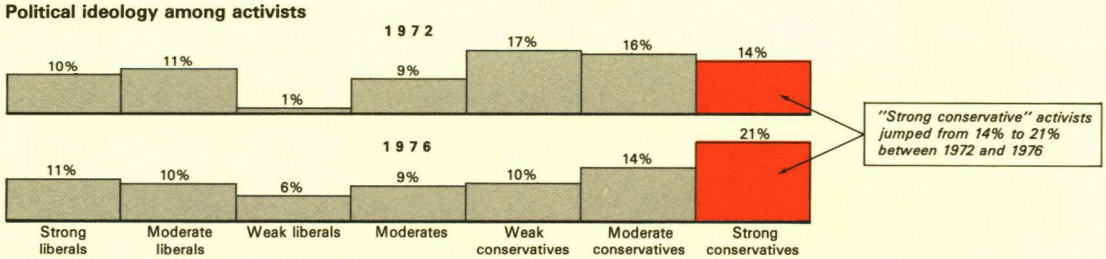
"MOVE TO THE RIGHT": TRACING THE RUMOR

If America *isn't* "moving to the right," how do we account for those die-hard rumors that it *is*? Teresa Levitin and Warren Miller of the University of Michigan's Center for Political Studies offer one possible explanation. While *most* Americans in the seventies have held steady in their political convictions, there *has* been a surge in hard-core conservatism among political activists—those who are able to make up in visibility what they lack in numbers.

Levitin and Miller point out that what is true for activists in general is true in spades for the Republican party: in 1972, 24% of Republican respondents declared themselves strong conservatives; by 1976, this figure had climbed to 32%. This could well explain the strong Reagan showing in the 1976 primaries, which generated reams of commentary about a "new conservatism."

At any rate, Levitin and Miller conclude, heightened conservative activism and the Reagan phenomenon do not a "move to the right" make.

Political ideology among activists



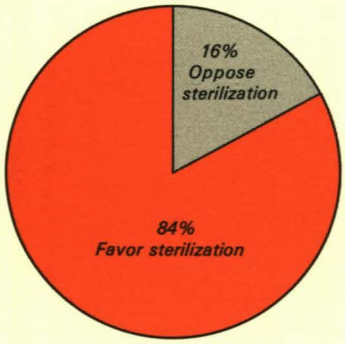
Note: Levitin and Miller divided conservatives and liberals into "strong," "moderate," and "weak" categories (in their paper, "identifying," "self-placed," and those with a "preference"), using an index composed from three of the Election Studies questions. "Activists" were those who talked to others and tried to persuade others to support their positions or candidates, in contrast to non-voters, or those who were merely voters.

Source: Teresa E. Levitin and Warren E. Miller, "Ideological Interpretations of National Elections: Problems in the Analysis of Change," paper presented at the 1978 American Political Science convention; based on data from the Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Election Studies, 1972 and 1976.

What We Used to Think

1937

Question: Do you favor sterilization of habitual criminals and the hopelessly insane?

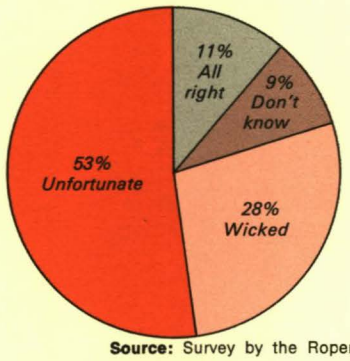


Source: Survey by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), January 13-18, 1937.

1939

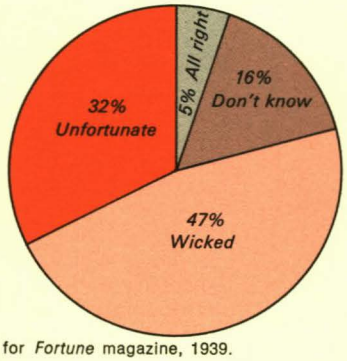
Question: Do you consider it all right, unfortunate, or wicked when young girls have sexual relations before marriage? (Asked of men only)

For women, men thought premarital sex was . . .



Question: Do you consider it all right, unfortunate, or wicked when young men have sexual relations before marriage? (Asked of women only)

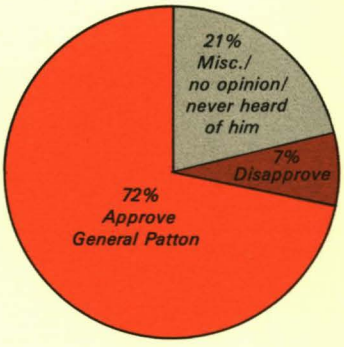
But for men, women thought it was . . .



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization for *Fortune* magazine, 1939.

1945

Question: What is your opinion of General George Patton?

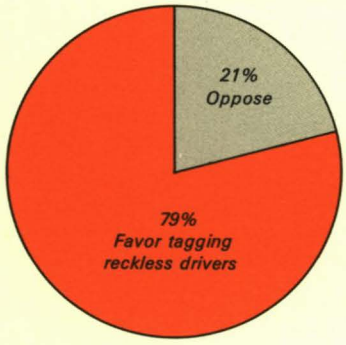


Note: 50% of respondents approved of General Patton without qualification; 22% gave him "qualified approval."

Source: Survey by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), October 19-24, 1945.

1951

Question: Would you favor or oppose requiring automobile drivers, convicted of careless driving, to put a red tag on their car windows for one year to show they are reckless drivers?



Source: Survey by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), December 9-14, 1951.

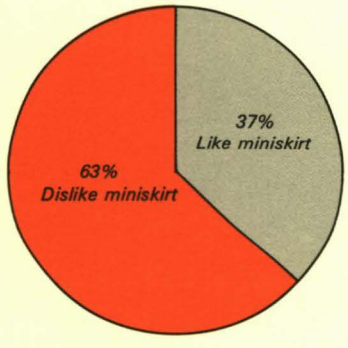
1965

Question: As you know, many boys today wear their hair very long. Do you think the schools should require boys to keep their hair cut short?

Source: Survey by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), September 16-21, 1965.

1967

Question: Have you heard or read about the "miniskirt"? [95% answered "yes," and were asked:] Do you like or dislike this new style?



Source: Survey by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), May 11-16, 1967.

ELECTIONS '78: FOUR PERSPECTIVES

CARTER: 1978's NON-ISSUE

RICHARD M. SCAMMON

Of all the things this November's elections may be, a referendum on the presidency of Jimmy Carter they are most certainly not. If, indeed, the coming Democratic victories this fall *were* to be so considered, the survey research business would go bankrupt by Thanksgiving Day and the nation's pollsters would be looking for new jobs for 1979.

What the voting this fall will do is reaffirm that in the House races, but rather less so in the campaigns for state houses and U.S. Senate seats, incumbency has become the new touchstone for success. What the balloting will also do is to underline the non-national character of much of America's voting pattern . . . not so much non-ideological as multi-ideological, with the incumbent most often having (or soon acquiring) the ideological shadings of his constituency. Again we will see the truth of the adage that in running for president you can't say one thing in Jackson, Michigan, and something different in Jackson, Mississippi, while that is just exactly what a party nominee does in running for Congress.

As to the mathematics, the consensus for the pundits seems to run around fifteen to twenty-five Republican gains in the House, a draw in the Senate or perhaps even a net Democratic gain, and the same for the state house races with perhaps a net Republican gain. In short, pretty much the "mixture as before." The older dogma of automatic—and frequently heavy—losses by the party in charge of the White House seems to have gone by the board in an era of incumbent strength and weakened party identification.

Hugging the Middle of the Road

Gallup and Harris polling and the participation in primary votes so far this year all tend to support a continuing Democratic predominance, though certainly with less of any "liberal" or "conservative" tinge to that label. The Democratic candidates apparently recognize that on many public issues of the day there seems to be a continuing, even massive ambivalence. People want health insurance, for example, but they also want tax cuts and a lowered cost of government.

Most candidates running in any save the most certain districts are trying their best to stay close to the middle of the road. Democrats were able in 1970 to finesse the law-and-order theme of many Republicans by themselves riding in squad cars, going all out in support of local police and the like. So, in 1978, the anticipated Republican bonanza from the observable tax revolt has fizzled out. In their campaigns, many Democrats have made it clear they can be just as anti-tax as Republicans.

Naturally, the lack of discipline within American political parties and the inability of the national leadership (if any) to impose its will reinforces the tendency of candidates to run independently. The candidates owe their very place on the ballot to the voters in their local party primary, and their campaign funds depend more on their own local and interest group efforts than upon national party coffers.

So, when the results are tallied and the gains and losses counted, one should be skeptical of translating party changes into changes in the nation's ideological leanings. The more Democrats elected, the more "liberal"—by a bit; the more Republicans, the more to the right—by a bit. But neither move will be more than a tendency, and no one knows how long it will last.

In fact, each member of Congress is now so closely tuned in to his district that you may well find more movement in the thinking of Congress *between* elections than can be toted up in seats won and lost *at* the elections. With the substantial victories of Democrats

in the House of Representatives in the 1974 elections, for instance, a considerable cut in the military appropriations might have been anticipated; that it didn't occur should tell us to be on guard in interpreting the results of off-year elections.

Equally, with the new Carter administration in the White House, many labor leaders expected smooth sailing for their programs in a Democratic Congress, to be followed by pleasant signing ceremonies in the veto-free Democratic White House. But on issue after issue, there has been stalemate at best, defeat at worst. The temper of the House has changed, as it has done most recently on taxes.

The American Congress seems to this writer to be much closer to the people than most other national legislatures, screened as those other bodies are from the popular will by the apparatus and tight ideological discipline of their political parties. Some fear that American representatives may be even *too* close, but however close they may be, November won't change their special regard for their voters back home. ☑

ELECTIONS '78: FOUR PERSPECTIVES

THE INCUMBENCY FACTOR

MORRIS P. FIORINA

Scholars and practitioners alike agree that the electoral importance of incumbency has grown significantly in the past two decades. But just what does that observation mean? Are incumbent congressmen more successful at the polls because of growing resource advantages, as their challengers and Common Cause charge? Or does electoral success result naturally from improved performance by individual congressmen, as the latter contend? Or is there something more?

Academic research is not yet conclusive. Although incumbents have access to an impressive public relations apparatus, it is not clear that improved electoral showings relate in any systematic way to the use of that apparatus. I have come to believe that the advantage of incumbency is bound up in two long-term trends in American politics—related trends whose continued workings will hold the loss of Democratic seats to a minimum in 1978.

The Changing Basis of Congressional Voting

In the post-Eisenhower era and accelerating since the mid-sixties, the basis of congressional voting has shifted. As late as 1958, congressional votes could be characterized as overwhelmingly party-line votes. Consequently, they were broadly reflective of the general policy differences which divided the parties. As the federal role has expanded, however, and federal programs have come to touch the lives of countless citizens, the relationship of a congressman to his constituency has changed. Increasingly, congressmen are elected as individuals, not as members of a party, and increasingly they are elected as nonpartisan, nonideological providers of constituency services. Congressmen have always done casework, of course, but the expanded federal role has vastly increased the demand for such services. Recent Democratic classes, in particular, have responded with diligence that does much to ensure reelection. Similarly, the pork barrel has a long history, but it has undergone a major expansion in recent years. One need take no position on the merits of various programs to recognize that congressmen have structured them so as to provide tangible (that is, politically visible) benefits to their districts.

In sum, one important source of the incumbency advantage is the ability of the incumbent to run on a basis different from and more favorable than the challenger's. The former runs as a proven ombudsman and supplier of particularized benefits, a known and noncontroversial quantity. The challenger usually runs on the issues and thereby adds controversy to the uncertainty he already embodies. Examine the campaign literature which comes to your door this month. I wager you will find that the only issues featured in the incumbent's literature are those which split the district 70-30 or worse. The literature of the challenger, in contrast, often contains a "laundry list" of controversial policy pledges compiled by well-meaning volunteers.

The repeated puzzling findings that people give high marks to their own congressman but low scores to Congress itself is really not so puzzling. The individuals perform quite effectively as caseworkers and program brokers, avoiding responsibility for divisive policy decisions. But some disembodied entity called "Congress" takes the blame for failure to adopt an energy policy, to reform a "disgraceful tax system," or to save the cities. When it comes to rewriting the Hatch Act, arms for Turkey, three-martini lunches and so forth, the congressman is merely one vote of 435, not counting the Senate and president. But when it comes to procuring water treatment plants, parks, mass transit study grants and assorted training programs, not to mention problems with social security, veterans benefits and a variety of other transfers, the congressman appears to be a benevolent, nonpartisan power.

The Decline of Party

A second trend that may be both cause and consequence of the growing importance of incumbency has been the decline of party loyalties. Fewer citizens feel identified with a party today, and even those who do are less attached than a generation ago. As these traditional anchors weaken, incumbents enjoy expanded opportunities to emphasize constituency service activities rather than party ties. Moreover, by running as a non-

partisan provider of constituency services, the incumbent gives pause to those who might oppose him on party grounds alone. In all but a handful of districts, controversies over the Hatch Act, arms for Turkey, three-martini lunches—the entire party program—are abstractions; water treatment plants, government contracts, and federal checks are not.

There is another aspect of the decline of party which is less often recognized: organizational decline. A generation ago incumbents were much more closely tied to local party organizations than today. The congressional campaign was one of many funded and operated by the organization, and because incumbents depended on the local party, at least some degree of collective responsibility existed. Moreover, in most districts the challenger had a pre-existing base of support —money, workers, and loyal party voters. In fact, the organization would usually find the challenger.

What have we now? While the local party organizations have declined, we have seen the rise of 535 minimachines headquartered on Capitol Hill. Each member of the House is entitled to eighteen personal staff members, and the size of Senate staffs is legendary. These staffs conduct permanent campaigns: they manage public relations, gather political intelligence, facilitate constituency services, and ultimately rotate in and out of the official campaign apparatus. Challengers, meanwhile, have no natural replacement for the party organization. Their need for resources (especially money) has increased just as their traditional source of supply has dried up.

Again, the organizational decline acts as both cause and consequence. As the parties atrophied, incumbents were forced to rely more on their own efforts (they were in a better position than challengers to provide themselves with needed resources). And, as they increasingly went their own way, they detracted still more from the party's *raison d'être*. Even if incumbents could no more than hold their own during the transition from party to personal organizations, their electoral prospects would brighten because challengers could not stay even. The decline of party leaves the challenger standing alone.

Several years ago when I first began to develop my ideas on incumbency, I worried that these trends would create an irresponsible Congress—one in which the individuals were not held electorally accountable for their policy stands. Panic over Proposition 13, however, suggests that today's congressmen have their noses to the wind as much as ever. And the current "lower our expectations—cheap is beautiful" sentiment is only the most graphic example of congressional responsiveness to trends in popular sentiment.

Why should entrenched incumbents continue to follow public opinion so closely? The answer may be that they are not so entrenched as they seem. The nature of safe seats has changed; seats are no longer safe for a party, but for an individual. And whereas party affiliations were once relatively stable and presumably reflected an even more stable underlying ideological division, the support of today—based on favors and district projects—is more ephemeral (recall Alben Barkley's "What have you done for me lately?" tale). Perhaps incumbents show continued sensitivity to popular opinion because they sense an underlying electoral volatility that is kept in check only by their persistent, diligent efforts.

Electoral Prospects for 1978

How big a loss will the Democratic majority incur in this election? My colleague, Ed Tufte, went on record (prior to the President's success at Camp David) as predicting a loss of twenty to forty seats with a "best guess" of twenty-six. Tufte's forecasting model, which has been the subject of widespread comment, predicts the midterm vote loss from data on perceptions of presidential performance and short-term growth in real income. I admire Tufte for standing behind his model, but believe his prediction will be wide of the mark this fall. Tufte's model is based on the period 1938-1974 and presumes that the underlying structure of congressional elections has remained stable during that period. As I've argued, however, important changes have occurred.

Given the decline of party and the contemporary emphasis on nonprogrammatic constituency service, today's incumbents find it easy to disassociate themselves from an unpopular president. Moreover, my own research on the economic factor leads me to conclude that it has lost much of its significance in congressional elections (though not in presidential elections!).

The main source of uncertainty in this election stems from the large number of open seats, two-thirds of which are now occupied by Democrats. The Republicans finally have learned not to attack the strongest members of the opposition—the young, ambitious, constituency servicers—but to concentrate instead on the open seats and a few out-of-touch or scandal-tinged seniors. They will score some gains, but probably less than half what Tufte predicts. Ten seats is a good bet, whatever may happen to Carter and the inflation rate.

Post-1978 Policy Prospects

Looking beyond this fall, the 96th Congress will have some sixty new faces but a partisan composition much like the 95th. On the basis of past research, I would expect a continuity of policy, but the congressional past is now a chancy predictor of the congressional future. It is difficult to predict specific trends in popular sentiment. At the moment, resentment of government rides high and may continue to do so as California implements Proposition 13 without suffering the predicted dire consequences. If so, we will continue to hear Democratic representatives making fiscally conservative noises.

It is considerably safer to predict a continuation

of several broad trends we have observed in the last several Congresses. Individual members will continue to service their districts faithfully and to articulate the interests of their districts in debate, proposed amendments, and recorded votes. They will be less faithful in looking at the interests of the nation, in looking to the long term, and in supporting what will work as opposed to what looks good to their personal constituencies. Those characteristics are inherent in our electoral system, and unfortunately current trends allow them free rein in today's Congresses. ☑

ELECTIONS '78: FOUR PERSPECTIVES

THE "ECONOMIC SHOCK WAVES": STILL TWO YEARS FROM WASHINGTON?

RICHARD J. WHALEN

The after-shocks of California's two-to-one vote for Proposition 13, an electoral earthquake of the first magnitude, continue to be felt across the country. Twenty other states will pose similar tax-limitation questions to their citizens in referenda this fall. Meanwhile, double-digit inflation cuts deeper into household budgets and stirs consumer resentment. *Obviously*, the "economic issue" will be pivotal in many congressional and state-level contests this year.

Or will it? For a nation supposedly tormented by inflation and popular anxiety over a recession said to be lurking around the corner, sentiment from Main Street to Wall Street has been surprisingly bullish, at least on near-term opportunities to make a buck. Unrest among farmers has declined as livestock and commodity prices have risen. Small businessmen are worrying about sales—and increasing their inventories. Larger-scale enterprises are beginning to commit long-delayed capital outlays for new plant equipment. The stock market enjoyed a brisk summer rally, discounting the evident bad news to feast upon the bountiful vistas across the near-term valley.

In short, there are few signs that voters this fall are prepared to blame the incumbents in Washington for the state of the U.S. economy. They *are* beginning, however, to question whether they need or want all the costly government they are paying for. Thus, while dissatisfaction has not yet crystallized into a major 1978 issue, it could become the pivotal concern in 1980.

The "Economic Issue"

If there is an "economic issue" influencing this year's mid-term elections, it is not easy to define it. To be sure, there *is* a widespread popular uprising against burdensome taxes that have escalated sharply in recent years, such as real estate taxes that must be paid once or twice a year in cash. But there is not yet a similar grassroots "revolt" against the distant federal government in Washington, its massive spending and relatively painless federal withholding taxes—although that is where the uprising ultimately leads.

Last April, the Gallup poll reported that 54 percent of those surveyed saw inflation as the nation's most important problem, one of the highest levels ever recorded. At the same time, the voters express steadily dwindling confidence that the federal government can achieve *any* of its stated economic goals, including control of inflation. In May, only 12 percent of those polled by Gallup believed the government could succeed in its economic policy, compared with 32 percent early in 1977 and substantially higher confidence levels in the preceding decade.

This steep decline in public confidence in Washington's economic policies represents something more than an adverse judgment of the Carter administration, the Congress and the evident failure of orthodox neo-Keynesian economics. Such deep-seated pessimism may actually betray conscious public rejection of an effective anti-inflation policy because the short-term costs of that policy are unacceptable.

In testimony late last June before the Congressional Joint Economic Committee, Jay Schmiedeskamp, the senior economist-pollster of the Gallup organization, analyzed the generalized gloom of consumers and said it has "the potential for causing a sharp fall in consumer spending, if consumers should get the idea that their government is trying to slow down the economy in order to slow down inflation." If the Federal Reserve Board continued to boost interest rates, he warned, the American people would regard the tightening of credit as a "signal" to batten down the hatches for an approaching recession.

So it appears that strong majority concern over high inflation does not necessarily translate into a comparable majority in support of political-economic measures likely to bring this supposed "priority" problem under control. On the contrary, it appears that consumer-voters would prefer to extend the status quo, as unsatisfactory as it is, if the alternative is government-induced recession.

The reality of the American political economy is vastly more complicated than conventional rhetoric about jobs, prices and taxes. Unfortunately, it is too complex for the economically untutored news media to comprehend, much less communicate essential trends in 30-second bursts on television. The media's overemphasis on a single dubious statistic—whether it is the unemployment rate or the consumer price index—to encapsule the economy's short-term performance reveals the news analysts' near-total helplessness before

the mind-boggling reality of a $2 trillion economy. It is even more unfortunate that politicians and voters have been conditioned to look to the professional economists to enlighten them on what's actually happening in the economy. All that many professionals can offer are pseudo-scientific, computerized econometric "models" that falsify developments in the untidy real world of human beings and their subtle motives.

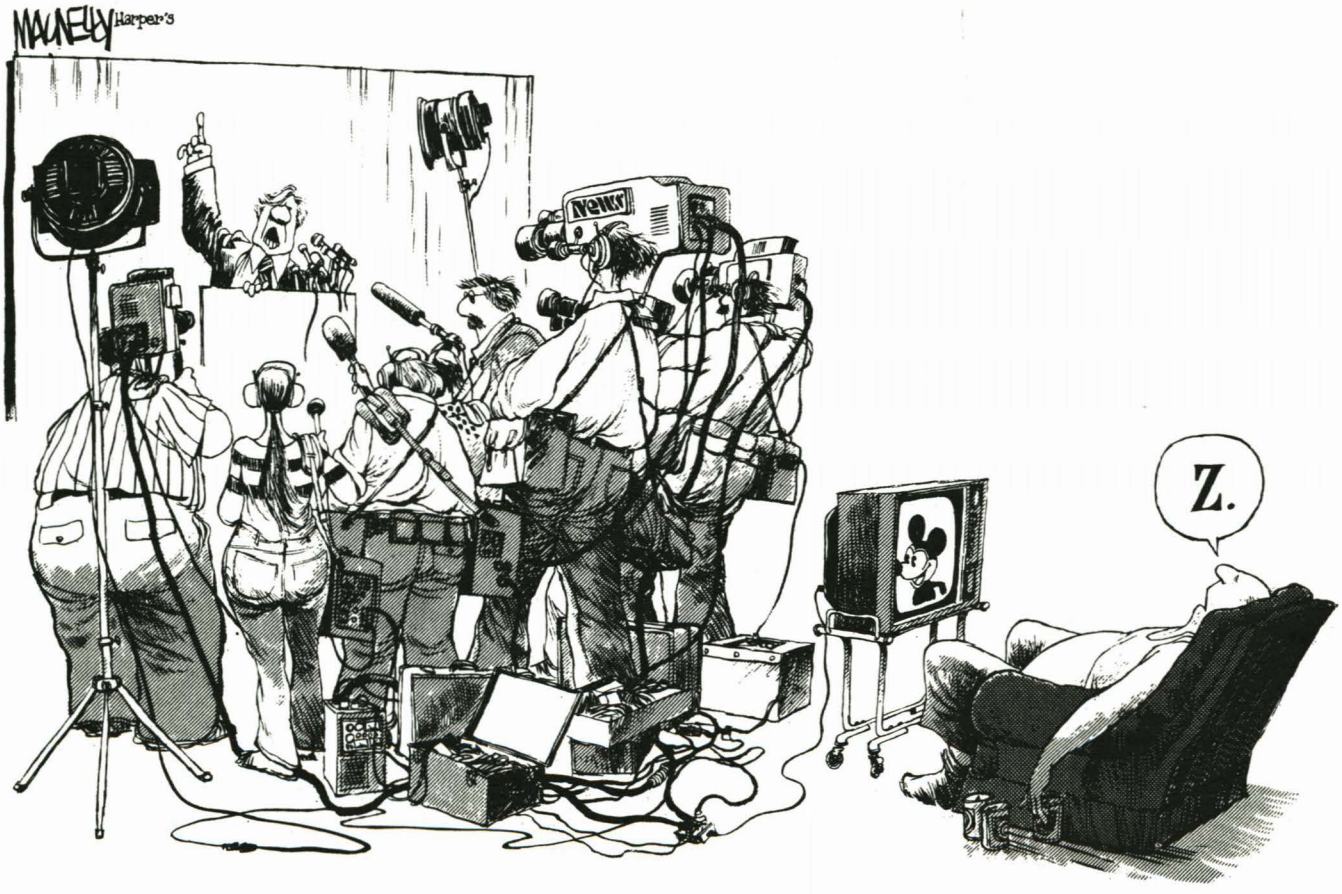
It is abundantly clear, even to observers peering around computers, that the American voters, like the President they elected in 1976, often express a desire for things that are not merely inconsistent but flatly contradictory—for example, reduced federal taxes *and* national health insurance. Politicians, behaving rationally in the face of the democratic imperative to please most of the people most of the time, do their best to resolve these contradictions or at least leave them unchallenged.

As a result, the electorate in a democracy such as ours gradually comes to resemble a spoiled child who is never corrected or chastised, and who consequently learns to have disrespect verging on contempt for those in presumed authority who are afraid to say "No." The child-citizen knows very well that not all desires are feasible, affordable or even genuine. But why not play along with Big Daddy government while the favors keep flowing? That sentiment has prevailed for a good number of years.

What may be happening now, however, is that increasing numbers of taxpayers are attempting to drop out of this game because it no longer pays off for them. There is no single, overriding "economic issue" facing the voters—not even inflation. Instead, the individual voter-consumer is assessing the performance and prospects of local, regional and national economies, calculating the impact of these perceived trends on his/her household's monthly cash-flow and overall financial condition, and making a rational cost-benefit analysis of that household's trade-offs between taxes paid and government services and benefits received. For each of the nation's 74 million households, that bottom line is different, but for more and more, it has the same ultimate meaning: government taxes now cost more than they're worth. Hence, the makings of a tax rebellion.

In the past decade, the broad-based welfare state created by President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society legislation has come of age, and its costs and benefits alike are extravagant. Precisely because the federal government now generously bestows various forms of welfare on millions of middle-class Americans, the other middle-class Americans inescapably find their combined income and social security tax bills are soaring. Escalating inflation, initially caused by expanding government deficit spending and borrowing from the banking system (technically called "monetizing debt"), intensifies the pressures on middle-income taxpayers by pushing them into higher brackets.

In an ideal socialist state, we might all live well by



taking in each other's wash. Something like this fantasy is being enacted with the runaway growth of federal "transfer payments"—pensions, welfare, food stamps, and other cash subsidies. Since the early 1960s, the share of national income redistributed from the producing to the nonproducing elements of the population has more than doubled, to around 14 percent, and the trend is powerfully upward. As the liberal cliché has it, priorities have shifted. In 1976, transfer payments accounted for 33.8 percent of all federal expenditures, compared with 32.4 percent for national defense. By the fourth quarter of 1977, transfer payments comprised 39.8 percent of total federal outlays, while national defense had dwindled to 22 percent.

As transfer payments rocket toward 50 percent of all federal spending, vast fiscal constituencies are becoming organized in their support, and national income is being redistributed from large metropolitan areas in the Northern states to smaller towns and cities in the Sun Belt (for example, about 80 percent of all military pensions are paid to recipients in the Southern and Western states). But easily the most insidious effect is that because these rapidly growing payments usually include some form of cost of living ("indexing") adjustment, they accentuate the inflationary bias of the entire economy and impose an even larger relative burden of federal and state taxes on earned income. The U.S. political economy is being transformed into hostile camps of taxpayers and recipients.

Consider these dramatically contrasting statistics: between 1970 and 1975, transfer payments accounted for 50 percent of per capita personal income growth in stagnant St. Louis (vs. only 27.3 percent from private sector wages), while in booming Houston private wages accounted for 77.3 percent of personal income gains and transfer payments for only 8.2 percent.

Are wage-earners and taxpayers simply victims of government-engineered inflation? No, as a matter of fact, many of them also send their wash out. As economic analyst Robert J. Samuelson recently wrote in the *National Journal:* ". . . the distasteful reality (is) that any effective anti-inflation policy must ultimately aim at wages, not prices. Wages constitute more than half of all business costs. Manufacturing profits (before taxes) are only eight to ten cents of each dollar of final sales. Raise wages 8 percent, and prices surely follow. . . . Consequently, there is a sort of conspiracy of silence, among both Democrats and Republicans, about the basic engine of inflation, which is the persistent rise in wages, aimed at raising living standards and catching up with past inflation. . . . There is no natural anti-inflation constituency. . . ."

Where is the Anti-Inflation Army?

Surely, if the Census Bureau's data reflect political-economic realities, such a constituency *ought* to be emerging. The latest income figures show the typical family on an inflationary treadmill: since 1970, median family income, adjusted for inflation, has risen only 4 percent. By contrast, in the decade between 1960 and 1970—*before* the era of exploding transfer payments and spiralling inflation and taxes—that income increased by 34 percent.

While private wages are increasingly "indexed," especially in heavily unionized sectors of the economy, the favored middle-class tactic for keeping ahead of inflation has been for the wife to return to work. Between 1950 and 1976, the proportion of married women in the labor force with school-age children *tripled.* Most of these younger women are not working in order to be "liberated": their families just can't make it on a single paycheck.

But with roughly one-half of adult women currently in the paid labor force—the highest proportion in U.S. history—this tactic for coping with inflation is approaching its limits, unless working wives begin to imitate their husbands and "moonlight" in the so-called subterranean, cash-only economy. This untaxed economy may have an unreported GNP of around $200 billion, according to expert estimates. But moonlighting, too, is a tactic of desperation. A household whose working adults are forced to extend themselves across several jobs is, quite simply, over-extended.

More and more middle-class Americans feel vulnerable because of the threat they see in the public sector's open-ended tax claims on their incomes. As a starter, they are taking aim not at Washington but at closer targets—their own state and local governments. It is here that most voter resentment may surface this fall. Polls reveal widespread belief that wasteful spending can be cut sharply without impairing vital services, a belief supported by the early post-Proposition 13 experience of California. State and local units of government can spend only what they are able to raise in taxes and through borrowing. If their revenues are reduced, they are bound to retrench because they cannot finance themselves by printing money and causing inflation.

Why Washington Should Be Next

The printing press belongs to Washington alone—and therefore the tax revolt now stirring at the grass roots must ultimately aim at the source of the unfolding inflationary crisis. Voters will, humanly, continue to temporize, for they understand well enough, without being Ph.D. economists, the causal relationship linking their over-taxed and inflation-rotted paychecks and, say, their elderly parents' increasing social security checks and generous medical-coverage reimbursements. No one begrudges Grandma's tiny slice of the national income pie, but there are a great many grandmothers, the pie is no longer expanding as it did in the mid-1960s, and Grandma's claim to a "decent" living standard inevitably clashes and competes with the economic counterclaims of others, including her own children and grandchildren.

Someone's expectations and living standards must be sacrificed. Accelerating inflation ultimately forces such cruel questions of income redistribution to be faced and dealt with. Last May, in hearings before the Senate Committee on Banking and Finance, the chairman, Senator William Proxmire (D-Wisc.), in his typically blunt-spoken way, anticipated the future fiscal battleground, declaring: "In my state, I figure there are 600,000 voters that receive Social Security. Can you imagine a Senator or Congressman under these circumstances saying, we are going to repudiate that high a proportion of the electorate? *No!* Furthermore, we have the capacity under the Constitution, the Congress does, to coin money, as well as regulate the value thereof. And therefore we have the power to provide that money."

"*And we are going to do it. It may not be worth anything when the recipient gets it, but he is going to get his benefits paid.*" (Italics added.)

For obvious reasons, most Americans would rather avoid this fundamental "economic issue," and they may well succeed in deferring it beyond the November elections. But the growing popularity of expedient tax-limitation is merely the prelude to an unavoidable and agonizing future ordeal of *spending*-reduction.

This fall may be the last opportunity for every politician to don a white hat and talk about tax cuts—the fiscal equivalent of a "free lunch." By 1980, the fate of Grandma and the dollar alike could be urgently before us. ☑

ELECTIONS '78: FOUR PERSPECTIVES

ETHNICS: A DEMOCRATIC STRONGHOLD?

MARK A. SIEGEL

The Republican National Committee has apparently seen the light of day and under the pragmatic leadership of Chairman Bill Brock is making a concerted effort to court ethnic and constituent Democrats who have been alienated by President Carter at one time or another over the past two years. Whether the Republicans can succeed in 1978—or more significantly, in 1980—has become one of the more interesting questions on the political horizon.

The most clear-cut Republican effort is its ambitious and expensive campaign to woo the Jewish vote, based on Jewish disenchantment with Carter's Mideast policies and particularly Jewish anger prior to the Mideast summit. Six full-time Republican staffers, with an annual budget of $150,000, are conducting the drive, visibly aided by Brock and presidential hopeful Robert Dole. While their campaign suddenly became problematic after Camp David, the Republicans seem to be pressing ahead anyway.

Similar efforts by the RNC are also under way in the Black community, where once again new staff members have been brought on board and a number of overtures have been made. Black leader Jesse Jackson, who feels that Black influence has eroded within the Democratic party, symbolized the GOP campaign by serving as the keynote speaker at a gathering of the Republican National Committee earlier this year. The Republicans are also seeking to make inroads into the Greek American community (alienated over the Carter initiative to end the arms embargo against Turkey), the Hungarian community (still shaken by the return of the Crown of St. Stephen to the communist government of Hungary), and into the Catholic community (angered by Carter's blockage of tuition tax credits for parochial education). In addition, the GOP has targeted several farm states where there is overt hostility to the President.

The possibility of success in all of these undertakings is supported by Louis Harris, who states in his August 1978 report that "the general decline in party loyalties that cut back the Republican base to 18 percent in 1974 is now seriously eroding Democratic strength. The first concrete effects of this may well be found in races for state legislatures and the Congress . . . ." Harris points to the drop of self-identified Democrats among Black Americans from 80 percent in 1976 to 66 percent in 1978 to substantiate his hypothesis.

A major presidential opportunity does indeed exist for Republican gains among ethnic and constituent groups in 1980, if the Democratic candidate is Jimmy Carter and if the Republican national candidates embrace the causes that have split Carter from many of his early supporters. Old loyalties to the Democratic party are still there, but they could be overridden in appropriate circumstances. If the issues are clearly polarized in 1980, with the Democratic platform supporting the Carter policies that have caused so much ethnic and constituent alienation while the GOP candidates and their platform embrace the positions of various ethnic and Democratic constituency groups, the stage could well be set for a party realignment in 1980.

The Democratic Reservoir

Nonetheless, I believe a compelling case can be made that the Republicans are wrong in thinking they can translate ethnic dissatisfaction with the President into election victories this fall. There are just too many powerful forces moving in the other direction.

First, as the Republicans themselves recognize, the Democratic party commands inordinate strength within most constituent and ethnic communities in the United States. An itemized listing of constituent (that is, farm, labor, urban) and ethnic (that is, Black, Irish, Italian,

Jewish, Greek, Spanish) blocs defines the very essence of the Democratic coalition in America, one that stretches back to Franklin Roosevelt. That coalition, if cohesive, is not only a potent force, but a winning force. And if it was not responsible for the nomination of Jimmy Carter, it certainly was responsible for his election.

Table 1

PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND VOTE IN 1976 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Group	U.S. population	Party identification: Percent Dem.	Percent Rep.	Percent Ind.	1976 Carter vote
Jewish	6,000,000	60%	6%	34%	68%
Irish	12,200,000	41	20	36	55
Italian	7,100,000	45	17	39	55
Greek	430,000	48	24	29	na
Hungarian	600,000	48	13	39	na
Blacks	24,700,000	71	8	21	83
Hispanic	10,500,000	69	5	26	na
Union	21,000,000	53	14	33	62

Source: The population numbers are based on 1976 U.S. Census estimates; party identifications are based on NORC studies, 1972-1978; the 1976 Carter vote is based on the 1976 CBS Election Day Survey (the Irish and Italian vote is devised from the CBS figure for "Catholic" ethnics).

Members of the groups listed in Table 1 often tend to live in fairly concentrated communities, and because of their size, make up a significant bloc of the electorate in scores of congressional districts across the country. According to census data, there are now 179 congressional districts where members of such groups comprise over 30 percent of the population; 129 of these represent ethnic concentrations and 50 represent urban groupings. The important political point is that in these 179 districts, 144 seats are now held by Democrats and 35 by Republicans. Additionally, Democrats usually win these 144 seats by such overwhelming margins that they are no longer competitive. The vote for Democratic congressional candidates in these districts in 1976 illustrates the point:

Democratic vote	*Number of districts*
Less than 55%	17
56-60%	13
61-65%	13
Over 65%	101 (!)

Clearly, then, ethnic America has become a huge reservoir for the Democratic party on the congressional level. As the 1978 election approaches, most of the Democratic incumbents continue to have an almost invincible hold and, in some cases, they face no Republican opposition at all. The RNC ethnic grab bag strategy for 1978 thus seems doomed from the outset.

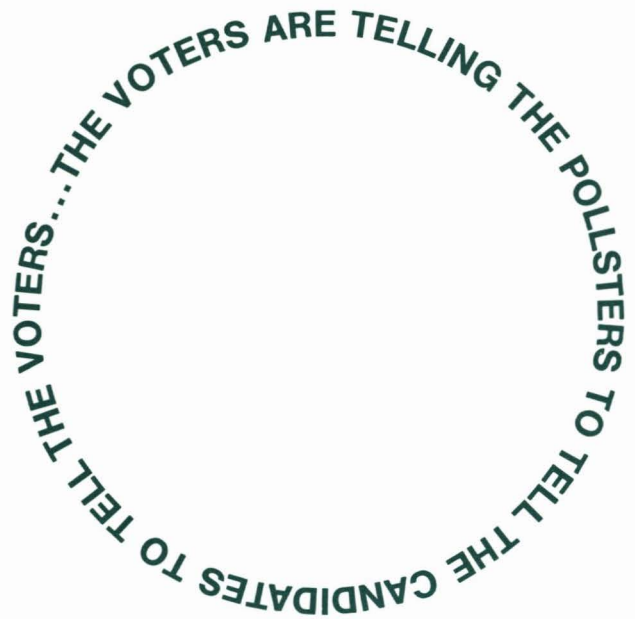
Furthermore, even if the President were in trouble in many of these districts, there is no evidence to suggest that the Democratic incumbents are. Indeed, districts with large Jewish populations are generally represented by congressmen and women, all Democrats, who had strongly and outspokenly opposed Carter's arms sales policies. Districts with heavy Greek concentrations produced a set of congressmen who voted down the line against the President's plan to lift the arms embargo against Turkey. Members of Congress from districts with high Catholic concentrations led the fight for tuition tax credits for parochial education, fighting the administration every inch of the way. And it was Mary Rose Oakar, a Democratic congresswoman from Ohio, who led the American protest against returning the Crown of St. Stephen. Unlike the President, the Democratic congressmen and women from these districts almost uniformly stood firm for the specific interests of their constituents and thus remain seemingly invulnerable on those issues.

The 1976 election also indicates that Democratic members of Congress from these ethnic districts have a base that is independent of the White House: in only 11 of the 144 districts did Carter manage to win more votes than the Democratic congressional candidate, and almost all 11 were in his native South. In fact, the average difference between Carter and the Democratic candidate was an astounding 15.8 percent. Such margins make it easy for Democrats to campaign independently in 1978.

Finally, it should be noted that on two of the most controversial issues this year in Congress—the Middle East arms sale and the Turkish embargo—the President was sustained in Congress not by the Democratic party, but rather by "the loyal opposition." On the arms sale, Democratic senators rejected the President's policies by a vote of 33 to 28, while Republican senators sustained him by an overwhelming 26 to 11. The same pattern of Republican support helped the President win necessary congressional support for lifting the Turkish arms embargo. Republicans campaigning in Jewish and Greek communities this fall are thus carrying some very heavy baggage.

These votes speak for themselves, as do scores of other votes in the 95th Congress showing that Democrats continue to be more supportive of the aspirations of Black Americans than do Republicans. Jesse Jackson may speak to and work with the RNC, and Bill Brock may labor mightily as party chairman, but little will change the clear fact that in terms of economic and social interest, a rational Black electorate will continue to vote its self-interest—in other words, it will continue to vote Democratic.

Until the Republican party and its candidates offer a clear alternative on issues of high intensity to ethnic and constituent communities, they will lose any opportunity for significant congressional gains there. Rhetoric alone will not win voters disaffected with Carter; it will take action—and specifically, key legislative votes —to follow through on Brock's dream. The 95th Congress, like nearly all Congresses since 1932, has shown that the self-interest of major ethnic and constituency groups remains Democratic. And so will their votes in November. ☑



Adam Clymer

The polls are telling the consultants to tell the candidates that voters this year are very, very upset about inflation, and very upset about taxes. But they are also telling them the electorate distrusts anybody's solutions and many distrust simple solutions the most.

So how's a consultant to earn a fee? Give classes in canvassing? More likely, he will tell his candidate that even though it's important to sound concerned about inflation and taxes, the candidate cannot expect to win on that issue because his opponent will be against them, too. Thus, the campaign staff must look elsewhere through printouts for the key subject that can turn a vulnerable portion of the electorate around. But no adviser worth a fee this fall is failing to tell his candidate that even if inflation offers no panaceas for election, the polls are showing that it is a matter of profound concern for the voters.

John Gorman of *Cambridge Survey Report* tells of a continual series of national polls asking respondents to list the two most important problems before the nation. Inflation has hung steadily in the mid-thirties for a couple of years, and in January it was cited by 35 percent of those who answered. Then in early summer it shot up to 54 percent. It is not just Gorman (and partner Pat Caddell) or their Democratic clients who are hearing that sort of thing. Wilma Goldstein, associate campaign director at the Republican Congressional Committee, has been seeing polls for more than 100 Republican candidates for the House and finds a steady run of 50 and 60 percent citations of inflation as the single most important problem before the nation. Robert M. Teeter of Market Opinion Research in Detroit tells his Republican clients that inflation is being cited as the most important problem at two or three times the rate it was identified in the 1966 and 1968 elections, when Republicans also sought to make it an issue.

When a good pro combines the numbers and the way things sound as he travels about, he comes up with an analysis like that offered by Mark Shields, the peripatetic Democratic adviser: "Inflation is all by itself. It's everywhere. Across all groups. I think double-digit inflation is a seminal event, as frightening for this generation as the Depression was for our parents."

What, then, should a candidate do? "You cannot say 'I have a solution,' it just won't sell," reports Republican consultant Edward Mahe. "But you've always got to have a TV spot talking about it." Shields concurs and emphasizes that a candidate can empathize credibly on the issue and gain an advantage over a less sympathetic candidate, even if neither of them has a solution for inflation.

Moreover, even if few voters take the candidates' solutions seriously, that may not mean they don't have any of their own. Gorman reports that a question that has been asked for years showed a surprising turnaround in results this summer. Respondents were asked if they agreed with the statement, "We've got to learn to live with high inflation. Prices will never be stable again." In 1974, about 25 percent agreed, and after the reality of double-digit inflation, the percentages rose into the forties in 1975. By January 1978, 55 percent said they agreed. But in early summer, the number who agreed had dropped to 35 percent. Why has a fifth of the population suddenly decided that inflation can be stopped?

One possible explanation comes through mixes of other data. Many pollsters report that a growing number of people think government spending is the chief cause of inflation. For a number of years, about a third of the public named government as the chief cause, about a third blamed business and labor, while another third blamed outside events like the weather and the oil embargo. Now, however, Teeter says his state-by-state polls are frequently finding as many as half the respondents think government spending is the chief cause of inflation and labor is now being blamed far more often than business. (Other national polls confirm Teeter's results; see Opinion Roundup, pg. 25, in this magazine.) If people believe inflation is caused by government spending, Proposition 13 in California may have suddenly encouraged them to think there is indeed a solution: they themselves can cut spending, and thus put a brake on inflation, by voting for Proposition 13s across the country.

The idea may have been at hand even before the publicity about the California vote and such phenomena as Howard Jarvis appearing on "Meet the Press," the cover of *Time* magazine, and on Capitol Hill, where conservative Republican senators greeted him open-mouthed, like a group of regional sales managers for

a struggling snake-oil firm, convened to meet the man who had redesigned the bottle and the label and would make them all rich. Consider a nationwide poll of 1,500 persons taken by Decision Making Information earlier this year for Citizens of the Republic, Ronald Reagan's political action committee. Here are the question and the results:

"Some people think there should be an absolute limit on the percentage of national income the government can take in taxes, to control the growth of government spending. Others think the government should be allowed to tax and spend as much as it decides it needs. Where would you place yourself?"

Limit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No Limit
	40%	16%	18%	15%	4%	2%	5%	

Only 11 percent opposed a limit, 15 percent gave a neutral response, and of the 74 percent that wanted an absolute limit, more than half took a flat-out stand. As Lyn Nofziger, executive director of the Reagan group, points out, this poll was taken *before* the Proposition 13 vote, suggesting that the country today is not just sunning itself in the afterglow of the California action. Tax fever has been around for awhile.

The Tax Lesson

Is there a magic formula here? The electoral pattern may seem uneven. In California, Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., was an outspoken opponent of Proposition 13 before the vote, but his fancy footwork afterwards left people forgetting his earlier stand. In Massachusetts, the voters did not forget: Governor Michael S. Dukakis was elected there four years ago with a promise not to raise taxes. By no stretch of the imagination has his administration since then been a free spender, but when he found the state's finances in terrible shape, he *did* raise taxes. This September, the voters meted out their punishment, choosing conservative Edward J. King over Dukakis in the Democratic primary.

Two Senate primaries this fall have also suggested that federal tax-cutting positions have real value, at least if the candidate concentrates on them hard enough and long enough so that they do not seem like gimmicks. For both victors, Republican Jeffrey Bell of New Jersey and Democrat Robert Short of Minnesota, while there were other factors that were more important to their triumph, the call for lower taxes was a significant part of their primary races. Nonetheless, as of September, both Bell and Short appeared to be unlikely winners in the general election. Adding it all up, the lesson appears to be that a strong campaign in favor of tax cuts is no guarantee of ultimate victory, but to be successfully pictured as pro-spending and pro-taxes is probably the country's shortest road to political extinction.

A Year of Many Passions But Few Issues

The distrust that pollsters and consultants all report finding for "solutions" does not mean they are offering their candidates nothing substantive to say on the matter. And the simple fact that a campaign line has been around for many years without great apparent impact does not mean it will never pay off. In Minnesota, where Robert Short spent $800,000 of his own funds in winning the Senate primary, his billboards labeling Donald Fraser as a spender have represented the high-budget version of what quite a few Republican managers are urging their candidates to do—attack the opponent's votes for bills that cost a lot of money.

On the other side, pollster Peter Hart, who finds this "one of your less cataclysmic elections" with little in the way of issues, says that from his polls, he tells Democrats "the key issue is government waste" and they should find a way to oppose it. Caddell believes Democrats can exploit the waste issue by stressing President Carter's civil service legislation. While that issue showed up hardly at all in spring and summer campaigning, Representative Morris K. Udall of Arizona, the bill's floor manager, was telling colleagues as early as June that political audiences were responding to his pitch on the bill as a way to rein in bureaucracy. September's 385 to 10 vote on House passage may show his message got through.

Nonetheless, there is general agreement among pollsters this fall that in this election few issues are affecting very many votes. (Indeed, there haven't been very many votes, as one low turnout after another during the primary season has underlined the public's distrust of politicians.) To some extent, the lack of definable issues with clear opportunities for differentiating candidates results from the dominance of inflation. As Mahe notes, when open-ended questions about important problems get 50 or 60 percent of the people giving one answer, other responses are so widely scattered as to fail to make much impact on polling statistics.

President Carter's stunning success at Camp David came relatively late in the campaign season, not too late to be seized on by Democrats but well after most candidates had made a set decision about how they would run. Teeter's first reaction to the summit was that the skill Democrats had already shown in separating themselves from Carter would make it hard for them to get much benefit from his diplomatic triumph. Still, if there is merit, and there seems to be, in Yale professor Edward Tufte's thesis that a president's popularity and the year-to-year change in real income affect off-year elections, the Democrats are bound to be helped by Camp David, at least a little.

Some candidates this fall have been citing defense as an important issue, or at least as the issue of the future. Republican pollster Bob Teeter finds, however, that while there is a trend toward more traditional attitudes in favor of a very strong national defense, only 5-7 percent of respondents believe it is an important issue. At the GOP Congressional Committee, Mrs.

Goldstein scoffs, "For two years, I've been hearing it's a coming issue, but I haven't seen it yet."

The one other issue on a barren agenda appears to be taxes, which may be a part of the inflation issue for many voters. Its dominance varies greatly from state to state, depending on whether taxes have gone up sharply or whether the issue has become acute. Michigan is likely to attract more and more national attention this fall as voters try to decide on two major tax referenda. In Illinois, Democrat Michael Bakalis has used taxes to mount a much stronger challenge than expected to Republican Governor James Thompson, pushing a cumbersome property tax circuit breaker through the legislature which Thompson vetoed and then making further gains when a Thompson petition drive for an advisory referendum on spending turned out to have an embarrassing number of phony signatures—not embarrassing by ordinary Illinois standards, perhaps, but embarrassing for the super-clean ex-prosecutor.

The Kemp-Roth bill, which Republicans are trying to exploit, may be an exception to the warning against simple solutions, although Mrs. Goldstein warns that if it is not carefully explained, voters may turn off on it as just another gimmick. But the attention it's getting is at least as much the result of press interest as polling figures. Reporters and Republican leaders, for that matter, are fascinated by seeing the Republicans on the offensive with a positive economic plan. And, as Republican consultant John P. Sears says, the Democrats have some difficulty counterattacking. "They're not used to calling funny-money schemes irresponsible. That was always our bag."

"In our view, the rapid pace of events on both the domestic and the international scene and the continuing uncertainty of the economic climate preclude any expression of voter preference at this particular time. I will say this, however. Both my husband and I will continue to monitor developments across the entire political spectrum, and we look forward confidently to rendering a fair and equitable judgment in November."

The "No Frills Survey Module"

The weakness of issues in the campaign has not turned politicians away from pollsters, who are doing more business than ever, promoting their wares with handy little packages like DMI's black, yellow, and orange booklet describing the $9,540 "No Frills Survey Module," which consists of three polls—"Benchmark, Follow-up and Quick-Look."

Political consultants employ such polling material in all sorts of ways that go beyond basic strategy planning. Nofziger observes, as usual joking less than he says he is, "I use these things to show reporters that people agree with us." That's just another version of leaking the raw percentages of a positive poll in order to discourage the other side. David Keene, another Republican consultant, says "I don't need a survey to tell someone not to run like a right-wing nut, for example, but having the numbers may help me convince him, especially if he has a lot of conservative friends back home who keep saying, 'Why aren't you talking more about the Panama Canal?' "

Polls can thus prove a lot of negatives, showing that a particular issue does not matter, at least to voters who are still undecided. But polls offer opportunities, too. They can tell a candidate like John Pucciano, a Republican running for the House in New Haven, that federal aid for housing is very important to people in his district, or that his opponent, Robert N. Giaimo, is more highly regarded by both Democrats and Republicans than by independents. They can also tell a party where to target its resources. This year, for example, the Republican National Committee took a number of polls to locate districts where middle-ranking and senior Democratic incumbents might be weaker than generally thought. Their findings have a lot to do with where Republicans are making major efforts, and if the GOP does score significant gains next month, they may be a major reason.

Political polls this year provide no sure-fire schemes for election victory—and probably little that has even as much impact as David Garth's discovery that by getting Ed Koch to hammer on capital punishment, he could toughen up the candidate's image and get him elected mayor. They do offer a number of warning signs to smart campaign managers and they do suggest opportunities. Still, there's only so much anyone should expect from the polls. They cannot tell a candidate how to make himself credible, nor can they tell him how to whip inflation—not even many economists are sure of that anymore. ☑

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- ☐ your partner
- ☐ your son-in-law, the minister
- ☐ your barber
- ☐ your best friend
- ☐ your management staff
- ☐ your postman
- ☐ your accountant
- ☐ your vice president
- ☐ your tennis partner
- ☐ your boss
- ☐ your son, the musician
- ☐ your spinster aunt
- ☐ your professor
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the associates program

THE EMPTY BALLOT BOX: REFLECTIONS ON NONVOTERS IN AMERICA

CURTIS B. GANS

Consider just a small slice of history. Early in 1963, President John F. Kennedy established a special bipartisan presidential commission on registration and voting participation in the United States.

He did so, in part, because he was appalled that the level of American voter turnout in the presidential election of 1960 and the congressional elections of 1962 was substantially lower than the turnout rate of most other Western nations. Kennedy wanted to do something about the incongruity he saw—that the greatest democracy in the world had almost the least political involvement of its citizen-electorate of any democracy in the world.

One week after the young President's untimely death and after six months of intense deliberation, the commission emerged with a series of recommendations aimed at increasing the country's voter turnout. Among its major findings, the commission urged the abolition of literacy tests and poll tax as prerequisites for voting; the removal of voting barriers to full voting participation by Blacks and other minorities; enfranchisement of youth between the ages of eighteen to twenty-one; absentee registration and voting; liberalization of state and local residency requirements; and simplified registration, including the use of outreach programs and postcards.

The commission's report had a profound impact on American political thought. Its ideas became the conventional political wisdom for remedying low political participation and in the fifteen years since the report was first published, almost every major commission recommendation has become registration law.

The only problem, however, was that like the surgeon whose operation was a fantastic success with the single exception that the patient died, the commission-inspired reforms did not yield the expected results.

In 1960, 63.8 percent of the eligible electorate cast their ballots for president. In 1976, only 54.4 percent went to the polls. In 1962, 46.3 percent of the American electorate voted in the congressional elections of that year. In 1974, the percentage of eligible voters who went to the polls for a congressional election had dropped to 38.2. *After a decade and a half of electoral reform, the level of voter turnout in the United State has fallen below that of every other democracy in the world, with the single exception of Botswana!*

Fifteen Million Dropouts

The central and perhaps the greatest single problem of the American polity today is not the direction of the nation with respect to any single area of public policy, but rather the degree to which the vital underpinnings of American democracy are being eroded. The legitimacy of a democratic leadership and the health of the democratic process depend squarely on the informed and active participation of the electorate. Yet the level of political participation is now sinking and the decline seems irreversible.

Neither the parameters nor the import of these trends should be underestimated:

- During the last ten years, fully 15 million Americans who were once regular voters have dropped out of the political process.
- Nearly 70 million eligible Americans failed to vote in the 1976 presidential election; more than 100 million eschewed the ballot box in the congressional election of 1974.
- Fewer than 28 percent of Jimmy Carter's fellow citizens voted for him in the presidential election of 1976; Brendan Byrne became governor of New Jersey with a "mandate" of less than 15 percent of New Jersey's eligible voters; Mayor Koch was the "choice" of less than 12 percent of New York City's electorate; Senator Henry Jackson "won" the 1976 New York presidential primary with less than 6 percent of the total vote.

More than half of America's nonparticipants are chronic nonvoters—people who have never or hardly ever voted, whose families have never voted and who are poorer, less educated and less involved participants in American society. But a growing number of Ameri-

cans are dropping out of the political process—many of whom are the educated, white collar professionals who were once regular participants—and a growing number of young people are failing to enter as political participants. Both of these trends constitute a major national concern, for there is the very real danger that the habit of good citizenship—of civic virtue, if you will, that has been so intrinsic and necessary a part of the American voluntary democratic process—will atrophy and die and that government of the people, for the people and by the people will become government of the few, by the few and for the few.

Threat to the Body Politic

There is, of course, no foreordained optimal level of political participation, and American democracy has survived and even prospered—at least in this century—despite rates of voting participation lower than many other democracies. (Participation levels in nineteenth century America were substantially higher, albeit with a more limited electorate.) But the continuing and sharp decline in the level of voting and citizen involvement cannot help but adversely affect the health of the American body politic.

* To the extent that fewer and fewer Americans bother to vote, the ability of organized minorities, special interests and single-issue zealots to polarize American politics and influence the course of public policy will be enhanced. In the 1978 primaries, low turnout allowed right-wing militants to unseat moderate Clifford Case in New Jersey and permitted Republican crossovers and anti-abortion and anti-environmental activists to defeat Democratic party designee Donald M. Fraser in Minnesota.

* To the extent that American political participation dwindles and the business of politics becomes increasingly the province of organized interest groups, the ability of the political system to produce public policy in the interest of society as a whole declines correspondingly. Public employees, for instance, who constitute one-sixth of the employed adult population and whose turnout rate is normally quite high, might well have a disproportionate influence on the outcome of elections in a diminishing electorate and consequently have undue influence on the course of public policy with regard to such issues as civil service reform or government reorganization.

* To the extent that citizen interest in, and involvement with, the political process continues to wane and political institutions—especially parties—continue to atrophy, there is a greater likelihood that politics will be dominated by professional media manipulators beholden to no one and that national leadership can emerge which is unknown to the electorate and potentially unstable, demagogic and even authoritarian. The nation is indeed fortunate that whatever his other failings might be, President James Earl Carter is a man of decency, for it was well into his presidency before people stopped asking the question, "Jimmy Who?"

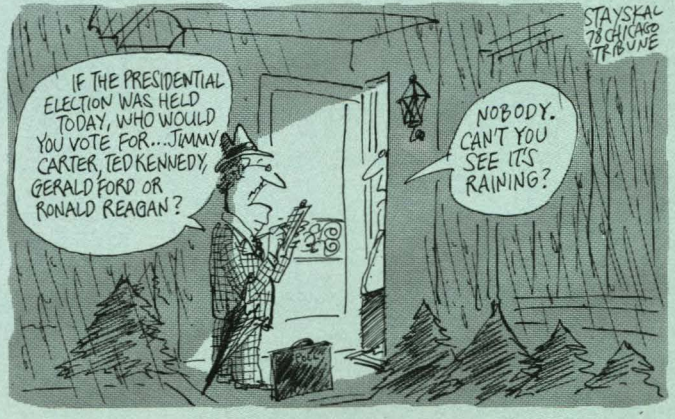
* * *

Identifying the problem of declining political participation, understanding its ramifications, even demonstrating its importance to the welfare of American democracy is not, however, equivalent to finding the way to reverse this trend. This is one area of social inquiry in which exploration for probable cause does not yield a political remedy.

Some of the reasons for a decline in voting are obvious. The sharpest decline in participation among those who had previously considered themselves Democrats occurred between 1964 and 1972—or at precisely the time when the war in Vietnam was dividing Democrats against each other and when pro-war and anti-war factions were taking turns capturing control of their party to the exclusion and hostility of their opponents. Similarly, the sharpest drop in Republican turnout occurred between the congressional elections of 1970 and 1974—or precisely when Watergate made many who had hitherto been Republicans embarrassed to be so identified. The enfranchisement of youth between the ages of eighteen to twenty-one, a larger voter pool with a lower than average turnout rate, also helped in a minor way to depress the national turnout averages. But these events, now history, offer no wisdom to explain or reverse the continuing decline in voting nor to change what sociologist Harold Mendelsohn has termed the present "American anomie."

The will to vote is in essence religious. It rests on the belief that despite the overwhelming majority of elections that are not decided by one vote, each individual's vote will contribute to a general will that will yield honorable leadership, wise policy and sufficient checks on the excesses of power. It is precisely this faith that has been shattered.

As almost all recent survey research has indicated, there has been for more than a decade a high level of cynicism about whether government can address any of the public's perceived needs, a large degree of mistrust of the integrity and competence of public officials and



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the efficacy of political institutions, and a growing feeling of personal impotence that afflicts not only nonvoters but voters as well. It is likely that voting participation will continue to decline until these attitudes are substantially altered and a modicum of that intangible called "hope" is restored to the political process. This, in turn, will not be accomplished by simply acknowledging the sins of the past and replacing the "bad" old officeholders with "good" new ones. More fundamental questions need to be addressed.

The Answer May Depend on the Question

Once the Pandora's box is opened, the questions come tumbling out:

- To what extent have reforms undertaken in Congress, in the two political parties and in the conduct and financing of elections, enhanced or inhibited participation?
- To what extent do modern techniques of identifying a candidate's supporters and pulling only those individuals to the polls contribute to declining participation?
- To what extent has the change in the legislative officeholder from state or national citizen to dispenser of services reduced the competitiveness that sustains voter interest?
- To what extent has the federal government, as a dispenser of services and jobs, undercut the traditional role of the political party and made voter mobilization efforts more difficult?
- To what extent has the practice of districting in favor of one party reduced turnout?
- To what extent is the fact that the United States is the only democracy in the world which does not have a state-run system of universal voter enrollment a contributing cause?

As important as each of these questions may be, there are, I believe, four broader and related questions that are of even greater relevance to the future revitalization of American democracy. They are:

1. The Question of Scale—In survey after survey during the past several years, the American public has responded strongly and negatively to the word "big," especially when followed by the words "government," "business" and "labor." There is without question increasing public uncertainty about issues grown too complex and a growing public helplessness and impotence in the face of institutions grown too large.

Greater federal authority may well be needed to cope with such issues as energy conservation and a stagflation economy, but leadership can no longer afford to give only lip service to decentralization. It must begin a serious exploration of the instrumentalities needed for the devolution of power and administrative authority of both public and private institutions.

2. The Question of Television—There have been two sets of televised presidential debates—the first in 1960 at the high-water mark for voting in the past three decades and the second in 1976 at the recent low point in voter turnout. In between, voting and political participation have declined sharply and steadily while television has assumed a growing centrality in the lives of Americans.

It would be too facile to ascribe a cause-and-effect relationship between these two phenomena, but there are many questions about the relationship between television, society, and politics that need to be asked. Specifically:

- Has one of the by-products of the television age been the erosion of community political and social institutions and the relative atomization of American society?
- Has the essentially protected position of the three networks enhanced the trend toward larger institutions and greater centralization?
- While creating a public with a greater body of shared knowledge and information, has not television also enhanced public confusion by providing a surfeit of information without distinguishing between that which is important and that which is not? Or put another way, has television, in speeding up the present, robbed American politics of a necessary sense of the historically important?
- Has one political impact of television been to create a demand for candidates who have charm and charisma without due regard for character and competence?
- Is it not also true, as public opinion specialist Irving Crespi among others has suggested, that television has transformed American politics by creating a new breed of campaign technicians—the media image manipulators—who are guns for hire, allying themselves temporarily with one politician and vitiating the role of political parties in selecting nominees and in delivering votes as well as political programs and services?
- Has not television's approach to the coverage of politics been to emphasize the competition involved rather than the stakes of that competition, leaving the citizen as an uninvolved spectator at a horse race rather than an involved participant in a decision that might affect at least some aspect of his life?

These, of course, hardly exhaust the serious questions that can and should be asked about the relationship between television and American politics, but they should suffice to indicate that a serious and critical examination of that relationship is long overdue.

3. The Question of Political Parties—The American system of two heterogeneous parties has served the nation well, but there is mounting evidence that it is, at least for the present, in trouble. The traditional roles of the parties in mobilizing the electorate, finding and training leadership, providing information, dispensing jobs and services have been—to a larger extent than is healthy—supplanted by television, by government

and casework, by direct mail specialists, and the new breed of independent television packagers. But what may, in the long run, be more important is the decline in the role of the parties in defining public choice, channelling public debate and creating programmatic alternatives for legislative and governmental action.

For four decades since the advent of the New Deal, the political options were clear:

- The Democratic party was the party of the New Deal and its progeny, the Fair Deal, New Frontier and Great Society. It was the party of the welfare state and the common man, of the economics of John Maynard Keynes and the foreign policy of Dean Acheson. It was the party of labor, the minorities, the big city machines, the small farmers and the liberal intellectuals. It was the party of expansive hope.
- Against the cacaphony of competing interests, the Republican party was the party of the common interest. Against the corruption of the big city machine, the Republican party was the party of moral probity. Against the allure of unreasoned hope, the Republican party was the party of common sense. The Republican party was the party of classical economics and political restraint.

The public had every confidence that in voting Democratic or Republican, it was making a meaningful choice and that those choices would be reflected in the public policy decisions made by their candidates once in office.

That certitude broke down in the 1960s.

A concerted drive by an ideologically rigid and politically reactionary right wing for control of the sinews of the Republican party and a flaccid response by legitimate conservatives left the Republicans an atrophied remnant of their former selves. It also left the real debate on central issues of public policy—for and against the war in Vietnam, for and against détente, for jobs or for controlling the despoliation of the environment, for unlimited or restricted growth—to be conducted mainly within the Democratic party rather than between the parties. The fact that these debates were never resolved left the Democratic party ridden with conflict, without a clear sense of direction and without the ability to pull itself together for the delivery of a political program.

Faced with one party that was fast becoming ideologically irrelevant and the other bloated beyond meaning and capacity to contribute to the public good, it is little wonder that the average citizen saw no choice and no good reason to vote.

The 1960s also left the nation with a Republican party controlled at its bottom by ideological zealots and at its top—to a lesser extent—by corporate giants, and a Democratic party, over whose policies and leadership the trade union movement in general and the AFL-CIO in particular exercised a continuing veto. This, in turn, left no political base for the largest single element in the American population—the unorganized but educated white collar and professional middle class, precisely the group in society that is dropping out of political participation. Which is all to say that high on the national political agenda is the need for a definition and perhaps a realignment of the American party system.

4. The Question of Belief—If what propels people to the polls—beyond family upbringing, high school training and concepts of civic duty—is some belief that they might contribute to the direction of their country, one of the salient features of this age is the degree to which neither American liberalism nor American conservatism has provided meaningful choices within the political marketplace.

The public no longer believes in the unlimited cornucopia of resources and moneys that traditional liberals still insist is there, but it also is unwilling to give up dreams of greater equity that many conservatives are anxious to shatter. The public no longer believes there is a program for every problem, but it is not willing to dispense with efforts to make the quality of American life better. The public may not believe that Keynesian economics has the answer to the present American economic impasse, but it surely sees that a reversion to classical economics might have even less impact. In short, a large number of Americans no longer identify with either the New Deal liberalism that is at the core of the Democratic party or the Goldwater conservatism that seems to motivate an increasing number of Republicans.

Perhaps nowhere was the dearth of new and relevant thought more evident than in the recent debate in Congress between liberals and conservatives over national energy policy. Liberals, claiming to represent consumers, fought to hold the line on energy prices, as if somehow they believed that the age of cheap energy might last forever. Conservatives, on the other hand, shilled for big business, urging financial incentives for increased production as if they believed that producing more oil and gas now would somehow address the reality that there may well not be any oil and gas in the near future. Throughout the debate, the overriding national and world interest in a policy of conservation was a political orphan.

Unless American liberalism and conservatism begin to put their respective intellectual houses in order and offer the public choices relevant to the times, it is likely that increasing numbers of American citizens will forget their family upbringing, civic training and sense of patriotic duty and sit out ensuing elections.

It is said that the only certainties in this world are death and taxes. It is, however, a virtual certainty that unless a fundamental reexamination of the structure and tenets of American politics is undertaken soon, the 1978 elections will see fewer voters go to the polls than did in 1974, fewer will vote in 1980 than in 1976, and the erosion of the vital underpinnings of American democracy will continue and, perhaps, sadly accelerate. ☑

(Continued from page 13)

would appear. And I don't think those people are mindless. I've met them, you've met them.

Schlesinger: No, no, but they're preoccupied with their jobs, and they're doing what they think their jobs require. To suppose that there's some conspiracy here is hard to believe.

Wattenberg: *Not a conspiracy, perhaps, but an ideology. Isn't that really what's at work?*

Schlesinger: To propagate a regulation of the kind that Irving describes about cheerleaders is not a credible way of advancing the cause of big government. Therefore, it seems to me to be mindlessness.

Kristol: What these people believe in, really, is "the worse, the better"—at least as far as economic growth is concerned. There is a simple dialectic at work here. To the degree that you get economic growth, the pressure for redistribution diminishes, because economic growth permits everyone, hopefully, to improve his or her condition. As economic growth is frustrated, pressure for redistribution increases. There are a great many people in this society, particularly people who are now called liberals and are members of this New Class, who think redistribution on moral grounds is the most important political necessity, and that if you have to frustrate economic growth in order to achieve that redistribution, that's the way to do it.

Schlesinger: I think that's a bizarre and unduly conspiratorial reading. I don't think this has much relationship to the world of politics. No one is going to succeed in making a political appeal on those grounds.

Kristol: But they don't make it on those grounds. They make it on other grounds. I don't want to use the word "conspiracy." I'll accept the word "ideology." That is the agenda which is clearly implicit in all of their activities. And, since they are not stupid, and they are not mindless, I think they *know* that agenda.

The Limits of Politics

Gergen: *Are the terms liberalism and conservatism carrying so much baggage today that they have lost much of their meaning?*

Schlesinger: They probably always have. I don't know whether you'd gain anything by abolishing them.

Kristol: We can't abolish them, and they do have meaning. They come out of the French Revolution. They are essentially nineteenth century terms.

Schlesinger: Liberalism, of course, in Europe, has a very different significance from liberalism here, where it generally means a free market, anti-clerical liberal party that. . . .

Kristol: It meant that here, too, for most of the nineteenth century, and that has changed. . . . But there is an important distinction between left and right, and the categories of left and right, which is in one's conception of the politically possible. Really, that's what it comes down to. The reason the French Revolution is the dividing line for all modern political ideologies is that it sets up the challenge: What do you think the limits of politics are? If you're left, you think the limits of politics are either infinite, or, at least, very, very large. If you're right, you tend to think the limits of politics are more toward the narrow side.

Schlesinger: What do you mean, "the limits of politics"?

Kristol: I mean the degree of human happiness and human progress that can be achieved through political action.

Schlesinger: Well, in that sense, I would be a conservative, because I think politics has very marked limits.

Wattenberg: *Yet, you feel that we ought to have a new spasm of activity in the eighties.*

Schlesinger: Yes, as far as programs and policies are concerned. But, I'm a Niebuhrian; I believe in the limits of human wisdom and the frailty of human striving. Niebuhr was politically a liberal and theologically a conservative.

Kristol: Well, a very, very moderate liberal, shall we say. Conservatives, after all, are not against politics, they're not even against change. Conservatives—to use Michael Oakeshott's rather lovely phrase—believe that change should respond to the intimations of change that are already occurring in the society. And I think that's a fair description of what a conservative response should be.

Schlesinger: Conservatism believes in holding the line. As Emerson said, "The castle, which conservatism is set to defend, is the actual state of things, good and bad." The progressive believes in the inevitability of change.

Kristol: Well, most conservatives who are thoughtful—and not all are—believe in the inevitability of change.

Schlesinger: We're getting here into this difficulty of distinguishing between conservative intellectuals and practical conservatives. Most conservatism in American politics has been unreflective; and indeed, it depends for its thinking more and more on people who are trained in another tradition.

Kristol: Yes, I think that's true. We're trying to change that. But I think the attitude toward the market does to a considerable degree derive from one's attitude towards the limits of politics. That is, if you say that the limits of politics are relatively narrow, then you take *ab initio* a more indulgent attitude toward the market, and you say government probably can't do better, or the presumption is that government can't do better. It doesn't follow that the market always can do better. But the presumption is that economic activity will probably be better off if the marketplace guides it, rather than government.

That's the original conservative presumption.

Schlesinger: I'm in favor of the market doing everything it can do. I don't know who wants to abolish the market. Even in socialist countries they're trying to use the market. But there are certain problems that the market, obviously, can't solve, and it's such problems that require the use of government. The market cannot, as the Great Depression showed, solve the problems of unemployment.

Kristol: Well, there is an argument over that, but the question is really the presumption.

The U.S. as Moral Leader

Wattenberg: *We haven't touched at all on foreign policy, and I wanted to suggest, as an old LBJ hand, the following thought. Irving, you are in many ways rejecting the LBJ domestic initiative or saying, "It's gone far enough. Let's reconsider it, maybe roll back some of it," whereas, I wouldn't say that and I don't think Arthur says that.*

Arthur, you have, in many ways, rejected the LBJ foreign policy vision. I was struck by a very interesting passage in your new book, quoting the last line of Robert Kennedy's announcement statement in 1968, which was, "At stake is not simply the leadership of our party or even of our country. It is our right to moral leadership on this planet," and you comment after that that you were opposed to that statement then and now.

What I am wondering is whether, on both of your parts, there is a retreat from a sense of what was possible ten or fifteen years ago—perhaps you, Arthur, in the foreign aspect and you, Irving, in the domestic aspect.

Kristol: Certainly on domestic policy I would say that. On foreign policy, it's really quite different. I mean, here I am a Niebuhrian. I have never been a Wilsonian. In general, I detest Woodrow Wilson. I don't think the world has ever recognized our right to be the moral leader of the world.

Wattenberg: *But Americans recognized it or felt that they had a special mission.*

Kristol: Yes.

Schlesinger: I have felt that language about our "special mission" is grandiloquent, and what it implies seems to me disagreeable. I feel very strongly the limits of American wisdom and American power and that any moral leadership we get is what we earn and not what we proclaim. The most effective way of gaining moral leadership at this point is to show a certain sobriety in world affairs and try to fulfill our own standards at home.

Wattenberg: *Would that view have been called isolationism in an earlier era?*

Schlesinger: Well, I would add that I believe where our vital interests are involved, we must be prepared to act, but I don't think all our interests in every part of the world are equal. That's why I was an interventionist in 1941, and I would be again if there were any threat to Western Europe, but Western Europe is one thing and Southeast Asia is another. Africa is another. It was very interesting about the whole Vietnam war that the chief proponents of the idea of national interest, Morgenthau, Lippmann, Kennan, and Niebuhr, were all opposed to the war in Vietnam because they didn't see how American national interests were involved. That was the basis of my opposition to that war.

Kristol: I don't even like the term "leadership." It is misleading. It suggests that the rest of the world is waiting in line to follow us once we can come up with a nice moral, comprehensive statement. The rest of the world does not like to follow us.

Schlesinger: They have their own problems.

Kristol: Yes, and they have their own interests.

We do have and should have an instinctive empathy with those nations which share our traditional political values. This is a form of national interest that, in the end, may be the most important. It is a question of whether you live in a hostile world or a world that is friendly to you.

Secondly, we must consider the matter of *realpolitik*. There are many nations which do not share our values at all but whose foreign policy might be, at least for a while, advantageous to us or at least not hostile to us. Obviously, it is better to have nations who don't share your values having a friendly foreign policy than an inimical foreign policy.

Gergen: *The moral leadership issue today is often defined in terms of human rights and standing up for freedom in other countries. Where are our national interests in that respect?*

Schlesinger: The human rights effort is a campaign, not a policy. But for all its contradictions and unevenness of application, it is still worth doing. President Carter deserves credit for having put it on the world agenda.

Kristol: The human rights issue, I think, should have been raised at the United Nations. That's where it belongs. You really can't run a foreign policy on that issue. The United Nations is a church where people get up and give sermons. We should give our sermons there. The human rights effort is all right, but it cannot become an effective weapon in foreign policy.

The Changing Struggle

Wattenberg: *Not too many years ago, there was perceived to be a cosmic, titanic struggle going on between the forces of freedom against the forces of non-freedom. By and large, I still hold that view. As I hear it, though, each of you seems to be saying, "Well, that's really not what is going on right now, and we, therefore, ought to respond very differently." Is that correct, Arthur?*

Schlesinger: What the postwar years have shown is that the power of nationalism is much greater than the power of ideology, that the extension of communism does not mean the extension, necessarily, of Russian power or Chinese power. Therefore, the situation is more complicated than it was in the early years of the Cold War when Stalin was still alive. A threat still exists, but it's a different kind of threat, much more diffuse and less ominous than it was when Stalin was the all-powerful head of a coordinated world movement.

Wattenberg: *Notwithstanding the great arms buildup on the part of our adversaries, you say the threat is still very different and less ominous.*

Kristol: It's a different kind of threat, surely. I partly agree with Arthur, partly disagree. First, I don't believe the world ever witnessed any such titanic struggle. That's one of those Wilsonian myths about American foreign policy. The situation has clearly changed between the Stalinist era and today, but it remains a fact that the Soviet Union is determined to become a major world power at our expense. This poses a very real threat. The fact that they may be doing it for nationalistic reasons rather than for communist reasons doesn't affect me.

It was inevitable—and I think Arthur is right here—that everything in this century gives way before nationalism. The church gives way before nationalism. Communism gives way before nationalism. Capitalism gives way before nationalism. Everything. So it was foreseeable to the degree that communism was victorious in different parts of the world, different national communisms would emerge.

Schlesinger: On human rights, the great deficiency is in the private sector. The American Psychiatric Association and the International Psychiatric Association, for example, have been very good, but the American Historical Association has been deplorable in its failure to press the human rights issue against the Soviet Union.

Kristol: And the churches. It is extraordinary that the churches are so actively worried about human rights in Nicaragua or whatever, but I'm not aware that they are particularly concerned about human rights in the Soviet Union. All I ask is that all the Protestant churches and the Catholic Church in this country get somewhat exercised—I think for their own sake they should—about the suppression of religion in the Soviet Union.

Wattenberg: *The American Political Science Association just voted that they wouldn't go to Chicago because Illinois had not passed the ERA, but they would go to Moscow.*

Schlesinger: Yes, that's typical.

Kristol: It is absurd that only the Jewish organizations seem to be concerned about the restrictions on religious freedom of Jews in the Soviet Union. What about all the Christians in the Soviet Union? Why aren't the Christian churches doing something about it? I don't think this is the job of the American government; I agree with Arthur on this.

The Teddy Kennedy Phenomenon

Wattenberg: *Let me redirect the conversation to an apparent anomaly between substance and personality. The*

idea that there is a cyclical move to the right, which we seem to accept in some moderate form, is matched at this particular moment with the fact that the most popular politician in this country, even after Camp David, is Senator Edward Kennedy, a man who does not seem in phase with that particular cyclical movement. Is that just a random occurrence or does this deny that the cyclical occurrence is happening?

Schlesinger: There is a longing for leadership, and people feel that he is a commanding figure. His support may be more attached to his strength and magnetism of personality than to his views. His views are what I would call New Deal, New Frontier, Great Society liberalism. It's not all that unpopular.

Wattenberg: *Not according to my system of labels.*

Kristol: I think the American people don't know a single thing about Senator Kennedy's political opinions. If there is ever a campaign where he has to articulate these opinions—which are very liberal indeed—and is challenged on them, public attitudes will change. At the moment, he is seen as a very attractive man who comes from a very distinguished political family. He is not seen as particularly liberal, oddly enough, by the majority of the American people, though obviously he has a liberal constituency within the Democratic party. He himself is a very articulate and, at least on the surface, attractive politician.

Schlesinger: And under the surface. [Laughter]

Kristol: Maybe not only on the surface. I don't know him. I only know him on the surface. But I think in the course of a campaign that his popularity will decline.

Must Americans Move Left Again?

Gergen: *You both seem to be saying that we're in a period of quiescence and that the pendulum is going to naturally swing back during the 1980s. But is that inevitable? Is it possible that during this period the private sector, which is the alternative that conservatives would put forward, can exercise leadership to solve some of the problems that may be coming down the road and thereby prevent us from going back into another period of governmental activism, once again enlarging the welfare state?*

Schlesinger: Nothing is inevitable, and if the private sector can show that it can solve the problems of inflation, unemployment, racial injustice, environmental protection, and all the other concerns, then there would not be a new resort to government.

It is simply a fact that in previous periods of quietism, the private sector has failed to solve these or similar problems of public concern, and therefore, when people get fed up with the problems, they resort to government, and as Irving says, that creates problems of its own. But that's the way it goes.

Kristol: It is not reasonable, and I think it is a form of political demagogy to ask the private sector to solve the problem of inflation. Inflation is created by government. Only government can solve the problem of inflation.

Schlesinger: The private sector contributes to the problem of inflation. That is another subject.

Kristol: Well, everyone contributes to the problem of inflation, but it's government that makes inflation possible.

Schlesinger: Administered prices contribute.

Kristol: No. Believe me, that is not of any great economic significance, Arthur.

But what do you want from the private sector? There really are only two things the private sector has ever offered. One is a great deal of personal liberty, and the other is economic growth. Now, economic growth will in the longer run solve a lot of problems. I have lived long enough now, and I have seen it solve a lot of the problems that we were familiar with in the 1930s and 1940s.

I'll quote JFK again, that a rising tide lifts all ships. If you get satisfactory economic growth over a period of time, miracles appear. The first play I ever saw on Broadway was *Tobacco Road*, and I remember looking and saying, "Oh, my God, those people down there. What are we going to do with them?" Well, I don't know what happened to them, but with economic growth, they seem to have vanished. They seem to be all out in Southern California.

Or look at some of the sociological literature from the 1930s. In every American city and town in those days, there was another side of the tracks. The railroad divided American cities and American towns socially. Well, what happened to the other side of the tracks? People there looked like a hopeless population, but economic growth has helped the tracks disappear in most areas.

Wattenberg: *You are arguing that the American experience under liberal government has been successful?*

Kristol: Oh, I think so, yes—using the term "liberal" to mean under all administrations.

Schlesinger: Liberalism is a victim of its success.

Kristol: In a way, yes.

Gergen: *Is the public today, through Proposition 13 and other means, distinguishing between the success of liberalism and the excess of liberalism? On the one hand, the public supports the welfare state insofar as it has been successful—social security, and so on—but people are unwilling to pay for what they believe to be excesses of liberalism. Is that not what we're seeing?*

Kristol: I think so.

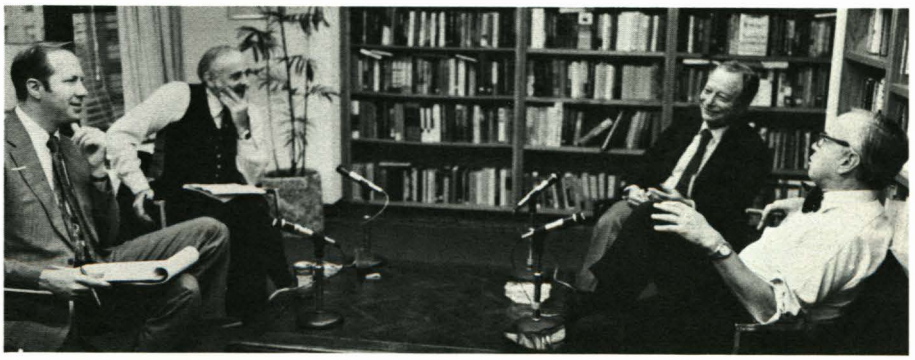
Schlesinger: This is part of the rhythm of the democratic process. But there are certain deeper problems which I don't think the market or the private sector is going to solve. These are going to become acute. In the 1980s we will move again.

Gergen: *Do you see that coming as well, Irving?*

Kristol: I don't really know what I see coming. I can see that coming. I can see the opposite coming. I really have no idea.

Wattenberg: *That's a good note to close on.*

From left to right: David Gergen, Ben Wattenberg, Irving Kristol, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.



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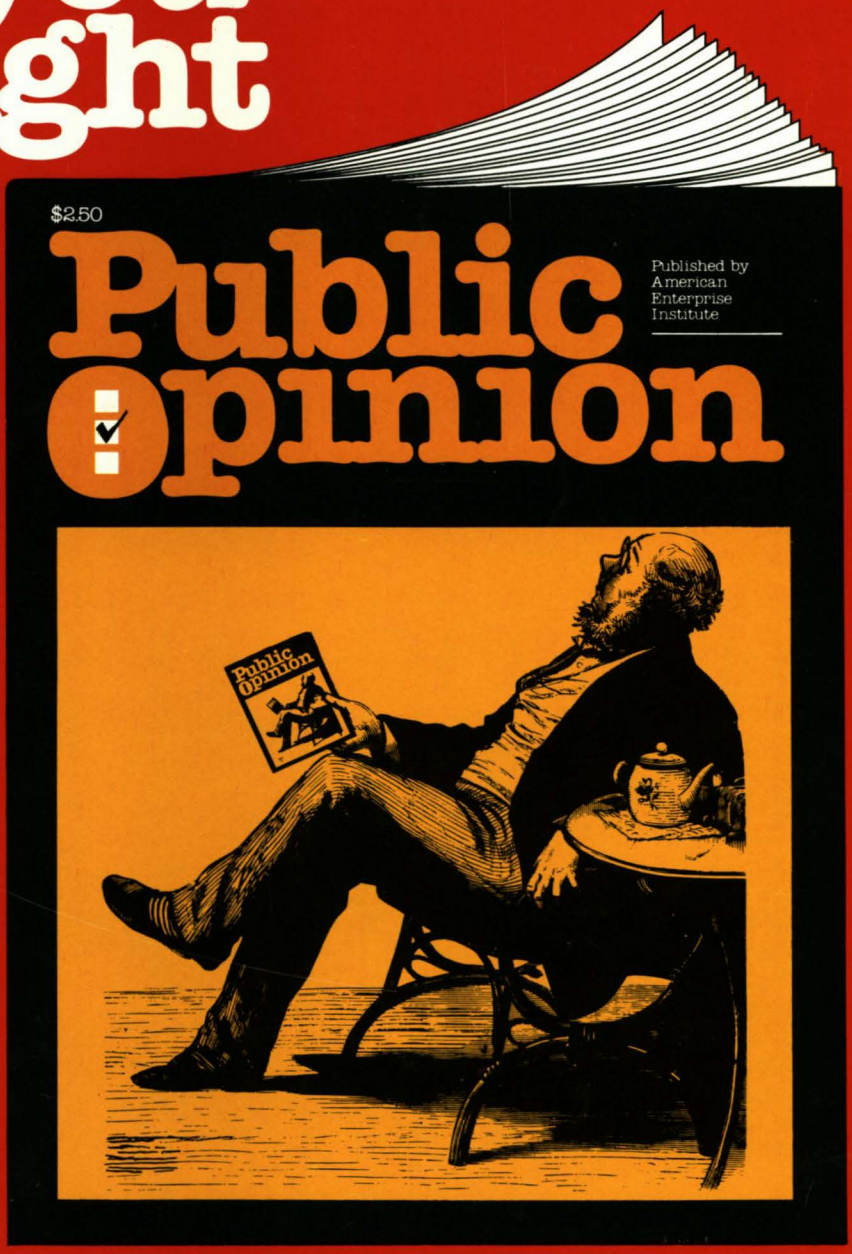

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