1994

# Politics, Professionalism and Power

John Green
*The University of Akron*

# POLITICS, PROFESSIONALISM, AND POWER

## Modern Party Organization and the Legacy of Ray C. Bliss

Edited by
John C. Green

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF AMERICA

THE RAY C. BLISS INSTITUTE OF APPLIED POLITICS
The University of Akron

University Press of America®, Inc.
4720 Boston Way
Lanham, Maryland 20706

3 Henrietta Street
London WC2E 8LU England


Printed in the United States of America
British Cataloging in Publication Information Available

Copublished by arrangement with
The Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Politics, professionalism, and power : modern party organization and the legacy of Ray C. Bliss / edited by John C. Green.
p. cm.
Papers presented at a conference held at the University of Akron, Sept. 12-13, 1991.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Political parties – United States – Congresses. 2. Politics, Practical – United States – Congresses. 3. Bliss, Ray C. – Congresses. I. Green, John Clifford, 1953- . II. Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics. III. University of Akron.
JK2276.P65 1994 324.273–dc20 93-37014 CIP

ISBN 0-8191-9351-8 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN 0-8191-9352-6 (pbk. : alk. paper)

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48–1984.

*Dedicated to*

*Ellen Palmer Bliss*
*(1909-1991)*

## Contents

**PART THREE**
**Party Development after Ray Bliss**



**PART FOUR**
**Factions and Organization**

# Tables

*Tables*

*Figures*

# Preface

This volume originated in a conference entitled "Grassroots Politics and Party Organizations: The Leadership Model of Ray C. Bliss" held at the University of Akron September 12-13, 1991. Early versions of most of the papers included here were presented at the conference, although some were added later. Many people deserve special thanks for helping organize the conference and preparing this volume, including John Bibby, Robert Huckshorn, Arthur Peterson, Charles McCall, John Kessel, William Crotty, Cornelius Cotter, James Baker, Jo Good, William Prendergast, Alex Arshinkoff, Martha Moore, Kent McGough, John Andrews, William Ayers, Ralph Goettler, Robert Feldcamp, David Eugene Waddell, Clyde Mann, Roy Browne, Madge Doerler, Helen Brown, Francis Rex, David Broder, James Tilling, James Nathanson, George Roberts, Paul Herrnson, Philip Klinkner, Jon Hale, John Pitney, Stephen Frantzich, Samuel Patterson, Paul Beck, and Jesse Marquette. In addition, we would like to thank two anonymous reviewers, whose comments on the manuscript were very helpful, and James Guth, whose reading of the final manuscript was both careful and insightful.

A very special thanks goes to Mrs. Ellen Bliss whose generosity, insight, and patience were indispensable to the success of this project as well as the broader efforts of the Bliss Institute. A similar thanks goes to Mrs. Bliss' sister, Louise Earley and her husband Lawrence, and to her brother, William Palmer and his wife Ellen. We also are grateful to Alice Marriott, John Berry, William Robert Timken, Sr., William Robert Timken, Jr., and Louise Timken for gifts to the Bliss Institute endowment that made this project possible.

Members of the Bliss Institute staff also deserve recognition: Holly Harris-Bane for organizing the original conference, along with Deborah Facemeyer, Shannon Little, and Dana Walch, and Denise Baer for some of the initial planning for the conference. Kimberly Haverkamp deserves special credit for preparing the manuscript with skill and good cheer.

John C. Green, Director
Bliss Institute

## About the Contributors

**John F. Bibby**, Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, specializes in the study of American political parties. He is the author of *Politics, Parties, and Elections in America* and a co-author of *Party Organizations in American Politics*, an analysis of the status and role of state parties. His practical politics experiences has included service on the staff of the Republican National Committee during the chairmanship of Ray C. Bliss.

**Stephen H. Frantzich** is currently Professor of Political Science at the U.S. Naval Academy. He is the author of *Political Parties in the Technological Age* and a variety of other books. He serves as a consultant on the impact of technology on politics to the U.S. and a number of foreign governments.

**John C. Green** is the Director of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at The University of Akron and Associate Professor of Political Science. He is co-editor of *Machine Politics, Sound Bites and Nostalgia: On Studying Political Parties* (with Michael Margolis) and *The Bible and the Ballot Box: Religion and Politics in the 1988 Election* (with James Guth).

**James L. Guth** is Professor of Political Science at Furman University. He is co-editor of *The Bible and the Ballot Box: Religion and Politics in the 1988 Election* (with John Green) and has published extensively on religion and politics, campaign finance and interest groups.

**Jon F. Hale** is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Oklahoma. His research interests include mass media, political campaigns, and political parties. He is working on a study of the impact of the Democratic Leadership Council on Democratic party politics.

**Tim Hames** is the Lecturer in Politics at Pembroke College, Oxford where he specializes in contemporary American parties and elections. He was awarded his doctorate in 1990 for his thesis "Power Without Politics: The Republican National Committee in American Political Life and the Debate on Party Renewal." In conjunction with this research he spent much of 1988 as a guest of the RNC. He is co-editor of the forthcoming *A Conservative Revolution? The Reagan-Thatcher Decade in Perspective.*

**Paul S. Herrnson** is an Associate Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland. He is the author of *Party Campaigning in the 1980's* and articles on political parties, campaign finance, and congressional elections. He is a consultant for the Democratic Caucus for the U.S. House of Representatives and served as an American Political Science Association Congressional Fellow.

**Robert J. Huckshorn**, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Political Science, Florida Atlantic University, has published nine books and numerous articles in the fields of political parties and congressional politics. He is a co-author of *Party Organizations in American Politics* and has a great deal of practical experience including serving on the staff of the Republican National Committee under Ray C. Bliss.

**John H. Kessel** is a Professor of Political Science at Ohio State University. His writing on political parties includes *The Goldwater Coalition*, *Presidential Campaign Politics*, and *Presidential Parties*. He has been a member of the Council of the American Political Science Association, editor of the *American Journal of Political Science*, and president of the Midwest Political Science Association.

**Philip A. Klinkner** received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Yale University and worked as a Research Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. He is currently an Assistant Professor at Loyola Marymount University where he is writing a book on how parties respond to presidential election defeats.

**Joseph I. Lieberman** is the junior United States Senator from Connecticut, elected in 1988. His prior government service includes two terms as Connecticut Attorney General, six years as Majority Leader in the State Senate and membership in that body since 1970. He is the author of four books including *The Power Broker* (Houghton Mifflin, 1966), a biography of the late Democratic Party Chairman, John M. Bailey.

**David Menefee-Libey** is an Associate Professor of American politics and public policy at Pomona College. This chapter and his upcoming book on *The Return of Campaign-Centered Politics* are based on research he did while a Research Fellow at the Brookings Institution.

**Lawrence F. O'Brien** served as Chairman of the Democratic National Committee in 1968 and 1970-1972. A contemporary of Ray Bliss, an excerpt of his autobiography is reprinted with permission from his publisher.

**Arthur L. Peterson** is Director of ASPEC at Eckerd College. After serving two terms in the Wisconsin State Legislature, he spent most of his career as a Professor of Political Science and as a college president. He was an assistant to Republican National Committee Chairman, Thurston Morton, and was Chief of Staff for Ray C. Bliss. He was the Organizing Director of the Republican Coordinating Committee under Ray Bliss and for three national Republican conventions served on the Chief of Staff of the Platform Committee.

**John J. Pitney, Jr.** is Assistant Professor of Government at Claremont McKenna College, in Claremont, California. He has been a Congressional Fellow of the American Political Science Association and has served in several staff positions in Washington. He has written a number of academic essays, as well as articles for *The New Republic*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Reason*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

**George C. Roberts**, Professor of Political Science at Indiana University Northwest, has particular interest in political parties, ballots, party leadership, and electoral activity in Indiana and at the national level. He is the author of *Paul M. Butler: Hoosier Politician and National Political Leader* and other publications and is editor of the *Proceedings*, Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences.

**Fredrick M. Wirt** is Professor of Political Science at The University of Illinois. He is the author of numerous books and articles on urban politics, including *Power in the City* (1974). Although a Democrat, he served as a polling consultant to the Ohio Republican Party in 1958-1960, while Ray Bliss was Chairman. His selection in this volume is based on his experience and observations in that role.

# 1

## Politics, Professionalism, and Power: Introduction

*John C. Green*

Classic scholarship often appears near the end of political eras. A good example is Cotter and Hennessy's *Politics Without Power: The National Party Committees* (1964). This book provided the now-standard assessment of national party committees through the early 1960s, finding that, except for brief periods of crisis, their political influence was marginal. The national party chairs and their staffs were routinely constrained by administrative fragmentation, inadequate resources, and lack of control over allied organizations, including the traditional state and local parties as well as the emerging candidate and ideological associations. Indeed, the national committees presented a stark contrast to the centralization, sophistication, and autonomy of the other kinds of national organizations that increasingly dominated American life.

Such a contrast was short-lived. Hardly was *Politics Without Power* in print than there began a major transformation of the national committees, and during the next thirty years they grew in cohesion, resources, and independence to become major players in national politics. The seeds of this transformation were noted by Cotter and Hennessy, of course, and they and their colleagues were among its earliest (Cotter 1969) and most attentive chroniclers (Cotter et al. 1989). In fact, Cotter and Hennessy offered a number of recommendations for strengthening the national committees that anticipated in part the future course of party development.

Drawing consciously on the "responsible" parties model, Cotter and Hennessy argued that American political parties should be *centralized* in organization and clearly *differentiated* on policy, and that the national committees were crucial to any such development. Most of their organizational recommendations have come to pass in one form or another, and are generally referred to as "party renewal" (Pomper 1980). The essays in this book are about the origins and progress of this renewal, beginning with Republican National Committee Chairman Ray Bliss in the late 1960s, and

followed by the expansion and extension of his model to both major parties in the decades that followed. Although these essays vary in topic, scope and approach, one common theme runs through them: increased professionalism has been central to the growth of national party power.

Cotter and Hennessy's policy-making recommendations met with much more limited success, although a host of related internal changes did take place, collectively known as "party reform" (Crotty 1983). Ironically, these reform efforts have been dominated by expressive impulses largely opposed to the professionalism of the renewal efforts, and tied principally to candidate and ideological associations rather than party organizations per se. While party reform is not a primary focus in these essays, its relationship to renewal is often noted, particularly in terms of party factionalism. Thus, some thirty years after *Politics Without Power* the national party committees are far stronger organizations than ever before, but are still beset by constraints in policy making.

Advocates of responsible parties may be disappointed by this unbalanced development, but such a situation should hardly be surprising. After all, the division between organizational "professionals" and candidate- and issue-oriented "amateurs" was highlighted in Wilson's *The Amateur Democrat* (1962), published just prior to *Politics Without Power* (demonstrating that classics are often written at the beginning of political eras as well). Wilson identified "professionals" as pragmatic leaders of "regular" party organizations who practiced a "politics of interest," characterized by emphasis on the electoral process and extrinsic rewards that flowed from success at the polls. In contrast, the "amateurs" were ideological leaders of candidate and "reform" groups who practiced a "politics of principle," characterized by emphasis on policy proposals and intrinsic rewards that flowed from such advocacy. Wilson found social class behind this cleavage: "professionals" were drawn from the older urban and ethnic working class, while "amateurs" came from the newer suburban and assimilated middle class.

These distinctions have become part of the rough and tumble of political debate, of course, with "amateurs" often identified as extreme and uncompromising, while "professionals" are seen as self-interested and unprincipled. But the word "professional" has another, largely positive meaning that was implicit in Wilson's definition, and which, ironically, is closely connected with middle-class status. To be a "professional" is to have special technical expertise and "professionalism" refers to a high-quality application of such expertise, characterized by efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity. Thus, the "amateurs" in politics were most often "professionals" in economic and social life. Indeed, Wilson's "amateur Democrat" was certainly the neighbor of the William Whyte's "organization man" (1956), although the latter might have been a "purist" in the GOP (Wildavsky 1965).[1]

It is useful then, to distinguish between what might be called "professional goals," that is commitment to process over principles, and "professional values," that is commitment to high-quality, expert work over self-actualizing experience and expression (Felice 1981). The dramatic growth of middle-class people in the post-war period and their entrance into politics in large numbers brought both kinds of professionalism to the fore (Hacker 1964). For example, Beer (1978) identified the politics of the mid-1960s as a clash within the middle class between a "technocratic takeover," professional on both counts, and a "romantic rebellion," amateur on both dimensions. These divisions, and other related ones as well, were most clearly evident in the quadrennial quest for the presidency.

National party organizations could hardly have been immune to such forces and it was all but inevitable that they would be "rationalized" in one form or another to meet the expectations--as well as contradictions--of the increasingly potent middle-class activists.[2] Party renewal has primarily involved the implementing of professional values in the staffs of the national party committees, and among their state counterparts as well. In principal, such professionalism could serve any goals the party could agree on, and the tendency has been to leave the making of party policy to ideological activists aroused by presidential campaigns. It is not clear, however, if a separation of professional values and professional goals is really possible in the long run. Charles Schutz recognized this situation early on:

> The professional staffer as an organization man can be expected to be a force for unity, regularity and moderation. He will prefer non-ideological politics (he will be for principles which regularize his activities, give him security, and routinize party operations, but he will be against rigid doctrines which exacerbate factionalism and prevent compromise). He will be a team-worker, a pragmatist, and an extrovert. Not given to introspection, he will seldom question the why of things. What changes that he brings about will be accomplished in the name of efficiency. The framework and rationale of political party organization will not be questioned by him, but by his activities he will transform their content (Schutz 1964:129).

The logical extension of professional values may thus be an analogous "rationalization" of party policy making to embrace professional goals. In the present period, however, professionals participate in a complex political process where they can often mold into a coherent whole the powerful expressive impulses unleashed within parties by candidates and issues--but just as often find their efforts undermined by such forces. Despite enormous efforts, no mechanism has yet been institutionalized to produce clear and consistent policy differences between the major parties.

## The Bliss Model of Party Organization

As the chapters in Part I reveal, Ray Bliss was the quintessential middle-class professional in both senses of the term. As chairman of the Republican National Committee (RNC) and the Ohio Republican Party (ORP), he was noted for professionalism and attempts to overcome the classic constraints facing party leaders. To Bliss, strong professional organizations were the essence of party politics and his efforts produced the first full-scale examples of the now common "service-broker-vendor" model of party organization (Frantzich 1989).

According to John Bibby (chapter 2), Bliss took advantage of the 1964 electoral disaster to implement a "permanent, professional, and service-oriented" organization at the RNC. This development was unprecedented at the time, but based on proposals that had long circulated among Republican leaders (see chapters 2 and 4). Bliss' model stressed a strong, amply-funded professional party headquarters, which could integrate the disparate elements of the party. And according to Robert Huckshorn (chapter 3), Bliss accomplished this goal by innovative programs to assist state and local parties, and by building national party unity through vehicles such as the Republican Coordinating Committee (an out-party policy committee; see chapter 14). These efforts ended state committee hegemony in party politics and initiated national centralization.

Professionalism was at the core of the Bliss model in two related ways. First, professional party values directly increased the probability of mobilizing individual voters, and second, professional goals helped congeal party elements into an effective vote-mobilizing operation. Bliss was thus famous not only for his detailed "nuts-and-bolts" approach to organization, but also for his avoidance of public controversies on policy matters that undermined party unity. Or, as he put it, he chose to be an "office" rather than a "speaking" chairman, leaving to candidates and office-holders the task of making public pronouncements on issues. Bliss was keenly aware of both the limits of party organization and the constraints imposed by the disparate nature of party coalitions; his professional approach sought to minimize the former and overcome the latter.

There was one traditional constraint Bliss could not overcome: the tendency of sitting presidents to undermine their own party's organization. Bliss' resignation when President Nixon took charge of the RNC caused many of his programs to go dormant, but the subsequent Watergate disaster brought forth another dynamic chairman, Bill Brock, who built upon the Bliss model to professionalize the RNC further. Bibby and Huckshorn, both of whom worked with Bliss in Washington, see the Brock initiatives as a direct extension of Bliss' programs, but on a much larger scale, reflecting altered

circumstances as well as Brock's own innovations.[4] Unlike Bliss' programs, however, Brock's efforts were largely sustained when the Republicans returned to the White House in 1980. Bibby and Huckshorn suggest that this unusual circumstance reflected both the eventual acceptance of the Bliss model and the impact of its full implementation under Brock.

Bliss' reputation as a party professional was well-established before he came to Washington, however. Drawing on interviews from the 1950s, John Kessel describes the Ohio Republican Party (ORP) under Bliss (chapter 4). At that time, the ORP was one of the most professional state party organizations, combining a permanent, independently funded headquarters with systematic ties to county parties and candidate organizations. There were parallel contacts with national party leaders, who regarded Bliss as a "model" state chairman. Kessel summarizes the functioning of ORP as "imparting information, providing services, and avoiding controversy," and characterized by "cautious leadership, avoidance of controversy, and thorough preparation." The ORP rarely spoke on policy matters, a role assigned to office-holders and candidates, whose task was to appeal to voters directly.

As at the national level, Bliss was keenly aware of the limitations of party organization and the constraints party leaders faced. But through his professional approach, he was able to develop a strong clientele among local party leaders, candidates, and national party colleagues without seriously challenging their prerogatives or sensibilities. Kessel concludes that although the ORP was not often the source of innovations, it was an early and rapid adopter of new techniques developed elsewhere: the use of opinion polls and the mass media, centralized fund raising, and the mobilization of middle-class volunteers. But far more importantly, the ORP was "a living presence in Ohio precincts. It was not a paper organization."

Frederick Wirt describes this "living presence" in the 1960 general election, involving GOP victories in presidential, state, and local races (chapter 5). Based on Bliss' own office files, Wirt recounts Bliss' best-known success before becoming national chairman. Wirt concludes that Bliss succeeded in 1960 not by "uprooting the decentralized party structure, but from welding it together with mutual self-interest and benefit," and he "overcame localism by relying on it across a range of candidates and offices." Candidate and amateur organizations played an important part in this synthesis.

Bliss' success as a party leader arose from several sources. First, he was admired for his professional values: knowledge of local politics, excellent advice, high-quality services, and the extensive resources at his command. But Bliss' professional goals were equally important; he was trusted by local party leaders and candidates because his office was "a service station for local power centers" and he was interested in "supplementing but not supplanting"

the power of other leaders. Bliss made a point of staying out of local factional infighting and avoided policy controversies that would undermine party unity. Finally, his personal integrity, hard work, and stature as a successful party leader were important factors in their own right.

In summary, Ray Bliss brought to the RNC a model of professional party organization that sought to overcome the traditional constraints on national party leaders. Both in Ohio and at the national level, the Bliss model emphasized professional values and professional goals, and provided a potent legacy for subsequent party development. However, Bliss' programs at the national level did not survive the election of a Republican president, a pattern that appears to be common to his era.

## Ray Bliss and His Contemporaries

The chapters in Part II compare Bliss to three chairs of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) who served in roughly the same era and substantially shared his professional orientations: Paul Butler (1955-60), John Bailey (1961-1968), and Lawrence O'Brien (1968, 1970-1972). (Several other RNC chairs with a comparable approach to Bliss' are discussed elsewhere in this volume: Herbert Brownell and Leonard Hall in chapters 2 and 11, and Bill Brock in chapters 2, 3, 10 and 11). Taken together, these party leaders stood in sharp contrast to the more common type of national chair, a current or aspiring office-holder serving part time as a spokesperson for elected leaders. Each of these comparisons highlights aspects of the Bliss model. The comparisons with Butler and Bailey reveal the impact of professional organization, while the comparisons with Butler and O'Brien show the results of policy advocacy. All three Democratic chairs, but particularly Bailey, reveal the negative impact of the presidency on the national committees.

This section begins with an intimate portrait of Ray Bliss by Arthur Peterson, a long-time friend and associate in Ohio and Washington (chapter 6). Peterson seeks to present a more balanced view of Bliss' professionalism. Drawing a contrast between "managers" and "leaders," Peterson argues that Bliss was far more than a narrow, "nuts-and-bolts" manager, and was instead an innovative and insightful leader. Peterson claims that contrary to conventional wisdom, Bliss was a courageous risk taker whose commitment to party organization was driven by a grand design for party government.

According to Peterson, nowhere was Bliss more misunderstood than on the subject of party policy making and issue stands. Bliss was deeply interested in public policy questions, but chose not to make policy pronouncements or publicly engage in debate over issues because he felt it was counter-productive for professional party leaders to do so. He was, however, deeply involved in policy development behind the scenes, meeting

with executive and legislative leaders, organizing party platforms, conducting and interpreting opinion polls, and mediating disputes among party factions. The choice to remain silent on issues reflected Bliss' view of the elements of successful campaigns: good organization was basic, followed by good candidates, who in turn articulated good issues (Bliss 1960). Issues were crucial because of their link to voters, and were thus most appropriately presented publicly by candidates and office-holders. Party leaders were thus two steps removed from policy pronouncements, serving instead as facilitators for recruiting candidates and developing issues, and then integrating them with other elements of the party to produce effective government.

In many respects, the experience of Paul Butler is the most comparable to Bliss' national service. According to George Roberts (chapter 7), Butler's biographer, Butler and Bliss shared many things in common: both served as out-party national chairs, both were well-known for their organizational achievements, and both saw their legacies undermined by the presidents they helped elect. Butler's work on fund raising and party organization was similar to Bliss', including an emphasis on small dollar donations and programs to train state and local party leaders (his Advisory Committee on Political Organization paralleled Bliss' efforts in many respects). In addition, Butler organized the Democratic Advisory Council, an out-party policy council that resembled the Republican Coordinating Committee during Bliss' tenure.

There were, however, striking differences between Butler and Bliss. Butler was a self-conscious advocate of the "responsible party model" and saw himself, the out-party chairman, as the natural policy spokesperson for the "loyal opposition." Unlike Bliss, Butler put primary emphasis on issues (which he labeled as "communication"), followed by candidates (supported by local issue activists), with organization coming last (finances, training, and services). Butler was an outspoken advocate of particular policy positions and enjoyed controversy, a practitioner of the "new politics of ideas" associated with Adlai Stevenson and the emerging amateur Democratic activists. The essence of the Butler model was vigorous intra-party debate over issues, followed by public proclamations once consensus was achieved.

To the chagrin of many congressional Democrats and state and local Democratic leaders, Butler was closely allied with the Northern liberal "presidential" wing of the party. Consequently, his organizational efforts often exacerbated the division among the disparate elements of the Democratic Party and his policy advocacy failed to build party unity (Bone 1958). Just as Bliss' programs were rejected by Nixon, Butler's programs were dismantled by President Kennedy, although some of his policy-oriented work set the stage for the party reforms of the late 1960s. Bliss apparently admired Butler's efforts, and drew both positive and negative lessons from them. On a positive note, Butler's organizational programs provided valuable examples of the power of professionalism, but on the negative side, his controversial policy

stands reinforced Bliss' views on the dangers of issue pronouncements by party leaders. "Butler did as much as anyone to elect Kennedy," Bliss is reported to have remarked, "but the Democrat Party was left in shambles after the election."[3]

One of Butler's proximate successors, John Bailey, more closely resembled Bliss in practice and style, though not in national party development. In the selection reprinted here, Joseph Lieberman (chapter 8), Bailey's biographer, reveals that his professionalism as the Connecticut Democratic Party chairman closely resembled Bliss' in Ohio. Note for example, the deference to local party leaders, the careful consultation and thorough preparation, and the emphasis on party unity. Like Bliss, Bailey was known for his honesty and integrity, and the trust he inspired in friends and foes alike. Indeed, Bliss and Bailey used many of the same catch phrases to describe their personal values, such as "There are no written contracts in politics. Your word is your bond."

On the other hand, there were some key differences between the "boss" of Connecticut and the "organization man" from Ohio. Unlike Bliss, Bailey put the greatest emphasis on developing good candidates, who were both capable and popular enough to help the entire ticket. Lieberman finds Bailey's "real magic" was the skill with which he secured nominations for his chosen candidates. Good issues came next, and to develop them, Bailey was actively involved in the halls of government, particularly the state legislature, developing either a solid record or an attractive alternative program for his candidates to take to the voters. Ironically, Bailey, like Bliss, has often been regarded as uninterested in policy matters (Cotter and Hennessy 1964:87-88). As with Butler, party organization received the least emphasis. Bailey's state headquarters was apparently not as professional and sophisticated as Bliss' in Ohio, but the Connecticut organization shared the same kind of connections with the local party units and candidates.

Unlike Bliss and Butler, Bailey was national chair when his party held the White House, and he served under two different presidents. Consequently, Bailey's scope of operation was closely circumscribed, a situation he found immensely frustrating (Lieberman 1966:313-337). Bailey's principal role was to communicate with the Democratic "bosses" and other state and local Democratic parties and serve as a cheerleader for the Democratic cause. Although he did some organization building and outreach to state and local parties (his "Operation Know-How" resembled Bliss' training programs on a much smaller scale), Bailey was increasingly ignored and circumvented by the White House, particularly under President Johnson, who put his own people in key places in the DNC. Bailey and Bliss served in Washington contemporaneously and were good friends. Reflecting on his situation, Bailey is reported to have said to Bliss: "Ray, you are getting along pretty well, you're winning, and making some big changes. My advice is never have a president to deal with."

Among Bliss' DNC counterparts, Lawrence O'Brien was probably the least like Bliss in style and philosophy, but shared a similar professionalism, as evident in the selection from his autobiography reprinted here (chapter 9). Unlike Bliss, Butler or Bailey, O'Brien did not rise to prominence as a party leader, but worked his way up by attachment to candidates and office-holders, beginning with the senatorial campaigns of John Kennedy, followed by work in the 1960, 1964 and 1968 presidential campaigns, and serving in the White House and Cabinet. But O'Brien's chief political functions were to implement the "nuts-and-bolts" of political organization (his "O'Brien Manual" of campaign organization is strikingly similar to Bliss' "Elements of Victory") and to serve as liaison with the "regular" Democratic Party (in a fashion parallel to Bliss' mobilization of the GOP regulars).

O'Brien served briefly as DNC chair during the 1968 campaign and returned in 1970 to rescue his party from the dissention that followed the 1968 defeat, much as Bliss had done after 1964. Like Bailey, O'Brien put the greatest emphasis on developing good candidates. And like Butler (but unlike Bliss), O'Brien saw the national chairmanship as a forum for leadership and he spoke for the party on controversial matters with great relish. Following Butler and Bailey, he placed the least emphasis on organization, although he shared with Bliss a deep concern of professionalism and for party unity. Indeed, his professionalism is most evident in his approach to party reform, which came to a head during his DNC tenure and overshadowed other matters.

Although O'Brien viewed himself as a reformer, his principal objective was to build party unity, an approach similar to Bliss' efforts at the RNC. In the reform process, O'Brien's strategy was to give "symbolic" rules changes to the reformers and "tangible" personnel, who would interpret and enforce the rules, to the party "regulars." This strategy succeeded brilliantly in the short run, and the Democratic reforms would not have been implemented as quickly or completely without O'Brien's efforts. However, the newly adopted rules allowed the expressive impulses unleashed during the 1972 campaign to undermine O'Brien and other party regulars, much to their surprise and dismay (Shafer 1983). Bliss regarded O'Brien as a worthy opponent in 1968, and appreciated his dilemma in the reform process. He is reported to have remarked "O'Brien had the right idea on unity, but the reforms got away from him. It would have been better if he had dealt with the [Vietnam] War and other matters directly instead with quotas and rules." Interestingly, Bliss later served on the "Rule 29 Committee" to consider similar changes for the GOP, where he argued against following the Democrats path.

In sum, then, Bliss' professionalism was not unusual for his era, and several national chairs in both parties shared his professional values and/or goals. However, Bliss differed from them in two key respects: he served in office at a time propitious for change, and he had a more fully developed

model for party renewal. Neither Bliss nor his contemporaries were able to cope with the power of the presidency, but their successors may have made some progress in this regard.

## National Party Development After Bliss

The chapters in Part III deal with party development after Bliss, when the process of professionalization was renewed at the RNC under Chairman Bill Brock, and then taken up by contemporary DNC chairs. Focusing largely on the period after 1978, these chapters also provide a different perspective on Bliss and his model. Unlike the earlier essays, these chapters portray Bliss less as the initiator of the present era of party development and more as the culmination of the former one. This scholarship finds ample evidence of professional values among recent party chairs, but highlights instead their *entrepreneurial* goals, namely their willingness to undertake risky party building in return for personal advancement. Such entrepreneurship is compatible with either expressive or professional goals, but in recent times there has been an accent on the latter. Indeed, most of these authors find the professionalism of the national parties excessive, arguing, as one author puts it, that the national parties are now best described as "power without politics" instead of the other way around (chapter 11).

This section begins with Philip Klinkner's comparison of Ray Bliss and Bill Brock (chapter 10). To Klinkner, Bliss was an example the traditional party chair described by Cotter and Hennessy, operating within the constraints of a decentralized party, which he did little to overcome. In contrast, Bill Brock was a bold entrepreneur who overcame traditional party fragmentation and centralized power in the RNC. While other scholars see the Brock program as basically extension of Bliss' on a grander scale (see chapters 2 and 3), Klinkner sees a sharper distinction between the two: it was Brock's greater entrepreneurship that best accounts for the broader scope and the greater permanence of his programs, rather more favorable political circumstances.

Klinkner draws many contrasts between Brock and Bliss. To begin with, unlike Bliss, Brock did not rise through the party ranks to become RNC chair. He spent his career as an office-holder, and he was chosen in a contested election against rivals from other ideological factions, as opposed to Bliss' unanimous election. Once in office, Brock used Bliss-like programs for state and local parties and new programs for state and local candidates to centralize power within the RNC. In contrast to Bliss, Brock was very aggressive in pursuing his centralization, even backing favored candidates in contested primaries. However, the largest difference between Brock and Bliss was the former's public engagement in policy debates. Arguing that the GOP

should be a "party of ideas," he established policy forums and publications at the RNC which together produced a vigorous debate on the party's direction. Unlike Bliss' behind-the-scenes role with the Republican Coordinating Committee, Brock stood at the center of this process and consciously sought to change the GOP's image.

Brock altered Bliss' hierarchy of organization, candidates and issues by giving equal emphasis to each. Ray Bliss enjoyed a cordial relationship with Bill Brock, serving as an unofficial advisor on numerous matters, and generally approved of Brock's programmatic efforts. However, Bliss is reported to have been concerned that Brock's emphases on candidates and issues would produce a "hollow core" below the presidency, and hurt Republican fortunes at the state and local levels.

Tim Hames reports some of these problems Bliss foresaw in his description of the maintenance of Brock's programs by his RNC successors, Richard Richards and Frank Fahrenkopf (chapter 11). While Hames shares with Klinkner a limited view of Bliss' activities, he is also skeptical of Brock's entrepreneurship, arguing that his successes were due in part to the availability of unprecedented financial resources and legal changes that made party organizations valuable to presidential campaigns. The unusual vitality of the RNC under Presidents Reagan and Bush reflects these factors, plus the ability of a professionalized party organization to exploit them.

During the 1980s the RNC was increasingly bedeviled by many constraints that Bliss would have recognized, including financial woes, uncooperative state and local parties, and the debilitating effects of the presidency (Independent Network Interview 1983). Brock's efforts required enormous sums of money, but the surpluses of the late 1970s could not be maintained indefinitely. Building state and local parties from Washington also proved to be much more difficult than anticipated. Finally, presidential candidates' use of party committees was often detrimental to the organizations themselves. Under these pressures Bliss' hierarchy of organization, candidates, and issues, already "equalized" under Brock, was re-configured to put candidates first, followed by issues, and then organization. And the results were as Bliss might have predicted: failure to extend the presidential successes of the 1980s to Republican gains at the congressional, state and local levels, and eventual problems even at the presidential level (Margolis and Green 1993:49-52).

During this period the GOP also faced increasing competition from the Democratic Party, resulting from successful professionalization described by David Menefee-Libey (chapter 12). Both the circumstances and the pattern of this development are strikingly like those in the GOP: electoral defeats brought forth two successive entrepreneurial party builders, Charles Manatt and Paul Kirk, whose efforts closely resembled those of Ray Bliss and Bill Brock, respectively. Indeed, the principal difference is that Democratic party building was not interrupted by gaining control of the White House. Both

Manatt and Kirk emphasized professional goals and professional values, first moving away from the ideological factionalism that had become institutionalized at the DNC during the 1970s, and then instituting a modern party headquarters, programs to strengthen state and local committees, and sophisticated services for candidates. These activities continued under Ron Brown (Margolis and Green 1993:52-54), resulting in a change in emphasis paralleling those at the RNC (as well as John Bailey's and Larry O'Brien's earlier approaches): candidates first, followed by issues, and then organization.

Paul Herrnson concludes Part III with a typology of the party organizational developments since the 1960s. Herrnson describes four kinds of institutional change: party "reform" and "reorientation" (formal versus informal alteration of party rules), and party "renewal" and "reinforcement" (formal versus informal alteration of party organization). Herrnson sees Bill Brock as an agent of party renewal and Ray Bliss as an agent of reinforcement. Democratic leaders after 1968 are an example of reformers and Barry Goldwater in 1964 is identified a reorienter, although an equally good example for the Democrats would be Paul Butler.

Among other things, this formulation identifies the source of increased professionalism: it comes to the fore when major electoral defeats raise questions about a party's capacity to wage effective campaigns. Party renewal occurs when party leaders with entrepreneurial goals respond by centralizing power within the party. In contrast, leaders with non-entrepreneurial goals respond by running the existing organization more efficiently, but leaving power relationships largely unchanged. Thus professional values are important to both kinds of change, while professional goals may or may not be present, depending on the orientation of the entrepreneur. In contrast, increased amateurism occurs when narrow defeats destabilize a party's coalition, and in an analogous fashion, entrepreneurial leaders generate reform rather than reorientation. In either case, then, it is entrepreneurship that makes party developments permanently influential.

What accounts for the different assessments of Ray Bliss in Parts I and II on the one hand, and Part III on the other? Disagreements over factual matters certainly play an important role.[5] But there is a generational difference at work here as well: older scholars, many of whom knew and worked with Bliss, offer a more positive assessment of his achievements in light of the standards of his time, while younger scholars, steeped in the present era of nationalized parties, see Bliss' work as modest by contemporary standards. Finally, there is also a difference in the topics emphasized. The earlier chapters give as much attention to Bliss' performance as a party leader as the institutional changes he brought about, while the later chapters focus mostly on the institutional changes achieved by the next generation of party leaders and pay little attention to the performance of the chair. But however

one assesses Bliss, it is clear that professionalism, in one form or another, was central to the increased influence of national party committees. Indeed, professionalism was probably more important in this regard than the expressive impulses associated with party reform that have received more attention.

## Factions and Organization

The chapters in Part IV concern the expressive impulses that have opposed professional goals for the last thirty years and that have often been at odds with professional values as well. This tension, particularly in the form of ideological factions, has became more common precisely during the period that national party organizations became more professionalized. In fact, both tendencies may be integral parts of the candidate-centered politics that now characterizes American politics. Each chapter reports on a particular collision between the expressive and professional trends in national party organizations.

John Pitney (chapter 14) offers an account of the ideas developed by the Republican Coordinating Committee (RCC), an out-party policy committee that operated under the direction of Ray Bliss. Focusing on the consensus building that took place among GOP factions, Pitney shows the RCC to have been a text book example of the application of professional goals to party policy making, and he enumerates its successes and failures. On the positive side, the RCC developed a distinctive alternative to the Democratic domestic agenda, an alternative that Pitney argues is still largely relevant in the 1990s. But on the negative side, the Republicans most committed to this new agenda, the liberal to moderate factions, represented by Presidents Nixon, Ford and Bush (the last two were RCC alumni), were never able to implement it successfully. And the electoral success of the more expressive, right-wing factions under Ronald Reagan (also an RCC alumnus) did not advance this domestic agenda either. Indeed, the combination of policy consensus and electoral success has eluded the GOP.

Jon Hale's discussion of the Democrats' long search for an effective message over the same period reveals similar difficulties (chapter 15). Hale argues that the Democrats have tried a variety of messages with little long-term success, from the New Politics to Neoliberalism to the New Covenant, with candidate-specific, personal messages interspersed. More often than not, the Democrats failed to obtain intra-party consensus as well as electoral success, but even when they won elections, as with Jimmy Carter, they had little consensus on how to govern. Thus, although the GOP was more successful in presidential elections, it may have been no more successful once in office. As many analysts have noted, however, the reverse holds for congressional and state-level offices, where the Democrats have tended to win,

but found it difficult to govern, while the Republicans have had both kinds of problems.

The conventional explanation for the patterns discussed by Pitney and Hale revolves around the diversity of each party's coalitions. Green and Guth offer a partial challenge to this position in their analysis of ideological factions among a broad slice of activists in both parties (chapter 16). They find that Republican activists are actually more diverse in important ways than their Democratic counterparts, and that they have achieved greater unity largely by political means. Green and Guth find that attitudes towards parties make an important contribution towards coalition building: support for party organizations and commitment to professional goals increase coalition building in both parties, while concern for policy and expressive goals decrease coalition building. These factors played out differently in each party because of their activist coalitions were structured differently. Democratic activists are characterized by an ideologically drive factionalism, with fewer factions but lower levels of support for party, while the Republicans are characterized by a party-driven factionalism, with more factions but greater support for party.

Ray Bliss and other professional party leaders would not be surprised by these findings on coalition building, but they might be taken aback by Steven Frantzich's analysis of the impact of party resources (chapter 17). Frantzich argues that professionalism can have two kinds of effects on party performance: it can enhance competitiveness, the ability to win elections, and/or it can enhance coherence, the ability to govern effectively. All told, Frantzich finds that the goals, activities and effects of party campaign contributions increase the competitiveness of congressional candidates in both parties. However, Frantzich finds the increase in party resources and the skill with which they are used has not increased the coherence of the congressional parties at all. Until professional activities are used to foster party unity, argues Frantzich, the goal of coherent and competitive parties will not be realized.

Thus, we end where we began. Over the last three decades, national party organizations have become stronger and more important institutions, largely as the result of increased application of professional values. Party policy making remains problematic, however, with the application of professional goals uneven and often ineffective. Indeed, candidate-centered politics, aided and abetted in many instances by professional parties, and the expressive impulses associated with candidates, particularly at the presidential level, may conspire together to limit the development of fully "responsible" parties. Thus, the move from "politics without power" to "power without politics" has been a mixed blessing. One suspects that Ray Bliss would agree with such an assessment, and look with both realism and satisfaction on his own contributions in making parties significant in the modern era.

## Notes

1. Recently scholars have noted that different professions have different political leanings. For example, the "new class" of knowledge professionals tend to be liberal and Democratic, while the "old class" of business managers tend to be conservative and Republican (Bruce-Briggs 1979).

2. Beyond such clear-cut divisions, there were also disputes between professional goals and professional values (as in bosses versus bureaucrats) and between amateur goals and professional values (as in social movements versus advocacy organizations). And the growth of candidate-centered politics has pitted full-fledged professionals against activists combining professional values and amateur goals. This array of conflicts bespeaks of the profound impact of middle-class activism on the substance, structure, and style of national politics (Brody 1978).

3. These and other quotations attributed to Ray Bliss come from interviews with Bliss intimates, particularly his widow, the late Ellen Palmer Bliss; and are memories of conversations with Mr. Bliss after his retirement from the RNC chairmanship.

4. Bliss clearly lacked the financial resources to implement his programs fully. For example, Bibby reports Bliss had only four field men at the RNC, but Wirt reports he had 10 field men just in Ohio in 1960. It is also clear that Bliss worked hard to raise funds, particularly by expanding the direct mail program already in existence at the RNC.

5. Three examples will suffice to illustrate these disagreements. Some scholars believe Bliss was unambitious because he did not pursue the national chairmanship, but others argue that he was actually quite ambitious, but simply pursued the chairmanship behind the scenes. Also, some argue that Bliss believed in keeping issues out of campaigns; other scholars argue just the opposite was true and that Bliss paid great attention to polls and platforms precisely because he believed issues were so critical to electoral victory. Some scholars see Bliss as uninterested in governing, but other scholars point out that Bliss strongly believed elected officials had an obligation to abide by the platform they ran on. When he could, such as in Ohio, he enforced party regularity, and when he could not, such as at the RNC, he spent a great deal of effort persuading elected Republicans to stick to the party's platform.

## References

Beer, Samuel H. 1978. "In Search of a New Public Philosophy," in Anthony King, ed., *The New American Political System*. Pp. 5-44. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Bliss, Ray C. 1960. "The Role of State Chairman," in James Cannon, ed., *Politics U.S.A.* Pp. 159-170. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Bone, Hugh A. 1958. *Party Committees and National Politics*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Brody, Richard A. 1978. "The Puzzle of Political Participation in America," in Anthony King, ed., *The New American Political System*. Pp. 325-370. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Bruce-Briggs, B. 1979. *The New Class?* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Cotter, Cornelius P., and Bernard C. Hennessy. 1964. *Politics Without Power: The National Party Committees*. New York: Atherton.

Cotter, Cornelius P. 1969. "The National Committees and Their Constituencies," in Cornelius P. Cotter, ed., *Practical Politics in the United States*. Pp. 17-41. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Cotter, Cornelius P., James L. Gibson, John F. Bibby, and Robert J. Huckshorn. 1989. *Party Organizations in American Politics*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Crotty, William J. 1983. *Party Reform.* New York: Longman.

Felice, E. Gene. 1981. "Separating Professionalism from Pragmatism: A Research Note on the Study of American Political Parties." *American Journal of Political Science* 25:796-807.

Frantzich, Stephen E. 1989. *Political Parties in the Technological Age.* New York: Longman.

Hacker, Andrew. 1964. "Politics and the Corporation," in Andrew Hacker, ed., *The Corporate Take-Over.* Pp. 246-270. New York: Harper and Row.

Independent Network Interview. 1983. "Thoughts of a Departing National Chairman: Interview with Richard Richards," in Robert Harmel, ed., *Presidents and Their Parties: Leadership or Neglect?* Pp. 90-95. New York: Praeger.

Lieberman, Joseph I. 1966. *The Power Broker.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Margolis, Michael, and John C. Green. eds. 1993. *Machine Politics, Sound Bites, and Nostalgia: On Studying Political Parties.* Lanham, MD: The University Press of America and the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics.

Pomper, Gerald. ed. 1980. *Party Renewal in America.* New York: Praeger.

Shafer, Byron E. 1983. *The Quiet Revolution.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Schutz, Charles E. 1964. "Bureaucratic Party Organization Through Professional Political Staffing." *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 8:127-42.

Wildavsky, Aaron. 1965. "The Goldwater Phenomenon: Purists, Politicians, and the Two-Party System." *The Review of Politics* 27:386-413.

William H. Whyte, Jr. 1956. *The Organization Man.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Wilson, James Q. 1962. *The Amateur Democrat.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

# PART ONE

# The Bliss Model of Party Organization

2

# Party Leadership, the Bliss Model, and the Development of the Republican National Committee

*John F. Bibby*

At the time of Ray Bliss' death in 1981, David Broder of *The Washington Post* observed that five Republican National Chairmen--Mark Hanna, Will Hays, Leonard Hall, Ray Bliss, and Bill Brock--had put their marks on history. Hanna and Bliss had been the great party innovators. Hanna had demonstrated how the GOP could organize business and money as a major source of campaign funds. Seventy years later, Bliss "welded on to that financial base the mass of small direct-mail contributions and showed how money could be sensibly spent to build local organizations, guide campaigns through scientific polls and use mass media to shape the party image" (Broder 1981).

The Bliss model for party organization was the product of decades of practical experience as a county and state party chairman in a fiercely competitive environment. While always a committed partisan loyalist, he recognized the shortcomings of his own party and was convinced that the polity functioned well only when there was vigorous inter-party competition. For Ray Bliss, the most effective way to achieve vigorous inter-party competition on a continuing basis was to have party organizations that could provide the infrastructure to win elections and sustain the party in its periods of difficulty. Candidate-centered politics, he believed, would yield only temporary successes and fragment the political system.

The basics of Bliss' model of party organization were described in his January 31, 1966 (Republican National Committee 1966) presentation to the Republican National Committee (RNC). The key elements of that model included: development of a strong and broad-based system of fund raising; recruitment of qualified candidates; professional staffs; attention to issue development; implementation of voter outreach programs, particularly for minorities, senior citizens, young people, and ethnic groups; implementation of voter mobilization programs; and integration of elected officials into the party organization.

Much of the Bliss style of national committee operation went dormant during the Nixon years as the RNC became an adjunct of the White House rather than a mechanism for party advancement. However, after the loss of the presidency in 1976 and Bill Brock's selection as national chairman, the ingredients were in place for the implementation of a much-expanded version of the Bliss model of national party operations. Through Brock's implementation (1977-1981) of the Bliss model on a large scale at the RNC (see chapter 10) and the Democratic National Committee's unabashed copying of the program (see chapter 11), the national committees have achieved an unprecedented level of institutionalization and integration with state and local party organizations.

Today, as a result, neither academicians, journalists, nor politicians refer to the national committees as "politics without power"--the apt, if somewhat exaggerated, description of these organizations provided by Cotter and Hennessy in their 1964 classic study. Both the Republican and Democratic National Committees have become and are likely to remain powerful participants in electoral politics (Herrnson 1988:chap 2).

## Early Efforts to Institutionalize the RNC and Integrate the National and State Parties

Prior to the Bliss chairmanship there had been a gradual trend toward more institutionalized national committees with the development of a permanent Washington headquarters, expanded staffing, and specialized divisions within the RNC (Cotter and Bibby 1980). The establishment of a permanent Washington headquarters with continuous staffing occurred during the chairmanship of Will Hays (1918-1921). Under his aggressive leadership, the RNC had many of the attributes of its late twentieth century counterparts (Goldman 1990:292). Although staffing after Hays' chairmanship was continuous, it often had an ad hoc quality with party notables and professionals coming in on a temporary basis to handle campaign duties. The election cycle (the national committees prior to the late 1960s ran presidential campaigns) imposed radical fluctuations on the national committee's workload. As a result, even a chairman such as John Hamilton, who after the 1936 election actively worked to strengthen the RNC, presided over drastic post-election staff cuts (Cotter and Bibby 1980:4-5). Further contributing to instability at the national committee was the unpredictable nature of funding and the RNC's dependence upon state parties for support.

Just as strong RNC leaders emerged after electoral defeats in the 1960s and 1970s, the 1930s also produced an unusually innovative out-party chairman, John Hamilton of Kansas. Like modern-day chairmen, Hamilton was a paid, full-time employee of the national committee. He travelled the

country meeting with state and local leaders, created the positions of director of research and director of publicity, established a systematic fund-raising program, published a newsletter, worked closely with congressional leaders, and encouraged Young Republican and women's auxiliaries. In an effort to provide leadership in developing party policy positions, he created the Republican Program Committee (1938-1940). While this party policy committee had the usual problem of members of Congress and potential presidential nominees not wanting to be bound to the Committee's positions, it did prove useful in getting Republican leaders in contact with one another and in preparing the 1940 platform (Goldman 1990:407-408). Wendell Willkie's removal of Hamilton from the RNC chairmanship, the electoral defeat in 1940, disputes over policy issues, factional maneuvering among Willkie, Dewey, and Taft supporters, and part-time chairmen prevented the strengthening of the RNC that Hamilton had begun from becoming permanent.

The Hamilton type of permanent, professional, and service-oriented national committee operation was again proposed--but never implemented--by chairman Herbert Brownell after the defeat of Thomas E. Dewey in 1944 (Goldman 1990:487). Indeed, it was not until Ray Bliss' chairmanship beginning in 1965 that a serious and successful effort to implement a program designed to expand the activities and influence of the national committee was put in place.

## Ray Bliss Assumes the RNC Chairmanship in the Wake of an Electoral Disaster

In the aftermath of the Goldwater electoral disaster of 1964, the RNC immediately became the focal point of intra-party maneuvering for control. Governor Robert Symlie of Idaho and other moderate governors called for the ouster of Dean Burch, the RNC chairman installed by the Goldwater forces in 1964. They were ably assisted by Nebraska national committeeman Donald Ross who mobilized midwestern support on the committee to elect another midwesterner, Ohio State Chairman Ray Bliss, as RNC chair. When it became clear that Bliss and his allies would not back down and that they had the votes to oust Burch, Burch and his supporters agreed to support Bliss as a party unity candidate (Hess and Broder 1967:39-42; Bibby and Huckshorn 1968:212-3).

### *Bliss' Personal Attributes*

Although his election as a unity candidate deprived him of the clear mandate that he might have had if he had defeated his rivals in an open floor

fight, Bliss did enter the chairmanship from a reasonably strong position. He was respected as one of the most effective and successful party chairmen in the country and supported by RNC colleagues who had seen his skills up close through work on the Republican National Committee (e.g., his chairing of the committee which drafted a manual for GOP operations in big cities). His integrity was not questioned and he had no entangling alliances that would unduly restrict his independence of action or inhibit his ability to treat various party factions fairly: he was not beholden to any one faction of the party; he was not linked to elements of Washington-based interests or factions; nor was he a part of the congressional system. Bliss came to the chairmanship determined to be full-time director of the RNC. He frequently told senior aides that he was his own executive director--i.e., he personally was in direct charge of running the committee. His attention to the details of committee operation was legendary and his expectations concerning staff performance were demanding.

He summarized his philosophy of party leadership while serving as Ohio state chairman in the following manner.

> In modern American politics, the primary role of state chairman . . . is to build a party organization . . . Whether his party wins or loses an election, a state chairman should build and maintain an effective year-around organization . . . A political organization must be a continuous thing. It must always be an alive, alert and aggressive operation. *Organization is a major key to success in politics on any level--county, state, or national.*
>
> At some time nearly every state chairman must make a basic decision as to whether he will be an office or be a speaking chairman, traveling over the state day in and day out making public appearances. There are both types. *I have chosen to be primarily an office chairman.* [emphasis added] (Bliss 1960:160-161)

As these statements indicate, Bliss stressed organization building, not ideology or articulation of party policy on current issues. He believed that public policy statements by the chairman would only further fragment an already-divided party and complicate the always delicate relationship which a national chairman has with party leaders in Congress.

When he assumed the chairmanship in 1965, the GOP was in a severely weakened state. Its electoral position was so low that political scientists were talking about the United States having a "one and one-half" rather than a two-party system (Polsby 1966:107). In June 1965, Gallup Poll reported that only 27 percent of the voters considered themselves Republicans. The party had been reduced to holding only one-third of the House, Senate, and governorships. Intra-party warfare and ideological squabbling were intense. In addition, revenues were depressed and the RNC headquarters staff was demoralized and racked by internal conflicts. To say that Bliss faced a formidable task of party rebuilding would be an understatement.

*Conditions Conducive to Strengthening the National Committee*

Even though Republican fortunes were at a low ebb when Bliss assumed the RNC chairmanship, the conditions that a far-sighted national chairman could utilize to develop the national committee into a major force in national politics were emerging. As an out-party chairman, he led the RNC at a time when the national committee's influence tends to be greatest. Without a party leader in the White House, the national committee, as the most inclusive party organization in the country, becomes a focal point for party activity, and its chairman has heightened visibility, prestige, and freedom to maneuver.

As a full-time, paid chairman, Bliss was in a position to devote full attention to building the party. This contrasted sharply with the common pattern of unpaid, part-time chairmen drawn from the ranks of Congress (e.g., Joseph W. Martin, B. Carroll Reece, Hugh Scott, Thruston Morton, William Miller). Bliss also had the advantage of becoming RNC leader at the time when there was a potential to overcome two major weaknesses that had traditionally plagued national committees--the absence of both a firm financial base of support and a political base within the states (Bone 1958:12-20; Heard 1960:294).

As Alexander Heard pointed out in his pioneering study of political money, national party leaders had "rarely conceived of financial management as a way to develop party unity and to build a stable organizational structure." Money tended to arrive in the heat of campaigns and was used to meet current needs. However, he noted "Any changes that freed national party committees of financial dependence on state organizations could affect importantly the loci of party power. If a national committee were able to channel funds selectively to lower levels, its role would be radically changed" (Heard 1960:294). Having conducted his research in the 1950s, Heard did not foresee such a shift in the loci of intra-party influence. However, the makings of just such a shift were already underway in 1962--developments of which Bliss and later Bill Brock, in particular, took full advantage.

In 1962, the RNC under the leadership of its executive director, William S. Warner, initiated a direct mail, "sustaining membership" (small contributor) program. This program brought in $500,000 in its first year and in 1963 netted over $1.2 million (45 percent of all money available to the Committee that year). The RNC was thus beginning to develop reliable, continuing, and substantial revenue sources of its own--a precondition for a permanent, professional, and service-oriented national party headquarters. With the national committee's dependence on state parties reduced, Bliss seized the opportunity that these new revenues provided to begin a program of national party-financed programs of support for state and local parties and candidates--a pattern of RNC activity that was expanded significantly under Brock's leadership in the late 1970s. Indeed, under Brock and his successors, the RNC

became financially independent of the state parties. Instead of money flowing from the state parties to the national committee, the RNC became a major dispenser of funds to state and local organizations. And with the power to allocate funds to state and local parties, the RNC gained leverage over state parties that it had never had in the past.

The RNC had also strengthened its political base and achieved greater integration with its state parties through a series of rules changes that made state party chairmen automatic members of the RNC. Traditionally, the state chairmen had not been automatic members of the national committee, but in 1952, state chairmen were made RNC members if their state had cast its electoral votes for the Republican presidential nominee in the most recent election, elected a GOP governor, or a congressional delegation composed of a majority of Republicans. This rules change gave Bliss, a leader of the state chairmen, a base of support within the Committee that many of his predecessors had not enjoyed. During the Bliss chairmanship (1968) this process reached its logical conclusion when all state chairmen, regardless of election outcomes in their states, became national committee members automatically.

## Bliss' Strategy for Improving Party Unity

### *Congressional Relations*

Bliss had built his reputation as a "nuts-and-bolts" organization person who avoided making statements on issues of public policy (see chapter 5). Yet it was through skillful handling of issue and policy development that he made a major contribution to cooling the flames of intra-party warfare that had raged since Senator Barry Goldwater won the presidential nomination of 1964. He became the first national chairman to be a formal member of the Joint House-Senate Republican Leadership and presided at the group's regular Wednesday sessions. These meetings provided an opportunity for Bliss to discuss matters of mutual concern with the congressional leadership and to plan the weekly press conference of Senate Minority Leader Everett McKinley Dirksen and House Minority Leader Gerald Ford. RNC research and public relations staffs were involved in shaping the content and staging of the Dirksen-Ford press conferences. Even though he was the ranking participant in joint leadership meetings, Bliss avoided making appearances at the press conferences. This was in keeping with his view that the people "on the Hill" should make policy statements. Of course, this eased the inevitable tensions that arise in national committee-congressional leadership relations.

*Assisting the Governors*

Bliss also accommodated the governors in their effort to create a headquarters presence in Washington. The RNC helped finance an office for the Republican Governors' Association within RNC headquarters, including access to printing, mailing, and communications facilities. The precedent for housing and supporting the Governors' Association within the RNC headquarters has been maintained by Bliss' successors.

*Republican Coordinating Committee*

The Republican Coordinating Committee (RCC) was an out-party policy committee that was proposed by congressional leaders, at the suggestion of House Republican Conference Chairman Melvin R. Laird, to counter a move by GOP governors to convene a special mid-term convention to rewrite the 1964 Republican platform. It was created at the same national committee meeting in January 1965 that elected Bliss as chairman. The RCC had a broad-based membership consisting of former President Dwight Eisenhower, four former presidential nominees, eight Republican governors, seven members of the Senate leadership, nine members of the House leadership, six RNC members, and a representative of the Republican State Legislators' Association. Bliss, as national chairman, was its presiding officer.

It was widely believed that the congressional leaders, ever-protective of their claim to be the party's policy spokesmen between conventions, never intended that the RCC should amount to anything. Bliss was determined, however, that the RCC should succeed and he provided the financial, staff, and political support required for it to function. Although he himself was not ideologically oriented, Bliss recognized that the party could not stand mute on the issues of the day. In addition, he recognized that, if properly handled, the RCC could help in building party unity for the 1966 and 1968 elections.

In addition to the strong support provided by the RNC chairman, the RCC was able to function effectively (even if its policy statements were a bit bland) for the following reasons:

(1) The congressional wing of the party was given a major role in all aspects of the RCC's work. Twelve of the original 29 committee members were from Congress. The congressional wing of the party, with the support of a handful of other RCC members, therefore, could dominate the committee. In addition, appointees to the six task forces that prepared reports on various aspects of public policy for full RCC consideration were cleared with congressional leaders and many task force members were recommended by GOP members of Congress. Drafts of task force reports were also cleared with appropriate staff personnel on the Hill.

(2) Bliss insisted that the membership and staff of each task force be balanced and representative of various elements of the party.

(3) Task force chairmen were carefully selected to avoid intra-party strife. This meant that some prominent leaders were bypassed for lesser-known figures.

(4) The format of full RCC meetings worked against intra-party bickering. All members had a chance prior to the meetings to suggest revisions of the papers being considered. More importantly, the presence of former President Eisenhower and Thomas E. Dewey (who did not suffer fools gladly!) and members' peers discouraged fractious activities. No one wanted to be accused of disrupting the party's moves toward unity; nor did the participants want to lose face in front of their leadership colleagues by firing either ideological broadsides or engaging in niggling criticisms of the task force reports.

In all, a total of 48 position papers were released by the Coordinating Committee along with a series of shorter statements designed to attract immediate media attention. The combined output of the RCC provided a basis for the drafting the 1968 platform. A further indication of the Bliss' success in using the RCC to build intra-party unity was the support which congressional leaders eventually gave to its activities. By 1968 the once skeptical congressional leaders had become so convicted of the RCC's utility that they were urging more frequent RCC meetings in order to present GOP policy proposals and launch criticisms of the Johnson Administration (see chapter 14).

*Maintaining Neutrality in Presidential Nominating Politics*

Because the national committee handles arrangements for the national convention and is a communications center among national and state party leaders, the national chairmen have been in a position to provide a boost to favored candidates for presidential nominations. Chairman John Hamilton, for example, helped engineer Wendell Willkie's nomination in 1940 by arranging for Philadelphia (a hotbed of Willkie support) to be the convention site, selecting the keynoter, and plotting convention strategy with Representative Charles Halleck, Willkie's convention floor manager (Goldman 1990:411-12). In sharp contrast, Bliss viewed such activities as divisive and inappropriate for a national chairman. He insisted upon headquarters neutrality in the contest for the 1968 presidential nomination. Therefore, he rejected Richard Nixon's request for RNC support for a plane that would carry the former vice president on a nation-wide speaking tour in support of GOP candidates in the 1966 midterm elections. Bliss also made it a point to invite GOP presidential candidates to RNC headquarters, where they met with him privately and were then given the opportunity to speak to the staff.

Neutrality in presidential nominating politics, however, does have its price. Candidates and their organizations tend to adopt the view that "if you are not for us, you are against us." Although the RNC provided strong support for Nixon after he won the 1968 nomination, Bliss was never considered to be a member of the Nixon organization and Nixon White House maneuvers designed to limit severely Bliss' role at the RNC led to his resignation in 1969 (Broder 1969).

*Expanding and Stabilizing the Party's Financial Base*

Bliss strengthened the fund-raising capacity of the RNC by recruiting General Lucius Clay to be chairman of the Finance Committee. Clay led the committee's efforts to build up its major giver program--the $1,000 per year Republican Associates program--through regional meetings led by Finance Committee vice chairmen.

However, the backbone of the Bliss finance program was the direct mail sustaining membership program which had been started in 1962. This program was expanded and by 1967 provided 82 percent of the funds raised by the RNC (Republican National Committee 1968:16). It also provided revenues to support Bliss' party-building efforts at the state and local levels. The growing importance of the direct mail solicitation also forecast the falling away of state party dominance over the national committee as the national committee became financially independent and no longer dependent upon state party assessments for revenue.

The direct mail solicitation program of the Bliss era appears quite modest by the standards of the 1970s and 1980s. At the time, however, it was a relatively new innovation that involved unusually high fund-raising costs. Ever the careful and frugal party manager, Bliss, therefore, moved cautiously in expanding the program. However, its expansion under Bliss was a major step forward in enabling the RNC to become an increasingly active participant in national and state/local politics.

## Building the Party Organization

By 1966, as intra-party sniping diminished and revenues flowed to the treasury with increased regularity and volume, Bliss was able to concentrate on programs to strengthen state and local parties (see chapter 3). As Ohio chairman, he had used workshop sessions for party leaders and state legislators; as chairman of the State Chairman's Advisory Committee, he had organized workshops on campaign techniques for his fellow chairmen. This format was extended to the national committee. It reflected Bliss' belief that professionally staffed headquarters in each of the states were essential to

electoral success. An emphasis on organization building was also considered an effective antidote to ideological squabbling.

The first RNC-sponsored workshop was held in Kansas City in early 1966. Bliss invited each state committee to send representatives to a seminar for research personnel conducted by the RNC's Research Division, which was assisted by staff from the Governors' Association, congressional offices, and selected state committees. The response exceeded expectations as 23 state parties sent representatives. Additional conferences were then held for research personnel and other headquarters specialists, such as communications directors. The following list indicates the scope and level of participation in these programs between 1965 and 1969 (Republican National Committee 1968, 1969; Hess and Broder 1967:49):

- Thirteen regional two-day Campaign Management Seminars and 12 campaign seminars were conducted involving 6,042 persons.

- Eight Big City-County workshops were held in which leaders from over 135 large metropolitan areas in the 50 states participated.

- Specialized training seminars for state public relations, research, and data processing personnel were conducted.

- Training sessions for party workers before the 1966 and 1968 elections involved approximately 20,000 persons.

- Day-long conferences on college campuses were held in 34 states to attract young people to the party.

- Minorities, Spanish-Speaking, Senior Citizens, and Nationality Divisions were activated.

These "nuts-and-bolts" sessions, as Bliss liked to call them, shifted the attention of party activists away from intra-party ideological battles and at the same time helped create the infrastructure for the 1966 and 1968 campaigns. The Bliss program of assistance to state and local parties did, however, have its limitations. The RNC could hold workshops to train state leaders, but it had little leverage when it came to making certain that the programs and actions it was recommending would actually be implemented. In the decentralized American party system of the 1960s, the national committee was restricted to working with the existing state and local organizations--including those with little inclination to move toward professionalism in their headquarters operations.

Bliss' ability to reshape state organizations into professionally staffed campaign service organizations was also limited by the fact that his financial resources were not nearly as extensive as those of RNC chairmen in the 1970s and 1980s. Although the RNC was financially strengthened under his leadership, it did not have sufficient revenues to permit large scale grants to state and local parties. Unlike Bill Brock, who used the lure of large-scale financial, staff, and technical assistance to influence state party leaders, Bliss had much less leverage over state leaders. A key component of Brock's and his successors' programs of assistance to state/local parties was a professional field staff of substantially larger size than was possible during the Bliss era.

To encourage and assist state parties in implementing RNC-recommended programs and to make RNC technical assistance more readily available, Bliss created a small field staff which served as liaison between the RNC and state parties. This field staff, which began operations in 1966, was the first to be created by the RNC for a midterm election (the National Republican Congressional Committee had operated with a field staff for some time prior to 1966). The RNC field staff, however, consisted of only four persons because of limited resources. It was not possible, therefore, for the field staff to monitor state organizational progress, provide extensive on-site assistance, or give financial aid to parties and candidates.

### Inability to Sustain the Bliss Model as the In-Party

When he left the chairmanship in 1969, there was a consensus within the party and among journalists that Bliss' programs had significantly strengthened the GOP organizational structure and contributed to the 1966 and 1968 electoral successes. However, like the efforts of previous chairmen to invigorate the RNC and state organizations, Bliss' model was not yet fully institutionalized. The in-party's national committee takes its marching orders from the White House. Sustaining the Bliss model of RNC operations, therefore, required presidential support, which was not forthcoming. After making Bliss' position untenable, President Nixon installed Representative Rogers C. B. Morton as his national chairman. Morton had been Nixon's floor manager at the 1968 convention in Miami Beach. The Nixon White House perceived the national chairman as a spokesman for the President and the national committee as a presidential campaign support mechanism. Neither Morton (1969-1971) nor Senator Robert Dole (1971-1973), who took over from Morton, were specialists in organization building. The speaking chairman style of leadership during this period was captured effectively by a map issued by the RNC entitled "503,800 miles for Presidential Nixon." It showed the places in 44 states to which Chairman Dole had travelled to give

speeches on behalf of the President between January 1971 and November 2, 1972. Clearly, leadership priorities had shifted from party organization building to public relations and playing a supporting role in the President's reelection campaign.

Organization building received a further setback from the Watergate scandal and the intra-party struggle created by Ronald Reagan's challenge to President Gerald Ford for the 1976 presidential nomination. Even during this difficult period, however, RNC Chair Mary Louise Smith (1974-1977) was able to maintain the financial viability of the RNC through the sustaining membership program, which had 300,000 names on its mailing list (Kayden and Mahe 1985:72).

## Implementing and Expanding upon the Bliss Model

Loss of the presidency, ample revenues provided primarily by direct mail solicitations, and the election of William Brock (1977-1981), a full time national chairman with a commitment to organization building, made it possible to reestablish the Bliss model at the RNC on a much-expanded basis (see chapter 10). With the chairmanship freed from White House domination, Brock was able to build upon the Bliss model to create a national committee capable of providing an unprecedented array of support services to state parties and candidates. Brock's unprecedented actions to expand the role of the RNC were made easier because Bliss already had demonstrated the utility of a service-oriented national committee and had sold party leaders on the concept. These same party leaders were highly critical of the Nixon Administration's neglect of the Bliss model of party building. They were, therefore, ready to accept an activist and innovative national chairman's proposals for a strengthened national committee.

Under Brock's leadership the RNC implemented multi-million dollar programs that provided state parties with cash grants, professional staff, data processing services, and consulting services for organizational development, fund raising, campaigning, media, and redistricting. Candidates in targeted races also received direct financial and technical assistance, some even before the primaries. Brock went so far in 1977 and 1978 as to pay the salaries of state organization directors through a program costing $1 million per year.

In a striking departure from past practices, the RNC entered the arena of state legislative elections. In its initial venture into this field in 1978, it spent $1.7 to support legislative candidates (Bibby 1979). These support efforts included giving cash grants, training campaign staff, conducting surveys, and assisting with media advertising. The state legislative program was expanded in 1980, with field coordinators working directly with more than 4,000 candidates (Conway 1983:5).

Brock's programs created an unprecedented level of interdependence and integration between national and state party organizations. These programs of national party support also shifted the power relationship within the party. The national committee now had some more leverage over state parties. Indeed, the extension of national committee aid to state parties has been likened to the federal government's grant-in-aid system (Epstein 1986:223). Just as the federal government's categorical grants require that state and local governments follow federal guidelines, the RNC also attaches conditions (albeit highly permissive and flexible ones) to the assistance it gives to state parties and candidates.

What is most striking, however, about these programs of assistance to state and local parties and candidates is the extent to which they have now become an institutionalized part of national committee operations. Once they were in place, they developed a constituency among the state parties and an expectation of continued assistance. Brock's successors, particularly Frank Fahrenkopf (1983-1989), not only maintained most of his programs but expanded upon them. Fahrenkopf, for example, continued a program of assistance to state legislative candidates and started a major voter list development program which was run through the state parties with the assistance of the Republican senatorial and congressional campaign committees. He also instituted programs to encourage Democratic voters to switch party registrations and Democratic state legislators to switch parties. In addition, RNC programs of assistance reached down to the local level with cash grants to county party organizations.

It is also instructive to note that the Bliss-type programs which are now such an accepted part of national committee operations have been maintained and supported even when the Republicans have held the White House (see chapter 12). Indeed, both Presidents Reagan and Bush have been generally regarded as pro-party presidents who have been willing to lend support (particularly in fund raising) to RNC operations.

The process of party integration and nationalization has been given a further push by the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA). By permitting state and local parties to spend without limit for "party-building" activities (e.g., registration, get out the vote campaigns, posters, buttons, and generic party advertising), the law has encouraged the national party organizations to transfer massive amounts of money to state and local parties for voter mobilization programs. These money transfers within the Republican and Democratic parties were estimated at between $30-50 million in 1988. They were directed and coordinated by the national committees and resulted in temporary build-ups of state party treasuries and staffs in key states in the presidential race. Because of the ability of the national parties to raise more money than they can legally spend on federal elections and the FECA's provision for state and local "party building," a nationalization of the federal

campaigns is occurring, the national party is gaining increased intra-party influence, and national and state parties are becoming better integrated.

## The Bliss Model Institutionalized

The institutionalization of Bliss' model of a permanent, professional, and service-oriented national committee can be seen when the present day national party headquarters are compared to those of the 1960s. Both the RNC and DNC headquarters of the 1990s bear scant resemblance to the one that Bliss inherited in 1965--cramped and dreary rented space occupying parts of two floors in the Cafritz Building at 1625 Eye Street, Northwest. Now housed in their own modern Capitol Hill office buildings crammed with staff professionals and high tech equipment, both the Republican and Democratic National Committees have become institutionalized as sophisticated and powerful participants in the political process. Many factors have contributed to this development, but as Bill Brock commented at the time of Ray Bliss' death, "Our present success is due in large measure to his devotion and ...leadership" (Broder 1981). His has been the model on which successful national party leaders have built and in the process significantly changed the nature of American party politics.

## References

Bibby, John F. 1979. "Political Parties and Federalism: The Republican National Committee Involvement in Gubernatorial and Legislative Elections." *Publius* 9:229-236.

Bibby, John F., and Robert J. Huckshorn. 1968. "Out-Party Strategy: Republican National Committee Politics," in Robert J. Huckshorn and Bernard Cosman, eds., *Republican Politics: The 1964 Campaign and Its Aftermath for the Party*. Pp. 205-233. New York: Praeger.

Bliss, Ray C. 1960. "The Role of the State Chairman," in James M. Cannon, ed., *Politics U.S.A.: A Practical Guide to the Winning of Public Office*. Pp. 159-170. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Bone, Hugh. 1958. *Party Committees and National Politics*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Broder, David. 1969. "Bliss Yields to Nixon, Resigns as GOP Chief." *The Washington Post*. February 19:A1,4.

_____. 1981. "Bliss Remembered." *The Washington Post*. August 12:A25.

Conway, M. Margaret. 1983. "Republican Political Party Nationalization, Campaign Activities, and Their Implications for the Party System." *Publius* 13:1-18.

Cotter, Cornelius P., and John F. Bibby. 1980. "Institutional Development of Parties and the Thesis of Party Decline." *Political Science Quarterly* 95:1-27.

Cotter, Cornelius P., and Bernard C. Hennessy. 1964. *Politics without Power: The National Party Committees*. New York: Atherton.

Epstein, Leon D. 1986. *Political Parties in the American Mold.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Goldman, Ralph M. 1990. *The National Party Chairmen and Committees: Factionalism at the Top.* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Heard, Alexander. 1960. *The Cost of Democracy.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Herrnson, Paul S. 1988. *Party Campaigning in the 1980s.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Hess, Stephen, and David S. Broder. 1967. *The Republican Establishment: The Present and Future of the GOP.* New York: Harper and Row.

Kayden, Xandra, and Eddie Mahe, Jr. 1985. *The Party Goes On.* New York: Basic Books.

Polsby, Nelson W. 1966. "Strategic Considerations," in Milton C. Cummings, ed., *The National Elections of 1964.* Pp. 82-110. Washington, DC: Brookings.

Republican National Committee. 1966. *Elements of Victory.* Washington, DC.

Republican National Committee. 1968. *The Chairman's Report for 1967.* Washington, DC.

Republican National Committee. 1969. *The Chairman's Report for 1968.* Washington, DC.

# 3

## National Committee Leadership of State and Local Parties

*Robert J. Huckshorn*

For 16 years, Bliss occupied the office as chairman of the Ohio Republican State Central Committee, an organization that has been described, with only slight exaggeration, as "a national force comparable in influence to Wall Street, organized labor or a major religious denomination." Even after the Goldwater debacle, the G.O.P. holds every state constitutional office for the first time in 34 years, occupies all but one seat on the seven-member State Supreme Court, and controls both houses of the Legislature.

David S. Broder
*The New York Times Magazine*, March 31, 1965, p. 49

Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that the Republican National Committee under the leadership of Bill Brock has put in a tremendous program to assist the local and state parties and to elect Republicans. This is the first time I can remember that the national party has ever done anything meaningful for the state parties. I want Chairman Brock to know how much we appreciate it.

David F. Norcross, State Chairman, New Jersey
Addressing the meeting of the Republican State
Chairmen's Association, Minneapolis, Minnesota
June 23, 1979. Personal Notes.

In early 1968 the Republican National Committee (RNC) published an 87 page *Research Manual for State Party Headquarters*. The first paragraph in that document stated: "Engaging in a political campaign without adequate research can be compared to making a complicated road trip without a map. It is impossible to plan the trip unless you know where you are and where you are going." That sentence and its sentiment are pure Ray Bliss. He truly believed in research as a major foundation of campaigns. He was not comfortable entering a campaign without knowing the voting history of the district or state, the record of past party performance, the success rate of candidates, the socio-economic composition of the electorate, and the prospects for financing and organizing. The desire to know those things did not make Ray Bliss unique. Political operatives had wanted to know such

things for decades. But, the willingness of Bliss to raise research to a high status, to build strategy around public opinion polls, to surround himself with researchers and scholars, and to take an early interest in the political benefits of technology placed him many levels above the other practitioners of the day. Furthermore, when combined with his belief in the importance of political organization, it is clear that Bliss was in the forefront of modern party building.

When Bliss became RNC chair in 1965, he was a near-legendary figure in the Republican Party as a result of his 16 years as chairman of the Ohio State Central Committee (see chapter 4). At the time of Bliss' selection as national chairman, David Broder (1965:49) quoted an unidentified source as describing the Ohio Republican organization, with only slight exaggeration, as "a natural force comparable in influence to Wall Street, organized labor or a major religious denomination." He noted that even after the 1964 Republican debacle, Ohio Republicans held every state constitutional office, all but one seat on the State Supreme Court, and controlled both houses of the state legislature.

Bliss' long tenure as state chair brought to the national chairmanship some unique qualities. Other national chairs had served at the state party level. Few, however, had constructed a machine as formidable as that built by Bliss and few had the string of successful campaigns and victories enjoyed by the Ohio Republicans. This feat was especially impressive given the high level of competitiveness between the parties in his state.

Bliss came to the national committee at a time when major changes were needed in the relationship between the national and state party organizations and he became the first agent of that change. After an interregnum of eight years, former Senator William Brock became national chairman and the second agent of change. He, too, set about to restructure the role of party and the relationship between the national and state organizations. It is significant that both Bliss and Brock served most of their terms during periods of Democratic presidencies, thus eliminating White House efforts to exercise party control and emphasizing the leadership role of the national chairman. Bliss first demonstrated the efficacy of national party support to state parties and campaigns, and Brock brought that concept to full fruition.

## The Era of State Party Hegemony

This chapter is about the relationship between the national and state committees. Because of the differing emphases the two parties have devoted to national-state party relations, the discussion will concentrate on the Republican National and State Committees. Beginning with the Bliss tenure as RNC Chairman and continuing for the next two decades there was a tidal

shift in relationships between the national and state parties. During that period, the state Republican parties moved from a position of control over national party affairs, to a subordinate role in which they were dominated by the national committee. Bliss was not solely responsible for this reversal of fortunes, but his style of leadership and his ideas about the respective roles of the two levels of organization were an important contributing factor in the development. Until the early 1960s, the RNC was not brimming with power or influence. Cornelius Cotter and Bernard Hennessy (1964) had just published their noted book on the national committees and had subtitled it "politics without power." For a variety of reasons, that was an apt description of both national committees.

First, the organizational structure of the RNC was such that it was nearly impossible for national party leaders to gain power or exercise influence. At that time it was composed of two members from each state, one man and one woman, and later was expanded to include the state chair. As a body, the RNC had no thoracic organs with which to sustain life. It was all arms and legs, fifty of them, pulling and pushing in many directions and defining national party politics as seen from the states. The RNC met twice each year to listen to speeches, pass resolutions, exchange political gossip, and endorse the actions of the national chairman, most of which had been cleared and approved in advance.

The second player in this game, when the party was in control of the White House, was the president and his advisors. They, too, provide direction for the national party leaders to follow. As noted earlier, during the Bliss tenure as chairman the RNC did not control the presidency, leaving him free to deal with the states and other intra-party groups. The same was true of most of Brock's term. Thus, the operations of the RNC, composed as it was of state and local party stalwarts, was dependent on persuasion and negotiation in order to develop any national direction or thrust.

As might be expected, in most instances the state parties were not anxious to increase the power of the national committee and chairman. Many of them considered the latter to be little more than coordinators and party spokesmen. Furthermore, the state chairs were assuming a much greater role in the national party structure and the national committee members, sensing a diminution of their influence, did not view the changing relationships with favor.

A third factor was the distrust that existed between party leaders of various ideological factions in the pre-Goldwater era. The existence of a number of important Republican leaders--Rockefeller, Percy, Romney, Scranton, Nixon--each with an individual following and each presiding over a personal party fiefdom, made it very difficult for a national chairman to build

the kind of coalitional support necessary to govern the party. Nelson Rockefeller was busy trying to fend off Goldwater incursions into his state campaign organizations. Romney was deciding whether to be the "moderate" candidate to oppose Goldwater's bid for the nomination. Nixon still retained elements of his long-time supporters and had not given up hope of someday becoming president. These rivalries opened ideological, regional, and personal animosities that made it much more difficult for the national chairman and the national committee to assume the leadership role envisioned for them by some (Cosman and Huckshorn 1968).

A fourth reason for the inability of the RNC to assert itself as a leader of the state parties was its longstanding and continuing rivalry with the Republican National Campaign Committee (RNCC), and to a much lesser extent, the Republican National Senatorial Committee (RNSC). At that time in Washington, many political operatives and journalists believed the NCCC was superior to the RNC in its effectiveness in public relations, fund raising, and ideological coherence, having a position a bit to the right of center with which most GOP congressmen could agree. With a more homogeneous and localized constituency, it was considerably easier for the NCCC to reach decisions, shift directions, and develop new thrusts than it was for the RNC. Again, however, this perceived weakness permitted the state parties to occupy a more dominant place than normally would be the case.

Finally, a fifth reason for state party dominance was the inability of the RNC to raise the kind of money necessary to organize a truly national party effort. It was not until late 1962 that the RNC began to implement its successful "sustaining membership" (small contributors) program. Prior to that, money to operate the RNC was paid by the state parties under a quota system based on a complex formula that was often in dispute and placed the national party organization in a subordinate position to the state parties. Furthermore, the RNSC and RNCC ran their own fund-raising efforts and, because of their state-oriented constituencies of senators and congressmen, had more direct contact with potential contributors. Former national Chairman Leonard Hall was convinced that one reason for the greater success of the congressional committees was that the RNC members in the states had lost control of federal patronage to the Republican congressmen (Hess and Broder 1967:37).

For these and other reasons the national chairmen who preceded Ray Bliss presided over a headquarters that was not perceived to be well-engaged in campaigning or vote gathering. While its operations were far from primitive, the RNC did not begin to approach state-of-the-art sophistication. Nevertheless, some selected units performed their activities with dispatch and with considerable expertise, such as the Convention Bureau and the Research Division.

**The Centralization of Party Control**

As I have noted, in the early 1960's the RNC was seen by many state parties as having only a coordinating and communicating role. Today, however, due to a series of changes since the mid-1960s, the roles are reversed. The state parties have not been diminished. Indeed, a number of prominent studies have shown that they have been strengthened both organizationally and operationally (Cotter et al. 1989; Huckshorn 1976; Conway 1983). But, the RNC is no longer in the subservient position that it once occupied in relationship to the state parties. A number of events have taken place that have brought about this change in relationship.

The most significant of these events has been a change in the financial relationship between the two levels of party organization. Today the RNC has assumed a dominant fiscal influence over the state parties by funneling millions of dollars to them for operating and campaign expenses. The campaign finance laws that have been passed over the past 20 years have encouraged the concentration of contributions at the national level. This, in turn, has placed the national party in a position as channeler of money to the state (and in some cases the local) party organizations (Adamany 1983:525-27; Conway 1983:10-15).

A second element in this changed relationship, partly conscious and partly a reaction to events, was the decision to forego emulating the Democrats in their quarter-century effort to democratize the intra-party structure and set standards for the state parties to meet in order to participate in the national party arena. Instead of the quadrennial dickering over delegate selection engaged in by the Democratic National Committee (DNC), the Republicans chose to build a stronger national organization to serve the state parties in better fashion. Republican political problems are at the state level where the failure to elect governors, state legislators, congressmen, and senators has stymied party growth and influence. Republican presidential candidates run their own campaigns, usually quite successfully, but to make gains at other levels requires that the national party provide aid to the state parties and that practice has gradually brought about a better appreciation for, and loyalty to, the RNC.

A third factor was the increased "institutionalization" of the RNC. This has been manifest in the development of a staff "civil service" that has stabilized personnel turnover and has permitted greater specialization and professionalization. That, in turn, according to Cotter and Bibby (1980), has permitted the national party to provide better and more elaborate assistance to the state parties.

Finally, all of this change was facilitated by the emergence in quick succession of two leaders who had the vision to carry it out--Ray Bliss and Bill

Brock. In 1965, the RNC had never seen anything quite like Ray Bliss. Recent leaders had been part-time incumbent members of Congress or out-of-work politicians awaiting their next opportunity. Few of them were able to spare the time necessary to actually manage the RNC, leaving that duty to the paid professional staff. Most of them were put in place as party spokesmen, not political organizers.

Bliss, on the other hand, was a true believer in the importance of organization and "nuts and bolts" politics (see chapter 5). He did not believe that a political party could succeed unless there was a full commitment to recruitment, training, fund raising, advising, and campaigning. The Ohio Republican organization reflected just about every one of these virtues. Bliss assumed the four-year term as chairman committed to bringing his brand of party operations to Republicans everywhere. He was in a unique position for a RNC chairman. He was a long-time widely respected state party leader with an almost unmatched record of electoral success; he was anointed for the position by the leaders of all major party factions and he insisted on being full-time and paid; and he assumed the chairmanship after an electoral debacle of such enormous proportions that there was open press speculation as to whether the Republican Party could survive. Bliss did not have a totally free hand. He had been around long enough to know that no appointed leader ever does. But because he was Bliss, he was about as close to an independent operative as was possible for an out-party leader under the circumstances at that time.

To defuse the serious ideological rift in party ranks Bliss appointed a top level Coordinating Committee to seek a more unified party position on issues. This stratagem, in addition to allowing serious discussion of ideological differences among party factions, permitted him to avoid the necessity of making policy statements that might distract from his ambitious organizational goals. He made it clear that the position papers of the Coordinating Committee would serve as the working papers for the Platform Committee in 1968 and he appointed Dr. Arthur Peterson, a long-time trusted advisor, to oversee the effort. To ensure that the recently emerged Republican Governors' Association did not upstage the RNC efforts, he appointed Dr. William Prendergast to cover regional platform hearings and the pre-platform preparations of the governors. All of these actions were designed to prevent further intra-party skirmishing and to build a new platform upon which most Republican candidates could run. These appointments and initiatives permitted Bliss to concentrate on rebuilding the party machinery. To do that he developed a series of thrusts that were designed to accomplish his goals (Bibby and Huckshorn 1978; Huckshorn and Bibby 1982; Price 1984 269-70; Saloma and Sontag 1972:64-65).

## The Bliss Organization

This plan encompassed four principal features, all aimed at the state and local organizations: (1) education and training; (2) technological enhancement; (3) expanding the electorate; and (4) fund raising (see chapter 2). In 1965 there were no state party organizations that even approached the sophistication of the house that Bliss built in Ohio (see chapter 4). A 1964 survey of state chairmen, conducted by Robert Agranoff and Edward Cooke, found that the most frequent contacts of state chairs were with their governor (if in power), other state constitutional officers, and state legislatures. Few mentioned the national party chairman. When asked which of their duties they considered to be of lesser importance, they listed electioneering, fund raising, and improving the party's image. Several suggested that party organization was their principal priority. It was those views, expressed by state party leaders, that Bliss hoped to address. Some of his efforts were more successful than others. But all of them laid the groundwork for the organizational skills brought to the national chairmanship eight years later by Bill Brock (see chapter 10).

Bliss believed in spending the time and money necessary to train and educate party leaders and workers. He had done so in Ohio and he expanded his horizon to the 50 states. The ability to make effective and knowledgeable operational decisions is important to a successful campaign. The decision maker must know the social, economic, and political composition of the electorate. He or she needs to understand the issues that affect the constituency and how best to approach them. To accomplish these goals, Bliss organized workshops for party workers, state chairs, fund raisers, legislators, incumbent officeholders, and non-incumbent challengers. These workshops were held in Washington and in cities across the nation. RNC staff and outside experts were brought in to conduct the workshops. Subjects included research capabilities, data processing, fund raising, public opinion polling, and aggregate vote analysis. Participants were urged to emulate their experience and disseminate what they had learned to their state and local colleagues. Follow-up telephone calls were made to ascertain the degree of effectiveness of the effort and to gather information to assist with future workshops.

### *Technology*

In 1966, only one year after taking office, Bliss authorized a study of centralized data processing. The staff of the RNC produced a handbook to explain in lay terms how computer technology could be used in politics. They developed a pilot program based on selected precincts and held training conferences to explain the system. All of this was directed at the state and local parties, most of which had little or no computer equipment. The RNC

produced a total of sixteen manuals and eleven computer programs to be offered to the state parties. By the time Bliss left office in 1968, 20 Republican state organizations were using data processing in one form or another. The RNC also had produced a series of technical manuals to assist the state parties in developing their own data bases. As an aside, I might note that as late as 1968 the RNC was also distributing a booklet describing the virtues of the mimeograph machine and the use of microfilm as a method of storing data. In some states, no doubt, that was considered to be high technology.

*Expanding the Electorate*

An underlying theme of the Bliss term was his belief that the Republican Party must improve its electoral opportunities in the urban areas of the nation and develop new ways to appeal to voters who lived in the big cities. He had been the principal author of the 1961 *Report on Big City Politics*, which promised an operational plan to accomplish those goals. After the presentation of this report to the RNC in 1962, efforts were undertaken to stimulate state and local parties to implement the detailed recommendations. Those recommendations bore the Bliss imprint and included full-time paid staff, field coordinators, expanded precinct operations, year-round sustained fund raising, and the use of modern campaign technology. They also included the development of research capabilities and expanded efforts to reach ethnic and nationality groups. Although the *Big City Report* was widely hailed as a blueprint for revitalizing urban Republicanism, little was done to implement it. It was not widely accepted in some areas which were predominantly traditional and rural, it did not appeal to some suburban party leaders, and it got caught in the pre-1964 infighting that led to the nomination of Barry Goldwater. Furthermore, it came at a time of serious financial problems due, in part, to money being siphoned off to the Goldwater campaign and to the party's inability to get control of the debt that remained from the 1960 campaign.

Significantly, in Bliss' maiden speech as RNC chairman in 1965, he reviewed the recommendations of the *Big City Report* and by mid-1966 had implemented a plan to put parts of it into effect. These efforts were built around what had become a Bliss trademark--workshops, conferences, seminars, and training manuals usually organized by subject matter (e.g. research, recruitment, fund raising) and by geographic area.

*Fund Raising*

As noted earlier, in 1962, during the chairmanship of Congressman William E. Miller, the RNC had established the sustaining membership

program for small contributions. This direct-mail based program was dependent on millions of $10 contributions and was a success almost from the beginning. Bliss appointed retired General Lucius Clay as chairman of the Republican National Finance Committee, the arm of the national party devoted to raising operating and campaign money. One of the goals of Bliss and Clay was to attempt to unify the fund-raising apparati of the RNC, RNCC and RNSC. Although this effort was not entirely successful, the degree to which unity was accomplished did bring about greater coordination of effort, avoidance of duplication, and better personal relationships between the staffs of the different party units. By 1965, the sustaining membership program had brought in $2.4 million (Huckshorn 1980:191-92) and by 1967 was generating about $3.5 million per year. In addition to these contributions, Bliss and Clay had increased the number of $1,000 contributions substantially. Nevertheless, the RNCC and RNSC, and their off-shoots, such as the Boosters Club, continued to raise millions of dollars of their own.

The success of the fund-raising efforts permitted Bliss to develop the programs he was most interested in for the state and local parties. He not only was able to pay the operating expenses of the RNC, but he was also able to fund the workshops and seminars for the state organizations that were so much a part of the Bliss plan. These activities also served as an example to the state parties and their leaders of some new and different ways to organize campaigns, run headquarters, and raise funds of their own.

Bliss' vision of a unified and cohesive competitive party was never entirely realized. Programs such as these are not easy to carry out and in a decentralized party system it is especially difficult. Some state and local party leaders resented interference by national leaders and some were resistant to any change at all. Even so, the four years of Bliss' leadership demonstrated to party leaders and candidates the importance of organization, fund raising, campaign technology, and, as ever, the "nuts-and-bolts" of politics. By the time William Brock assumed the party chairmanship in 1977, circumstances had brought wider acceptance to the Bliss style of politics and Brock made the most of it. When Brock took over as RNC, the Republican Party was at its lowest ebb since 1964. Brock, like Bliss, believed that the party's revitalization was dependent on rebuilding its state and local organization. But the Brock program far exceeded anything Bliss had undertaken and differed greatly in style (see chapter 10).

## The Brock Chairmanship

Brock's term as national chairman was dynamic and exciting. Much of his vision for the party was based on the legacy of Ray Bliss. It took the form of a series of programs that formed the basis of his rebuilding effort, including

making the Republican Party the "party of ideas," new publications, emphasis on building state party organizations, and expanded financial assistance.

*The Party of Ideas*

The rebuilding plan was directed toward the state and local foundations of the party. It was made possible by the success of the direct-mail fund raising and it sought to instill in the minds of the voters the notion that the Republicans were the "party of ideas." To demonstrate that commitment, Brock appointed five Advisory Councils on economic policy, energy and environmental policy, human and social concerns, foreign policy, and general government. More than 400 political leaders and subject matter specialists were brought together to develop a comprehensive program resulting in a series of pamphlets that laid the groundwork for the 1980 platform and campaign (Price 1984:40-41).

*New Publications*

As a part of his campaign to identify the GOP as the party of ideas, Brock began three new publications. *First Monday* was a monthly party magazine devoted to partisan attacks on the Carter administration and *Commonsense* was a new semi-scholarly quarterly journal dealing with public policy issues and containing articles written by traditional conservative Republicans and neo-conservative Democrats. A publication directed at local party officials and volunteers was *County Line* (Reichley 1985:188; Sabato 1988:80). A corollary effort to the publications was a television advertising campaign focusing on the parties and attempting to distinguish between them in the minds of the voters. These were among the most professional commercials ever run by a political party and the high hopes held for them were attested to by the $9.5 million price tag.

*Emphasis on State Organizations*

Brock also established a separate division at the RNC to work with the state and local parties and to assist with the recruitment effort in 1980. In some cases the RNC interceded in local races in behalf of preferred candidates, a practice that had heretofore been considered unacceptable but which received wide publicity when implemented. To assist with this program, 15 regional program directors and four regional finance directors were appointed to work with state party officials in coordinating their efforts with the RNC and the two Hill committees. One of their functions was to identify marginal races to which funds could be channeled. For two years, in 1977 and 1978, the RNC paid the salary of an organizational director in each state

headquarters. A new Local Elections Campaign Division at the RNC worked with state parties and organizational directors to identify marginal districts and seek candidates to run in them. Over 4,000 legislative candidates were identified and a staff of 45, both in Washington and the field, worked with them (Bibby 1980; Conway 1983).

*Financial Assistance*

Finally, the RNC provided both financial assistance and technical services to the state and local parties. The Finance Committee estimated that it spent over $6 million for state and local candidates and $4.6 million, the maximum allowed by law, in the 1980 presidential campaign. Almost $2 million of this was spent on targeted state legislative races and the three Washington-based committees spent a total of $10.3 million on congressional races. In addition to financing, the RNC processed nearly 130 public opinion surveys for individual candidates and it sponsored five nationwide polls. A program was implemented to give state parties access to the RNC's data-processing services and assistance was provided local and state candidates in advertising, precinct targeting, voter registration, and other technical services (Conway 1983; Price 1984:40-41).

## The "New" Party Organization

Upon the election of Ronald Reagan, Bill Brock left the RNC in 1981 to become U.S. Trade Representative. The RNC's activities were scaled back, as usually happens when the party has a president in power, but party leaders had learned from experience, and the reduction was not nearly as severe as in the past (see chapter 12). The value of the Bliss-Brock concept of party had become widely apparent and was much more widely accepted. An entire cadre of candidates across the country had learned what an effective party organization could do for them.

Ray Bliss and Bill Brock demonstrated that a well-financed national party organization, with dedicated and experienced staff, would have a major impact on the state and local parties as well as the campaigns of individual candidates. The national Republican Party committees had demonstrated a political interest that went well beyond the White House and encompassed the state and local parties. The national committee and the congressional committees had shown themselves to have a broad understanding of political organization as well as campaign technology. There have been some confrontations between the national and state party organizations, but on the whole, they have developed a mutual respect for each other's services and

capabilities. Most of the problems that have emerged in the ensuing years have been ideologically based rather than service/technology-based.

National committee leadership of the state and local parties must be measured by services rendered and attitudes changed. Two recent studies have demonstrated the degree to which the RNC has had an impact on the state and local party apparatus. A 1983-84 survey conducted by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations in cooperation with the two national committees elicited a 69 percent response from the state chairs (ACIR 1986:85, Table 3-13). That report shows the substantial impact the RNC's on-going programs have had on the state and local parties. With the exception of "voter registration," every other category of technical aid, including financial, polling, data processing, recruitment, training, and campaign management, was acknowledged by 60 to 70 percent of the state parties. That is a remarkable record when it is considered that only 15 years before Bliss' time fewer than half the state parties even had a headquarters.

The RNC's assistance was not evenly distributed. The Commission Report demonstrated that the cumulative types of aid to the state parties was targeted to those organizations most in need of it. Clearly, disproportionate levels of assistance were channeled to the parties of the South and the Northeast, areas with less Republican organizational strength. These parties have traditionally had the smallest budgets and greatest need for services, although the latter is no longer a problem in many of those states. The parties of the Midwest, on the other hand, have had the largest budgets and least need for technical assistance, and the ACIR Report (1986:84-87) illustrates that fact. National Democratic party assistance to the state parties in every category but two were at a much lower level.

The recent nationwide study of party organizations by Cotter et al. (1989), attempted to determine the level of integration between the national and state party committees and the level of state party involvement in national committee affairs. Although about one-fourth of the state parties reported a high level of involvement with the national committee, most reported very low levels of involvement. The obverse was true of the national committees and their efforts to influence the organization and processes of the state parties. Most of this influence, as noted earlier, was through the provision of services. As shown in Table 2.1, the Bliss-Brock emphasis on campaign seminars was the most frequently cited service on the Republican side and nearly two-thirds of the state parties had staff assigned by the national party.

The contrast with the Democrats was striking. The most pronounced contrast was the high level of service provided by the Republicans compared to the Democrats emphasis on rule enforcement rather than service provision. The DNC has had considerable success with a direct-mail fund raising campaign and in recent years has made strides in providing additional services to the state parties.

Table 3.1 National Committee Services to State Party Organizations

| Service | Percent Receiving Service Republicans | Democrats |
|---|---|---|
| Staff | 63.0 | 3.8* |
| Polls and Research | 44.4 | 7.7* |
| Voter Identification | 22.2 | 19.2 |
| Campaign Seminars | 88.9 | 40.7 |
| Rule Enforcement | 0.0 | 53.8* |
| Technical Assistance | 22.2 | 22.2 |
| Cash Transfers | 51.9 | 7.4* |

*Difference between parties is statistically significant at $p<.05$.

*Source*: Reprinted from *Party Organizations in American Politics*, by Cornelius P. Cotter, James L. Gibson, John F. Bibby, and Robert J. Huckshorn, by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press. © 1989 by the University of Pittsburgh Press.

The political parties have been challenged in the past quarter century to adapt to the new political environment. Under the leadership of the RNC, a wide-ranging program of change was undertaken that has had the effect of strengthening the power of that body, while at the same time enhancing the role of the state and local parties. Not the least of these changes was the inclusion of the state chairs as members of the RNC. While respecting the prerogatives of the state party organizations, the RNC under both Ray Bliss and Bill Brock began programs of funding and services that have modernized the party machinery and institutionalized the changes.

Most recent evidence suggests that the predictions of the decline, or even the demise, of the political parties are greatly exaggerated. The parties will be with us for some time to come and it can be anticipated that they will continue to emphasize their role as service providers for the state and local party organizations, a role pioneered by Ray Bliss.

## References

Adamany, David. 1983. "Political Finance and the American Political Parties." *Hastings Constitutional Law Quarterly* 10:497-566.

Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. 1986. *The Transformation in American Politics: Implications for Federalism*. Washington, DC: ACIR. A106.

Agranoff, Robert, and Edward F. Cooke. 1964. "Political Profile: State Party Chairmen." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Conference of Political Scientists, Madison, WI.

Bibby, John F. 1980. "Party Renewal in the National Republican Party," in Gerald M. Pomper, ed., *Party Renewal in America*. Pp. 102-114. New York: Praeger.

Bibby, John F., and Robert J. Huckshorn. 1978. "The Republican Party in American Politics," in Jeff Fishel, ed., *Parties and Elections in an Anti-Party Age: American Politics and the Crisis of Confidence*. Pp. 55-65. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Broder, David S. 1965. "Bliss Rides the Elephant." *The New York Times Magazine*. March 21:49.

Conway, M. Margaret. 1983. "Republican Political Party Nationalization, Campaign Activities, and Their Implications for the Party System." *Publius* 13:1-17.

Cosman, Bernard, and Robert J. Huckshorn, eds. 1968. *Republican Politics: the 1964 Campaign and Its Aftermath*. New York: Praeger.

Cotter, Cornelius P., James L. Gibson, John F. Bibby, and Robert J. Huckshorn. 1989. *Party Organizations in American Politics*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Cotter, Cornelius P., and John F. Bibby. 1980. "Institutional Development of Parties and the Thesis of Party Decline." *Political Science Quarterly* 95:1-27.

Cotter, Cornelius P., and Bernard Hennessy. 1964. *Politics Without Power: The National Party Committees*. New York: Atherton Press.

Hess, Stephen, and David S. Broder. 1967. *The Republican Establishment*. New York: Harper & Row.

Huckshorn, Robert J., and John F. Bibby. 1982. "State Parties in an Era of Political Change," in Joel L. Fleishman, ed., *The Future of American Political Parties: The Challenge of Governance*. Pp. 70-100. New York: American Assembly.

Huckshorn, Robert J. 1980. *Political Parties in America*. North Scituate, MA: Duxbury Press.

_____. 1976. *Party Leadership in the States*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Price, David E. 1984. *Bringing Back the Parties*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Reichley, A. James. 1985. "The Rise of National Parties," in John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson, eds., *The New Direction in American Politics*. Pp. 175-202. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Sabato, Larry J. 1988. *The Party's Just Begun*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co.

Saloma, John S. III, and Frederick H. Sontag. 1972. *Parties: The Real Opportunity for Effective Citizen Politics*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

4

# Ray Bliss and the Development of the Ohio Republican Party During the 1950s

*John H. Kessel*

When Ray C. Bliss became chairman of the Ohio Republican Party (ORP) in 1949, it was in real need of skillful leadership. Bliss supplied that in abundance. He was cautious, avoiding controversy by planning ahead and letting elected office holders make public statements. His style emphasized thorough preparation, the maintenance of organizational viability by providing services to clientele groups, and the early adoption of new political techniques. In this way, he built the ORP into a prototype of a modern political institution.

## Ohio Politics at the End of the 1940s

To the casual observer, the ORP seemed strong in the 1940s. Senator Robert A. Taft was a recognized national leader. Harold H. Burton had held the second Senate seat until President Truman appointed him to the Supreme Court. John W. Bricker was governor, Republican vice presidential candidate in 1944, and elected to Burton's Senate seat in 1946. But on closer scrutiny, there were clear signs of trouble. Senator Taft had barely been reelected in 1944, defeating a little-known Dayton attorney named William Pickrel with only 50.3% of the vote. And in 1948, Democrat Frank Lausche defeated Thomas Herbert to recapture the Ohio governorship he had lost to Herbert two years earlier. Lausche's victory emphasized Republican weakness; he carried seven of the eight metropolitan counties, and only lost Hamilton County (Cincinnati) by 72 votes.

It was in this context that Robert Taft asked Ray Bliss to become state chairman. The ORP needed to be rebuilt after the 1948 debacle, and Ray Bliss' experience as Summit County (Akron) chairman gave him the skills to develop party strength in the metropolitan counties. Mr. Bliss accepted, but stipulated that he was not to be responsible for raising money, and he was to be paid a salary and expenses. He thought the job would require full-time

work, and wanted an openly acknowledged salary so no one would say that he took the job to make money for his insurance business.[1]

## The Immediate Challenge

When Ray Bliss became state chairman, he saw two general problems. The first was the need for Republican candidates who had both ability *and* broad public appeal. The other was to revitalize the party organization. In the 1948 election, Republicans had lost every statewide office except state treasurer, and the treasurer was running for governor, so the party needed a full complement of candidates in 1950. Bliss did not offer party endorsements. He simply approached reasonably young Republicans whose capabilities had been demonstrated to his satisfaction and encouraged them to seek higher office. Bliss also worked through the party's speakers' bureau to give the candidates opportunities to make appearances across the state, and thus discover who developed support within the party. One young man was C. William O'Neill, who had already become Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives. Another was James A. Rhodes, a Columbus mayor who ran for governor in the 1950 Republican primary. O'Neill was elected attorney general in 1950, and Rhodes became auditor in 1952. Both were to become governors of Ohio while Ray Bliss was state chairman.

Organizationally, Bliss took a number of steps. He looked closely at what had caused the Republican troubles in 1948. County-by-county studies by the headquarters staff showed that there were about 140,000 Republicans, mostly in rural areas, who did not vote in 1948. The same studies suggested that there were about 150,000 potential Republican voters in metropolitan areas who were not registered. This led to an intensive registration and get-out-the-vote drive to maximize the core Republican vote.

There was an existing Ohio Federation of Republican Women, but it was not regarded as a particularly dynamic organization. Bliss created a women's division headed by the party vice chairman.[2] This new division brought women into active roles as precinct workers and held a series of local campaign schools to increase their effectiveness.

Beginning in January, 1950, Bliss held a series of round-table discussions in each congressional district. His intent here was to build closer relationships with the Republican county committees. As a former county chairman, he could appreciate the problems facing these organizations. After the meetings were completed, he appointed a number of field men to provide continuing liaison with the county committees. These field representatives were instructed to make suggestions to the local organizations, but never to tell them what to do.

The state headquarters staff was augmented. In addition to normal publicity work, headquarters facilities were provided for all candidates who wanted them. Since only Senator Taft and State Treasurer Ebright were incumbents, most other candidates needed these facilities. The result of all this was a state headquarters staff of 57 people at the height of the campaign. This was a very sizable staff for that era; the Republican National Committee had a paid staff of only 107 in 1954 (Bone 1971:154).

In addition to the party efforts led by Chairman Bliss, there was an extensive campaign centered on Senator Taft. There were Teachers for Taft, Doctors for Taft, Farmers for Taft, and so on, coordinated by Willis Gradison of Cincinnati. The Taft campaign cooperated very closely with the state party organization (Bliss 1960:164), and of course Senator Taft was campaigning hard himself. Nor were organizational efforts the only elements determining the election outcome. Taft's opponent, Joseph Ferguson, a Democrat who had done well running for the less visible office of state auditor, was given to malapropisms that were easy to joke about, and 1950 was generally a good year for Republicans. Even so, Robert Taft was reelected by more than half a million votes, and the Republicans won three statewide offices (secretary of state, treasurer, and attorney general) and recaptured the state legislature. Ray Bliss is certainly entitled to his share of the credit for that victory.

## The Bliss Organizational Pattern

By the time the Ohio Republican party had been through a couple of Bliss-led campaigns, an organizational pattern was set. Perhaps the best way to describe this pattern is not to focus on structure per se, but rather on the relationships between the state chairman and various groups on which he depended.

### *State Committee*

Ohio law required that each party should have a state central committee and a state executive committee, and that these committees should hold an organizational meeting within two weeks after the primary election. In practice, most of the work was done by the headquarters staff. The Ohio Republicans operated with a single committee known as the Ohio State Central and Executive Committee. At the organizational meeting, the ORP members learned what Ray Bliss' plans were (which was important for new members) and endorsed them. It was not a decision-making meeting so much as a ratification meeting, and a fair amount of preparatory work was required.

The ORP was organized into seven subcommittees that generally mirrored the activities of the headquarters staff. There were subcommittees on audit,

finance, speakers, policy, political research and development, publications and campaign literature, and a committee on committees. Mr. Bliss selected the members of these subcommittee after conferring informally with committee members. He usually reappointed members to the subcommittees on which they were already serving, but there was some shifting around whenever new members were elected.

The amount of work needed for the headquarters staff to prepare the subcommittee reports varied. The report for the speakers' committee, for example, concerned setting up a speakers' bureau at state headquarters. This was a routine affair, and the report required little work. The report for the subcommittee on publications and campaign literature, on the other hand, had to include plans for temporary and permanent campaign pamphlets, poll books, biographies of the candidates, and television and radio programming. It required a good two weeks for the publicity department at headquarters to pull this together.

Since all the work had been done in advance, the meeting itself went quite smoothly. The meeting itself was closed. "I feel the trick of having a successful political meeting," Ray Bliss explained, "is to have people there who know and trust each other implicitly. Then they will all have confidence in the situation and let their hair down. But if there is even one outsider there, any inward doubts they may have will not be spoken of, and thus go unresolved." Those who attended, though, said that the officers were unanimously reelected, the reports of the committee on committees were unanimously approved, and the reports of the substantive subcommittees were presented to, and unanimously approved by, the full committee. Not a lot of controversy.

*Candidates*

To understand Ray Bliss' relations with candidates, one must know what he believed the roles of the state party organization and the candidate to be. Roughly speaking, about three million votes were being cast in Ohio elections. In Bliss' view, the Republican organization could give any GOP candidate about a million votes, and the Democratic organization ought to be able to do the same for their candidates. The other million votes would be in dispute. Therefore, party activity ought to center on those things that benefitted the entire ticket, thus building up the Republican core vote. The candidates, in contrast, should appeal to independents and Democrats to add to the core vote, and should have strong personal organizations for this purpose. Consequently Ray Bliss did not see "Citizens for Eisenhower" or "Lawyers for Taft" or "O'Neill for Governor" committees as rivals. He called these "supplemental organizations," and was prepared to work closely with them in their complementary tasks.

Ray Bliss met with the Republican nominees for statewide office (including the formally nonpartisan judicial candidates) early in the summer to outline what the party could do for them. They would be offered the support of the headquarters staff, and given an office at state headquarters if they wanted it. A candidate for minor state office, say, state treasurer, was likely to have his only campaign office there, especially if he was not an incumbent. There were instances--James Rhodes's 1954 gubernatorial campaign--in which major campaigns were run from state headquarters. If there was an extensive separate campaign organization--such as Bill O'Neill's 1956 gubernatorial campaign--then a liaison person from the campaign would represent the candidate by being available at the headquarters office.

The party would provide the candidates with a number of speaking opportunities. There were three party meetings: one with all the county chairmen, usually in June, the Republican state convention in September, and the fall meeting of the Ohio Federation of Republican Women's Clubs. The headquarters speakers' bureau would also relay other invitations. (Candidates often preferred to control their own schedules rather than just accept invitations. By so doing, they could avoid traveling from a lunch in Ashtabula to an evening meeting in Cincinnati, 312 miles away.)

Several things were done to provide publicity. One was a piece of literature giving biographical notes, newspaper quotes, and related information for every candidate on the state ticket. A "temporary pamphlet" containing just the information on all the state candidates was put out for use early in the campaign. A "permanent pamphlet" came later. A separate edition of the permanent pamphlet was issued for each county, and included a sample ballot listing the names of all candidates for state and county office. A great deal of work was required to get the names of all the county candidates, but including the local names meant that it was in the interest of each county organization and all the local candidates to see that it was distributed. A parallel "judicial strip" contained the names of all Republican candidates running on the nonpartisan judicial ballot. State headquarters also issued lithographs containing pictures of the candidates. These were sent out to county organizations and were used to decorate halls for political rallies.

Each state candidate was offered financial support if he or she agreed to take part in an integrated Republican fund drive (to be discussed shortly) rather than raise money independently. During the 1950s, the amounts were said to range from $5,000 for judicial candidates to $150,000 for major statewide office. (The agreements by candidates not to raise funds themselves often fell apart either because inadequate amounts were raised, or because one candidate would start raising his or her own money and others would use that as a pretext for their own independent efforts.) Each candidate was given his or her choice of sending bills to state headquarters or taking a lump sum which would be added to his or her own campaign funds.

While Ray Bliss provided these support services to all Republican candidates, he did not try to tell them how to run their own campaigns. As already noted, each candidate was encouraged to run a campaign aimed at the independent vote, and to develop a strong personal organization for that purpose. However, Chairman Bliss was receiving a constant flow of information, both from field representatives working in various parts of the state and from surveys (see chapter 5). If a candidate was running behind, and therefore more likely to listen to suggestions, Bliss could, and did, give advice on how to repair his or her political fortunes.

*Finance*

Funds were raised in a single annual fund drive, as was customary for Republicans during this era. This pattern had been adopted by the Republican National Committee during the late 1930s on the advice of Carlton G. Ketchum, a Pittsburgh fund raiser. It was similar to what used to be called Community Chest, and is today the United Way. The premise of the community fund drives was that potential support was lost because people were tired of separate appeals from the Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, hospitals, and so on. It was hoped that donors would be more generous if they were promised that they would only be asked once, with the funds to be distributed to various agencies. Similarly, the party hoped to raise more by promising donors would not have to respond to appeals from individual candidates.

A separate Ohio Republican Finance Committee (ORFC) had existed since the early 1940s. During the Bliss years, it had a year-round office across the street from the ORP. The ORFC was headed by a fund-raising professional, often one suggested by the Ketchum firm. In addition to professional skills, having a separate ORFC provided a firewall between donors and the ORP. Few contributors asked that the party do such-and-such because they had made a contribution, but if anyone did they could be reminded that their contribution had been made to the ORFC, not the ORP.

A fund-raising drive would be conducted in each county once a year, with the goal being to obtain the funds needed by that county, plus the county's share of the state and national goals. The state goal reflected the ORP's operating budget, and the amount they wanted to make available for candidates. The extent of national funds to be raised in Ohio was determined by negotiations between the state and national committees. In the case of large counties, a field worker would be sent by the ORFC to act as an adviser. Once the ORP had money in hand, one portion would be returned to the counties, another would be sent to the National Committee, and further allocations would be given to statewide and congressional candidates.

Although Ray Bliss followed standard Republican fund-raising methods, his budgeting was his own. He believed that it caused a loss of fervor to put together a large budget, and then be forced to prune the budget if money did not come in. Instead, Mr. Bliss used three budgets, one for minimum needs, one for intermediate needs, and one for maximum needs. As funds came in, he would first spend for minimum needs, such as the campaign pamphlets for the state and county candidates. Next he would begin to spend on his intermediate budget. This included such items as television coverage of the state convention. Maximum needs, for example, sending a special Farm Edition of the *Ohio Republican News* to all rural boxholders, would be addressed only if money were plentiful.

*County Committees*

Just as Ray Bliss thought each candidate should wage his or her own campaign to add to the state party's efforts, he also believed that each county chairman should modify the state campaign plan in view of local circumstances. "In a state like Ohio--a big agricultural state, a big industrial state, and a lot of other things beside--you simply can't set up a statewide campaign that is going to be suitable everywhere," he explained. "You just can't reach down into all the crevices. The local chairmen must do that for you. You can tell them on a broad general level what your campaign effort is going to be, but they must modify it so it will be applicable locally."

When they arrived for their meeting with the state chairman, the county chairman were given packets with the information they needed. In these packets, they found folders entitled "roster," "election information," "meetings and speakers," "publicity," and "campaign organization." The information concerning rosters and elections varied a bit from year to year, but all of the folders indicated the thorough preparation Bliss thought necessary.

The roster folder contained routine, but vital data: the names and address of Republican state and county leaders, and a copy of state committee resolution specifying the number of delegates each county was to send to the state convention. The election information folder gave the chairmen maps of Ohio legislative districts, census statistics, a copy of the Ohio Constitution, and data on election dates and procedures. Forms to notify the speakers' bureau that a meeting was being held and a request to send a speaker, a calendar of state meetings, and a suggestion sheet on how to hold a rally were found in the meetings and speakers folder.

The publicity folder contained pictures, newspaper mats, and biographies of all the candidates. There were samples of the temporary and permanent pamphlets used in the previous campaigns, along with requisition blanks and

order forms to obtain needed materials from state headquarters. One mimeographed sheet gave hints about the best use of publicity materials, and another described ways of promoting the party at county fairs.

The campaign organization folder had sample introductions for candidates, descriptions of the various party auxiliaries (e.g., the Women's division and the Young Republicans), arguments to used in defense of the state and national Republican records, and four organizational guides. The most valuable of these was a mimeographed "Blueprint for Precinct Organization." It suggested a three-phase campaign: registration and polling, selling, and election-day activities.

As already mentioned, the candidates spoke at the meeting of the county chairmen, so the gathering included many political staples: a chance to get to see the candidates in action, and an opportunity to gossip and exchange views with their counterparts in other counties. But the meeting also illustrated Ray Bliss' approach to state political leadership: to impart information, to provide services, and to avoid controversy.

*National Organizations*

Political parties in the United States are knit together through both horizontal and vertical integration. Horizontal integration takes place at the state level through liaison between the state committee, the X for President Committee, the Y for Senator Committee, the Z for Governor Committee and all the other candidate organizations. Vertical integration occurs upward between the state committees and various national political organizations, and downward by means of ties between the state committee and county committees. Thus party integration can occur only if a state chairman maintains liaison upward and downward, as well as horizontally with campaign organizations at the state level.

Ray Bliss was an important liaison with national organizations for a long time, speaking for both Ohio Republicans and state committees generally. As is well known, he was nationally visible, widely respected, and was often spoken of as a role model for other state chairmen. What is less well known is the time he spent creating structures that permitted liaison between state and national organizations.

The first such structure was the Midwest and Rocky Mountain State Chairmen's Association. This was not conceived by Ray Bliss; it had existed since the late 1940s. Mr. Bliss did use it as a vehicle to promote the presidential candidacy of Robert Taft. Much of the Senator's support came from those area of the country. The Taft candidacy, of course, was ultimately unsuccessful, but the Midwest and Rocky Mountain State Chairmen's

Association survived, and Bliss became its chairman. By the end of the 1950s, chairmen from other regions were attending its meetings, and in the early 1960s, it metamorphosed into a national Republican State Chairman's Association, again with Ray Bliss at its head.

Another development in which Ray Bliss played an important role was the addition of state chairs to the Republican National Committee in 1952. The home state had to meet a political test (such as having cast its votes for the Republican candidate for president in the preceding election) before the state chair was added to the national committee,[3] but the addition of state chairs to the national committee was significant. From a national standpoint, if one wanted something to happen in, say, Pennsylvania, one could work through the national committee members for that state, but sooner or later one would have to contact the state chair. The state chair headed the organization that was going to have to do the work, and having him or her on the national committee aided the articulation of national and state efforts.

*Policy*

Policy making was not at the top of Ray Bliss' agenda. He prided himself on being a nuts-and-bolts politician. When he did speak, he was likely to address organizational questions. He certainly was not known for leadership of political causes. But Ray Bliss did at least two things that had policy consequences, and these should be part of the record.

One was the creation of the Ohio Legislative Service Commission. In the early years of his chairmanship, Ray Bliss had a man on the headquarters staff who had a clear policy role. His name was John D. Skipton. But as Bliss put it, "we shouldn't be doing that here [at headquarters]." So he spoke to the Speaker and the Senate Majority Leader, and they, in turn, caused legislation to be passed creating a Legislative Service Commission. Once this was done, John Skipton moved over to the state capitol as the first director of the Legislative Service Commission.

The other activity that had genuine policy impact was Ray Bliss' use of surveys. An early believer in the use of polls, he studied them very carefully. Of course, surveys allow one to see which issues are adding votes to the party column (or subtracting them, as the case may be), and Mr. Bliss' political experience gave him added insight about issues that would touch the largest number of lives. Although candidates were not always ready to listen, if they happened to be running behind they were more open to suggestions. And it was in just this way that "jobs" became such a central theme in Ohio Republican politics.

## A Few Conclusions

### *Themes of Bliss Leadership*

What are we to make of this record? What kind of political leadership does it represent? For one thing, there is not much innovation. I do not know of anyone else who used three separate budgets to maintain both control and flexibility, but to the best of my knowledge, that was the only Bliss practice that was unique.[4] However, there is unmistakable evidence of very early adoption of techniques that are now standard. For example, Ray Bliss began using college students to conduct his own polls in Akron in the late 1930s. Quite a few politicians were coming to rely on surveys in the 1950s, but even then their use was far from universal. Or consider the creation of a women's division to bring more women into active roles as precinct workers. A campaign manual published by the Republican National Committee in 1951 begins:

> There are several principles of political campaigning which should be understood, particularly by new-comers . . . [The] decline of the big-city machines and the thinning of the ranks of paid workers has brought a relative newcomer into politics--the *volunteer*, or average citizen recruited directly from the ranks of the public.

Obviously, Ray Bliss was not the only political leader who was aware of surveys or the need to recruit volunteers at the time of the first Eisenhower campaign. But whereas other leaders were aware of such things, Ray Bliss acted on his knowledge.

The dominant themes here are cautious leadership, avoidance of controversy, and thorough preparation. These are seen most clearly in the meetings with the ORP and the county chairmen. A great deal of work went into compiling abundant information about the campaign to come; outsiders were kept away; ordinarily Bliss' plans were accepted without serious questions being raised. And once the plans were accepted, Ray Bliss used field representatives and other contacts to make sure that the plans were being carried out. The fundamental difference between the ORP and other state parties is that the Bliss organization was a living presence in Ohio precincts. It was not a paper institution (see chapter 5).

### *Context*

It takes a lot of work to develop a party organization, but success depends as much on the surrounding context as it does on the quality of the organization itself. Frank J. Lausche loomed large on the Ohio political scene

for a quarter of a century. Although the ORP was successful by many criteria, Ray Bliss' organization was never able to defeat Frank Lausche, who won five terms as Ohio's governor (1944, 1948, 1950, 1952, 1954) followed by two terms in the United States Senate (1956, 1962).

At the same time, it can be argued that Ray Bliss was fortunate to be building the Ohio Republican party when Frank Lausche was the state's principal Democrat. Governor Lausche's political creed and his pattern of friendships were such that he really liked many Republicans. He summed up his own partisan beliefs by saying:

> All my life in public service, I have endeavored to do everything possible to give greater freedom to the individual and to improve his welfare. I have tried to do this within the limits of the Constitution of the United States. I do not believe that any segment of our society should be given preferential treatment by government. Within the context of this statement, I am a Democrat.

These are not the views of an unbridled partisan. Furthermore, he did not place much value on party organization. When he was a young lawyer, Lausche had learned his politics working in the campaigns of Vic Donahey. The Donahey style was to build on the metropolitan Democratic base by making unpublicized personal visits to small towns; this required personal effort by the candidate rather than party organization. And when he was mayor of Cleveland, Frank Lausche had broken with the Cleveland Democratic organization. Whether these earlier experiences had an effect, or whether Governor Lausche would have been independent regardless of his experiences, the Ohio Democratic organization was minuscule. Eugene Hanhart, Lausche's choice as Ohio Democratic Chair, operated with a staff of three: an assistant to the chairman, a secretary, and a receptionist. For most of the 1950's, Ray Bliss just didn't face much *organizational* competition.

Ray Bliss' fortunes were also as affected as any other politician's by good years and bad years. In 1956, with Eisenhower running for reelection and most of the state prosperous, the Republicans won every office except for the U.S. Senate seat that Frank Lausche was picking up. As Joseph Ferguson (the same Democrat who had tried to unseat Robert Taft in 1950) was watching the election returns being written on the blackboard election night, he said "I thought the Democrats were supposed to vote too." Some years later Bliss himself commented "That's the year we could have all stayed home."

Two years later, it was a different story. In a remarkable show of political obtuseness, Ohio businessmen put an issue on the ballot that would have legalized right-to-work laws. They did this in the middle of the 1958 recession, and just to make sure that no one missed the point, they refused to make contributions to Republican office holders unless they took public positions for right-to-work laws. Chairman Bliss and Senator Bricker both

met with the leaders of this campaign. Bliss did his best to explain why this was bad politics, and Bricker told them that if they went ahead, they would defeat every Republican, including himself. (The only previous Ohio election John Bricker had lost was in 1936.) The businessmen disregarded the counsel of the Republican leaders and continued with their campaign. When the votes were counted, John Bricker's political career was over, and Secretary of State Ted Brown was the only Republican able to retain statewide office.

Party organization, after all, has a marginal effect on election outcomes. If the electoral forces favor the party as in 1956, good organization may have increased the percentage of votes received from, say, 54% to 56%. If the same forces favored the opposition as in 1958, there was little an organization could do except temper the magnitude of defeat. It is only when the electorate is evenly split that good organization can tip the balance. To repeat, party organization has a marginal effect. Ray Bliss' contribution was to make sure this margin always favored the Republicans.

*Organizational Viability*

In their classic *Public Administration*, Simon, Smithburg, and Thompson explored the concept of *organizational equilibrium*. Among other things, they were concerned with *external support*, and the contribution it makes to equilibrium. "Groups and individuals outside [the organization] contribute political support in return for satisfactions derived from the accomplishment of the organization's goal." But since the social fabric is constantly changing "for organizations to survive there must be a continuous and delicate adjustment of several different sets of satisfactions and contributions to the conditions that determine the shifting interests within society. . . . Government agencies can survive only so long as they can continue to secure the support of politically effective groups in the community and continue through these groups to secure legislative and executive support" (1950:399,401).

Herbert Simon and his colleagues were concerned, of course, with public agencies and their need for support from clientele groups, the general public, and so forth. But their analysis of external support, and of the importance of external support to organizational equilibrium applies quite well to Ray Bliss' leadership of the ORP. His activities did not concern organization in a narrow sense: job descriptions, maintenance of good communications, organizational efficiency, and so forth (see chapter 6). Instead, each of the activities we've reviewed dealt with relationships between Ray Bliss and one of his clientele groups. He organized the ORP so its activities would parallel those of the headquarters staff. He told candidates about the support he could provide to them. He drew up multiple budgets to husband the resources provided by the ORFC. He informed county committees about services state headquarters could provide and encouraged them to adapt his

campaign plan to better suit local conditions. He worked with other state party committees in representing their interests in national party councils. In none of these relationships did Ray Bliss challenge the outside groups or threaten them with controversy. All of such relationships, he offered services valued by the group in question. In return, Chairman Bliss received the respect and support that cemented his reputation and ensured the viability of his party organization.

## A National Epilogue

Ray Bliss left the chairmanship of the ORP in 1965 to assume the chairmanship of the Republican National Committee. Once again, he was asked to rebuild a political organization in the wake of an electoral disaster. As John Bibby and Robert Huckshorn (see chapters 2 and 3) make clear, he used the same approach on the national level that he had employed in Ohio. Bliss continued to stress organizational development, working closely with other party units, broadening the financial base, paying careful attention to surveys, and strengthening the party through extensive training. He re-energized the organization so effectively that the party was able to take advantage of the change in political fortunes, and elect a president in 1968. Ironically, the election of Richard Nixon led to Ray Bliss' departure from the national chairmanship, and many of his programs seemed to disappear. But as Bibby and Huckshorn also explain, Bliss was so highly regarded and the services he provided were so appreciated by party members that organizational development was resumed at the first opportunity, by then Chairman William Brock. The strong national Republican organization of today can trace its origins to the Ohio state party developed by Ray C. Bliss in the 1950s.

## Notes

1. Unless otherwise cited, material in this chapter is drawn from my dissertation about the 1956 Ohio gubernatorial campaign (Kessel 1958). Since this volume will be a prime source about Ray Bliss' political career, I wanted my account to be as accurate as possible. I thought I could do better by using interview material from the 1950s than by trying to remember personalities and events thirty-five years later. Whenever possible, I used material from an interview with Mr. Bliss.

2. Lest someone take exception to my use of the masculine gender in titles such as "chairman," "vice chairman," "field man," and so forth, let me point out that I am using the designations of the time period I'm writing about. A "chairman" was almost always a man; it was understood that a "vice chairman" was often a women; a "field man" was usually a young man.

3. This test was dropped in 1968 when all Republican state chairs became members of the Republican National Committee.

4. Whitaker and Baxter, a California public relations firm active in the same era, typically drew up two budgets, a minimum budget that was agreed to and a maximum that might be used if necessary (Kelley 1956:46).

## References

Bliss, Ray C. 1960. "The Role of the State Chairman," in James M. Cannon, ed., *Politics U.S.A. A Practical Guide to the Winning of Public Office*. Pp. 159-170. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Bone, Hugh A. 1971. *American Politics and the Party System*. 4th ed. New York: McGraw Hill.

Kelley, Stanley, Jr. 1956. *Professional Public Relations and Political Power*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Kessel, John H. 1958. "Road to the Mansion: A Study of the 1956 Gubernatorial Campaign in Ohio." Ph.D. diss. Columbia University.

Simon, Herbert A., Donald W. Smithburg, and Victor A. Thompson. 1950. *Public Administration*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

5

# The Organization Man in Politics: Ray Bliss and the 1960 Election

*Frederick M. Wirt*

Traditionally, the characteristic mark of American political parties was their decentralization. Except for presidential elections, where one candidate could impose an uncertain and fleeting unity, power rested with county or city party chairs at the grassroots. Higher-level party leaders had only that power delegated to them by lower levels, and there was little enough of that. This chapter is a study of an exception to this generality, the role of the Ohio Republican Party (ORP) chairman Ray C. Bliss in the 1960 election.[1]

In understanding his role, we must examine Bliss' unusual utilization of the party structure and a wide range of modern campaigning techniques, both of which were enhanced by a special relationship with local party organizations that was neither command nor subordination. Bliss was not the usual state chairman who held office briefly, usually at the beck and call of leading public officials or dominant factions of the state committee, a fly-by-night barker for the party and its leaders. Instead, by 1960 Bliss had been ORP chairman for 14 years, maintained a position almost of civil service neutrality among party factions, and built the largest professional staff in the country.

## The Organization of State Headquarters for the Campaign

One of the conditions upon which Bliss insisted when assuming the chairmanship in 1949, at the request of Senator Robert Taft and other prominent Republicans, was complete control over the headquarters staff. In other states, where this principle did not prevail, appointments were often made by leaders of various factions, undermining the chairman's effectiveness. By 1960, Bliss had spent more than a decade training a group of highly qualified technicians in his principles of operation. Bliss' headquarters was based on functional divisions, with sections for legislative campaigns, field

workers, speakers, publicity, radio and TV, research, mailing and shipping, and clientele divisions for women, youth, farmers, and so forth. An explanation of these structures will give some idea of the elaborateness of the 1960 campaign organization in Ohio.

*Functional Divisions*

The Legislative Campaign Division coordinated campaigns for the state legislature. This division and one for congressional contests provided a number of services we will examine later. The Field Staff efforts, also explored later, involved 10 full-time field men working on a congressional district basis in the non-metropolitan areas. These men assisted county chairmen in expanding and stimulating local effort.

The Speaker Division provided the usual activity of findings and bringing in speakers, but on a large scale. For example, in the 1960 fall campaign, there were four appearances by President Eisenhower, several by Richard Nixon and Henry Cabot Lodge several times, numerous by nationally known party officials and office-holders, including the national chairman, senators, congressmen, governors, and cabinet members, and by various Hollywood stars. Ike's pre-election day stint was aimed at many undecided voters which polls revealed to be located in heavily populated Northeastern Ohio. Nixon's swings were planned to help the entire ticket, including several marginal congressional candidates, and others were used for key contests or groups. Each speaker was provided an itinerary and time schedule complete for every moment in the state, including suggestions as to key themes to stress or soft-pedal during appearances.

This was only the beginning of the campaign publicity. The separate Public Relations Division was responsible for many activities, including editing the weekly state headquarters newspaper, the *Ohio Republican News*, unusual in its long uninterrupted publication (26 years by 1960). Its circulation of 27,000 had two major targets, the mass media and party leaders down to the precinct level. This paper provided a continuous source of communication to all echelons of the party, interpreting the party line and reporting future meetings or recent actions relevant to party success. Drawing upon syndicated material and editorials (even polls unfavorable to Republicans were published to jolt the lethargic), the *News* was open to all party elements. It was not closed even to George Bender in his futile effort to get a primary nomination as delegate to the presidential convention.

The Public Relations Division's work did not end here. A literal flood of material focused on campaign events, such as distributing news of statewide meetings, arranging newsmen's credentials for meetings and speeches, preparing releases and campaign literature, and maintaining correspondence on a myriad local politicos in order to get stories for the *News*. When the

legislature was in session, this division transcribed weekly interview programs with GOP legislative leaders for distribution to 36 radio stations and distributed other news on legislative activities. Pictures of state legislators with visiting home county groups were taken and provided for local papers. They distributed a weekly column by Hal Conefry on the legislature to papers requesting it; Conefry also helped some Republican legislators with suggestions for their local news outlets. What stands out from this work is not its novelty, but the extent and depth of the coverage generated.

Headquarters also maintained a Research Division which suddenly blossomed at election time. Newspapers for years had been clipped for files on who said what or voted how, an ammunition bank for the campaign. Another research function was election analysis. In the summer of 1959, Bliss gave a meeting of county chairmen an intensively detailed report on the preceding and pending elections based upon state-wide analysis; this analysis provided the basic strategy for 1960, particularly in four marginal congressional districts where Republicans might expect gains. Other research involved the use of polls, either the more precise telephone polls or the less precise mail polls. The latter, which Bliss developed as Summit County chairman, were used for examining 60 legislative and congressional races. All polls helped shape state headquarters' decisions about contributing money or materials. Polls in the 1960 campaign showed about 10% of the voters undecided, and these shaped the crucial decision of where to bring visiting speakers in the closing days.

These functional divisions in Columbus shared office space with the clientele divisions. Blacks were stimulated to vote Republican by a special staff under the direction of William Walker, editor of the largest black weekly in Ohio, the *Cleveland Call and Post*. Farmers and veterans were similarly approached through special organizations. But the most work was done by two permanent women's organizations. The Women's Division, headed by Mrs. Florence G. Morris, vice chairman of the ORP, was responsible for training precinct committee women in Ohio counties by working through the county chairwoman using training schools. The Ohio Federation of Republican Women was headed by Mrs. Catharine Kennedy Brown, the GOP National Committeewoman. This group of over 37,000 women sponsored educational and social events which distributed information and built up party morale. Local committeewomen were often recruited from this group. Both of these groups cooperated closely with one another and with Bliss.

### *Money's Role in Headquarter Operations*

Finally, because no organization operates without finances, an explanation of the Headquarters fund-raising techniques is in order. Funds were raised by the Ohio Republican Finance Committee (ORFC), comprised of about 35

geographically distributed civic, professional, and business leaders, including Bliss; it raised funds both for the ORP and for the Republican National Committee (RNC) quota set for Ohio.

The details of this operation are worthy of note. The ORP was arrived at on the basis of cost factors drawn from similar campaigns in the past. With this and the state quota for the National Committee placed before it, the ORFC determined the share to be raised by each county, which were of two types. In one, called "non-participating," the county raised its own funds for local campaigns, while the ORFC representative raised funds for state and national quotas. In the second type of county, termed "participating," which included most Ohio counties, there was one ORFC representative who, working with the county party, had a goal equal to the state and national quota *plus* the local party's budget. In this case, the amounts raised were distributed on a pro rata basis among county, state and national committees, while the donor was approached only once, although he or she was welcome to donate elsewhere as well. More than $83,000 were donated to the ORFC in 1960, according to Bliss.

Money is not the crucial variable in elections, but its availability certainly makes candidates less nervous. If so, the Republicans in 1960 were rather calm. An estimated two million dollars were raised and spent, of which 40% ($800,000) went to county committees, 30% ($600,000) was spent by the ORP directly, 25% ($500,000) went to the national and congressional campaign committees, and the remaining 5% ($100,000) went directly to GOP congressional candidates in Ohio (*Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* 1960).

Some other details fill out Bliss' position on fiscal affairs. Money was not spent equally for all candidates, but it was concentrated in those areas with the greatest chance of capturing or holding marginal seats. Although his budget was given close scrutiny by the ORP, Bliss had considerable flexibility in using it. His concern to watch money carefully was seen in the elaborate set of accounting controls at his headquarters. An auditing firm checked the books semi-annually, records for income tax and social security purposes were kept closely, and all staff persons maintained detailed expense account records. In addition, Bliss insisted on being a full-time, salaried employee, so as to forestall any suggestion that he would use his position for financial gain.

In this mass of administration detail we see not only the major sources of Chairman Bliss' effectiveness, but the focus on state and national campaigns, races which the scholarly literature indicates usually received the least attention from the local county party. These extensive activities dealt little with races for sheriff or the city council, the building blocks of power in the county and city parties. Further, only 40% of the reported ORFC expenditures went back to the county, because the larger portion was reserved for state and national campaigns. But where the interests of the two echelons intermingled, Bliss and the local chairman worked in tandem out of mutual

self interest, namely, electing Republicans. Given this state and national focus of the Bliss organization, we now turn to separate consideration of organizational devices important at these races, such as the Ohio Volunteers for Nixon-Lodge and the field staff.

## The Ohio Volunteers for Nixon-Lodge

Postwar politics witnessed the rise of citizen groups operating outside the regular party framework in support of presidential candidates. While extremely valuable to these candidates, these volunteers worried state and local party leaders who viewed them as amateurs both capable of messing up campaigns and of providing a future center of political opposition. For example, in Indiana, after the 1956 election, the Citizens for Eisenhower group took over much of the party organization. In Ohio, such groups contributed greatly to Nixon's success and posed no threat to the regular party, a result attributable to Bliss' smooth integration of their efforts into regular party operations.

### *Organization of the Amateurs*

The 1960 amateur organization was the Ohio Volunteers for Nixon-Lodge (OVNL), based on the remnants of the Eisenhower equivalent in the 1950s. Indeed, the director of the OVNL, Robert H. Hoffman, held the same position in the 1956 Citizens for Eisenhower (CFE), originally appointed upon the recommendation of Bliss to the Eisenhower Ohio chairman, President A. Blair Knapp of Denison University. Hoffman, a former state senator, had worked with Bliss on other campaigns and shared his fullest confidence. The 1952 Ohio CFE had been anti-Taft, which had created some intra-party friction. But this friction declined with the death of Taft and the cooperation of the CFE with regular operations, and by 1960 it had disappeared entirely. The state board of the 1960 OVNL, chaired by Dr. Clyde E. Williams of the Battelle Institute, was composed of 18 local civic leaders, some having served with the CFEs in 1952 and 1956.

A similar recruitment process for OVNL leaders transpired at the county level. In each county a civic leader chairman, not known for political activity, and a chairwoman, involved in charitable or cultural affairs, were picked to head the organization. One of the major jobs of the state OVNL was recruiting these local leaders, using field men in each county to develop a list of names suggested by the county chairman and other community leaders. From such a list, Hoffman chose a county OVNL leader who was approved by the party county chairman, a clearance process instituted by Bliss to soothe the sensitivities of local leaders. In cases of conflict with this party leader,

Hoffman intervened personally to settle the dispute; but such disputes occurred in only 10% of the counties. In this fashion, OVNL affiliates were instituted in 141 communities and in 82 of the state's 88 counties; of these, 75 actively operated and 40 had their own headquarters. Approximately 150,000 volunteer membership cards were secured by such amateur groups.

*Amateur Operations*

The characteristic middle-class orientation of the OVNL may be demonstrated in one of its major efforts, the mobilization of professional groups. From rosters of such groups, an OVNL executive board member would recruit a member to work in each county for the single purpose of recruiting others in that field--doctors to recruit doctors, for example. The professionals organized had included doctors, lawyers, optometrists, dentists, veterans, farmers, and educators; black and labor elements were also approached. Examination of OVNL files indicated that 272 clientele leaders had contacted over 10,000 of their colleagues, many whom were important in influencing opinions in their area. Bliss saw the recruitment of locals as highly successful, but not all counties were organized, and the ambitious recruitment program among professionals fell far short in some categories.

But the larger work of the OVNL was feeding locals with ideas and materials with which to do their job. State aid to local affiliates was a bigger job, taking most of the money and materials. A nationally developed manual on voter mobilization was modified for the state and distributed to the counties. Those recruited to do volunteer work received workers kits to recruit 27 other workers who would, in turn, mobilize voters; these kits were assembled in Columbus over a three-week period. County OVNL leaders received requests for such campaign material as Nixon's biography, statements on civil rights, speeches of political leaders, and a rental copy of a film showing Nixon's travels abroad. In addition, the OVNL bought and distributed over $18,000 of campaign supplies, including 25,000 yardsticks ("Measure Up With Nixon and Lodge") for county fair distribution, bumper stickers, buttons, hats and literature--the usual throwaways of modern campaigning.

All of this cost the OVNL just under $80,000. Of this, one-third went for salaries of directory office staff and field men expenses, and almost another third for publicity--campaign supplies, advertising and clipping services. Just under one-fifth went to county affiliates, 13% for office maintenance, and the remaining 4% for a state-wide meeting. Raising these funds could have created friction with similar ORFC efforts, particularly with the insistence by Bliss that donors be solicited only once. A jurisdictional agreement was worked out among Bliss, the OVNL finance committee chairman, and the ORFC. The state, but not county, OVNL could raise money, but only in the

metropolitan counties. Hoffman said that about $82,000 came from these sources. Some donors gave only to volunteers, while others gave both to the party and volunteers. Certainly the volunteer group facilitated getting money from independents in a way that regular party organs might not.

*Local Activism by Amateurs*

Given the work of the state level of OVNL, what were the county volunteers doing? The state group dealt mostly with affiliates, while the affiliates dealt with the voters. Their tasks were the three traditional campaigning jobs--registration, publicity, and getting out the vote. Registration involved telephone and doorbell-ringing campaigns. Publicity involved distribution of literature, press releases, and so forth--the usual, including even the reintroduction of the torchlight parade, maybe the last in American history. Voter mobilization involved massive telephone campaigns that had developed in the 1950s, and the usual election-day transportation of voters to the polls. Most efforts were familiar and so need little elaboration here, except for the unusual enthusiasm among volunteers with a single candidate in mind.

Noteworthy, however, were the intense telephone campaigns used to promote registration, collect crowds for visiting politicians, and increase voter turnout on election day. City-wide teams and sub-teams were organized so that each volunteer worked only four pages of the telephone book, and reported back up channels information on voters needing aid in registration or getting to the polls. On several occasions, the entire phone book was called in Franklin, Cuyahoga, and Hamilton counties (over 200,000 in Franklin County alone). On the day before election, 3,500 volunteers (mostly women) contacted 95% of Franklin County's voters. The resulting turnout was 90% of those registered, providing Nixon a 59% majority compared to Eisenhower's majority of 66% in 1956 and 60% in 1952.

What did these eager and enthusiastic volunteers do? They handled a telephone, covered rest homes and residences of the disabled to register them, rang doorbells, handed out throwaways at Ohio's many county fairs, turned out to cheer for Nixon and Lodge, and spoke or corresponded with Bliss' field men and the county party leadership. These efforts generated very little intra-party friction due to the coordination between regulars and volunteers which Bliss had encouraged. Bliss believed that the volunteers worked harder in 1960 than in 1956 because Nixon was not a sure winner. Nor did they fade away. After the Nixon loss, at least 59 county affiliates expressed the wish to remain in existence, while the Mahoning and Franklin group maintained a more or less regular program for their members for some time. All of these groups, however, remained as a huge reservoir of latent strength to be reactivated in the next election.

In conclusion, Bliss integrated the amateur groups into his overall campaign organization. A volunteer organization that could have created more bother than it was worth was welcomed, encouraged, and provided with leadership acceptable to Bliss and integrated into the efforts of the party regulars. At three key places, Bliss' intervention was crucial for this success--his suggestion of longtime friend and colleague Hoffman as state leader, his insistence that county OVNL leaders be cleared with the county chairman, and his smoothing out of jurisdictional conflicts over fund raising. The last two were most significant because without Bliss' intervention they would thrust the volunteers directly into the areas most sensitive to the regulars--leadership and money. By settling these difficulties before they arose, Bliss made it possible for his office to overcome the localism of the regular party and to harness the nationalism of the volunteers to the mutual benefit of both. The result was a higher vote turnout for Nixon and the entire Republican ticket.

## Field Staff Activities of State Headquarters

While Bliss felt that candidates and issues were important in campaigns, he believed that electoral success was mostly a function of an extensive organization dedicated to activating one's partisans. While such an organization was commonly left to municipal politics, the involvement of the *state* organization in the work was rare. State campaigns required candidates to convince local regulars to support them more than casually, and furthermore, there is usually little state-wide party machinery for the candidate to manipulate. By 1960, Bliss achieved a state-wide integration of campaign effort which both recognized local autonomy while persuading local leaders to adopt modern campaigning techniques on behalf of higher-level candidates.

### *The Field Men as Linkages*

The plan had been developing in Bliss' thinking for a decade. The need was for more integrated campaigning and a greater use of newer campaign techniques. The problem was the county chairmen's autonomy and the variation in the counties' social composition, campaign participation, independence, and local leaders lack of concern for offices beyond their borders. None of these local politicos could be compelled by Bliss to do anything. What he could do was to persuade them that state Headquarters was concerned only with the success of the party, in getting all of its candidates elected, and in respecting their legal and political authority. The mechanism to weld these diverse forces together was a field staff organization

of full-time paid agents ($500-$600 a month) from Headquarters working in assigned areas to facilitate the election of Republicans to state and federal offices.

In the summer of 1959, Bliss began by selecting a director, John Andrews, Lucas County Chairman and a former public relations man for a large corporation. By June of 1960, the field men had been selected and trained and their work allotted. Bliss explained what was coming at a June meeting of county chairmen. He emphasized that these field men were assigned only to offer services which the chairmen could use or reject in light of prevailing conditions; these Headquarters men were there to help elect Republicans to the legislature, congress, presidency, and, indirectly, to local offices.

The central instruction the field workers carried into the field was that they were the links between the state and county chairman. Their function was "to supplement but not supplant" the latter. They were a transmission belt forwarding requests for help to Columbus, but just as importantly, persuading local chairmen to utilize a broad range of campaign technologies to maximize Republican support. The field men's detailed manual, produced by Bliss and Andrews, stressed repeatedly this pivotal function: they must work *with* the county chairman while working *for* the state chairman.

Here are some lines from that manual underscoring Bliss' sensitivity to local autonomy; my examination of scores of these field men's weekly reports showed they were aware of it:

> Because each county and districts organization is autonomous in relation to the State Committee, the relationship between them is purely *voluntary*. No field men will organize, direct or otherwise become involved in any county or districts political activity without the knowledge and consent of the local leadership. It is intended that the field men develop and maintain a harmonious spirit of cooperation with the local leadership. Field men *suggest* programs and activities recommended by Headquarters, anticipating that local leadership will accept those which have reasonable opportunity for success in the area involved.

> Prior to field visits, meetings are held with county and district leadership to apprise them of the field operation, invite suggestions from them and to solicit their cooperation. To the extent possible, all questions are answered and apprehensions removed before the field man commence operations in the area . . .

> [At the first meeting of field man with county chairman] the field man should reiterate that he is a service man for State Headquarters, that his only objective is to provide whatever assistance he can to the county political operation, and that he will provide liaison between the county and all departments of the Headquarters . . .

Nor did Bliss wish his men entangled in county factionalism. The field man's orders were clear--deal only with the county chairman who alone is the duly elected Republican leader. This point reflected Bliss' long-time policy

of letting the local parties settle their own internal problems and then he would recognize the legally elected leadership.

To control his field staff, Bliss instituted a continuous reporting system. They reported to Andrews on every visit to a chairman, even using a prescribed form. Weekly meetings of this staff were held with Andrews and Bliss. Field men submitted detailed expense statements. This process was not just a control feature, however, because it also provided Columbus with a running evaluation of many campaigns and a means of quickly handling emergencies. Let a local chairman complain of delays in literature ordered, and the field man got on the telephone to Andrews; he quickly looked up the snag and immediately called back to the local chairman about Headquarters' actions on the problem. This procedure gave the sense locally that Headquarters was not only aware of special problems, but was doing something about them; it also gave locals with a sense of participating in a campaign which reached outside their borders.

*State-Local Operations*

For a deeper understanding of these operations, we can reconstruct how these two echelons were linked from the field staff's directives and their reports. The field man quickly got to know local Republican officials and news media, reviewed GOP women's activities, checked on Democratic activity, and built files of what organizations existed in the area. The last included a roster of filled and unfilled precinct committeemen and women, and a long list of which party auxiliaries were active: Women's Clubs, Young Republican Club, Mr. and Mrs. Club, OVNL, vertical organizations of professional men, civic leader committee, occupational or special interest clubs, Registration Committee, Get-Out-The-Vote Committee, Party Campaign Committee, and so forth. The field man reported all meetings with local leaders, the degree of activity of each group, names of these groups' leaders, the degree of activity of each group, and what weaknesses or strengths were evident.

The major step was to organize a special campaign committee, but only if the county chairman approved and if he appointed its leadership. This committee had the major job of coordinating campaign activities for the state and federal races in each county. Model calendars of great detail were offered detailing when each campaign activity should take place. Headquarters also gave great attention to organizing special groups of civic leaders in the community that would give direction to local public opinion. This program was directed from Columbus, but the field men worked around each such group in their own area, organizing, helping, and reporting on it. These local groups were chosen for their key position in shaping community

thinking, and for their ability to raise volunteers and funds. Such plans had great potential, but they did not meet expectations in all counties.

Youth were mobilized through the existing Young Republican Club; if none existed, the field man worked closely with the county chairman to organize one. He first got the chairman's permission, asked him for names of potential young leaders, approached these people to start a club, and thereafter gave it periodic encouragement. These youth groups were viewed with concern by regulars due to their untested abilities and their potential to oppose the existing leadership. In the past Bliss himself had not always seen eye-to-eye with the Ohio League of Young Republicans, but by 1960 its leadership worked closely with him. Loyal YR affiliates reported working just as closely with the county chairman as he would permit and with the OVNL groups; the OVNL was a natural outlet for their eager interest in the big, dramatic issues of the day. With field men's encouragement, the number of YR clubs increased during the campaign, although not all counties had them by the campaign's end.

The field staff work with women's groups was more limited because of state Headquarters and the Ohio Federation of Republican Women. Organizations of professional and vocational groups were designed much as described earlier in the work of the OVNL; indeed, field men usually reported that their work here was mostly in stimulating and encouraging local OVNL in this activity.

*Programmatic Activities*

All the organizing activity of the field staff would avail little unless the groups organized had something to do. Accordingly, field men generated special action programs--registration and getting out the vote campaigns, practical politics courses, and workers' training schools.

Registration was conducted as part of the county party's program, employing traditional techniques, but emphasizing precincts which former U.S. Senator John Bricker had carried in 1958 by 55% or more when he lost his Senate seat. Rosters of occupational groups with a propensity for Republicanism were sought from interest groups, business and trade associations, and from county clubs, service and private clubs. Further, special Get-Out-The-Vote Committees were aimed at the disabled; armed forces registration groups were formed by the county chairman at the field man's suggestion.

Bliss saw an untapped source of Republican votes in the many "practical politics" courses which had become popular and were sponsored by business groups. Field men obtained their graduates who were then invited by the county chairman to perform specific tasks. Workers' Training Schools trained precinct and volunteer workers who were new to politics or inactive in the

past. Field men had complete plans for these two-hour evening schools, complete with curriculum, visual aids, and even techniques for good teachings. Some may wonder why precinct workers would need such schools since few were actually full-time activists. But research into the operation of Ohio county party activity found extraordinary cases of inactive precinct workers (Flinn and Wirt 1965). Some didn't even know they had been appointed, others filled the job only to get a poll worker job, many did not attend party meetings, or know who belonged to their party in their areas--a far cry from the pictures then prevalent of the party activists. Bliss knew of this lack of training and so was especially concerned that the field staff push this effort.

*A Congressional Example*

This general description of the field staff work may be illustrated in one congressional race. Bliss used the congressional district as the basis for organization for several reasons: local party officials thought of themselves as part of their congressional district, it was the basis for representation in the state central committee, and the congressman was the chief contact in federal matters. Recall, too, that field men working for a congressional race were also juggling a number of General Assembly contests, working in liaison with the Legislative Campaign Division at Headquarters. All but a few chairmen permitted the field man to work directly with legislative candidates, although reporting back to the county leader. Field men did not work in all 33 Ohio Senate or 139 House contests for the General Assembly, because the focus was upon the marginal races, about 40 seats in the lower house.

For example, the nine-county Sixth District in southern Ohio was one of four Congressional districts receiving this attention. Here the GOP candidate, William Harsha, with the field man developed a "Harsha for Congress Citizens' Committee." The head of this special committee was selected from names suggested by various county chairmen. Committee workers were placed in every precinct possible for registration and getting out the vote, except in heavily Democratic precincts as defined by Headquarters analysis. The field man set up most of the special effort organizations outlined above and checked frequently with candidate Harsha. An intensive 1959 poll underlay the entire campaign. It had shown great dissatisfaction with the Democratic legislature and Governor Michael V. DiSalle because of corruption; it also revealed potential Republican strength in a district which had returned a Democrat to Congress for many years until his recent death.

With effort like this, the Republicans won in three out of four of the marginal districts in 1960, and the remaining one fell to the GOP two years later. Harsha won with 55% vote in 1960, compared to 38% and 46% for the Republican candidate in the two elections before. The voting pattern prior to 1960 had shown GOP decline in congressional vote in all nine counties, but

in 1960 year all but one county swung sharply for Harsha as he carried all but two. While only three General Assembly seats were carried, Harsha ran ahead of all GOP candidates in eight of the nine counties. Nixon also benefitted from this Headquarters work in this district. He stayed close to Eisenhower's 1956 landslide percentage and exceeded Ike's margin of 1952 in six counties, holding even in the other three.

While the Bliss campaign was unusually successful in the marginal contests, how did he do in other counties where the field staff operated? Table 4.1 compares the 1960 GOP congressional percentage with that of 1956 and 1958. These data show considerable Republican improvement. In 1960, the Republican congressional candidates did better in one-quarter of the counties than in the big Republican year of 1956, although in one-half they did worse. But compared with 1958, almost three-fifths showed Republican support, and only one-in-ten showed a decline. Putting together three years of congressional voting, the Republican support increased in one-third of the counties, recovered from the 1958 debacle in another one-third, declined in one-quarter despite Bliss' efforts, and stayed the same in the remaining counties (less than 10%).

This is only a rough measure of the effects of Bliss' voter mobilization techniques, for other factors also operated to achieve this Republican improvement. But county chairmen whom I interviewed were generous in praise of his work. They reported, and the field staff reports confirm, an increased use of the devices suggested by Headquarters when appropriate to the locality. There was a general belief that Bliss and his staff had been fair and respected local autonomy. This acceptance was not merely passive, furthermore, for Headquarters reported a heightened urgency among local chairmen, a sense of the need to heat up the usually slow-acting rural organization under this stimulus from Columbus. Helping this along was the field man's approach of urging local officials for a turnout of an extra 1,000 to 2,000 votes to offset a certain big city ward's Democratic margin. Those votes in Cool Bottom, Ohio, did not help already-safe John Dudley in his commissioner race, but they were necessary for Nixon or a congressman. If the county chairman forgot, there was that field man coming around every week to remind him of the need and how to meet it. Of course, it did not work on every chairman, but Headquarters' evaluation mentioned only a few who resisted the field man's offers or who failed to cooperate.

## Evaluating the Bliss Effort

Enough evidence has been offered to assess the relationship of Bliss' actions to his success. Of primary importance was the confidence he built in the minds of county chairmen that: (1) he had their interests at heart in

Table 4.1 Ohio GOP Congressional Percentage in Non-Metropolitan Counties, 1960 vs. 1956-58

| *GOP %* | *# Counties* | *% Counties* |
|---|---|---|
| 1960 > 1956 | 20 | 25 |
| 1956 > 1960 | 39 | 49 |
| 1956 = 1960 (± 3%) | 21 | 26 |
| | 80 | 100% |
| 1960 > 1958 | 46 | 57 |
| 1958 > 1960 | 9 | 11 |
| 1958 = 1960 (± 3%) | 25 | 31 |
| | 80 | 100% |

*Source*: Calculated by Author.

forwarding the Republican Party, and (2) that he was not trying to dominate them by undermining their authority. This conclusion rests upon their experience with him through many elections, and from his frequent insistence that his office was a service station for local power centers and not an instrument of control for some local faction. Evading factionalism built the confidence of local chieftains that he meant what he said about "supplementing but not supplanting" their power. In 1960 he wanted the party to offer good candidates, but he did not need to pick them; in only one case did his field man, by mounting a write-in campaign, produce a legislative candidate where the local party was inactive.

A second factor underlying Bliss' success was the local knowledge that following his advice and aid increased the chances of electoral success, which is one definition of leadership. When some state party supporters in 1958 had pushed the Right-To-Work amendment onto the ballot by initiative and onto the Republican Party by implication, Bliss was strongly opposed for fear of the electoral consequences. He was right then, just as he had been right in his campaign advice since 1950 on. If anything, the 1958 defeat strengthened his influence on Republican state leaders and also enhanced his stature with local leaders. So they did not see the Headquarters field man in their counties as an alien intruder nor reject any advice as incompetent or irrelevant.

A third feature of his success, implicit in the preceding, was Bliss' voter mobilization skills. His knowledge and use of the wide variety of technologies to turn out voters was extraordinary. Much of this rested on his three decades of personal experience in local and state politics and on his careful; evaluation

of what other political technicians had found useful. His field staff represented long thinking on how to link state and local turnout effort in the complex politics of an industrial state. Prime among these skills was the creation of a communication system through which both field men and polls provided almost instantaneous knowledge of the course of many campaigns at different levels. As ever in organization, knowledge thus gained enhanced the leader's ability to distribute resources strategically.

A fourth factor was the availability of money. Bliss' fund-raising methods and his ample resources represented a component of his success whose value was inestimable. Studies on the effect of money in politics indicate that victory does not always go to the well-heeled. But without financial resources, Bliss' effectiveness would have seriously diminished. In 1960, there were a quarter-million pamphlets in July, almost 2 3/4 million thereafter, 800,000 buttons, 10,000 large lithograph pictures, almost 14,000 poll books for precinct workers, almost 2 million "judicial strips" for those nonpartisan contests, film copies of a speech by vice presidential candidate on ethnic groups, 400-500 billboards for the national and congressional ticket, and thousands of "gimmick" giveaways. The effects of such an effort can't be certain, of course, but, then, nothing is certain before the votes are counted.

A fifth factor was Bliss' national stature in the party which was, in turn, a function of his prior successes. But it enhanced his work by raising money, obtaining nationally known speakers, and getting local leaders to accept his advice. Such was his stature that Richard Nixon turned over to Bliss' organization the handling of his entire campaign in Ohio, the only place he did so. Such recognition could be felt and shared by all in Ohio Republicanism.

Finally, like any full-time political leader Bliss had personal qualities which contributed to his success. Full commitment of his energy and time were obvious. Honesty in political and financial relations were also important. Such as, Bliss' insistence on dealing only with the elected local leadership and in maintaining scrupulous financial accounting procedures. Courage was required to insist upon campaign approaches or techniques unfamiliar or unwanted; in previous years he threatened to resign if his recommendations were ignored, (although this offer was not extended when his recommendation on the Right-To-Work issue was ignored).

Summarizing, then: the unusual influence of the ORP in 1960 came not from uprooting the conventionally decentralized party structure, but from welding it together with mutual self-interest and benefit. Here we can see the potential for mobilizing political localism in a way that does not focus is upon one candidate and one office. In 1960, Bliss overcame localism by relying on it across a range of candidates and offices.

However, the impression must not be left that Bliss alone was responsible for Republican successes or that his efforts in other states would be equally

successful. Many things were going for Republicans in Ohio for some time; there had been little Democratic presidential support and few Democratic General Assembly or congressional majorities, and few governors or senators (and Frank Lausche's success rested on a large Republican vote). Indeed, the Cincinnati and Columbus metropolises were Republican. Certainly the state's newspapers did not support the Democrats; only the *Dayton Daily News* and *Toledo Blade* of the big-city press supported Kennedy in 1960, and only the Dayton paper supported Democrat DiSalle in 1962. Thus Ohio in recent decades may have acquired a regular Republican cast to its politics, broken only by the occasional failure of the dominant party to integrate its considerable resources, as in 1948 and 1958.

But these caveats about Bliss' crucial role were not shared by Republican political pros. They were in unusual agreement in giving him the credit. The point here is not to judge the importance of Bliss' work as a discrete variable in the 1960 election, but to demonstrate how his success arose out centrally coordinated campaigning that relied up decentralization to great effect.

Given his skills and prestige, what would happen if Bliss obtained the national chairmanship--as may well happen yet--on his own terms, namely, full staff control and emphasis upon organization and not public speaking? The nation isn't Ohio, of course, and the RNC isn't the ORP. Speaking as a Democrat, I would be concerned. Speaking as a political scientist, however, I would be intrigued.[2]

## Notes

1. This chapter was originally written in the early 1960s under unusual circumstances. As a liberal Democrat at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, I was approached by Ray Bliss to be a paid consultant as state poll director (see chapter 6). In our several years together, we developed a poll of surprising accuracy--given its crude sampling--that sought opinion on issues and campaigns. The chapter's text refers to the polls, for Bliss fed this information to his field men. Our relationship was always formal and my comments were only on the numbers reported. But once he raised the possibility of my entering a primary for a GOP seat in the House of Representatives. Given my own partisanship and prospect of running against John Ashbrook, an entrenched incumbent, I politely demurred. Nevertheless, he allowed me use his office files for analysis reported here. Soon afterwards, he left for Washington and I for Berkeley, and now Illinois. My work with him was my first experience with the reality of men in hot pursuit of political office.

2. Bliss' chairmanship of the Republican National Committee confirmed this judgement of his talents written nearly thirty years ago. However, the 1964 landslide and resulting problems diluted his influence. In retrospect, his Ohio activities reported here foreshadowed the recent developments by national and state party organizations.

## References

*Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report.* 1960. "Unexpected Ohio Victory Shows Firm GOP Organization." 43:2003-2007.

Flinn, Thomas, and Frederick Wirt. 1965. "Local Party Leaders: Groups of Like-Minded Men." *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 9:77-98.

# PART TWO

## Ray Bliss and His Contemporaries

# 6

## Ray C. Bliss: Leader or Manager?

*Arthur L. Peterson*

Ray Bliss would have been amused by an analysis of the details of his character and his life's work. I can almost see him leaning back in his big chair and exclaiming "Well, some people were a little slow when it came to becoming a detail person in politics, but finally the victory is mine. You are finally going to examine something in detail, even if it is me!"

Indeed, the question of whether Ray Bliss was essentially a leader or a manager requires some detailed probing in several directions. It involves testing some myths about Ray Bliss and perhaps modifying some popular views about the secrets of his success. For, as I will attempt to demonstrate, Ray Bliss was far more than the "nuts-and-bolts" party manager portrayed by well-meaning but only partially informed observers. He was a complex personality whose keen analytical mind and brilliant intuitive insights were wed to a remarkably high sense of professional integrity and commitment.

Leader or manager--which best described Ray Bliss? To answer that question we must first assign some operative meaning to the terms leadership and management--not an easy task given the lively disagreement by students of the subject. I propose we approach the subject from two perspectives, administrative science and political science. I will relate the Ray Bliss I knew in over twenty years of close association to relevant concepts advanced in these fields.

### The Administrative Science Perspective

Our first approach is to relate Ray Bliss' style, values, and techniques to those basic attributes reputable students of administrative science have characterized as typical of leaders as contrasted to managers. We will take as representative of this literature the work of Harvard Business School professors Abraham Zalesnik (1977) and Mary E. Tramel and Helen Reynolds (1977), focusing on six dimensions of their dichotomization. Implicit in this literature is a non-judgmental position regarding leadership versus management: the two concepts are viewed as separable, and it is held that

because of varying situations and structures, some times strong leadership skills are required while at other times proficiency in management is to be preferred. Ray Bliss clearly fit best the leadership side of this ledger, although there were strong managerial overtones in some aspects of his work.

First, how are leaders and managers defined? What is their essence in terms of motivation and modus operandi? According to these analysts, leaders are innovators, driven by a grand design and given to intuitive flashes of insight, and willing to acquire and use power to achieve their goals. In contrast, managers are essentially problem solvers and achieve results through persistence, tolerance and good will, reaching their goals through a cautious process of trial and error (Zalesnik 1977:68).

It is impossible to escape the conclusion that Ray Bliss was constantly driven by a grand design, that he lived by political instinct, and that he knew how to use, and frequently employed, power to achieve his goals. His ultimate motivation was the strengthening of the two-party system in America. But to Bliss, parties were not an end in themselves. They were rather essential instruments toward the larger goal of efficient, effective government about which he cared passionately. His view was not narrowly partisan. On more than one occasion, for example, he stated flatly to me that if the opposition party, meaning the Democrats, ever got so weak as to jeopardize their check-and-balance function in American government, he would offer to help restore their fortunes.

The typical work day for Ray Bliss was from about 9:00 am until 2:00 am. And many of those nocturnal hours were spent sharing ideas not about the "nuts-and-bolts" of politics, but rather about the grand design of party government. More than one major party document, including the well-known *Elements of Victory* (Republican National Committee 1966) on party strategy for the 1966 and 1968 elections was initiated over dinner at 7:00 pm, brought back to the office at 9:00 pm, and then further roughed out over a draft beer at 1520 Club long after midnight.

No one who worked closely with Ray Bliss can forget his faith in and reliance on political instinct. In one of his few published statements about party organization and leadership he wrote:

> Some state chairmen have an uncanny knack, developed through years of experience, to make the right decision, call it what you will--instinct, a hunch, or an extra sense--but it is there. Many chairmen have lived to rue the day when they have acted contrary to their own instincts (Bliss 1960:161).

Examples of his successful reliance on political instinct are endless. His innovative use of polls of all types is well-known. He would ponder the results for hours, waiting for that special moment of political intuition to determine their use. Bliss was no "number cruncher" in the modern behavioral sense. No obvious and immediate answers flowed solely from a

broad array of facts. He perceived political reality more in the way a 35 mm camera takes a picture--a total impression through one opening of the lens--as opposed to the manner in which a TV image is produced--dot by dot, pixel by pixel, fact by fact. The intuitive short cuts Ray Bliss took characterized much of his information processing, even though an incredible accumulation of experience, insights, and stored factual data formed the backdrop for those intuitive flashes he relied on.

The temptation to think of Ray Bliss basically as a manager results from taking several elements of his style out of context. For example, many view Bliss as primarily a "nuts-and-bolts" person. He was, indeed, incredibly strong on detail and follow-through, and he certainly regarded attention to the details of political strategy, research, and organization as crucial to political success (cf. Bliss 1960:161-165). He worked very hard, and expected his subordinates, associates, and colleagues to do likewise. In many ways he was a perfectionist, as many of us who worked with him clearly recall. But his "nuts-and-bolts" emphasis clearly occurred in the context of a broader vision. Bliss was also an able problem-solver; when the appropriate time came to settle organization problems, he did it cleanly and with dispatch. And he was certainly noted for his perseverance, tolerance, and good will towards his associates as well as adversaries. The resolution of minor organizational issues, however, was hardly his favorite activity, and correspondence and call back notes would some times accumulate for days.

On the other hand, to focus only on these elements of Bliss' character produces a caricature at best, and at worst, a highly inaccurate image. He was indeed a master of the "nuts-and-bolts" of party politics, but he was also a conceptualist, a big-picture man, a people person, and even a speaker of distinction when the situation required. Did the press and other observers miss much of what Ray Bliss was all about? Yes. But there was something of a contradiction between Bliss' macroscopic orientations, which few people saw, and his microscopic concerns, which became apparent in his many political successes. These apparent contradictions reveal the complexity of his character and the key to his effectiveness. Thus while there were strong managerial overtones in his overall style, the leadership component of Bliss' style was clearly dominant.

The second dimension of the leadership/management dichotomy relates to how leaders and managers view themselves in terms of organizational relationships and achieving their objectives. Leaders seek to alter human, economic, and political relationships in profound ways. Managers strive to protect the existing order of affairs and identify with the status quo (Zalesnik 1977:72-74).

Although Ray Bliss held what would be termed conservative views concerning the government, economic, and social relationships, he did not favor protecting the existing order of a party organization if it were not

producing the kind of results he envisaged. It must be repeated that for him the two-party system was not an end in itself. He felt parties could and should influence public policy in the interest of the body politic. He had deep concerns for the welfare of the working man and woman, and counted among some of his closest friends leading members of the trade unions in his home community of Akron, Ohio. In developing his famous study on Big City politics it was not only the enhancement of the Republican Party organization in those areas that concerned him. He foresaw the deterioration of the inner cities and felt strongly that strengthened local party organizations could help alleviate the human cost of what he saw as a largely inevitable, but frightening development.

In building his own party organization he did not rely on formal hierarchy alone. Much to the chagrin of the organization purists, he encouraged personal or candidate-centered organizations as important supplemental efforts that could both draw more citizens into the political process and serve as a critical resource pool for future party leaders. His skillful integration of thousands of independent voters and Democrats into Robert A. Taft's 1950 Senate campaign through special groups of teachers, labor union members, doctors, lawyers and farmers, and the close coordination he fostered with the largely independent Citizens for Eisenhower groups in the 1952 and 1956 presidential campaigns, illustrate his ability to go well beyond the existing party structure to alter future political relationships profoundly (see chapter 5).

He fully recognized and accepted the downside of his organizational philosophy. His attributes of flexibility and compromise, for example, did not always put him in great favor with the more traditional or ideologically oriented party leaders, but he felt a major goal of the chairman was the election of party nominees by all honorable means, and he intended to achieve that goal. At times that meant wrenching alteration of long-standing political relationships. If that was the price of leadership, he was willing to pay it.

The third leadership/management dimension concerns how leaders and managers view their work. Leaders seek risk and danger and question established procedures, generating excitement and inspiration for co-workers. Managers fear uncertainty and are more concerned with the processes that achieve results than with the results themselves (Zalesnik 1977:72).

There is no question where Ray Bliss fits in this dichotomization: his entire career is filled with examples of courageous risk-taking, of venturing into new and untried areas of political endeavor. As a consequence, he was a constant source of inspiration to not only his co-workers, but to all who were interested in the strengthening of the political system.

An example that stands out in my memory had to do with the "request" (read demand) by Richard Nixon in early 1966 that a private aircraft be

supplied to the former Vice President for the various fund-raising speeches he was giving in support of Republican candidates across the country. Chairman Bliss, with a limited budget at the Republican National Committee and cognizant of the fact that fellow presidential hopefuls George Romney, Nelson Rockefeller, and William Scranton also were out on the hustings raising money, had informed each of them that he was most grateful for their supportive efforts, but that no financial help was available from the RNC to cover their expenses.

The showdown came one afternoon. Bliss and I had returned from lunch to find an urgent call from the former Vice President. "I want you to hear this" Bliss said, and, turning on the speaker phone, he called Nixon. The conversation started out with the usual pleasantries, but soon Nixon was pressing his demand for a private plane for his fund-raising trips. Again and again, Bliss expressed his gratitude, but explained why this was impossible. It was obvious from the tone of his voice that Nixon was infuriated. He became more and more demanding and threatening. Ray Bliss drew heavily on his omnipresent cigarette, but remained outwardly calm. Only the increasing redness of his face revealed the furor within. Finally, realizing he was not going to force Ray Bliss into anything he did not feel was right, Nixon said angrily, "All right, Ray, but remember this, I don't forget these things."

Another example that comes to mind concerns Bliss' condemnation of the John Birch Society for defaming former President Dwight Eisenhower, along with other national leaders, for alleged communist sympathies. Realizing that some staunch Republican supporters were ardent members of the Birch Society, Bliss nonetheless decided something had to be done to distance such an irresponsible group from the Republican Party. He chose the Republican Coordinating Committee, a group of the nation's top Republican leaders, as the vehicle for this condemnation. In a simple, but strongly worded resolution, drafted after midnight on an evening just preceding a Coordination Committee meeting, Bliss sought and received unanimous support for his position on the Birch Society. There were retributions, of course, but these he had anticipated and did not particularly concern him.

I am not suggesting that Ray Bliss abandoned established procedures lightly. He was too much of an organization man for that. But the record is filled with examples where, despite risk and danger to his own career, Ray Bliss acted with great courage to achieve his goals. The effect of this kind of leadership on his co-workers, the press, and students of government was dramatic; he became highly respected and a source of inspiration, particularly to those who worked closely with him. They alone observed the pain he suffered with periodic bouts of gout, the endless hours he devoted to his job, and his refusal to bend to political expediency or pressure from even the highest sources.

When respected journalists, like Godfrey Sperling of *The Christian Science Monitor* make comments such as ". . . Mr. Bliss, perhaps the best and most highly respected national chairman ever to come down the GOP pike. . ." (1974), they are referring as much to the man's absolute integrity as to his political skills. They were calling to remembrance his willingness to take risks to avoid the procedural pitfalls of organizational lethargy which can so easily trap the best-intentioned managers. There is no question but that Ray Bliss viewed his life work as a great adventure, an adventure which *he* would lead.

The fourth question administrative science asks is how do leaders and managers view their goals? Leaders are driven by their personal goals, they alter expectations and change the way people think, creating ideas instead of reacting to them. Managers focus on the organization's goals and are driven by a need to support them, and their ideas are passively shaped by their organization's history and culture (Zalesnik 1977:70-71).

The innovative thrust of Ray Bliss' style of leadership was clearly evident everywhere he served, but particularly at the national level (see chapter 2). Examples of his extraordinary, creative efforts are numerous. Bliss was instrumental in developing sophisticated headquarters services at the county, state and national level, including polling, automatic data-retrieval systems, expanded media relations, and new approaches to aiding state and local party organizations and supplementary groups (see chapter 3). Indeed, Michael Baroody, a staff assistant to RNC Chairman William Brock, claimed that most of the important innovations pursued with great success by Brock were initiated by Bliss (see chapter 9).

Bliss also had a passion for training at all levels and in every area of the party's program. David Broder of *The Washington Post* noted that "Ray Bliss was a teacher at heart . . . the use of polls, computers, TV and direct mail is routine now. It was not then, and it was Bliss, more than anyone else, who organized the teaching process" (1981). And Bliss developed effective coordination between party headquarters and Republican legislators. At the state and national levels, he met regularly with legislative leaders to help fashion party policy in those bodies and to decide on the legislative program for the session. His influence on policy development was not well-advertised, but it was substantial.

At the national level he agreed to become Republican chairman only if all sectors and wings of the party agreed to coordinate their efforts. It was on the basis of such a plan for a coordinated approach, crafted by a number of congressional leaders and staffers at the RNC following the devastating election of 1964, that he assumed the chairmanship in April, 1985. The Republican Coordinating Committee, which Ray Bliss implemented, is generally acknowledged as the most successful effort of party coordination at the national level in American two-party history (see chapter 13). Its stated purpose was:

> (1) to broaden the advisory base on national party policy; (2) to set up task forces to study and make recommendations for dealing with the problems that confront the people of the nation; and (3) to stimulate communication among the members of the party and others in developing a common approach to the nation's problems.[1]

Speaking to the Republican Governors' Association on April 19, 1971, then Republican House Leader Gerald Ford assessed the work of the Coordinating Committee:

> After our spectacular comeback in 1966 . . . we continued our gains in congress and in the state capitols in 1968 and recaptured the executive branch of the Federal government. Then what did we do? We rode down Pennsylvania Avenue in the Inaugural Parade and proceeded to dismantle the very vehicle that carried us there--The Republican Coordinating Committee . . . I don't know whose fault it was that the National Republican Coordinating Committee was allowed to simply wither away just when it proved its worth in 1968. We still had miles to go in winning back the Congress. We could have also concentrated on holding and increasing state offices so essential to redistricting after the 1970 Census. But we didn't.

Although he clearly understood and deeply appreciated the history and culture of his beloved party, Ray Bliss did not let that history or culture shape his goals. He was driven by his own goals of responsive and responsible government, and if that meant institutional change, so be it. He was constantly examining the possibility of major changes. For example, he could argue the case for a national presidential primary very persuasively, just as he could remind one forcefully of some of the mischief that the presidential primary system could cause. In any case, Ray Bliss viewed his goals against the backdrop of his personal value system. To him the party organization was never the master. He could comfortably conform or counsel change. He viewed organization essentially as a malleable, not a static instrument through which larger values and goals could be achieved.

Our fifth question about leaders and managers is how do they view others? Leaders, we are told, arouse intense feeling of admiration and respect; they care about people and their needs. Managers relate to people according to their job titles and social status; they are more concerned with people's roles in a process than their needs (Zalesnik 1977:72-74).

Bliss was clearly a leader on this point. Many highly respected journalists and political luminaries felt so strongly about Bliss' qualities of integrity and competence that they insisted the whole sordid Watergate ordeal would have been avoided if Bliss had remain as national chairman after 1968. Raymond Moley and Bryce Harlow, both intimates of several presidents, urged President Nixon to ask Bliss to stay on as chairman after the 1968 election. To them, Bliss was the antithesis of the sleazy and the maladroit in politics and both of them, as experienced political professionals, knew full well that candidates often desperately need voices of reason and morality to counter

the siren songs of expediency. Much to his later sorrow and regret, Nixon rejected the pleading of Harlow and Moley, and ended up in disgrace.

One reason for the admiration and respect people from all walks of life had for Ray Bliss was that he genuinely cared for people and for their ideas. For example in Ohio, he employed a young Democratic political scientist, Fred Wirt, to develop and administer a completely independent poll as a supplement to the findings of the professional pollsters (see chapter 5). To further augment his data base he ventured out from time to time to conduct what we called the "Bliss tavernkeepers' poll," asking laboring men and women at various friendly neighborhood bars what they felt about the issues of the day.

Whenever he observed a human need he tried to alleviate it. Unknown, perhaps to this day, were his many kindnesses to various of his staff members at both state and national levels. I recall a telephone operator at the RNC whose daughter desperately needed medical attention, but whose funds simply did not allow for the needed operation. "I will take care of it," the Chairman said, and he did, with his personal funds, without the RNC staff member ever knowing from where the help came.

The respect and admiration that people felt for Ray Bliss was multifaceted. Certainly his integrity and competence would come to the mind of most who wrote about him or observed him in office. But his special, low-key way of caring about people accounted for the intensity of the feeling about him. For instance, he would not spend party money for alcohol at party events. "What would the retired school teacher, going without something in order to contribute twenty-five dollars to the party, think if she felt her hard earned dollars were going for my drinks?" he would ask. It was such acts of concern and kindness--for a former president or for an unknown laborer--that won him more than respect or admiration, rather, the genuine affection from thousands. He believed deeply in the worth of the individual and he wanted each person to have every opportunity to achieve all that she or he could in life.

Finally, the literature asks how do the leaders and managers achieve respect? Leaders' authority derives from their personal relationships while managers' authority stems from their formal positions. This point has been covered implicitly, if not explicitly, in the foregoing analysis. Ray Bliss clearly derived his authority through the personal relationships he had with his co-workers and political associates. They trusted him, had great faith in his political judgment and organizational skills and enjoyed his thoroughgoing professionalism. He earned his reputation, in the beginning, through holding key party leadership positions, but the immense power that he wielded during the mature years of his political career did not come from his title. It came because it was common knowledge that virtually everyone in the party apparatus would support whatever he decided to do.

In fact, Bliss was confident enough of his leadership abilities that he insisted his leadership have such a base. An example is the meeting of industrial and political leaders called by then state Chairman Bliss after the devastating 1958 defeat of Republican candidates. Ray Bliss indicated in no uncertain terms that he would remain as chairman only if the assembled leaders were willing to trust his political judgment and not develop their own personal agendas and strategies in future contests. He came away from the meeting with apologies for their intrusions in the 1958 campaign and promises that they would indeed defer to his decisions about strategy and tactics in subsequent campaigns. Obviously not every state chairman could approach the state's power brokers and opinion leaders in that way (see chapter 4). Ray Bliss could and did because he insisted his authority be based on their trust in his integrity, judgment, and political skills.

In summarizing the leadership versus management ledger as formulated by administrative science, Ray Bliss fits unquestionably in the category of leader, although there are some managerial overtones in some of the categories we have considered.

## The Political Science Perspective

Having demonstrated that Ray Bliss was a leader by the standards of administrative science, we need to look at the leadership criteria advanced by political scientists. An eminent political scientist, Thomas E. Cronin (1984), will be used as exemplary of this literature, reflecting the views of scholars such as Warren Bennis (1985), John Gardner (1990), and the scholars associated with the Center for Creative Leadership at Greensborough, North Carolina. Cronin defines leadership as follows: "Leaders are people who perceive what is needed and what is right and know how to mobilize people and resources to accomplish mutual goals." He then identifies six qualities of leadership.

"Leaders" says Cronin, "are people who know who they are and know where they are going" (1984:28). Bliss possessed not only a realistic and accurate picture of his own strengths and weaknesses, but his assessments of others were made quickly and were amazingly accurate. He postulated his ideals clearly and he plotted carefully just how he would arrive at their realization.

Cronin's second point is that "leaders have to provide the risk-taking, entrepreneurial imagination for their organization and communities" (1984:30). Ray Bliss took great delight in perceiving situations and coming up with insights that would lead to possible new approaches and solutions. As I pointed out earlier, he did not take great joy in being a problem solver

of minute operational issues, but in attending to these, as well as to larger difficulties, he frequently indulged in exciting transformational thinking.

Cronin's third point about leaders is that they need a sense of humor and a sense of proportion (1984:31). Contrary to what many commentators felt and wrote about Ray Bliss, he had a great sense of humor. The fact is that Ray Bliss was not the dour, single-minded specialist some have made him out to be. Our evening conversations over the years were punctuated with humorous stories centering on the foibles of the power seekers of our time. Though not a particularly good joke teller and not much given to telling jokes, he would from time to time act out his mischievousness.

On one lovely June evening Mrs. Bliss, Ray and I had gone to dinner at an outside cafe named the Chez Francois near the National Committee headquarters, then on Eye Street. The waiters were very French and did not understand much English. When it came time to order dessert, we all decided we wanted chocolate mousse, but in response to Ray's order the waiter was obviously puzzled and sought some guidance--all the waiter could do was to mumble "Chocolate?--chocolate?" Finally, in desperation, Ray put his fingers along side his head like antlers and exclaimed "Moose, moose, chocolate mousse!"

Incidentally, I should comment on the role Ray's lovely and unselfish wife, Ellen, played in his leadership. I could write a paper on that alone and Ray would be delighted, for he was deeply grateful for all she did to sustain and strengthen him. Suffice it to say that Ray Bliss did feel guilty about the almost total preoccupation he had with politics. He knew this kept him away from spending time with Ellen and he regretted it deeply and commented on it often. He made a point of writing about it and remarked that state chairmen "must make heavy personal sacrifices to meet the many demands on their time. They are on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. They are likely to have little home or family life" (Bliss 1962:160).

Cronin believes, fourth, that "leaders have to be skilled mediators and negotiators, but they also had to be able to stir things up and encourage healthy and desired conflict." Most political commentators from the 1960s give Ray Bliss a large measure of the credit for the resurrection of the Republican Party after the devastating defeat in the 1964. Among the contributions mentioned most frequently was his ability to create party unity. The extent of that accomplishment can best be appreciated when one recalls that the Republican Coordinating Committee, representing all ideological wings of the party, the congressional sector, the presidentially oriented group, governors, state legislators, and party officials produced 70 unanimous reports on widely disparate subjects. I can testify to the fact that it was often the skilled negotiating and mediating on the part of Chairman Bliss that produced that kind of unanimity.

On the other hand, Ray Bliss was not one to discourage conflict when it was ultimately productive. In describing the importance of developing a corps of good candidates, he commented on the need from time to time for spirited conflict in the following way:

> When a state chairman builds a corps of candidates, he may reach a point where the competition among those individuals becomes quite intense for one particular office. For example, several of them may want to run for the same office at the same time. This, of course, may create some friction . . . But it is better to have friction, or competition, of this type than no candidate at all (Bliss 1960:166).

Cronin's fifth quality of leadership is integrity (1984:32). If there is one quality Ray Bliss would like to be remembered for it is his integrity. He would often say "There are no written contracts in politics," and "Your word is your bond." When Ohio or Washington associates broke their word he was not only saddened, but he let them know of his unhappiness. He seldom, if ever, expressed himself publicly on these matters, but more than one congressional leader, governor, and national committee member felt his wrath in private meetings. For his part, it was a matter of utmost honor to live up to the spirit and the letter of any agreement to which he was a party.

Sixth, Cronin says "the leader has to have brains and breadth" (1984:32). No one who has worked intimately with Ray Bliss would question the brilliance of his mind nor the breadth of his interests. Although he eschewed playing a highly visible role in public policy pronouncements, behind the scenes he was both very knowledgeable about, and active in, promoting positions he felt were in the interest of the party, the state, and the nation. When he refused to go on national television shows like "Face the Nation" or "Meet the Press" many assumed it was because he was a narrow organizational technician.

That was not true! He could defend an issue position with the best of the party leaders in Washington. He often did so with an excellent data base and persuasive force during our friendly nocturnal debates. He chose not to do so publicly because he felt that was the province of the elected office-holders. They were the ones who had to stand for reelection and who needed the publicity such events provided. Office-holders respected him for taking that position. It was another way in which he built party unity.

Cronin would be the first to insist that a person possessing these six essential qualities is not necessarily going to be a leader, let alone an effective leader. But he also would point out that these qualities do characterize those successful political leaders he has studied. Our analysis reveals that the personal characteristics and modus operandi of Ray Bliss clearly paralleled the characteristics of leadership identified by political scientists.

## Conclusion

In describing Ray Bliss many writers and political associates, would often use the old expression, "When God made Ray Bliss, he broke the mold." It is true. He was unique. That uniqueness, however, can be explained by how hard and successfully Ray Bliss worked to develop skills with which he was least comfortable, and how carefully he balanced those developed skills with his natural strength and affinities. There is no doubt about Bliss' successful leadership nor that he was driven to serve and to succeed. But neither the insights of administrative nor political science can explain the ultimate source of his motivation and values. That chapter, perhaps the most fascinating of all, has yet to be written.

## Notes

1. Unless otherwise noted, the material in this essay is drawn from the personal recollections, papers, and correspondence of the author covering almost three decades of close association and friendship with Ray Bliss.

## References

Bennis, Warren. 1985. *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*. New York: Harper and Row.

Bliss, Ray C. 1960. "The Role of the State Chairman," in James Cannon, ed., *Politics U.S.A.* Pp. 159-170. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Broder, David. 1981. "Bliss Remembered." *The Washington Post*. August 12:A25.

Cronin, Thomas E. 1984. "Thinking and Learning About Leadership." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 14:22-34.

Gardner, John. 1990. *On Leadership*. New York: Free Press.

Republican National Committee. 1966. *Elements of Victory*. Washington, DC

Sperling, Godfrey. 1974. *The Christian Science Monitor*. August 7:5.

Tramel, Mary E., and Helen Reynolds. 1977. *Executive Leadership*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Zalesnik, Abraham. 1977. "Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?" *Harvard Business Review* 55:67-78.

7

# Paul M. Butler and the Democratic Party: Leadership and New Directions in Party Building

*George C. Roberts*

In December 1954, Paul Mulholland Butler, from South Bend, Indiana, was elected chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), serving from 1955 to 1960. His importance in the transformation of national party organization was demonstrated in his party management, in his role as spokesperson for Democrats, and in his party-building programs. He brought to the office thirty years of political experience, the last three years as a member of the DNC. This political experience was important in shaping his goals and accomplishments as a national party leader, as well as his theory of party leadership.

Operating in the absence of a Democratic president, Butler saw possibilities for establishing leadership claims, but he was aware that other Democrats saw themselves as national party leaders--Adlai Stevenson (soon to be twice a defeated presidential candidate), forceful congressional leaders such as Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn, former President Harry S Truman (who had opposed Butler's election and was tied to Frank McKinney, "his" national chairman and Butler's Indiana factional foe), and some state and urban party leaders. How Butler formulated and put into effect his theory of party leadership, focus on public policy, and efforts at party building, all aimed at a Democratic presidential comeback, will be examined to illustrate the style and substance of his extraordinary chairmanship.

Paul Butler can be usefully compared to Ray Bliss, an innovative chairman of the Republican National Committee who served his party, like Butler, when it did not occupy the White House. Butler and Bliss exhibited similarities as party leaders while they showed clear differences. These party leaders came from neighboring states, loved politics, thought that political party service was a high calling, and placed high value on the role of political parties in the American political system. Both experienced political party activities at the local and state levels; while only Bliss formally held chairmanships at the county and state levels, Butler was a state committee member by virtue of serving as a congressional district chairman. Both served

on their respective national committees before becoming national chairmen. Both believed in building strong party organizations, although Butler brought more of a centralizing attitude to the chairmanship than Bliss.

An important difference was the emphasis they placed on public policy. While Ray Bliss had policy concerns, his policy leadership was unobtrusive and he shunned policy controversy. His main leadership goal was organizational effectiveness (see chapter 6). Paul Butler, on the other hand, whatever his innovations and accomplishments in improving Democratic Party organization, placed primary emphasis on party principles, platform, and policy. In the role of party policy leader, Butler was in the forefront with the media in articulating his ideas to the public. He enjoyed the controversies in which he found himself embroiled, and he believed party organizational effectiveness came about only when proper communication had advanced shared party principles. Theory was wed to reality when a political party was responsible to its members and the public.

## Butler's Political Experience

Any analysis of Paul Butler's leadership talents, leadership style, and efforts at organizational innovation and party building benefits from awareness of his broad background in politics. (Roberts 1987:1-49). The unique Indiana party system was the framework for his vast political experience (Roberts 1988). Butler came from a family active in local politics. From 1926, when he turned 21, Butler steadily rose in party ranks. He never held public office, but was active in factional party organizational maneuvers, managed and spoke out through the media in general election campaigns, and held party offices at the precinct, congressional district, state, and national levels, and was elected to the DNC in 1952.

As Paul Butler made the transition from grassroots politics to national party leadership, he took advantage of an opportunity to develop more concrete notions of party leadership and organizational activity. Through service as a National Committee member, and member of its executive committee, he could pursue party organizational ideas by proposing programs to accomplish them. He gained a reputation as a party organizational specialist. Butler unsuccessfully sought a 1954 midterm party convention and prepared a party constitution (rules), with centralizing provisions. The problem of southern loyalty (and national convention delegate loyalty) was interwoven with the subjects of these ventures.

National committee service also put Butler in contact with political leaders, such as Michigan chairman Neil Staebler, who wanted more vigorous party organization and more rank-and-file involvement, while exhibiting some suspicion of old-line party bosses. In this manner, Butler came into

acquaintanceship with some aspects of the "new politics" of issues emerging in the 1950s (Sawyer 1960). His role in the movement to draft Adlai E. Stevenson as the 1952 party nominee gave Butler contact and a continuing relationship with Stevenson, the new national chairman, Stephen Mitchell, and other Stevenson people, which was turned to his advantage when he sought the national chairmanship.

*Leadership Theory and Practice*

What theory of party leadership would Paul Butler pursue as chairman? His political apprenticeship left him with some guiding principles concerning leadership substance and style. From his earliest local contact with party factionalism he became almost obsessed with opposition to those in political leadership who put selfish interest above party interest, particularly those who were in politics for personal financial gain. As he became more active in state-level party matters, he broadened this idea into hard opposition to what he and others perceived as a collusive bipartisan establishment in Indiana politics. Butler perceived his role in Indiana factionalism as striving for "the complete elimination from positions of power and influence of men who deal across party lines to gain their selfish ends."[1] This concern was at the heart of the longtime factional opposition associated with Butler's election as national committeeman in 1952.

When Butler became DNC chairman in 1955, he had not completely formulated a theory of party leadership, at least not one for a national constituency. Experiences would soon help produce a more fully developed concept of leadership. The theory of "responsible parties," then popular enough among political scientists to be embodied in a special report to the American Political Science Association (APSA) (American Political Science Association 1950), played an important role in this development.

*Responsible Party Controversy*

As early as 1960, Daniel Ogden, who came to the DNC as an American Political Science Association Fellow about the time Butler departed, argued that Butler had literally tried to apply the "responsible party" theory to the DNC, rather than what Ogden termed the "arena of compromise" theory of party politics, and that Butler succeeded only to the extent that he lapsed into compromise (Ogden 1960). In 1971, Evron Kirkpatrick, criticizing the 1950 APSA report on responsible political parties, cited Butler as "the one party leader who tried to implement its proposals [and] failed completely" (Kirkpatrick 1971).

Did Butler rigidly attempt to follow the responsible party theory? He was aware of the APSA report by 1953, if not earlier, and the concept of

responsible parties was included in his 1953 midterm convention proposal and his party constitution. Butler made ample references to responsible party theory whenever he expressed his views on the role of a national chairman in opposition, on the chairman's relation to congressional leaders, on loyalty to party principles, on obligations to the public and to party members, and on communication, fund raising, and organization. With interest in the "new politics" of issues, Butler enunciated clearly the responsible party theory. Party communication and the resultant effective organization, supported by widespread participation of rank-and-file party members, attracted by party principles, depended on the responsible party theory and, as well, helped fulfill it. To Butler, party organization based on common principles was the winning kind of organization. Theory would be wed to reality.[2]

However, Butler definitely saw himself as a pragmatic party leader--he certainly wanted to win elections, and Democrats did win in 1958 and 1960. He valued party unity, as an asset to winning, and practiced conciliation with the South on racial matters until he felt events made unity impossible. But he placed limits on unity as a goal, limits dictated by the responsible party doctrine of adherence to party principles. If the South could not agree to party policies, unity would suffer (Roberts 1987:94). In his political apprenticeship, Butler had been socialized to believe in party unity--he was an organizational man, he said--but a unity stressing party diversity until deliberation had produced principles, and then no further disagreement on the basic principles agreed to (Roberts 1987:181). The centralizing provisions in his draft of a party constitution in 1953 had suggested such a definition of loyalty.

By 1959, at the height of a worsening relationship with Democratic congressional leaders, Butler's view of party leadership was made clear. He now proclaimed that, with no Democratic president, the DNC chairman became the instrument to communicate to the party's congressional leaders what rank-and-file Democrats thought, to nudge legislative party members to support party pledges and platforms, to see that the Democratic Party gave voters an alternative to Republican policies, and that voters saw policy differences between the parties.[3] Up against Butler's responsible opposition plan were the pattern of consensus politics under President Dwight Eisenhower's bipartisanship and the cooperative approach Democratic congressional leaders employed with the president. Butler further faced the established pattern of Anglo-American legislative party independence from other aspects of party organization. Congressional leaders tended to view the National Committee as oriented to presidential interests.

Did Butler fail as party leader, perhaps because he followed responsible party theory? The initial reaction tended to be in the affirmative. However, there has clearly been some revision on the question, recognizing what Butler actually did and what he hoped to achieve, taking into account institutional

limits and the context of the times (Huckshorn 1984:64; Price 1984; Roberts 1987:179-84; Sundquist 1968).

*Butler and Bliss as Party Leaders*

Like Paul Butler, Ray Bliss learned from his experiences on the Republican National Committee lessons which would assist him as national chairman. Ray Bliss was an active, full-time national chairman in the sense that Paul Butler was, but Bliss was an "office" leader, not a "speaking" chairman (see chapter 2). In avoiding personal publicity, Bliss was far more the unobtrusive party leader than was Butler, who was often in the public eye, enjoying controversy. Bliss was concerned with issues, but not ideology, and was never informed by the "responsible party" theory. Since Butler was interested in the responsible party theory and had more centralizing notions than Bliss did, Butler was far more confrontational in some circumstances, although perhaps not as much as some have suggested.

Butler put qualifications on the goal of party unity (because of policy and party responsibility concerns), but Bliss shaped all aspects of his job to promote unity. Bliss practiced unity on the Republican Coordinating Committee; he was chosen Chairman because he was acceptable to all factions; he carefully balanced the RCC task forces ideologically; and he established a climate which discouraged bickering. Organizational building was Bliss "nuts-and-bolts" remedy for ideological bickering. Bliss achieved more integration with state and local party organizations and congressional leaders than Butler (see chapter 3). For example, Ray Bliss presided over the Wednesday meetings of Republican congressional leaders throughout his tenure as chair. Butler might have been able to have performed that role in 1955, but not later.

## The "New Politics," Policy Focus, and Party Building

In the 1950s, Butler understood the "new politics" as one of issues and personality, attracting non-traditional party activists. Adlai Stevenson's 1952 campaign had attracted many amateurs and reform-minded intellectuals. In a sense, Butler and Stevenson shared this constituency of issue-oriented activists, apparent in such states as California and Michigan. These new activists reflected mass communications and increased levels of education, along with nationalizing trends in politics. Butler liked to think people were beginning to participate more in party processes, and that issues, principles, and ideas were responsible for the attraction and attachments of such amateurs to the political parties. While mentioning personality as an aspect of the new politics, Butler never elaborated on this more ambiguous matter,

as he did with issues. Cotter and Hennessy (1964:64, 67-80) believed that Butler himself showed elements of "charismatic and symbolic leadership." Butler's clashes with congressional leaders and southern and northern factional opponents often resulted from Butler's personality. Butler admitted to an outspoken style and some thought it abrasive. His reserved nature was often taken for coldness.

*The Primacy of Communication*

In terms of party building, Butler developed a political trinity stressing communication, fund raising, and organization. Communication was the most important of these as Butler saw it as a catch-all term encompassing much of the other two elements. Fund raising could serve as an intra-party communications device which might draw contributors to party work, and party organization could not be made truly effective without proper communication.

This communications emphasis tied in with Butler's belief that he should communicate the views of party members to Congress. The loyal opposition had to guide the congressional majority and inform the public. Devices to inform the public and create better intra-party communication made parties more responsive and responsible to both party members and the public. If issues were discussed and party positions on issues pressed on party followers, participation in party activities would increase and a broad base of energetic party workers would be created.

With such communication primacy, issue emphasis and policy alternatives to the Eisenhower program would be the essence of loyal opposition. Butler was generally supported on this point by Adlai Stevenson and other Democratic leaders, even if opposed to Butler for factional reasons. Communication emphasis partly explains Butler's ambitious travel program to grassroots party events. He could speak out on issues while checking out local party organization and increasing the visibility of the chairmanship. Butler valued television as a communications device and he often appeared on television in addition to his frequent press conferences. He missed few opportunities for issue discussion or policy pronouncement. As civil rights issues took on more importance in the late 1950s Butler became a prominent spokesman and advocate for integration, thereby compounding problems with congressional leaders and the South. Butler labelled civil rights the number one social issue of the time, the greatest moral issue facing America.

*The Democratic Advisory Council*

In November 1956, the Democratic Advisory Council (DAC) became the first formalized policy-making body between conventions for the Democratic

Party. The idea did not originate with Paul Butler. Republicans had made policy statements between conventions (Republican National Committee 1966), and the 1950 APSA report on responsible parties had endorsed the idea. A group of Democrats, the Finletter Group (named after former Secretary of the Air Force, Thomas Finletter), associated with Adlai Stevenson by 1956, had researched issues and made policy pronouncements. After his 1956 defeat, Stevenson was convinced Democratic congressional leaders could not be the only party voices in a loyal opposition.

Butler's 1953 midterm convention proposal incorporated the idea of a party policy-making body between conventions. Thus, Butler fully supported creation of the DAC, became its chairman and was instrumental in appointing its membership and getting it organized. He constantly encouraged its work, prompting and complementing it with his own policy utterances. With his stress on issue communication as a prerequisite for effective party organization, what else would one have expected?

DAC also served Butler's goal of responsible party opposition. DAC's main purpose, as announced in January 1957, was to "further the programs and principles of the Democratic Party," guided by the 1956 platform and evolving events, "to make a national party more responsive and responsible to its members and to the public" (Democratic National Committee 1957-60). Speaking for Democrats not represented in Congress, it would also help legislators carry out the platform, a critical function of opposition. In February 1957, the DNC charged the DAC with application of the platform to events and with the enunciation of policy between conventions.

By June 1960, DAC had issued sixty-one policy statements and Butler saw each one as front-page news throughout the nation. To Butler, DAC was an effective way to reach the public and useful for intra-party communication. Aiming at the 1960 election, a lengthy 1959 statement from DAC, "The Decision in 1960," read like a party platform. James Sundquist (1968:395-415) has established the relationship between DAC statements, the 1960 platform, and policy proposals in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and Butler's role in the beginning stages of this progression. DAC had made a contribution to the debate over national purpose. Yet, John F. Kennedy persuaded the DNC to abolish DAC after the 1960 election, feeling that a Democratic president and national party agencies could not both speak for the party on policy matters.

As noted above, the focus (and the manner of focus) on public policy questions marks a sharp difference between Paul Butler and Ray Bliss, and this difference affected their leadership patterns. Butler's communication interest was related to the role of party leader and so to policy. Whereas Butler spoke out on policy, Bliss' unobtrusive leadership style avoided policy controversy. Butler tied policy concern to the "new politics" of the 1950s. Butler thought issues would attract people to politics; Bliss was interested in

all facets of attracting Republican voters, but he did not view issues as central to party organization nor ideology as anything but divisive.

A comparison of the Democratic Advisory Council and the Republican Coordinating Committee illustrates party and leadership differences (see chapter 13). While DAC was suggested by presidential party leaders and Adlai Stevenson's supporters, interested in an ongoing policy forum, RCC had its origins in congressional leaders who wanted to prevent a 1966 midterm convention favored by GOP governors. Butler attracted no real congressional leaders to DAC, while Bliss saw that they had a major role in RCC. Without participation of congressional Democrats, DAC became top-heavy with presidential liberals, increasing tension within the party. However, both parties used the products of these policy-making bodies for their party platforms.

*Fund Raising and Organization*

Paul Butler had raised considerable funds for the DNC in Indiana in 1954, while serving as national committeeman. He found fund raising burdensome and came to see it as a national party problem. And it did create problems for him as DNC chairman, although much of the burden of fund raising was shifted to others as the role of the chairman changed (Cotter and Hennessy 1964:71-73,178). Still, money was a necessity for campaigns and party building.

There were programs aimed at small contributors, such as Dollars for Democrats and the Sustaining Membership program (a similar program was used by Democrats in the 1920s), but an increasing deficit necessitated a turn to large contributors and state party organizations for funds. The state assessment or quota system had been established by Stephen Mitchell in 1953. After Butler inherited the quota system he found national party financial administrators engaged in bookkeeping disputes, alternately practicing begging and threats, and dealing with quotas not met (the deficit was $923,000 in September 1958). Butler supported the small contributor programs mainly because he thought them good for intra-party communication and for getting people at the grassroots involved in party activities, as well as for building local organization. Democrats could also help maintain their image as the party of the little guy with such programs (Hennessy 1959:1).

Revitalized party organization had been a concern of Adlai Stevenson and Stephen Mitchell after the loss of the 1952 election. Butler shared this view and attracted the attention of Stevenson people and leaders from "new politics" states, such as Michigan State chairman Neil Staebler, while serving on the DNC. He began then to talk about conferences for party workers and publishing a precinct committeeman handbook. He was aware that Republican Chairman Leonard Hall had instituted a workshop for RNC

members, dealing with issues, public relations, organization, precinct work, and voter registration in 1954 (see chapter 2).

Soon after Butler became chairman in 1955 he announced plans for creation of the Advisory Committee on Political Organization (ACPO), which lasted until 1960. Its role in party development has been neglected by students of party organization, partly because it maintained no deliberate publicity like the DAC. Its successful programs were not always cited by Butler's critics either.

The ACPO was organized in October 1955 with Neil Staebler as its chairman. Butler and Staebler had similar ideas on party organization. Butler charged ACPO with looking at past organizational ideas and revising them and generating new ideas, creating programs for party workers, composing and circulating party manuals and handbooks, and considering the problems between national and state party organizations.

ACPO met Butler's charge and considered a broad range of questions. These included precinct work, handbooks for grassroots use, voter registration materials, and training sessions for instructors who would teach precinct workers (1956) and for instructors who would teach state, congressional, and local party leaders (1959). Also, in 1956, ACPO set up a Field Assistants Program, whereby conferences were organized for the strengthening of state and county party organizations. The realities of decentralization were generally respected, while the field representatives did not always believe their work was appreciated locally. Advance preparation and strenuous working sessions of ACPO produced programs used for the 1956, 1958, and 1960 elections.

The emphasis on party organization exemplified in ACPO was related to Butler's overall stress on increased communications. ACPO honored the trinity of issue communication, fund raising, and organization. The central molding force of organization was seen as communication, especially a two-way flow between organizational levels. ACPO endorsed a common body of information for debate among party members. Through regional training programs and conferences, intra-party communication could be improved. The national party would learn new organizational ideas and techniques from state and local organizations (which could learn from each other) and they could in turn benefit from national party information.

With suburban growth and the rise of amateur activists, Butler stressed the importance of precinct work and its use in terms of communication, not only to reach voters, but to attract new party workers and contributors. ACPO quickly caught on to this theme. Butler noted that the party professionals were at first skeptical of ACPO's utility, that they expected theory and few workable ideas. The notion of training party workers was foreign to their thinking. But many of these professionals were surprised with

the value of ACPO programs, especially with precinct and party worker training.

In the end, Butler was proudest of ACPO as an innovation. Yet John F. Kennedy ended ACPO, like DAC. If Butler failed in particular aspects of party building, the reality of a decentralized party system and independence of congressional parties were the best explanations. When charging the newly-formed ACPO, Butler asked it "To determine the role of both the National Committee and chairman, particularly in relation to state party organizations" (Roberts 1987:137). The 1950 APSA report had warned that a national chairman exercising any initiative other than in presidential campaign management was likely to have his authority challenged. Butler knew what he was up against when he challenged tradition.

Both Paul Butler and Ray Bliss worked for organizational effectiveness to win elections (see chapters 4 and 5). Here they were much alike. Although Bliss' model of party organization was not fully institutionalized, his eye was always on this goal. Butler diverged insomuch as communication and policy goals remained top priorities. Their respective efforts in party building helped Democrats in 1958 and 1960, Republicans in 1966 and 1968.

Butler brought organizational concerns to his chairmanship, partly because of his involvement with "new politics" leaders, such as Neil Staebler, who headed the Advisory Committee on Political Organization. Similarly, Bliss' work on the Big City report foretold his later programs. On the other hand, Bliss had actually used training workshops as Ohio state chairman; Butler would have been surprised if the Indiana Democratic organization had shown such innovation. Money, or raising it for party purposes, is a burden for any party leader. Bliss never got into the squabbles over state quotas which dogged Butler. Both chairmen used direct mail to solicit contributions, and both relied on large contributors. Bliss' successors were able to have greater success with both types of financial support than Butler was able to achieve in his tenure. In regard to training programs, Bliss may have performed on a greater scale by the 1960s, but Butler had tried the same type of training programs in his era. When he had to operate with scant resources, Butler's plan of training those who, in turn, would train others, was an efficient concept. In providing services to state and local organizations Butler never got as far as Bliss, nor did he reach the level of integration with such organizations.

## Paul Butler's Legacy and Ray Bliss

In the transformation of Democratic national party organization Paul Butler stands out through his leadership, policy focus, and party building programs. Neil Staebler believes Butler stood out because of his "sense of

organization and dedication to the Party." (Roberts 1987:184). Has any successor Democrat provided such sustained leadership and attracted such attention while doing so? An anonymous political columnist has suggested that Butler's more recent successors "lacked guts." Under Democratic Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Carter the Democratic National Committee had no real independence.

Beginning in 1968, the Democratic Party pursued reforms, aimed at participatory democracy in the selection of national convention delegates, and these reforms created fissures in the party leadership and ranks. Paul Butler was one type of reformer, but not necessarily the type of the 1960s and 1970s. Neil Staebler believes that Butler wanted more "open-door participative politics," in contrast to "backroom-boss manipulative politics" (Roberts 1987:184). While Butler agreed with much of the "new politics" of his time he still considered himself an "organization man" and was not anti-party. In the 1950s, he was known as a reformer with a professional touch. While critical of party leaders who pursued selfish interests, it is clear that Butler could not have been enthusiastic about all of the reforms his party later undertook.

The divisions within the Democratic Party over policy questions would have come about whether or not Butler had emphasized policy in the 1950s or the DAC had existed. Yet this divisiveness was previewed during Butler's chairmanship. Butler would not have been on the liberal side of all the disputes of the 1960s and 1970s either. In particular, Democrats have continued to argue whether they should emphasize policy. In 1974 Democrats held a Kansas City midterm conference and drafted a party charter, an unconscious memorial to Paul Butler. But the midterm conference has withered and the charter movement declined as the national chairmen of the 1980s became more campaign-oriented (see chapter 10).

There is no question that Butler did well with party-building programs. Neil Staebler has pointed out that Ray Bliss, in following a course parallel to Butler, improved on Butler's programs (Roberts 1987:146). John Bibby believes later Democrats unabashedly copied Bliss' party-building programs (see chapter 2), but Democratic national chairmen also had the Paul Butler model to guide them.

To some extent, comparing Paul Butler and Ray Bliss as party leaders is somewhat like comparing apples and oranges. They were most alike in their interest in party building, but they reached that activity with different emphases. Party building was all-important to Ray Bliss, who saw it as an antidote to ideological bickering. Paul Butler's concept of responsible political parties and communication put an emphasis on shared issues and party principles, which had to exist before any organizational structure could be effective. This emphasis made him an obtrusive party spokesperson who often found himself in confrontational situations, while Ray Bliss avoided such

situations. These two accomplished party leaders thus left different legacies for modern party development.

## Notes

1. Butler to the author, July 5, 1961.
2. A speech by Paul M. Butler at Antioch College, May 1961.
3. This perceived leadership role was revealed in an interview with Robert Riggs, a political columnist for the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, July 19, 1959.

## References

American Political Science Association, Committee on Political Parties. 1950. "Towards a More Responsible Two-Party System." *American Political Science Review*. 44:Supplement.

Cotter, Cornelius P., and Bernard C. Hennessy. 1964. *Politics Without Power: The National Party Committees*. New York: Atherton Press.

_____. 1957-1960. *Statements Issued by the Democratic Advisory Council*. Washington, DC.

Hennessy, Bernard C. 1959. *Dollars for Democrats*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Huckshorn, Robert J. 1984. *Political Parties in America*, 2d ed. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Kirkpatrick, Evron M. 1971. "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: Political Science, Policy Science, or Pseudo-Science?" *American Political Science Review* 65:965-990.

Ogden, Daniel M. 1960. "Party Theory and Political Reality Inside the Democratic Party." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York.

Price, David E. 1984. *Bringing Back the Parties*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Republican National Committee. 1966. *The Development of National Party Policy Between Conventions*. Washington, D.C..

Roberts, George C. 1987. *Paul M. Butler: Hoosier Politician and National Political Leader*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

_____. 1988. "Indiana Political Parties: Tradition and Transition." *Proceedings: Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences* 22:1-12.

Sawyer, Robert L., Jr. 1960. *The Democratic State Central Committee in Michigan, 1949-1959: The Rise of the New Politics and the New Political Leadership*. Ann Arbor: Institute of Public Administration, The University of Michigan.

Sundquist, James L. 1968. *Politics and Policy: The Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson Years*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

# 8

## The Modern Political Boss: John M. Bailey of Connecticut[1]

*Joseph I. Lieberman*

John Moran Bailey was most of all a man of many paradoxes. His thoughts as he spoke them were jumbled and confusing, but confront him with an important piece of legislation and he was as incisive as the most ordered legal mind. His public oratory was thoroughly unimpressive, but put him in the role of advocate for a political cause and he was incredibly compelling. He could forget the name of a newsman he had known for years and still remember the most minute details of legislative history or procedure. He was as careless in attending to administrative chores like answering mail as he was meticulous in organizing the pursuit of delegate votes at a convention. He was a tough and single-minded politician, seemingly oblivious to all except political triumph. He was, at the same time, a sensitive man, conscious of his standing and concerned that he was not sufficiently honored. He was wealth and Harvard. He was the wards and Hartford. You thought you had fully understood him and then it was painfully clear you had not. He had eluded your neat mold.

It is impossible to fit John Bailey, Boss of Connecticut and Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, into one school or one era of American politics. He bore the markings of a ward heeler made good, a political animal bred in the tough and lawless school of urban machine politics which thrived in America sixty years ago. But he did not fully belong there, for he had played the game in its most contemporary forms. He understood modern government and was sensitive to the demands an educated and affluent electorate makes on it. He was not at all reluctant to use political tools unique to this age. He did it in Connecticut. He did it in the 1960 Kennedy campaign as an important member of that first great social scientific political team. But although he had played on their team, he was not really one of them either. His roots were elsewhere.

As a resident of Connecticut, I had been well aware of John Bailey since I came to political consciousness. I have tried to recall my impression of him then, before he was a subject of study, and the first words that come to mind

are "Boss Bailey"--the tag his Connecticut opponents inside and outside his own party give Bailey in portraying him as a tyrant worthy of suspicion. To me then John Bailey was a mysterious figure of merciless, manipulative genius. He was not totally evil, but then again he was not exactly a philosopher king either. The adjectives "tough," "cunning," and perhaps even "crude" fit my impression of him best. I knew he was closely associated with Governor Abraham Ribicoff, and that was positive, for the Governor was surely as honest, attractive, and progressive a man as had ever occupied the state's highest office. At times, it must be admitted, I wondered how Ribicoff got on with Bailey. It seemed like a strange marriage. And when they both linked themselves with the presidential plans of the young, brilliant, and elegant Senator from Massachusetts, I was convinced that there was certainly more of Ribicoff than Bailey in this alliance of neighboring political kingdoms. I suspect that a good many of the people of Connecticut whose participation in politics does not go beyond a quick reading of the local newspapers had very much this same image of John Bailey. It was quite wrong.

## The Power Broker

My first confrontation with "The Boss" deepened my suspicions but at the same time nurtured an affectionate fascination with him.

The scene was the Democratic state convention at Hartford's Bushnell Auditorium in July, 1962. Here was the beast in his natural habitat. Although by the end of the two-day affair his green eyes were red from lack of sleep, there was little doubt that he thrived on the conditions and the combat.

In action and personal bearing, Bailey was "The Compleat Political Boss." He brought to mind Cabell Phillips' fine description of "the familiar image of beefy, cigar-smoking, diamond-studded Irish Machiavellis who, as masters of large and inert blocs of voters, control the political destiny of the nation."

Bailey was tall, bald, and beefy and walked in a heavy, flat-footed way with his shoulders slightly slouched and his black pants up and over what Chicago politicos call "the alderman." He was smoking cigars (a perennial preoccupation except during Lent, when he just chewed them), which helped to fog the back room he operated in during that 1962 convention. Although I did not see any diamonds, he did seem the perfect Machiavelli with complete control, indeed, of "large and inert blocs of voters."

Of the eight nominations to be made at the Hartford convention, the organization--Bailey--was challenged in three. The first and most serious challenger was interested in running for the U.S. Senate and had been galloping about the state for months telling people so and attacking Boss Bailey. He was swamped completely in a floor fight.

There were three candidates for State Treasurer. To balance the ticket Bailey picked one of them--a Protestant Negro from Waterbury--for racial, religious, and geographic reasons. After consultation with Bailey and other party leaders, the two remaining candidates bowed out, saying they "understood the rules." One of them--a young mayor from a small town in central Connecticut--had been in the campaign for some time and was unable to control tears of frustration as he announced in a short and proper speech "I have chosen to serve the party."

The third challenge was for congressman-at-large, and Bailey handpicked an unknown at the eleventh hour largely because the last three letters of his name were "s-k-i." The Polish voters apparently had to be satisfied. A bright and personable lawyer who had served one term in Congress from Fairfield County in 1958 had announced his candidacy for congressman-at-large months before. Now he refused to bow to the organization and pull out.

As reporter David Broder wrote, "All over the hall, weary impatient delegates suddenly heard this conversation: 'It's Grabowski.' 'Who's Grabowski?' 'Bailey's man.'"

Grabowski it was. Bailey allowed Fairfield County to go free, and was stuck with its former congressman. But that was just not enough. Bailey's man, the pleasant Pole who doubled as a municipal court judge, received resounding support from all other quarters of the state. It appeared that the troops had received their orders from command central and carried them out in excellent style. Grabowski was nominated.

Through it all, Bailey, the ringmaster, just kept moving in those large and heavy steps of his through the crowds of advisers, hangers-on, pawns, and political power brokers who clutter about him. He never seemed to be going anywhere in particular except in and out of that back room off-stage at the Bushnell Auditorium--but just kept moving from group to group. He would grab an arm, look straight into the eye of its owner and, regardless of how far he was standing from the other, manage to sound as if he was whispering a very important and confidential piece of political information into his ear.

Well into the second evening, this movement of "The Boss" continued, his glasses pushed to the top of his bald head, the cigar ever-present, his right hand occasionally thrust out and up to rest on his forehead, either to wipe away the sweat or to indicate he was worried; it was much the same gesture a nervous housewife might use. He extended his hand to his sides with the palms up, as if he were pleading for help, "What can I do?" or at other times offering consolations, "What else could I do?"

His gestures, his repartee, his personal bearing were all reminiscent of the old school of bosses. Certainly, his dip into the pothole of political obscurity to elevate Bernard Grabowski to the U.S. Congress was reminiscent of the hand-picking of candidates done by the Tammany Sachems and their fellow political bosses decades ago.

So striking, in fact, was this similarity that if I had been asked immediately after that 1962 convention to place John Bailey personally and politically, I would have guessed that he was a first--or possibly second-generation American who came from a poor immigrant family and had worked his way up through ward politics, with financial security coming to him as a very important secondary benefit of political success.

I left Hartford after that 1962 convention thoroughly fascinated with this modern political mogul. My fascination grew after a surface study of John Bailey's career. I found that he was a fourth-generation American born to a family of considerable education and great wealth. He had worked his political way up through the wards; yet he did so only after attending Catholic University and Harvard Law School.

The record revealed that Bailey's taste in candidates did not run only to political unknowns who happened to fill an open religious, national, racial, or geographic slot. His Connecticut Democratic Party had brought to office a group of men who compared favorably to the average public servant in America: Senators Brien McMahon, William Benton, Thomas Dodd, and Abraham Ribicoff; Governors Chester Bowles, Ribicoff, and John Dempsey. I found too that Bailey played a major part in Connecticut legislative politics and that the record of the Connecticut Legislature was--in spite of a hamstringing system of malapportionment--an outstanding one.

These facts rested with me, to be aroused sometime later in a rereading of Theodore White's *The Making of the President 1960* by these few sentences: "Bailey had in his fourteen years in office in Connecticut built the tightest New England political machine which he operated with merciless efficiency . . . ." And then: "If one were to choose as a proud grouping those American States whose politics are probably the most decent and worthy of respect, one would group Wisconsin, certainly, with Minnesota, California, and Connecticut."

These two statements together triggered this study. The first described what I had seen at the July convention: John Bailey was the boss of a powerful political machine that carried many of the traits of the notorious machines of the past. But then White had spelled out what I had begun to see in my reading into Bailey's career. Bailey's organization evidently did not feed on the corruption which seemed to be necessary fuel for the traditional American political machines. Not only was machine-dominated Connecticut not marked by graft and chicanery, but a leading American political pundit had seen fit to place the state among the top four in the nation whose politics were "the most decent and worthy of respect."

A machine which operated with "merciless efficiency" and yet was "decent and worthy of respect" challenges some widely held notions of what machine politics were all about. "There ain't no such thing as a good boss," Fiorello La Guardia once wrote. "If he is good he is not a political boss; and if he is

a political boss, he's no good." John Bailey and his Connecticut political machine refuted La Guardia's logic. Bailey was surely a boss, but he was a species far different from the bosses and machines Fiorello knew.

### John Bailey: Style and Substance

From birth John Bailey differed from most of the classic bosses. He was born to wealth, and that gave him time--time that had to be taken in building the friendships and loyalties, the legislative skills and political sense that he would need to bring him to the top of Connecticut and national politics. He came to politics in a natural and easy way: his family was public-spirited and enjoyed community standing, and he was competitive and energetic. To say that Dr. and Mrs. Michael Bailey gave their only child to politics is accurate, and he went gladly.

In the unfolding of Bailey's career, as in every politician's, the chance sequence of external events was crucial. So much depends on where a man was and at what time. Events move on, and the politician must decide where it is best for him to enter or whether, bad as it is, he must enter then or never. Some leap forward as rapidly as they can in a headlong drive for success and so must follow wherever they are taken.

Bailey's rise was rapid. He went directly to the center of Democratic power in Hartford which was in Boss T.J. Spellacy's corner. There the emphasis was on political organization and the style was old and urban. Bailey learned much and gained many allies but at the same time was cast--in spite of his service on the bench--in the narrow mold of pure political animal. He tried in 1940 to break away and seek stature through public office, but the tide of events was against him and the public would not allow it. In 1940, if he wanted to stay in politics and advance--and there was no question that he wanted to do both--he had to suppress his desires for public office and give full attention to political organization.

He moved away from the Old Guard and Spellacy but refused to move all the way across to alliance with the New Guard and settled with a collection of young, ambitious, pragmatic, urban liberals. This stance suited his nature, for he was temperamentally a competent centrist who viewed political issues as a technician, not as an ideologist. He was not at ease with zealous partisans of either right or left, and it would have been harder for Bailey to do it with public men who preferred the prophetic to the political. His motto was "You've gotta do what you've gotta do."

Slowly he used his personal capacity--energy, likability, savvy, advocacy, and emotional self-discipline--to develop political resources like friendships, loyalties, and respect. Some of these in turn were transformed into tangible patronage resources. In 1946, with full use of his strategic talents, he brought

all of them together in the form of votes which gave him control of the Democratic Party in Hartford and Connecticut. He moved then to solidify his position by throwing himself into the legislative process and by entering into business-like negotiations with the most influential Democratic elements in Hartford and Connecticut. They were like a small group of wealthy entrepreneurs brought together by one of their own--the power broker--to form an association which he promised them would pay handsomely. His simple pitch was that disparate elements had more to gain if they united around him. Most important of all was the alliance he managed among the big-city bosses, for their delegate power meant control of state conventions and their legislative votes brought solid leverage in the General Assembly. To these big-city barons, Bailey was never boss but always broker. He was first among equals. He led, but together they decided on candidates. They gave him absolute legislative support, but he gave them patronage and places on the state ticket.

Very clear rules of behavior were set down by Bailey to those urban powers and all other political activists who came in contact with him. They knew they could trust Bailey and act accordingly. The importance of this to his continued control could not be overestimated. "Bailey's word is as good as his bond" was repeated so many times by so many different Connecticut politicians that it seems to receive inordinate and unjust importance. But it is not really hard to understand. Politics is a sphere of intense personal involvement where compromise and concession are imperative if there is to be public progress or personal gratification for the politicians. There is, however, no coercive authority inside or outside the world of politicians which can insure adherence to agreements made among them. There is no police authority. There are no written contracts. One man's promise to another must do if the system is to function. In the Connecticut Democracy, the system functioned because all who participated knew that John Bailey might hesitate or speak around a question or a request for support if he was not ready to answer that question or give that support, but when he put forth his word it could be trusted absolutely.

Patronage was a very important component of the modern political boss' rule. Bailey used it without apology, for it was as crucial to his art and occupation as the offer of stock options or fringe benefits or higher recompense was to the business executive seeking able and loyal co-workers. Bailey openly viewed patronage as the best method of financing party activity and harmony and of soliciting personal loyalty. Each must be rewarded according to his contribution or potential for harm. Able men were attracted to activity in Democratic politics because they saw it as one good path to the bench or other public office. Angry men were silenced because they thought it will ultimately benefit themselves or their constituencies. The big-city

bosses received most from Bailey. Ethnic groups and major interest blocs like organized labor were also well-satisfied.

There was too a cyclical, self-increasing quality to Bailey's power. As the years passed, his position became more secure and his patronage wealth grew. More and more Democrats concluded that it was judicious to stay on the right side of John Bailey, so they went with him in the Legislature and at conventions. This, in turn, made Bailey's position more imposing and made him more worth pleasing.

Deference to local party leaders was another basic principle of Bailey's political faith. "I respect position" he said. Local Democratic satraps knew that they would handle the distribution of state patronage within their home territories. They also knew that Bailey would not interfere in local political wars. In an action typical of the conservative way in which he felt he must use his power, Bailey concluded that he could not afford to put his prestige on the line every time there was a conflict in a Connecticut town or city. One prominent Democrat recalls a testimonial dinner at which he was seated next to Bailey when an old friend, who was involved in a hometown factional fight, came up to Bailey and said: "John, I told these guys who are running against me that even if they win, you and I have been friends too long for that to change things. When it comes to doing business with our city, I told them John Bailey will be working through me." Bailey nodded and went on to pass the time of day. As his embattled friend left, the Democrat next to Bailey chuckled. "What are you laughing about?" Bailey asked. "You know very well, John, that if he loses, you'll be dealing with the people in power." Bailey said nothing, but in time his old friend did lose and Bailey did deal with the people in power.

Bailey was once asked what he thought was the cause of his political success, and he answered: "Well, people talk about strategies and of course you've got to know where you're going, but the real reason for our power is a lot of little favors." He was being modest in this reply, but it was true that the traditional service functions of the political party, which were staples of the old-time bosses, had not been overlooked by Bailey. Most important of all perhaps had been his own accessibility to local Democratic organizations. Also, a staff working under Miss Katherine Quinn had distributed information, minor clerical, maintenance or summer jobs, and introductions to friendly state government agencies.

There emerged among Connecticut Democrats a feeling--sometimes gratitude, sometimes awe, sometimes empathy--that John Bailey's first wish was the good of the party. When he banished the dreams of a would-be candidate with a look of anguish and the plea, "What else can I do?" the fallen might take solace in the fact that Bailey applied these same inviolable, victory-producing principles to his own dreams as well. When he admitted to a Democratic legislative caucus that he was not so sure about a bill, but that

he believed it must be passed because the Governor wanted it and it was in the party platform, the hesitant heard and identified and went along. If John could do it, well, so could they.

All these factors helped Bailey rise to political eminence and stay there, but the ultimate source of his power was the product of all the others; he kept winning at the polls. "I have to keep winning" he explained "That is my job as party chairman." He measured all his political actions according to the effect they would have on the hundreds of thousands of Connecticut citizens who come from their homes to the polling booths in that mysterious exercise on election day. Bailey was a supreme democrat. In his politics the elective process occupied the predominant place it should in a representative democracy.

## The Elements of Victory

Winning in Connecticut was no easy task for a Democratic chairman. In the 1960s the state grew more Democratic, but it was still essentially what it had been since 1930--a battleground of strong competition between the two major parties with the deciding balance of power swung by the large bloc of voters (more than one-third) who registered as Independents. The electorate was alert and demanding and had an exceptionally low tolerance point for public chicanery.

Within these given circumstances, Bailey had methodically pursued his primary goal--victory. He had, in the first place, kept his own house clean in a determined attempt to avoid political corruption. He did this because he was basically an honest man, because he was too wealthy to desire more, and because in Connecticut there would be more to lose--elections, for instance--than gain in dipping his hand into the public treasury.

The most crucial task facing Bailey--unlike the old-time bosses--was his choice of candidates. With the cold and professional detachment of the surgeon he once thought he might be, Bailey went about gauging popular sentiment. He became the unemotional receiver of feedback from the voting public, the computer absorbing data and then turning out the name of the candidate most likely to receive the votes of a majority of citizens. He gathered his facts in continual conversations with the rank-and-file of his party. He was an early and ardent believer in political polls, and he knew and pored over the voting statistics of his state. But there was one way in which Bailey outdid the computers, for they could not punch onto their cards the elusive element of "political feel"--his heightened sense of intuition and timing which tied all the data together.

Bailey's personal attitudes had no place in these investigations or in his ultimate choice. Some of the men who came farthest in Connecticut politics

under Bailey's sponsorship had been least kind or loyal to Bailey himself. But they had a popular strength and that, in the end, was all that mattered to Bailey. As Abe Ribicoff put it once: "John had never allowed himself the luxury of revenge."

The choice of the top one or possibly two men for Bailey's ticket was made with meticulous care to insure the broadest base of support. The most careful concern went into the selection of a gubernatorial candidate, because control of the state government and its patronage treasure was Bailey's foremost goal. Candidates for the Senate must show popular strength so that they could be counted on to help the Democrat into the Governor's mansion. In filling the ticket openings at lower levels, Bailey's aim was simply a balanced ticket, with some grace if possible. His behavior here testified to one of the great underpinnings of American democracy: it is not a majority but a coalition of minorities that rules. The integral blocs in the state's electorate must be represented and satisfied so that together they would form a majority: the ethnic groups (Irish, Italians, Polish, Jews, Yankees, and now Negroes); the geographical areas (the big-city regions, the different ends of the state and the small towns); the economic interests (labor should, at least, feel that one of those who have jumped on to the ticket in another category was decidedly pro-labor), and the sexes (one woman, at least, who was also likely to satisfy an ethnic or geographical interest). Because of the nature of the Connecticut electorate, Bailey could not be too crude too often in filling these balancing slots. He had to find people who were not only Irish or small-town or women but who were also competent.

Studies in Connecticut and elsewhere indicate that ethnic factors no longer played the determinative part they may have in an earlier, less integrated America. But Bailey's feeling of the public pulse lead him to conclude otherwise. Bloc voting still played a role, all other things being equal. Asked if he thought all his ticket-balancing exercises were necessary, Bailey answered: "To be honest with you, I really don't know, but we keep winning, don't we?"

It was at the next stage, when Bailey had to see to it that his choice of candidates was accepted by the full party, that he worked his real magic. Political power could hardly have been used in a more sophisticated way. His selections seemed to spring wondrously from the grassroots Democratic activists themselves. His rule was by consultation. The big-city bosses and most-trusted Bailey intimates were consulted first. They had most to say in the selection both because he respected their advice and because their votes at a state convention were just about controlling. Then Bailey toured the state, discussing the nomination with local leaders and bloc leaders, claiming he had no specific candidate but managing to elicit a consensus favorable to his own prior conclusions. Time and again he did this--in 1948 for Chester Bowles, and in 1952 and 1954 for his greatest gamble, Abe Ribicoff, who

brought Bailey his largest and most durable triumphs. Time, excellence, and effort were required to develop power which could be exercised in this soft and subtle way. But it is power which might have been more lasting than that gathered through crude force and coercion.

By the time the nominating convention was called to order, the trick had usually been turned. Accord had been reached, and the convention delegates had only to ratify it. At all costs, Bailey worked to avoid a divisive convention battle. Unity must be maintained, for unity brings victory in the election and productivity and bounty in the next legislative session. Before the primary law in 1955, not one set of combatants for a major statewide nomination ever reached the convention floor.

The demands Bailey made of the convention delegates were more often implicit than stated. Here, too, he gained power from the deference many felt he must receive as grand broker in party power resources. A large percentage of the delegates never felt this subtle coercion. They simply believed in his way of putting a ticket together. In 1962, for instance, it was unnecessary for Bailey or his agents to have demanded support for the able but unknown Bernard Grabowski. Great numbers of delegates agreed, without argument, that there should have been a Polish-American on the ticket.

Once Bailey had his candidates, he had to give them issues on which to run a campaign. These were raised in the marbled halls of the state Legislature. When a Republican sat as Governor, from 1946 to 1948 and 1950 to 1954, Bailey was the acid critic, alert for opposition errors, intent on using the lush public relations prerogatives of the minority, or sometimes just sitting back in a calculating hunch that the Republicans would slaughter themselves. But with one of his own comfortably in the Governor's chair, he was the active field general, loyal to his Chief Executive and anxious to establish a record of "good issues" for him to take into the next election. In both tactical stances--acid critic or loyal field general--Bailey had excelled, because he was a master of the Connecticut legislative process, a supreme strategist and negotiator, and a skillful party chairman who was able to hold his legions together in harmony. He argued, he cajoled, but rarely did he coerce. "In the course of a five-month session and two special sessions" Professor Duane Lockard, a former state Senator, has written, "I never once heard a demand from Bailey." The unity Bailey established among Democrats in the Assembly was founded in the absolute support he received from the big-city Senators who composed the controlling bloc among Democrats in the Senate. Others were persuaded by his hold over the legislative scheduling of local bills or his direct line to the Governor or, again, by his control of patronage rewards.

As the record has shown, all these factors brought together gave Bailey a record of legislative productivity which--in sheer amount alone--was an admirable one. His Governors passed enough of their programs--fulfilled

enough of their pledges--to face the demanding Connecticut electorate confidently, their voices ringing with tales of accomplishment.

Having realized the first two planks--"good candidates" and "good issues"--of his three-point platform for political success, all that remained was "good organization." For the modern political boss operating in a state like Connecticut, campaign organizations holds a lower priority than they did for the old-time bosses. Today organization is only as important as the quality of the candidate and the appeal of the issues. When the formal election campaign began, most of Bailey's work was done. He was then outside the area of his special competence. He would probe and he would plot, but traditionally the chief candidate set the pace and the satchel of issues was emptied. The lesser candidates made certain that the blocs they represented knew they were representing them. The significant work that Bailey and the organization could do at this point was to push local Democratic organizations to get out and register voters. In this, the figures show they were very successful. With the help of Katherine Quinn, Bailey could also check to see that local organizations were well-supplied, running aggressive campaigns, and prepared, with some financial assistance from the state party, to bring out the Democratic vote on election day.

The best indication of how well this "good candidates, good issues, good organization" scheme worked is Bailey's record. By 1966, after twenty years at the party helm in a very competitive political state, he had Democrats in control for fourteen of those years. Batting .700 was doing very well in any sportsman-politician's league.

But his excellence and success would have been hollow if he had brought no more than Democratic triumphs to Connecticut. The neatness of the whole story is that John Bailey had to bring more to be triumphant. To win in Connecticut--to appeal to the decisive bloc of Independent voters--he had to run very good candidates and pass legislation of high quality.

The men who came to important public office under Bailey--Brien McMahon, Chester Bowles, William Benton, Abe Ribicoff, Tom Dodd, and John Dempsey--were men whose capacities and presence brought them prominence and respect on a national level.

At the lower places on his tickets, Bailey sometimes placed unknowns, but none of these proved to be an embarrassment once in office. Bailey's response to criticism of these unknown figures was to wonder whether the quality men at the top of the ticket could be elected without the bloc slots being filled below.

Probably Bailey's most caustic critics within the Connecticut Democratic Party (other than those who were simply hungry for his power) were liberals who charged him with bringing too many "mediocre" men to office, "mediocre" here seeming to mean more moderate than they would have preferred. They complained that Bailey always went with the winner and so did not use his

influence to give the state the kind of leadership and representation it should have had. Indicting Bailey for strategic conservatism was altogether just. That was his deliberate policy: "I go with the bird who can fly, not with the pigeon who can't get off the ground." He had no special antagonism towards liberals and was quite willing to support a reform leader, provided that the leader had a better than even chance--if not the best chance--of getting elected to office so that he had somewhere to lead from.

If major Democratic officeholders in Connecticut were not as liberal as they might have been, it was either because the voters of the state did not want liberal leadership or because the liberal leaders did not go out and convince the voters that they should have wanted them. Liberals yelled in 1958 when Tom Dodd, with Bailey's subtle backing, defeated Chester Bowles and William Benton for the senatorial nomination. But where were they over the years between elections when Dodd was out on the hustings assiduously building popular support? A real turning point for liberal politics in Connecticut came in 1958, when New Haven's Mayor Dick Lee--a liberal who knew how to build a political organization and took the time to do it--declined to run for the U.S. Senate.

Although winning in the next election was still his overriding goal, it was in the state Legislature that politics has became more than just winning for John Bailey. Interest groups like labor, which was crucial to the Democratic Party, and the good-government organizations which were taken as representatives of the Independent voters, must all be satisfied. The obligation to insure electoral victory acted as one limit of Bailey's actions. But because he derived a secondary personal delight and satisfaction from passing good, constructive, respectable legislation there was a second limit within the first--what can be done and still not upset the chances of victory.

## The Modern Political Boss

The American reaction to strong party leadership is somewhat schizophrenic. The same people who look with envy at the unity of the British national parties also work within our states to destroy any chance of such party strength. Our popular remedies have been applied automatically even when the ailment they seek to cure is not present. We see the ghosts of Tweed and Hague in John Bailey of Connecticut when they were in fact not there.

The record shows that the modern political boss, John Bailey, while pursuing little more than political advantage, made for more effective democracy in Connecticut. He built the Democratic Party into a strong and united political body. That strength and unity allowed him to exercise authority. That authority was used in the state's competitive political system

to make the party significantly responsive to the popular will. That responsiveness more often than not has meant victory for the party at the next election. And that victory delighted John Bailey and kept him in power.

There should hardly be any mystery to all this. In a representative democracy whose fundamental aim is to maximize the government's responsiveness to individual citizens through competitive political parties as go-betweens, one of the best people to hold power surely must be one whose overriding goal is electoral victory and whose first principle of action is: "You've gotta do what you've gotta do."

## Notes

1. Reprinted with permission from Joseph I. Lieberman. 1966. *The Power Broker.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, pp. 1-7, 338-353. © 1966 by Joseph I. Lieberman

# 9

## National Chairman

*Lawrence F. O'Brien*

As 1970 began, I was busy with O'Brien Associates and with work on this book.[1] Then, early in February, Senator Fred Harris resigned as chairman of the Democratic National Committee and I found myself under intense pressures to replace him.

The unsalaried post of national chairman was not, to be sure, much of a plum at that point. Our party was divided and deeply in debt. I had been surprised when Fred Harris sought the post a year earlier. He apparently hoped the chairmanship would work to his political advantage by giving him national visibility, but instead his increasing association with the liberal wing of the Democratic Party was giving him political problems back in Oklahoma.

A number of reporters called me on the day Harris announced his resignation and I told them all that I was not the least interested in the job. Hubert Humphrey called me a few days later and said that as the party's titular leader he felt a responsibility to recommend a new chairman to the National Committee, whose members were to meet within thirty days to elect a replacement for Harris. Humphrey asked me to refrain from flatly ruling out the possibility until we had time to talk in person.

I agreed to do so, but I made it clear to him that I was not a candidate. However, in the days ahead, pressures continued to build. Humphrey called to report that Bob Strauss, a Dallas lawyer and Texas national committeeman, had agreed to become the party's treasurer if I became chairman. I commented that any man who would become the treasurer of a party that was over nine million dollars in debt was obviously a good Democrat.

Humphrey and I met in Washington and he told me he had been in touch with party leaders around the country and there was a consensus that I was the man for the job. I replied that I doubted if any real consensus existed, since, for example, I'd heard that George Meany, head of the AFL-CIO, was cool toward my return.[2]

"Let's just see about that," Hubert responded and immediately called Meany, who told him he could be comfortable with me as chairman.

I discussed the situation at length with my wife Elva, Joe Napolitan, and Ira Kapenstein. Their view was that I had done my share for the party over

the years and that I had my private life and my own financial situation to consider. I found myself agreeing with them.

I was tempted, of course. I've been in politics too long ever to be immune to its call. The prospect of trying to help unite our badly divided party was a challenge. There was the added incentive of joining the fight against the Nixon administration, both in that fall's congressional elections and in the preparations for the 1972 campaign.

But I decided I could not do it and, after advising Humphrey, I made a public statement that I was not a candidate.

I assumed the matter was closed. However, after the executive committee of the National Committee began its deliberations, I received a call from the chairman, Colonel Jake Arvey, a close friend of mine and the long-time Democratic leader in Chicago, who announced that the executive committee had unanimously drafted me. "We don't want any response from you now," he said. "Just think about it." While I thought about it, there was a call from Humphrey and I filled him in on what was taking place. He was highly amused and pleased. "We've got you on the spot now," he said.

I began to be swayed by the mounting pressures. Finally, I said I would accept the draft of the executive committee if it was backed up by similar approval of the full National Committee. Eventually Arvey and other party leaders persuaded the active announced contenders not to enter the race so that my selection would be unanimous. Given that on-the-record support from the National Committee, I accepted the chairmanship.

Some reporters wrote that I had engineered a brilliant political coup to obtain the unanimous draft. That wasn't true. I did not seek the job and I accepted only when old friends in the party persuaded me.

## Forum for Leadership

In early March of 1970, soon after my return to Washington, I had a breakfast reunion with some friends in the press corps. Their blunt attitude was: "O'Brien, you're crazy! What are you doing here?"

They knew, as did I, that the party was a shambles. Not only did our debt total some $9.3 million; despite Fred Harris' efforts, it had increased rather than decreased in 1969.

Even more serious than our financial plight was the deep division within our party, the worst I had ever seen. The problem encompassed far more than our losses of the 1968 election. We had lost in 1952 and 1956 and remained reasonably united. But in 1970 the bitter divisions of 1968 still existed--hawk versus dove, liberal versus conservative, reformer versus regular --and no reconciliation was in sight.

The National Committee was, I thought, the proper forum, indeed the only forum, through which the party might be united. It had been in existence for more than a century; it represented all the states and territories, and it had, through its executive committee, its elected membership, its chairman, and its full-time staff in the Washington headquarters, the potential for visible and effective leadership.

I intended to be an aggressive chairman. My first priority, I felt, was to undertake vigorous internal reorganization of the DNC and its staff. New staff members were hired, including John Stewart, formerly a legislative assistant to Vice President Humphrey, as our director of communications; Joe Mohbat, a prize-winning young reporter for the Associated Press, as a press secretary; Stan Griegg, whom I'd known when he was a Congressman in Iowa, as director of political organization. They joined Geri Joseph, our vice chairman; Dorothy Bush, the party's long-time secretary, and Bill Welsh, a former Humphrey aide, who was the committee's executive director.

Ira Kapenstein, who had worked with me at the Post Office, on the Humphrey campaign, and at McDonnell & Co. became my deputy chairman. Bob Strauss, the Dallas lawyer, came aboard as treasurer, and later, after Geri Joseph resigned, I brought in Mary Lou Berg as the committee's first salaried, full-time female vice chairman. Also, Joe Califano, who had been LBJ's special assistant for domestic affairs, agreed to serve as our unpaid general counsel.

With this revitalized staff, we were able to develop better communications within the party. We created offices representing the governors and the state chairmen. We held meetings and receptions with the Congress to improve the DNC's traditionally poor relations there. We increased the research facilities we could make available to Democratic candidates for Congress, and once again we updated and revised the O'Brien Campaign Manual.[3] In September, we had the first political strategy meeting ever held on national closed-circuit television, with some eight thousand Democrats in eighteen cities participating.

These nuts-and-bolts jobs needed doing, but it was not my intention to be just a nuts-and-bolts chairman. I meant to be a major spokesman for our party. There was no precedent for the kind of chairmanship I envisioned, but neither was there precedent for the condition of the party at that point. I saw myself in a free-wheeling role, one limited only by my own time and imagination. For the first time in my political career I didn't have any responsibility to an employer--a President or would-be President--and I intended to do my own thing.

In the spring of 1970, Nixon too often held the national stage without challenge. His most outrageous statements would go without rebuttal. Our

party's titular head, Hubert Humphrey, was concentrating on winning election to the Senate, and Senators Muskie and Kennedy were also absorbed with their home-state Senate races.

I thought the situation demanded that I speak out forcefully for the party, despite the risk of offending some members of Congress. In the months ahead I was often tougher than our presidential contenders felt they could be. I denounced "Nixonomics" and the Nixon-Agnew "politics of fear." Agnew became a special target of mine at a time when many Democratic leaders chose not to take him on.

I did not expect to make my attacks with impunity. The White House could never persuade my counterpart at the Republican National Committee, the pleasant, low-key Rogers Morton, to attack me with sufficient vigor, so they unleashed Senator Robert Dole, Morton's eventual successor as Republican chairman, who began denouncing me almost daily. Also, a right-wing writer began circulating, at White House urging, scurrilous stories about my business and political activities, but these rarely saw print. The only attack that received much publicity was Agnew's sarcastic remark at a Republican fund-raising dinner that thanks to my "adroit management" McDonnell & Co. had gone broke. I issued a statement demanding an apology, but privately I wasn't bothered. McDonnell's financial problems were a matter of record. If that was the worst charge the Republicans could make about me, I was in good shape.

In fact, I welcomed Agnew's attacks. By directing his fire at me, he reinforced my status as the Democratic Party's spokesman. As far as I was concerned, Agnew was playing into my hands.

In addition to speaking out myself, I wanted to make it possible for other Democrats to express themselves by fighting for greater equity in the manner in which television time was allocated between the "in" and "out" parties. In mid-March I said, on "Meet the Press":

> Recently my predecessor asked to purchase time from the television networks to present our case to the American people and solicit funds. One major network flatly refused to allow that purchase of time, and let me sum up by saying that I am not going to stand idly by and allow that to happen. They will be hearing from me.

We began the fight for fair play in the allocation of free television time in 1970. We continued it throughout my three years as chairman. We lost more battles than we won, but I think we prevailed in the long run. I did not expect the Republican administration to permit the needed reforms, but I was hopeful that the next Democratic administration would put aside partisan concerns and surrender some of the power of incumbency in the interest of preserving the two-party system of government.

## Midterm Politics

For me, the 1970 congressional campaign began the day I returned as national chairman. Political columnists were focusing on the disarray of the Democrats and were speculating that the Republicans might sweep the elections and gain control of Congress. Our disarray was undeniable, but I thought Nixon was vulnerable and that our party could do well in the off-year elections.

The gap between Nixon's promises and his performance was beginning to show. He had not ended the war, the economy was a mess, and he had been hurt politically by the Senate's rejection of two of his Supreme Court appointments--Clement F. Haynesworth and G. Harrold Carswell. I began hitting hard at the "crisis of confidence" in Nixon's leadership. Nixon, however, read his status reports differently, for he chose to make himself and his record the central issue in the campaign: he chose the candidates, raised their money, and stumped tireless for them. It would have been a great personal victory if he had won. As a politician, I admired his audacity--a President *should* lead his party--but as a Democrat, I was glad to see him gamble and lose.

Three issues stood out in 1970: the war, the economy, and a third, more complicated issue, sometimes called "law and order." On the latter, the Nixon-Agnew strategy was to lump together street crime, political dissent of all degrees, and alleged "softness" or "permissiveness" and to denounce their political opponents as "soft on crime," "radical liberals," "effete snobs."

Agnew acted as Nixon's hatchet man in 1969, with his attacks on newsmen and anti-war militants, but he soon shifted to his real targets--those politicians of either party who opposed the Administration. By mid-1970, his attacks on "radical liberals," a term that stretched from the Black Panthers to liberal Republicans, were receiving tremendous publicity; and he stood tall in the public opinion polls. When Agnew came charging into their states, many Democratic leaders would arrange to be elsewhere.

I was glad to take on Agnew. I felt that his tactic of lumping sincere and legal dissenters with criminals and Communists extended far beyond the accepted boundaries of political debate. Like Senator Joe McCarthy, he questioned not only opponents' judgment but their motives and patriotism. Moreover, as the campaign progressed, I sensed that Agnew's smears were becoming counterproductive. Nixon had given Agnew an impossible assignment. A voter might disagree with, say, Adlai Stevenson III's liberal views, but few voters are going be convinced that someone like Stevenson is a dangerous radical. Nixon and Agnew were underestimating the intelligence of the voters, and, in time, they only created sympathy for the men they smeared.

I kept waiting for Agnew to switch from the low road to the high, to climb out of the gutter and to strike some note of statesmanship. But he never did, and when Nixon began his own intensive campaigning in the final weeks, his tone was no more elevated than was Agnew's. I was amazed when I realized that Nixon intended to base his entire campaign on demagoguery. It was a blunder, as Nixon realized when the returns were in.

Far from achieving the Republican sweep of Congress he had sought, Nixon's party lost twelve seats in the House and picked up only two in the Senate--far short of the number needed for control. Our party scored an impressive net gain of eleven governorships. On a district-by-district basis, the Democratic candidates ran an average of 3 percent better nationally than they had in 1968.

All in all, 1970 had been a good year for the Democrats. At its start, the pundits were proclaiming our party politically dead. At its end, the same pundits were saying that Richard Nixon might be a one-term President. That was not to be, but we would later learn that his 1970 setback, and his fear of defeat in 1972, inspired the thirst for political espionage that eventually led to Watergate.

With the congressional elections behind us, it was time to think ahead to the coming presidential election. One of my concerns was to try to keep our party's numerous presidential contenders from tearing the party further apart in the 1972 primary elections. To that end, on the evening of February 1971, in my apartment at the Sheraton Park Hotel, I convened what I believe to be an unprecedented meeting of our party's presidential contenders. Those present, in addition to myself, Bob Strauss, and Ira Kapenstein from the Democratic National Committee, were House Speaker Albert, Senate Major Leader Mansfield, and seven senators who were potential candidates for the Democratic nomination in 1972--Hubert Humphrey, Ed Muskie, Henry Jackson, George McGovern, Ted Kennedy, Harold Hughes, and Fred Harris. Senator Birch Bayh was also invited but was out of the country.

It was a tricky--some critics said a presumptuous--thing for me to select, more than a year in advance, the party's potential presidential candidates. The only announced candidate was McGovern, whom few people took seriously. Obviously my list was an inclusive one, although not inclusive enough to please everyone. Gene McCarthy's friends complained because he wasn't invited and Sam Yorty, the mayor of Los Angeles, called for my resignation after he learned of the meeting. I invited Ted Kennedy because, despite his disclaimers, he was widely viewed as a logical candidate; and I invited Wilbur Mills to our second meeting when he had begun to be discussed as a dark-horse contender.

I maintained top secrecy, lest the press learn of the meeting. Most of my staff knew nothing of it, and even the guests did not know the purpose until they arrived. I had feared that if I told them I was calling a meeting of

potential candidates for President, they would assert their non-candidacy and decline the invitation. Nor did they have any way of knowing who else was invited, and there was a lot of head-turning and joking each time the door opened and another "contender" arrived.

When everyone was present, I told my guests what I had in mind. As national chairman, I was responsible for planning the 1972 national convention, and I wanted all potential candidates to be involved in the planning. I wanted their support for the party's proposed delegate selection reforms. And I wanted to minimize intra-party bloodletting in next year's primaries.

My guests greeted my proposals with enthusiasm. Hubert Humphrey declared that it would be a shame if we didn't have a picture of this unprecedented gathering, and we got on the phone and located a photographer. We proceeded on to dinner and a long, productive discussion.

We agreed that evening, and I was authorized to inform the press, that the Democratic contenders for the presidential nomination in 1972 would concentrate their fire on the Nixon administration, not on each other; that they would support the party reforms; that they would assist Democratic National Committee fund-raising efforts; and that they would work with the Democratic National Committee in its fight for increased "Loyal Opposition" access to television.

At a later meeting, we reached our most important agreement: a ceiling on each candidate's media spending--five cents per registered voter in the primary states and three cents per voter in the non-primary states. This agreement helped every one, and it meant that money saved in the spring could be used against Nixon in the fall. It was closely adhered to, with the only charges of violation being exchanged by Humphrey and McGovern in the last days of the California primary.

## Party Reform

It was far easier to achieve a semblance of unity among the party's six or eight presidential contenders than to achieve unity in the party itself--that is, among the millions of people in America who consider themselves Democrats but sometimes disagree on the issues. The main instrument for achieving party unity was, and continues to be, the party reforms that were begun in the aftermath of our disruptive 1968 Convention, reforms that went to the basic question of how our party selects its candidate for President.

Many states, of course, hold presidential primary elections to choose their delegates to the National Convention. But in a larger number of states, party

leaders had traditionally appointed the delegations. Thus, it was possible for a candidate to win the primaries but not the nomination, if enough party leaders opposed him.

The issue came to a head in 1968. The two anti-war candidates, McCarthy and Kennedy, swept the primaries, but Humphrey won the nomination. The result was division and disillusion among many Democrats. In effect, they decided that the Democratic Party was not democratic.

Yet anti-war forces won one important victory at the 1968 Convention--the creation of two commissions on party reform: the Commission on Rules and the Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection.

The members of both commissions had been selected by Fred Harris when he was national chairman, and, I believe, the make-up of the two commissions was clearly weighted towards the liberal wing of the party, rather than being representative of the party as a whole.

The Commission on Rules was the less controversial of the two. Led by its competent chairman, Representative James G. O'Hara of Michigan, the Commission adopted new procedures to streamline our party's National Conventions. Its deliberations led to the elimination of the traditional "spontaneous" floor demonstrations for candidates, a reduction in the number of seconding speeches for presidential nominees, a reduction of media access to the floor of the Convention, and other steps to make the National Convention less of a circus and more an efficient business meeting.

The Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection was the one that caused widespread disagreement within the party, for it dealt with the more complicated and controversial issues. The first chairman of the Commission was Senator McGovern, with Senator Harold Hughes as vice chairman. When McGovern later resigned to become an announced candidate for President, Representative Donald M. Fraser was named to replace him.

The basic and most controversial reform endorsed by the McGovern Commission was a requirement that all of the delegates to the National Convention must be elected. This was not difficult in the twenty-two states that already had primary elections scheduled in 1972, but it meant major changes in the rest of the states. In some "non-primary" states, party leaders had traditionally appointed their delegations; in others, party caucuses were held, but they were often poorly publicized and poorly attended, and held far too early to be significant. The McGovern commission guidelines required that such party caucuses be in the year of the election, be well-publicized, and be open to all Democrats.

The commission then went one crucial step further. It required "state parties to overcome past discrimination by taking "affirmative steps":

> --to encourage minority group participation, including representation of minority groups on the national convention delegation in reasonable relationship to the group's presence in the population of the State.
>
> --to encourage representation on the national convention delegation of young people (defined as people of not more than 30 nor less than eighteen years of age) and women in reasonable relationship to their presence in the population of the State.

These requirements obviously needed interpretation. What were the "affirmative steps"? What was a "reasonable relationship"? Each requirement was followed, in the Commission report, by a reference to Footnote 2, which further confused the issue. The footnote read: "It is the understanding of the Commission that this is not to be accomplished by the mandatory imposition of quotas."

The footnote symbolized the built-in ambiguity of the guidelines--an ambiguity that I think was encouraged by some members of the McGovern commission and its staff. We wanted minority groups, young people, and women on the delegations, but we didn't want a quota system. What was to be done if an open caucus produced an all-white, all-male delegation or an all-black, all-female delegation? How can an open election comply with a "reasonable relationship" requirement?

By the time I returned as national chairman early in 1970, the McGovern commission had already held hearings across the country and had adopted its proposed new delegate selection guidelines. Its activities had, however, created a good deal of confusion and suspicion among party leaders and labor leaders. My concern, therefore, was with the definition and implementation of the guidelines. I had to "sell" the new rules to the national party as a whole and particularly to the state party leaders who would have to live with them, to work with them, and to enforce them. At the same time I was aware that many of the reform advocates on the McGovern commission and its staff viewed me as an establishment figure who would somehow try to "sell out" the party reforms. I accepted their suspicion as inevitable and felt that my actions would be the best proof of my commitment to an open party. Reform was imperative and I and virtually every member of the National Committee wanted reform. What I also wanted, and what we did not achieve in 1972, was reform that led to party unity, not reform that came at the price of continuing division within the party.

The reforms succeeded in achieving an unprecedented mixture of young and old, black and white, males and females at our Convention, but these advances resulted in great ill-will in other segments of the party. Many party leaders, informed they must run for election to their delegation after years of taking their appointments for granted, stayed home. Other leaders ran, often pledged to Muskie, were defeated by young McGovern supporters, and responded with indignation. Organized labor viewed the new rules as an

attempt by liberals to lessen its influence in the selection of the Democratic candidate. Many traditional Democrats--working people, members of ethnic groups, older people--watched this struggle on the evening news and thought: "It's O.K. that you're bringing in the kids and the blacks, but what about us?" In short, in bringing in some groups, we made others feel ignored.

I have sometimes asked myself whether I, as a national chairman committed to party unity, might not somehow have foreseen the problems that arose out of the McGovern Commission reforms. The guidelines had been adopted by the Commission. They were supported by me and unanimously approved by the Democratic National Committee after careful review. That review was supposed to resolve any ambiguities including any ambiguity there might be in Footnote 2. We understood it to mean that there was to be no quota system. Yet that didn't prove to be the case. Most party leaders, fearful of challenges at the Convention, chose to play it safe by assuring that their delegations included the appropriate percentage of women, blacks, and young people. And McGovern, as a candidate, carefully balanced his slates, which put pressure on the other candidates to do the same. But that was a total denial the purpose of the reforms, which stated that there was to be an open process, a democratic process.

I don't think anyone could have foreseen in 1970--not I, not George McGovern, not George Meany--the results of the guidelines two years later. We were feeling our way, taking steps no major political party had ever taken. We knew that the old rules had brought deep divisions in 1968 and we were groping toward something better.

But in 1972, of course, we realized that the new rules, in their application, favored the candidate with determined, tenacious followers. McGovern had those followers. If another candidate had organized his supporters for a fight in each of the non-primary states, the outcome might have been different. Muskie, in particular, ran for President in 1972 as if the 1968 rules still applied, relying on party leaders without emphasizing grass-roots activity.

The party was as deeply divided in 1972 as it had been in 1968, and no rules, however written, could have satisfied both sides any more than a "compromise plank" on Vietnam could have reconciled both sides in 1968. In 1968 the establishment elements of the party got their man nominated and in 1972 the anti-establishment or anti-war elements got their man nominated, but neither side could win the election without the other. Thus, we lost in 1972 just as we lost in 1968--by defeating ourselves. The divisions were just too deep to be overcome.

The continuing struggle over the new party rules brought me into conflict, in October 1971, with the man who was then the front-runner for the nomination, Ed Muskie. It was not a confrontation I sought, but I gave it my all, for it seemed that Muskie was trying to intrude upon my authority as national chairman.

At issue was the acting chairmanship of the Credentials Committee for the National Convention. Since it was likely there would be many contested delegations to the Convention, the Credentials post became a highly important one. I had the responsibility to recommend someone to the full National Committee and my selection was Patricia Roberts Harris, a Washington lawyer who had previously been U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg and dean of the Howard University Law School in Washington, D.C. I had known Mrs. Harris only slightly, but a number of people urged me to make use of her talents some capacity at the Convention. After Bob Strauss and I had luncheon conversation with her, we felt she would be an excellent choice for the Credentials post.

Senator Harold Hughes, who had been vice chairman of the McGovern commission and was considered a leader in the reform movement, informed me that he hoped to be the acting chairman of the Credentials Committee. He began actively soliciting support among members of the National Committee.

I decided, however, that Mrs. Harris would be better for the position. As I saw it, she was at least as well-qualified as Hughes (she was a lawyer, which he was not, and this was a judicial post), she was just as committed to reform, she was less controversial, and she would not bring to the post any personal political ambitions. Also, Congressman Jim O'Hara, the chairman of the Rules Commission, had told me that both he and Congressman Don Fraser, the chairman of the Commission on Delegate Selection, thought it would be a mistake to have a Credentials chairman who had been a member of the McGovern commission. This, he said, was nothing against Hughes, but they thought there was a basic conflict of interest involved. In effect, the McGovern commission had performed a legislative function--writing the new rules--and the Credentials Committee would perform a judicial function--interpreting the new rules.

The irony of the ensuing Hughes-Harris contest for Credentials chairmanship was that, since Hughes was a leader in the reform movement, Mrs. Harris was viewed by some as an "anti-reform" candidate--a rather ridiculous view, since she was black, a woman, and a liberal.

The Hughes-Harris contest ultimately involved some of candidates for President, along with other Democrats in Congress. Suddenly, everyone seemed to be telling me and National Committee members what course of action to follow. Finally, Senator Muskie became involved when he called two nights before the election and informed me that he was instructing his people to lobby for Hughes and was issuing a press release stating his support for Hughes over Mrs. Harris. I understood Muskie's motives. He very much wanted an endorsement from Senator Hughes, who had a following in the anti-war movement. Nonetheless, I hit the ceiling; this was too much. Under

the rules, it was my responsibility to nominate a candidate for this post and I did not think Senator Muskie should become involved in the matter.

"Ed," I told him, "I'm supporting Pat Harris, with no holds barred. I'll put my reputation on the line for her. I don't see what you're doing in this, since this is my area of responsibility."

"Wait a minute, Larry," Muskie said, but I didn't want to wait a minute and the conversation was soon terminated. Muskie apparently saw me in the old role of national chairman--as simply a front man for the party powers. I thought he knew me better than that. That night I told my staff I wanted a detailed head count of the National Committee members in the Hughes-Harris race.

The lobbying was thick and heavy by Wednesday morning when the National Committee met. Muskie's aides were lobbying for Hughes, although in some instances not enthusiastically; my aides were lobbying for Mrs. Harris; and George Meany's representatives were also lobbying for her. It was later reported in *The New Republic* that I had brought labor's people into the battle as part of a stop-McGovern effort. That was ridiculous. In October 1971, no one was worrying about McGovern. Labor's goal was to block Hughes, whom Meany regarded as a far-out left-wing reformer.

The vote was to follow a "unity luncheon" that turned out not to be as unifying as we'd hoped. I introduced all the presidential contenders, and McGovern, Fred Harris, and Muskie all got up and endorsed Hughes. Humphrey deftly complimented both candidates. Scoop Jackson received the most applause when he declared that his role as a senator did not encompass getting involved in DNC matters. To me, that was the real issue.

The vote itself was anticlimactic. Mrs. Harris defeated Senator Hughes by a two-to-one margin. Later that day Hughes issued a press release in which he declared: "This is the first real combat on the big moral issues within our Party since 1968 . . . We have just begun to fight." I thought that some what overblown. He hadn't exactly been defeated by Senator Eastland.

There was an interesting aftermath to the episode. Muskie and McGovern had both been wooing Hughes for his endorsement, and backing him for Credentials chairman was part of their strategy. The McGovern people were confident that Hughes, as an outspoken anti-war leader, would support the man, and they were astounded when Hughes endorsed Muskie. In the middle of the Hughes-Harris contest, Frank Mankiewicz, a McGovern top adviser, had said to one of my aides, "How can you sleep nights working for O'Brien?" Later, after Hughes endorsed Muskie, he retracted that statement.

**Party Neutrality**

As the party primaries began in the spring, I was as surprised as most people to see Senator McGovern emerge as the front-runner for the nomination. Before the primaries, I had shared the conventional wisdom that Muskie was the likely nominee, that Humphrey might move up if Muskie slipped and that Kennedy could never be ruled out, despite his avowal of non-candidacy. I had viewed McGovern as a determined candidate, but one whose support was too narrow to win him the nomination.

Obviously, I underestimated McGovern and, also, the impact of the new party rules on the nominating process. McGovern's primary campaign was smart and well-organized. His followers, motivated by their hatred of the war in Vietnam, were at the moment the most vital force in the Democratic Party. Only George Wallace's followers shared their passion, but the Wallace people were not well-organized. Muskie had many governors and senators supporting him, but not the foot soldiers. In state after state, party leaders pledged to Muskie would be defeated in party caucuses by students and housewives pledged to McGovern. Clearly, something historic was happening within our party.

As the neutral party chairman, I viewed the primaries with a measure of detachment, but many party regulars, along with AFL-CIO President George Meany, were doing all they could to stop McGovern. I had been in communication with Meany about the new party rules and other matters since I returned as national chairman in 1970. Our relationship was cordial, but Meany viewed the Democratic Party as disorganized and ineffectual in comparison to COPE, the AFL-CIO's political arm. Obviously, I could not accept that view. I spoke with Meany about the new rules in 1971, and he denounced them as part of a liberal attempt to take over the party.

"The rules have been adopted," I told him. "It's too late to debate whether they're good or bad. You have your people well-organized all over the country. You should study the new rules and use them to your advantage, just like everyone else."

For too long, however, labor ignored the new rules. For a time, in the early party caucuses, word went out to labor people to run as uncommitted delegates. This strategy failed. It was almost impossible to elect uncommitted delegates, because you can't beat somebody with nobody. You can't get people excited about supporting Mr. X. I had lunch one day with a labor organizer who'd just come back from caucuses in Georgia. "We had buses," he said. "We had box lunches. We got our people there. But the meetings would drag on until our people began to drift away. The McGovern people would stay till midnight and they won."

Labor eventually changed strategy and told its people to run as delegates for whoever was strongest in their area--Humphrey, Muskie, Jackson--anyone

but McGovern. Ultimately, labor was to claim there were more labor delegates at the 1972 Convention (approximately 500) than at any previous Democratic Convention.

A few weeks before the National Convention was to open in Miami, I received an unexpected visit from one of George Meany's chief political advisers. The man indicated, in a rather roundabout way, that he hoped some action could be taken to stop a McGovern nomination. I made it clear that I was neutral with regard to the nomination and would continue to be. I assumed a stop-McGovern effort would develop at the Convention, but I was not going to be part of it. Perhaps my visitors hoped that I, by some ruling at the Convention, could help stop McGovern. Certainly there have been times in the past when a convention chairman, with one bang of his gavel, destroyed someone's candidacy, but that wasn't what I had been working toward for a year and a half. The people who wanted to stop McGovern could have stopped him in the primaries, if they had planned their strategies more intelligently. I certainly had no intention of pulling their chestnuts out of the fire.

## Notes

1. The book mentioned is Lawrence F. O'Brien. 1974. *No Final Victories*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday. Pp. 271-297. Reprinted with permission; © 1974 Doubleday.

2. O'Brien previously served as Democratic National Chair during the presidential campaign in 1968.

3. The O'Brien Campaign Manual was a handbook of "nuts-and-bolts" knowledge assembled in various forms over O'Brien career that achieved near-legendary status. A good example is the "third edition" of the O'Brien manual, *The Democratic Campaign Manual 1964*. 1964. Washington, DC: Democratic National Committee.

# PART THREE

## Party Development After Ray Bliss

10

# A Comparison of Out-Party Leaders: Ray Bliss and Bill Brock

*Philip A. Klinkner*

Leading a national party while out of power is a difficult task at best. As Cotter and Hennessy (1964:94) observed, the chairman of an out-party "is at the mercy of long-standing, deliberate, and institutionalized fragmentation of national political power." But the very lack of centralized power in American parties creates many opportunities for an out-party chairman. According to David, Goldman, and Bain (1960:89), "an out-party chairman himself has unrivaled opportunity for the exercise of initiative. If no one else is prepared to speak for the party on questions of organization, party strategy, or even public policy, there is no one to prevent the chairman either from speaking or finding a spokesman to express what he has in mind." In such a situation, the possibility exists for an ambitious and entrepreneurial chairman to influence positively his or her party's fortunes.

Both Ray Bliss and Bill Brock served as Republican National Committee (RNC) chairman while their party was out of power, yet each approached the job in strikingly different ways and each embodied these two different aspects of out-party leadership. Bliss, for the most part, exercised leadership within the constraints described by Cotter and Hennessy, while Brock took advantage of the power vacuum of an out-party to exert leadership. In this chapter I will analyze the out-party leadership of Ray Bliss and Bill Brock to understand the experiences of these men and their approaches to party leadership.

## The Ascension to Power

Ray Bliss and Bill Brock came to the RNC in similar circumstances. Both men became chairman following disappointing presidential election losses and when factional disputes split their party. In these circumstances, both Bliss and Brock managed to gain power by offering a less ideological, more organizationally oriented leadership style than their chief rivals.

In 1964, most Republicans sought to heal the wounds of the Goldwater campaign by selecting an RNC chairman who would avoid factional infighting and focus on the financial and organizational aspects of party leadership. For advocates of this position, Ray Bliss appeared as the ideal candidate for party chairman. As chairman of the Ohio Republican Party since 1949, Bliss had developed a reputation as a mastermind of organizational politics and he had a non-ideological, organizational approach to party affairs that made him acceptable to moderates and conservatives. His supporters knew that Bliss would devote himself to the less controversial role of managing the "nuts and bolts" of the Republican Party.

Twelve years later, the Republican Party faced similar circumstances and once again selected an RNC chairman who stressed organization over ideology. Throughout his campaign for chairman, Brock contrasted his "tactical" approach of party building and organizational improvement which he would employ as chairman with the "political" approach of Richard Richards, his chief competitor and the favorite of many Republican conservatives, which saw the RNC chairman as a participant in the party's factional competition.[1] Brock told a group of RNC members, "You can't take this job if you are interested in your own candidacy or if you are interested in the candidacy of somebody else. If you do, you'll never do anything again."[2] This effort seems to have succeeded since Brock's ultimate victory is attributed to Richards' being viewed by many RNC members as too closely linked to Reagan to lead the RNC effectively and independently.

Though the external circumstances surrounding the elections of Bliss and Brock were very similar, there were differences in the attitude that each took toward the position of party chairman. Though the consensus choice of most party elements, Bliss was extremely reluctant to voice his desire for the position. Furthermore, when Bliss did speak of the RNC job, he refused to run for it unless there was a vacancy (Hess and Broder 1967:41-42; Klinkner 1992:chap. 4). Brock, on the other hand, quickly announced his desire for the chairmanship and mounted a full-scale campaign for the job. Unlike Bliss, Brock was not the consensus choice for the position and his ultimate victory over Richards came only on the third ballot. Furthermore, Brock had no problem advancing his candidacy, even if it meant criticizing his opponents.

## Leadership Through Organization

Once in office both men began quickly to exercise leadership by implementing the organizational changes and party-building activities with which they were identified (see chapter 2). Money is an absolute necessity for any organizational rebuilding, and for both Bliss and Brock fund raising became the initial focus of their leadership activities.

Bliss' first fund-raising emphasis seems to have been large contributions. He persuaded General Lucius D. Clay to become chairman of the Republican National Finance Committee (RNFC). Clay, the commander of the Berlin Airlift and an imposing figure, restored order and prestige to the RNFC. Also, as a partner in Wall Street brokerage firm of Lehman Brothers and a member of numerous corporate boards, Clay helped to bring back many Republican businessmen who had abandoned the party in 1964.

Despite Bliss' and Clay's emphasis on increasing the number of large contributions, the RNC's principal source of income was its direct mail program. Since its origin in 1962, the program had grown tremendously, raising almost $6 million for the party in 1964.[3] This success continued after the election. In 1965, the party brought in $1.7 million dollars through direct mail, which was over 40 percent of the total funds raised by the RNFC that year (Kesaris 1986a). The success of the direct mail program continued in following years. By 1968, the RNC raised over $6 million dollars through its direct mail program (Alexander 1971:148). According to RNFC Treasurer J. William Middendorf, the party "lived off small contributors" in this period.[4]

Brock also recognized that the party-building activities he envisioned would require raising vast amounts of money. Unlike Bliss, however, he chose to focus on direct mail over large contributions. Brock knew that direct mail not only had the greatest financial potential, but that it also served other purposes. Emphasizing the small-contributor-oriented direct mail program would help shake the image of the Republicans as a party beholden to the rich and provide the party a new channel by which to communicate with its members. Moreover, Brock seems to have recognized that a broad base of small contributions would give the RNC financial autonomy and thereby increase its independence and power within the Republican Party.

To expand the party's base of givers, Brock assigned all funds not needed for current expenses to prospecting for new contributors. This plan had risks, but, as Brock recognized, "There really was no other way to build an effective national party" (Reichley 1985:187). The strategy eventually paid off; between 1977 and 1980 the RNC expanded its base of contributors from 250,000 to over 1.2 million. These contributions, averaging around $25 each, increased RNC net receipts from $12.7 million in 1976 to over $26 million in 1980 (Reichley 1985:187; Adamany 1984:76). By 1980, 73 percent of the RNC's funds came from contributions of less than $500, the bulk of which came from direct mail and phone solicitations with an average contribution of $25 (Alexander 1983:300-301).

Though both Bliss and Brock succeeded in raising large amounts of money, there were clear differences in the ways that they approached fund raising. With Bliss, it seems that he never fully recognized the potential of direct mail fund raising (but see chapter 2). An analysis of his approach to fund raising suggests that he viewed it in a purely instrumental fashion, a

means by which to accomplish his larger purpose of organizational rebuilding. Brock, however, seems to have understood that fund raising could be an end in and of itself and that the way in which a party raises money has important implications for the nature of the party beyond how many dollars flow into its coffers (see chapter 11).

With their financial bases secure, Bliss and Brock set out to undertake a grassroots rebuilding effort. Both men saw the task as vital to rejuvenating the Republican Party. According to Bliss, "Organization is a major key to success in politics on any level--county, state, or national" and he promised that he would try to "build a solid Republican Party organization that goes right down to the precinct level" (Bibby and Huckshorn 1968:214).

Bill Brock also articulated the need for concentrating on the party's grassroots. Moreover, Brock recognized that the party's focus on the White House in recent years had meant ignoring more fundamental matters. As he told the RNC in his acceptance speech, "We have become too dependent upon the presidency, oriented too much to the top of the ticket, and thereby assuring our own ultimate destruction as we ignore our eroding base in precinct and state legislature, in community and county government"(Kesaris 1986b).

To accomplish their organizational goals, both men established programs to train and support state and local parties (see chapter 3). These workshops concentrated on teaching state, county, and city party workers and congressional campaign staffs the techniques of polling, data processing, vote analysis, fund raising, advance work, scheduling, volunteer organizing, campaign headquarters management and media usage (Bibby 1967:17; Bibby and Huckshorn 1968:227-230).

Bliss also began a novel program where four regional field workers would act as a liaison between local campaign organizations and the RNC. In the past, local party officials had been reluctant to allow RNC representatives to meddle in their affairs, but this program was well-received since the services offered by the RNC were useful and because it was well-known that Bliss, a former state party chairman, was not out to centralize power in the RNC.[5]

Though greater in scope, due mostly to the greater resources available, many of the organizational efforts employed by Bill Brock closely resemble those undertaken by the RNC under Ray Bliss. Brock also began various programs to support state and local party organizations. To aid in this effort the RNC employed 13 to 15 Regional Political Directors and four Regional Finance Directors to assist the state party chairmen's efforts to improve their organizations and fund-raising operations (Bibby 1980:108-109). Brock also carried out a significant improvement in the technical services provided by the RNC to various state and local campaigns and parties, giving those organizations access to sophisticated technology, such as computer services,

media training, and polling data, at a low cost (Kayden and Mahe 1985:79-81; Sabato 1981:294; Conway 1983: 7; Buchanan 1980:3189).

The most significant distinction between the organizational efforts of Bliss and Brock is the latter's emphasis on state legislative races. Though financial constraints may have been a factor, Bliss seemed less willing to have the national party play a direct role in such local races. Brock, however, saw such races as crucial to congressional redistricting and as training grounds for future state and national candidates, and therefore made extensive efforts in this area. Most notable of these was the establishment of the Local Elections Campaign Division (LECD) in 1977 to help recruit and train the candidates and staffs of state legislative campaigns. From 1977 to 1980 the LECD conducted 150 seminars helping to train over 4,000 candidates and campaign managers (Clark 1980:1619).

This program represented a significant investment on the part of the RNC. The LECD had a budget of $1.7 million during the 1978 election, with $1 million in direct financial aid to candidates and the rest in support services. In 1980, the LECD gave $1.7 million in direct support and $1.3 million in services (Conway 1983:5). In certain key races, the LECD provided almost all the campaign resources, including campaign management, preparation of direct mail pieces, planning and distribution of campaign literature, development of campaign plans and budgets, and assistance with public appearances and advertising (Bibby 1980:110-111; Bibby 1979:233-234).

A further difference between the RNC's organizational efforts under Bliss and Brock is the extent of direct transfers from the RNC to state and local parties and directly to campaigns. During Brock's tenure, the RNC provided significant cash assistance to various Republican campaigns and party organizations. In 1977, the RNC made a $650,000 loan to the National Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee to help that organization start its own direct mail fund-raising system (Clark 1980:1620). Along with the previously mentioned direct contributions to gubernatorial and state legislative candidates, the RNC contributed $4.6 million to the 1980 Reagan campaign (the maximum allowed by law), and over $800,000 to Republican House and Senate candidates (Herrnson 1988:66-69).

Two factors seem to account for this difference between the two periods. First and foremost is the difference in resources available to the national party in each of these periods. Though the RNC under Bliss was on a sound financial footing, it just did not have the unprecedented resources that were available to Brock decade later. Second, the passage of both state and national campaign finance reforms in the early and mid-1970s seems to have increased the relative importance of intra-party financial transfers.

In addition to organizational rebuilding, both chairmen strove to improve the quality of candidates recruited by the party. Certainly this was true of Ray Bliss, who, in the spring of 1965, helped to persuade liberal Republican

Congressman John Lindsay to run for mayor of New York City.[6] Lindsay's victory that fall was taken as evidence of improved Republican fortunes. Bliss' recruitment efforts also helped the party's success in the 1966 elections (Mayer 1966:314).

Brock also placed a strong emphasis on candidate recruitment, but his efforts seem to have focused less on the personal persuasion used by Bliss than on institutionalizing methods of candidate recruitment within the RNC. Under Brock, the RNC ran a series of "Concord Conferences" to help identify and recruit potential candidates (Kondracke 1980). The RNC also began training seminars for the candidates to educate them in the personal qualities necessary in an effective candidate: public speaking, how to deal with the stress of the campaign, the need to follow professional advice rather than that offered by friends and relatives, even how to dress appropriately for different types of campaign events.[7]

One sharp contrast between the leadership of Bliss and that of Brock was the latter's willingness to extend RNC support to candidates in contested primaries. Under Brock, the RNC usually tried to do this in conjunction with the wishes of the state party organization, but according to Brock aide Ben Cotton, the RNC at times "bit the bullet" and opted to support one candidate over the wishes of the state party.[8]

Needless to say, such actions by the RNC were very controversial, especially in 1978 when the RNC-backed candidates for Senator in Iowa and Governor in Wisconsin lost in the primaries to candidates who eventually won in the general election. Most state and local parties resented these efforts of the RNC to interfere in local affairs and as a result, at the 1980 convention, the party passed a rule prohibiting the RNC from assisting a primary candidate without the consent of the state party chairman and that state's national committee members (Kayden and Mahe 1985:78-79).

## Party Image

The biggest difference between the chairmanships of Ray Bliss and Bill Brock was their approach to party image-making and the related topic of issue development. By most accounts Ray Bliss took little interest in issues, instead viewing them as, at best, distractions from the more important matter of organization or as, at worst, potential mine fields which could upset the best party organization. During Bliss' tenure, he served as chairman of the Republican Coordinating Committee (RCC), which had been established to help set party policy in the wake of the Goldwater debacle. Bliss labored mightily to ensure that the RCC did not cause further division in the party; as its chairman he continually deferred to the party's elected leadership on

policy matters and at RCC meetings he ruled with an iron hand to make sure that disputes did not get out of hand.[9]

Yet one is struck by this essentially defensive strategy for the RCC. At the time that the Democrats were implementing the Great Society, their most important and controversial domestic policy initiative since the New Deal, the issues council of the Republican Party was unable and seemingly unwilling to use it to develop clear Republican alternatives. Though the lack of leadership on the part of Ray Bliss is surely not the only reason for this, his avoidance of most policy and ideological matters certainly did not help the party to offer an alternative to the Great Society (but see chapter 13).

In contrast to Bliss' reticence on policy matters, Bill Brock placed an intense focus on policy development. According to Roger Semerad, an associate of Brock's who later became director of the RNC's policy councils, both he and Brock discussed the need for a "serious and substantive vehicle" for policy discussion within the party in preparation for the 1980 campaign.[10] Moreover, according to RNC staffer Michael Baroody, Brock and others at the RNC were willing to go ahead with such a project in spite of the reluctance of the party's congressional leadership. In their view, Congress was too involved in the day-to-day routine of legislation, while the RNC could engage in policy development free of the parochial political interests that were more prevalent in Congress.[11] Unlike the RCC, elected officials did not control the issue advisory councils established by Brock (Price 1984:272).

To further contribute to the discussion of ideas within the Republican Party, in 1978 the RNC began publication of *Commonsense*, a "Republican journal of opinion and thought" intended to provide the Republican Party with a forum for policy discussion and for the more symbolic purpose of promoting the Republicans as "the party of ideas."[12] The journal received generally favorable reviews from the media and the intellectual community. Baroody also claims that Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Senator from New York and a well-known Democratic intellectual party, held up a copy of *Commonsense* at a meeting of the California Democratic Party and claimed that this was evidence that the "party of ideas" label had shifted from the Democrats to the Republicans (see chapter 3).[13]

Another important benefit of *Commonsense* was its contribution to the dialogue within the Republican party over how to reformulate conservatism so that it offered a credible governing alternative to New Deal-Great Society liberalism. In Baroody's analysis, *Commonsense* helped the Republican Party begin to develop the themes of family, neighborhood, community, and voluntary associations, as alternatives to the usual Republican rhetoric of individualism and as a new basis for Republican policies (Berger 1978; Novak 1978).[14] These themes, along with the policies developed by the issues councils, eventually played an important role in Ronald Reagan's 1980

nomination acceptance address, the party's platform, the fall campaign, and the programs of the Reagan administration.

Both Bliss and Brock attempted to alter the image of the Republican Party by attempting to appeal to areas and groups which had not previously shown much support for Republican candidates. For Bliss, the main areas of emphasis were the traditionally Democratic big cities. Early in his tenure he dusted off the report of the Committee on Big City Politics, which he had chaired for the RNC in 1961 and 1962, and began to implement many of its recommendations.[15]

Bill Brock also attempted to improve and broaden the party's public image since the close vote in 1976 showed that the party could not afford to write off any portion of the electorate (Hucker 1978). In 1977 the RNC put $640,000 into an effort to recruit more black support for Republican candidates.[16] The RNC also provided $140,000 to establish the Black Republican Council, an effort aimed at building stronger organizations for black Republican candidates (Hucker 1978:1048). The RNC's selection of Detroit for its 1980 Convention was widely seen as an effort to attract the votes of blacks, ethnics, the poor, and union members (Cook 1979; Arieff 1980).[17] In 1980 the party platform committee, chaired by Brock and Senator John Tower, held a series of public hearings in 10 cities across the country as a means of showing the Republicans as "a party of the people" through the exposure and inclusion of various groups in the platform-writing process.[18]

In many ways both Bliss and Brock can be criticized for their outreach efforts. Both were manifestly unsuccessful and perhaps even wrongheaded. As for Bliss' Big City Program, not only did such efforts fail to make a dent in the Democratic margins there ("white flight" was rapidly depleting the pool of potential Republicans), but the whole program failed to recognize the declining political importance of large cities. Many of the same criticisms can be leveled against Bill Brock's efforts to increase Republican support among women and blacks. The effort clearly failed; the 1980s saw the advent of the "gender gap" and declining rates of black support for Republican candidates over the previous decade. This, however, overlooks another aspect of Brock's outreach efforts. In his assessment, while the attempt to reach black voters was sincere, another purpose of the program was to appeal to moderate, suburban whites by addressing their concern that the party be open and diverse.[19] In that sense, one can judge Brock's outreach program to have been a success.

A final difference between Ray Bliss and Bill Brock in the area of party image is in their use of the mass media. Under Bliss, the RNC engaged in rather minimal party-advertising efforts. Bliss, however, did begin a program of sending out to radio stations around the country five-minute recordings of various Republican officials speaking on different issues. Many stations, starved to fill air time, eagerly broadcast the weekly tapes. Since the program

was run as news or public affairs programming, there was no cost to the RNC, thereby giving the party free broadcast time.

Brock, once again aided by greater resources, undertook a novel and extensive program of "institutional" or "generic" television advertising, which, unlike candidate-oriented ads, sought to make a positive appeal for the whole of the Republican Party and staked out the differences between the parties. The necessity of this was clear to Brock, who stated in 1980:

> There was a time just a few years ago when many people said there wasn't a dime's worth of difference between Republicans and Democrats. Our position on issues wasn't clearly defined, and most voters felt that there was no real difference between the two parties (Kayden and Mahe 1985:77).

This effort culminated in 1980, when the RNC ran a hard-hitting advertising campaign attacking the Democrats and declaring, "Vote Republican. For a Change." RNC polling showed that the ads were very successful; the public had a high rate of recalling seeing the ads and they substantially increased the number of voters who were aware that the Democrats controlled Congress. The RNC believed that the ads contributed to a decline in the polls of the percentage of voters planning to vote Democratic for Congress and the campaign was continued into the fall elections (Adamany 1984:82; Conway 1983:9).

## Bliss and Brock: A Comparison of Leadership

The chairmanships of Ray Bliss and Bill Brock possess many similar characteristics. Most importantly, both men led the RNC during periods of rapid organizational growth. This seems reasonable since Brock consciously attempted to carry out many of the same programs first begun by Bliss. According to Brock, "Obviously you watch people as good as Ray Bliss to try to learn from them."[20]

The two periods, however, are not completely alike. The scale of the RNC's efforts under Brock dwarfs those undertaken by Bliss. Differences in financial resources offers one reason for this disparity. While Bliss was able to stabilize the RNC's finances (no easy task in those days) and expand and initiate a variety of programs, the funds available to the RNC in the late 1970s were unprecedented. For example, in 1967 the RNC raised $3.5 million dollars, while in 1979 the figure was over $17 million dollars, a vast difference, even accounting for inflation (Alexander 1971; Alexander 1983).[21]

But the distinctions between the party-building efforts of Bliss and Brock differ not only in scale, but also in scope. One is struck by the difference in initiative displayed by the two men. Bliss, unambitious to a fault and always a state party chairman at heart, appears to have been comfortable within the

constraints described by Cotter and Hennessy (1964) (see chapter 4). He seems to have been extremely unwilling to exercise independent initiative in such a way that it would have disturbed existing patterns and relationships within the Republican Party. Bliss' efforts at the RNC were directed at building state and local party organizations for their own sake, rather than in an effort to use them to centralize power within the RNC (but see chapter 3).

Brock, however, recognized that extensive party building activities, paid for and run by the RNC, would help to centralize power and influence within the national committee (Herrnson and Menefee-Libey 1990). Acting to take advantage of the "unrivaled opportunity for the exercise of initiative" that an out-party chairman possesses according to David, Goldman, and Bain (1960), Brock sought to use his organizational efforts as a means for increasing the power of the national party. Brock saw the rebuilding of state and local parties as a means to increase the power of the RNC by making it the central organizational structure on which all other parts of the party would depend.

Several examples illustrate how Brock's approach differed from that of Bliss. First is the former's emphasis on state legislative elections. Though Bliss may have been hampered by a relative lack of funds, one also gets the impression that he viewed this as an area which the national committee should leave to the state and local parties. Brock, however, had no problem establishing programs which not only assisted state and local efforts in these areas, but in many cases actually directed local campaigns and forced state parties to accept RNC-developed campaign strategies (Latimer 1979).

Another example is that of candidate recruitment. Bliss preached the need to recruit good candidates and made many efforts to recruit quality candidates, but from all accounts, it would have gone against every fiber of his being to have the RNC support one candidate in a major primary contest, such as the RNC attempted to do under Brock. For Brock, favoring a particular candidate over the wishes of the state and local party organization was a natural outgrowth of his desire to concentrate power within the RNC.

Bliss and Brock also had very different attitudes toward policy matters. Bliss' heart and soul were in the day-to-day detail of running a political organization,"nuts and bolts," in his favorite phrase (see chapter 5). Policy was a distinctly secondary interest for him. Though many observers justly credit Bliss as an efficient chairman of the RCC, this role does not seem to have been an important interest for him. He had no involvement in creating the RCC and he deferred to elected officials on policy matters. As RCC chairman, he strove mightily to keep it from saying too much, rather than too little. As a result, Bliss was unable to use the opportunity provided by the RCC for the Republican Party to develop a viable conservative alternative to the Great Society (see chapter 2).

Brock, however, was very interested in matters of policy as well as organization, and he saw policy efforts as another opportunity for taking the

initiative and increasing the importance of the National Committee. Where Bliss' only involvement was in a policy council created and run by the congressional leadership, Brock deliberately set out to establish a policy forum independent of the party's congressional wing. In doing so, he centered within the RNC the debate among Republicans intellectuals which eventually helped to develop a viable conservative alternative to Democratic liberalism. Furthermore, Brock took an active and important role in that debate. According to Roger Semerad, Brock was "intellectual as well as political leader of the party,"[22] a rather unlikely claim to be made about Ray Bliss (but see chapter 6).

Through the use of opportunity and initiative, Brock succeeded in his effort to "nationalize" the Republican Party through upgrading the RNC's organizational capacities (Cotter and Bibby 1980). The money and resources available to state parties through the RNC in this period were invaluable, giving them a level of organizational sophistication which they had never had before. According to one Midwest state chairman:

> Bill Brock has changed the whole concept of the National Committee. The field people we had helping us were the best I've seen. They gave us staff, resources, and money. In the last two years, we've had more help from the National Committee than in the whole time I've been around (Bibby 1980:112).

By providing them with this organizational and financial prowess, Brock made the state and local parties willing to accept, even to encourage, the centralization of power within the RNC. As one state chairman stated, "I figure that I should go along with Bill Brock and the National Committee as much as possible, because I want as much of their money as I can get for my state" (Bibby 1980:112).

In conclusion, a comparison of the leadership experiences of Ray Bliss and Bill Brock shows strikingly different examples of out-party leadership. As RNC chairman, Ray Bliss was either unable or unwilling to challenge the traditional constraints on his office in order to alter the balance of power in the Republican Party. Bill Brock, on the other hand, successfully took advantage of the opportunities presented to an out-party chairman. His example seems to indicate that out-party leaders who possess adequate resources and initiative are not necessarily bound by the constraints on them and can exercise important and effective leadership.

What then is the impact of these different approaches to out-party leadership? The most notable difference seems to be in the longevity of the efforts undertaken by Bliss and Brock. Ultimately Bliss' work came to naught, undone by the personal ambitions of Richard Nixon. Brock's organizational reforms proved much longer-lasting, providing the basis for the further party-building activities by the RNC in the 1980s. One cannot help but to think that these different results in some ways stem from the different leadership

approaches of Bliss and Brock (see chapter 11). Brock's concentration of power within the RNC seems to have enabled that organization to continue its central role in party affairs beyond the lifetime of Brock's leadership. Moreover, one might also consider the idea that if Bliss too had used his activities to increase the power of the RNC, then it might have been better able to resist the abuse that his work eventually suffered at the hands of Richard Nixon.

## Notes

1. Ben Cotton, personal interview, April 2, 1991.
2. Warren Weaver Jr., "Brock Takes Lead For G.O.P. Chairman." *The New York Times*. January 14, 1977.
3. Document from the Republican National Finance Committee Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, January 21, 1965 (photocopy). I am indebted to Herbert Alexander for providing me with a copy of this document.
4. William Middendorf, personal interview, April 3, 1991.
5. Arthur Peterson, telephone interview, March 27, 1991.
6. David S. Broder, "Bliss Helped Nudge Linday." *The Washington Star*. May 14, 1965.
7. Ben Cotton, personal interview, April 2, 1991.
8. Ben Cotton, personal interview, April 2, 1991.
9. Arthur Peterson, telephone interview, March 27, 1991.
10. Roger Semerad, personal interview, April 3, 1991.
11. Michael Baroody, personal interview, April 10, 1991.
12. Michael Baroody, personal interview, April 10, 1991.
13. Michael Baroody, personal interview, April 10, 1991.
14. Michael Baroody, personal interview, April 10, 1991.
15. David S. Broder, "Republicans Intensifying Efforts in Big Cities as Democrats Cut Back Their Urban Staff." *The New York Times*. December 29, 1965.
16. Adam Clymer, "Jesse Jackson Tells Receptive G.O.P. It Can Pike Up Votes of Blacks." *The New York Times*. January 21, 1978.
17. John Herbers, "G.O.P. Ends Its National Meeting With an Optimistic View of 1980." *The New York Times*. June 27, 1979.
18. Roger Semerad, personal interview, April 3, 1991.
19. William Brock, personal interview, June 17, 1991.
20. William Brock, personal interview, June 17, 1991.
21. These years seem the best for comparison, since in 1968 the Republican Party was able to raise huge sums through large (and often illegal) contributions to the Nixon campaign, something the campaign finance laws prevented the RNC from doing in 1980.
22. Roger Semerad, personal interview, April 3, 1991.

## References

Adamany, David. 1984. "Political Parties in the 1980s," in Michael Malbin, ed., *Money and Politics in the United States*. Pp. 70-121. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.

Alexander, Herbert. 1971. *Financing the 1968 Election*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath.

_____. 1983. *Financing the 1980 Election*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath.

Arieff, Irwin B. 1980. "Republican Party Converges on Detroit." *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. July 12:1923-1925.

Berger, Peter L. 1978. "Mediating Structures: The Missing Link of Politics." *Commonsense* 1 (Summer 1978):1-9.

Bibby, John F. 1967. *The Republicans and the Metropolis: The Role of National Party Leadership*. Chicago: Center for Research in Urban Government, Loyola University.

_____. 1979. "Political Parties and Federalism: The Republican National Committee Involvement in Gubernatorial and Legislative Elections." *Publius* 9:229-236.

_____. 1980. "Party Renewal in the National Republican Party," in Gerald M. Pomper, ed., *Party Renewal in America*. Pp. 102-115. New York: Praeger.

Bibby, John F., and Robert J. Huckshorn. 1968. "Out-Party Strategy: Republican National Committee Rebuilding Politics, 1964-1966," in Robert J. Huckshorn and Bernard Cosman, ed., *Republican Politics: The 1964 Campaign and Its Aftermath for the Republican Party*. Pp. 205-233. New York: Praeger.

Buchanan, Christopher. 1980. "National GOP Pushing Hard to Capture State Legislatures." *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. October 25:3188-3192.

Clark, Timothy B. 1980. "The RNC Prospers, the DNC Struggles as They Face the 1980 Elections." *National Journal*. September 12:1617-1621.

Conway, M. Margaret. 1983. "Republican Political Party Nationalization, Campaign Activities, and Their Implications for the Political System." *Publius* 13:1-117.

Cook, Rhodes. 1979. "Bill Brock Concentrates On the Grass Roots, But Conservatives Are Critical." *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. April 28:775-779.

Cotter, Cornelius P., and Bernard C. Hennessy. 1964. *Politics Without Power: The National Party Committees*. New York: Atherton.

Cotter, Cornelius P., and John F. Bibby. 1980. "Institutional Development of Parties and the Thesis of Party Decline." *Political Science Quarterly* 95:1-27.

David, Paul T., Ralph M. Goldman, and Richard C. Bain. 1960. *The Politics of National Party Conventions*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

Herrnson, Paul S. 1988. *Party Campaigning in the 1980s*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Herrnson, Paul S., and David Menefee-Libey. 1990. "The Dynamics of Party Organizational Development." *Mid-South Journal of Political Science* 11:3-30.

Hess, Stephen, and David S. Broder. 1967. *The Republican Establishment: The Present and Future of the G.O.P.* New York: Harper and Row.

Hucker, Charles W. 1978. "Blacks and the GOP: A Cautious Courtship." *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. April 29:1045-1052.

Kayden, Xandra, and Eddie Mahe Jr. 1985. *The Party Goes On: The Persistence of the Two-Party System in the United States*. New York: Basic Books.

Kesaris, Paul L., ed. 1986a. *Papers of the Republican Party, Part I: Meetings of the Republican National Committee, 1911-1980; Series B: 1960-1980*. Frederick, MD: University Publications of America.

_____. 1986b. *Papers of the Republican Party, Part II: Research Division Reports*. Frederick, MD: University Publications of America.

Klinkner, Philip A. 1992. "The Response of Political Parties To Presidential Election Defeats: A Study in Organizational Culture." Ph.D. diss. Yale University.

Kondracke, Morton. 1980. "The G.O.P. Gets Its Act Together." *The New York Times Magazine*. July 13:18-24, 42-47.

Latimer, Margaret K. 1979. "'No-Party' Politics at the End of the Wallace Era." *Publius* 9:215-227.

Mayer, George H. 1967. *The Republican Party, 1854-1966*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Novak, Michael. 1978. "Prescription for Republicans." *Commonsense* 1:27-33.

Price, David E. 1984. *Bringing Back the Parties*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Reichley, A. James. 1985. "The Rise of the National Parties," in John E. Chubb and Paul Peterson, eds, *The New Directions in American Politics*. Pp. 175-200. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

Sabato, Larry J. 1981. *The Rise of the Political Consultants: New Ways of Winning Elections*. New York: Basic Books.

# 11

## Strengths and Limitations: The Republican National Committee From Bliss to Brock to Barbour

*Tim Hames*

The purpose of this essay is two-fold: first, to demonstrate that the Republican National Committee (RNC) in the 1980s, working from a model largely devised under Ray Bliss and (especially) Bill Brock, successfully evaded many of those factors which had previously served to restrain its value and importance, and second, to show that there remain powerful forces that limit the RNC's effectiveness both as a political institution and as catalyst to party renewal. These two factors shaped the National Committee that the 1993 chairman, Haley Barbour, inherited from his two illustrious predecessors.

For the overwhelming majority of its history, the RNC has not been a body of significant political importance. The prime cause of this has been its lack of any meaningful institutional autonomy or organizational independence. There have been six factors that historically have restricted the Committee's development and which confronted all who would reform it. They are:

1. The lack of independent financial standing.
2. Little respect for its programmatic function and output at the state, congressional, or presidential levels.
3. Its tendency to be the forum for party factionalism.
4. Limited independence from, and respect held by, the state parties.
5. No real independence from a sitting Republican President.
6. Little political influence over other Republican officeholders.

Before the activities of Ray Bliss and Bill Brock, three other Chairmen, Mark Hanna (1896-1904), William Hays (1918-1921), and John Hamilton (1936-1940) had tried to tackle these difficulties, and one other, Leonard Hall (1953-1957), made a more limited effort. The tactics employed by these four chairs break down into two styles, depending crucially on whether the Republicans held the White House during their tenure.

With the Republicans in opposition, Hanna, Hays, and Hamilton all adopted the same line of approach. They tried to deal with the RNC's lack of financial standing through innovative new fund-raising techniques. They then attempted to use the revenues generated to improve the range of, and the respect for, the RNC's programmatic activities. This, it was hoped, would have the helpful side effect of repressing factionalism and increasing the enthusiasm among state parties for an activist RNC. Finally, Hays and Hamilton (Hanna never really had the opportunity) involved the RNC in the policy discussions, focused mainly among congressional leaders, that followed the party's previous electoral defeat. Given that there was no Republican President, they never had to face the problems of their lack of independence from him. The RNC chairmen who did serve under a Republican President, Hanna and Hall, pursued a more modest version of the same strategy. Again fund raising was stressed with some effort made to diversify revenue gained into RNC-run programs. There was no attempt to involve the RNC in policy making of any kind.

These four chairmen were only partially successful. Hanna raised enormous amounts of money for the 1896 election, but never had the same influence once the Republicans regained the Oval Office. Hays had some success in the policy arena, although most of his product was ultimately jettisoned by candidate Warren Harding, and elements of Hay's financial innovation also went seriously astray. Hamilton made considerable progress in fund raising, policy involvement, and, strikingly, in building the program side of the RNC, but none of it survived him. Hall proved a very competent fund raiser, but never established a substantial policy or program role. Above all else, these reformers did not make their plans stick under an incumbent Republican President. The six difficulties outlined above were ultimately too serious.

In essence, the tactics employed by both Bliss and Brock were not by themselves radically different. They stressed fund raising as the basic precondition for the RNC's revival, using direct-mail techniques first pioneered (in admittedly primitive form) under John Hamilton. They used those monies to strengthen the programmatic wing of the RNC and hoped this capacity to distribute funds to the localities would mute factional tendencies and enhance state party respect for the RNC. They involved the Committee in the discussions that followed the GOP's defeats in 1964 and 1976, in both cases more as a secretariat than as direct participants, and neither had to worry about the views of a Republican President. Taken together, these reforms followed a "service-agency" model of party organization (see chapter 17). However, there are three distinct differences between the Bliss and Brock periods that are important to outline.

The scale of fund-raising revenues and hence of the RNC activities they financed was considerably greater under Brock than Bliss. This meant that

the RNC could go much further towards the service-agency model in the 1970s than had been possible in the 1960s. The focus of the RNC also altered between Bliss and Brock. Ray Bliss saw the RNC's task as supporting state and local party organizations, building them up as the means to Republican electoral advance. Under Brock the RNC became more concerned with candidates and campaigns, although it would be wrong to imply that he ignored party organizations. Nonetheless, there was an important shift of emphasis and the RNC of the 1980s has followed and extended the Brock rather than the Bliss view of these matters. Finally, and most importantly, the Bliss reforms could not survive the return of a Republican Administration (see chapters 2 and 3).

Indeed, had there been no Bill Brock or Brock reforms, Ray Bliss would now be remembered as just a more energetic version of Hanna, Hays, Hamilton and Hall. It was the adoption of Bliss as a model by Brock and the fact that Brock's RNC was not emasculated under Presidents Reagan and Bush that gives Bliss his current standing as a sort of "John the Baptist" figure in the history and evolution of the RNC.

As this chapter will outline, it has been the institutionalization of the RNC in the 1980s basically on the Bliss/Brock model that has been the great novelty. It is this that also prevents Bliss and Brock from joining the Hanna, Hays, Hamilton, and Hall roster of heroic failures as RNC reformers.

## The RNC in the 1980s: Strength Through Continuity

In all previous periods of Republican tenure at the White House, the RNC has entered a period of inertia and decline, the main reason being that most Presidents had little interest in the RNC except as a mouthpiece for their Administration. Presidents tended to appoint Chairmen whose first loyalty was to them personally and who had little authority to strengthen the committee. Indeed the usual pattern was for part-time appointments. As the RNC gained little from presidential patronage, had few independent means of survival and no great constituency in either the states or Congress to support it, the presidential will prevailed, and either through active measures or simple indifference, the RNC collapsed. The most extreme example of this approach was that of Richard Nixon, who sought to keep his distance from the Republican Party in all forms, and thus accorded the RNC a role minuscule even by the modest standards of Republican re-election campaigns.

There were several reasons why Ronald Reagan and George Bush, unlike Richard Nixon, chose to retain the Bliss/Brock-format RNC and positively support its expansion. One was the personal factor: Reagan and Bush were considerably more interested in--and committed to--the Republican Party as an institution than many of their predecessors. However, this personal

element would not have been enough by itself. For example, Gerald Ford had considerable sympathies for the RNC, but his enthusiasm could not spark a rejuvenated RNC. A number of other incentives combined to allow the RNC to survive and prosper in the 1980s. Those factors are:

1. The creation of a financial base that appeared capable of maintenance even in the event of Presidential indifference.
2. The creation of a constituency in the states and Congress for national Republican organizational development.
3. The service-agency model widely believed to have real value to the party's candidates.
4. A set of particular functions useful to Presidential candidates, created by the various campaign finance acts of the 1970s, that only party organizations could fulfill.

The RNC had raised over $75 million in the 1979/1980 electoral cycle, mostly in small individual donations solicited through direct mail. This massively exceeded anything the Committee had achieved previously and represented a very sizable argument for sustaining the RNC. A donor file approaching 1.2 million names existed and the early months of 1981 indicated that these individuals would continue to contribute to the Committee even though Ronald Reagan had been successfully elected. The RNC had reason to believe that, at least to some extent, it had a fiscal standing of its own.[1]

Such a financial position created a constituency. State parties were now financially assisted by the national party, reversing the historic trend, and were thus interested in seeing the Committee continue along Bill Brock's lines. As Philip Klinkner (chapter 9) suggests, Brock was able to "buy" the loyalty of state parties. Furthermore, there now existed a congressional constituency. In 1980, the abundance of money pulled in by the three national Republican committees (the RNC, the Republican National Senatorial Committee [RNSC], and the Republican National Congressional Committee [RNCC]) meant that for the first time a majority of congressional candidates received their largest single campaign contribution from their own party, which increased support for the National Committee.

The RNC's programs also received much favorable publicity. Under Brock, dozens of RNC operatives had been sent to assist campaigns at every layer of competition. The unexpectedly spectacular Republican gains at all levels in 1980 were credited in some part to these efforts. Given the necessity of holding the Senate in 1982 and the objective of retaking the House of Representatives in that year, few in Congress wanted to see a retreat in the RNC's programs.

These elements combined with the intended and unintended consequences of campaign finance legislation. Strictly speaking, presidential candidates

were financially restricted to the grant they received from the taxpayer with the sole exception of a limited amount of money that their parties' National Committees could raise and spend on their behalf. This provided a reason to keep the RNC at least strong enough to meet this task. Second, the law allowed the National Committee to spend an unrestrained amount on television advertising in presidential elections provided that it boosted the party generally and not the Republican presidential candidate specifically. In 1980, the financially flush RNC had run a widely praised campaign attacking Democrats and promoting Republicanism. Next, a campaign finance measure of 1979 allowed state and local political parties to spend unlimited sums on behalf of their presidential candidate through volunteer materials, mass mailings, and telephone banks. The sole regulation was that any money spent *exclusively* on backing the presidential candidate had to be raised according to federal legal stipulations. Finally, the discovery of the "soft money" loophole expanded the scope of national fund raising: state parties could raise money to promote the general Republican cause under state campaign finance laws, which were usually much more lax than the federal regime. Together, the law and its loopholes enabled national party organizations to open a "second front" in presidential campaigns and these activities gave incumbent Presidents an excellent reason to support a strong and active RNC.

Thus, the RNC acted through the 1980s in a style that would have been entirely recognizable to Bill Brock and to a lesser extent Ray Bliss. Although relations between the White House and the new RNC chairman, Richard Richards, deteriorated when he started offering public pronouncements on policy issues, the RNC spent millions of dollars commissioning opinion polls and television advertisements on behalf of Ronald Reagan's economic agenda, an activity without precedent for a National Committee under an incumbent Republican President. Vigorous fund raising broke all records, enabling the RNC to run another television campaign and throw money at Republican candidates in the 1982 elections. Indeed, the fact that GOP losses in that election were not as bad as expected was credited to the Republican financial advantage. The RNC's massive fund raising continued through the 1984 elections where the three national Republican committees raised nearly $250 million between them, breaking all records and financing a diverse range of projects.

For the 1986 elections, the RNC expanded and developed its portfolio. RNC activity included $4.1 million worth of voter list development, with get-out-the-vote drives organized in twenty-three states. Nearly 5.5 million telephone calls were placed to supporters, of which two million consisted of recorded messages from Ronald Reagan urging Republicans to vote. In addition, the RNC spent $90,000 a month on polling and used a sophisticated in-house media operation to support its candidates. The 1987/88 political cycle saw that formula repeated in conjunction with the Bush campaign. The

1990 mid-term elections witnessed a basic continuity of the Republican recipe of fund raising, programs, and an increasing use of high technology in various aspects of campaign politics.

The breakthrough for the RNC in the last decade has been to make permanent the service-agency model envisaged by Bliss and Brock. Their successors, after the Richards interlude, each added significantly to the Committee's evolution. Frank Fahrenkopf Jr., Nevada Republican chairman, was hardly a household name but his tenure from late 1982 until January 1989 was the longest stretch since Mark Hanna. Fahrenkopf's replacement, Lee Atwater, who tragically died at the age of forty only two years later, was the first presidential campaign manager since Jim Farley in 1932 to move straight from that post to chair a national committee. Atwater was also the most politically important chairman since Farley and the fact that he wanted to run the RNC implied it had acquired a certain stature unimaginable two decades earlier. It would be a mistake, however, to believe that all the historic limitations of the RNC have been overcome. There are losses and limitations that accompany the service-agency model, and these limitations can also be seen in the pattern of RNC operations during the same period.

## The Limitations of the Republican National Committee

There are three basic limitations of the service-agency model that will be outlined in this section. First, the model relies almost symbiotically on extremely high levels of funding, which probably cannot be sustained. Next, there are very substantial restrictions on how much the RNC can do to influence the political direction of the state parties, as can be seen by an examination of the failure of the "1991 Plan" - the RNC's blueprint for achieving majority party status. Indeed, the RNC is now more a candidate-based rather than party-based organization. Finally, the RNC's role in presidential elections are a mixed blessing from an organizational point of view.

### *The Decline of Republican Fund Raising*

If the National Committees are to serve as service agencies, then money is absolutely fundamental. The RNC witnessed a huge spurt of revenues in the 1979/1980 political cycle, exceeded in both 1981/82 and 1983/84. However, 1983/84 represented the peak of Republican success in actual as well as inflation-adjusted receipts, and the NRCC peaked earlier still. This subsequent decline was first noted after the 1986 elections when the loss of the U.S. Senate, the Iran-Contra scandal, and the fund-raising operations of the 1988 Republican presidential aspirants combined to hit RNC revenues

hard. The decline has continued since then and, as Table 10.1 makes plain, shows little sign of reversing itself.

Early information for the 1991/1992 period suggests that the RNC fell $10 million short of its 1987/1988 total of $90.9 million. The $31 million raised in 1989 was almost identical to the amount brought in ten years earlier, and the $37 million raised in 1990 was the lowest total for a year involving nationwide elections since the mid-term campaign of 1978. This decline in revenues has an obvious negative effect on RNC programs. Inevitably, both staff and projects have been slashed since the halcyon days of 1983/1984 when the RNC's greatest problem was finding candidates and ideas worth spending their money on. This dilemma is unlikely to return.

This slowdown in Republican revenues has not been helped by the performance of Democratic committees over the same period. Although Democratic revenues have been somewhat volatile, especially between presidential and non-presidential cycles, the general trend is upwards, a pattern that continued in 1992.

The consequences of this decline in Republican fund raising--both in absolute terms and relative to the Democrats--can be seen in reduced

Table 10.1 Major Party Receipts 1977-1990 (in millions of dollars)

| | RNC | RNC/NRSC/NRCC | DNC | DNC/DSCC/DCCC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1977/1978 | $ 34.2 | $ 64.7 | $11.3 | $ 17.7 |
| 1979/1980 | $ 76.2 | $130.3 | $15.1 | $ 23.0 |
| 1981/1982 | $ 83.5 | $190.5 | $16.4 | $ 28.6 |
| 1983/1984 | $105.9 | $245.9 | $46.4 | $ 55.9 |
| 1985/1986 | $ 83.8 | $208.0 | $17.2 | $ 42.9 |
| 1987/1988 | $ 90.9 | $191.4 | $52.3 | $ 81.1 |
| 1989/1990 | $ 68.7 | $167.6 | $14.4 | $ 49.9 |
| 1991/1992 | $ 80.3 | $187.0 | $65.7 | $104.0 |

*Source:* The Federal Election Commission

support for congressional candidates. In the 1982 elections, some $23.9 million was channeled to congressional candidates by all party committees. Of this party money, $19.5 million went to Republican candidates or 80.8% of the total. Democratic sources, by contrast, produced only $4.4 million or a meager 19.2% of the total. In contrast, in the 1990 elections, $23.5 million came to congressional candidates from party organizations, $13.6 million (a fall of one-third in absolute terms) or 57.9% of the total came from the Republicans, and $9.9 million (over twice as much in absolute terms) or 42.1% originated from the Democrats. In 1992, this gap narrowed further.

Given that overall congressional campaign expenditures have been rising at the same time as Republican Party contributions have fallen, the result has been a sharp decline in the proportion of all Republican receipts coming from the organized party. For 1977/1978, 12% of all GOP congressional funds came from party sources. This figure increased to 13.4% in 1981/1982 and has been falling ever since, reaching a new low of 6.9% in 1989/1990. For Republican incumbents - who are the subsection of candidates most likely to be elected - that decline has been sharper. In 1981/1982, 8.9% of Republican incumbents' receipts hailed from party committees and by 1989/1990 that proportion was 4.1%. If present trends continue, party contributions to Republican candidates will soon be as small and irrelevant as they were before Bill Brock became RNC chairman in 1977.

This slide in party contributions has been reinforced by the fall in PAC contributions to Republican congressional candidates (Herrnson 1988). In the 1979/1980 campaign, 48.2% of PAC gifts went to Republicans, falling to 38.1% by 1989/1990. Put all these trends together and the total proportion of all congressional campaign funds taken by Republicans has slipped from over 51.5% in 1977/1978 to 46.5% in 1989/1990 and declined further in the 1991/1992 period. A similar drop has happened in contributions and coordinated expenditures to candidates in state and local elections.

Why have Republican revenues fallen so markedly and is this phenomenon likely to last? The simple reason why revenues have tumbled has been the collapse of the conservative direct-mail market, the backbone of RNC revenues. In 1980 and 1981, the RNC had over 850,000 people offering small contributions through the mail. By 1988 that number was under 550,000 and since then it has probably fallen further still. The proportion of all RNC receipts coming from such donors fell from 77% in 1981 to 53% in 1991. Exactly the same difficulty has depressed revenues at the NRSC and NRCC.

There are several explanations for the slump in the conservative direct-mail universe. One is that direct mail probably works best as a medium for a party in total opposition, when feelings of disgust with the incumbent regime can be whipped up and turned into contributions. Perhaps it was inevitable that direct-mail receipts would decrease the longer the Republicans remained in the White House. Further, as most donors are very conservative,

many either had their agendas realized by President Reagan or realized that they probably could not be implemented by any president. Oversolicitation was another element: so many different conservative causes joined the direct-mail bandwagon that contributor exhaustion almost certainly resulted.

These are not the explanations advanced by most professionals within the various GOP committees; all three natural party committees have undertaken substantial research into their donors. Their findings give a picture of a donor group that is disproportionately elderly. Some 70% are fifty-five years and over, 50% exceed sixty-five, and the most consistent givers are older still. This age profile is not troublesome in itself, indeed with an aging population it would imply a rich harvest of potential funds for the Republican Party. However, the same research indicates that it is *generation* rather than age that makes such people RNC contributors: the generation raised in the depression and World War II and characterized by a passionate belief in service to country, and that perceives party contributions in that light. As a group they do not possess the same cynicism towards politics and politicians that the baby-boom generation so clearly exhibits.

In short, the RNC has discovered that the new fifty-five year olds of 1990 are not supporting it financially in anything like the same way as the fifty-five year olds of 1980. This despite polling evidence suggesting the current cohort of fifty-five year old voters contains more Republicans than the previous one. The RNC's donor file is literally dying out. If these assumptions prove correct then there is no reason to believe that revenue from direct mail would be revived if only the Republicans lost a presidential election.

Faced with this difficulty in their premier source of revenue, the RNC has responded by giving greater emphasis to large donations from affluent individuals. The House and Senate bodies have followed suit. Major donor clubs such as the Republican Eagles (which costs $15,000 a year to join) based on events attended by Republican celebrities have been expanded. Donations even larger than these, through the soft-money loophole, have also been encouraged ("Team 100").

There are two problems with this form of political finance. The first is that events and clubs such as these rely on their exclusivity as part of their appeal. If the RNC allows them to get too big, large numbers of people will drop out. There is a certain natural ceiling to such promotions. A much more important problem is the law. Current federal legislation limits individual donations to a political party to $20,000 a year. In reality there are ways of giving more by using soft money donations either to the RNC's building fund or to a state party. Nevertheless, while such soft-money funding is obviously welcome, it plainly restricts the RNC's ability to maximize its major donor revenues. The Federal Election Campaign Act restrictions, almost irrelevant to the RNC during the era of massive direct-mail receipts, are now frustrating. It has not been possible to make up the shortfall in large numbers of small

contributions with small numbers of large contributions, and so RNC funds have declined, and therefore, RNC activities have declined. There would appear little prospect of a change in the law to enable the Republicans to escape this position.

The consequences of all this are straightforward. In comparison with the Consumer Price Index, RNC money has slumped, and when compared with inflation relevant to political operations--television commercial costs, for example--it has collapsed. The programs, staff, activities, direct contributions, and coordinated expenditures of the RNC have all suffered. This loss of revenue has wider costs for the National Committee. The key to escaping its former institutional plight was money. Money allowed Ray Bliss and Bill Brock to revive the RNC, and the financial performance of the RNC in 1980 was a leading reason why the RNC broke the historical constraints normally seen under an incumbent Republican Administration. Money was also the main incentive for state parties and Republican congressmen to support the RNC. The RNC and its affiliates are raising enough money to still be worth the backing of such groups, but it is a reasonable assumption that such support is not as strong now as it was a decade ago. Furthermore, as the next section notes, even before and without this financial conundrum, there was evidence of real limitations on what the RNC could achieve in the way of central political planning, and evidence that indicates wider limitations on National Committees as political institutions as well.

*The Rise and Fall of the "1991 Plan"*

Flushed with their performance in the 1980 and 1982 elections, the RNC announced that their chief political priority for the decade would be attaining majority party status. This objective would be reached by central party organization from the Committee through a series of activities known as the "1991 Plan". This section will trace the development of that plan, noting that the original scheme which placed activating county-level Republican parties at its core was abandoned, and that the second version, much more candidate-based originally but expanding into non-campaign fields, fell short as well.

In 1983, shortly after becoming RNC chairman, Frank Fahrenkopf, Jr. laid down a twelve-point program that he would later formally christen the 1991 Plan. The proposal sought to ensure Republican majority party status by that date. It is worth outlining those initial points:

1. To focus the RNC's political activities on 650 key counties.
2. To evaluate the party's strength in all fifty states and 3,707 counties, parishes, and independent cities.
3. To hold twice-yearly policy forums.

4. To encourage local parties to run GOP candidates in every race at every level.
5. To enlarge the financial field staff to work directly with approximately 400 key counties.
6. To commit those key counties to list development, voter identification, registration, and turnout.
7. To direct the efforts of the RNC's Working Parties Program towards those key counties.
8. To direct the RNC's liaison programs towards those counties.
9. To get involved with voter coalition groups in identification, voter registration, and turnout drives.
10. To focus the RNC's (and state party) training programs on local party-building efforts.
11. To establish a direct communications link with the more than 3,000 Republican county leaders.
12. To build a network of GOP and community leaders throughout the states and counties to articulate GOP policies.

This was essentially a party-based plan for the revival of Republican fortunes over an eight-year period with county political parties as the key actors. After the 1984 elections, the initial Fahrenkopf Plan was condensed into the "1991 Plan Mark One." It had already been altered by perceptions of the weaknesses of the 1984 campaign. In particular, Republican operatives were disappointed by the modest fourteen-seat gain in the House of Representatives. The conclusion drawn, and a questionable one, was that the Republicans had been frozen out of the House because of gerrymandering of legislative districts produced by Democratic control of the redistricting process. Hence the relaunched plan contained two new elements. By the end of 1990 Republicans would hold legislative majorities in most states, control the redistricting procedure, and then the GOP would take control of the House of Representatives. In the process, Fahrenkopf's original notion of GOP revival via an institutional build-up at the county level was implicitly finessed with plans to win elections through importing RNC campaign techniques at the state legislative level, with the goal of grasping the levers of redistricting.

The 1991 Plan Mark One had five points. The first was local programs which encompassed the previous twelve-point scheme for county parties. The other four related to how the political, legal, computer services, and communications departments could help state parties with redistricting. The key Republican county parties were indeed surveyed through 1983 and 1984. The results were not encouraging. Over 72% of the local GOP affiliates did not produce a written political plan and 54% had no formal budget - two of the most basic organizational requirements. The majority did not have a

political headquarters of any type, and of those that did, the overwhelming majority were only open part-time. The survey also showed how few and limited the range of political activities undertaken were.

Partly as a result of the difficulties revealed by its own survey, the 1991 Plan Mark One gravitated away from counties and local party-building towards investments in campaign techniques and resources for candidates in state legislative contests. After the 1984 elections, despite county programs being placed at the top of Fahrenkopf's priorities, little of substance was done. Two new national organizations were created--the National Republican Legislators Campaign Committee and the National Conference of Republican County Officials--the first was related to the redistricting drive, and the main vehicle of contact with the second was a newsletter, *County Line*. Talk of surveying all three thousand county parties by 1990 never reappeared in RNC literature after 1985. By 1987, the 1991 Plan Mark One was further redefined into a four-part plan ("1991 Plan Mark Two"). The county programs were dropped as were all references to party building. Instead, the plan now solely focused on preparations for the re-districting process which would start after the 1990 elections.

The death of the 1991 Plan Mark One had many sources. One was that building the party from the grassroots increasingly seemed difficult to accomplish from Washington, D.C. The more the political professionals looked at it, the less they liked it. Further, the fruits of such an approach would take some time to arrive and the National Committee was under pressure to invest in projects that would create tangible rewards swiftly. Pressure mounted as the financial woes discussed earlier became more apparent. Congressional interests wanted redistricting given priority and even the state parties preferred to see money go to candidates and campaigns rather than to build county party organizations that might prove troublesome rivals. Ultimately, despite strong backing from the chairman and (then) record income, the RNC could not engage in the sort of party-based effort that one suspects Ray Bliss would have loved to implement if he had enjoyed such lavish coffers (see chapter 3). The 1991 Plan Mark Two was thus devoted to candidates and campaigns in the states. From 1985 onwards state legislative contests were supposed to be the RNC's foremost priority. In truth, the Mark Two version of the scheme had little more success and within three years a further reorientation had taken place. This change had a multitude of causes as well.

It proved no easier to focus the RNC on state legislative races and ignore other cross-pressures than had proved to be the case with county parties. The RNC could not concentrate on redistricting-related planning when there were more pressing federal and national priorities. In theory, the campaign to keep the U.S. Senate Republican in the 1986 elections was delegated to the NRSC. In practice, it became the main objective of the RNC as well. The same

story--of the RNC attempting a dual effort--appeared in the 1987/88 cycle. Only this time the stakes were higher and the pressure greater. Even in the 1989/1990 period, hopeful signs of possible Republican gains in the Senate drew effort and resources away from the 1991 Plan Mark Two. These conflicts of interests were made more complicated by the evident shortfall in funds to cover all of them.

Added to this, state legislative races were proving tougher to mastermind from Washington, D.C. than supposed. The RNC could flood a state with money and its operatives, but the absence of attractive candidates and a well-established Republican network on the ground proved problematic. Furthermore, the standard RNC technique of trying to nationalize or "presidentialize" local contests using themes and tactics tested on the Reagan campaign proved no more successful at the state legislative level than it was proving in the House of Representatives.

In addition, state parties often had different priorities from the National Committee. Many states, especially in the far West, had been virtually annexed by the Christian Right and wanted to allocate funds to candidates based on their ideological purity instead of a realistic assessment of the prospects for electoral success. Others spent their own - and RNC - money in their own ways. An excellent example of this problem was Texas, where in 1988 the national party wanted money spent on the race for Lands Commissioner. This was a low-profile office carrying a vote on the Texas redistricting board. The Texas GOP was more interested in the contest for Railroad Commissioner, an office which carried enormous local patronage, but was irrelevant to redistricting politics. The Railroad rather than Lands Commissioner got the majority of the money, and the first office was captured and the second one lost.

As the traumas of politics at this level increased, the RNC's input moved away from state legislative contests somewhat, concentrating mostly in states where the state parties presented no obstacles to RNC tactics. More often than not, this reflected the weakness of a state party as much as anything else. Increasingly limited finances were directed at the gubernatorial campaigns in the large states due to gain or lose most from redistricting. Here RNC efforts were focused on candidate and campaign politics, and completely bypassed liaison with either state or local political parties.

More striking still, the 1991 Plan Mark Two began to move toward activities with no campaign component at all. By the late 1980s, it was apparent that far from dominating the redistricting process in 1991, the Republicans' chief concern was how to prevent the Democrats from using that process for their own ends. Thus two new priorities emerged. The first was the need to ensure that Republican legislators understood the partisan implications of any proposals the Democrats might present in their state. Such information could then form the basis of Republican opposition in the

legislative chamber, in public relations, and--depending on state law--in the courts. The second priority was an attempt to short-circuit the redistricting exercise completely by persuading the federal judiciary to declare partisan political gerrymandering unconstitutional.

The first need required increased resources and emphasis on the Computer Services Division of the RNC, which served as a consultant to the state parties, testing various software packages and assessing how well they matched demographic and electoral data to theoretical district boundaries. The RNC had hoped at one stage that they would have the money to produce their own purpose-built software but that never happened. Much of this attempt to educate state legislators in the required procedure had to be squeezed into the 1989/1990 cycle itself. Earlier plans to have the technology in place before then fell short partly due to budget cuts, but more importantly, to cross-pressures. The RNC computer experts were lobbied extensively and successfully to produce massive voter lists for use in the 1986 and 1988 elections instead.

Finally, legal developments took center stage. The RNC pursued its attempt to have gerrymandering ruled unconstitutional with increasing vigor as the decade progressed. Its first vehicle involved an Indiana case, *Davis v Bandemer*. Unfortunately for the RNC, the details of this case meant they had to support the Indiana Democrats against their GOP affiliate as it was the Democrats who were protesting against a local redistricting plan. The Supreme Court's verdict, handed down by a 6-3 margin in 1986, accepted that partisan political gerrymandering could affront the constitution, but ruled in the specific set of districts in Indiana that it did not. Significantly, the Court's conservatives refused to support the RNC's position, stating that it represented an invitation for judicial activism. The RNC returned to the Court with a California case *Badham v Eu*, involving a blatant Democratic Party gerrymander. This time the Supreme Court, with its conservative faction strengthened, first sent it back to California (on technical grounds), and finally, in 1989, refused to hear it. Ironically, the final evolution of the 1991 Plan Mark Two and the RNC's last shot at nationalizing the districting process was frustrated by the votes of conservative judges appointed by a Republican President on whose behalf the RNC had spent millions of dollars. Even at the judicial level, the dictum that "all politics is local" proved more powerful than the RNC.

### *The Limitations of Presidential Campaigns*

An important element in the institutionalization of the RNC has been the existence of a set of campaign finance regulations that prescribe certain functions exclusively to the national and state political parties. Those functions were: raising additional money for the presidential candidate;

engaging in generic party television advertisement campaigns; running a set of local efforts such as mass mailings and telephone banks on behalf of the entire party's ticket of which the presidential candidate is the head; and accepting soft-money donations that would be illegal at the federal level. This set of functions give the impression that they are, in practice, actually implemented by the National Committee or by state parties. But that impression would be wrong. In all of these instances, the political party acts as a conduit for candidate-centered campaigns and campaign operatives.

In 1984 and 1988, the RNC easily raised that sum of money it was legally permitted to spend directly on the presidential campaign. However, this contribution was, in any meaningful sense, little more than a de facto donation to the campaign. For while the RNC may have raised the money and signed the checks, the strategic decisions about how and where to spend such funds were not made by the RNC, but by the presidential campaign headquarters. Similarly, the RNC may have commissioned generic television advertisements for the benefit of the entire Republican ticket, but those advertisements were actually designed and produced by the Reagan-Bush and Bush-Quayle teams. In 1988, the three RNC advertisements that aired nationally were actually created by Roger Ailes, the same man who was simultaneously producing George Bush's own campaign commercials.

This basic pattern surfaces when an examination of state parties is conducted. Each state party was allowed to create a committee to raise and spend money on various local activities directly in support of the presidential candidate. In reality, while these committees - known as "Victory '84" and "Victory '88"--were affiliated with the state parties, they were not controlled by them. In 1983 and 1987, RNC employees organized these committees, making sure that initial funds were raised in the states deemed most important for presidential purposes. This national substructure was then taken over by appointees of the Reagan and Bush campaigns. For example, the finance wing of the RNC's Victory '88 was taken over by the two individuals who had been directing the state-by-state fund raising for George Bush's primary campaign. At the state level, the Victory '88 organizations were taken over by those who had been running Bush's fund raising in the individual state.

The point here is not that anything illegal or improper occurred. The significance is in how loose the distinction between candidate-goals and party goals is, and how candidate-oriented individuals were placed in authority over the allegedly party-oriented element of the 1988 elections. Even the soft-money effort was in effect nationalized by the Bush camp via the RNC. A national club--Team 100--was established to solicit $100,000 gifts, recommend a state party where such gifts could be given, and ensure that the state party then passed the gift directly to the Victory '88 section. Here the de facto Bush campaign organizers would receive national advice from other de facto

Bush people on how best to spend it. Team 100 was headed by Robert Mosbacher, who had been George Bush's chief fund raiser during the primary period.

All this created a presidential campaign waged on two fronts. The official Bush-Quayle campaign fought the "air war," concentrating most of their federally allocated money on television commercials and staff costs, while the supposedly party campaign (but in effect "Bush-Quayle Two") fought the "ground war" aimed at direct mail, telephone banks, and voter list development. All other elections outside of the presidential arena received little attention despite the theory that this was an organization devoted to supporting the entire Republican ticket.

The very set of incentives that encourage incumbent Presidents to support a vibrant RNC also act to constrain what the RNC can do. The National Committee is as much a hostage to the presidency as it was in previous eras when incumbents chose not to nurture it. The current legal regime has not encouraged presidents to delegate their campaigns to the National Committees. They maintain separate personal organizations which periodically take over the national party to exploit its legal advantages. While this role is better than none at all, it represents a limited one. Indeed, given the manner in which employees of presidential campaigns seized the organized party and its affiliates, it is not unreasonable to speculate that in a different legal climate, such as one with unlimited and unregulated expenditures, the campaigns might well have set up their own fifty state organizations completely outside of the party. The National Committee would be ignored and the state parties marginalized.

## Conclusions

The RNC has clear strengths and limitations as a political institution. Its great strength in the 1980s has been its continuation in the form that Bill Brock created and Ray Bliss foreshadowed. However, many of the historical factors that have always dogged National Committees still have considerable sway. Even when the RNC's maximized its revenues and activities, it found that such restrictions constantly reappeared and were invariably overpowering.

The RNC in the 1980s thus represents all the strengths and weaknesses that come from professionalism in politics and the relationship between that professionalism and political parties. The RNC has unquestionably established itself as a permanent player in the American political system. It has achieved that unique historical breakthrough largely because of an enormous increase in its professionalism and because a constituency has been created that wants a strong National Committee to continue. Nonetheless, the basis for such professionalism and the constituency for it is somewhat fragile,

relying heavily on fund-raising success and the current eccentricities of the legal framework surrounding political parties. This essay has tried to signal that the first of these preconditions is now suspect and the second is a mixed blessing.

In addition, the 1980s have revealed that the National Committee is precisely that--national. The capacity of the RNC to work successfully in the states and localities is not boundless. Despite all the fashionable discussion about the nationalization of American politics, federalism is still alive and well and exercising a massive influence. While the National Committees are national, they are still mostly presidential when their party occupies the White House. The separation of powers is still a major force controlling and constraining national party organizations. Nor should one make judgements about the health of state parties--and especially local parties--on the basis of what the National Committee is doing. Many state parties became financially dependent on their national body in the 1980s. The money and the tools that allowed state parties to become miniature versions of the RNC was a short-term phenomena. Although seen by some observers as a symptom of underlying strength, it could as easily be interpreted as a sign of weakness.

The RNC has also gone further along a campaign-centered rather than a party-centered path. The weakness of the service-agency model is that it does a lot more for individual candidates and campaigns then it does for the political party as an institution. Yet it is precisely its value as a supplement to campaign organizations that gives the RNC a role and a constituency. Again, this can be viewed as source of weakness as much as strength and, like David Menefee-Libey (see chapter 12), one wonders what Ray Bliss would think of this situation.

Today the RNC operates in more areas with less restraint, and with more effectiveness and more success than it ever did in the past. But this state of affairs should not obscure the fact that the historic limitations on the RNC have only been moderately eased rather than eradicated. For scholars, this should be kept in perspective when discussing the role of national party organizations in the debate over party decline. In many ways politics and the RNC have altered over the last thirty years to replace Cotter and Hennessy's (1964) "politics without power" with "power without politics."

## Notes

1. This paper draws heavily on RNC Chairman's Reports during the 1980s, interviews conducted by the author, and the records of the Federal Election Commission. Additional material can be found in Hames (1990).

## References

Cotter, Cornelius P., and Bernard C. Hennessy. 1964. *Politics without Power: The National Party Committees*. New York: Atherton.

Hames, Tim. 1990. "Power Without Politics: The Republican National Committee in American Political Life and the Debate on Party Renewal." Ph.D. diss. Oxford University.

Herrnson, Paul. 1988. *Party Campaigning in the 1980s*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

12

# Embracing Campaign-Centered Politics at the Democratic Headquarters: Charles Manatt and Paul Kirk in the 1980s

*David Menefee-Libey*

The 1980 election was a shattering experience for Democrats. Jimmy Carter, winning only six states and the District of Columbia, became the first President to lose a bid for reelection since Herbert Hoover in 1932. Democrats lost control of the Senate as well for the first time since 1954 as conservative Republicans swept aside a whole roster of senior liberals. Even control of the House of Representatives was threatened when Republicans halved the Democrats' comfortable margin in that body.

In the eight years that followed, the Democrats transformed their party's national headquarters organization. Members of the Democratic National Committee, frightened by predictions of a Republican realignment, demanded change and elected two activist national chairs in succession to carry it out. Charles Manatt began the transition in 1981 through 1984 in a way that resembled Ray Bliss' work at the RNC after the 1964 Johnson landslide (see chapter 2). Like Bliss, Manatt downplayed factional battles--in this case between liberal "issue activists" and more conservative "party regulars"--that had plagued the national party for more than a decade (Shafer 1983). He distanced the organization from its former focus on regulating state and local party organizations and presidential delegate selection. Instead, Manatt worked to build a financial base for the headquarters and applied the growing funds to programs all factions could agree on: coalition-building activities and campaign services to Democratic candidates and state party organizations.

Paul Kirk took over in 1985 and further shifted the headquarters toward fund-raising and providing campaign services, following more closely the Republican model established in the 1970s by Bill Brock (see chapter 3). He weaned the issue activists and regulars almost entirely from using the headquarters to fight their factional battles, and funneled money and services to Democratic candidates and state parties regardless of their ideological leanings. By 1988, Manatt's and Kirk's combined efforts,

carried out with ongoing National Committee support, had dramatically shifted the headquarters' role, enabling the DNC to reenter national electoral politics as a major force in a presidential campaign.

In the context of arguments Paul Herrnson and I present in this volume (see chapter 13) and elsewhere (Herrnson and Menefee-Libey 1990), Manatt and Kirk strongly resemble Bliss and Brock as successful political entrepreneurs (see chapter 10), ushering in organizational change at their party's national headquarters. The circumstances faced by both these sets of party chairs differ in some important ways, but their work on party institutionalization has some striking parallels.

## Seeking a Democratic Response to the Republican Challenge

Demands for change began even before the 1980 returns were counted, and they continued for months afterwards (Clark 1980). Party and issue activists joined Democratic candidates, both winners and losers, in calling for action to "rebuild the party," a single phrase with a multitude of meanings. As the election cycle ended and Democrats began to look to the future, a recurrent theme emerged. Anne Campbell, former head of the Association of State Democratic Chairs, stated the argument bluntly, "The 1980 election was a referendum on national party structure," she said, "We were outspent, out-targeted, and outpolled. The RNC did a superlative job. The Democratic Party should hold its head in shame" (Cook 1981a:137).

Like Campbell, members of the DNC understood and regretted the impact of the National Committee's four-year standoff with President Jimmy Carter, during which the party's national headquarters organization had been virtually drained of resources and programs. After the election, with the President gone, many members wanted to do whatever they could to recover their losses. They worked to spur the development of a revitalized headquarters that could provide resources to their candidates and campaigns, and improve the party's fortunes in 1984.

Late in the fall campaign, members of the National Committee and other Democrats began to look back even farther and to recognize the significance of the different paths they and the Republicans had chosen for their organizations during the previous decade. Before the struggles with Carter, the DNC had spent the 1970s locked in factional battles, building an elaborate system of party governance, and only developing headquarters service capacities when presidential campaigns were well under way. While the Democrats had ignored their external competition, however, the Republicans had followed a different strategy. Led by national chair Bill

Brock, the Republicans had spent the years since Watergate building a network of permanent, well-financed national organizations to lay the foundations for competitive Republican campaigns (see chapters 2 and 3).

Once the 1980 election was over, Jimmy Carter and his appointees withdrew from party affairs and the members of the Democratic National Committee set to work on the dual task of setting their own agenda and electing a chair to carry it out. When the DNC executive committee met in December 1980 to weigh their options, they began by rehearsing factional arguments from the previous decade (Peterson 1980).

Liberal issue activists (many of whom had supported Sen. Edward Kennedy the previous spring) offered several arguments. A few argued that the real problem had been the party's weak presidential ticket and that no major change was necessary. A somewhat larger faction called for another round of party delegate selection reform. After ten years of such struggles and the concurrent decline in the party's electoral fortunes, however, the number of Democrats who viewed reform as a tool for revival was shrinking. Other liberals remained committed to the purpose behind reform, but focused instead on the party's platform. In essence, they wanted to work within party arenas to continue and resolve the factional policy schisms of the 1960s and 1970s, hoping to expand the party's commitment such objectives as racial and economic equality, feminism, and disarmament. Some southern and conservative "regulars" also supported the idea, agreeing that Democrats had to settle these issues if they wanted to offer voters a clear program and remain competitive in national elections (Bonafede 1981a). Each side embraced this approach believing that their own faction would win a fair and open debate and--as a result--win the party's future presidential nominations.

Leery of another round of divisive and probably inconclusive policy debate, some liberals and most regulars on the National Committee embraced a more campaign-centered response to the Republican electoral challenge. They looked at the work done by powerful Republican organizations in 1979 and 1980, and concluded that, by comparison, Democratic Party support for its candidates and campaigns was too scattered and uncoordinated to provide much help in elections. These DNC members echoed the calls of Democratic officials at all levels, led by House Speaker Tip O'Neill, outgoing Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd and former national chairman Robert Strauss, who called for more attention to the "nuts-and-bolts" of winning campaigns and less attention to the political issues that divided Democrats (Bonafede 1981a; Cook 1981a). The Republicans had developed superior political tools, the argument went, and it was time the Democrats developed some tools of their own. Regardless of their factional stripes, all members of the National

Committee could benefit from services to their candidates and campaigns in 1982 and 1984.

Arguments about these two approaches continued for months after the election without resolution, and to some extent they still continue today. But just as the 1980 losses had led some DNC members to reconsider their fixation on party governance, the landslide also brought an important shift in the balance of National Committee support for issue debates and campaign-centered services. Those calling for the development of party services gained support, while some issue activists apparently decided that their coalitions had little to gain by winning ideological control of a resource-poor headquarters.

### Charles Manatt's Dual Strategy: Both Party and Campaign

Several candidates ran for the job of leading the Democratic National Committee and the national party, voicing variations on the themes developed by the Committee's members. But only National Finance Chair Charles Manatt developed a well-organized and well-financed campaign. A former California Democratic Chair and unsuccessful candidate for the national chairmanship in 1972, Manatt had been active in national party affairs since the 1960s and had been a successful party fund raiser since 1976.

Manatt won over DNC members with an agenda for the headquarters organization, drawn largely from his own experience and from ideas already being debated publicly by Democrats. He incorporated both issue-oriented and campaign-centered ideas in building his program for organizational change and offered programs appealing all factions. For liberal issue activists, he proposed using the headquarters offices to draw together leaders from the various Democratic constituencies and working to rebuild electoral support for the party. For the regulars, he proposed to shift headquarters resources toward a broad program of services for Democratic candidates, as well as for state and local parties. For Democratic office-holders, he proposed that the headquarters establish and coordinate conferences and committees that would draw elected officials back into party affairs and engage them in discussions on party governance and public policy.

But perhaps most important, Manatt proposed expanded fund raising--initially from large donors but increasingly from direct mail--to build a stable financial base which would allow the development of a strong and permanent organization capable of doing all these things. In short, he offered proposals that would not only expand the headquarters organization, but also dramatically reorient its division of labor and

resources.[1] With these proposals, he won election to the DNC chair by presenting himself to members less as an innovator than as one who could draw together existing ideas into a coherent and manageable program that would please all factions.

Although he began as DNC chair with a clean organizational slate, Manatt faced one clear limit on his opportunities to bring change in the headquarters organization: time. As the political columnists Germond and Whitcover have noted,

> It has always been an article of political faith that a national party committee and a national party chairman are truly significant only when that party is not in control of the White House. But a corollary of that axiom is that the importance of both the national committee and its chairman diminish as a presidential nomination unfolds, because the candidates then vie, rightly, to eclipse the national chairman as the party's spokesman (Germond and Whitcover 1983:2494).

Manatt recognized that, as the presidential race drew closer, incentives and rewards for his initiatives would become more limited, and attacks from factions within the party would become more likely. He had less than three years to make his mark on the headquarters organization before his hands would be tied by presidential nomination politics.

Manatt's apparent strategy was not to focus on one facet of institutional development and work it through. Rather, he began to work on all four of his proposed initiatives as quickly as possible, perhaps hoping that the appearance of vitality in the organization would please the National Committee and stimulate public donations to support the vitality. He worked from a broad organizational agenda of simultaneous programs in several areas.

Before he could begin in earnest, however, he first had to attend to a persistent issue from the 1970s: delegate selection regulation and convention reform. He appointed North Carolina Governor James Hunt as chair of a new Commission on Presidential Selection, who agreed to work as quickly as possible to produce a consensus report. Yet, after three months of regional field hearings and relatively peaceful meetings, they produced a report recommending substantial changes in the presidential nomination process, shortening the primary season and allotting one-seventh of the next convention's seats to members of Congress as "superdelegates." The most striking shift, however, was the recommendation that DNC members themselves return to their former status as automatic delegates to presidential nominating conventions. The move reversed one of the most divisive decisions of the McGovern-Fraser reforms and gave DNC members a renewed opportunity to play a central role in presidential campaign coalition building. Not surprisingly, the DNC

praised Manatt's and Hunt's work and voted to accept the commission's recommendations without revision.[2]

With these matters acted upon, Manatt set to work. His first, and most striking, organizational initiative was to carry out his promises to liberal issue activists by turning the party headquarters itself into an arena for factional coalition building. Within his first year as Chair, Manatt provided staff support to the three constituency-based DNC Vice Chairs, who represented blacks, hispanics, and women. He also opened similar "caucus offices" for other constituency groups--gays and lesbians, business professionals, Asian-Americans, and liberals--whose leaders he wanted to draw into the party's presidential coalition. He built this caucus structure with the expectation that these constituency group leaders could influence members of their groups and provide organizational and voter support for Democratic candidates on Election Day. And, by the spring of 1984, the caucus offices were a major fixture of the headquarters staff organization, run by leaders of each of the groups, and doing outreach too, providing services for, and representing the interests of their constituencies.

Manatt had also made promises to party regulars, and he began to deliver on them by shifting headquarters resources toward a broad program of services for Democratic candidates as well as for state and local parties. Despite the fact that the 1980 landslide dampened contributions in early 1981, he started several programs early in the 1981-82 election cycle. For candidates, he began by providing financial assistance and strategic advice in five special House elections held in mid-1981. Democrats won three of the five, dampening talk of a sweeping national Republican realignment (Bonafede 1981c). The ongoing services and contributions to Congressional candidates continued throughout Manatt's chairmanship, but they remained limited to little more than $100,000 in each of the 1982 and 1984 election cycles.

In addition to direct campaign assistance, the headquarters sponsored the founding of a Democratic National Training Academy in Des Moines, Iowa, in September 1981. The Academy's staff traveled over the next three years to sessions across the country, training more than 5,000 Democratic candidates and campaign workers in the methods and skills of modern elections. They worked with campaign coalitions at all levels, from Congress to state legislatures (Bryant 1985; *The Washington Post* 1981b).

Manatt also initiated a program of services to state and local Democratic parties in 1982. Directed by DNC staff member Brian Lunde, "The State Party Works!" program initially focused on New Mexico as a laboratory for state party organizational development with national party assistance. Building on the Republicans' successful model of gathering, integrating and interpreting voting, survey, and other poll data into a statewide financial appeal and campaign strategy, the New Mexico program

helped Democrats build a strong base of coordinated resources and support for campaigns across the state. Despite New Mexico's landslide vote for Reagan in 1980, the Democrats won a U.S. Senate seat (Jeff Bingaman), the governorship (Toney Anaya), and majorities in both houses of the state legislature in 1982. After this successful pilot effort, Lunde helped expand the program to reach more than 20 state parties in 1984. Unfortunately, he was only able to obtain about one million dollars for the project, which amounted to a token effort averaging $50,000 per state (Bryant 1985).

Manatt also began some longer-term projects to strengthen the headquarters' service capabilities. He convinced the DNC to join the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in sponsoring the development of a multi-million dollar media center. The center, completed in January 1984, provides television and radio facilities for the campaigns of Democratic candidates and office-holders at below-market costs (Bonafede 1984b). The most important symbolic initiative of the period, however, was the construction of a $7 million building on Capitol Hill to house the DNC headquarters staff and the Senatorial and Congressional campaign committees under one roof (Bryant 1985; see also Bonafede 1983). When the three organizations moved in after the 1984 election, at the end of Manatt's tenure, they served notice that they had become permanent participants in national campaign politics.

Keeping his promises to Democratic office-holders, Manatt moved to establish and coordinate conferences and committees that would draw elected officials back into party affairs, and engage them in discussions on elections and public policy. For example, he set up a Democratic Strategy Council of national, state and local office-holders that would meet and talk about policy issues as well as election strategies and local events (*The Washington Post* 1981a). Modeled on the earlier out-party Democratic Advisory Council (1956-1960) and Democratic Policy Council (1969-1976), the commission served as an arena for party leaders to develop a unified party voice on national policy issues. But unlike its predecessors, the Strategy Council was composed entirely of elected officials. As the headquarters' executive director Eugene Eidenberg described it, "the thought was that these people have to run for office every few years and their views and policies and personal styles embody what the Democratic Party stands for. The accumulated acts and positions of these standard-bearers are the real content of the party" (Bonafede 1981b). After a fashion, Manatt and Eidenberg seemed to be working to gather together a kind of Democratic "party-in-government" that could offer a coherent response to the resurgent Republicans.

They also used this approach to control a potentially more divisive event left over from the 1970s reform era. The "midterm conference" was

an innovation liberal issue activists had developed in the early 1970s as a means of gaining influence in the party prior to presidential campaigns. But while Carter's White House had downplayed the 1978 conference by rescheduling it after the midterm election, Manatt moved the 1982 conference up to June, gave National Committee members and elected officials clear control, and converted it into a campaign kick-off event. With this increased participation of the party-in-government, the Philadelphia conference focused on the "nuts-and-bolts" of winning elections, with campaign-training and issue workshops, strategy sessions for Congressional campaigns, and showcase speeches for Democratic presidential candidates (cf. Drew 1982:77-94; Bonafede 1981b:1098-1100).

All of these initiatives cost money, and fund raising drew Manatt's closest attention. He established an array of special "councils" that large donors could join in exchange for regular contact with elected party leaders: the traditional National Finance Council ($5,000 per year), the Business Council ($10,000 for individuals, $15,000 for PACs), the Labor Council (no set fee), the Chief Executives' Council ($5,000 for meetings with Democratic Governors), and so on.[3]

Recognizing the unpredictability and political liabilities that large-donor fund raising had created for the Democrats in the past, Manatt also followed the Republicans' lead and initiated a direct-mail program to build a predictable small-donor base for the organization. Direct mail is an expensive enterprise to begin, however, and the Democrats had neither the skills nor the computer equipment to run a major operation in-house. So, rather than build one slowly, Manatt took a monumental risk and borrowed $2.4 million dollars to start a large-scale operation quickly. He hired the direct mail consulting firm of Craver Matthews Smith & Co., had them send out a million fund-raising letters in August 1981, and instructed them to reinvest half of the earnings from the operation back into further mailings. Such continuous "prospecting" is expensive, but because the rate of return on individual direct mailings is small, repetition is necessary to develop a large and consistent list of donors (Kayden 1985:43-44; Bonafede 1981c:1586).[4]

Manatt's direct mail gamble paid off. In 1981, the DNC mail program began with an active list of about 65,000 donors (compared with the 300,000 name list they had compiled in 1972 and the two million names the Republicans had in 1980). At that time, it provided about 20 percent of the headquarters' income. With the money from the Craver Matthews Smith mailings, the start-up loan was repaid within two years, and by the end of 1984 the Democratic list had grown to almost 600,000 names. This expanded roster of small donors brought in more than $500,000 a month, nearly half of DNC income.

In addition to direct mail, Manatt initiated a number of other fund-raising programs, with varying degrees of success. Most notably, his attempt to revive the annual Democratic telethon over the 1982 Memorial Day weekend was a disaster, and the headquarters-sponsored speaking tour of Democratic presidential candidates in late 1983 never came together (See Bonafede 1984a).

Manatt made other mistakes as chair. Most arose because he tried to move too quickly, to push the organization in too many directions at once. When his fund-raising efforts failed to reach their targets, he was forced to cut back the headquarters' programs at awkward moments (cf. for example, Peterson 1982). The Training Academy, symbolically placed in Des Moines as a signal that the party headquarters was reaching out beyond Washington, was eventually closed and run sporadically out of the headquarters itself (Grant 1984). And the ambitious assistance program for state and local party organizations dwindled by early 1984 to little more than a series of strategy sessions and a cooperative voter registration drive with other political groups.

Nevertheless, the Democratic National Committee ratified Manatt's initiatives at every opportunity. He had worked to avoid the political polarization that had frequently plagued the National Committee in the 1970s, instead offering noncontroversial campaign-centered services. After four years under Carter, when the National Committee had suffered through a tense and occasionally confrontational relationship with the headquarters organization, Manatt's low-key, collaborative style was welcome. By the time presidential nomination politics began to heat up in late 1983, Manatt presided over an organization that bore little resemblance to the one he had taken over in January 1981, one which ran as a valuable adjunct to the Mondale-Ferraro organization through the general election.

The dominant role of the Mondale-Ferraro organization had one ironic benefit for Manatt's headquarters. As Ronald Reagan rolled to a landslide reelection in 1984, few Democrats blamed the DNC or the headquarters for the loss. The only aspect of the campaign with serious implications for the organization was the "special interest" charge raised against Mondale first by Gary Hart in the primaries and then by Reagan in the general election. In essence, they charged that Mondale's traditional style of organizing his Democratic campaign coalition around the leaders of interest and constituency groups tainted the party, and guaranteed that Mondale could not govern fairly or impartially.[5] When the landslide was over, some members of the Democratic National Committee argued that Manatt's constituency projects at the headquarters were vulnerable to the same charge. But the issue was never fully debated: Manatt announced his intentions to step down in January.

Charles Manatt did not simply ride off into the sunset, however. Shortly after leaving the chair in early 1985 he joined the presidential campaign of Sen. Gary Hart, the presumptive front-runner for the party's nomination in 1988. Before Hart's campaign collapsed in scandal in 1987, Manatt the successful entrepreneur appeared to have been rewarded with status as a close political advisor to the next Democratic president.

### Paul Kirk: Embracing Campaign-Centered Politics

Despite their efforts since 1981, Democrats in late 1984 faced conditions very similar to those in the aftermath of the 1980 election. The party's presidential ticket had been humiliated nationwide, and the Republicans retained control of the Senate. Many Democratic organizations and candidates had been out-spent and out-organized by their Republican opponents, and Democratic leaders feared for the future. There was no Democratic president, and the party's national chair was stepping down. The barrage of demands on the members of the National Committee was similar--just as broad, just as contradictory, but perhaps more urgent--and the members proved just as interested in changing the headquarters in response. Democrats wanted more money, more services, clearer policy positions, different delegate selection procedures, and more voter outreach. But most of all, they wanted to win again, and they thought the headquarters organization could play a role in victory. As they had in 1980, the members of the National Committee again used the election of its chair as a means to set the future course of the headquarters organization.

The winner this time was Paul Kirk, the sitting DNC Treasurer and former Kennedy presidential campaign aide from 1980, who had campaigned with variations on the themes Manatt had embraced four years before (Gettinger 1985; Brownson 1985a). He pledged to continue Manatt's strategy by creating organized opportunities for party and coalition building, and to avoid factional divisions over changes in party rules. He promised to spend most of his energies, however, on campaign-centered projects, developing technologically advanced and politically useful services to Democratic candidates and organizations at the state and local level in preparation for the 1988 presidential election.[6] To accomplish this, he promised to continue strengthening the organization's financial base through large donors and direct mail.

Recognizing the limited window of opportunity for initiating changes before presidential election politics again overshadowed the party organizations, he worked quickly. Programmatically, most of Kirk's early work went to paring down the headquarters' commitment to party rule-

making and internal coalition-building. He began by quickly dispatching work in two of the traditionally conflictual DNC-coordinated arenas created by and for liberal issue activists. The Fairness Commission, yet another delegate selection reform exercise mandated by the 1984 convention, worked quietly and recommended minimal change in the presidential nomination process set up by the Hunt Commission in 1982 (Brownson 1985a and 1985b; Cook 1985). The Democratic Policy Commission, a successor to Manatt's Strategy Council, held public hearings in an effort to reconnect the party leadership with grassroots problems and "mainstream" ideas on domestic and foreign policy. The commission released its centrist report early in the summer of 1986 and the most stinging criticism it drew was for its dullness (DNC 1986).[7]

In contrast to such continuity, Kirk took two actions in 1985 that signaled dramatically his intentions to end Manatt's institutionalized generosity to the party's liberal issue activists. Within weeks after taking office, Kirk first eliminated the headquarters support Manatt had provided for "caucus" offices representing particular constituency groups: blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, gays and lesbians, women, and business professionals. He explained the move as a response to the "special interest" label Reagan had slapped on the party, saying

> Our party has traditionally mirrored the diversity of America. But lately we seem to have turned our diversity from a strength into a weakness. We have allowed the parts to grow bigger than the whole. . . . The Democratic Party cannot be perceived as a retail broker of programs and patronage for each caucus and constituency (Bonafede 1988:441).

He would use the headquarters to support Democratic candidates and campaigns, he said, but he would not let the headquarters be used as a platform for constituency leaders to advance the interests and cohesion of their own groups. Eliminating the offices backfired briefly, bringing political demands for reversal from such prominent Democrats as Jesse Jackson and AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland. But the DNC's executive committee endorsed the action at its May meeting (DNC 1985b).

Kirk's second dramatic move to scale back headquarters support for liberal activism was his decision to cancel the 1986 midterm convention, and to urge that the DNC permanently discard such conventions and use the resources instead for campaigns. He again met vocal resistance from activist members who insisted that the conferences were essential to party democracy, but the Committee endorsed his arguments and his decision (DNC 1985c; for press coverage see Bragdon 1985).

While scaling back organizational support for activism, Paul Kirk did not abandon it completely. Instead, he worked to preempt factionalism by establishing himself as a national spokesman for a unified Democratic

party. The most visible example was his bitter criticism of the RNC's planned program of challenging Democratic voters in predominantly black precincts in Louisiana, Indiana and Missouri in 1986. The Republicans ultimately withdrew the program and settled a DNC-sponsored lawsuit, and Kirk made valuable points for his leadership and the DNC in the dispute (Dionne 1986; Tolchin 1986). Early in the contest for the 1988 presidential nomination, Kirk followed the example of earlier chair Larry O'Brien in proposing a "code of conduct" for the campaign aiming "to discourage negative, polarizing and party-bashing campaigns and to promote a civil, constructive and positive debate on policy alternatives" (Quoted in Broder 1986b). He simultaneously collaborated with RNC chair Frank Fahrenkopf to set up jointly-sponsored presidential debates, bumping the non-partisan League of Women Voters from the scene (Dickenson 1987). As the 1988 nominating convention drew near, he urged the contending candidates to unite behind the front-running candidate and a vague, general platform (Barnes 1988; Reid 1988).

Nevertheless, Kirk's intentions were clear: shift the headquarters away from advancing the Democratic *Party* as the central focus of factional electoral politics, and instead use the party headquarters to support Democratic candidates and support a more *campaign*-centered politics, enabling each candidate and campaign organization to proceed however it liked. With increased revenues and the resources freed up by his earlier moves, Kirk turned his attention to such services. Aside from a small effort to expand the Democratic Training School in collaboration with the Capitol Hill campaign committees, he worked to shift the focus of virtually all headquarters service activities toward the state-level parties, extending and reworking Manatt's State Party Works program and focusing on the traditional interests of National Committee members themselves in state politics.

He began by setting up a system of regional desks, and gave each of four regional field coordinators responsibility for integrating services to a specific set of states. He created an Office of Party Outreach to work directly with Democratic elected officials in the state houses, state legislatures, and local governments (*National Journal* 1985). And early in 1986 he put national field workers (the "Democratic Party Election Force") to work with the parties in sixteen targeted states with critical gubernatorial or state legislative elections. The Force, initially budgeted at $1.2 million, worked to build and support state party staff organization work in developing fund-raising and campaign-service capacities (DNC 1986).[8] By the summer of 1988, now under the name "Campaign '88," the multi-million dollar operation was working on fund-raising, voter-identification, and mobilization programs in the 35 most competitive states (*Campaign Hotline* 1988; Edsall 1988).

Kirk also launched Project 500, a related program intended to help state Democratic parties win 500 more legislative seats in swing states before reapportionment that would come after the 1990 census, an issue of major concern to many state delegations in the DNC (*National Journal* 1986; Gottlieb 1986). In combination with the Election Force and an extensive round of DNC-sponsored survey research in the states, Project 500 helped the states develop computerized voter files for voter registration and turnout programs. It also gave the state parties access to the headquarters' new computer facilities, and let them tap into the data base that the headquarters direct-mail program had developed after bringing the program in-house in 1985 (Brownson 1986a; on voter registration see Brownson 1986b).

To fund these initiatives, he began by bolstering the party's large-donor programs, the National Finance Council and the Democratic Business Council (*National Journal* 1985; Clark 1985). These programs stirred up controversy, especially when the headquarters raised large amounts of "soft money," marginally legal donations directed toward "party building." The Republicans had mastered such fund raising in the late 1970s and the Democrats' struggle to catch up was gathering press attention (Edsall 1986b).[9] Ultimately, the Democrats' large-donor efforts would pay off in grand fashion, raising $20 million in "soft" money and nearly the same amount in "hard" dollars for DNC-supported state field operations for the Dukakis-Bentsen campaign in 1988 (Matlack 1988a and 1988b).

Kirk's second important financial initiative was to bring the headquarters' direct-mail operation in-house in September of 1985, thus eliminating the dependency and expense of using a private contractor. He saw an increasing reliance on direct-mail receipts as the only way to wean the expanding headquarters from the continuing political liabilities of large donations and "soft money," and he directed substantial resources to the effort. Direct-mail receipts dropped sharply after the 1984 landslide, as they had in 1981 (Edsall 1986a). But by early 1986, the direct-mail operation brought in $600,000 a month, or 75 percent of the organization's operating revenues (Bonafede 1986). Even so, the expanding direct-mail receipts paled in comparison with the headquarters' large donor fund-raising success in 1988.

By the end of the 1985-1986 election cycle, Kirk had not only to put his own stamp on the headquarters organization, but he had also helped people forget the divisiveness of his decisions to close the caucus offices and end the midterm conference. Those who disliked his treatment of various factions within the party were nevertheless more than happy to accept the money and services he generated. The cycle ended with Kirk sharing credit for the successful 1986 campaign, in which the Democrats

regained control of the U.S. Senate and held their ground in the state capitals.

Over the next two years, Kirk's star continued to rise. His consensual leadership of the national committee enabled him to serve as an honest broker between Gov. Michael Dukakis and Rev. Jesse Jackson in the tense weeks leading up to the 1988 Democratic National Convention. But more importantly, his efforts resulted in the DNC making a major financial and organizational contribution to the 1988 general election campaign, the first time in twenty years that Democrats came close to matching Republicans organizationally and financially (Matlack 1988a and 1988b).

Early in the summer of 1988, when it became clear that Dukakis would win the Democratic Presidential nomination, Kirk began to develop ties with the Dukakis campaign organization. At the July convention, the DNC and Dukakis fund-raising and campaign organization were merged. The fund-raising operation, run by future DNC Treasurer Robert Farmer, would be an astonishing success, raising $50 million for the Dukakis-Bentsen campaign and funding a major expansion of the "Campaign '88" structure Kirk had already established. This private money, combined with the $46 million contributed by public financing, led former DNC Treasurer Peter G. Kelley to remark "Money is not going to be an issue this time. The Democratic ticket is going to be able to match the Republicans bullet for bullet" (Barnes and Cohen 1983). The DNC helped Michael Dukakis and Lloyd Bentsen stage one of the best-organized and best-financed presidential campaigns in American history.

When Dukakis lost the 1988 general election, the contrast with 1980 was striking. Everyone blamed the nominee himself for the loss; nobody pointed to money or organizational problems to explain the outcome. Paul Kirk, and later the joint "Campaign '88," had built a campaign-centered headquarters organization that provided sufficient resources to win. The Democratic ticket had lost the election on the merits, and when the election ended, the DNC headquarters organization remained strong and in the black. National Committee members and party leaders in general almost unanimously requested that Kirk remain in the chair after November 1988 (Madigan 1988). When he declined their invitation and stepped down, he was immediately promoted by some as a candidate to succeed Dukakis as governor of Massachusetts.

## Conclusion: The Transition To Campaign-Centered Politics

In some ways, the development of the Democratic Party's national headquarters from 1981 through 1988 can be viewed as a roughly continuous process. Democrats, frightened at the specter of realignment

raised by the 1980 and 1984 landslides, wanted a reorientation of their national headquarters organization and its programs away from divisive factional policy brokering and regulation, and toward services that could benefit all factions. First Charles Manatt, then Paul Kirk stepped forward with entrepreneurial programs to bring change about. The changes they ushered in not only institutionalized the party, significantly increased the size and capacities of its headquarters, but also completely reoriented its approach to electoral politics.

Throughout the 1970s the headquarters had been the subject of factional battles within the party, with liberal issue activists winning broad reform and regulations, and regulars demanding autonomy and support for candidates and state party organizations. The organization's program careened wildly among party governance and reform, service modernization, presidential nomination fights, and disputes between constituency leaders. In the 1980s, Charles Manatt worked to moderate these swings by downplaying reform, giving organizational patronage to the issue activists, then creating arenas and forums for elected party officials and increasing these officials' influence over the headquarters organization. Paul Kirk went even further, eliminating patronage and stressing campaign services, and built a party headquarters similar to the Republican National Committee developed by Bill Brock in the 1970s.

Some Democrats resisted these changes, but ultimately Manatt's and Kirk's approach won out. In effect, Democrats both within and outside government began to agree in the mid-1980s that they wanted to reconcile factional divisions--or at least set them aside--for the sake of the party's electoral fortunes. Manatt's and Kirk's standard argument for such reconciliation was that Democratic factions differed more with Republicans than with each other, and that Republicans would retain the presidency as long as Democratic party elites failed to recognize this fact.

But Manatt and Kirk argued further that the best alternative to such intraparty factional warfare was to embrace the campaign-centered politics of money and services for Democratic candidates and campaigns. These newly available DNC resources had no factional content; they enabled Democratic candidates and state parties to campaign however they liked, with whatever policy positions they liked. They could focus on the party or issues or individual candidates, depending on whatever would work with voters in a given election. This was clearly not the only alternative available. The Republican National Committee under Ronald Reagan proved, after all, that party organizations can be partisan, ideological, and successful at the same time. But it was an easy alternative to embrace for Democrats weary of interminable factional battles and frightened by the growing affluence of their partisan opponents.

At the core of this campaign-centered program, however, is a kind of agnosticism about the value of party as a mediating institution in electoral politics, perhaps driven by the growing indifference of voters toward parties in the 1970s and 1980s (see chapter 17). We might be troubled by the Democratic headquarters' move to embrace such campaign-centered politics, but the program itself was viewed as Manatt's and Kirk's great success, and the only redeeming feature of the Democrats' 1984 and 1988 campaigns. Now that both major parties have embraced such politics, it is undoubtedly the way of the future in American elections. We can only wonder what a committed partisan like Ray Bliss would think.

## Notes

1. Manatt described his agenda in his maiden speech as chair. See transcripts from the meeting of the Democratic National Committee, February 27, 1981, Washington, DC. I also draw on press coverage and interviews with William Sweeney in December 1987 and DNC Press Secretary Terry Michael in March 1987, both in Washington, DC.
2. On the development of the Commission's proposals, see Cook 1981b and Malbin 1982a. For a summary of the Commission's report, see Malbin 1982b. On the DNC's acceptance, see *National Journal* 1982.
3. The councils are catalogued in the program book for the 1984 Democratic National Convention, (Democratic National Committee 1984: 63-66.).
4. Republicans and independent groups like those of Richard Viguerie and Terry Dolan had reinvested far larger proportions of their income in building their huge lists in the 1970s (Cohen 1981).
5. For an interesting commentary on this charge, see Edsall and Edsall 1991.
6. For detail, see Kirk's speeches to the DNC (Democratic National Committee 1985a.).
7. For commentaries, see Margolis 1986; *The Washington Post National Weekly* 1986; and Toner 1986.
8. For comment, see Broder 1986a.
9. For a broader discussion of soft money, see Jackson 1988.

## References

Barnes James A. 1988. "The Brokering Game." *National Journal*. March 19.

Barnes, James A. and Richard E. Cohen. 1983. "Unity-Will it Last?" *National Journal*. July 30:1960ff.

Bonafede, Dom. 1981a. "For the Democratic Party, It's a Time for Rebuilding and Seeking New Ideas." *National Journal*. February 21:317-320.

_____. 1981b. "Democrats Hope Their Midterm Meeting Will Send a Message of Party Unity." *National Journal*. July 19:1098-1100.

_____. 1981c. "Can the DNC Adjust to Being a Minority? Can the RNC Reverse 50 Years of History?" *National Journal*. September 5:1586.

_____. 1983. "Democratic Party Takes Some Strides Down the Long Comeback Trail." *National Journal*. October 8:2053-2055.

_____. 1984a. "A Tale of Two Parties." *National Journal*. January 24:124.

_____. 1984b. "Strides in Technology Are Changing the Face of Political Campaigning." *National Journal*. April 7:660.

_____. 1986. "Kirk at the DNC's Helm." *National Journal*. March 22:707.

_____. 1988. "Saying 'No.'" *National Journal*. February 23:441.

Bragdon, Peter. 1985. "DNC Approves Kirk's Plans to Alter Democrats' Image." *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. June 29:1287.

Broder, David. 1986a. "Democrat Kirk Deploys His 'Force.'" *The Chicago Tribune*. April 4:23.

_____. 1986b. "Democratic Campaign Pledged." *The Washington Post*, November 24:A10.

Brownson, Ronald. 1985a. "DNC Weighs 'Deregulating' Nomination Rules." *National Journal*. July 6:1555, 1574.

_____. 1985b. "Sanford Entry Tightens DNC Chairman Race." *National Journal*. January 19:147, 172.

_____. 1986a. "Party Workers in the Computer Age." *National Journal*. August 16:2002-2003.

_____. 1986b. "What if Nobody Votes?" *National Journal*. November 1:2617.

Bryant, Diane, ed. 1985. *The Democratic National Committee, 1981-1985: Building for the Future*. Washington, DC: Democratic National Committee.

*Campaign Hotline*. 1988. "The Force Be With You." April 25:12, 25, 155.

Clark, Timothy B. 1980. "The RNC Prospers, the DNC Struggles As They Face the 1980 Elections." *National Journal*. September 27.

_____. 1985. "Democratic Business Council's Top Dog Has One Credo: Money." *National Journal*. March 9:545.

Cohen, Richard E. 1981. "Democrats Take a Leaf from GOP Book With Early Campaign Start." *National Journal*. May 23:923-925.

Cook, Rhodes. 1981a. "Chorus of Democratic Voices Urges New Policies, Methods." *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. January 17.

_____. 1981b. "New Democratic Rules Panel: A Careful Approach to Change." *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. December 26:2563-2567.

_____. 1985. "Most Democrats Cool to Redoing Party Rules." *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. August 24:1687-1689.

Democratic National Committee. 1984. *Democrats: Building America's Future*. Washington, DC: The Democratic National Committee.

Democratic National Committee. 1985a. Transcripts of the Democratic National Committee meeting, January 31, in Washington.

_____. 1985b. Transcripts of Executive Committee Meeting, May 17, Washington, DC.

_____. 1985c. June 25, Washington DC.

_____. 1986. "Kirk Announces $1.2 Million 'Democratic Party Election Force.'" Press release, March 6.

Dickenson, James R. 1987. "2 Parties Say They'll Sponsor Presidential Debates." *The Washington Post*. February 19:A4.

Dionne, E.J. 1986. "Democrats Sue Republicans on Plan to Challenge Voters." *The New York Times* (eastern edition). October 8:A8.

Drew, Elizabeth. 1982. "A Reporter at Large: The Democratic Party [Conference in Philadelphia.]" *The New Yorker*. July 19:77-94.

Edsall, Thomas B. 1986a. "Maybe the Democrats Should Use a Tin Cup." *The Washington Post National Weekly*. March 3:11.

_____. 1986b. "A Funny Thing Happened to the Party of the Working Class." *The Washington Post National Weekly*. August 25:13.

_____. 1988. "Democrats Adopt GOP 'Ground War' Tactics," *The Washington Post*. July 25:A1.

Edsall, Thomas B. and Edsall, Mary D. 1991. *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights and Taxes on American Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Germond, Jack W. and Jules Whitcover. 1983. "Inside Politics." *National Journal*. November 26:2494.

Gettinger, Stephen. 1985. "Democrats Seek a Chairman To Help Redefine the Party." *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. January 26:155-156.

Gottlieb, Paul. 1986. "Democratic 'Summer Camp' for Pols." *National Journal*. July 26:1844.

Grant, Diane. 1984. "Parties' Schools for Politicians Grooming Troops for Election." *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. May 5:1036-1037.

Herrnson, Paul S. and Menefee-Libey, David J. 1990. "The Dynamics of Party Organizational Development." *Midsouth Journal of Political Science* 11:3-30.

Jackson, Brooks. 1988. *Honest Graft: Big Money and the American Political Process*. New York: Knopf.

Kayden, Xandra. 1985. "The New Professionalism of the Oldest Party." *Public Opinion*. June/July:43-44.

Madigan, Charles M. 1988. "Democrats Don't Want Their Leader to Go." *The Chicago Tribune*. November 21:4.

Malbin, Michael J. 1982a. "Democratic Rule Makers Want to Bring Party Leaders Back to the Conventions." *National Journal*. January 2:24-28.

_____. 1982b. "The Democratic Party's Rules Changes." *National Journal*. January 23:139, 165.

Margolis, Jon. 1986. "Democrats Start to Close Yawning Gap Against GOP." *The Chicago Tribune*. June 6:6.

Matlack, Carol. 1988a. "Democrats Love the Money Man." Convention Special, *National Journal*. July 23:1913,1928.

_____. 1988b. "Backdoor Spending." *National Journal*. October 8:2516ff.

*National Journal*. 1982. "New Democratic Rules Usher in 550 Uncommitted Delegates." April 3:600.

_____. 1985. "The Party Circuit." March 2:497.

_____. 1986. "Mapping the Future." March 8:541.

Peterson, Bill. 1980. "Finger-Pointing Democrats Vent Frustrations at Meeting." *The Washington Post*. December 10:A2.

_____. 1982. "Cash Short Dems Cutting Back Staff, Travel." *The Washington Post*. July 23:A2.

Reid, T.R. 1988. "Democrats' Platform is Short, Subtle." *The Washington Post*. June 28:A4.

Sawyer, Kathy. 1980. "Byrd Faults Party Panel on Handling of Election." *The Washington Post*. November 16.

Shafer, Byron. 1983. *Quiet Revolution: The Struggle for the Democratic Party and the Shaping of Post-Reform Politics*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Tolchin, Martin. 1986. "GOP Agrees to End a Voter Check Program." *The New York Times* (eastern edition). October 21:B20.

Toner, Robin. 1986. "Democrats Bring Out New Model." *The New York Times* (eastern edition). September24:A24.

*The Washington Post*. 1981a. "Dem National Chairman Manatt Plans Council of Top Party Figures." April22:A1.

_____. 1981b. "Democratic Party Sponsors First National Training Academy." September 28:19.

*The Washington Post National Weekly*. 1986. "No Fire in the Democrats." (editorial) July 14:26.

13

# Party Leadership and Party Organizational Change

*Paul S. Herrnson*

The Democratic and Republican National Committees (DNC and RNC) have changed tremendously since the 1960s.[1] Prior to their transformation in the 1970s and early 1980s (Herrnson 1988,1990), they were commonly described as weak, powerless, and capable of providing only limited coordination of state and local party activities (Cotter and Hennessey 1964). Today, the national committees are larger, better-financed, more adept at campaigning, and more heavily involved in party building than ever. The DNC has also become an important regulator of state and local party activities, especially those concerned with the presidential selection process. Both committees are now highly effective political campaigners and governors of party affairs.

This chapter discusses the changes experienced by the national committees in recent times. The argument I develop is that party leaders played a critical role in shaping the changes that occurred in the national committees during key junctures in their histories. Party leaders' abilities to recognize opportunities for change, coalition-building skills, and personal objectives were critical in determining the types of innovations introduced and the length of time that their innovations endured. Events and conditions in the larger political environment were also important because they created pressure for change, but change occurred only because party leaders worked to make it happen.

## The Dynamics of Party Organizational Development

Party organizational change occurs after developments in the political environment, such as the introduction of new cross-cutting issues, the erosion of electoral coalitions, and the introduction of new approaches to campaigning, make it difficult for a party to contain factional conflicts, assist candidates with campaigning, or mobilize voters (Shafer 1983; Schlesinger 1985). Crisis, such as a major electoral defeat or a rift among a party's

factions, provides a window of opportunity for change. Party leaders must build support for change and implement it.

Party organizations, however, are not predisposed toward change. In fact, their organizational dynamics are more conducive to resisting change than promoting it. The dominant coalition of party elites--including party officers, members, and staff--typically resists efforts to change because party leaders fail to recognize the full extent of the environmental transformations that have taken place or believe that methods used in the past will continue to work in the future. Change also may be resisted to prevent the possibility of a redistribution of power within the party. Changes in nominating rules or in the criteria used to distribute party money to candidates, for example, almost always favor one faction or group of party leaders over another, even though this may not be the intent behind the proposed change. Opposition to change also may flow from concerns about the possibility of unintended consequences. Some party leaders prefer the known shortcomings of a party organization to the unpredictable problems that could arise after change is implemented.

Crisis provides an opportunity for change because it upsets the balance of power between those providing diffuse support for the party organization and those wishing to change it. Those who favor change argue that previous ways of conducting party affairs have failed and that innovative approaches are needed to solve the party's immediate problems (Panebianco 1988). The type of change that occurs depends on the nature of the crisis, the kinds of solutions proposed by party leaders, and the internal politics of the party organization itself, including the motivations of its leaders.

If the crisis that occurs is an intra-party factional conflict connected with a narrow electoral defeat, then pressure will mount to alter the relationship among the competing factions (Ranney 1975; Shafer 1983; Baer and Bositis 1988). Party leaders will develop proposals regarding the participation and representation of different constituencies, including those formerly excluded from party decision making. If party leaders are able to build a coalition in support of these proposals, then a new balance of power among party factions will develop.

On the other hand, if the crisis is a landslide defeat resulting from the party's campaign activities becoming outmoded, then pressure will mount to improve the capacity of the party to wage successful campaigns. Party leaders will develop proposals to enhance the party's organizational apparatus, campaign technology, and finances. If political leaders are able to build a coalition in support of these proposals, then a new party infrastructure will develop.

Whether the change introduced is short-lived or more enduring depends largely on the nature of the proposals advanced by party leaders. Changes

that are formal in nature and involve altering a party's constitution, by-laws, or organizational structure are more likely to persist than those which merely help members of the new dominant coalition amass power or execute existing party programs. Changes that alter relations between a party committee and outside organizations, such as other party committees, caucuses, or interest groups, are also likely to last longer than changes that deal solely with internal politics or operations. Finally, party leaders who have aspirations for higher office are more likely to pursue measures that will have a more permanent impact on their party.

## Types of Party Organizational Change

The changes that have taken place at the DNC and RNC can be grouped into five categories: decline, reform, reorientation, renewal, and reinforcement.[2] The reasons for party decline have been briefly discussed here and more thoroughly covered elsewhere (see Broder 1971; Crotty 1984). It is sufficient to say that party organizational decline is largely the result of entropy in the face of broad environmental changes, including alterations in the public agenda, demographic change, and the emergence of political consultants, political action committees (PACs), and other rivals for electoral influence.

Party reform and reorientation are primarily concerned with the relationships among the party's factions. Party reform results in more enduring changes because it involves the introduction of formal alterations in a party's mission or rules, and it has the support of party leaders outside of the organization itself. Party reorientation, on the other hand, results in more short-lived changes because party leaders seek to advance their faction's influence without changing the party's existing mission or rules.[3] Whether a party committee experiences reform or reorientation depends largely on whether party leaders choose to institute formal changes in the mission or rules.

Party renewal and reinforcement are primarily concerned with the party's organizational capacity, including fund-raising, party-building, and election programs. Party renewal results in more enduring changes because it involves a redefinition of the committee's mission and a restructuring of its election machinery. Party reinforcement, on the other hand, results in more short-lived changes because party leaders seek to expand existing programs and improve the operation of the existing structure. Whether a party committee experiences renewal or reinforcement depends largely on whether party leaders choose to institute formal changes in the committee's mission or structure.

## Four Cases of National Committee Changes

Four cases of party organizational change that have taken place since the 1960s will be analyzed in terms of the framework developed above: the reform that occurred at the DNC after the 1968 election, the reorientation that took place at the RNC between 1960 and 1964, the renewal that was implemented at the RNC after the 1974 election, and the reinforcement that took place at the RNC following the 1964 election. Although the framework is only applied to the national party committees, it is general enough to explain other cases of party development at the national, state, and local levels in this country and abroad.

### *Party Reform: The DNC after 1968*

The environmental change that provided the pressure for Democratic Party reform was the emergence of a set of loose-linked issues that formed a new political agenda for a number of groups within the Democratic coalition.[4] Civil rights, women's issues, the Vietnam War, and the 18-year-old vote formed the core concerns of newly mobilized, liberal activists. These "New Politics" liberals used both traditional means and public protests to pressure the dominant coalition of Democratic leaders to support their causes. Their mainstream tactics included challenging Mississippi's delegation to the 1964 Democratic National Convention and pressuring the convention to take steps to open participation in party politics to all Democrats, regardless of their race or gender. Their protest activities included rallies, marches, and sit-ins.

Prior to the 1968 convention, the liberal activists had little success in getting party leaders to support their positions. The disagreement over issues became extremely heated during the 1968 contest for the Democratic presidential nomination. After the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy of New York, the nomination race turned into a showdown between Senator Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota, the champion of the New Politics liberals, and Vice President Hubert Humphrey, the choice of the party "regulars." When it became apparent that Humphrey would win the nomination without entering a single primary, the liberals began to protest their having been shut out of the candidate selection process. They targeted the convention in Chicago for a major public protest (Crotty 1983; Shafer 1983).

The 1968 convention was the critical event that opened a window of opportunity for Democratic Party reform. In the midst of the chaos taking place inside the convention hall and outside on the streets, the convention mandated an official commission to study the issues of party governance that had been raised by the protestors (Shafer 1983; Price 1984). Following Humphrey's defeat in the general election and the appointment of Senator

Fred Harris of Oklahoma as the new DNC chair, the quest for party reform resumed when Harris created the Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection to study the issue. Senator George McGovern of South Dakota was appointed to be its chair. Later, when McGovern decided to run for the presidency, Representative Donald Fraser of Minnesota, a commission member, took over the chairmanship.

McGovern and Fraser were at the forefront of the party reform movement. McGovern and his staff invested tremendous energy in the Commission. By the end of 1969, the Commission had convened 17 regional hearings, received widespread publicity, won the support of other liberals, and developed a report, "Mandate for Reform," that recommended sweeping changes in the Democratic Party.[5] The report called for state parties to make it easier for rank-and-file Democrats to participate in delegate selection contests, to apportion delegates on the basis of voter support for candidates, and to take "affirmative steps" to assure the participation of blacks, women, and young people in Democratic nomination politics (Democratic National Committee 1969). McGovern sent "compliance letters" to state Democratic chairs that summarized the Commission's guidelines and notified the chairs that failure to comply with them could result in their delegations being challenged at the 1972 convention.

In mid-1971, after McGovern resigned from the Commission to run for President and Fraser had taken over as its chair, it became apparent that the commission had neither the authority nor the power to implement its reform agenda over the objections of state party chairs. Fraser worked with the DNC's new chair, Lawrence O'Brien, to convince DNC members to shift compliance responsibilities from the commission to the DNC's staff[6] (see chapter 9). As a result of McGovern's and Fraser's entrepreneurism, the New Politics liberals succeeded in reforming the Democrats' presidential nominating process in a way that would insure that their views would be heard.

The momentum for party reform carried over into the party's 1972 national convention. McGovern's nomination set the stage for the liberal activists to perpetuate the reforms by including them in a formal party charter. Convention resolutions mandated the creation of a commission to draft a charter and called for a midterm party conference in 1974 to ratify it.

The Party Charter Commission created opportunities for a new set of party leaders to become involved in transforming the DNC, including DNC chair Jean Westwood, her successor, Robert Strauss, and North Carolina Governor Terry Sanford, who was Strauss's appointee to chair the commission. Sanford developed a charter report that advanced many of the McGovern-Fraser Commission's goals. It was published in August 1974, and Strauss spent the next three months convincing mainstream Democratic leaders to support it. He succeeded in getting a caucus of Democratic state

governors to endorse the charter in November, and worked to get other Democrats to speak publicly in its favor (Malbin 1974; Goodwin 1974). By the party's midterm conference in December, Strauss had built a coalition that was large enough to get the charter adopted by a wide margin.

The new charter, like the delegate selection rules passed earlier, had a major impact on the national Democratic Party. The charter formalized the DNC's oversight of state delegate selection procedures and altered its composition. The committee was tripled in size and restructured to allow for the proportional representation of women, young people, and minorities.[7] The charter also partially changed the DNC's focus by requiring the committee to devote a substantial portion of its resources to support future reform activities (Walters 1974; Democratic National Committee 1969). The passage of the charter insured that the DNC would retain its role as a rule-making and rule-enforcement body having the authority to regulate Democratic state committees.

The case of party reform at the DNC demonstrates that the political unrest of the 1960s set the stage for a major organizational transformation. The party's disruptive 1968 national convention and the narrow election defeat in 1968 destabilized the coalition that had previously dominated the DNC. Liberal party leaders took advantage of the opportunity provided by the crisis and constructed a broad coalition in favor of change. They formally enacted reforms in the delegate selection process, redistributed power within the Democratic coalition, restructured the composition and roles of the DNC and the Democratic National Convention, and reversed the flow of power between the national committee and state party organizations (Crotty 1983; Shafer 1983; Wekkin 1985).

At the same time that the Democratic leaders worked to change the party's rules, they also labored to advance their own careers. McGovern benefitted most directly from these activities. He rewrote the delegate selection rules so they would help him win the Democratic nomination in 1972. The others reaped lesser benefits. Sanford used his reputation as a Democratic reformer to establish a base from which to run for public office, eventually winning a seat in the U.S. Senate. Strauss used his enhanced stature as a career politician to win some high-ranking appointments, including that of Special Trade Representative under President Jimmy Carter.[8] Fraser accrued the least tangible benefits, using the Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection as a vehicle to advance his standing as a liberal leader in the House (Herrnson and Menefee-Libey 1990).

### *Party Reorientation: The RNC after 1960*

Factional pressures set the stage for the reorientation of the Republican Party after the 1960 elections. A rift had been growing for 20 years between

the party's liberal-to-moderate faction, which had pragmatically accepted the major elements of the New Deal, and GOP conservatives, who continued to oppose it (Cosman and Huckshorn 1968; Rae 1989). The philosophical views of the two groups manifested themselves in two different strategies. The moderates and liberals, who were led by President Dwight Eisenhower, Governor Nelson Rockefeller, and Senator Jacob Javits (both of New York), believed the Republican Party should take middle-of-the-road positions that would enable it to rebuild its strength in big cities. The conservatives, largely southerners and westerners who were led by Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, believed the American people should be given "a choice, not an echo" and that the party should concentrate on winning support among conservatives, especially those residing in the South.

The moderates carried the day at the 1960 Republican National Convention, succeeding in nominating then Vice President Richard Nixon as the party's presidential candidate. Nixon ran a campaign that tried to accommodate the views of both GOP moderates and conservatives. Following his narrow defeat, each side blamed the other, complaining that a stricter adherence to their strategy would have provided the necessary votes for a Nixon victory.[9] Moderates claimed that Nixon would have won if he had more closely followed a "Me Too" strategy embracing New Deal programs that appealed to independent voters and persuadable Democrats. Conservatives argued that Nixon had exerted too much effort in appealing to these groups, and alienated too many Republicans and conservative southerners.

Nixon's defeat did not constitute a factional crisis of the same magnitude as that experienced by Democrats in 1968, but it widened the rifts that existed among different groups of Republicans and opened the way for change at the national committee. Moderates and liberals pressured for and succeeded in getting the RNC to pay somewhat more attention to urban areas,[10] but failed to get the RNC to develop proposals to commit more federal resources to health care, education, unemployment, and other popular New Deal-like programs (Novak 1965; Klinkner 1991). Conservatives were far more successful. Their growing numbers and increased representation on the RNC enabled them to get the Committee to devote substantial resources to party revitalization in southern states. Money was spent on grassroots organizing efforts that mobilized conservatives and strengthened the party in the South (Lamb 1968).

Factors besides the growing conservative presence in the RNC and increasing commitment to the southern strategy worked in the conservatives' favor. Moderate and liberal Republican leaders either underestimated the strength of Goldwater and the growing conservative movement, or had personal reasons for not standing up to it. Potential sources of liberal opposition, such as Governors Nelson Rockefeller of New York, George

Romney of Michigan, and William Scranton of Pennsylvania, placed their presidential ambitions above ideology and attempted to placate the conservatives by running campaigns that centered on personality rather than ideological appeals (Novak 1965). The party's financial base also began to change, making it more dependent on small contributions raised through an infant direct-mail program and less reliant on large contributions given by northeastern "establishment" Republicans (Alexander 1968; Hess and Broder 1967; Thayer 1973). Collectively, these trends led to the decline of the moderate-to-liberal coalition and ascendance of the conservatives led by Goldwater.

After securing the Republican nomination, Goldwater selected conservative Congressman William E. Miller of New York (then RNC chair) as his running mate and made an acceptance speech proclaiming that "Extremism in the case of liberty is no vice! . . . Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue"(White 1965:217). Goldwater's decisions for staffing the RNC and his general election campaign reflected his uncompromising rhetoric. Conservative Dean Burch, who had virtually no experience in working in Republican Party politics, was appointed chairman of the National Committee.[11] Dennis Kitchel and other Goldwater aides from Arizona ran the campaign. Party professionals and moderates were notably absent from the upper echelons of both organizations (White 1965; Lamb 1968). Many moderate and liberal Republican leaders, such as Rockefeller, Romney, and Senator Jacob Javits were so opposed to the campaign that they publicly disavowed themselves from it at every opportunity, thereby helping to set the stage for the nominee's defeat (e.g., Rae 1989).

In spite of their successes in capturing control of the Republican National Convention and the RNC, Goldwater, Burch, and the conservatives did not alter the party's rules or restructure its organizational apparatus. One explanation for the lack of action is that Nixon's loss in 1960 was not caused by, and did not lead to, a conflict over party rules. Indeed, the 1960 defeat was not massive enough to cause Republican leaders to question their party's fundamental principles of governance. Another explanation is that because Goldwater had won control of the party under the existing delegate selection process he and his followers had little incentive to revamp it. Lastly, Goldwater and his followers had little to gain from turning their attention away from the general election in order to tinker with the rules. Consequently, once the 1964 election was lost, and lost by a landslide, the Goldwater changes were swept away.

The 1964 Republican experience has both similarities and differences to the Democrats' 1968 experience. The major similarities are that factional conflicts were at the root of both episodes of change and shifts in the balance of power within each party resulted from it. The differences concern the goals, strategies, and changes introduced by different party leaders. Once

Goldwater had won the nomination and control of the RNC, he placed his allies in power and pursued the overriding goals of running a successful conservative campaign for president rather than reforming the party. Once McGovern, Fraser, and the other liberal Democratic leaders had gained the upper hand in their party, however, their major goals concerned reforming the rules governing its presidential selection process and other activities to their advantage. The changes introduced by the Democratic leaders permanently strengthened the DNC and broadened its mission, while those introduced by Goldwater were short-lived and primarily connected with his bid for election.

*Party Renewal: The RNC from 1974 to 1980*

The catalyst for RNC organizational development in the 1970s was a crisis of competition that had its roots in the Watergate scandal. Watergate reversed the tentative rebirth of Republican competitiveness that had taken place in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The scandal badly tarnished the GOP's image and cut into its level of public support. Beginning in 1974, a growing number of the party's candidates experienced major defeats. The Republicans lost 49 seats in the House that year, had an incumbent President defeated two years later, and by 1977 it controlled only 12 governorships and four state legislatures.

The Republicans' crisis of competition created an opportunity for organizational change at the RNC. After the 1974 election, party leaders debated intensely over what route the party should follow to recapture its lost competitiveness. One group of leaders suggested attempting to broaden the party's base by implementing participatory reforms similar to those adopted by the Democratic Party after the 1968 election. Another group advocated improving the party's campaign apparatus using programs similar to those introduced by Ray Bliss after Goldwater's defeat in 1964 (Malbin 1975; Cotter and Bibby 1980; Bibby 1981).

Once Mary Louise Smith announced her resignation as RNC chair in November 1976, the politics of organizational development became entwined in the politics surrounding the race for the chair. William Brock, of Tennessee vigorously pursued the position. Defeated in his bid for reelection to the Senate earlier that year, he found himself out of federal office and without a base of operations in Washington for the first time in 14 years. The RNC chairmanship offered him a new power base and an opportunity to resuscitate his political career. Brock campaigned for the position by presenting himself as a conservative capable of rising above factional disputes and by advocating a program of party organizational development. Using these appeals, he was able to defeat Richard Richards, the preferred candidate of Ronald Reagan and GOP conservatives, and James Baker, the choice of President Ford and party moderates (Malbin 1977; *National Journal*

1977). Once he had won the chairmanship, he focused his energy on restructuring the RNC, recognizing that by increasing its power he would enhance his own reputation and influence.

Party building was not an unprecedented phenomenon at the RNC prior to Brock's arrival. Nevertheless, his program of party building differed from those of earlier RNC chairs in some important ways. First, the scale of national party activity conducted under Brock was unrivaled by previous programs. Second, Brock's party-building program had a much more national-level focus than those of his predecessors. Previous Republican party-building chairmen placed heavy emphasis on using RNC resources to strengthen state and local party organizations, while Brock used substantial party resources to strengthen the national committee and increase its presence in Washington and in states and localities (Cotter and Bibby 1980; Bibby 1981). Whereas Ray Bliss believed that party "strength emanates really from the bottom, [and] all the people at the national level can do is instill a general direction and instill enthusiasm," and Mary Louise Smith saw "parties as growing from the bottom up or the center out, not from the top down" (Malbin 1975:331), Brock envisioned the National Committee as a major source of strength that could be used to develop other party organizations (see e.g., Malbin 1977). He sought to transform the RNC's mission in a way that would reverse the flow of power within the party's organizational apparatus (see chapters 2, 3, and 10).

At the national level, Brock made major contributions to the institutional development of the RNC. Committee receipts grew from just above $29 million in 1977, when Brock first became chair, to nearly $78 million at the end of his term in 1980. He expanded the RNC's direct mail fund-raising program from 350,000 to 1.2 million contributors, further expanding the committee's broad base of donors whose contributions averaged under $30. Support from large contributors and PACs also grew as old programs were expanded and new programs established.

Under Brock the RNC experienced unprecedented organizational growth, permanence, and diversification. It moved into a large headquarters building located a few blocks from the U.S. Capitol and increased its staff from 200 to 350 full-time employees. Professional consultants were hired to raise money, conduct state and local party-building activities, recruit candidates, distribute campaign services, and carry out other election activities.

Brock's state party-building program was equally comprehensive. The RNC assisted state party leaders with modernizing their organizations, developing fund-raising programs, and establishing realistic election goals and strategies. State parties also were given access to RNC computers for accounting, data analysis, and the preparation of mailing lists (Bibby 1981; Conway 1983; Price 1984). The RNC's ability to provide or withhold money,

organizational assistance, and election services gave it tremendous influence with state and local Republican committees (Wekkin 1985; Epstein 1986).

Finally, Brock initiated an extensive program of campaign activity and support. In 1978, the RNC contributed $530,000 to gubernatorial candidates and $1.7 million to 775 contenders for state legislatures (Bibby 1979; Conway 1983). A local elections campaign division carried out district analyses, candidate training and campaign management seminars, and furnished candidates with direct on-site assistance (Bibby 1981). The division also played an extremely aggressive role in candidate recruitment. RNC staff went so far as to back their preferred primary candidates over those supported by state and local party leaders (Herrnson 1988).

In 1980, the RNC distributed $6.2 million in cash and in-kind contributions to candidates for the House, Senate, governorships, and state legislatures, and it gave the Reagan-Bush campaign $4.6 million, the maximum legal contribution allowed under the Federal Election Campaign Act. It also took primary responsibility for mounting a party-focused mass media campaign and voter mobilization program (Adamany 1984; Price 1984).

Brock's tenure at the RNC represents a major turning point for the Republican Party. Under his leadership, the RNC achieved unprecedented growth and influence both in intraparty politics and election campaigns. The new RNC programs expanded the chairman's formal authority and power base. They made Brock immensely popular with state and local party officials. They also enabled him to retain the chairmanship during the 1980 general election, despite the established practice of replacing the chair with one of the presidential nominee's supporters and heavy pressure applied by Reagan for Brock's removal (Adamany 1984). Brock retained the post through the election, and was then rewarded with a cabinet post in the Reagan administration.

Brock set the RNC on a new path of development, one that would be followed by future RNC chairs and other party leaders well into the 1980s. His stewardship of the RNC was instrumental in changing the Committee's mission and transforming its relationships with other party committees. It earned Brock a reputation as an innovative Republican leader, contributed to his continuing career in national politics, and set an example that the DNC would try to emulate following the landslide defeat the Democrats suffered in 1980.

### *Party Reinforcement: The RNC after 1964*

The conditions surrounding the 1964 election bear similarities to those that existed for the Republicans in 1976. During each period, environmental transformations created pressures for party organizational change and a critical event opened a window of opportunity for it to occur. Yet, the

changes implemented were less dramatic than the changes introduced in the other periods. The circumstances were ripe for either party reform or renewal, but neither occurred because RNC chairman Ray Bliss had a more limited vision for his party.

The Republicans' massive defeat in 1964 created an opportunity for organizational transformation at the RNC. The GOP's losses were of a similar magnitude to those experienced by the Republicans in the two post-Watergate elections. Goldwater lost by a margin of nearly 23% and 550 Republican state legislators went down in defeat. The GOP also suffered a net loss of 37 seats in the House (including 39 incumbent defeats) and two seats in the Senate, giving the Democrats their largest margins in both chambers since the 75th Congress (1937-1939). The 1964 election can be described as constituting either a crisis of competition or a factional crisis for the Republican Party. The GOP's massive general election losses lend themselves to the former interpretation, but the sharp tensions that strained relations within the party prior to the election support the latter. Certainly, the outcome of the election exacerbated the conflicts that existed within the party. Dean Burch and the conservatives attempted to maintain control of the RNC, while liberals and moderates fought to have them ousted. The liberals and moderates eventually won the battle, but recognized the importance of selecting a new RNC chairman who would be acceptable to both wings of the party.

Bliss, who was then serving as the chairman of the Ohio Republican State Central and Executive Committee and vice chairman of the RNC, emerged as the top choice of many RNC members. His midwestern roots insured that his selection would not be viewed as rewarding the eastern Republicans who opposed Goldwater in 1964. His non-ideological "nuts-and-bolts" approach to running the state party also posed little threat to either faction (Hess and Broder 1967; Bibby and Huckshorn 1968). Bliss, a self-described "office chairman," had focused on managing party affairs from state headquarters, rather making public appearances, as a "speaking chairman" was apt to do (Bliss 1960). He was perceived to be a leader who could overcome the party's factional strife and reunify it.

Bliss was unanimously elected to chair the RNC on January 21, 1965. The election gave him a mandate that could have been used to introduce a wide range of new programs, including those associated with party reform or renewal. The party reform route could have been justified by arguing that changing party rules to enhance representation and participation would help the RNC reduce factional conflicts. Party renewal on the scale of Brock's program could have been justified as a means to improve the party's competitiveness. Had Bliss pursued either approach, he could have transformed the mission of the RNC and put himself in a position to remain a major player in party politics.

Nevertheless, Bliss chose to strengthen the party without increasing the RNC's power vis-a-vis Republican state committees. His program consisted of improving the committee's finances, enhancing its state and local party-building program, increasing its role in candidate recruitment, and strengthening its public-relations functions. In the area of party finance, Bliss increased the RNC's pool of large contributors, expanded its direct-mail program, and increased its receipts from $2.1 million to almost $5.7 million (Klinkner 1991; see chapter 10). Bliss' party-building program concentrated on revitalizing state and local party organizations. The RNC held workshops on campaign management, research, public relations, and other grassroots activities for state and local party committees, candidates, and activists (Bibby and Huckshorn 1968; Bibby 1981).

Bliss became personally involved in candidate recruitment and worked to enhance the party's public image. He is credited with convincing a number of candidates to run for governorships and congressional seats in 1966, though he did not pick favorites in Republican primaries (Broder 1965,1966). He improved the Committee public relations by distributing radio actualities to local stations and using the Republican Coordinating Committee to research issues, develop consensual party policies, and attack the Johnson administration (Hess and Broder 1967; Bibby and Huckshorn 1968).

Bliss clearly strengthened the RNC during his chairmanship, but his program was far less ambitious than those of Brock or other party leaders who sought to restructure a party committee[12]. Bliss' grassroots strategy concentrated on "rebuilding from the basement up, not from the roof down" (Reichley 1985:186), reflecting his belief that there should be limits to the RNC involvement in state and local party affairs. Bliss, for example, never would have allowed RNC staff to intervene in contested primaries, as Brock did. He envisioned the Committee playing a supportive role for Republican Party organizations and candidates, not leading them (see chapters 2 and 3).

Bliss' model, by design, reinforced rather than altered the mission of the RNC. It did not consolidate power under the National Committee, nor did it significantly alter its relationships with other groups. This left the RNC vulnerable to encroachment by future Republican leaders, and it made it possible for Richard Nixon to dismantle the programs that Bliss had developed. Perhaps if Bliss had centralized power, this outcome could have been avoided.

There are a number of possible explanations for the limited change that Bliss instituted at the RNC. First, there was little constituency for party reform at the committee. Even though Bliss' term as RNC chair began in an era characterized by sharp intra-party divisions, the dominant coalition of Republican elites that emerged after the 1964 election was not in favor of party reform.[13] Because the factional split in the party was not based on racial, gender, or age cleavages, the dominant group that emerged after the

election did not advocate the establishment of quotas or guidelines to enhance the participation or representation of specific demographic groups.

Second, institutional constraints and party culture also help to explain the lack of organizational transformation. Unlike the Democrats, the Republicans had a long history of stable, written rules by the 1960s and possessed an "innate restraint" toward organizational problems (Crotty 1983:206). This would have made it difficult for any Republican leader to have implemented a program of party reform after the 1964 election. The GOP's strong states' rights position and its commitment to a confederated structure also would have made it difficult for Bliss to have altered the relationship between the RNC and the state committees.

Third, Bliss' aspirations for himself and the RNC provide an important explanation for the Committee's following a path of reinforcement rather than reform or renewal. Bliss had limited goals for the Committee and had no plans to use the chairmanship as a stepping stone to higher office. He eschewed the high visibility and somewhat controversial activities that other party leaders pursued in favor of a grassroots program modelled after the one he had implemented in Ohio. Following Nixon's election in 1968, Bliss' tenure at the RNC ended when Nixon asked him to step down and offered to make him Ambassador to Denmark. Bliss refused the appointment and returned to Ohio, where he continued to serve on the Republican state committee and in other party posts.

## Conclusion

The Democratic and Republican National Committees have experienced several types of change since the 1960s. In order to understand how party change occurs, one must examine the crisis that opens a window of opportunity for change, and the activities and motives of the leaders who seek to implement it. The dynamics of party organizational change at the DNC and RNC suggest a number of things about the future development of party organizations. Major change, such as that associated with party reform or renewal, is not likely to result from a gradual process of adjustment. Instead, change is likely to lag behind the evolution of the political environment and take place after some critical event gives a party leader an opportunity to initiate change.

Party renewal or reinforcement can be expected to occur after some element of the environment in which campaigns are conducted, such as the campaign finance system, changes significantly. Party reform or reorientation will take place after a party's electoral coalition changes significantly. Both types of change can be expected to take place in the party out of power. Party reform also will probably not be initiated by the Republicans unless the

GOP succeeds in attracting so many new minority supporters that Republican leaders find themselves under demographically rooted factional pressures like those that have repeatedly strained relations among Democrats.

Lastly, the visions and goals of party leaders will continue to have a decisive role in shaping party organizational change. Party leaders who aspire to higher office can be expected to make changes that are more formal, sweeping, and enduring than other party leaders. They will seek to strengthen the organizations they head in ways that work to their future advantage and to build relationships with other organizations that will help their innovations to persist. Party leaders who have more limited or short-term ambitions, on the other hand, are likely to enact less formal or sweeping changes, and these are likely to be less permanent.

## Notes

1. In addition to the sources cited below, information was collected through personal interviews with officials at the Democratic and Republican national committees.

2. Changes that parallel some of those occurring at the national committees also took place at the parties' senatorial and congressional campaign committees, and some state and local party organizations (Herrnson 1988; Cotter, Gibson, Bibby, and Huckshorn 1984).

3. The major long-term effect of party reorientation is that some of the extremists who first became active during or immediately after the factional dispute remain active in party politics for years to come.

4. Some of the historical material in this section and the section on party renewal is taken from Herrnson and Menefee-Libey (1990).

5. The Hughes Commission recommended a similar set of reforms four years earlier, but few were implemented.

6. O'Brien was originally appointed DNC chair by Humphrey, but stepped down from the position shortly after Humphrey lost the 1968 election.

7. The commission also mandated future midterm conferences, but these were discontinued by the DNC's new chair, Paul Kirk, following the 1984 election.

8. Ironically, Strauss's most recent appointment, Ambassador to the Soviet Union, was made by Republican President George Bush.

9. A switch of 12,000 votes in Hawaii, Illinois, Missouri, New Mexico, and Nevada would have given victory to Nixon (Klinkner 1991).

10. The RNC created the Committee on Big City Politics, chaired by Ray Bliss. The committee's main goal was to overcome the Republicans' organizational weaknesses in major urban areas. It recommended several proposals to accomplish this goal, but did little to implement them (see e.g. Klinkner 1991).

11. Burch had not even served as a Republican county chairman.

12. These leaders include Charles Manatt of the DNC, Representatives Guy Vander Jagt of the National Republican Congressional Committee and Tony Coelho of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, as well as those discussed in this chapter (also see Herrnson and Menefee-Libey 1990).

13. As noted earlier, even Barry Goldwater chose not to reform the party's rules after winning its nomination in 1964.

## References

Adamany, David. 1984. "Political Parties in the 1980s," in Michael J. Malbin, ed., *Money and Politics in the United States*. Pp 70-121. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.

Alexander, Herbert E. 1968. *Financing the 1964 Election*. Princeton: Citizens' Research Foundation.

Baer, Denise L., and David A. Bositis. 1988. *Elite Cadres and Party Coalitions*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Bibby, John F. 1979. "Political Parties and Federalism." *Publius* 9:230-236.

_____. 1981. "Party Renewal in the National Republican Party," in Gerald M. Pomper, ed., *Party Renewal in America*. Pp. 102-114. New York: Praeger.

Bibby, John F. and Robert J. Huckshorn. 1968. "Out-Party Strategy: Republican National Committee Rebuilding Politics, 1964-66," in Bernard Cosman and Robert J. Huckshorn, eds., *Republican Politics: The 1964 Republican Campaign and its Aftermath*. Pp. 205-233. New York: Praeger.

Bliss, Ray C. 1960. "The Role of the State Chairman," in James M. Cannon, ed., *Politics U.S.A.: A Practical Guide to the Winning of Public Office*. Pp. 159-170. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Broder, David S. 1965. "Bliss Helped Nudge Lindsay." *The Washington Star*. May 14.

_____. 1966. "Bliss Proves a Good GOP Caretaker." *The Washington Post*. November 15.

_____. 1971. *The Party's Over*. New York: Harper and Row.

Conway, M. Margaret. 1983. "Republican Political Party Nationalization, Campaign Activities, and Their Implications for the Political System." *Publius* 13:1-17.

Cosman, Bernard, and Robert J. Huckshorn. 1968. "The Goldwater Impact: Cyclical Variation or Secular Declines," in Bernard Cosman and Robert J. Huckshorn, eds. *Republican Politics: The 1964 Campaign and its Aftermath*. Pp. 234-244. New York: Praeger.

Cotter, Cornelius P., and John F. Bibby. 1980. "Institutional Development of the Parties and the Thesis of Party Decline." *Political Science Quarterly* 95:1-27.

Cotter, Cornelius P., and Bernard C. Hennessy. 1964. *Politics Without Power: The National Party Committees*. New York: Atherton Press.

Crotty, William. 1983. *Party Reform*. New York: Longman.

_____. 1984. *American Parties in Decline*. New York: Longman.

Democratic National Committee. 1969. *The Charter and the Bylaws of the Democratic Party of the United States*. Washington, DC: Democratic National Committee.

Epstein, Leon D. 1986. *Political Parties in the American Mold*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Goodwin, Richard. 1974. "A Divided Party." *The New Yorker*. December 7:157-166.

Herrnson, Paul S. 1988. *Party Campaigning in the 1980s*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

_____. 1990. "Reemergent Party Organizations," in L. Sandy Maisel, ed., *The Parties Respond*. Pp. 41-66. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Herrnson, Paul S., and David Menefee-Libey. 1990. "The Dynamics of Party Organizational Development." *Midsouth Journal of Political Science* 11:3-30.

Hess, Stephen, and David S. Broder. 1967. *The Republican Establishment*. New York: Harper and Row.

Klinkner, Philip. 1991. "The Response of American Political Parties to Election Defeats: A Study of Organizational Culture." Ph.D. diss. Yale University.

Lamb, Karl A. 1968. "Under One Roof: Barry Goldwater's Campaign Staff," in Bernard Cosman and Robert J. Huckshorn, eds., *Republican Politics: The 1964 Campaign and its Aftermath*. Pp. 9-45. New York: Praeger.

Malbin, Michael J. 1974. "Controversy Over Charter Reflects Democratic Party Division." *National Journal*. September 21:1407-1417.

_____. 1975. "Republicans Prepare Plan to Rebuild Party for 1976." *National Journal*. March 1:324-326.

_____. 1977. "The Past and Future Parties." *National Journal*. February 5:24.

*National Journal*. 1977. "Brock Picked to be Chairman." January 22:150.

Novak, Robert D. 1965. *The Agony of the GOP 1964*. New York: Macmillan.

Panebianco, Angeol. 1988. *Political Parties: Organization and Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Price, David E. 1984. *Bringing Back the Parties*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Rae, Nicol C. 1989. *The Decline and Fall of the Liberal Republicans*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Reichley, A. James. 1985. "The Rise of the National Parties," in John E. Chubb and Paul Peterson, eds., *The New Direction in American Politics*. Pp. 175-200. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Ranney, Austin. 1975. *Curing the Mischiefs of Faction*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Schlesinger, Joseph. 1985. "The New American Political Party." *American Political Science Review* 79:1152-1169.

Shafer, Byron. 1983. *The Quiet Revolution*. New York: Russell ge.

Thayer, George. 1973. *Who Shakes the Money Tree?* New York: Simon and Shuster.

Walters, Robert. 1974. "Democrats Adopt Charter Reforming Party Procedures." *National Journal*. December 14:1891.

Wekkin, Gary. 1985. "Political Parties and Intergovernmental Relations in 1984: The Consequences of Party Renewal for Territorial Constituencies." *Publius* 15:19-37.

White, Theodore H. 1965. *The Making of the President 1964*. New York: Atheneum.

# PART FOUR

## Factions and Organization

# 14

## Republican Alternatives to the Great Society

*John J. Pitney, Jr.*

After the 1964 Johnson landslide, national GOP leaders formed the Republican Coordinating Committee, a body designed to unify the fractured party and offer alternatives to Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. The Committee's 36 members comprised former GOP presidential nominees, members of Congress, governors, and other elected officials. It also ran eight task forces of business executives, academic experts, and political climbers such as California Governor Ronald Reagan and Texas Congressman George Bush (see chapter 2).

Republican National Committee Chairman Ray Bliss supplied the Coordinating Committee's budget and chaired its meetings. Bliss avoided public comments about party policy, preferring to let other members do the talking (Otten and Seib 1966). In Bliss' eyes, the Committee existed not just to issue statements but to soften personal conflicts among top Republicans. He explained: "[Y]ou don't say anything nasty, at least not publicly, about somebody you're going to dinner with tonight. That's the same theory behind this" ("How Ray Bliss" 1968:30; see chapter 6).

The effort served more than a diplomatic function. The Committee and its task forces issued numerous reports, published together under the title *Choice for America*. Congressional candidates made extensive use of the Committee's work, which also helped shape the 1968 Republican platform (RNC 1968:45-65). *Choice for America* thus provides a good reading of the Republican Party's ideological climate in the mid-1960s.

A close analysis of the document shows that the party's moderate-to-liberal wing kept considerable clout during this period (Reichley 1981; Rae 1989), but it also suggests that this wing shared common ground with conservatives on several domestic issues (Hess and Broder 1967:85). In 1967, Goldwater said that conservatives used to balk at aid to education and urban renewal, "but now we must recognize they are here to stay, and make them work" (Reichley 1967:166). The conservative and liberal wings still had major differences, of course, so *Choice for America* skirted some contentious issues. (For instance, it barely mentioned housing discrimination.) Nevertheless, Republican conservatives were now more likely to seek consensus than in the

"rule-or-ruin" days of 1964 (Reinhard 1983:216). *Choice for America* also shows that the GOP thinking in the 1960s foreshadowed the "New Paradigm," a policy model set out by Bush White House adviser James Pinkerton in 1990. Supported by leaders such as Jack Kemp and Newt Gingrich, the New Paradigm emphasizes: market forces, choice, empowerment, decentralization, and an orientation toward quality instead of budget growth. Proposals such as tenant ownership of public housing and enterprise zones, staples of the New Paradigm, appeared in embryonic form in *Choice for America* and other GOP writings of the time.

New Paradigm thinkers acknowledge this debt. Pinkerton traces the idea of "empowerment" to GOP housing legislation of the 1960s (Mufson 1991). Gingrich often speaks of an "opportunity society," a term augured by the "Opportunity State" described in the 1960s by the Ripon Society, a group of young liberal Republicans. Gingrich sees a "new synthesis" between conservatives and "the classic moderate wing of the party, where, as a former Rockefeller state chairman, I've spent most of my life" (McKenzie 1989: 3).

The New Paradigm Republicans hope that their proposals will help the GOP reach majority status. But they must confront a nagging question: why did the reform ideas of the 1960s fail to launch a realignment? *Choice for America* itself provides part of the answer. While Republican leaders of the 1960s wanted to present clear choices, they often echoed Great Society premises. For instance, they joined LBJ in assuming a direct link between education spending and educational outcomes. Tethered to such notions, the 1960s Republicans could only strain in the direction of fundamental reform. As Philip Klinkner suggests, they fell short of offering radical alternatives to the Great Society (see chapter 10).

The GOP's "new ideas" of the 1960s also lacked a consistent champion at the top. Despite occasional bursts of attention to matters such as welfare and health care, Nixon put most of his energy into foreign policy. This emphasis helped him win the 1972 presidential election, but it did little for the GOP in congressional elections, where domestic concerns have traditionally held sway.

The New Paradigm Republicans have gone far beyond their predecessors in urging fundamental change. But in the early 1990s, it remained questionable whether Bush would be more receptive to a reform agenda than Nixon had been two decades earlier. The first years of the Bush presidency focused on foreign policy, with only sporadic and hesitant interest in domestic issues. As the 1992 election approached, the New Paradigm advocates feared that this inattention might spoil GOP chances for congressional gains. But before further analysis of the 1990s, we should step back to the 1960s for a look at the intellectual and political background of the Republican Coordinating Committee.

## Themes

On May 22, 1964, President Johnson told the graduating class of the University of Michigan that "we have the opportunity to move not only toward the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society" (Johnson 1965:704). Just a year later, however, urban riots were hurting Johnson's popularity and discrediting his Great Society program. This trend highlighted "the theory of unanticipated consequences"--the idea that bad side effects of government programs outweigh the good they accomplish (Steinfels 1980:65). The most prominent spokesman for this theory was a Democrat named Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Even though Moynihan had served Democratic presidents, House Republican Conference Chairman Melvin Laird asked him to contribute to a book called *Republican Papers*. Moynihan's essay called the burning slums "the wreckage of a generation of good intentions on the part of American liberals" (Moynihan 1968:130,138). Several other contributors to *Republican Papers* cited Moynihan, and *Choice for America* later bore the marks of his influence: "The scope and magnitude of social programs must be shaped with reference to the total consequences, not just with regard to the primary beneficiaries" (RCC 1968:123).

Moynihan noted an odd link between radicals and Republicans, with both against "bigness, impersonality, bureaucratized benevolence, prescribed surveillance" (Moynihan 1969:160). Leftist Paul Goodman said that the Great Society served to "aggrandize the Establishment, the education barons, the broadcasting barons, the automobile barons, the shopping center barons" (Goodman 1967: 517). The Coordinating Committee worked the same idea: "Too often, programs that were inadequate to begin with have been administered and operated through political machines which feed themselves on poverty while remaining unresponsive to the needs of the poor" (RCC 1968:14).

The word *alienation* cropped up several times in *Choice for America*. Although the term was a favorite of the New Left (Safire 1978:12-13), Republicans now used it to give a new spin to their traditional pitch for decentralization. *Choice for America* argued that racial discrimination and cumbersome government machinery

> have contributed to the alienation of people from the larger, law-abiding community . . . The Republican Party believes that there should be an effort to recapture the loyalty of these alienated citizens (RCC 1968:2-3).

This discussion of bureaucracy and alienation has a contemporary ring. James Pinkerton (1990) says: "The bureaucratic impulse turns the governance of free people into the administration of things . . . Perhaps Kafka was lucky

that he did not live longer, because the sheer scope of bureaucracy today would defy even his imagination."

The Republican Coordinating Committee sought a remedy in "mediating structures." Alluding to Tocqueville, *Choice for America* said: "From America's earliest history individuals have joined together voluntarily to solve problems and meet needs too big for the individual" (RCC 1968:65). Therefore, we would have to look beyond government to those "who benefit and thrive in our metropolises--individuals, businesses, churches and social institutions, foundations, civic organizations . . . " (RCC 1968:24). Contemporary policy innovators also emphasize mediating structures. According to Butler and Kondratas (1987:73): "Quite apart from the function of these organizations as agents in giving a new sense of stability and purpose to the poor, they also provide tangible services to the poor."

In spite of these similarities, the Republicanism of the 1960s differed in some ways from the New Paradigm of the 1990s. Recall the passage from *Choice for America* that damned "programs that were inadequate to begin with." This phrase implied that the programs required greater funding, as did a number of the Coordinating Committee's specific proposals. The Ripon Society's vision of an "Opportunity State" subtly diverged from that of an "Opportunity Society" since the word *state* implies governmental action while *society* connotes both political and voluntary action (Gingrich 1984:116-120).

## Policies

*Choice for America* contained highly specific policy proposals and detailed critiques of the Johnson Administration's performance. An examination of these arguments and proposals will illuminate the Republicanism of the 1960s and its relationship to the New Paradigm.

**1. Poverty and Community Action.** Community action, ironically, was a major initiative of the Great Society. Enacted as part of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the Community Action Program sought "the maximum feasible participation" of the poor. The law said little about how the poor were to get involved and what projects they would work on (Moynihan 1969:92-93; Lowi 1979:213-219). Some community action programs became patronage pies for decadent political machines, while others staged street demonstrations.

In a *Republican Papers* chapter entitled "The Republican Opportunity Crusade as an Alternative to the Anti-Poverty Program," Representatives Charles Goodell and Albert Quie condemned this performance and called for energizing the poor, mobilizing the community, and stressing independent action over government action (Goodell and Quie 1968:171). The Republican

Coordinating Committee struck the same chord: "*We recommend fuller involvement of the poor in the solution of their own problems, by giving them representation on the community action boards in each area*" (RCC 1968:15; emphasis in original).

Such wording came close to the "empowerment" language that would later characterize Republican policy analyses. But while the words sounded alike, the meaning was a shade different. The earlier critique revolved around *bureaucratic* empowerment: giving poor people more leverage over government agencies. Stuart Butler, a contemporary theorist of empowerment, argues that this version distracted policy makers from the far more important challenge of *economic* empowerment (Butler 1989:265). According to this view, the makeup of community action boards was irrelevant.

*Choice for America* did make a stab at economic empowerment by backing Senator Jacob Javits' plan to promote the financing of businesses in poor neighborhoods (RCC 1968:67). This idea was later elaborated in the Community Self-Determination Act of 1968, a bill drafted by an unusual alliance of House Republicans and the Congress of Racial Equality, and supported by a broad coalition ranging from George McGovern to John Tower (*Congressional Record* 1968a:21111-21112, 22982-22997). The measure would have created Community Development Corporations to raise money for community business enterprises. But despite the emphasis on economic empowerment, the bill also proposed new public and private bureaucracies. The Ripon Society proposed a simpler, more direct method: tax credits for locating and renovating businesses in poor areas (Huebner and Petri 1968:150-151). This proposal was a forerunner of Jack Kemp's "enterprise zones."

The Ripon Society also supported the negative income tax, perhaps the purest form of economic empowerment (Huebner and Petri 1968:126-143). Although the idea had started with Milton Friedman, few Republican policy makers cared for it (Moynihan 1973:64). In 1969, however, Nixon was persuaded by his social policy advisor--the ubiquitous Moynihan--to offer a much-modified version called the Family Assistance Plan. Although FAP started strong, its appeal dwindled. Liberals deemed its benefits too paltry and conservatives thought it strayed too far from the Friedman concept. After a while, Nixon lost interest in fighting for FAP, which passed the House and died in the Senate. One vestige of FAP--the Earned Income Tax Credit for the working poor--did become law in 1975. In the late 1980s, Republican innovators supported an increase in EITC as a way to encourage work and family stability (Butler 1989:264-265). In the House, the main proponent of an increased EITC was Representative Thomas Petri, who had served as executive director of the Ripon Society in the 1960s.

**2. Housing.** Prior to the Johnson Administration, federal urban renewal programs destroyed far more dwellings than they built, and high-rise public housing projects became vertical slums. Learning from this experience, the new Department of Housing and Urban Development made some modest efforts to curb destruction and encourage home ownership, but the results were disappointing (Frieden and Sagalyn 1986).

The Republican Coordinating Committee attacked the Johnson Administration's lack of progress and offered an alternative. "We believe that opportunities for acquiring ownership of units must be enhanced. In this regard, the Percy-Widnall home ownership plan and sweat equity proposals offer imaginative and constructive approaches to improving the quality of our housing and the lives of lower-income families" (RCC 1968:76). The Percy-Widnall bill, sponsored by Senator Charles Percy of Illinois and Representative William Widnall of New Jersey, would have established a National Home Ownership Foundation to help low-income families buy homes through interest subsidies and "sweat equity." Like the Community Self-Determination Act, the Percy-Widnall bill drew support across the spectrum, from liberal California Senator Thomas Kuchel to conservative Strom Thurmond (*Congressional Record* 1967a:10288-10301). And like the other bill, Percy-Widnall was vulnerable to the criticism that it had too many moving parts. Still, it anticipated the time when home ownership would become a top priority of Jack Kemp's HUD. Senator Percy explained the bill's purpose:

> [A]s one walks through the slums, he will see a man outside his tenement washing and polishing his automobile. Then he goes into his apartment building where there is garbage down the front steps. What is the difference? He has a degree of ownership in the automobile. That is his. But he has no feeling of ownership, no feeling that the apartment is his . . . How much better to take those buildings, and use the credit guarantee of the Federal Government and the money of the savings and loan associations, banks, insurance companies, private industry, and unions to rehabilitate these buildings and then sell apartments to the families that now rent them (*Congressional Record* 1967a:10294).

Except perhaps for the reference to S&Ls, this argument could just as easily come from Kemp or other contemporary advocates of economic empowerment. John McClaughry, a Percy aide who helped draft the legislation, said in a letter to a black leader: "What you really want, I think, is the *power* and the *means* to build the kind of community your people want and deserve to have . . ." (Wright 1968:213; emphasis in original). And William Widnall, the bill's House sponsor, foreshadowed the Kemp approach in an even more direct manner: he advocated the sale of *public* housing units to tenants (Widnall 1968:283).

**3. Education.** In 1965, Congress passed the Great Society's main education initiative, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. During the next ten years, real federal outlays for elementary and secondary education more than tripled (calculated from OMB 1989b:63-64). Yet at the same time, SAT scores started to fall; by the 1980s, Americans believed that their educational system was skidding. Blaming the decline on educational bureaucracy, New Paradigm Republicans seek to inject competition into the system, through devices ranging from educational vouchers to public school choice.

In 1968, the Republican Coordinating Committee voiced a similar idea when it endorsed tuition tax credits on the grounds that nonpublic schools allow "parents to exercise a degree of freedom of choice in the education of their children" (RCC 1968:102). But while providing relief to families of nonpublic-school students, tuition tax credits would not go nearly as far as voucher or choice plans in restructuring education.

As mentioned before, *Choice for America* departed even farther from New Paradigm Republicanism by accepting the Great Society assumption that more money means better education. "The main thrust of Federal support should be aimed at raising the overall expenditure for education to adequate levels, and at equalizing the ability of the various States to support education" (RCC 1968:101). Indeed, it dismissed the need for rigorous performance measurements: "Though many of the benefits of education are qualitative and not subject even to rough measurement, the direct economic benefits alone are undoubtedly sufficient to justify the cost" (RCC 1968:102). Subsequent research, however, showed only a weak relationship between resources and performance, except in cases of great deprivation or gross abundance (Chubb and Moe 1990:193).

*Choice for America* appeared to embrace decentralization. Because parents and teachers felt isolated from education agencies, it said, "recent proposals for school decentralization in a number of the larger cities are worthy of serious attention . . . "--a point also made by the Ripon Society (RCC 1968:96-97; Huebner and Petri 1968:159). But there was less to this decentralization than met the eye. According to Chubb and Moe, whose research is often cited by New Paradigm Republicans, such proposals would not replace political control with market control, but merely alter the relationships among school boards, bureaucracies, and legislatures (Chubb and Moe 1990:11).

**4. Civil Rights.** Because of current partisan debates over affirmative action, it is perhaps startling to find that *Choice for America* chided LBJ for moving *too slowly* on civil rights: "The Administration has failed to give prompt and effective implementation to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which bans

discrimination by employers and labor unions with more than one hundred members. Once again, we Republicans call upon the Democratic Administration to enforce this section of the law" (RCC 1968:71).

Goldwater opposed the 1964 Civil Rights Act, so this stand put the Coordinating Committee toward the liberal side of the 1960s spectrum. Today, New Paradigm Republicans speak warmly of the civil rights laws of the 1960s. Kemp says:

> I wasn't there when Dr. King was in that jail in Birmingham. I wasn't there when students got there heads beat in for integrating the lunch counters. I wasn't there when the ballot box was integrated. But I'm here now, and I hope that I can be but a small part of integrating the greatest democratic capitalist system on the face of the earth . . . . (Kemp 1990).

Today's Republicans would agree with the Coordinating Committee: "Every American deserves and should have a full and fair chance to fulfill his God-given capacity to learn, to work, to earn--all without regard to race, or creed, or color" (RCC 1968:77). But the last phrase underscores a bitter point of dispute between the parties. Many Democratic liberals now contend that only "race-conscious" remedies can make up for the legacy of slavery and discrimination, and that "color-blind" policies would reverse minority gains. They cite Lyndon Johnson's 1965 Howard University speech: "We seek not just legal equity but human ability, not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result" (Johnson 1967:254). In this respect, then, the Coordinating Committee diverged from the Great Society and sounded more like contemporary Republicans who argue for "equality of opportunity" instead of "equality of result." Kemp and other innovators say that economic empowerment will do far more for minority progress than bureaucratically administered affirmative action programs.

The Nixon Administration entrenched affirmative action policies that had started under Johnson and Kennedy. Courts and administrators tended to support racial preferences, and even though Nixon personally questioned such policies, he was not willing to spend political capital to mount a serious attack against them (Glazer 1978:213).

**5. Urban Politics.** Johnson dwelt on urban problems. In his 1964 Ann Arbor speech, he said: "Our society will never be great until our cities are great. Today the frontier of imagination and innovation is inside those cities and not beyond their borders" (Johnson 1964:705). After the 1964 election, Republican liberals said that their party's neglect of big cities had contributed to its defeat, and that a new Republicanism should display an urban bent (Gilder and Chapman 1966:299-300). In *Choice for America*, the Coordinating Committee took this advice with vigor:

> The United States is engulfed in an urban crisis (RCC 1968:62).
>
> Air pollution is pre-eminently an urban problem (RCC 1968:49).
>
> Although the proportion of urban population in most States has been growing rapidly, many State formulas for the allocation of highway funds continue to favor rural and inter-city highways (RCC 1968:54).
>
> In short, the stakes of success or failure in urban schools today are higher than in times past, and higher than in many rural areas (RCC 1968:97).

Although the Coordinating Committee offered some suggestions for reforming urban government, the key point here is that it bought Johnson's definition of social problems as big-city ailments. In the mid-1960s, riots made the cities a "hot" issue; but this attention came just when the big cities' role in American life began to diminish. Between 1960 and 1988, the share of Americans living in cities of more than 250,000 people dropped from 21.8% to 17.8%. The greatest population growth took place in suburbs and smaller cities.

Contemporary Republican innovators recognize the problem of big cities: Jack Kemp redoubled his efforts in the wake of the Los Angeles riots of 1992. Nevertheless, they also acknowledge the needs of smaller communities. And instead of seeing the decentralization of metropolitan areas as a problem to be reversed, they see it as an opportunity to be exploited. In particular, Pinkerton advocates policies to foster telecommuting, which he says will cut down on traffic and pollution, ease child-care problems, and improve worker productivity.

## After the 1960s

Starting in the late 1960s, the Republican liberals faded out (Rae 1989). The party was increasingly dominated by a new generation of GOP political leaders who had come of age under Goldwater. Some of the GOP liberals moved to the right. Others, like Mayor John Lindsay of New York, switched to the Democrats. Still others, like New York Senators Charles Goodell and Jacob Javits, lost their seats to more conservative Republicans.

Meanwhile, their ideas suffered from neglect or dilution, as Republican presidents avoided taking large risks for large domestic social policy goals (Reichley 1981:412). As a centrist, Nixon had no great hostility to these ideas, but as a politician he had no great enthusiasm either. "I've always thought this country could run itself domestically without a President; all you need is a competent cabinet" (White 1970:183). Five years later, he went further in

another conversation with Theodore White. "People don't respond in domestic affairs. Unless it touches them directly--like busing--they don't give a damn" (White 1973:475). Nixon was referring to presidential politics. Domestic issues *can* change votes in state and congressional elections, but Nixon showed little interest in using his presidency to help other Republicans. Gerald Ford, by contrast, was a creature of the House and a close ally of Goodell, so he might have been able to renew interest in the innovations proposed in the 1960s. But the Nixon pardon and the 1974 recession prevented him from getting his presidency off the ground.

In the late 1970s, Republicans rebounded. Economic and international setbacks damaged Carter, and Republicans were able to tap the public's opposition to higher taxes and its support for a stronger defense. RNC Chairman Bill Brock revived efforts to develop party policy by publishing a public policy journal and forming several advisory councils (see chapters 2, 3, and 10.)

During the next decade, the GOP appeared to gain a firm grip on the presidency as the nation enjoyed the longest peacetime expansion in history and communism collapsed across the world. But the Reagan Revolution was incomplete. While Reagan succeeded in curbing the growth of the welfare state, he did not invest much effort in devising alternatives to it. Without strong "magnet" issues that would draw voters to the Republican domestic agenda, the party made little headway on Capitol Hill. Democrats regained the Senate in 1986 and kept control of the House throughout the period.

In a sense, Republicans suffered from their presidential success, for it was tough to proclaim "Mission Accomplished!" and still make the case for a drastic political change. To attract candidates and voters, Republicans needed domestic issues. In the early part of the Bush presidency, some Republicans tried to meet this challenge with ideas such as the New Paradigm. Would Bush champion domestic innovations where Nixon and Ford had not?

## George Bush and the 1990s

On May 4, 1991, President Bush went to Ann Arbor to deliver the commencement address at the University of Michigan. Twenty-seven years after Lyndon Johnson announced the birth of the Great Society, Bush offered an obituary:

> When Lyndon Johnson--President Johnson--spoke here in 1964, he addressed issues that remain with us. He proposed revitalizing cities, rejuvenating schools, trampling down the hoary harvest of racism, and protecting our environment--back in 1964 . . . And gradually we got to the point of equating dollars with commitment. And when programs failed to produce progress, we demanded more money. And in time,

> the crusade backfired. Programs designed to ensure racial harmony generated animosity. Programs intended to help people out of poverty invited dependency (Bush 1991:565).

These lines were in tune with the contemporary activists--which is natural because they were drafted by Tony Snow, a young speech writer known for his ideological passion.

But Bush was not merely reciting someone else's sentiments: he had been criticizing Great Society programs since his first days in public office. As vice chairman and public spokesman of the Republican Coordinating Committee's Task Force on Job Opportunities and Welfare, he argued that the Job Corps and other federal training programs were wasteful and ineffective in helping people in need.

Like other Republicans of the 1960s, Representative Bush did not just attack the Great Society, he sought positive alternatives. A few months after taking office in 1967, he made a floor speech in support of the Percy-Widnall bill: "Every American dreams of owning his own home. This bill gives him this opportunity. He will have a group of his own local citizens working on the solutions of his own problems" (*Congressional Record* 1967a:10376). Bush often spoke of community service. During his freshman year, he urged a voluntary "neighborhood action crusade" to quell further riots. With Charles Goodell and two other Republican House members, he asked President Johnson for support (*Congressional Record* 1967b:20819). "Ultimately, this proposal calls for the participation of the people themselves in the solution of the problems they face," Bush said. "A spirit of community must be energized at their level" (*Congressional Record* 1967c:25246). Two decades later, the idea of mediating structures inspired President Bush's vision of "a thousand points of light" (Noonan 1990:310).

But during those two decades, Bush's many jobs--UN Ambassador, envoy to China, CIA director and Vice President--had shifted his primary focus from domestic to foreign policy. In the first years of his presidency, he sometimes spoke of New Paradigm ideas, as in the Ann Arbor speech--yet with less enthusiasm and less follow-through than he gave to global matters. A 1991 *Wall Street Journal* analysis of his schedule depicted "a president who rarely misses a chance to dabble in international affairs, but who rarely seizes a chance to take the initiative on domestic policy" (McQueen and Harwood 1991). Meanwhile, the Republican National Committee had ceased virtually all policy-related activities (other than the occasional press release listing Bush's accomplishments).

In the immediate wake of the Persian Gulf War, it appeared as if Bush's emphasis on foreign policy would furnish him with a triumph as great as Nixon's 1972 victory. This prospect died quickly. By the end of 1991, hard economic times had punctured his popularity and his political opponents were

openly mocking his international focus. The New Paradigm wing argued that he had to turn his attention homeward--not only for his own sake but for the broader good of the Republican Party. In effect, they were urging him to return to his political roots, to the ideas he had espoused on the Republican Coordinating Committee.

Meanwhile, national Democrats were breaking with Great Society liberalism and starting to embrace elements of the New Paradigm. If the GOP did not move quickly to take up the mantle of reform, the Democrats would--and a political window of opportunity would close for a generation. Much has happened with the ideas spawned by the Republican Coordinating Committee in the late 1960s.

## References

Bush, George. 1991. "Remarks at the University of Michigan Commencement ceremony in Ann Arbor, May 4, 1991." *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* 27 (May 13):563-566.

Butler, Stuart, and Anna Kondratas. 1987. *Out of the Poverty Trap: A Conservative Strategy for Welfare Reform*. New York: Free Press.

Butler, Stuart. 1989. "Overview," in Charles L. Heatherly and Burton Yale Pines, eds., *Mandate for Leadership III: Policy Strategies for the 1990s*. Pp. 123-136. Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation.

Chubb, John E., and Terry M. Moe. 1990. *Politics, Markets and America's Schools*. Washington, DC: Brookings.

*Congressional Record*. 1967a. April 20:10288-10301, 10294, 10376.

_____. 1967b. August 1:20819

_____. 1967c. September 12:25246.

_____. 1968a. July 12:21111-21112.

Frieden, Bernard J., and Lynne B. Sagalyn. 1986. "Downtown Shopping Malls and the New Public-Private Strategy," in Marshall Kaplan and Peggy L. Cuciti, eds., *The Great Society and Its Legacy: Twenty Years of US Social Policy*. Pp. 13-147. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Gilder, George F., and Bruce Chapman. 1966. *The Party That Lost Its Head*. New York: Knopf.

Gingrich. Newt. 1984. *Window of Opportunity*. New York: TOR/St. Martin's.

Glazer, Nathan. 1978. *Affirmative Discrimination: Ethnic Inequality and Public Policy*. New York: Basic/Harper Colophon.

Goodell, Charles E., and Albert H. Quie. 1968. "The Republican Opportunity Crusade as an Alternative to the Anti-Poverty Program," in Melvin R. Laird, ed., *Republican Papers*. Pp. 171-190. New York: Praeger.

Goodman, Paul. 1967. "The Poverty of the Great Society," in Marvin E. Gettleman and David Mermelstein, eds., *The Great Society Reader*. Pp. 512-519. New York: Random House.

Hess, Stephen, and David S. Broder. 1967. *The Republican Establishment: The Present and Future of the GOP*. New York: Harper and Row.

"How Ray Bliss Plays the Cards for the GOP." 1968. *Business Week*. March 9:28-30.

Huebner, Lee W., and Thomas E. Petri, eds. 1968. *The Ripon Papers 1963-1968*. Washington, DC: National Press.

Johnson, Lyndon B. 1965 [1964]. "Remarks at the University of Michigan," in *Public Papers of the Presidents 1963-1964*, Volume I. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

_____. 1967 [1965]. "To Fulfill These Rights," in *The Great Society Reader*, Marvin E. Gettleman and David Mermelstein, eds. Pp. 251-260. New York: Random House.

Kemp, Jack. 1990. Remarks to the Council of One Hundred. Washington, DC, January 10.

Lowi, Theodore J. 1979. *The End of Liberalism*. 2d ed. New York: Norton.

McKenzie, Bill. 1989. "A Conversation With Newt Gingrich." *Ripon Forum*. May:3-7.

McQueen, Michel, and John Harwood. 1991. "Bush's Schedule Shows He Spends Little Time on Domestic Concerns." *Wall Street Journal*. October 28:A1, A16.

Moynihan, Daniel Patrick. 1968. "Where Liberals Went Wrong," in *Republican Papers*, Melvin R. Laird, ed. Pp. 129-142. New York: Praeger.

_____. 1969. *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding: Community Action in the War on Poverty*. New York: Free Press.

_____. 1973. *The Politics of a Guaranteed Income: The Nixon Administration and the Family Assistance Plan*. New York: Vintage.

Mufson, Steven. 1991. "Empowerment: Left to Right." *The Washington Post*. February 3:C3.

Noonan, Peggy. 1990. *What I Saw at the Revolution: A Political Life in the Reagan Era*. New York: Random House.

Office of Management and Budget [OMB]. 1989a. *Budget of the United States Government: Special Analyses*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

_____. 1989b. *Budget of the United States Government: Historical Tables*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Otten, Alan L., and Charles B. Seib. 1966. "The Minor Masterpiece of Ray C. Bliss." *The Reporter*. February 10:35-38.

Pinkerton, James P. 1990. "The New Paradigm." Remarks to the Reason Foundation. Los Angeles, California, April 23.

Rae, Nicol C. 1989. *The Decline and Fall of the Liberal Republicans*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Republican Coordinating Committee [RCC]. 1968. *Choice for America: Republican Answers to the Challenge of Now*. Washington, DC: Republican National Committee.

Republican National Committee [RNC]. 1968. *Official Program of the 29th Republican National Convention*, Ray E. Stull, ed., Washington, DC: Republican National Committee.

Reichley, A. James. 1967. "Here Come the Republicans." *Fortune*. September 1:95-97, 162, 164-166.

_____. 1981. *Conservatives in an Age of Change: The Nixon and Ford Administrations*. Washington, DC: Brookings.

Reinhard, David W. 1983. *The Republican Right Since 1945*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Safire, William. 1978. *Safire's Political Dictionary*. New York: Ballantine.

Steinfels, Peter. 1980. *The Neoconservatives: The Men Who Are Changing America's Politics*. New York: Touchstone.

White, Theodore H. 1970. *The Making of the President 1968*. New York: Pocket Books.

_____. 1973. *The Making of the President 1972*. New York: Bantam.

Widnall, William B. 1968. "A Republican Program for Housing," in *Republican Papers*, Melvin R. Laird, ed. Pp. 276-288. New York: Praeger.

Wright, Nathan, Jr. 1968. *Let's Work Together*. New York: Hawthorn.

15

# In Search of a Message: Democrats in the Post-Great Society Era

*Jon F. Hale*

The quadrennial post-mortem on the Democratic Party has become one of the most predictable events in contemporary American politics given the party's loss of five of six presidential elections between 1968 and 1988. Much of that discussion revolves around the party's problems with defining a message and forming a national majority in support of it. The current era is a far cry from the previous period when New Deal liberalism defined the national party's outlook. From its genesis in the 1930s through its evolution to the Great Society liberalism of the mid-1960s, the Democratic message was both intelligible and popular.

Over the past quarter century, the Democrats have been a party in search of a message. Beginning in earnest in 1968, new issues gave rise to intra-party conflict as competing "associations" within the party emerged, tried to seize leadership of the party, and redefine its message. An insurgent association took control of the party and its message in 1972, but defeat at the polls opened the way for a prolonged period of conflict between the liberal and centrist associations within the party.

This struggle occurred largely outside of the institutional party. Informal, but competing, intraparty associations articulated their version of party messages through supportive elected officials, especially presidential candidates, and, often, through their own unofficial organizations. During this period, the national party organization was unable to bring intraparty conflict to closure; instead, it played the role of ensuring contending groups access to party affairs. The national party organization appears to have had little power to control or formulate party message on its own. It could not force presidential nominees to adhere to a party doctrine nor could it force competing associations to agree to accept a negotiated settlement over message. The reformed nominating system further complicated matters by allowing candidates with no ties to an identifiable association within the party to win the nomination and for that candidate's message to be a highly personal one.

This chapter traces the vicissitudes of the Democratic Party and the nature of intra-party conflict from 1968 to 1992. Early in the period, the insurgent New Politics liberals took control of party message, but their influence has eroded. By 1992, it appeared that the influence of party centrists was growing rapidly behind a message articulated originally by the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), a centrist unofficial party organization, which served as the basis for Gov. Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign for the nomination.

## Party Message and Intra-party Conflict

While American parties lack the clear, relatively distinct ideologies and specific programs that characterize parties in other Western democracies, they, nonetheless, have general outlooks that distinguish them from one another at any given time. "Party message," then, is used here to refer to this general outlook--the basic philosophy, agenda, and policy positions dominant in a party as well as the rhetoric that binds these elements together in public discourse. Because American parties traditionally have been more concerned with winning than with ideological principles, an enduring party message generally carries with it an electoral strategy that explains the pragmatic advantages the message provides in electoral competition.

As Ceaser (1991:91) reminds us, political parties are "associations of people who share a set of basic political values they seek to advance by presenting candidates for elective office." A party begins with a message that reflects the like-mindedness of the people who formed it and a successful party develops enduring institutional arrangements, including informal leadership. Over time, party message naturally evolves to take account of changes in the political environment. Because "message evolution" does not entail fundamental change, it is usually accomplished with relatively little intra-party conflict and is easily accommodated within the party's leadership structure. Inevitably, however, new issues arise that are fundamentally different from the dimension of conflict on which the prevailing party message is based. These issues create new cleavages within a party and lead to intra-party conflict over party message and formal party leadership. These periods are occasions for significant transformations in party message. The result is "message change."

While the rise of new issues creates the conditions for the development of intra-party conflict over party message, the most significant message change tends to occur when the party is out of the White House. When the party controls the White House, the president is the chief custodian of the party message, and insofar as he came to power under a different set of conditions, he will try to straddle the new issues or suppress new cleavages (Sundquist

1983:311). When the rise of new issues coincides with the party being out of the White House, on the other hand, conditions are ripe for intra-party struggle over party message and leadership.

The structure of the party organization conditions the process of message change. Existing institutional arrangements tend to be controlled by party "regulars" who adhere to the existing party message. As periods of intra-party conflict develop, party "regulars" can use these arrangements to head off "insurgents" pushing for message change. For their part, insurgents will try to advance reforms in the party's institutional arrangements designed to enhance their power in internal party affairs. Before they can change party message, they need to gain control of the party's institutional arrangements through which the presidential nomination is procured. Bear in mind, however, that most of the time American parties are *arenas* for conflict as much as they are coherent organizations. As Sundquist (1983:328) notes, parties are "unusually decentralized . . . and extraordinarily open to participation by any group that seeks to use a party for its purposes." During extended periods in which a party is "in power," the party's institutional arrangements may become, relatively speaking, closed, but never so closed as to suppress completely the challenge of insurgent groups (see chapter 13).

## From the New Deal to the Great Society

Beginning in the 1930s, the Democratic Party message was that of New Deal liberalism, the development of which arose as a response to the crisis of the Great Depression. For the most part, this message, centered on the notion that the national government ought to intervene actively in economic affairs and produce policies designed to assure the economic well-being of its citizens, evolved over the next decades to the New Frontier-Great Society liberalism of the 1960s, advanced by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson (Beck 1987; Hamby 1985). The party message remained fundamentally unchanged, but whereas New Deal liberalism promised to assist the masses of common people who needed assistance due to the Depression, Great Society liberalism promised to complete the New Deal agenda by focusing government activism on the resilient pockets of poverty that had remained impervious to New Deal programs and postwar economic growth. Great Society liberalism relied on the generosity of the new middle class that had benefitted handsomely from the New Deal and that was enjoying the fruits of unprecedented economic prosperity to extend government activism to the poor. In addition, Great Society liberalism vaguely aspired to extending the notion of government activism from economic matters to the quality of life: just as active government had helped create material prosperity, so it could help create a

more fulfilling life for its citizens. This idealism amounted to an attempt to extend the Democrats' message to "post-materialist" issues (Beer 1978).

The emergence of the civil rights issue presented the first opportunity for message change during the New Deal era. Roosevelt had avoided the issue in order to keep the party's electoral coalition together. In 1948, Truman supported a civil rights plank in the Democratic platform, which prompted the walkout of Southerners and the third-party Dixiecrat effort. Support for civil rights, however, was strong among party regulars, including President Truman. And, in some ways at least, support for civil rights was a logical extension of the philosophy of the New Deal, since civil rights were necessary for black Americans to ensure their economic and social well-being. For the next four elections, 1952-1964, the party message on civil rights evolved from nominal commitment to strong support for significant civil rights measures. Aside from Southern conservatives, the Democrats were united in 1964 around Lyndon Johnson and Great Society liberalism. By 1968, however, a new issue emerged that would cause intra-party conflict and, eventually, party message change.

## In Search of a Message, 1968-1992

### *1968: Vietnam and the Rise of an Insurgent Association*

The new issue which undermined Great Society liberalism was Vietnam, and by extension, the entire postwar foreign policy of containment, over which there had been a general consensus both within and among the parties since 1947. The insurgent antiwar candidacy of Sen. Eugene McCarthy and, to a lesser extent, that of Sen. Robert Kennedy, brought together an insurgent association inside the Democratic Party consisting of a younger generation of activists with a principled commitment to ending the war in Vietnam. In stark contrast to party regulars, those pragmatic "professionals" whose loyalty to the party was based on its reliability as a vehicle for getting elected, the insurgents were issue "purists," political "amateurs" who wanted to take control of the party for the expression of their position on Vietnam (Wilson 1962; Wildavsky 1971).

The candidates who brought together this insurgency attempted to capture the party through the presidential primaries, which they hoped to use as a springboard to convince various state and local party leaders, who still controlled most of the delegates, to capitulate to a change in message and leadership. Ultimately, Vice President Hubert Humphrey won the nomination with the backing of Johnson and party regulars without entering a single primary. Although Humphrey had played by the rules in winning the nomination, his refusal to go head-to-head with the insurgent candidates in

the primaries crystallized the insurgents' case for changing the party's nomination procedures.

Intra-party conflict developed in 1968 over the rise of a new issue, but party regulars, benefitting from party nomination procedures, resisted message change. The prospect of a close election in November, however, strengthened the insurgents' chances for message change during the next quadrennium. At the disorderly Democratic National Convention, in hopes of unifying the party for the general election, party regulars handed the insurgents a victory in accepting their minority report of the rules committee, which called for the appointment of a committee to reform the rules of the nominating process (Shafer 1983:12-40).

*1972: Triumph of New Politics Liberalism*

In 1972, the insurgent association had new party rules formulated in its image, a candidate, an electoral strategy, and a message. "New Politics" liberalism emanated from opposition to the war in Vietnam, but was a broader message by 1972. Allard Lowenstein, one of the leaders of the insurgent association, described the evolution from opposition to the war toward a more encompassing message:

> The one good thing about the war is that it peeled off a lot of assumptions, and caused us to see things we had never seen before. We began to realize the need for total overhaul of many aspects of the entire system, from foreign policy to the tax structure (quoted in Reichley 1972).

New Politics liberalism was a form of democratic idealism that emphasized equality and participation to a greater extent than did the message of the regular party. The new association challenged the postwar commitment to internationalism based on the containment of communism, arguing that such a policy often led the United States to impose its will undemocratically--and therefore immorally--in trouble spots around the world. Anti-communist fervor, they argued, led to the U.S. propping up anti-communist dictatorships and fighting popularly supported leftist movements that may not be controlled by communists. Vietnam was, of course, at the root of the New Politics liberal outlook on foreign affairs.

In keeping with their emphasis on equality, the New Politics liberals supported affirmative action policies over less comprehensive anti-discrimination measures. They had a "live-and-let-live" attitude toward alternative lifestyles and a complementary libertarian outlook on most of the new "social" issues. The New Politics liberals were less concerned with traditional pocketbook issues than they were with "post-materialist" issues like environmentalism (see Inglehart 1977). And finally, the New Politics liberals stood for the new politics inside the Democratic Party, a politics in which the

party's procedures were internally democratic, open to everyone, but subject to delegate quotas for women, minorities, and youth to ensure equality of representation.

The New Politics liberal message stood in stark contrast to the traditional centrist liberalism descended from the New Deal-Great Society era and associated in 1972 with party regulars -- party leaders, centrist elected officials, and labor leaders who represented rank-and-file Democrats. Presidential aspirants Humphrey, Edmund Muskie, and Henry Jackson all sought support from party regulars. On foreign policy, the party regulars considered Vietnam a rational response to the American responsibility to contain communism, the basis of American consensual foreign policy since 1948. The party regulars, therefore, generally supported the "justness," if not the actual conduct of the war. After having fought civil rights battles largely oriented toward enacting major anti-discrimination legislation, few party regulars were favorably disposed toward enacting measures that could result in "reverse discrimination" toward loyal Democratic constituencies. These same constituencies--the Democratic rank and file--consisted of blue collar, union, ethnic, and other middle-class voters whose rising affluence during the postwar era had confirmed their position in the middle class. Few party regulars, then, were very supportive of alternative lifestyles that appeared to mock traditional middle-class values. Finally, party regulars retained their concern over traditional pocketbook issues of the sort consistently emphasized by the party since the New Deal. New politics liberals did not oppose the old pocketbook issues of the New Deal, but were more favorably disposed toward pushing anti-poverty measures than policies designed to help middle-class Democrats, of whom there were many by 1972.

Party message change was accomplished in 1972 because a candidate of New Politics liberalism availed himself of new rules in the nominating process that had been promulgated by the insurgent New Politics association in the party. Led by George McGovern until he resigned to run for president, the Commission on Party Structure and Delegate Selection recommended and won sweeping changes in the process by which national convention delegates were selected. All delegates had to be selected through an open process. Party leaders and elected officials were subject to the same rules for delegate selection as everyone else. Quotas required state delegations to reflect the overall population in terms of gender, race, and age. As a result, many party leaders, elected officials, and party regulars were unable to win delegate positions in 1972. In contrast, the insurgent association coalesced behind the McGovern candidacy and utilized the new rules to its advantage while other Democratic contenders felt their way through the new process looking something like blindfolded men trying to negotiate a mine field.

Propounded most notably by Fred Dutton, a McGovern strategist, the New Politics electoral strategy was based on the idea that the Democratic

majority centered around pocketbook New Deal issues would not hold because of the recent upheavals in American politics. Some traditionally Democratic constituencies, such as white southerners, urban ethnics, and union members, would find themselves on the conservative right side of cultural and foreign policy issues, but others, including many affluent baby-boomers just coming of age, the well-educated, and the poor, would find themselves on the left side of the new issues. And it would be the latter groups that would provide the Democrats' new majority. Once the Vietnam war was over, Dutton argued with some prescience, the principal line of cleavage splitting the left and right would be cultural, not economic, as it had been for the previous three decades (Dutton 1971: 225).

Ultimately, however, the New Politics electoral strategy failed miserably in 1972, although some portion of the McGovern debacle can be attributed to the candidate's own missteps (the $1,000 "Demogrant," the Eagleton affair). Even so, there was no evidence of Dutton's New Politics majority in 1972. Many traditional Democrats bolted the party for precisely the reasons Dutton predicted, but there were far too few New Politics Democrats to offset those losses. As Scammon and Wattenberg pointed out in a rival thesis, because the "real majority" is "unyoung, unblack, and unpoor," Democrats should have continued to fight for the political center (1970:45). This meant a centrist message on cultural and foreign policy issues and a renewed emphasis on pocketbook issues. Although 1972 was the year when the New Politics liberals dominated the party and articulated its message, the landslide defeat signalled continued intra-party conflict over party message.

### *1976: Personal Message*

In the aftermath of the McGovern debacle, New Politics liberals were leaderless and, without the war as a rallying point, their message seemed less urgent. Moreover, as the association that led the party to an ignominious defeat, the New Politics forces found themselves on the defensive between 1972 and 1976.

After four years of ascendance in the party, New Politics forces had gained near-parity with centrist party regulars within the party organization. As was customary, the party nominee selected the Democratic National Committee (DNC) chair at the Democratic National Convention. In 1972, McGovern chose Jean Westwood of Utah, but after the election, party regulars on the DNC moved for Westwood's ouster in favor of Robert Strauss of Texas. Although Strauss owed his victory to party regulars, his chairmanship of the DNC was an exercise in balancing the major competing--and largely antagonistic--associations in the party (Parmet 1976:305). Preoccupied with ensuring that both centrist party regulars and New Politics liberals were fairly represented in party affairs, Strauss did little to reconcile

substantive differences within the party. Asked at one point what the party stood for, he replied, "Hell, I don't know. That's not my worry" (Broder 1974:39). In fact, Strauss did appoint the Advisory Council of Elected Public Officials in 1973, but it met only twice and its work sank without a trace (Broder 1974).

In contrast to New Politics liberals, centrist party regulars pushed for more moderate positions on cultural and defense issues, and an emphasis on economic issues, in keeping with the party's New Deal tradition, but the centrist message seemed short on specifics (Parmet 1976:308). Party reform of the nominating process, however, appeared to be working against party regulars, whose strength in party affairs rested with elected officials and local party leaders connected to traditional Democratic constituencies. The reforms severely undercut the influence of these party leaders in the nomination process (see Crotty 1978; Polsby 1983). In addition, the open process resulting from the reforms benefitted candidates who could activate a core of enthusiastic supporters in a large number of states.

The strongest candidate of the regular party in 1976 was Henry Jackson: supportive of middle-class values and New Deal economics, but hawkish on defense. Jackson met with little success in getting traditional Democrats out to work for him and to vote for him in the open nominating process. Under the old system, a Jackson candidacy might have impressed party leaders, and, in the general election, it might have brought out the traditional Democratic constituencies. In the new nominating system, however, Jackson was unable to generate much enthusiasm. Interestingly enough, New Politics candidates such as Fred Harris and Morris Udall failed to generate much enthusiasm either.

Everything fell into place for Jimmy Carter, a candidate who never would have stood a chance in the old nominating system. Carter diligently made his way across the country explaining his message to the idealistic amateurs whose support he needed to run a successful campaign. Capitalizing on public disillusionment with government and politics in the aftermath of Watergate, Vietnam, and the upheavals of the 1960s, Carter's message was a personal one, all but untranslatable as a party message. As an outsider, Carter told voters he would return government to decency and promised never to lie to the American people. It was a message that emphasized the separation that had grown between the presidency and the rest of the political system (Jones 1991) and the personalization of the presidency itself (Lowi 1985).

In any event, Carter's personal message did not pose a serious challenge to either the New Politics liberals or party centrists. Neither had very appealing candidates in 1976 and both hoped that Carter would turn out more like themselves than their rivals in the party. Hence, 1976 was a year in which the Democrats regained the presidency without a *party* message. It was every candidate for him or herself. As for Carter, he astutely took advantage

of the national mood to run on the basis of a personal message that had very little substantive content.

*1980: Defeat and Disarray*

When a party controls the White House, party message becomes infused with the president's message, which is based on his philosophy, agenda, issue positions, and overall performance in office. By 1980, it was apparent that Carter, who came into office on the basis of a largely non-substantive personal message, had done little to clarify what he stood for. Having run as an outsider and having tried to balance the competing associations in the party, Carter spent his term struggling to establish credibility as party leader, but succeeded only in alienating practically everyone (Skowronek 1988). Hence, the incumbent entered the 1980 election cycle with few allies in the party. Carter's weakness led Edward Kennedy to enter the race for the nomination. Since 1972, Kennedy had been considered by many elements of the party as the strongest Democratic candidate for president, but as he began his long-anticipated campaign, Kennedy seemed shockingly ill-prepared to articulate why he should replace the beleaguered incumbent president. Carter, helped by the Iran hostage crisis, built an insurmountable lead early in the nominating campaign. Kennedy found his legs midway through the process and won several important primaries, including New York and California, but these triumphs were too little, too late, and only served to weaken Carter's re-election chances.

On the whole, Democratic foreign policy resembled the neo-isolationism of New Politics liberalism, as did the party's liberal position on cultural issues such as affirmative action. Carter himself, however, all but conceded the failure of the New Politics foreign policy after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Further, it had become painfully clear during the Carter years that no one in the party had much to say on the economic front in the face of simultaneous inflation and unemployment unseen during the New Deal-Great Society era.

Neither Carter nor Kennedy was particularly unacceptable to New Politics liberals on the basis of foreign policy or cultural issues, but neither was particularly acceptable on other grounds. The centrist association in the party--heir of the old party regulars--was split: organized labor forthrightly supported Kennedy, while non-labor centrists generally stayed with Carter. Many New Politics liberals bolted the party altogether in 1980 in favor of the quixotic independent candidacy of former conservative Republican John B. Anderson, whose policies were at least as close to New Politics liberalism as Carter's were.

After the election, voting analysts argued, correctly, that the 1980 election was more a negative "retrospective" evaluation of Carter's presidency than it

was a positive "mandate" for the Republican's conservative message--hawkish foreign policy, conservative stances on cultural issues, and opposition to big government and high taxes (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 1990; Wattenberg 1991). But the Democrats' lack of a clear message in 1980 gave voters no other basis for their vote *other than* a personal evaluation of Carter's performance. The tattered remnants of New Politics liberalism remained in 1980 if only because no alternative had supplanted it since 1972. This allowed Republicans to remind voters, when necessary, that the message they had overwhelmingly rejected in 1972 was, after all, still alive in the party and there was little Democrats could do to refute the contention. Moreover, the lack of direction in economic policy from both centrist and liberal wings of the party during the Carter years allowed Republicans to argue that Democrats were no longer competent to manage the economy.

*1984: Neoliberalism*

In the aftermath of 1980, with Ronald Reagan in office and conservatism ascendant as public philosophy, the Democratic Party had been exposed as a party in disarray, unsure of what it stood for, and unclear about what it should do about it. The last occasion for message change had come with the rise of foreign policy and cultural issues beginning in 1968. The new party message on those issues had been electorally unsuccessful. In the early 1980s, the "new" issue was the economy. It was a new issue because the era of postwar economic growth had ended and the old Keynesian approach to managing the economy seemed no longer appropriate in the new economic context. Moreover, traditional Democratic constituencies, having risen from the ranks of the poor and working class to the relatively affluent middle class, had become more concerned about their taxes than government programs, particularly during periods of inflation.

Hence, the party found itself in the early 1980s needing to reformulate its economic message to address new realities *and* to address the unpopularity of its positions on foreign policy and cultural issues. In stark contrast, the Republican Party, led by a president who articulated a coherent message and in control of the Senate, was taking command of the national agenda.

There seemed to be little that the party organization itself could do to articulate a new party message. New DNC chair Charles Manatt moved aggressively on the idea of a party policy council, which, as in times past, was thwarted by the congressional leadership, who saw it as a threat to their own policy-making prerogatives (Arden 1988:53-60; see chapter 12). A new commission on nominating rules, the Hunt Commission, urged the creation of delegate slots for elected officials whose participation in the party nominating process had dropped precipitously since 1968. But the "superdelegates" in the otherwise unchanged new system would be unable to

play the screening role party leaders did in the old system. What, for example, would happen if a group of "superdelegates" tried to block the nomination of a candidate who emerged out of the open primary and caucus system as the front-runner?

The associations contending for power in the Democratic Party were reconstituted in 1984 (see Hale 1989). Largely due to economic issues, New Politics liberals split into two groups, which I shall call the "neoliberals" and the "social democrats." The first group argued that the slowly growing economy required a focus on the promotion of economic growth, *before* Democrats could extend the social welfare state. "Industrial policy" was the centerpiece of the new economic message -- government should coordinate with business and labor to target for investment promising new industries and take steps to ease the transition for workers caught in declining industries. In the face of the popular Reagan military build-up, the neoliberals argued that military strength could be achieved at less cost by emphasizing efficiency in military procurement.

While the neoliberals were New Politics liberals who had shed some of their original purist orientation to politics for pragmatism, the social democrats were purists through and through, unwilling to compromise their views for the sake of the party. The social democrats supported an extensive redistribution of wealth and power from the "corporate class" to the consuming and working classes. In a limited growth economy, they argued for more economic democracy. On foreign policy, they pushed for American withdrawal from the Cold War, and for massive cuts in defense spending. Both neoliberals and social democrats supported versions of the nuclear freeze and remained in general agreement on cultural issues. In the race for the nomination, Gary Hart emerged as the candidate closest to the neoliberals, while Jesse Jackson was the candidate most closely representing the social democrats.

Meanwhile, party centrists were also split in 1984, as they had been in 1980. Particularly hard hit by the new economic realities and by Reagan policies was organized labor. Its main concern was preservation of union jobs, wages, and benefits. The organized labor version of industrial policy was one designed to help ailing heavy industries preserve jobs and reinvest in plant and equipment. Hoping to unify labor behind a single candidate, the AFL-CIO endorsed Walter Mondale in late 1983.

Non-union party centrists--mainly moderates and conservatives from the South and non-union areas of the Midwest--regarded neoliberals and social democrats as too liberal, labor-centrists as too self-interested, and none sufficiently supportive of military strength. Yet this group had no coherent message or viable candidate in 1984 as Ernest Hollings and Reuben Askew were minor contenders who went nowhere in the early primaries.

Ultimately, Mondale, who had built links to both groups during his career, forged an alliance with neoliberals and labor centrists. Dubbed by many as "neoliberalism," the main new component of the Democratic message was economic, centered around the concept of industrial policy. As Ginsberg and Shefter (1985:15) have argued, industrial policy was an effective political message for bridging the gulf between party centrists and liberals:

> Whatever its economic merits, industrial policy can be viewed politically as a compact between the New Politics movement, which would gain influence over the allocation of capital, and organized labor, whose members are promised protection against lost jobs and income during the period of transition as well as job retraining for the high-technology industries of the future.

Perhaps inevitably, the Mondale alliance did not satisfy the left-out elements of the party, neither the social democrats nor the non-labor centrists. Nor did the neoliberal message resonate with voters, as the Democrats lost 49 states to the popular Republican incumbent.

*1988: Personal Message (Again)*

On the heels of Mondale's defeat, non-labor centrists formed the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), an extra-party organization of elected officials designed to articulate a "mainstream" message that would not be perceived by voters as too liberal or beholden to organized labor. Led by political entrepreneur Alvin From, the DLC built its own financial base, much of it from corporate lobbyists who were close to moderate Democrats in Congress, began collecting and developing new policy ideas, and sent its members on publicity tours to build support.

Paul Kirk, who became DNC chair after the 1984 election, was associated with the neoliberal alliance, but wanted to reduce the perception that "special interests" controlled the party and to moderate party message and policy. Fearing that the DLC would undercut his attempts to moderate the party from within, Kirk initially tried to co-opt the DLC by forming yet another policy council to formulate a party message for 1988. When it became clear that the DNC could not make the DLC go away, Kirk simply made his peace with the group and proceeded to cancel the midterm convention, cut back on national party sponsorship of various "special interest" caucuses, and arranged for the 1988 platform to be a brief, thematic document rather than an extensive listing of issue positions (see chapter 12). In short, Kirk helped create the conditions under which a broad thematic message could get accepted, but his efforts did little to create such a message (Hale 1991).

Southern elected officials and party leaders, many associated with the DLC, but operating independently of both the DLC and the DNC, engineered what amounted to a Southern regional primary in 1988, by simply using their

influence in their home states to persuade them to schedule nominating contests on the same day. The objective of "Super Tuesday" was to make the nominating process more amenable to a DLC-type moderate. Ultimately, however, the efforts of the DLC and its supporters drew only one centrist into the race, the young and relatively unknown Albert Gore Jr. Richard Gephardt was the candidate closest to labor and, as a leader of the DLC, Gephardt hoped to forge a new coalition of party centrists. Among liberals, Jesse Jackson once again was the candidate of the social democrats, but leading neoliberal candidates, Gary Hart and Joseph Biden, dropped out early due to allegations of womanizing and plagiarism, respectively.

Enter Michael Dukakis, a candidate generally acceptable to the neoliberal alliance. A relative unknown who had superior financial resources, Dukakis became the nominee by avoiding controversial positions and being content to let his less well-heeled rivals bloody one another and spend themselves to death. Dukakis' positions were basically neoliberal on foreign policy and cultural issues, but vague on economics. When he asked voters to elect him on the basis of "competence, not ideology," his message became another personal one, hard to translate as a *party* message. Dukakis proceeded to run a themeless general election campaign that called to question his competence at campaigning, if not governing. The Republicans managed once again to run against New Politics liberalism, because the Democrats had failed to replace that message with one that packed more electoral appeal. In so doing, the Bush campaign managed to demonstrate that the campaign was, indeed, about party message, in addition to candidate competence.

### *1992: Return to the Center*

The incoherence of the party message in 1988, coupled with the Republicans' caricature of New Politics liberalism prompted the DLC and the remnants of the New Politics forces themselves to redouble their efforts at forging a new party message for 1992. Despite its own lack of influence and even its failure to articulate a coherent alternative, the DLC saw 1988 as an election that vindicated its purpose. Thus, the DLC moved more forthrightly toward articulating a coherent centrist message that would be available for candidates to use in 1992. Between 1988 and 1992, the DLC created a think tank, held increasingly high-profile policy conferences and annual conventions, and increased its elected official membership to around 600, including nearly half of the Democrats in Congress.

The DLC message resembled the temperament of the early New Deal in its acceptance of active government but with a willingness to try innovative approaches to solving policy problems. It echoed the New Frontier in calling for a greater ethos of individual responsibility and mutual obligation. Its economic message was neoliberal in its support for "growth before

redistribution," but populist in its call for middle-class tax relief. On cultural issues, the DLC is pro-choice, and emphasizes the need to reduce racial tensions, by supporting "equality of opportunity, not outcomes." Originally echoing Republicans in its support of a strong national defense, the DLC's post-Cold War foreign policy position was "energetic engagement" but without the reliance on force seemingly preferred by Republican administrations (DLC 1990).

The enhanced profile of the DLC helped prompt the 1990 formation of a factional organization of party liberals called the Coalition for Democratic Values, which sought to articulate a message that could reinvigorate a liberal coalition of social democrats, neoliberals, and labor. Staunchly pro-labor and culturally liberal, the CDV argued that a massive "peace dividend" could pay for "current social and economic needs" (CDV 1990a, 1990b).

In the 1992 primaries, the DLC message was picked up *in toto* by Gov. Bill Clinton, former DLC chair. Sen. Tom Harkin was the candidate closest to CDV positions, while former California Gov. Jerry Brown's sympathy to CDV positions was largely overshadowed by his anti-establishment message and flat tax proposal. Former Gov. Paul Tsongas, an original neoliberal, stood astride the two factions, as a pro-business social liberal. The results of the 1992 nominating season gave Clinton the opportunity to define the party message in the centrist-DLC image.

## Conclusions

When a party finds itself both out of the White House and faced with the need to address new issues, the conditions are ripe for significant change in party message. Intra-party conflict occurs as competing associations try to articulate a message and take over the leadership of the party. Insurgent associations often find themselves handicapped by the existing structure of party organization and its procedures, so party reform becomes part of intra-party conflict.

In the Democratic Party, the New Politics liberals emerged in 1968, fought successfully for party reform, and took over party message and leadership in 1972. Their landslide defeat at the polls, however, prevented their consolidation of control over the party and led to a prolonged period of intra-party conflict with party centrists over party message -- prolonged, indeed, so that the main competing associations themselves recombined in the 1980s. While elements of it have remained a part of the message since 1972, New Politics liberalism has never again dominated. Party centrists, on the other hand, found their influence diminished by party reform and many moderate elected officials withdrew from national party politics altogether during the 1970s. In the 1980s, party centrists began reasserting themselves in party

affairs, pushing for party reforms and other changes designed to weaken their rival New Politics association (superdelegates, abolition of midterm conventions, Super Tuesday), and eventually formed an extra-party group intended to restructure party message.

At base, the Democrats' message problem stems from the diversity of the party and the breakdown of New Deal-Great Society liberalism, which covered the party's disparate parts adequately until the political landscape changed in the late-1960s. Since then, the party has not been able to consolidate support around a coherent message. There appears to be little the institutional party can do about this, except try to accommodate competing associations in party affairs and manage intra-party conflict, which is exactly what a succession of DNC chairs have done since 1972. Party policy councils appear to be one institutional tool that could help define party message, but they have met with little success since 1972, because no one takes them seriously as a means to clarify party message. DNC chairs have used them, instead, to gain credibility with competing associations by carefully balancing them with representatives from competing associations. The result has tended to be policy statements filled with generalities that have little real impact on party message.

Since 1984, party centrists have reasserted their interest in national party affairs, have organized themselves around the DLC, and that organization has begun a concerted effort to develop a new party message, one which Bill Clinton rode to the 1992 nomination. For the first time since 1968, party centrists had the upper hand in the politics of party message formation. And this appeared to pay off with electoral victory in 1992. The success--or failure--of the Clinton administration will, of course, have great bearing on the performance of the centrist message and the prospect for continued intra-party conflict.

## References

Abramson, Paul R., John H. Aldrich, and David W. Rohde. 1990. *Change and Continuity in the 1988 Elections*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Arden, Caroline. 1988. *Getting the Donkey Out of the Ditch: The Democratic Party In Search of Itself*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Beck, Kent M. 1987. "What was Liberalism in the 1980s?" *Political Science Quarterly* 102:233-57.

Beer, Samuel H. 1978. "In Search of a New Public Policy," in Anthony King, ed., *The New American Political System*. Pp. 5-44. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Broder, David S. 1974. "The Democrats' Dilemma." *The Atlantic*. March:31-40.

Ceaser, James W. 1991. "Political Parties--Declining, Stabilizing, or Resurging?" in Anthony King, ed. *The New American Political System*. Pp. 87-138 Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 2nd ed.

Coalition for Democratic Values. 1990a. "The Coalition for Democratic Values." Silver Springs, MD. Pamphlet.

_____. 1990b. "Taking on the Fight for the People." Silver Springs, MD. Pamphlet.

Crotty, William J. 1978. *Decision for the Democrats*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Democratic Leadership Council. 1991. "The New Orleans Declaration." Washington, DC: Pamphlet.

Dutton, Frederick G. 1971. *Changing Sources of Power*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Ginsberg, Benjamin and Martin Shefter. 1985. "A Critical Realignment? The New Politics, The Reconstituted Right, and the 1984 Election," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Elections of 1984*. Pp. 1-26. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Hale, Jon Frederick. 1989. "Intellectual Realignment in American Politics, 1964-1988." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta.

_____. 1991. "The Institutionalization of a Party Faction: The Case of the DLC." Paper delivered at the 1991 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.

Hamby, Alonzo. 1985. *Liberalism and its Challengers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Inglehart, Ronald. 1977. *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jones, Charles O. 1991. "The Separated Presidency," in Anthony King, ed., *The New American Political System*. Pp. 1-28. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 2nd ed.

Lowi, Theodore. 1985. *The Personal President*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Parmet, Herbert S. 1976. *The Democrats: The Years After FDR*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Polsby, Nelson W. 1983. *Consequences of Party Reform*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Reichley, A. James. 1972. "The Time Bomb Inside the Democratic Party," *Fortune*. February:126-31.

Scammon, Richard M., and Ben J. Wattenberg. 1970. *The Real Majority*. New York: Coward-McCann.

Shafer, Byron E. 1983. *Quiet Revolution: The Struggle For the Democratic Party and the Shaping of Post-Reform Politics*. New York: Russell Sage.

Skowronek, Stephen. 1988. "Presidential Leadership in Political Time," in Michael Nelson, ed,. *The Presidency and the Political System*. Pp. 115-160. Washington, DC: CQ Press., 2nd ed.

Sundquist, James L. 1983. *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institutions.

Wattenberg, Martin P. 1991. *The Rise of Candidate-Centered Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wildavsky, Aaron. 1971. *The Revolt Against the Masses: And Other Essays on Politics and Public Policy*. New York: Basic Books.

Wilson, James Q. 1962. *The Amateur Democrat: Club Politics in Three Cities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

16

# Controlling the Mischief of Faction: Party Support and Coalition Building Among Party Activists

*John C. Green*

*James L. Guth*

Coalition building is among the principal tasks expected of American political parties. On practical grounds, broad-based coalitions are considered important to winning election, and on theoretical grounds, they are regarded as necessary for effective government once elections are won. Among the major obstacles to party coalition building, however, has been party factionalism, reflecting both the diversity of the polity at large and the weaknesses of party organizations themselves.

In recent times, politicians, pundits, and scholars have been preoccupied with strengthening party organizations as a means of controlling the "mischief of faction." For example, the reform efforts of Democratic Party leaders since 1968 were in part attempts to cope with factional disputes devolving from the breakup of the New Deal coalition. Similarly, the renewal efforts undertaken by Republican National Chairmen Ray Bliss and Bill Brock were in part an antidote to factional divisions arising in the post-New Deal era. Advocates of both reform and renewal believe that parties are crucial mediating institutions, forums where, among other things, factions can be molded into coalitions. In one way or another, support for party among political activists is seen as critical to the success of such a mediating role (cf. McCorkle and Fleishman 1982; Ranney 1975).

Here we look at the relationship between factions, party support, and coalition building among an increasingly important set of party activists: financial donors to national and state party committees and the campaign organizations of presidential aspirants. We find different kinds of factionalism among Democratic and Republican activists, and related differences in type and intensity of support for their respective parties. Overall, support for party policy positions and amateur political style, which are most common among Democrats, tend to undermine coalition building, while organizational support and professional political style, which are most common in the GOP, tend to

enhance coalition building. These findings help account for the relative unity of the major party activist corps, and thus have important implications for the likely impact of stronger parties, be they "reformed" or "renewed."

## Party Factions and Party Support

"Factions" of all sorts were, of course, regarded as suspect by the American founders, and although the legitimacy of conflict *between* political parties is now accepted, conflict *within* them is still viewed with considerable skepticism. Part of the problem is conceptual: the most common notion of faction is inherently pejorative and the term is routinely used to discredit rather than describe political actors. Indeed, a diverse terminology has developed to avoid these negative connotations and gain analytic precision, including "associations" (Ceaser 1991), "tendencies" (Rose 1964), "issue groups" (Kessel 1984), "clusters" (Reiter 1981), and "coalitions" (Shafer 1983). After surveying this bewildering vocabulary, Sartori (1976) suggested a generic term, "fraction," to encompass all such sub-groups within parties--a suggestion that may not improve matters much.

Here we will employ the most common American usage of "faction," although we are aware of its limitations, particularly in a comparative context. We follow Polsby:

> Factions are the name for the natural parts of a complex political system such as that prevailing in the United States. Factions organize interests, the felt needs of individuals which are seen to be in some sense capable of satisfaction by means of government policy. And in order to be more than "interest groups" or "pressure groups," they must exist to some substantial degree in and through the party system, providing a mass base, an ideological format, an organizational matrix, or all three, for the expression of interests by means of party policy or party effort (1978:108).

Factions are thus the basic, narrow interests expressed in parties that underlie any broader consensus. Or put another way, factions are the raw material from which coalitions are consciously fabricated. By "coalition" we will mean both cooperation among political actors with non-congruent interests as well as the joint alignment of such actors resulting from such cooperation (Hinckley 1981). These definitions are useful precisely because they highlight the tension between narrower and broader interests that lies at the heart of party politics.

Of course, these definitions allow for many different kinds of factions. For example, one might imagine a case were a strong "organizational matrix" is tied to an explicit "ideological format" representing a well-defined "mass base" (e.g. an "organized faction"?), and similarly, one could imagine cases where only one of these elements is present, or on the other extreme, where

all elements are poorly developed (e.g. a "factional tendency"?). While a full elaboration of the types of factions is beyond the scope of this chapter, we can made a few distinctions that are helpful in identifying the raw material for coalitions among party activists.

One way to look at factions is *vertically*, distinguishing among levels of partisan politics. Three such levels have been commonly recognized: party leaders (Goldman 1990), activists (Eldersveld 1989), and identifiers (Petrocik 1983). Crucial to this notion is the kind of resources controlled by actors. Another way to look at factions is *horizontally*, distinguishing among the substantive foci of partisans at a particular level of politics. Three such differences are often discussed: leadership or candidate followings (Miller and Jennings 1986), issue or ideological groupings (Kessel 1984), and socio-demographic blocs (Axelrod 1972). Crucial to this concept is the variety of interests held by actors.

Yet another way to look at factions is *temporally*, distinguishing the degree of partisan mobilization at a particular level and substantive focus of politics. Three such situations can be easily imagined: actors mobilized for specific decisions (such as leadership and platform fights), for more general decision-making processes (such as conventions and campaigns), and as part of broader forms of participation (such as voting in primary and general elections). Crucial to this notion is the type of political outcomes sought by actors (Belloni and Beller 1976).

Although most theories of coalition building focus on one level of politics, one set of substantive differences, and one decision or decision-making process, many discussions of party coalitions mix vertical, horizontal, and temporal concepts of faction in an ad hoc fashion. It is common, for example, to discuss elite issue groupings alongside demographic voting blocs, or to define elites in terms of rival candidacies, and activists in terms of issues. Also, scholars often rely on specific disputes to identify factions, giving prominence to groups actively in opposition at one time, but ignoring those temporarily allied or quiescent. Such practices are quite understandable if the focus of inquiry is salient political events, but a fuller understanding of factions and coalitions requires a more systematic approach.

A good place to look for party factions is among issue groupings of activists, mobilized as part of highly competitive presidential campaigns. This mid-level approach to defining factions offers four advantages for our purposes. First, ideological groupings play a prominent role in theories of coalition building, and party politics has become increasingly ideological in recent times. Second, both the issue positions of activists and the activist corps itself change slowly compared to specific sources of conflict, thus representing relatively stable reservoirs of basic political interests. Third, activists are the backbone of party politics, being both the source and primary

constituents of party leaders and candidates. And finally, the range and depth of party activists are likely to be fully exemplified in competitive presidential campaigns.

A key concept in most theories of coalition building is issue proximity, namely, that actors with the most similar issue positions are the most likely to coalesce (Hinckley 1972). One corollary is that the less diversity exists among actors, the easier coalition building will be. Another corollary is that the relative size of actor groupings influences the ease of coalition building: larger groupings can more easily serve as the basis of a successful coalition than smaller ones. One problem with such hypotheses, however, is the tendency to confuse successful coalition building with a lack of diversity among actors, or alternatively, to assume that unsuccessful or weak coalitions are the product of the complexity of actor groupings. Indeed, it is important to distinguish between a party unified by naturally occurring homogeneity (for example, demographic uniformity) and one unified by means of successful coalition building (that is, by means of politics).

This last point is important because other factors have been found to influence coalitional behavior once issue proximity has been taken into account (Hinckley 1981:52). For example, the extent and kind of participation in organized politics is likely to increase cooperation among actors as is support for common policy positions and political leaders. Along another plane, greater material and solidary motivations among actors and a "professional" style of politics are likely to influence coalition building as well. While all such factors are often subsumed under ideology in discussions of intra-party conflict, issue proximity and various forms of party support represent conceptually distinct dimensions of coalitional behavior (Orren 1982).

It is commonly believed that stronger parties facilitate coalition building in part because they encourage increased party support among activists. For example, advocates of party reform believe that more inclusive party rules help make parties more coherent in policy terms and thus more attractive to activists (cf. Crotty 1978). Similarly, proponents of party renewal argue that more effective services help make parties more competitive in elections and thus more valuable to activists (cf. Pomper 1980). Despite the difference in emphasis, both these positions rest on the assumption that party support of one kind or another helps mold factions into coalitions.

Although we have no direct measures of reform or renewal available to us here, we can assess the extent to which party support is associated with coalitional behavior among activist factions. After a brief description of Democratic and Republican factionalism, we will examine the effects of party support on presidential coalitions in 1988 and previous elections.

## Data and Methods

This chapter is based on two parallel mail surveys of stratified random samples of major financial donors to the state and federal committees of the Democratic and Republican Parties and the campaign committees of their presidential candidates in 1988.[1] The absence of an incumbent president in the 1988 race produced an exceptionally competitive pre-nomination struggle in both parties that mobilized an extraordinary number of donors. While campaign contributors may not fully represent the party activist corps, they are surely central to it, being sociologically elite, extremely active, and quite diverse politically (Brown et al. 1991).

Both surveys contained common questions designed to tap the issue differences *between* the major parties, and then separate queries concerned with differences *within* each party. In total, there were 69 items evenly divided between economic, social, and foreign policy. In addition, there were parallel batteries concerning support for each party's presidential contenders in contested nominations over the last twenty years. Of particular interest here were 58 items measuring support for parties: involvement in party politics, support for elected and appointed party leaders, support for party policy positions on economic, social and foreign policy, motivations for political involvement (tapping purposive, solidary, and material motivations), and political style (amateur or purist and professional attitudes).

The first step in our analysis was to describe issue-based factions among these activists. Building on our previous work (Green and Guth 1991), we first assessed divisions between and then among Republicans and Democrats by means of cluster analysis.[2] These analyses produced five Democratic and seven Republican "factions." Having identified such differences within each party, we investigated varieties of party support by means of factor analysis, generating four readily interpretable dimensions for each sample.[3] Factor scores were then used to assess the impact of party support on presidential coalitions.

## Major Party Factions

As indicated above, our analysis produced five factions in the Democratic Party (four internal divisions and a group of self-identified Republicans) and seven factions in the Republican Party (six internal divisions and a tiny group of self-identified Democrats). No doubt some observers will be surprised with these findings, given the common image of the Democrats as being more diverse than the Republicans. It should be remembered, however, that we are dealing with political activists, who are characterized by high social status. The Democrats were, in fact, somewhat more diverse in terms of race, gender

and ethnicity, had a modestly greater range of opinion on many issues, and showed somewhat more polarization across issues as a whole. But even so, Republican activists show considerably more diversity than is commonly recognized (but cf. Gopoian et al. 1987).[4] Indeed, in terms of theories of coalition building, the Democratic activists should have less difficulty coalescing than the Republicans.

*Democratic Factions*

Table 16.1 describes the five factions identified among Democratic activists and some of their distinguishing attitudes. Ranging from left to right are the "New Politics" faction (29.5% of the Democratic activists), the "Regular Liberals" (29.2%), "Neoconservatives" (21.3%), the "Populists" (11.0%), and self-identified Republicans who donated to Democratic committees (8.9%). This latter group and their counterparts in the GOP participated largely for instrumental reasons, revealing the permeability of the major parties (Green and Guth 1986).[5] When compared to the GOP, the Democratic activists show greater division over ideology, extending across issue domains. Democratic factionalism revolves around the ideological content of the party, with fewer and larger factions contending over the exact meaning of liberalism. What follows is a brief description of each of these factions.

**1. The New Politics Faction.** We affix the "New Politics" label to the largest of the Democratic factions because they closely resemble the most widely discussed contemporary movement within the party (Edsall 1984). This faction accounts for nearly three-tenths of the Democratic activist corps and is the most consistently liberal (Table 16.1). This liberalism extends from of self-identified ideology (77% "extremely" or "very" liberal) to economic policy (70% strongly advocated expanding welfare programs) to social issues (83% pro-choice on abortion) and foreign policy (86% favored closer ties with the former Soviet Union). Indeed, these activists stand in marked contrast to the other Democratic factions in their commitment to the contemporary liberal agenda, one tempered in an era of conservative presidents (Beck 1987).

Given the anti-establishment rhetoric of the "New Politics," the deep commitment of these activists to the Democratic Party may be surprising: more than three-quarters regard themselves as strong or regular Democrats, more than any other faction. The outsiders seem to have become insiders, although they still show evidence of their insurgent heritage. They were most common in Jesse Jackson's and Gary Hart's 1988 campaigns, and in the Democratic National Committee. Their favorite Democratic leaders include George McGovern, Edward Kennedy, and Mario Cuomo. In recent times, these activists have been involved in Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition,

Table 16.1 Ideological Factions Among Democratic Party Activists

| | New Politics | Reg Liberals | Neo Consers. | Popu -lists | Rep Donors |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Weighted N | (946) | (934) | (683) | (353) | (284) |
| % of Cases | 29.5% | 29.2% | 21.3% | 11.0% | 8.9% |
| SELF-IDENTIFICATIONS | | | | | |
| Liberal* | 77% | 42% | 12% | 5% | 2% |
| Democratic | 78% | 61% | 42% | 33% | 0% |
| ECONOMIC ISSUES | | | | | |
| Fight unemployment over inflation | 55% | 50% | 18% | 6% | 4% |
| Spend more on welfare programs | 70% | 52% | 34% | 12% | 14% |
| Pro labor union policies | 75% | 34% | 21% | 9% | 0% |
| Anti tax breaks for business | 33% | 30% | 25% | 42% | 32% |
| Anti government aid to business | 23% | 17% | 20% | 46% | 44% |
| SOCIAL ISSUES | | | | | |
| Pro abortion on demand | 83% | 79% | 52% | 64% | 45% |
| Pro affirmative action | 78% | 42% | 23% | 4% | 5% |
| More rights for working women | 91% | 50% | 64% | 10% | 22% |
| More rights for gays and lesbians | 81% | 19% | 25% | 4% | 6% |
| More rights for gun owners | 11% | 2% | 24% | 6% | 9% |
| FOREIGN POLICY | | | | | |
| Anti "Star Wars" program | 62% | 36% | 19% | 10% | 4% |
| Anti immigration restrictions | 59% | 33% | 15% | 24% | 24% |
| Anti troops to the Persian Gulf | 58% | 45% | 28% | 29% | 17% |
| Pro better ties with the USSR | 86% | 65% | 61% | 41% | 58% |
| Trade restrictions to save jobs | 28% | 38% | 53% | 25% | 30% |

* Table entries are the percentage of each group taking the two most extreme positions on a seven-point scale, e.g. liberal percentage is "extremely" and "very" liberal combined.
*Source:* Surveys by the Authors

Howard Metzenbaum's Coalition for Democratic Values and its ally, the Campaign for New Priorities.

The demography of this faction closely matches the common image of liberal activists. For example, better than one-half reside in the major metropolitan areas of the East and West coasts and are under 50 years old, and almost one-half are women. In addition, they are drawn overwhelmingly from "New Class" professions, such as lawyers, writers, artists, and college professors. Highly educated, affluent but not often wealthy, these activists are deeply involved in the public sector, either employed directly or in related professions and non-profit agencies. But perhaps their most striking feature is cultural: these activists are by far the least religious, with 34% claiming that religion was unimportant in their lives. Indeed, secular people are the largest ethnocultural group.

**2. The Regular Liberals.** The next most liberal and Democratic faction, which we call the "Regular Liberals," are almost as numerous as the New Politics activists and together they account for just under three-fifths of all Democratic activists. Indeed, these factions closely resemble one another when compared to Republican activists.[5] There are, however, important differences between them, with the Regular Liberals taking their cues from the liberalism of the New Frontier and Great Society era (Beer 1978).

To begin with, the Regular Liberals are markedly less liberal in self-identification (42% extremely or very liberal) and are much less supportive of expanding welfare programs or unionization (Table 16.1). Even larger differences occur on social and foreign policy matters, where the Regular Liberals are more skeptical of affirmative action and expanded rights for working women and gays. Indeed, their moderation on many social issues even exceeds that of the Neoconservatives, a rival centrist faction. The Regular Liberals are also more moderate on foreign policy, including less opposition to the "Star Wars" missile defense system and immigration restrictions, and less support for closer ties with the former Soviet Union.

Although the Regular Liberals are only modestly less committed to the Democratic Party (61% are strong or regular Democrats), their greater moderation shows up in the candidates they supported and leaders they admire. The Regular Liberals were most numerous among the 1988 campaigns of Michael Dukakis, Joseph Biden and Paul Simon, and they are also common in national Democratic party committees, particularly the "Hill" committees. Their favorite Democratic leaders include Edward Muskie, Walter Mondale, and Bill Bradley. In terms of demography, they depart modestly from the pattern of the New Politics activists as well: they are older, less metropolitan and more masculine, and more likely to be employed in the private sector. And they are also more religious, with only one-fifth regarding

religion as unimportant in their lives and claiming no religious affiliation. Catholics and Jews are the most numerous ethnocultural groups.

**3. The Neoconservatives.** We dub the next largest Democratic faction "Neoconservatives" because they resemble the intellectual movement by the same name. Making up roughly one-fifth of the Democratic activist pool, this faction draws inspiration from the liberalism of the New and Fair Deals. These activists have consciously adopted a more "centrist" position on many issues and do indeed appear "conservative" when comparison to the leftward Democratic factions, but not when matched with conservative Republicans. Activists resembling another intellectual movement, the "Neoliberals," are principally located with the Neoconservatives in this analysis, but not in our previous work.[7]

The Neoconservatives hardly identify as liberals at all, (only 12% are extremely or very liberal), but at the same time, better than four-fifths regard themselves as Democrats (Table 16.1). Such moderation extends to economic policy, with substantially fewer activists giving unemployment priority over inflation, willing to expand welfare spending, or support unionization. Note, however, that when compared to the leftward factions, they are equally sympathetic (and no less opposed) to the tools of "political capitalism," tax breaks and government aid to business. They are also as strongly supportive of "industrial policy" as the New Politics and Regular Liberals (data not shown).

The Neoconservative's biggest distinctive come on social and foreign policy. With a couple of exceptions (such backing as rights for working women), the Neoconservatives are skeptical of the liberal social agenda, and more supportive of rights for traditionalist groups, such as gun owners. And they are markedly more hawkish on foreign policy, ranging from a greater willingness to use troops in the Persian Gulf to more support for "Star Wars." In addition, the Neoconservatives are by far the strongest supporters of trade restrictions to protect the American jobs.

As might be expected, these issue positions are reflected in the candidates they supported and leaders they admire. The Neoconservatives were most common in the 1988 presidential campaigns of Richard Gephardt, Albert Gore and Bruce Babbitt, and the state Democratic committees outside the Northeast. They most admire Sam Nunn, Chuck Robb, and John Glenn. In recent times, these "centrists" are the principal constituency of the Democratic Leadership Council, the base of Bill Clinton's successful 1992 presidential campaign. Interestingly enough, Clinton himself was not particularly popular among these activists in 1988.

As with the other factions, there is a demographic basis for Neoconservatism. These activists are more common in the small cities and towns of South and West, although a strong contingent lives in the Northeast

as well. More than one-half are self-employed, and they are less well-educated and affluent that the leftward factions. As one might expect, they are also far more religious: less than one-tenth regard religion as unimportant in their life and claim no religious affiliation. The largest ethnocultural groups are mainline Protestants, followed by Catholics and evangelicals.

**4. The Populists.** Journalists and scholars routinely identify varieties of "populists", activists mixing conservative social policy with liberal economics, and politicians as distinct as Jesse Jackson, Pat Robertson, David Duke, and Jerry Brown exhibit some populist tendencies (Hertzke 1993). We use this label for the smallest Democratic faction (about one-tenth of the Democratic activist corps) because it fits this pattern when compared to other Democrats, and because when Democrats and Republicans are clustered together, this group links up with a similar one among Republicans.[8] These Populists harken back to a pre-New Deal version of "liberalism," one largely hostile to big institutions of any kind.

The Democratic Populists are roughly divided between moderates and conservatives, containing only a handful of self-identified liberals. Only one-third identify strongly as Democrats, with large numbers having moved away from the party since their youth. This pattern extends to the standard liberal positions on economics, such as fighting unemployment and increasing welfare spending, although their positions here are moderate rather than right-wing. They are deeply hostile to tax breaks and aid to business as well as regulatory, environmental and foreign aid programs, and are more in favor of traditional economic development policies, such as agricultural and transportation subsidies.

Much more dramatic differences appear on social and foreign policy issues. Aside from a pro-choice position on abortion (which is an anti-government position here), the Populists are very conservative on social issues, and outright opposed to expanding rights to other any other groups, from racial minorities to gun owners. They also support a more aggressive foreign policy, including a strong preference for deploying troops in the Persian Gulf, opposition to the (former) Soviet Union, and support for immigration restrictions. Interestingly, this pattern does not extent to trade restrictions to protect jobs, where the Populists are the least protectionist of the Democratic factions.

Populists are generally alienated from the national Democratic Party and its leaders, but their location in campaign and party committees generally parallels the Neoconservatives, and they have a special affection for former President Jimmy Carter. Their demography also resembles the Neoconservatives, with modest differences: they are predominantly younger,

self-employed men of moderate means, three-fifths from Catholic or Jewish backgrounds.

*Republican Factions*

Table 16.2 describes the seven factions we identified among Republican activists and some of their distinguishing attitudes. Ranging also from left to right are Democrats who contributed to Republican committees (.6% of the GOP activists), the "Progressives" (9.9%), "Moderates" (10.7%), "Stalwarts" (28.1%), "Supply-Siders" (14.8%), "Populists" (25.5%), and "Hard Right" (10.5%). When compared to the Democrats, the Republican activists show less ideological polarization, but more variation across issue domains. Thus, Republican factionalism revolves around the partisan implementation of conservatism, with more and smaller factions contending over party priorities. What follows is a brief description of these factions.

1. **The Progressives.** There has always been an identifiable left wing of the Republican Party, one basically sympathetic to a strong and active government in domestic affairs (Rae 1989). Theodore Roosevelt was perhaps the best exemplar of this position, and thus "Progressive" is a good label for the least conservative GOP faction, one comfortable with much of post-war liberalism. Although many analysts believe that "liberal" Republicanism has steadily declined in the last twenty years, the Progressives and an adjacent faction, the Moderates, each account for about one-tenth of the GOP activist corps.

The Progressives actually identify more as conservatives (45% extremely or very conservative) than as Republicans (36% strong or regular Republicans) (Table 16.2). This pattern reflects opposition to values and interests now central to the GOP. For example, the Progressives don't support cutting welfare spending or giving priority to fighting inflation, and they are less opposed to tax breaks and government aid to business. Indeed, this faction is the only one to significantly depart from the Republican orthodoxy of low taxes and less domestic spending (data not shown).

The Progressives are less out of step on social and foreign policy, although their positions are among the least conservative. For instance, they are the least opposed to affirmative action, the most strongly supportive of increased rights for minorities, and among the most pro-choice on abortion. Indeed, their support for expanding rights extends to church schools and gun owners as well. Similarly, they are the strongest proponents of closer ties with the former Soviet Union and the United Nations, and the least sympathetic to the "Star Wars" program. Furthermore, they are the most supportive of trade restrictions to protect jobs.

These unusual issue positions have not isolated the Progressives from other Republicans, however, and they are widely distributed across candidate

Table 16.2 Ideological Factions Among Republican Party Activists

| | Dem Donors | Progre -ssives | Mode -rates | Stal -warts | Supply Siders | Popu -lists | Hard Right |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Weighted N | ( 19) | (316) | (342) | (900) | (472) | (816) | (337) |
| % of Cases | .6% | 9.9% | 10.7% | 28.1% | 14.8% | 25.5% | 10.5% |
| SELF-IDENTIFICATIONS | | | | | | | |
| Conservative* | 18% | 45% | 64% | 81% | 82% | 93% | 95% |
| Republican | 0% | 36% | 54% | 68% | 69% | 76% | 86% |
| ECONOMIC ISSUES | | | | | | | |
| Cut welfare programs | 5% | 5% | 44% | 47% | 45% | 78% | 75% |
| Fight inflation not unemployment | 12% | 14% | 42% | 38% | 34% | 57% | 60% |
| Pro supply-side economics | 16% | 16% | 11% | 19% | 43% | 22% | 42% |
| Anti tax breaks for business | 40% | 17% | 45% | 35% | 45% | 64% | 56% |
| Anti government aid to business | 68% | 17% | 45% | 30% | 51% | 65% | 54% |
| SOCIAL ISSUES | | | | | | | |
| Anti abortion on demand | 33% | 49% | 56% | 48% | 63% | 67% | 80% |
| Anti affirmative action | 24% | 16% | 49% | 53% | 40% | 72% | 84% |
| More rights for gun owners | 7% | 18% | 15% | 32% | 18% | 6% | 59% |
| More rights for church schools | 22% | 25% | 9% | 28% | 31% | 9% | 53% |
| More rights for minorities | 50% | 61% | 19% | 18% | 40% | 2% | 16% |
| FOREIGN POLICY | | | | | | | |
| Pro "Star Wars" program | 17% | 39% | 48% | 64% | 71% | 74% | 93% |
| Pro immigration restrictions | 30% | 34% | 36% | 43% | 46% | 50% | 55% |
| Oppose United Nations | 1% | 3% | 17% | 34% | 21% | 48% | 78% |
| Oppose better ties with USSR | 40% | 29% | 56% | 66% | 56% | 82% | 95% |
| Trade restrictions to save jobs | 33% | 38% | 27% | 36% | 30% | 12% | 24% |

* Table entries are the percentage of each group taking the two most extreme positions on a seven-point scale, e.g. conservative percentage is "extremely" and "very" conservative combined.
*Source:* Surveys by the Authors

and party committees. Not surprisingly, these activists most admire leaders such as Bob Packwood and Lowell Weicker, and in recent times supported Republicans for Choice and the Republican Majority Coalition. In demographic terms, the Progressives look most like the liberal Democratic donors: they are youngest, most female, metropolitan, and Northeastern of the Republican factions. Many work in the public sector or in professions related to government, but an equal number find employment with national corporations, and although they are affluent, few are wealthy. The Progressives are the least religious of the Republican factions, but are far more observant that the leftward Democratic factions. In addition, they contain the fewest Protestants, mixing a plurality from the mainline churches with Catholics, Jews, evangelicals, and secularists.

**2. The Moderates.** We label this left-of-center faction "Moderates" because they resemble the self-proclaimed moderates of the Eisenhower and Nixon administrations, pragmatists who basically accepted and sought to improve upon the government's expanded role in the post-war era (Hess and Broder 1967). Although often accused of lacking "principles," this faction represents only a modest and issue-specific "moderation" of mainstream Republican positions. Slightly more numerous than the Progressives, they differ on more issues than they agree.[9]

These "moderates" are, in fact, quite conservative, with almost two-thirds identifying as extremely or very conservative, but are less committed to the GOP, with only slightly more than one-half identifying as strong or regular Republicans (Table 16.2). Unlike the Progressives, the Moderates hold conservative positions on issues central to the GOP, such as cutting welfare spending and giving inflation priority over unemployment, but they are opposed to supply-side economics as well as tax breaks and government aid to business. A similar situation obtains for social issues: they match the GOP mainstream on abortion and affirmative action, but are skeptical of expanding rights for most groups, including conservative ones. The Moderates are generally internationalist on foreign policy, standing between the Progressives and the rest of the party, except on trade, where they are modestly less protectionist.

Like the Progressives, the Moderates are found across the GOP campaign and party committees. As might be expected, they were particularly supportive of Howard Baker, Donald Rumsfeld, and Robert Dole in 1988, and were common in Northeastern state Republican committees. They most admire leaders such as Baker, Dole, and former president Gerald Ford. In demographic terms, the Moderates tend to resemble the Progressives, although they are the oldest faction, more masculine, and more metropolitan. They are more likely to be have professional occupations in the private sector, and are the most likely to work for multinational corporations. They are also

somewhat more religious and drawn overwhelmingly from mainline Protestant churches, more so, in fact, than the other Republican factions.

**3. The Stalwarts and Supply-Siders.** The business community has always played a central role in the Republican Party and we label the centrist Republican faction the "Stalwarts" because they resemble the traditional business interests in government dating from the 19th century (Meyer 1967; Reichley 1981). The differences between the Stalwarts and the more leftward factions have often been described as the division between "Main Street" and "Wall Street," while the differences between the Stalwarts and the more rightward factions arise on social and foreign policy matters. We also identified a related faction, the "Supply-Siders," named for their emphasis on economic policies that favor entrepreneurship, a sort of "Main Street" versus "Easy Street" distinction (cf. Schneider 1987).[10] These factions are the numerical the center of the party, accounting for better than one-quarter and about one-sixth of the GOP activist corps, respectively.

The Stalwarts and Supply-Siders are both solidly conservative (better than four-fifths extremely or very conservative) and Republican (more than two-thirds strong or regular Republicans) (Table 16.2). These activists represent the GOP mainstream on key issues such as cutting welfare spending and fighting inflation, but they differ on other economic policies. The Stalwarts are skeptical of supply-side economics, preferring instead the "old time religion" of tight money and balanced budgets (data not shown), and they are much less opposed to tax breaks and government aid to business. Supply-Siders are strong advocates of supply-side tax cuts, confident that "economic growth will balance the budget," and ironically, they are more opposed to the tax and spending policies that favor business.

These differences extend to some social and foreign policy questions as well. Interestingly, the Stalwarts are more supportive of a "conventional" individualism: pro-choice on abortion, opposed to affirmative action, and more supportive of expanded rights for established groups. On the other hand, Supply-Siders hold more to a "communitarian" individualism: less supportive of abortion, less opposed to affirmative action, and more supportive of expanding rights for disadvantaged groups. On foreign policy, the Stalwarts are more nationalistic and the Supply-Siders more internationalist. If foreign policy matters are ignored, a small "libertarian" faction can be carved from these two groups.

As might be expected, the Stalwarts were most common in the 1988 campaigns of George Bush, Alexander Haig, and national Republican party committees, while the Supply-Siders most favored Jack Kemp and Pete DuPont. But both factions admire centrist Republican leaders such as Bob Michel and James Baker. Stalwarts represent the Republican mainstream at

the state and local committees, and the Supply-Siders were the principal constituency for the Conservative Opportunity Society organized by congressional leaders in the late 1970s, and the Empower America organization that appeared in the wake of the 1992 defeat.

These factions also define the Republican demographic center of white, middle-aged businessmen. There is, however, a regional division between the Stalwarts and the Supply-siders: the former come from the small cities and towns of the South and Midwest, while the latter come from the metropolitan areas of the East and West coasts. The Stalwarts are older, more affluent, and tend to be owners or CEO's of small businesses and corporations; the Supply-Siders are by far the best-educated, show more upward mobility, and tend to be owners or partners in entrepreneurial ventures. Both groups are quite religious and composed mainly of mainline Protestants, with the Stalwarts including a small group of evangelicals and the Supply-Siders the largest number of Catholics.

**4. The Populists.** This large faction (about one-quarter of the GOP activist corps) is the Republican counterpart to the Democratic Populists discussed above, and it is considerably more conservative and Republican than we encountered in our previous analysis:[11] better than nine-out-of-ten identify as extremely or very conservative and three-quarters as strong or regular Republicans (Table 16.2). These activists are solidly middle-class and militantly hostile to "elites" of all sorts, but particularly those in government that go beyond maintaining order (Phillips 1983). Not surprisingly, these Populists are strongly opposed to the welfare state. They want welfare spending cut, inflation fought, special preferences for business ended, and supply-side economics abandoned. In addition, they strongly favor the gold standard and balanced budgets (data not shown).

But the defining characteristic of this faction is its position on social issues. In addition to very conservative positions on abortion and affirmative action, they are adamantly opposed to extending special rights to any groups, be they liberal or conservative. Indeed, this pattern is one of the principal differences between the Populists and the Hard Right, the most rightward of the GOP factions. Other differences appear on foreign policy, where the Populists show conservative but less extreme positions across the board, with the exception of trade, where, like their Democratic counterparts, they are strongly opposed to trade restrictions.

The Republican Populists did not have one home in the 1988 campaign, being equally common in the campaign committees of George Bush and Pat Robertson, and they are particularly fond of former President Ronald Reagan. The Republican Populists are quite different in demographic terms from their Democratic counterparts, closely resembling the Stalwarts in age, gender,

region, and education. However, they are more likely to be middle managers in regional and national corporations, and are less affluent. Although they include more evangelical Protestants, they are actually somewhat less religious, nearly matching the Progressives in this regard.

**5. The Hard Right.** Although extremely conservative activists have been evident in the GOP since the turn of the century, the "Hard Right" is best known for its unremitting opposition to the New Deal and its involvement in the Cold and "culture" wars of the post-war era (Miles 1980). Long associated with "movement" conservatism, this faction came to power in the party twice in the last twenty years, first, under Barry Goldwater, then later and more successfully under Ronald Reagan. In many ways the Hard Right is the opposite, not of the Progressives or Stalwarts, but of the Democratic New Politics faction, with which, ironically, it shares an insurgent style of politics. The Hard Right represents a militant and thorough-going traditionalism, and has often exercised influence beyond its modest numbers (about one-tenth of the GOP activist corps).[12]

The Hard Right is both the most conservative (95% extremely or very conservative) and Republican (86% strong or regular) faction and holds the most extreme positions on many issues (Table 16.2). For example, it strongly favors free enterprise (60% give priority to inflation over unemployment), traditional social values (only 20% are pro-choice on abortion), including strong support for expanding the rights of conservative groups and not their liberal opponents, and an aggressive foreign policy (only 5% favored closer ties with the former Soviet Union). The one exception to their uniform conservatism is on trade, where they are modestly protectionist (largely for national security reasons).

In 1988, the Hard Right was most prominent in Pat Robertson's campaign and Ronald Reagan's old PAC, Citizens for the Republic, but were common in Southern, Midwestern, and Western state Republican committees as well. Not surprisingly, they most admire Jesse Helms, Barry Goldwater, and William Buckley. This faction provided Pat Buchanan with much of his support in the 1992 Republican primaries. The Hard Right differs only modestly from other Republican factions in demographic terms, failing to match the right-wing stereotype in many respects. For instance, they are better-educated than the Stalwarts, less Southern than the Populists, younger than the Moderates, more often employed in national corporations than the Progressives, and more upwardly mobile than the Supply-Siders. However, the Hard Right is the most masculine and by far the most religious. One-quarter are evangelical Protestants, with conservative mainliners and traditionalist Catholics common as well.

**Party Support Among Activist Factions**

In what ways and to what extent do these factions exhibit support for their respective parties? As indicated above, we find four dimensions of party support in both samples: traditional organizational support, support for party policy positions, amateur or purist orientation, and professional style. Although these dimensions are similar for both parties, each has different priorities. For Democrats, policy positions and issue-oriented activism are more important, while the Republicans give more stress to organizational activity and economic policy.

To begin with the Democrats, the most important factor (accounting for 16.4 percent of the variance) is a "Core Policy/Policy Maker" dimension. This reflects strong support for Democratic party positions across the board, with somewhat greater emphasis on economic matters, support for Democratic congressional, national and state party leaders, and donations to liberal and left-leaning single issue PACs. In addition, identification with the Democratic Party at the national and local level was most strongly correlated with this dimension.

The next most important factor (accounting for 10.9% of the variance) is an "Amateur Style/Issue Caucus" dimension. This reflects the key attitudes of political amateurs, such as giving priority to principle over electoral success (Wilson 1962), participation in Democratic issue caucuses, and donations to formal party committees and liberal PACs. In addition, this factor includes solidary motivations for political activity, such as social recognition and "meeting people with similar interests," and material motivations ("business or professional reasons").

The third most important factor (accounting for 9.2% of the variance) is a "Party Organizational Support and Activism" dimension. This reflects strong participation in conventional party activities and donations to party committees. This pattern includes political careerism as well: participation in politics to further one's political career, to win elections, and to help "people like me get ahead." The fourth factor is a "Professional Style/Social Policy" dimension (accounting for 7.4% of the variance) that reflects the key attitudes of political professionals, such as putting electoral success ahead of principle (Wilson 1962), and opposition to party social policy positions, particularly those dealing with social "rights." Interestingly enough, purposive motivations, such as pursuing good policy and civic duty, are not part of these dimensions of party support.[13]

How are these dimensions of party support distributed across Democratic factions? Table 16.3 reports on the percentage of each faction with greater than mean scores on each of these measures. First, the Core Policy/Policy Maker dimension is highest for the New Politics faction and declines steadily

Table 16.3 Support for Party Among Democratic Party Activists

| Weighted N | New Politics (934) | Reg Liberals (683) | Neo Consers. (353) | Popu -lists (284) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Core Policy/ Policy Maker Support* | 73% | 61% | 58% | 19% |
| Amateur Style/ Issue Caucus Activity | 62% | 49% | 40% | 57% |
| Party Organizational Support and Activity | 39% | 40% | 41% | 41% |
| Professional Style/ Social Policy | 39% | 43% | 61% | 45% |

* Table entries are the percentage of each group that score above average on each dimension of party support (see text for description).

*Source:* Surveys by the Authors

to the Populists, although better than one-half of the Regular Liberals and Neoconservatives score high on this dimension as well. Thus, the dominant Democratic factions are most supportive of party on policy grounds.

A different pattern holds for the Amateur Style/Issue Caucus dimension, where the New Politics and Populists both score high, while the Regular Liberals and, especially, the Neoconservatives, are much less supportive. Basically the opposite situation obtains for the fourth dimension, the Professional Style/Social Policy factor, where the Neoconservatives score higher than the other factions. Thus, party support based on political style divides the leftward and rightward factions from the center. Finally, note the low and even distribution of support for the third dimension, the Party Organizational Support and Activity factor: only two-fifths of each faction score high on organizational support, and this varies little among them. Thus, support for traditional party organization is weak, but evenly distributed.

The Republicans show the same dimensions of party support, but they contain modestly different elements and occur in a different order. The most important factor (accounting for 16.2% of the variance) is a "Party Organizational Support and Activity" dimension. As with the Democrats, this reflects participation in party activities and donations to party committees. Solidary motivations are also part of this dimension, particularly "fun and excitement" and "social recognition" in politics as well as political careerism.

Similarly, identification with the Republican Party at the national and local levels is most strongly correlated with this factor.

The next most important factor (accounting for 9.7% of the variance) is a "Core Policy/Policy Maker" dimension. Unlike the Democrats, this reflects strong support for party positions on economics only, combined with strong backing for President Reagan, congressional, and national party leaders. Purposive motivations are also an important part of this dimension, including civic duty, "advocating issues that matter to me," and "supporting candidates I believe in."

The third and fourth factors (accounting for 9.7 and 8.8% of the variance, respectively) are almost mirror images of each other: a "Purist Style/Non-Solidary" and a "Professional Style/Social Policy" dimension. These dimensions reflect in part differences over party social issues stands and local party leaders, with the professionals being somewhat less happy with the former and more supportive of the latter. But the key difference is stylistic: the purists put policy preferences above electoral success and are not at all concerned with party solidarity, while the professionals combine pursuit of electoral victory with greater social concerns. Interestingly enough, neither material motivations, interest group membership, nor foreign policy positions figure in these dimensions of party support.[14]

We can also ask how these dimensions are distributed across GOP factions; Table 16.4 gives the percentages of each faction that score above the mean on each. First, note that as with the Democrats, support for the Party Organizational and Activity dimension is fairly uniform across factions, but at a much higher level: at least one-half of every faction scores high on this dimension. The variation that exists is idiosyncratic, however, with the Moderates and Supply-Siders scoring the highest, while the Populists, Stalwarts, and Hard Right have mid-level scores, and the Progressives score lowest.

The remaining dimensions show predictable patterns. Support for the Core Policy/Policy Maker factor is lowest for the Progressives, and rises fairly steady so that the Hard Right is highest. Thus, like the Democrats, the more extreme factions show the most party support on policy grounds, but unlike the Democrats, these groups are not large in relative terms. The Purist/Non-Solidary dimension shows a similar pattern, and not surprisingly, the Professional/Social Policy dimension the opposite. The Progressives and Moderates are the least purist and most professional, while the Populists and Hard Right show the reverse pattern. The Stalwarts are on balance modestly more professional, and the Supply-Siders modestly purist.

These patterns fit the "cultures" of each party identified by Jo Freeman (1986), with the Democrats being more policy-oriented, participatory, and characterized by interest group organization, while the Republicans are more organizationally focused and hierarchical, and less group-oriented. The

Table 16.4 Support for Party Among Republican Party Activists

| Weighted N | Progre -ssives (316) | Mode -rates (342) | Stal -warts (900) | Supply Siders (472) | Popu -lists (816) | Hard Right (337) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Party Organizational Support and Activity* | 50% | 64% | 55% | 67% | 57% | 55% |
| Core Policy/ Policy Maker Support | 35% | 43% | 51% | 65% | 63% | 68% |
| Purist Style/Non-Solidary Motivations | 48% | 34% | 44% | 56% | 60% | 61% |
| Professional Style/ Social Policy | 57% | 62% | 51% | 49% | 47% | 25% |

* Table entries are the percentage of each group that score above average on each dimension of party support (see text for description).

*Source:* Surveys by the Authors

ideologically driven alignment among Democrats is more closely connected with party policy positions and issue-oriented activism. Traditional organizational support and related professionalism are clearly secondary, particularly for the dominant, leftward factions. On the other hand, the party-driven alignment among Republicans is more closely associated with traditional organizational support and the economic issues central to conservatism. Stylistic and social policy differences are also secondary, and unlike the Democrats, are concentrated at both extremes of the activist corps.

## Party Support and Presidential Coalitions

How do these factions fit together into coalitions? Tables 16.5 and 16.6 present some evidence in the form of the percentage of each faction that supported the eventual nominee in the pre-nomination period for 1988 and in contested nominations back into the 1960s. These data must be viewed with some caution, of course, since such reports are likely to have a bias towards the eventual winner. In addition, these patterns are not accurate descriptions of the magnitude of support in past years since they include only activists still involved up to twenty years later. On the other hand, these

caveats suggest that these data may underestimate the strength of past factional divisions.[15]

Factional support for past Democratic nominees reported here certainly matches the common image of recent intra-party alignments. The New Politics faction was most supportive of Dukakis in 1988, but also Mondale in 1984 and McGovern in 1972, and least supportive of Carter in 1976 and Humphrey in 1968 (Table 16.5). The Regular Liberals show a similar pattern for 1988 and 1984, but were much more enthusiastic for Carter and Humphrey, and less so for McGovern. Meanwhile, the Neoconservatives and Populists were skeptical of Dukakis and Mondale and hostile to McGovern, but more supportive of Jimmy Carter, particularly in 1976. These two rightward factions disagreed on Humphrey, however, with the Neoconservatives being more supportive and the Populists much less so.

The Republican pattern also matches recent history, including both ideological conflict (1980, 1976, 1968, and 1964) and consensus candidates (1988, and presumably 1984 and 1972). The Progressives were most supportive of Bush in 1988 and showed some backing of Ford in 1976, but opposition to Reagan in 1980, Nixon in 1968, and Goldwater in 1964 (Table 16.6). The Moderates show a similar pattern, but added strong support for Nixon in 1972. The Stalwarts and Supply-Siders always on balanced supported

Table 16.5 Support for Party Nominee Among Democratic Party Activists 1968-1988

| Weighted N | New Politics (934) | Reg Liberals (683) | Neo Consers. (353) | Popu -lists (284) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1988 (Dukakis)* | 61% | 58% | 47% | 24% |
| 1984 (Mondale) | 58% | 61% | 47% | 36% |
| 1980 (Carter) | 50% | 60% | 60% | 48% |
| 1976 (Carter) | 40% | 54% | 70% | 56% |
| 1972 (McGovern) | 59% | 43% | 26% | 29% |
| 1968 (Humphrey) | 35% | 50% | 54% | 39% |

* Table entries are percentage of each group that reported supporting the eventual nominee by the national convention. Individuals reporting they were not active in a particular year were excluded.

*Source:* Surveys by the Authors

the eventual nominee, but the former were most supportive of Bush in 1988 and Nixon in 1968, while the latter backed Reagan in 1980 as well. The Populists and Hard Right backed most GOP nominees with enthusiasm, but with a low point coming with Ford in 1976, particularly for the Hard Right. For the Populists, the high points were in 1980 and 1968, and for the Hard Right, predictably in 1980 and 1964.

Thus, as expected, presidential coalitions are strongly influenced by issue proximity. Looked at another way, Dukakis and Mondale united the left-wing factions to win the nomination, while McGovern drew mostly from the New Politics faction. In contrast, Carter and Humphrey built centrist coalitions, drawing heavily on the Neoconservatives. An analogous pattern appears for the GOP: Reagan and Goldwater had center-right coalitions, and with varying degrees of success, Ford extended this coalition to the left, Nixon to the right, and Bush both ways.

What role did party support play in these patterns? Tables 16.7 and 16.8 present some tentative evidence in the form of partial correlations between party support scores and support for the nominee for each election, faction, and party. Positive coefficients indicate increased support for the nominees,taking into account other dimensions of party support.[16] These data must be viewed with caution for the reasons mentioned above, but also

Table 16.6 Support for Party Nominees Among Republican Party Activists 1964-1988

| | Progre -ssives | Mode -rates | Stal -warts | Supply Siders | Popu -lists | Hard Right |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Weighted N | (316) | (342) | (900) | (472) | (816) | (337) |
| 1988 (Bush)* | 69% | 73% | 72% | 75% | 65% | 74% |
| 1980 (Reagan) | 45% | 46% | 56% | 68% | 69% | 81% |
| 1976 (Ford) | 56% | 55% | 55% | 53% | 54% | 32% |
| 1968 (Nixon) | 48% | 60% | 78% | 70% | 79% | 73% |
| 1964 (Goldwater) | 44% | 49% | 55% | 50% | 73% | 86% |

* Table entries are percentage of each group that reported supporting the eventual nominee by the national convention. Individuals reporting they were not active in a particular year were excluded.

*Source:* Surveys by the Authors

because our measures of party support are projected back from the 1988 election cycle, and changes may well have occurred over the period. However, it is likely that such changes would reduce the effects under consideration.[17]

For the Democrats, the most important dimension of party support, the Core Policy/Policy Maker dimension, shows a weak negative pattern across elections and factions (Table 16.7): those most enthusiastic about party policies backed the nominee less often (17 negative coefficients out of 24).[18] A similar, but much more striking pattern occurs for the second most important dimension of party support, the Amateur Style/Issue Caucus dimension: amateurs strongly opposed the nominee across elections and factions (20 negative coefficients out of 24). These effects are, however, weaker where the amateur style is most common, suggesting the power of the underlying issue positions.

Much the opposite occurs for the third most important dimension of party support, the Party Organizational Support and Activity dimension. Organizational supporters on balance backed the nominee (15 positive coefficients out of 24), and this relationship is often strongest where it runs counter to ideological tendencies. But on the other hand, many of these coefficients run parallel to ideological tendencies, suggesting again the strength of underlying issue positions. The least important dimension of party support, the Professional Style/Social Policy dimension, shows a weaker version of this pattern. Professional activists are more likely to support the parties nominee (13 positive coefficients out of 24), particularly among the Neoconservatives.

The Republicans show a very similar pattern, albeit in a different order. The most important dimension of party support, the Party Organizational Support and Activity dimension, also shows the largest effects: organizational supporters on balance backed the nominee, with one important exception (18 positive coefficients out of 30) (Table 16.8). The exception is revealing, however: organizational supporters among Progressives, Moderates, and Supply-Siders opposed Reagan and Goldwater, the two most conservative GOP nominees. Once again, the impact of the underlying issue positions is evident.

The second most important dimension of party support, the Core Policy/Policy Maker dimension, shows an even more obvious issue bias. On the whole, more leftward factions are less likely to support more conservative nominees and vice versa. Thus, although the pattern is somewhat clearer, policy support shows the same negative pattern as with the Democrats (18 negative coefficients out of 30). The similarity between the parties is even stronger on the third most important dimension, the Purist Style/Non-Solidary dimension. Purist Republicans, like amateur Democrats, oppose the nominees

Table 16.7 Support for Party Nominee and Dimensions of Party Support Among Democratic Party Activists 1968-1988

| Weighted N | New Politics (934) | Reg Liberals (683) | Neo Consers. (353) | Popu -lists (284) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CORE POLICY/POLICY MAKER SUPPORT** | | | | |
| 1988 (Dukakis) | .16* | .00 | -.24* | -.09 |
| 1984 (Mondale) | -.02 | .00 | .10* | -.32* |
| 1980 (Carter) | -.11* | -.08 | -.02 | .27* |
| 1976 (Carter) | -.08* | -.03 | .10* | -.22* |
| 1972 (McGovern) | .11* | .08 | -.06 | -.17* |
| 1968 (Humphrey) | -.19* | -.02 | .07 | -.21* |
| AMATEUR STYLE/ISSUE CAUCUS ACTIVITY | | | | |
| 1988 (Dukakis) | -.10* | -.07 | .13* | -.14* |
| 1984 (Mondale) | -.05 | -.11* | -.08 | .03 |
| 1980 (Carter) | .00 | -.11* | .03 | -.23* |
| 1976 (Carter) | -.06 | -.29* | -.11* | -.04 |
| 1972 (McGovern) | -.02 | -.08 | -.07 | -.16* |
| 1968 (Humphrey) | -.05 | -.10* | -.01 | -.06 |
| PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND ACTIVISM | | | | |
| 1988 (Dukakis) | .08 | .08 | .07 | .01 |
| 1984 (Mondale) | .18* | .10* | -.03 | -.05 |
| 1980 (Carter) | .25* | .11* | .16* | -.15* |
| 1976 (Carter) | -.07 | -.07 | .08 | .14* |
| 1972 (McGovern) | .06 | .07 | -.02 | -.03 |
| 1968 (Humphrey) | -.11* | -.12* | .15* | .25* |
| PROFESSIONAL STYLE/SOCIAL POLICY | | | | |
| 1988 (Dukakis) | -.06 | .07 | .06 | .17* |
| 1984 (Mondale) | -.02 | .06 | .12* | .18* |
| 1980 (Carter) | .00 | .05 | .00 | .24* |
| 1976 (Carter) | -.06 | .00 | .16* | -.03 |
| 1972 (McGovern) | .06 | .02 | .17* | -.04 |
| 1968 (Humphrey) | .19* | .13* | .00 | .12* |

* Significant at .05 level or better.

**Table entries are partial correlations between support for the party nominee in a particular year and a given dimension of party support expressed as a factor score. Positive coefficients indicate that increased support for party is associated with increased support for the nominee; negative coefficients show the opposite.

*Source:* Surveys by the Authors

across elections and factions (22 negative coefficients out of 30). And as might be expected, the least important dimension, the Professional Style/Social Policy dimension, shows a largely opposite pattern (18 positive coefficients out of 30): professionals tended to back the nominee, but with the same kinds of issue exceptions.

A very similar situation obtains for vote choice in general elections, although all of these activists voted overwhelmingly for their party's nominees. In both parties, policy concerns and amateur or purist style are associated with greater abstention, support for independent candidates, and defection to the opposition, while organizational support and professional style show the opposite patterns (data not shown). No doubt these modest electoral effects parallel much larger--and more important--patterns of campaign effort.

Both the pre-nomination and general election findings persist in multivariate analysis, although the quality of the data make possible only general assessments of the relative impact of these variables. The faction membership (and the issue positions that underlie it) is by far the most important elements in presidential coalitions. Measures of party support have more modest impact, with organizational support and professionalism on balance enhancing coalition building, with policy support and amateurism or purism having the opposite impact.[19]

In summary, then, the ideologically driven factionalism of the Democrats is characterized by support for policy positions and amateur style, particularly among the dominant leftward factions, and these factors tend to undermine coalition building. On the other hand, even among Democrats, traditional organizational support and professional style tend to enhance coalition building, but these influences are less strong and concentrated in the smaller, rightward factions. Thus, all else being equal, the less complex Democratic activist corps finds it more difficult to build broad-based presidential coalitions.

Republican activists have a different and largely contrary pattern. Their party-driven factionalism is characterized by extensive organizational support, found across all factions, that tends to facilitate coalition building. This situation is aided by a subsidiary element of professionalism, located primarily in the party's smaller, leftward factions. On the other hand, even among Republicans, support for policy positions and purist style tend to undermine coalition building, but these influences are weaker and concentrated in the smaller, rightward factions. Thus, all else being equal, the more complex Republican activist corps finds it easier to build broad-based presidential coalitions.

Table 16.8 Support for Party Nominee and Dimensions of Party Support Among Republican Party Activists 1964-1988

| Weighted N | Progre -ssives (316) | Mode -rates (342) | Stal -warts (900) | Supply Siders (472) | Popu -lists (816) | Hard Right (337) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND ACTIVITY** | | | | | | |
| 1988 (Bush) | .40* | .08 | .13* | .12* | .10* | .10* |
| 1980 (Reagan) | -.15* | -.13* | .06 | -.24* | .17* | .06 |
| 1976 (Ford) | .33* | .05 | .15* | .03 | .17* | .15* |
| 1968 (Nixon) | .05 | .25* | .04 | .03 | .17* | .10* |
| 1964 (Goldwater) | -.18* | -.05 | .15* | -.07 | .17* | .02 |
| CORE POLICY/POLICY MAKER SUPPORT | | | | | | |
| 1988 (Bush) | .36* | .09 | .16* | -.11* | -.09 | -.18* |
| 1980 (Reagan) | -.21* | -.21* | -.10* | .00 | .09 | .05 |
| 1976 (Ford) | .25* | .09 | -.06 | -.26* | -.02 | -.21* |
| 1968 (Nixon) | .33* | .02 | -.08 | -.02 | -.08 | -.15* |
| 1964 (Goldwater) | -.27* | -.03 | -.17* | .06 | .11* | .06 |
| PURIST STYLE/NON-SOLIDARY MOTIVATIONS | | | | | | |
| 1988 (Bush) | -.02 | -.20* | -.10* | .05 | -.16* | -.18* |
| 1980 (Reagan) | -.34* | -.35* | -.03 | .04 | -.12* | .01 |
| 1976 (Ford) | -.41* | 23* | -.17* | .01 | -.12* | -.34* |
| 1968 (Nixon) | -.09 | -.24* | .10* | -.13* | -.07 | -.11* |
| 1964 (Goldwater) | -.06 | -.13* | .05 | -.13* | .08 | -.12* |
| PROFESSIONAL STYLE/SOCIAL POLICY | | | | | | |
| 1988 (Bush) | .25* | .18* | .08 | .08 | -.10 | -.06 |
| 1980 (Reagan) | -.34* | -.35* | .03 | -.04 | .12* | .23* |
| 1976 (Ford) | .26* | .04 | .01 | -.27* | -.08 | -.08 |
| 1968 (Nixon) | -.45* | .13* | .03 | .06 | .13* | .28* |
| 1964 (Goldwater) | -.48* | -.04 | -.13* | .03 | .07 | .30* |

* Significant at the .05 level or better.

**Table entries are partial correlations between support for the party nominee in a particular year and a dimension of party support expressed as a factor score. Positive coefficients indicate that increased support for party is associated with increased support for the nominee; negative coefficients show the opposite.

*Source:* Surveys by the Authors

**Party Strength and the Mischief of Faction**

What implications do these findings have for efforts to strengthen parties? On balance, our findings support the standard critique of party reform and the case for party renewal. To the extent that reform and neglect of renewal exacerbates policy commitments, issue-oriented activism, and amateur or purist style, stronger parties will not enhance coalition building. On the other hand, to the extent that renewal or counter-reform encourages traditional organizational support and professional style, stronger parties will enhance coalition building.

Indeed, it is tempting to ascribe the recent difficulties of the Democratic Party to its continuing engagement with reform, and its success in 1992 to an abatement in these efforts and moves toward renewal. But this temptation leads us to an equally important finding: the impact of party support on coalition building, positive or negative, is modest by comparison to the issue content of coalitions. If reform helps generate better party platforms--and renewal undermines clear issue stands--then any detrimental effects of reform may be well worth the costs. Indeed, it is also tempting to see George Bush's 1992 defeat as resulting in part from the triumph of management over program--in the GOP as well as the White House.

In any event, our findings help illuminate the last thirty years of struggle over strengthening parties. One can clearly see, for instance, why Democratic activists fought so intensely over party reform. The dominant factions, or factions that were to become dominant, benefitted greatly from procedures that emphasized the expression of issue positions, while their opponents were seriously disadvantaged. For good or for ill, party rules are never neutral, and the debate over issues became entwined with the issue of rules. Thus, defeated Democratic factions, from the Rainbow Coalition to the Democratic Leadership Council, routinely include revision of the rules among their demands.

Likewise, one can readily see why Ray Bliss and his successors in the GOP put such emphasis on party renewal: strong organization was a bulwark against infighting among a remarkably diverse activist corps. But organizations are, in the long run, no more neutral than rules, and the struggle merely shifted from the organization of the party to the control of the organization. Thus, dissatisfied Republican factions, from Republicans for Choice to the Christian Coalition, routinely included "taking over the party" among their plans. We will leave to others the fascinating chicken-and-egg question of whether the nature of each party's factionalism produced these disputes, or if it was the other way around.

In the end, our findings suggest that parties will better perform the coalition building role expected of them if activists support and participate in traditional party organizations. Lest this appear as a truism, one should recall

that much of the normative literature sees parties entirely in instrumental terms: conduits for enacting policy, as in "responsible parties," or mechanisms for winning election, as in "pragmatic parties." But if parties are to be effective mediating institutions, they must be regarded as valuable in their own right. In fact, successful mediation of conflicting interests may be as good a standard of party strength as policy coherence or electoral success.

## Notes

1. A total of 6,800 persons were included in both samples, drawn from the records of the Federal Election Commission. The return rates were 46.0% for the Republicans and 45.7% for the Democrats, excluding undeliverable mail. Inspection of the original mailing lists revealed one modest response bias: undeliverable mail was concentrated in the central cities of major metropolitan areas. Due to the oversampling of smaller committees, the data were weighted by the total funds raised by these committees in the 1987-1988 election cycle. Both questionnaires were ten pages long and contained over four hundred separate items covering donors' attitudes, behavior, and demography.

2. This analysis involved a four-step process using two methods of cluster analysis, designed to minimize the limitations of the technique (Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984). First, a random sample of one-quarter of the cases in both surveys was subjected to a hierarchical cluster analysis. After extensive inspection, an eight cluster solution was identified, which then served as seed points for an analysis of the entire sample using k-means iterative partitioning cluster analysis. Once the eight clusters were defined for both samples, the process was repeated for each separately, using the initial cluster memberships and items asked only in that sample. As a final step, self-identified Democrats and Republicans who contributed to finance committees of the other party were placed in a separate cluster. While any such solution has inherent limitations, these clusters closely resemble those described in our previous work (Green and Guth 1991), make sense in terms of variables not used in the analysis, and have considerable intuitive appeal.

3. A principal components factor analysis with an orthogonal rotation was undertaken in the 58 items assessing varieties of party support for each sample separately. These analyses each produced six factors with eigenvalues greater than one, accounting for 58.0% of the variance for the Democrats and 59.5% for the Republicans. The first four factors were readily interpretable as dimensions of party support, and the remaining two showed no relationship with party coalitions (see below).

4. These surveys were designed in part to explore our previous work on party factionalism further (Green and Guth 1991) and thus it should not be surprising that we found a slightly different set of factions. In addition, our previous work was based on a broader sample of PAC and party donors, contained substantially different questions, took place roughly a decade ago, and used a different statistical technique. Given all these differences, it is gratifying that a similar eight cluster solution was discovered in both samples. We will note important differences between our two analyses were appropriate.

5. Neither the Republicans who contributed to the Democratic organizations or their Democratic counterparts showed any appreciable support for their adopted party, and both scored high on material motivations. The Republicans in Democratic guise are actually fairly diverse and in aggregate bolster the rightward Democratic factions (Table 16.1). On the other hand, the tiny group of Democrats in the GOP closely resemble the Progressives (see Table 16.2).

6. In our previous work and when these samples are clustered together, both the New Politics and Regular Liberals are members of the same faction, the "Liberal Democrats."

7. In our previous work and when these samples are clustered together, two smaller, less liberal clusters appear, which we dubbed the "Neoconservatives" and "Neoliberals." Significant portions of these clusters were Republicans, however, and when they are removed, the remaining cases tend to cluster together.

8. In our previous work and when these samples are clustered together, we found two kinds of Populists, a centrist group containing both Democrats and Republicans ("Populists") and a largely Republican group of Southerners ("Southern Populists"). When intra-party cleavages are included and the partisans are separated, a more conservative Democratic group appears, and the two kinds of Republicans merge.

9. In our previous work and when these samples are clustered together, large portions of the Moderates and Progressives are found in the "Neoconservative" and "Neoliberal" clusters.

10. In our previous work, these centrist businessmen fall into three regional groups. We combined the Northeastern and Western groups to form the "Old Right" and left another group, the "Southern Right," separate. In these data, however, the opposite occurs, with Southern, Midwestern and Western respondents forming the Stalwarts, and a bi-coastal group forming the Supply-Siders. We suspect this difference reflects the present of Southern donors in conservative PACs in our previous sample.

11. See note 7 on the Populists.

12. The Hard Right is larger in this sample than its counterpart in our previous work, the "New Right." This reflects both better questions in our recent study and the effects of Pat Robertson's presidential bid.

13. The two remaining factors reflected purposive incentives and both closely parallel the second and fourth dimension of party support. Neither had any independent association with support for party nominees.

14. The two remaining factors were quite different, although neither had any independent association with support for party nominees. The fifth factor contained only material incentives and donations to corporate PACs; interestingly enough, scores increased steadily from right to left, culminating with the Populists. The last factor contained support for foreign policy positions and lack of support for local GOP leaders; it also increased from left to right.

15. Nevertheless, elites such as these generally show very accurate recall of party behavior (Nesbit 1988) and once involved in politics, stay active for long periods of time (Kessel 1984).

16. Controls for age, education, gender, income, region and other demographic variables had very little effect.

17. There is good reason to believe that activists become less extreme the longer they are active in party politics and that motivations shift from purposive to solidary and material (Eldersveld 1989).

18. As noted above, self-identified partisanship is most closely linked with policy support, and not linked to traditional organizational support. Among these activists, partisanship is substantially based in ideology, with the effectual and behavioral elements common in the mass public having less influence.

19. Multivariate analysis using logistic regression provides some evidence of the relative influence of faction membership and the dimensions of party support, controlling for a host of demographic variables. Faction membership (measured as an ideological continuum) is always the best predictor of support for the eventual nominee, although its sign varies with the ideology of the nominee. Organizational support and professional style have coefficients of similar magnitude, when averaged across the years, at roughly one-half the strength of faction membership, and usually with a positive sign. The same pattern holds for policy support and amateur or purist style, but usually with a negative sign.

## References

Aldenderfer, Mark, and Roger Blashfield. 1984. *Cluster Analysis.* Beverly Hills: Sage.

Axelrod, Robert. 1972. "Where the Votes Come From: An Analysis of Electoral Coalitions, 1952-1968." *American Political Science Review* 66:11-20.

Beck, Kent M. 1987. "What was Liberalism in the 1980s?" *Political Science Quarterly* 102:233-57.

Beer, Samuel H. 1978. "In Search of a New Public Philosophy," in Anthony King, ed., *The New American Political System.* Pp. 5-44. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Belloni, Frank P., and Dennis C. Beller. 1976. "The Study of Factions as Competitive Political Organizations." *Western Political Quarterly* 29:531-549.

Brown, Clifford Jr., Lynda Powell, and Clyde Wilcox. 1991. "Serious Money: Presidential Campaign Contributors in 1988," in Stephen Wayne and Clyde Wilcox, eds., *The Quest for National Office.* New York: St. Martins.

Ceaser, James W. 1991. "Political Parties--Declining, Stabilizing, or Resurging?" in Anthony King, ed., *The New American Political System.* 2nd ed. Pp. 87-139. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Crotty, William J. 1978. *Decision for Democrats.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Edsall, Thomas B. 1984. *The New Politics of Inequality.* New York: Norton.

Eldersveld, Samuel J. 1989. *Political Elites in Modern Societies.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Freeman, Jo. 1986. "The Political Culture of Democrats and Republicans." *Political Science Quarterly* 101:327-344.

Goldman, Ralph M. 1990. *The National Party Chairmen and Committees: Factionalism at the Top.* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Gopoian, J. David, Derek Hackett, Daniel Parelman, and Leo Perrotta. 1987. "The Democratic Party Coalition in the Eighties: A Reassessment of Ladd's Old Class/New Class Explanation of Intra-Party Conflict." *Western Political Quarterly* 40:247-264.

Green, John C., and James L. Guth. 1986. "Big Bucks and Petty Cash: Party and Interest Group Activists in American Politics," in Allan Cigler and Burdett Loomis, eds., *Interest Group Politics,* 2nd ed., Pp. 91-113. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

_____. 1991. "Who is Right and Who is Left? Activist Coalitions in the Reagan Era," in Benjamin Ginsberg and Alan Stone, eds., *Do Elections Matter?* 2nd ed., Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Hertzke, Allen D. 1993. *Echoes of Discontent.* Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Hess, Stephen, and David Broder. 1967. *The Republican Establishment.* New York: Harper and Row.

Hinckley, Barbara. 1972. "Coalitions in Congress: Size and Ideological Distance." *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 16:197-207.

_____. 1981. *Coalitions and Politics.* New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

Kessel, John H. 1984. *Presidential Parties.* Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.

Miller, Warren E., and M. Kent Jennings. 1986. *Parties in Transition.* New York: Russell Sage.

McCorkle, Pope, and Joel L. Fleishman. 1982. "Political Parties and Presidential Nominations: The Intellectual Ironies of Reform and Change in the Mass Media Age," in Joel L. Fleishman, ed., *The Future of American Party Politics.* Pp. 140-168. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Meyer, George. 1967. *The Republican Party, 1854-1966.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Miles, Michael. 1980. *The Odyssey of the American Right.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nesbit, Dorothy D. 1988. "Changing Partisanship Among Southern Party Activists." *Journal of Politics* 50:322-24.

Petrocik, John. 1981. *Party Coalitions: Realignments and the Decline of the New Deal Party System.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Phillips, Kevin P. 1983. *Post-Conservative America.* New York: Random House.

Polsby, Nelson W. 1978. "Coalition and Faction in American Politics: An Institutional View," in Seymour M. Lipset, ed., *Emerging Coalitions in American Politics.* Pp. 103-123. San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies.

Pomper, Gerald. ed. 1980. *Party Renewal in America.* New York: Praeger.

Orren, Gary R. 1982. "The Changing Styles of American Party Politics," in Joel L. Fleishman, ed., *The Future of American Party Politics.* Pp. 4-41. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Rae, Nicol C. 1989. *The Decline and Fall of the Liberal Republicans.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Ranney, Austin. 1975. *Curing the Mischiefs of Faction.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Reichley, A. James. 1981. *Conservatives in an Age of Change: The Nixon and Ford Administrations.* New York: Scribner.

Reiter, Howard L. 1981. "Intra-Party Cleavages in the United States Today." *Western Political Quarterly* 34:287-300.

Rose, Richard. 1964. "Parties, Factions, and Tendencies in Britain." *Political Studies* 12:33-46.

Sartori, Giovanni. 1976. *Parties and Party Systems.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Schneider, William. 1987. "The New Shape of American Politics." *The Atlantic.* January:39-54.

Shafer, Byron E. 1983. *The Quiet Revolution.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Wilson, James Q. 1962. *The Amateur Democrat.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

17

# He Who Pays the Piper: Party Campaign Contributions, Electoral Competitiveness, and Coherence in Congress

*Stephen Frantzich*

> The service party was born when, at some point in the 1960's, a quiet revolution began in the Republican National Committee. The committee's chairman of those years, Ray Bliss, involved the committee more and more in helping state and local parties with the nuts and bolts of party organizational work. Chairman William Brock carried the work forward in the late 1970's (Sorauf and Beck 1988:143).

Contrary to the old saying, at times, the more things change, the more things change. American political parties have frequently been adversely affected by shifts in the larger society, and in response, they have attempted to reorganize their internal rules and regulations (party reform) and expand their organizational capacity (party renewal). Of the two, party renewal has been most common. The increased cost of modern campaigns, the availability of alternative funding sources and the advent of new technologies threatened to undermine the influence of parties in elections. To counter these changes, the parties increased their organizational capacity and became "service-vendor-broker" organizations for their candidates (Frantzich 1989). Like most organizations, however, parties are better at reacting to changes than at creating favorable ones. Party renewal, such as that undertaken by Ray Bliss and Bill Brock at the Republican National Committee, their counterparts at the GOP congressional campaign committees, and among Democrats at all levels, may not have achieved all of the desired effects nor reached its full potential. Indeed, there is little consensus on whether the "renewed" parties are more capable of fulfilling their functions.

Political parties can perform two vital functions in democratic government. First, they can serve as vehicles for winning elections. Successful parties, according to this criterion, enhance the *competitiveness* of elections, and thus give the public real electoral choices. Second, parties can bring some *coherence* to governing coalitions. Successful parties, by this measure, bridge the separation of powers and make coherent governance possible, thus giving substance to the electoral choices made by the public. Given the diversity of America, however, competitiveness and coherence may be inherently in

conflict. In order to win elections, political parties must make the broadest possible appeal and allow their candidates significant leeway to pursue policies and strategies unique to their constituencies. Once such pragmatic openness is allowed in the election process, it is difficult to rein in the elected officials. In this chapter, we will investigate the extent to which competitiveness and coherence goals are met by one important form of party activity: party contributions to congressional campaigns.

## Competitiveness: The Party in the Campaign

During the first century of the American democracy, political parties dominated election campaigns. They recruited candidates, controlled access to the ballot, planned strategy, gathered the necessary resources, printed campaign literature, provided ballots, and ran campaigns. The relevant "party" for most candidates was not some distant national organization, but rather a well-organized state or local party entity made up of friends and neighbors, many of whom relied on the party for jobs or other benefits. The candidates clearly needed the party more than the party needed the candidates.

By all accounts, contemporary party organizations are relatively weak players in the electoral process when compared with their predecessors. The shift to the primary system for nominating candidates robbed the party of its almost exclusive control over access to the ballot. Concern about electoral fraud led to the adoption of the secret (Australian) ballot and denied the parties an effective way to monitor voter behavior. The arrival of mass media and modern campaign technology allowed candidates to bypass the traditional party organization resources and directly communicate with the voters. With the arrival of new technology, the labor-intensive party resources for envelope stuffing and door-to-door campaigning became less useful and less efficient. The "candidate-centered" campaign (Salmore and Salmore 1989:39-51) replaced the old style of party-organized and funded operations. Professional campaign consultants and vendors of campaign services became more important to many candidates than the party staffs and/or volunteers. The dramatic increases in campaign costs made party financial resources pale in comparison to the amounts needed to mount a credible campaign. Thus, modern party organizations generally play a supporting role in elections, if they play any role at all.

The post-war period found political parties attempting to recapture their previous glory and to expand their capacity to affect the electoral process. Two major shifts began to take place during the 1960s. First, the national party organizations, once relatively hollow shells which served as holding companies for the much stronger state and local parties, began an innovative and aggressive attempt at party renewal. From the 1960s onward, the national

party organizations became more viable and effective operations with professional staffs, increased budgets, and permanent headquarters. Second, the national party organizations sought to recapture some of their campaign role by focusing on the provision of campaign services, and to a lesser degree, financial resources. In effect, the parties attempted to use new technologies and campaign techniques which had helped to undermine their power as the basis for reinserting themselves into the process. The parties provided some services directly without cost, became vendors for other services, and served as brokers between candidates and other vendors, and between candidates and other resource providers. At the same time the party organizations sought to increase their role as providers of the financial resources that allowed candidates to purchase modern campaign resources.

The shift to a service-vendor-broker role was neither uniform nor consistent. The Republican Party took the lead at the national level towards renewal and greater competitiveness, while the Democrats focused their energy during the 1960s and 1970s on reforming and increasing their cohesiveness. The Democratic Party's almost single-minded commitment to revising the rules of its national convention procedures through party reform, left little time or energy for national party support of campaigns. However, Republican success at the ballot box led the Democrats to follow the Republicans in enhancing competitiveness.

*Party Support and Congressional Campaigns*

Until the 1970's, campaign financing in the United states was largely informal and unregulated. As the political parties began to lose their control over fund raising, scandalously large individual contributions linked with political favors, and perceived partisan advantages accruing from interest group support of the "other" party set the stage for campaign finance reform. Republicans wanted to weaken the link between the Democratic Party and labor unions, while the Democrats sought to undermine the business community support of Republicans.

The Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA), first passed in 1972 and amended a number of times since, was written by legislators who had gained office largely without party help. Most agreed with the view of one member that "if we depended on the party organizations to get elected, none of us would be here" (quoted in Jacobson 1983:317). Much to the chagrin of individuals desiring to strengthen political parties, current campaign financing laws treat direct party contributions to a candidate like those coming from any other "special pleader." The parties were treated no differently than other groups such as political action committees (PACs) in terms of direct contributions. As almost an afterthought, and with little understanding of the possible consequences on the part of most members of Congress,[1] parties were

allowed to make "coordinated expenditures" on behalf of candidates above and beyond the direct expenditures. This opened a window of opportunity for an expanded party role (Jacobson 1983:317).

The national parties may directly aid House candidates in three ways:

*Direct Expenditures*: Both national committees of each party (the national committee and the congressional campaign committees) may give a congressional candidate up to $5,000 in direct aid for the primary and up to $5,000 for the general election. The candidate must treat this aid like any other contribution and controls its expenditure. While this is more than the $1,000 per election an individual can give and equal to what an individual PAC can give, it is easy for the party organizations to have their contributions lost among the multitude of PACs donations.

*Coordinated Expenditures*: Based on a formula which takes into account inflation, the national party committees pay directly for campaign services requested by the candidate such as polling, mass mailings, and television advertising production. When originally passed, the limit for the national party as a combined entity for the election cycle was $10,000. Inflation pushed that total to over $26,000 for the 1992 House elections (Federal Elections Commission 1991). Coordinated expenditures expand the presence of the party significantly.

*Agency Agreements*: State and local parties are also allowed to support congressional candidates at the same level as the national committees. Given its financial resources, the national Republican Party began to look for ways to expand its influence. Despite a legal protest by the Democrats, the FEC and then the Supreme Court allowed the national parties to serve as "agents" for spending the contributions allowed for the state parties.[2] By the state party committee ceding its statutorily permitted spending to the national committee, the national committee can then spend an additional $10,000 in direct expenditures and over $26,000 on behalf of a House candidate in coordinated expenditures.

While the FECA did not intentionally or necessarily favor national party organizations over state and local ones, "the complexity of the law and the distaste for federal regulation had a chilling effect on local party activity on behalf of federal candidates" (Kayden 1980:265). State and local parties willingly shifted "the burden of helping these candidates to the national party organizations" (Jacobson 1983:317).

The legal right to support candidates tells us nothing about the financial ability to capitalize on this right. The fortuitous development of computer-based direct mail fund raising at about the same time as changes in the campaign financing law, provided the national party organizations the resources to capitalize on the opportunity. The national Republican committees were the first to use this technique of nationalized fund raising effectively. The Democrats copied these techniques with significant success.

The dramatic initial Republican advantage in the total amount of money available for contributions has almost been equalized in recent years by the Democrats. The Republican and Democratic Parties represent two different ways of collecting campaign funds. The Democratic Party committees depend a great deal more on PACs as opposed to individuals to contribute directly to the party. In 1990, 13.1% of funds raised by the four national Democratic Party committees came from PACs, while only 1.6% of the funds raised by the three national Republican Party committees came from that source.[3] Through their various sources, the national parties now provide about 10% of the funds used in all congressional campaigns. The key questions in this chapter revolve around how the parties go about distributing those funds and which of the party goals (competitiveness or coherence) are being supported by party giving strategies.

*Empirical Evidence of Competitiveness Strategies*

Party strategists readily admit that they use party campaign money to increase competitiveness with little concern for other goals:

> We are in the business of winning elections, not in the business of influencing the way members vote on the House floor--that is up to the party leaders (quoted in Leyden and Borrelli 1990:362).

> Our job is to get Republicans elected, not to be concerned about what they do when in office. We support candidates able to beat Democrats. We assume that they are Republicans for some good reason and will support the party once in office, but keeping seats in Republican hands is our primary goal (author's interview with national party strategist).

Given the multiple advantages of incumbents, the concern with winning elections (competitiveness) establishes a priority list with marginal incumbents getting the first crack at party money. In the words of two party strategists:

> The committee's top priority is incumbent protection. Next come candidates for open seats. Challengers to Republican incumbents bring up the rear. This means that the DCCC, whose money is always tight, has little more than advice and table scraps to offer challengers . . . . (DCCC political director Doug Sousnik quoted in Alston 1990:4235).

> We take care of what have got first. Incumbents in trouble are first in line for help. Then we target the winnable challengers (author's interview with national party strategist).

Since the congressional campaign committees are controlled by incumbents, there is a danger that viable, but geographically distant, challengers will lose out to incumbents with less need but having a physical

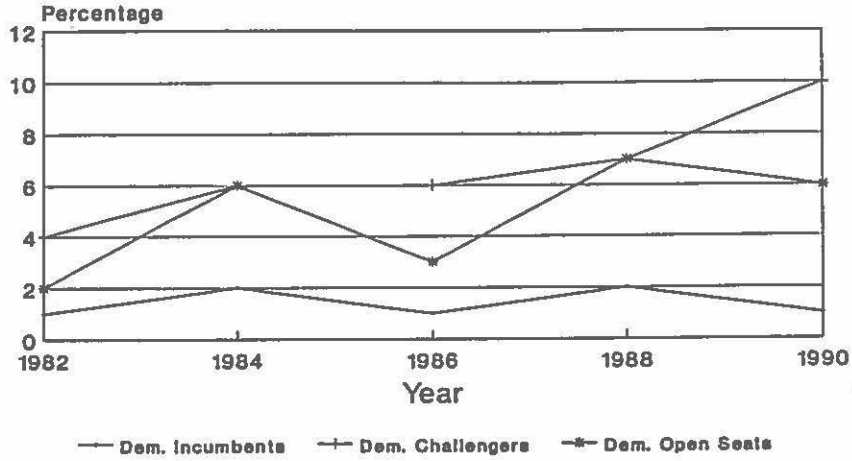
presence among their colleagues. Writing about the 1982 election, Gary Jacobson argued that Democrats in Congress lacked any tradition of mutual aid (Jacobson 1985-86:623). The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) had become an incumbent protection committee unwilling to make tough choices about the distribution of funds where they were most needed. On the other hand, Jacobson found that the Republicans distributed their campaign funds much more rationally than the Democrats since they were better able to target funds to the closest races. Republicans were especially attentive to the needs of challengers, while the Democrats tended to favor incumbents. He explains the effectiveness of Republican strategy by pointing out their greater ability to monitor individual races and the fact that since they "control so much money, [they] can improve the overall efficiency of their party's campaign finances significantly; [while] the relatively impoverished Democratic committees cannot" (Jacobson 1985-86:617-619). When he became chair of the DCCC in 1981, Tony Coehlo outlined a commitment not only to match Republican fund raising, but to go beyond funding incumbents and use Democratic money more strategically. Despite competing pressures and intentional lapses, Sorauf concludes that

> whatever may be the inability of party committees to achieve a perfectly "rational" electoral strategy (largely as a result of their need to placate powerful incumbents), they invariably pursue a more efficient strategy in the campaign than do the party's candidates taken together (Sorauf 1988:140).

Publicly espoused strategy and empirical reality match when it comes to party campaign support. The national party organizations are more interested in winning elections than in affecting the course of public policy through the use of campaign resources. Both the current data and previous research (see Leyden and Borrelli 1990:350) indicate that the national party organizations concentrate their funds on close races. Figures 10.1 and 10.2 indicate the dependence of different types of candidates on party contributions. Over the last decade, the parties (particularly the Republicans) have increasingly weaned their incumbents from the party as a source of funding, while increasingly undergirding the campaign efforts of challengers and candidates for open seats.

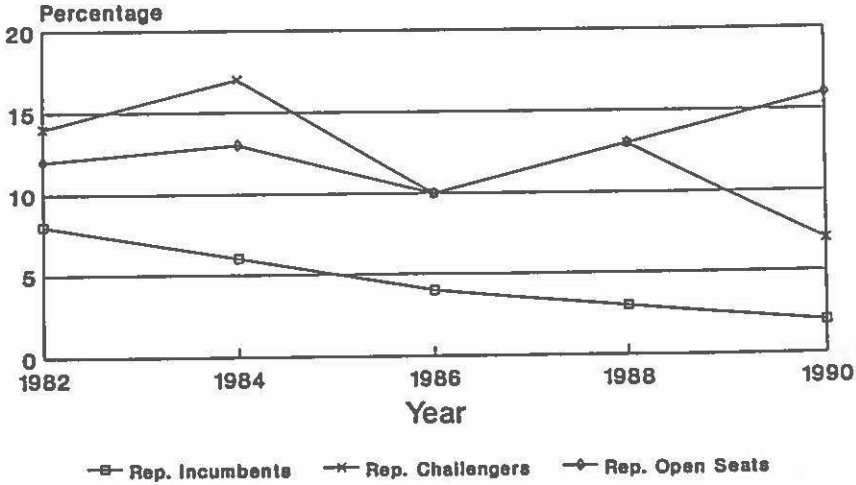
The real test of party rationality in terms of competitiveness is the degree to which party money goes to the most competitive races, no matter the type of candidacy. Focusing on winning candidates alone, Tables 10.1 and 10.2 indicate the importance of competitiveness in party resource allocation. Electorally secure candidates were much less likely to get party campaign funds than their less-secure colleagues. Research on previous election years (see Herrnson 1987:12) indicated that the Republican Party was more judicious with its allocation of funds. This was not the case for 1988 or 1990.

Figure 17.1 Party Organizations as Sources of Campaign Funding for Democratic Candidates.




*Source*: *Vital Statistics on Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1990).

Figure 17.2 Party Organizations as Sources of Campaign Funding for Republican Candidates.




*Source*: *Vital Statistics on Congress* (Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1990).

Table 17.1 1990 Republican Direct Contributions and Coordinated Expenditures to Congressional Winners by Electoral Security

DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS

| | | ELECTORAL SECURITY | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Marginal Races* | | Secure Races | |
| | | 1988 | 1990 | 1988 | 1990 |
| LEVEL OF PARTY FUNDING | Low** | 6% | 8% | 4% | 59% |
| | Medium | 18% | 25% | 59% | 31% |
| | High | 77% | 67% | 37% | 10% |
| | N | 17 | 12 | 75 | 71 |

1988 Chi Square Probability= .001Gamma= .598
1990 Chi Square Probability= .000 Gamma= .855
*Less than 55% in the previous election
** Low=0/ Medium= up to $3000/ High=over $3000

COORDINATED EXPENDITURES

| | | ELECTORAL SECURITY | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Marginal Races* | | Secure Races | |
| | | 1988 | 1990 | 1988 | 1990 |
| LEVEL OF PARTY FUNDING | Low** | 24% | 42% | 83% | 90% |
| | Medium | 6% | 8% | 3% | 3% |
| | High | 71% | 50% | 15% | 7% |
| | N | 17 | 12 | 75 | 71 |

1988 Chi Square Probability= .000 Gamma= .859
1990 Chi Square Probability= .000 Gamma= .840
*Less than 55% in the previous election
** Low=0/ Medium= less than $15,000/ High= Over $15,000

*Source:* Unless otherwise indicated, the data for these analyses come from a 50% sample (all odd numbered districts) of House Members elected in 1988.

If anything, the Democrats were more likely to concentrate their money on electorally marginal candidates. Both parties generally increased their focus on marginal candidates between the 1988 and 1990 as tables 17.1 and 17.2 indicate.

Table 17.2 1990 Democratic Party Direct Contributions and Coordinated Expenditures to Congressional Winners by Electoral Security

DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS

| | | ELECTORAL SECURITY | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Marginal Races* | | Secure Races | |
| | | 1988 | 1990 | 1988 | 1990 |
| LEVEL OF PARTY FUNDING | Low** | 33% | 8% | 84% | 91% |
| | Medium | 10% | 25% | 9% | 7% |
| | High | 57% | 67% | 8% | 3% |
| | N | 21 | 12 | 116 | 116 |

1988 Chi Square Probability= .000 Gamma= .810
1990 Chi Square Probability= .000 Gamma= .969
*Less than 55% in the previous election
** Low=0/ Medium= up to $3000/ High=over $3000

COORDINATED EXPENDITURES

| | | ELECTORAL SECURITY | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Marginal Races* | | Secure Races | |
| | | 1988 | 1990 | 1988 | 1990 |
| LEVEL OF PARTY FUNDING | Low** | 19% | 0% | 65% | 66% |
| | Medium | 33% | 50% | 28% | 27% |
| | High | 48% | 50% | 8% | 7% |
| | N | 21 | 12 | 116 | 116 |

1988 Chi Square probability= .000 Gamma= .751
1990 Chi Square Probability= .000 Gamma= .917
*Less than 55% in the previous election
** Low=0/ Medium= less than $15,000/ High= Over $15,000

*Source:* See Table 17.1

### Coherence: The Party In Office

While competitiveness is important, the full potential of political parties is not reached unless the election of a bloc of partisans has an impact on the public policy process. Winning elections is a means to other ends, one of which is to enact party principles into law. The shift toward candidate-centered campaigns undermined one of the ways of bringing about party-based policy coherence. Elected officials acting like independent agents has not always been the case:

> The old-style machines sanctified regularity and enforced it, and those who came up through their ranks were accustomed to being regular. When they arrived in Congress, they were prepared to follow leadership . . . The new-style members won their seats, in all probability, mainly by their own efforts. No party leaders handed them the nomination in the first place; they were self-selected, and they put together their own organizations, raised their own money, and ran their own campaigns. . . . Not having needed the party at home, and not beholden to it, they keep the party in Congress somewhat at a distance too (Sundquist 1982:49-50).

Party unity, as measured by the tendency of party members to support the party position on contested votes, has been much lower in Congress than in many other national legislatures. Party unity declined significantly during the 1960s and 1970s, and seemed to indicate that decades of party decline and candidate independence were catching up with the party organization in Congress. The future role of the parties as legislative forces began to be questioned seriously, with little hope for improvement in sight. During the 1970s, the national party organizations expanded their budgets, staffs, and campaign services. Shortly thereafter party voting in Congress shifted. Rather than showing a linear decline, party unity began to increase slightly during the 1980s. The fact that the national party organizations were showing a resurgence in organizational capacity at roughly the same time party unity in Congress began to rebound suggested a possible relationship between the two trends. A number of authors argued that the strengthening of the national party organizations could be contributing to the nationalization of congressional voting (see Jacobson 1985:166; Adamany 1984:95-112; and Leyden and Borrelli 1990:344-345). The fact that the two trends could be independent and the lack of agreement on the mechanism by which increased party support was being instilled left an area of confusion.

Pursuing a competitiveness strategy in the distribution of party campaign funds may complicate, but does not necessarily work against using some of those funds to increase the party loyalty of elected officials. A significant number of analysts have pointed out the potential for party influence through campaign support:

> The national committees . . . still tread very lightly around the goals and interests of congressional incumbents; thus their money comes largely without strings attached . . . If they ever turn their growing financial role and their electoral strategies to the service of a party program or ideology, if they begin to apply those tests to the recipients of their aid, then their role in the campaigns will transform them and, with them, much of American politics (Sorauf 1988:144).

> A higher degree of party participation in the financing of electoral politics will work in the direction of facilitating coherent governance (Arterton 1982:139).

> Effective use of party resources in support of party candidates may encourage candidate loyalty and responsiveness to the party (Justice Byron White ruling in *FEC v Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee*, 454 U.S. 27 [1981]).

Not all observers accept the potential for impact, Gary Jacobson argues that even if the party plays a significant role in an office-holder's initial election, once in office

> other resources are so readily available that the threat of withdrawal of party support is not much of a deterrent. Not only do incumbents enjoy many perquisites of office that can be turned to campaign purposes, but they are also favored by individual donors and PACs (Jacobson 1983:328-329).

Similarly, Huckshorn and Bibby assert that:

> The [FECA] act imposes expenditure and contribution limits on the support that can be provided by parties to candidates. As a result, congressional and senatorial candidates must rely heavily on nonparty sources of funds. Therefore, representatives and senators, once in office, feel little sense of obligation to their state and local parties, and the parties lack significant influence on the behavior of legislators in the halls of Congress (Huckshorn and Bibby 1982:91-92).

Both academic literature and journalistic accounts either explicitly or implicitly emphasize an exchange theory when discussing campaign contributions from individuals and political action committees. Common characterizations of the "best Congress money can buy," "trading votes for contributions," or "purchasing access" imply that funds from these sources come with significant strings attached. Thomas Ferguson outlines a broad historical view of American politics and presents an investment theory in which "power passes ineluctably to a relatively small group of major investors" (1983:64). Individuals and PACs are portrayed as wise strategic investors who create a set of beholden candidates willing to pay attention to the needs of their benefactors in exchange for continued funding. Political party contributions to candidates are seldom discussed in the same vein.

A number of lines of reasoning might help explain a linkage between party unity in Congress and party campaign support in elections. For

incumbents, the party might *reward* past loyalty or *punish* disloyalty. To the degree that party leaders take loyalty into account when distributing campaign funds, members aware of this tendency might *anticipate* potential rewards or punishment and make their judgement a part of their decision process. The influence may not be as overt. Both new and old members of Congress receiving party support might develop a sense of *indebtedness* to the party and increase their party unity based on past electoral support.

*Party Support and Congressional Behavior*

For party campaign contributions to have an impact on party support in Congress, two conditions must prevail. First, party contributions must be significant enough to engender notice by the recipients. Second, the distribution formula must take into account past and/or future levels of party support.

*Campaign Contribution Significance*: On the surface, party contributions seem relatively unimportant as compared with other sources. "Parties normally supply a conspicuously small proportion of the needed campaign funds. And this proportion has been decreasing over the last few elections" (Crotty 1984:205). Even if they pulled out all the stops and used the campaign law to the limit, the national parties could provide less than one-quarter of what it takes to run a serious House campaign. In actuality, they usually provide much less than the legal limit. Much of the party money goes to losing candidates. While national parties contribute about 10% of *all* congressional campaign funds, the account for less that 5% of the *winners'* totals. A large percentage of the winners are incumbents who find it relatively easy to raise funds from other sources. As Table 17.3 points out, there was a considerable drop in party funding for winners between 1988 and 1990 and a relative shift toward coordinated expenditures and away from direct expenditures. Both parties cut back on the percentage of winners they supported between 1988 and 1990. The Democrats drew much closer to the Republicans in the level of coordinated expenditures per winning candidate in 1990. PACs were more important to winners in 1990 than in 1988 and more important to Democrats than Republicans in both years.

Despite the relatively low overall percentage of winners' receipts coming from the national parties, the actual impact might be greater. A number of factors expand the potential impact of party money. Party money is readily identifiable and comes from party leaders with whom the congressmen will work closely. Party leaders are in a particularly good position to exact a price for the support they give to candidates. The House party leadership works along with the congressional campaign committee members (also members of Congress) to target races (Herrnson 1987:4). Unlike PAC and individual

Table 17.3 Average Party Contributions and Coordinated Expenditures to Congressional Winners, 1988-1990

| | | REPUBLICANS | DEMOCRATS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average Direct Party Contributions | (1988) | $ 6,207 | $ 1,810 |
| | (1990) | $ 3,313 | $ 711 |
| % of Candidates Getting Some Direct Party Funds | (1988) | 95% | 24% |
| | (1990) | 48% | 16% |
| Ave. Coordinated Party Expenditure | (1988) | $ 10,848 | $ 5,783 |
| | (1990) | $ 6,307 | $ 4,457 |
| % of Candidates Getting Some Party Coordinated Funds | (1988) | 28% | 42% |
| | (1990) | 17% | 40% |
| Ave. Total Campaign Expenditures | (1988) | $389,467 | $351,882 |
| | (1990) | $387,711 | $392,547 |
| Percentage of Winners' Totals from the National Party | (1988) | 4.4% | 2.2% |
| | (1990) | 2.8% | 1.3% |
| Ave. Total PAC Contributions | (1988) | $166,011 | $216,544 |
| | (1990) | $184,467 | $234,359 |

contributions, Members receiving party campaign support interact day in and day out with those individuals making the decisions on the allocation of campaign resources. Furthermore, "demonstrating appreciation to the party is unambiguous; members can simply make a greater effort to accommodate the party leadership" (Leyden and Borrelli 1990:355).

Dollar amounts may well be misleading since party money often goes further than money from other sources. Coordinated expenditures often buy services at cut rates since the national parties can negotiate favorable deals with vendors. Party contributions are also often supplemented with campaign advice, opposition research, local party-building help, and visits from party field staff--the cost of which does not show up on a candidate's receipts or expenditures.

Also, as Paul Herrnson points out:

> The timing of party contributions also increases their value. Substantial portions of all party money come early in the election cycle . . . Candidates usually need this

> early "seed money" to expand and revitalize their campaign organizations . . . Campaign contributions and coordinated expenditures made by the national parties have symbolic value that further increases their net worth. Candidates, PACs, and large individual contributors who are attuned to the politics of campaign finance recognize high levels of national party support to be *de facto* endorsements from these committees . . . national party contributions tell PACs and other big contributors to invest your money here (Herrnson 1988:69-71).

*Party Contribution Strategy*: In order to encourage party support, political party organizations must make some tough choices as to whom they support. Writing in 1982, Arterton argued that in the current era parties fail to choose among candidates on the basis of issues, ideology, or potential loyalty to the party. Estimates of electability dominate the decision process, funds are "allocated on a triage basis: safe incumbents and the most marginal challengers [are] given less (often nothing), while candidates running where ample funds might make a real difference receive party support" (Arterton 1982:129). During the early 1980's, both parties, particularly the Democrats, behaved like the slightly addled and always-forgiving rich uncle who gives small gifts to all the nieces and nephews because they are part of the family and does not keep track of the slights and rebellious actions of the recipients. For a number of years, the "rich uncle" fell on hard times and neither threats nor inducements meant very much since the potential rewards or punishments were so insignificant. Now that he is back on his feet with greater resources to give out, there is some potential for exchanging rewards for the love and support he desires. There is some evidence that the strategy of disassociating party campaign funding from party loyalty in office is beginning to change (see Leyden and Borrelli 1990; Jacobson 1987; and Sundquist 1982). As early as 1981, James Sundquist pointed out that:

> The Republican candidates who win with assistance arrive in Congress with what appears to be a deeper identification with the national party and a sense of obligation to it than do the Democratic members helped less generously. But once a new member takes his seat, whether money proves to be an instrument of continuing discipline will depend on the willingness of party leaders to withhold funds in future campaigns from members who defy the leadership. If past experience is a guide, it can be assumed that such penalties would be imposed only on the rarest occasions (Sundquist, 1982:52).

Jacobson also gives supporting evidence that early in the Reagan administration,

> Party resources were, on occasion, still used to round up Republican votes . . . some reluctant Republicans were induced to go along by party carrots (promises of help in justifying the vote to constituents) and sticks (threats to withhold party funds for the upcoming election from defectors) (Jacobson 1987:219-220).

Using sophisticated multivariate analysis to assess the impact of party loyalty on campaign support in the 1984 election, Leyden and Borrelli (1990) find that it is important to distinguish between the types of contribution. Controlling for a variety of other factors (primarily electoral security), they found that Democratic candidates with higher party unity scores receive more direct contributions from the party. Such rewarding of the most loyal members does not apply to Republicans. Similarly, the allocation of coordinated expenditures did not hinge on party loyalty for either party in 1984 (Leyden and Borrelli 1990). Turning to the impact of party funding on future behavior, they found that direct party expenditures were not related to future levels of party unity for either party in 1985, and that coordinated expenditures do have an impact on Republicans, but not for Democrats. They conclude that the limited Democratic resources and the fact that Republicans had to go through a formal review board of their party peers to get coordinated funding marked such contributions as special rewards that must be asked for (Leyden and Borrelli 1990:358-362). Apparently asked for rewards require some form of repayment.

*Empirical Evidence of Party Coherence Strategies*

To analyze both campaign contributions and party loyalty in office, the data in the following sections are limited to winning congressional candidates. Given the high re-election rate in Congress, this required the deletion of only a few cases from some analyses for Members not running for office in 1986 or 1990.

Party support in Congress was measured by using individual party unity scores as calculated by Congressional Quarterly. Party campaign support was divided into direct and coordinated expenditures to determine if the strategies and impact of the two types of contributions differ. Party campaign contributions often get lost in high-expenditure campaigns, and comparing absolute spending figures across districts may mean relatively little since candidates' perceived needs vary greatly. To some degree, the importance of party contributions may be compared by looking at the *percentage* of a campaign's contribution supplied by party sources. Just as "water tends to seek its own level," different districts establish a standard "water line" of necessary expenditures. The importance of the party contribution relates to its significance in aiding the candidate reach the perceived minimum. The party organization helping a candidate reach ten percent of his or her perceived goal is much more important than the party organization giving a large contribution which is insignificant to the total amount needed.

Given the high priority parties give to increasing competitiveness, it is no surprise that in the aggregate, party unity is not related to party campaign support (Table 17.4). In neither election year do congressmen highly

Table 17.4 1988 Party Direct and Coordinated Expenditures for Marginal Congressional Winners by Previous Party Support in Congress.

| | | PREVIOUS PARTY SUPPORT IN CONGRESS | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Low* | Medium | High |
| LEVEL OF PARTY FUNDING | Low** | 24% | 25% | 0% |
| | Medium | 18% | 33% | 14% |
| | High | 59% | 42% | 86% |
| | N | 17 | 12 | 7 |

1988 Chi Square Probability= .38// Gamma= .20
* Low=0-50%/ Medium=51-85%/ High=over 85%
** Low=0/ Medium= less than $15,000/ High= Over $15,000

supportive of their parties receive more funds either in direct or coordinated expenditures. The picture looks a little different when controlling for electoral security. In 1988, the parties did tend to reward supportive incumbents from marginal districts more than non-supportive incumbents when it came to coordinated expenditures, but there was no relationship for direct expenditures even among marginal members of Congress. No overall attempt to use party contributions as a reward was evident.

If party giving strategy shows limited and inconsistent relationships with past party loyalty, the empirical impact of party largesse on subsequent partisan behavior is even more limited and confusing. Weak, but generally inverse relationships between the amount of party funding and subsequent party support is the rule. Party campaign recipients seem to follow a strategy of opposing the party organization which helped support their campaign. Perhaps this results from a party strategy of helping marginal candidates whose constituencies do not normally reinforce a commitment to party. Unless one argues that high party campaign recipients are more loyal than they *might have been without such support*, there is little direct evidence of beholden candidates acting out their sense of indebtedness for financial support to their campaign by supporting party positions.

## Conclusions

The rise of the service-vendor-broker party as the result of party renewal has clearly maintained important roles for the various national party

organizations. The congressional campaign committees, in particular, have expanded their resources and increased their role in the campaigns of their candidates, both in terms of direct and coordinated expenditures and their strategic placement. However, in the minds and actions of national party strategists, competitiveness is both more important and in conflict with party coherence goals. Indeed, in pursuit of competitiveness the parties have almost totally abandoned the use of campaign funding to increase party coherence. The slight tendency to support past party loyalists in their next competitive race is neither consistent nor significant enough to encourage party unity. While the strategic use of campaign resources to increase candidate loyalty remains a possibility, it exists largely in the realm of potentiality rather than reality. Until party money comes with more strings attached, it will be accepted in the manner given. Winning candidates willingly accept party money, but it seems to have little impact on their behavior. Since the parties are not seen as "paying the piper," party campaign contribution recipients do not allow the party to "call the tune."

## Notes

1. An exception was Senator and later Republican Party Chairman Bill Brock (R-TN). Showing his political acumen, he fought long and hard during the 1974 amendment process for provisions that allowed parties to spend considerably more than individuals and PACs (*Congressional Quarterly* 1982:73).

2. *FEC v. Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.* 454 U.S. 27 (1981).

3. Democratic National Committee, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) and Association of State Democratic Chairs; and the Republican National Committee, National Republican Senatorial Committee, National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC).

## References

Adamany, David. 1984. "Political Parties in the 1980's," in Michael Malbin, ed., *Money and Politics in the United States*. Pp. 70-121. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.

Alston, Chuck. 1990. "Those Who Needed It Least Often Got Campaign Help." *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* 48:4235-4237.

Arterton, F. Christopher. 1982. "Political Money and Party Strength," in Joel L. Fleishman, ed., *The Future of American Political Parties: The Challenge of Governance*. Pp. 101-139. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Congressional Quarterly. 1982. *Dollar Politics*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly.

Crotty, William. 1984. *American Parties in Decline*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Federal Elections Commission. 1991. "1991 Party Spending Limits Set for Off-year Elections." Press release. July 3, 1991.

Ferguson, Thomas. 1983. "Party Realignment and American Industrial Structure: The Investment Theory of Political Parties in Historical Perspective." *Research in Political Economy* 6:1-82.

Frantzich, Stephen E. 1989. *Political Parties in the Technological Age*. New York: Longman.

Herrnson, Paul. 1987. "Party Strategies and Resource Distribution in the 1984 Congressional Elections." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.

_____. 1988. *Party Campaigning in the 1980's*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Huckshorn, Robert J. and John F. Bibby. 1982. "State Parties in an Era of Political Change," in Joel L. Fleishman, ed., *The Future of American Political Parties: The Challenge of Governance*. Pp. 70-100. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Jacobson, Gary C. 1983. "Congressional Campaign Finance and the Revival of the Republican Party," in Dennis Hale, ed., *The United States Congress*. Pp. 313-331. New Brunswick: Transaction Books.

_____. 1987. *The Politics of Congressional Elections*. Boston: Little, Brown.

_____. 1985-86. "Party Organization and the Distribution of Campaign Resources: Republicans and Democrats in 1982." *Political Science Quarterly* 100:603-625.

_____. 1985. "The Republican Advantage in Campaign Finance," in John Chubb and Paul Peterson, eds., *New Directions in American Politics*. Pp. 143-174. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Kayden, Xandra. 1980. "The Nationalizing of the Party System," in Michael Malbin, ed., *Parties, Interest Groups and Campaign Finance Laws*. Pp. 257-282. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Leyden, Kevin M. and Stephen A. Borrelli. 1990. "Party Contributions and Party Unity: Can Loyalty Be Bought?" *Western Political Quarterly* 43:334-365.

Salmore, Barbara G. and Stephen A. Salmore. 1989. *Candidates, Parties and Campaigns: Electoral Politics in America*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Sorauf, Frank J. 1988. *Money in American Elections*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

Sorauf, Frank J., and Paul Allen Beck. 1988. *Party Politics in America*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

Sundquist, James L. 1982. "Party Decay and the Capacity to Govern," in Joel Fleischman, ed., *The Future of American Political Parties: The Challenge of Governance*. Pp. 42-69. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

# Index