

sought to use constitutional arguments to mobilize southern whites while gaining northern sympathy. Unable or unwilling to make open racist appeals to the white "rabble," the segregationists' cause was thus lost.

However, interposition turned out to have great political value in other ways. If nullification was a poor way to contest the power of the national state directly, it was successful in turning the heads of conservatives outside the South. Kilpatrick and other segregationists became regular contributors to the most important conservative organ in the country, *National Review*, and the right wing of the GOP increasingly made the most of the segregationist states' rights stand to build a party apparatus there for the first time in a century. *National Review* came out in favor of massive resistance and interposition while attempting to distance that position from racism.⁷⁴

Collins had predicted that "when those on the other side of the Mason and Dixon Line, who love the Constitution, see the quality of the fight the South is making, they will respond with respect and admiration."⁷⁵ The respect and admiration that began to flow from northern conservatives did not save Jim Crow, but it did begin a long-term political shift in American politics. There was nothing inevitable about this shift. It was the result of deliberate action by political actors, like Collins, who married a critique of emergent racial liberalism to a new political vision that linked heterogeneous political elements in ideas and on the ground.

Joseph E. Lowndes,
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3

"GOLDWATER WAS THE HORSEPOWER": NATIONAL REVIEW AND THE NEW SOUTHERN GOP

In the decade following the Dixiecrat Revolt of 1948, Republican strategists began making inroads in the South for the first time in nearly a century. Since the end of Reconstruction, local Republican parties in the region generally functioned as patronage organizations whose sole function was to produce delegates to national conventions. As V. O. Key observed, "Southern Republican leaders are usually pictured as vultures awaiting the day when the party wins the nation and they can distribute patronage in the South. Meantime, they exert themselves only to keep the party weak . . . in order that there will be fewer faithful to reward." New York Governor Thomas Dewey, the Republican presidential nominee in 1944 and 1948, had been a strong advocate for civil rights and thus had little chance of making inroads in the South. But leading up to the 1952 presidential election, party activists loyal to Eisenhower tried to build a legitimate Republican base in the South through which to challenge the credentials of "post office" Republicans committed to the other Republican contender for the nomination, conservative Ohio Senator Robert Taft.¹

In their book *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, Earl Black and Merle Black argue that Eisenhower's "pathbreaking candidacy" in 1952 "was directed toward dynamic Peripheral South states, where urbanization and industrialization were creating large white middle classes sympathetic to the economic conservatism of the Republican Party." It is true that while Eisenhower cracked the Solid South that year and had an impact in the for-

mer Dixiecrat states of the Deep South, his electoral votes were not from these areas. Rather he took Florida, Virginia, Tennessee, Texas, and Oklahoma. Although Eisenhower knew that his strength was in peripheral and border South states, he campaigned vigorously throughout the region. He secured the endorsement of several Southern Democratic governors, including James Byrnes of South Carolina, and, as discussed in the previous chapter, received the backing of former Dixiecrat leaders, and tallied high vote totals from black belt counties in the Deep South.²

After Eisenhower's victory in the 1952 election, Taft, also hoping to strengthen ties to the South, urged Eisenhower to appoint the staunch segregationist senator Harry Byrd (D-Va.) to head the Treasury Department. Eisenhower declined, saying he could not appoint a Democrat, an explanation that "looked foolish" to Taft, given that Eisenhower had appointed a pro-union Democrat as Labor Secretary. Taft complained to one southern backer that, "For some reason, the [Eisenhower] group never had any interest in the South because it interferes with their idea that we should appease the minorities of the North." But while Eisenhower was hesitant about openly embracing segregationists, he had a great interest in the South and had frequent discussions with Republican National Committee chair Leonard Hall about the possibility of a major realignment that would bring moderate-to-conservative voters in the South into the Republican fold.³

Eisenhower often reminded southern senators that he was born in the South and that he had spent much of his life in places where Jim Crow reigned. In general, his statements showed sympathy with the white South—if not as a segregationist, then at least as one who saw racial equality as requiring an evolutionary process that would not be helped by government intervention. In the 1956 election, he proved his popularity again in parts of the South by winning Florida, Tennessee, Virginia, and Texas, this time taking the Deep South state of Louisiana as well.

The next year brought decisive challenges in the area of civil rights that could not be dealt with merely by taking a middle path, as Eisenhower was able to do with other divisive issues. In what became a showdown with Arkansas governor Orval Faubus, Eisenhower ordered in federal troops to protect nine black students attempting to enroll in Little Rock's Central High School. Even then, however, he asserted that he was using troops

not to defend or enforce integration, but merely to restore order. This distinction was lost on segregationist southerners such as Georgia senator Richard Russell, who charged the president with "applying tactics that must have been copied from the manual issued to the offices of Hitler's storm troopers." As a result of Eisenhower's actions, opportunities for the expansion of Southern Republicanism were stymied for the time being.⁴

Operation Dixie

Eisenhower moderates made one crucial contribution to the long-term growth of the Republican Party in the South, however: Operation Dixie, a program that built on their campaign work in both 1952 and 1956. In 1957, the Republican National Committee under Meade Alcorn established this five-man subcommittee to run moderate-to-conservative candidates on explicitly nonracist platforms, thereby beginning to realize the political realignment in the region that Ike had envisioned. I. Lee Potter, a Virginian who was head of the party's southern division, oversaw the project, and began speaking throughout the region on the importance of a two-party system. Potter sought to depict the GOP as the party of moderation and Southern Democrats as racial extremists who were out of step with the future of American politics. He also began recruiting young activists to build up local and state Republican parties and to run for office. These recruits tended to be young, college-educated professionals, moderately segregationist, and part of the South's growing urban middle class. Burgeoning industrialism in the region, particularly in the war industries, had begun to create new wealth in the metropolitan areas, and with it a new bourgeoisie that was attracted to economic conservatism and had fewer ties to the Democratic Party. Moreover, lack of local party infrastructure meant that these new activists could quickly rise up through the ranks to be party leaders or candidates for office.⁵

Operation Dixie appeared to have met with modest success in its first year. Each of the eight incumbent Republican congressmen from the South was reelected in the 1958 midterm elections, a year that saw very poor Republican showings nationally. But Eisenhower's decision to send troops to Little Rock limited the reach of the new Republican drive. In fact, the number of Republican candidates running in the twelve southern

states included in Operation Dixie was down from both 1954 and 1956; in some of those states, Republican candidates played down their party affiliation. At the time Potter did his best to put a good face on Little Rock, saying that southerners would be better off in the long run with the Republicans than with Democrats over issues like integration, but to little avail. The southern party remained remain circumscribed under Eisenhower's national leadership.⁶

The mixed success of Southern Republicans in 1958 raised the question of whether to try to woo the South by opposing civil rights in the 1960 presidential election, or to attempt to compete with the Democratic Party for the liberal and black vote in urban areas of the North. The question was related to a long-standing feud in the GOP between conservatives and moderates. Republican moderates had prevailed in the party at the national level since the New Deal, with most of the party's presidential candidates supporting internationalism and the welfare state. This wing was based in the Northeast and linked to Wall Street. Conservatives in the party tended to be midwestern or western, identified with small business, isolationist, and opposed to nearly all aspects of the New Deal. This split, which went back at least to Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party splinter in 1912, had never been resolved and was in part responsible for the Republicans' inability to become the dominant party. But emergent racial issues in the South would alter the equation between liberals and conservatives and even shape what those labels would come to represent.

The Southern Politics of *National Review*

While Republican moderates were attempting to build up a like-minded party in the South in the late 1950s, conservative intellectuals were more interested making ideological connections to southern segregationists. The weekly magazine *National Review* (NR) was instrumental in turning the attention of these conservatives southward. Founded in 1955 by William F. Buckley, the aim of NR was to "stand athwart history" by opposing New Deal liberalism in all of its forms and making a vigorous intellectual and political case for a rejuvenated Right. The magazine, which was aimed at both intellectuals and a broad conservative public, tried to bring together different ideas into a coherent framework and present, in

the words of NR publisher William Rusher, "a world view, rather than merely a political philosophy or the theoretical underpinnings of an economic system."⁷

Buckley and other NR editors linked economic antistatism and social traditionalism to develop this worldview in a combination that came to be called fusionism. This sometimes uneasy alliance brought together free market ideology with a philosophical commitment to transcendent moral horizons binding individuals in community and tradition. Both libertarians and traditionalists sought an organic basis for social order and were thus hostile to centralized state planning. They also shared a dislike of egalitarian impulses. In the context of the Cold War, anticommunism was a very tangible connection between the two. One key aim of the magazine which has not been discussed in historical accounts of the modern Right is the attempt to link southern opposition to desegregation to their emerging modern conservative agenda. Yet this development was fundamental to the conservative triumph.⁸

In the mid-1950s, almost no other conservative journals approached the issue of segregation, but NR's editors saw it as a prime opportunity to extend the conservative movement. States' rights was coming into increasing conflict with federal power in the South, and the motivating issue had to do with the maintenance of what southerners claimed were traditional local practices. Conservative scholar and regular NR contributor Richard Weaver invested the South with the quality of being the most anti-liberal region in the country, because of its commitment to the preservation of history, "principles of exclusion," and rigid hierarchies. Although these qualities are anathema to capitalism's tendency to disrupt historical bonds and sedimented forms of hierarchy, antistatism and a belief in nonplanned societies and economies provided enough common ground to build discursive links. Moreover, in the wake of *Brown*, segregationists were increasingly interested in anticommunism, as communist conspiracy provided a clear way to explain the growing civil rights struggle in the South. Indeed, Weaver went even further by claiming that desegregation was itself a form of communist practice. As NR attempted to bring states' rights into the conservative movement, the character of both conservatism and states' rights discourse were altered.⁹

Within the first month of its publication in 1955, NR looked for chinks

in the New Deal armor among southerners, and began to build a case on its editorial page that the struggle against civil rights was critical to the conservative movement. However, the *NR* approach to the question reveals just how open and contingent the political moment was on the right. The editors at *NR* were not GOP activists, and in any case bringing segregationists into the Republican Party did not seem like an obvious political choice to them in the mid-1950s. The GOP itself was dominated by the moderates who were coming to be called Modern Republicans, and with a Modern Republican president in office, it appeared to *NR* that Southern Democrats might have a stronger hand within their own party. It is indeed striking how much hope *NR* held out for conservative revival within the Democratic Party as compared to the minimal potential they perceived in the GOP.

One editorial from November 1955 revealed a sense of optimism about the future of the Democratic Party because of the potential strategic positioning of the South. "The Southerners have never lacked skill, but in earlier conventions they had a federal machine against them," asserted the editors. "The convention next year will be the first in a generation in which a majority of the delegates were not picked by a sitting Democratic president." The same issue featured an article promoting for the Georgia Senate race diehard segregationist Herman Talmadge, the supporters of whom were reportedly conservative because of their belief in "states' rights" and "local autonomy." There was, at this point, so little faith in the conservatism of the Republican Party at *NR* that writer Isabel Patterson asserted in another piece that it would be beneficial to have a Republican version of the Dixiecrat Revolt to sharpen internal differences among Republicans. Against the idea that another such split in the Democratic Party would help the Republicans, she argued that conservative Republican interest in the West and Midwest might "slide South, and more readily into the real party of the Solid South, the conservative Democrats, if [the Dixiecrats] were definitely on their own."¹⁰

But conservative Republicans in the mid-1950s did not share all the politics of the Dixiecrats. While racial hierarchy animated southern states' rights rhetoric, *NR* wanted to support states' rights without embracing racism openly. *NR* came out in favor of massive resistance and interposi-

tion while attempting to distance that stance from anything having to do explicitly with race.

First, in a 1956 editorial titled "The South Girds Its Loins," *NR* held that, "Those who oppose the South's resistance tend to rest their case, simply, on the fact that they disapprove of racial discrimination of any kind. It has been surprisingly difficult to fix their attention on the fact that, as far as the South and its sympathies are concerned, something else is at stake. Indeed, support for the Southern position rests not at all on the question whether Negro and White children should, in fact, study geography side by side; but on whether a central or local authority should make that decision."¹¹ From *NR*'s perspective, northern and western conservative solidarity with the South hinged on the claim that race was not so much the issue as basic federalist commitments.

"A Reasoned, Principled, and Consistent" States' Rights Politics

While attempting to convince conservatives to see segregationists as comrades in the struggle, *NR* also aimed to move segregationists away from their otherwise statist orientation and dependence on federal aid. The magnitude of *Brown*, the editors hoped, had shaken "inchoate states-righters out of their opportunistic stupor." One editorial stated,

Perhaps it is too late, but political resistance in the South seems to be centering on the broad and—potentially—dynamic concept of decentralized political authority. There has been more talk, these past few months, about the meaning of federation and about the significance of the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, than there has been for a generation. The result is that many of the arguments and much of the rhetoric advanced with respect to issues besides that of segregation have taken on an immensely rejuvenating theoretical substance; so that they begin to sound, as they have not for years, reasoned, principled and consistent.¹²

NR's editors thought that the issue of states' rights, animated by desegregation, could exceed the boundaries of race and come to shape other po-

litical issues of the day that were important to northern conservatives, such as the right of states to enact antisuversive legislation, and confront issues of price regulation, farm subsidies, and "federal aid to—and jurisdiction over—education, housing and road-building." These conservatives were willing to embrace the cause of massive resistance and make it part of the conservative agenda, but segregationist southerners had to likewise extend their racial states' rights stand to all conservative ideas and abandon populist New Deal commitments.¹³

Federally mandated desegregation was an easier matter for conservatives at *NR*, however, than the issue of voting rights. This posed a problem, because *NR*'s southern allies were as opposed to federal voting rights legislation as they were to desegregation. The magazine's response to the issue in the late 1950s showed just how difficult the task of separating racism from conservative principle in matters concerning the South would be, as they searched for a new, common political identity. In an editorial written by Buckley titled "Why the South Must Prevail," the magazine came out bluntly against democracy and for white supremacy. "The central question that emerges," he wrote,

is whether the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in the areas in which it does not predominate numerically. The sobering answer is *Yes* . . . because, for the time being, it is the advanced race. . . . The question, as far as the White community is concerned, is whether the claims of civilization supersede those of universal suffrage. . . . The *National Review* believes that the South's premises are correct. If the majority wills what is socially atavistic, then to thwart the majority may be, though undemocratic, enlightened.¹⁴

While Buckley's position was probably well received by many of his southern readers, it threatened to push *NR*'s politics beyond the boundaries of credible politics. The modern conservative movement was yet small, and, in the minds of many Americans, associated with discredited far-right groups like the John Birch Society. Moreover, for a nation that had fought a war against fascism little more than a decade before and that was currently steeped in pro-democratic Cold War rhetoric, a position that

opposed both the basic principle of democracy and the Constitution was difficult to defend. Most white Americans outside the South, whatever their private feelings about African Americans, would not have supported a movement based on clearly illiberal and antidemocratic politics.¹⁵

NR staff writer L. Brent Bozell dissented sharply from Buckley in the next issue. "This magazine," he wrote, "has expressed views on the racial question that I consider dead wrong, and capable of doing grave hurt to the conservative movement." Bozell indirectly endorsed the struggle for white supremacy in the civic sphere by emphasizing *NR*'s full-throated support of massive resistance but drew the line at political disenfranchisement. "Interposition, yes," he asserted; "the Constitution contemplates no final arbiter of its meaning. But where the law is clear, as in the case of the Fifteenth Amendment, I have never doubted that *National Review* and persons whose objectives we approve were, equally with the Establishment, bound to conform." Bozell argued essentially that conservative support for Jim Crow had to be sustained within the framework of the Constitution, which for him included guaranteed voting rights. As a future ghostwriter for Barry Goldwater, Bozell would help ensure that this would be the political course modern American conservatism would steer.¹⁶

NR staff writers closely watched southern political developments and defended segregationists as the natural allies of their nonsouthern readership in frequent editorials, articles, and book reviews. *NR* also encouraged noted white southern writers to contribute, allowing for the exploration of a range of possible identifications between southern and northern conservatives. Among its regular contributors was James Jackson Kilpatrick, who, as discussed in the previous chapter, was the editor of the *Richmond News-Leader* and the guiding intellectual of massive resistance. In the pages of *NR*, Kilpatrick further articulated and defended the states' rights position and made his constitutional argument against desegregation. Kilpatrick also developed a theory of racial superiority in his book *The Southern Case for School Segregation*, but significantly this theory was not present in his many pieces for *NR*. The absence underscores the point that *NR*'s support for segregation consciously stayed within bounds of generally accepted rhetoric on racial difference.¹⁷

Writing from a slightly different perspective was Donald Davidson, one of the authors of *I'll Take My Stand*, a Depression-era southern agrarian

critique of modern society. Davidson's chief anxiety was not so much civil rights as capitalism, industrialism, bureaucracy, and the elaborate control over everyday life wielded by what he, sounding like C. Wright Mills, called the "modern Power State." In an article entitled "The New South and the Conservative Tradition," Davidson carefully delineated what he thought the white South had in common with northern conservatives, rejecting most ties except antistatism.¹⁸

Anthony Harrigan, another southern writer, in an *NR* special issue called *The South: 1958*, took a very different view, granting more common ground between white southerners and conservatives—particularly capitalists—outside the South, while holding onto traditions of white supremacy. "Because the Southerner of today wants new factories on the bayous and in the magnolia groves, enjoys air-conditioning in his office, flies to New York once a week on business and enjoys a martini as well as any Manhattanite," wrote Harrigan, "one must not conclude that he is prepared to surrender his way of life." Taking the bond between white racist southerners and northern conservatives a step further, he continued, "The original shapers of Southern tradition believed that progress resulted not from equality of condition, but from fruitful inequalities. . . . The South has always been frank about its position on the question on equality. And, in the North, many persons have shared the view of the Southern thinkers." This image of the "Southerner of today"—a cocktail-drinking jet-setter who is nevertheless committed to older forms of ascriptivism—differed from Kilpatrick's Calhounism, linking, as it did, segregation to free market cosmopolitanism.¹⁹

Thus did *NR* begin to make links between the conservative movement and southern opponents of civil rights. But this growing discursive alliance was not, on its own, enough to shape the political field. It needed institutional force, just as the growing institutional reshifting of southern politics required an ideological base and a durable rhetoric in order to be achieved. But, as I show, not only did *NR* begin to make discursive links with the South, it also laid the groundwork for strategic work among Republicans seeking new conservative allies within the party. This alliance would bear fruit in the nomination of Barry Goldwater for the Republican presidential candidacy in 1964.

Goldwater and the South: The Beginnings of a Shift

The Republican Party in the South simultaneously began to grow and move in a decidedly conservative direction with attempts to build support for a 1964 Goldwater presidential run. The initial tie between Goldwater and the region was a conservative activist named Clarence Manion. Manion was a small-time industrialist from Indiana and former dean of Notre Dame Law School whom Eisenhower appointed to head the President's Commission on Inter-Governmental Relations. However, Manion's politics proved too conservative for that administration, and he was subsequently forced to resign.²⁰

After leaving the Eisenhower administration, Manion, who had been trying to build up a national conservative movement since the 1930s, began looking to the South. When Eisenhower sent troops to Little Rock in 1957, Manion saw his opportunity and approached Arkansas governor Orval Faubus about running for president. The strategy (developed by Manion along with South Carolinian William Jennings Bryant Dorn) was to run Faubus for the Democratic nomination in the South and run an ultra-conservative candidate for the Republican nomination up North. When both lost, the idea went, their support could be combined by choosing one of the candidates to run as a third-party candidate, bringing in enough Taft Republicans and Dixiecrats to block an Electoral College victory for either major party candidate.

Manion circulated a report written by a friend and founder of the Arkansas Citizens' Councils telling potential backers that "recent actions by the Federal judiciary which have tended to hasten at a frightening speed the Federal grab for power at the expense of the people and the States have placed the Federal judiciary squarely in the middle of the controversy. States' Rights," he went on, "have become household words in Ohio as much as in Arkansas or Mississippi. . . . How well would Orval Faubus do in the North, the Midwest, and the West Coast states? There is only one way to answer that question: by encouraging him to enter presidential primaries in those states."²¹

South Carolina was central to the development of this strategy. The state's junior senator, Strom Thurmond, had already run a presidential

campaign as the Dixiecrat candidate against the national Democratic Party, and had threatened to bolt again in 1956. Thurmond's famous defiance of the national Democrats made him a hero in South Carolina and helped prepare it to break from the century-long identification with the party. In 1959, two local conservative, segregationist, anti-union industrialists, Gregory Shorey and Roger Milliken, organized a state Republican convention in Greenville and invited Goldwater to speak. Convention delegates and television viewers across the state watched and listened as Goldwater told the conventioners that *Brown v. Board of Education* should "not be enforced by arms" because it was "not based on law." For Manion, Faubus was no longer necessary. Goldwater, he realized, would suffice on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line.²²

Manion, Shorey, and Milliken set about organizing a Goldwater for President organization and got Brent Bozell to ghostwrite a book on "Americanism" for Goldwater. The book, *Conscience of a Conservative*, debuted at number ten on *Time*'s best-seller list and soon after at number fourteen on the *New York Times* list. Succinct and easy to read, the book did a skillful job in packaging the modern conservatism that had been crafted by Bozell and others. Its aim was to draw different groups into a shared political identity and to create one sharp cleavage in American politics out of various political elements. The book begins: "I have crossed the length and breadth of this nation hundreds of times and talked with tens of thousands of people, with Democrats and Republicans, with farmers, with laborers and businessmen. I find that America is fundamentally a Conservative nation. The preponderant judgement of the American people, especially the young people, is that the radical, or Liberal approach has not worked and is not working. They yearn for a return to Conservative principles."²³ Bozell certainly knew that such a claim was not borne out by the electoral facts of the time, but the rhetorical tactic opens the possibility for a wide variety of people to begin to see themselves as opponents of the liberal regime, and to see their bedrock national identity residing in what he called "Conservative principles." In order to make this work, specific chapters speak to different groups. Thus there is a chapter called "Freedom for the Farmer," and one on "Freedom for Labor." However, the group for whom the book was perhaps most meant to appeal is not specif-

ically named. Rather, it is implied in the chapter titles "States' Rights" and "Civil Rights."

Using the formula developed at NR for dealing with issues of civil rights and the South, Bozell both separated and connected the principle of states' rights and black subjugation. Just as Bozell carefully distinguished massive resistance and interposition from a politics of white supremacy as such, here he had Goldwater claim to be an opponent of both racism and the tyranny of government intrusion into local affairs. "States' Rights," the author wrote, "affects Northerners as well as Southerners, and concerns many matters that have nothing to do with the race question. Still, it is quite true that the integration issue is affected by the States' Rights principle, and that the South's position on the issue is, today, the most conspicuous expression of the principle. So much so that the country is now in the grips of a spirited and sometimes ugly controversy over an imagined conflict between States' Rights, on the one hand, and are what are called 'civil rights' on the other." Civil rights, defined as rights to desegregated education, are neither valid nor legally enforceable, the author claims, for "despite recent holdings of the Supreme Court," he is "firmly convinced—not only that integrated schools are not required—but that the Constitution does not permit any interference whatsoever by the federal government in the field of education. It may be just or wise or expedient for Negro children to attend the same schools as white children, but they do not have a civil right to do so. I . . . support all efforts by the States, excluding violence of course to preserve their rightful powers over education."²⁴ This position was extended even further in a call for a constitutional amendment to reaffirm the control by states over education.²⁵

Having stated that he believes that white southerners should control education, Bozell then has Goldwater declare that desegregation was nevertheless a good idea. But, he wrote, "I believe that the problem of race relations, like all social and cultural problems is best handled by the people directly concerned." Through this logic, Goldwater supporters outside the South could at once denounce racism and make common cause with segregationists by claiming that their fight is at the forefront of the struggle for basic American freedoms.

Toward a "Union of Corn Belt and Cornpone"

The same year *Conscience of a Conservative* was published, both parties became more internally polarized over civil rights. The Democrats endorsed a strong civil rights platform in their national convention, including a proposal to outlaw segregation in federal housing or homes financed with FHA mortgages. Conservative and southern GOP organizers saw this as an opportunity, demonstrating the ideological shift of Southern Republicans between 1956 and 1960. Unlike in 1956, when Operation Dixie director I. Lee Potter contrasted his party's moderate race politics to the extremism of Southern Democrats, he now called the civil rights plank in the Democratic platform "a direct slap in the face" to those same Southern Democrats. RNC chair and Kentuckian Thruston Morton similarly stated that "the South is coming out of this Democratic Convention in an angry mood. . . . Personally I don't think our platform is going to be modeled after theirs on its extreme provisions." The term "extremism," used by Southern Republicans to describe Democratic support for segregation prior to Little Rock, now was used to describe opposition to segregation in federal programs.²⁶

The issue of the civil rights plank in the GOP platform became the focal point of the two ideological camps of the Republican Party as they faced off at its convention. In response to Potter and Morton, liberal New York governor Nelson Rockefeller expressed concern about the party's stance on civil rights. Hoping to avoid a floor fight at the convention, Richard M. Nixon, the likely Republican presidential candidate, traveled to meet the governor at his Manhattan townhouse. There, the two crafted a compromise platform that called for "aggressive action" to abolish racial discrimination and explicitly endorsed the lunch counter sit-ins that were then sweeping the South. The meeting, dubbed "the Surrender of Fifth Avenue," enraged conservatives at the GOP convention; they concluded that Nixon had succumbed to Rockefeller's "ultra-liberal" politics, particularly on the civil rights plank. Goldwater, believing that Nixon had double-crossed him, declared it the "Munich of the Republican Party." Goldwater had come to Chicago planning to bow out and throw his support to Nixon, but news of the Rockefeller pact made him decide to temporarily sit on his withdrawal speech.²⁷

The new strength of the conservative wing of the party was evident in the Goldwater support at the convention. South Carolina had already committed its delegates to Goldwater, and three new groups, Americans for Goldwater, Goldwater for President, and Youth for Goldwater, all descended on Chicago. After what the Texas delegation called Nixon's "damned sell-out," it released its pro-Nixon delegates to back Goldwater. Goldwater knew that he did not have enough delegates to challenge Nixon, and he did not want to split the party the way that it had been in years past. Yet South Carolina refused to give up their Goldwater votes, so Goldwater arranged to be nominated by delegates of that state in order to formally withdraw. When he came to the podium to make his withdrawal speech, he was drowned out temporarily by a spontaneous demonstration, where his enthusiastic supporters marched around the hall to the strains of "Dixie." In his speech, Goldwater told conservatives to "grow up" and work for Nixon in order to win the election, and to work in the longer term for a conservative takeover of the party. The Nixon-Rockefeller platform passed without debate, although it continued to rankle conservatives and southerners. As one Louisiana delegate lamented, "We've lost Louisiana, I tell you, we've lost Louisiana. Lyndon Johnson's going to come across the border and talk 'magnolia' to them and they'll vote Democratic and we could have had Louisiana, we could have had it."²⁸

But Nixon nevertheless was a popular candidate in the South. In Atlanta, 150,000 residents came out for his campaign kickoff, and he was well received throughout the rest of the region. Other Republicans, particularly conservatives, were also popular in the South in that campaign. "Demands for Senator Goldwater to appear before Southern audiences," according to RNC southern division and Operation Dixie head Lee Potter, "are in such volume that the Senator couldn't satisfy them if he spoke in three cities a day for the rest of the campaign." Nixon, who lost the election by an extremely tight margin, ran a very strong race in the South, carrying 46 percent of the vote and three of the four Eisenhower border states—Florida, Tennessee, and Virginia. Republicans made gains at the state level as well. In five gubernatorial races, the Republican candidates increased their vote "105 percent above the 1956 level or by over one million votes," according to the RNC research division. These results led the report's authors to conclude that "organizational effort at least in selected

areas of the Southern states to expand the base of the Republican Party is clearly justified by the 1960 results." However, Nixon's loss provided arguments for both moderates and conservatives about the future direction of the party. Moderates argued that Nixon could have appealed to more traditional Democrats such as union members, urban ethnics, and northern black voters had he run a more liberal campaign. Conservatives argued that the party had to look elsewhere and build a conservative party among southerners and Midwesterners, linking traditional anticommunism with opposition to civil rights in a "union of corn belt and cornpone."²⁹

After 1960, conservative influence in the party rapidly grew, institutionally and ideologically marginalizing the reach and authority of moderate Republicans. The most effective ground of the conservatives—in terms of both organization and newly infused political passion—was the South, where conservative GOP operatives began to organize in earnest to take over the party for a Goldwater run in 1964. Liberals and moderates in the party had made the mistake of forgoing the South in the years since Eisenhower, and now conservatives, working with staunch segregationists in the Deep South, as well as with Republican organizations in border states, began to control the party apparatus that Eisenhower moderates had built up in Operation Dixie. This was important not just because the South was proving to be fecund soil for organizing, but malapportionment of seats on the RNC gave southerners influence greater than their numbers. For the most part, the moderates who argued that the Republican Party should invest resources in building an urban base among Democratic constituencies made the case purely on organizational grounds, leaving aside ideological questions. This put them at a disadvantage in building the discursive links necessary to make a majoritarian bloc, either in the Republican Party or in the electorate. Conservatives were able to use their ideas and in particular their passionate opposition to the New Deal state to recruit committed organizers to build their base.³⁰

In 1961, the RNC, now run by archconservative William Miller, began plowing a huge portion of the RNC budget into Operation Dixie. With this new influx of cash, Potter hired a publicist to begin a newsletter for circulation around the South. Soon a slick magazine named *Southern Challenge*, with a readership of 39,000 and a decidedly conservative bent, attacked Democratic congressmen as disloyal to the South because of their

support of the policies of their northern liberal colleagues. The magazine's content is evidence that by the early 1960s Operation Dixie, and the national party apparatus more generally, had entirely abandoned a moderate approach in the South. This was probably the most efficacious political strategy for it was unlikely to build a party of moderation and civil rights liberalism given the changes both in the South and in the national party. In race, there was an easy issue around which to build a coalition, and the conservatives in the party were both well-positioned and ideologically disposed to exploit this tactic of abandoning the black vote in favor of, in Goldwater's words, "hunting where the ducks are." As he said in a press conference in Atlanta that year, "I would like to see our party back up on school integration. The Supreme Court decision is not the law of the land."³¹

The strategists of Operation Dixie publicly denied that they used race as a wedge issue. But the RNC actively recruited well-known segregationists to run for office. One was South Carolina's William Workman, a columnist and television commentator whose book, *A Case for the South*, was an important articulation of resistance to integration. Another was Rubel Phillips, the Republican candidate for Mississippi governor in 1963, whose campaign literature assured that he was "a staunch segregationist [who] condemns the use of federal power or threats of reprisals to force integration on Mississippians to curry favor with the minority voters on the big Northern and Eastern cities." There was also Alabama's hard segregationist senate candidate James Martin. Building the Republican Party in the South thus required a double game of convincing white southerners that the Republican Party would defend segregation while assuring Northern Republicans that they were only creating a party that looked politically like its northern counterpart.

Suite 3505

The Republican Party organizing that took place in the South in the early 1960s was directly descended from the Eisenhower efforts to create a moderate party there in 1952, 1956, and the early phase of Operation Dixie. Paradoxically, this continuation of Republican party-building in the South begun by moderates eventually contributed to their loss of control

of the national party. Key to the success of this conservative Republican organizing was the dynamic linkage of intellectuals at *National Review* with hard-nosed institution-builders—in particular NR's William Rusher, Ohio GOP Congressman John Ashbrook, and consummate Republican organizer F. Clifton (Clif) White. In 1961, White, a party operative from New York who had worked in Operation Dixie, was recruited by Rusher, the new publisher of NR, to create a strategy for a conservative takeover of the party. Rusher was the first real activist-oriented member of the *National Review* staff, and as such sought a way for the magazine to begin to intervene in strategic politics. White, Rusher, and Ashbrook, along with South Carolina's Shorey, Milliken, and a number of wealthy former Young Republicans, began an ad hoc group to plot strategy. At the first meeting of the "Suite 3505" group—named for their secret meeting place in the Chanin Building above New York's Grand Central Station—White outlined for them a strategy of how they could take over the party by gaining control of the party apparatus in the Midwest, West, and South. The ultimate aim of this takeover was a Goldwater run in 1964, but this was not openly discussed, as Goldwater had said repeatedly that he was not interested in the nomination. The Goldwater group kept their plan secret as they built it up, so that by the time they approached Goldwater, they would have a viable vehicle for him and could therefore convince him to run.³²

White, a professional political tactician who had a unique understanding of the arcane world of party rules and procedures, outlined a strategy of organizing Republicans starting with local precincts, moving up through counties, and finally the state level in the course of three years so that Goldwater supporters could take over local and state party organizations, choose their own delegates, and over time have those delegates influence the choice of new delegates. By the 1964 Republican Convention, states without primaries could be counted on to have their delegates back Goldwater, and states with primaries (of which there were only twelve at the time) would have mobilized forces to register Republicans and get them, block by block, to the polls. The strategy demanded extraordinary organization, but even more it depended on the tireless devotion of state party chairs and thousands of local volunteers under a small cadre of national organizers.

The growing rift between the liberals and conservatives in the party was opened up dramatically when a meeting of White's group in a Chicago motel was leaked to the press. Liberal Republicans, such as New York senator Jacob Javits, accused White and what was now being called his "southern strategy" of wrecking the party by appealing to the worst in southern racial sentiment. Conservatives responded that they were merely attempting to build a truly national party, one that left appeals to minorities to the Democrats. Goldwater appeared irritated by the negative publicity generated by White's group, but he did not openly repudiate it, which White took as a sign of encouragement.³³

Operation Dixie had become White's domain, and as such became one of the party's more vital projects. *Time* called the young Republican activists in the South the party's "New Breed; furrow-browed, button-down, college-trained professionals who, one by one, took control of the state parties from apathetic and aging professionals." Much to the lament of the program's moderate founders, it also had become the instrument of conservatives, who used it to push a hard, segregationist line in the party.³⁴

South Carolina Republican William Workman, running for Congress in 1962 against three-term Democrat Olin D. Johnston, himself a strong segregationist, painted his opponent as being in the pocket of the Kennedys, and therefore unable to stop desegregation in the South. Workman did so by tying Johnston to Kennedy's Medicare plan and to being the administration's point man on farm support legislation. Such a discursive strategy was meant to link the New Deal itself with racial liberalism in the minds of white southerners. Yet this rhetoric was not in itself enough, as many white southerners liked both Medicare and farm subsidies. This tension among Southern Republicans and Democrats over the role of government benefits was not so much resolved as overcome by the emerging racial crisis, beginning with the integration of the University of Mississippi in September 1962, where a violent, bloody clash left two dead and thousands of federal troops stationed in Oxford. It was then that southern support for Kennedy began a precipitous decline.

Goldwater immediately came out against the Kennedy administration, denouncing the intervention. "We haven't turned over to the federal government the power to run the schools. . . . I don't like segregation. But I don't like the Constitution kicked around either." In the wake of the riots

at Ole Miss, the Republicans did extraordinarily well around the South by southern standards. In South Carolina, Workman took 44 percent of the vote. In Alabama, James Martin lost to thirty-seven-year Democratic congressional veteran Lister Hill by nine-tenths of a percent. A congressional race in Tennessee, which hadn't seen a Republican challenger since 1936, was closer still. GOP congressional candidates across the region had taken 606,000 votes in the previous off-year election. This time they polled more than two million votes. Local gains were impressive as well. For instance, GOP candidates swept all state and county offices in play in three North Carolina counties, and in doing so unseated the Democratic speaker of the state House of Representatives. They also had major gains at the local and state level in Georgia, Alabama, Texas, and Tennessee.³⁵

After the election, moderate Republicans publicly attacked Operation Dixie's strategy of promoting segregationist candidates in the South. The editors of *Advance*, the magazine of the moderate Republican Ripon Society, asserted that, "though a traditionally conservative appeal to the South is certainly acceptable, a segregationist appeal is totally unacceptable, both morally and politically." The editors also attempted to downplay southern victories altogether, calling instead on the party to build up its base in northern industrial cities among blacks and labor. For moderates, the ideological direction of the party was doomed to be shaped by an emergent southern GOP.³⁶

Defending southern gains against claims that Operation Dixie sought segregationist votes, Lee Potter turned the question around. "If the Kennedys' actions at 'Ole Miss' enter into the picture at all," he wrote in a letter to the *New York Times*, "it is only to emphasize the split personality with which the Democratic Party has been afflicted for a century."³⁷

"Goldwater Was the Horsepower"

Using effective state organizers such as Alabama Republican state chair John Grenier and Texas state chair Peter O'Donnell as regional strategists, White was able to get backing for Goldwater among Republicans throughout the region. In fact, White's experience in the South went back to the Eisenhower campaign strategy to challenge the credentials of Taft's southern patronage delegates. But building a small base of party

regulars to nominate candidates is different than mobilizing an electorate. Republican recruiters could convince ambitious young professionals to join the party, but without a clear ideological perspective, there was no way to win over significant numbers of voters. In other words, the institution-building that the party had engaged in over the prior decade had been critical, and showed that it was possible to begin to pry away support from the Democrats. Without that work, the Republicans could not have gained a foothold in the region that had despised them for a century. But successful institutional change necessitates changes in the political landscape; and changes in political interest and identity are required to transform the landscape. Moderate appeals to the importance of party competition in the region were not enough to produce this transformation. The conservative embrace of segregation, however, excited passions and made the growth of the southern GOP possible.³⁸

Describing this evolution, White later said, "I first got involved in the South for Eisenhower in 1952. In that year the only Republican organization in the South was the Young Republicans. The oldsters had been holding conventions in phone booths. By 1964 we had a bunch of young kids in the South who couldn't be bought." And it was the promise of a conservative candidate who opposed civil rights that allowed the Republicans to build the party in the electorate. As John Grenier put it, "Goldwater was the horsepower. We needed voter sentiment in depth. We had the local leadership without the horsepower, but we couldn't get the voters to switch parties until we provided them with the catalyst."³⁹

After the 1962 election, William Rusher made the argument in *National Review* that encapsulates both how and why the South would be so necessary to the rise of the Right and for the success of the Republican Party nationally. Republicans, Rusher asserted, could either move right and support Goldwater for the next presidential nomination or support a moderate and be crushed. After a detailed account of the growth of the Republican Party in the South, state by state, he made clear that this newly revived party was not the party of Eisenhower, but of Goldwater. "Goldwater, and *Goldwater alone*," he wrote, "can carry enough Southern and Border States to offset the inevitable Kennedy conquests in the big industrial states of the North and still stand a serious chance of winning the election." Rusher was careful, like other conservative Republicans, to try to

distance the southern embrace of conservatism from regional race concerns. This attempt is contradicted, however, by two very telling cartoons accompanying the article: one depicts Confederate soldiers firing cannonballs labeled "Republican," and the other shows a bearded Confederate general holding aloft a flag emblazoned with an elephant.⁴⁰

Goldwater was well suited to the role of being the conservative candidate behind which southerners might rally, as he was more vocally critical of civil rights than even most conservative leaders in the party. Yet he claimed a personal commitment to racial equality. He had previously supported black voting rights in the South, and said that the "federal government should act even if it means with troops." He was critical of Robert Kennedy and the Justice Department for not prosecuting voting rights cases more forcefully, and he had even supported a constitutional amendment eliminating the poll tax. But as a presidential run seemed more likely, Goldwater took an increasingly stronger stance against civil rights. He assured southern whites that he would "bend every muscle to see that the South has a voice in everything that affects the life of the South." This tightrope walking defined the approach conservative Republicans in and around the Goldwater campaign took in relation to civil rights.⁴¹

However, not all attempts to link southern segregationists to conservatives outside the South relied on the kind of constitutional hairsplitting pioneered by Bozell. As actual Republican political races heated up in the South, so did the rhetoric of southern GOP candidates. Clifton White, in a political memoir he wrote after the 1964 election, defended the southern strategy against an accusation by Nelson Rockefeller that they had planned a race-based campaign. "Never at any time had I suggested that the GOP 'write off the Negro and other minority groups.' Nonetheless, we had to face political realities," wrote White. "I recognized that any conservative candidate—even a dedicated integrationist—would have great difficulty making inroads in the North. The only hope the Republican Party had . . . was to win the Southern states. And the GOP was already growing by leaps and bounds in the South without emphasizing the race issue at all, as Jim Martin's senatorial campaign against segregationist Democrat Lister Hill had proved in Alabama."⁴²

The above statement bears examination because it demonstrates how

conservatives first publicly rationalized the southern strategy. White begins by saying that he never "suggested that the GOP" exclude "the Negro and other minority groups," but follows immediately by saying that they "none-theless . . . had to face political realities." In other words, he may not have wanted to promote candidates who were opposed to civil rights, but this was in fact their best strategic option. He then states that a conservative candidate, "even a dedicated integrationist," would have gotten them nowhere in the North, and that they therefore needed the South where, of course, a dedicated integrationist would be of little use. But then he changes course to claim that the Republican Party was "growing by leaps and bounds in the South without emphasizing the race issue at all"—a statement that contradicts the logic he has just laid out. As an example of one of these candidates who was not emphasizing race, he offers Alabama senatorial candidate James Martin. Yet Martin, like the other candidates run by Republicans in the South, ran precisely on his segregationist credentials. In a typical speech, Martin called for "a return to the spirit of '61—1861, when our fathers formed a new nation. . . . God willing, we will not again be forced to take up the rifle and bayonet to preserve these principles." White goes on to say that none of his group, not even supporters in the Deep South, ever suggested that Goldwater run on a segregationist platform. But there was never reason for him to do so. As long as Goldwater held high the banner of states' rights, he could appear to split real questions of racial domination from an abstract commitment to the Tenth Amendment, and allow conservatives to show clean hands while building a segregationist party in the South. Meanwhile, southern segregationists could feel that their racial interests could be looked after by the Republicans, even if they would not openly embrace white supremacy.⁴³

Cynical as it was, this position left little room for New Deal Democrats to point fingers. White wrote that in the "twisted semantics of our age, it was somehow morally wrong for Republicans to aspire to political power in Southern states but of course perfectly all right for Democratic segregationists to continue their reign and help keep Democratic administrations in control of the federal government." But while the New Deal accommodation of Jim Crow had been key to its success, Democratic segregationists were beginning to lose their grip on the region and had been at odds with

Democratic administrations for some time. Conservative Republicans were merely making all the hay they could from this situation.⁴⁴

However, if Goldwater's coded racial appeals could be accommodated by his conservatism, this conservatism did not yet dovetail easily with the views of most white southerners, particularly when it came to issues of federal expenditures on farm subsidies, or giant public utility schemes like the Tennessee Valley Authority, which had brought electricity to tens of thousands of people in the region for the first time. In an interview with Stewart Alsop for the *Saturday Evening Post*, Goldwater flatly stated his belief that the federal government should sell off the TVA. This position immediately made his advisers nervous, for they feared that it threatened the hard-won gains the party had made in the South. Tennessee's Howard Baker called Goldwater's position on the TVA "a serious mistake, not only politically, but from the standpoint of the best interest of the nation." Thousands of letters poured into the Goldwater campaign office from around the region. One from Chattanooga read, "I have contributed to your campaign and helped organize the Goldwater club here . . . but since you have . . . come out . . . for sale of the TVA, I am taking off my Goldwater stickers." From Atlanta: "For some time now, I have thought I would vote for you if you are nominated. But why in hell did you say that about the TVA? . . . The southeast will never vote for anyone who advocates turning over the TVA to the . . . monopolists." Such populist sentiment among southerners may well have cost Goldwater the border states that had gone for both Eisenhower and Nixon.⁴⁵

Race and Conservatism Outside the South

Opposition to civil rights, necessary for southern support, came to have increasing purchase outside the South as well, where questions of housing segregation as well as school segregation were becoming more heated. Pollsters and journalists began seeing evidence of what came to be called "backlash" in northern cities, where urban ethnics of Southern and Eastern European descent were becoming more open to racial appeals. Clif White recruited one of these pollsters, Theodore Humes, to his Goldwater group. The wedge into these communities, Humes was discovering, was not conservatism, but opposition to civil rights. As White wrote,

Everywhere he went, Humes found the Polish, Slovak, Hungarian, Ukrainian and other groups of Eastern European origin in rebellion against the school bussing [*sic*] of their children and the threatened eradication of their old neighborhoods by "blockbusters," the greedy real estate speculators who were deliberately and systematically exploiting Negroes who wanted to buy homes of their own. [Backlash] was an issue we had no plans to exploit. But it was there nonetheless, and it was helping turn thousands in the "nationality" groups against the Kennedy administration and the Democrat big-city machines.⁴⁶

Just as White's justification of the southern strategy can help explain the conservative Republican logic there, here his explanation of Goldwater's strategy shows how the issue of race was used and justified outside the South.

As in his claim about the South, White argued that Republican operatives were not exploiting racism; rather they happened to reap the benefits of Democratic failure. Yet if race were the issue for the "nationality groups," they would turn against Kennedy and the Democratic Party and vote Republican only if Goldwater was seen to oppose civil rights initiatives. Hence after reading Humes's study of ethnic racism, White's group hired him to do more extensive polling. But unlike desegregation in the South, conservatives did not have a cut-and-dried issue here. In order to spell out exactly why white ethnic neighborhoods would be "eradicated" by the introduction of black homeowners, White would have to say either that blacks would change the character of these neighborhoods for the worse, or admit that the mere presence of black neighbors would be so distasteful to whites that they would have to move out. Instead, he displaced the conflict from either white ethnics or black potential homeowners to "greedy real estate speculators"—and by extension "open housing" laws that required sellers to sell fairly to the highest bidder regardless of race. In doing so, he avoided admitting a dubious moral position, sided with anxious working-class whites, and seemed to sympathize with vulnerable blacks all at the same time.

Indeed, the Goldwater campaign was quite interested in exploiting the race issue throughout the country. White contracted with more than one

public opinion firm to analyze the impact of civil rights on white communities, focusing on northern cities with substantial black populations such as Cleveland and Cincinnati.⁴⁷

The White Man's Party

While Goldwater strategists busily cultivated white backlash, they worked both sides of the issue, publicly claiming that it was not they, but liberals, who were bringing the issue of race to the fore. Buckley, in an *NR* column in July 1963, most fully elaborated this position. "If the Democrats," he wrote,

in their anxiety to discredit Goldwater and the conservative wing of the Republican Party, hammer away at the theme that such sentiments as Goldwater's add up to an anti-Negro policy, then those who side with Goldwater may begin reconstructing their habits of thought and argument; and eventually their policies. Thereafter, they might proceed, resignedly, on the assumption that what is anti-Negro and what is traditionally American are apparently the same thing. And that therefore one must now choose between staying free and trucking to the Negro vote.⁴⁸

Were it not written to admonish Democrats, this argument could be taken as a strategy brief for the Goldwater campaign. In it Buckley shows the conservative formula for constructing a new political identity among whites who will come to see their interests as reflected by conservative candidates. The brilliant formula would allow conservatives in the coming years to reap political dividends from every struggle to advance in black civil, political, and economic rights.⁴⁹

Influenced by both Bozell and Garry Wills, who at the time was a young staff writer at *NR*, Buckley moved away from his earlier stance frankly supporting white rule, and as the civil rights movement heated up, he increasingly distanced himself from segregation, and from opposition to black suffrage (which was now being promoted more by a new breed of racial populists in the South, and less by elite bourbon politicians). Buckley's intervention was also evidence of *NR*'s new orientation toward practical

politics, which reflected the influence of Rusher, and his desire to make the magazine an organizational tool for conservatives in the Republican Party.⁵⁰

The new racial bent of the party was evident at the annual RNC meeting in Denver in 1963, where even conservative columnist Robert Novak was alarmed at the openly racial language of southern chairmen and the lack of challenge to it by nonsoutherners. He cites as evidence a statement by Mississippi party chair (and member of Clif White's group) Wirt Yerger that Kennedy had fomented racial upheaval in the South in order to win the election. Not only did Yerger's claim go unrepudiated, but an "omnibus resolution" adopted at the national committee came close to endorsing it. "All of this pointed to an unmistakable conclusion," Novak wrote, that "a good many, perhaps a majority of the party's leaders, envisioned substantial political gold to be mined in the racial crisis by becoming in fact, though not in name, the White Man's Party."⁵¹

Goldwater confirmed his role as the "White Man's Party" candidate in June 1964 when he voted against Johnson's sweeping Civil Rights Bill. He took pains to make clear, however, that he did so entirely on conservative principle. In his speech on the Senate floor before casting his vote he said, "I realize fully that the federal government has a responsibility in the field of civil rights. . . . The two portions of this bill which I have constantly and consistently voiced objections . . . are those which would embark the federal government on a regulatory course of action with regard to private enterprise in the area of so-called 'public accommodations' and in the area of employment." Continuing his objection, he sketched out the Orwellian scenario that had become the staple of segregationists since 1948: "To give genuine effect to the prohibitions of this bill," Goldwater said, "will require the creation of a federal police force of mammoth proportions. It also bids fair to result in the development of an 'informer' psychology in great areas of our national life—neighbors spying on neighbors, workers spying on workers, businessmen spying on businessmen. . . . These . . . are the hallmarks of the police state in the destruction of a free society."⁵² This charged rhetoric linked race to antistatism in a way that could evoke passionate opposition to civil rights from both segregationists and conservatives, thus further creating a common political identity.⁵³

United at Last: The 1964 Republican Convention

When the Republican convention got under way in San Francisco in 1964, the southern and conservative alliance dominated the proceedings. The civil rights plank, which in its proposed form pledged enforcement of the new Civil Rights Act, was weakened by the drafting committee. Bending to southern opposition, the word "enforcement" was removed. Texas Senator John Tower defended the change by explaining that the term carried unfortunate connotations for a region that had suffered under Reconstruction. Further evidence that the conservative wing of the party was slouching southward came when respected Iowa Senator Bourke Hickenlooper proposed a plank "censuring" the Supreme Court for having "usurped" the functions of Congress, and demanded a congressional investigation of recent court actions.⁵⁴

Moderates did their best to resist the conservative takeover. The Ripon Society, a national organization of Republican moderates founded soon after Kennedy's assassination, issued a statement just before the convention declaring that the party had to choose "whether or not to adopt a strategy that must inevitably exploit the 'white backlash' to the Civil Rights Movement in the South and in the suburbs of the North." The only opposing candidate at the convention, Governor William Scranton from Pennsylvania, supported by the northeastern wing of the party, went fully on the attack against the faction that these liberals depicted as racist and warring. The accusation appeared justified when Rockefeller got up to offer a platform amendment that would denounce extremism, particularly the John Birch Society and the Ku Klux Klan. Goldwater supporters in the gallery went into a frenzy, and they repeatedly shouted the New York governor down.⁵⁵

Conservative stridence climaxed with Goldwater's acceptance speech for the nomination. Unlike in 1960 when he told conservatives to grow up, work for Nixon, and take the party back in the long term, now that they had taken the party he seemed prepared to offer no quarter. "Anyone who joins us in all sincerity we welcome." He went on: "Those who do not care for our cause, we don't expect to enter our ranks in any case." And in his now infamous words he proclaimed, "I would remind you that extremism

in the cause of liberty is no vice! And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!" Although Clifton White and other members of the Draft Goldwater group were aghast at Goldwater's proclamation, the floor went wild over it. With the southern and conservative takeover of the GOP now complete, the victors celebrated long into the night. "Some of the Goldwater jubilants were singing the 'Battle Hymn of the Republic' and others were singing 'Dixie,'" reported Theodore White. "But they were united at last."⁵⁶

Hunting Where the Ducks Are

The battle to wrest the states of the Old Confederacy from the Democrats began in earnest after the convention. Early in the fall, Strom Thurmond made a televised announcement to the people of South Carolina that he was switching parties. "The Democratic Party," he said, "has forsaken the people to become the party of minority groups, power-hungry union leaders, political bosses and big businessmen looking for government contracts and favors. . . . [It] has rammed through Congress unconstitutional, unworkable and oppressive legislation which invades inalienable personal and property rights of the individual."⁵⁷ He went on to say that he would campaign for the "Goldwater Republican Party" and "join him in his fight . . . to make the Republican Party a party which supports freedom, justice and constitutional government." Not only did Thurmond switch parties to try to swing the South to Goldwater in 1964, but, as his announcement stated, his aim was equally to alter the course of the Republican Party, to commit the GOP to racial conservatism.⁵⁸

Excited about the chance to support a major party candidate who openly opposed civil rights legislation, many southern backers beyond the control of the southern GOP apparatus began their own kind of campaign. One entrepreneur manufactured "Goldwater Cigars" to be distributed around the South. Boxes of the cigars came with a card that stated: "These cigars can be used in many ways. . . . Some Republican People at the San Francisco Convention Slipped a Lighted Cigar Into a Negro Delegate's Pocket! They Say He Seemed to Get the Idea That He Wasn't Wanted. And He Left the Room in a Hurry!"⁵⁹ Mindful of the bad national press

that could come from these gimmicks, Clifton White discouraged them. Thus in this and other similar cases, the Goldwater campaign sought to avoid open racial signification.⁶⁰

Although Goldwater was the anti-civil rights candidate for most voters, he rarely raised the subject in speeches between the convention and November. Despite his changing language to accommodate white southern voters, he was still uncomfortable being associated with racism, and was ambivalent about exploiting the issue. However, his candidacy was fast sinking, and it was the one issue for which he could count on votes—particularly in the South, but increasingly in northern urban areas as well. He finally agreed to a speech, written by young Arizona staffer William Rehnquist, that he felt would articulate his views without being racially divisive. “Our aim, as I understand it,” he told the audience at a fundraising dinner in Chicago,

is neither to establish a segregated society nor to establish an integrated society as such. It is to preserve a *free* society. . . . Freedom of association is a double freedom or it is nothing at all. It applies to both parties who want to associate with each other. . . . Barriers infringe the freedom of everybody in the society, not just the minorities. . . . Now the removal of such barriers enhances freedom. . . . But it is equally clear that freedom is diminished when barriers are raised against the freedom *not* to associate. We must never forget that the freedom to associate means the same thing as the freedom not to associate.⁶¹

The speech went mostly unreported in the press—there was no news in the fact that Goldwater was the anti-civil rights candidate. But rhetorically it further developed a formula that would be of great use to conservatives in decades to come. Moving beyond earlier awkward attempts to link racism and conservatism, it finally brought conservative ideals together with opposition to civil rights in a way that appeared classically liberal. Its durable “color-blind” logic, stating that all citizens should have the right to associate or not, could appear to oppose the institutions of Jim Crow while ignoring the structural conditions of racial stratification in the South and, more important, in the rest of the country. The argument was not new—its roots were in the nineteenth century, and Rehnquist himself

worked this angle as a Supreme Court clerk for Justice Jackson in drafting an opinion on *Brown*—but its basic premises were well-suited to the time and would become the hallmark of anti-affirmative action rhetoric used by conservatives thirty years later (including that of Supreme Court Chief Justice Rehnquist).

As the fall wore on, Goldwater was increasingly cast in the media and by the Johnson team as a frightening radical who would be quick on the nuclear trigger and out to destroy such cherished New Deal programs as Social Security. Members of Goldwater’s staff felt that the flagging campaign needed to heighten the contrast between him and Johnson in a way favorable to Goldwater by playing up backlash fears of racial transgression and social breakdown. Clifton White produced a documentary for Goldwater called *Choice*, which focused not on the threat of communism or the “collectivism” of the New Deal and Great Society, but rather on drunken hoodlums, bare-breasted women, and looting blacks—all symbols of what would soon come to be called “the social question.” When he previewed the film, Goldwater was disturbed by its images and angrily told White, “I’m not going to be made out to be a racist. You can’t show it.” While Goldwater did not mind looking like a conservative extremist, he did not want to be seen as a racial extremist. But it was too late for that—race and conservatism had become elements of the same political logic in the Goldwater campaign.⁶²

Goldwater could not clearly distinguish his conservatism from racial pandering, but that may not have been his biggest problem. Civil rights was one of the defining issues of the 1964 contest, but equally if not more important were high stakes questions of war and peace. Since the 1960 election, the Berlin Wall had gone up, the Cuban missile crisis had brought the country to the brink of war, and now the conflict in Indochina loomed large. Moreover, the nation was still reeling from Kennedy’s assassination. Goldwater, having been painted as a warmongering fanatic by liberal leaders in his own party, did not stand much of a chance of altering that image for the country at large. More important, however, conservatism did not yet appeal to a majority of Americans, who saw conservatism and the Republican Party as representing wealthy, elite interests. In fact, race was probably the most compelling issue Goldwater had on his side. Beyond his home state of Arizona, Goldwater did well only in states where the race

question mattered above all else—Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Georgia.⁶³

Conservative GOP strategists like William Rusher were initially wrong; the South could not push Republican vote tallies high enough to win the 1964 election, or even come remotely close. But they were right in the long run. The 1964 election was a watershed for the Republican Right because of both the institutional and discursive pieces that had been put in place by the time of Goldwater's nomination. Conservative Republicans needed southern delegates in order to challenge moderate and liberal Republicans at the national level and, they thought, to win in 1964. In order to do that, their candidate had to oppose civil rights.

Opposition to civil rights, intended primarily to bring in southerners, shaped the very character of modern conservatism itself. As issues of civil rights and black liberation became more acute in the following years, conservatives had a formula in place to interpret these issues for anxious whites, and paint themselves not as defenders of the elite, but of social order generally. In order for this politics to be successful, conservatism had to move beyond being identified with northern economic libertarians, traditionalists, or southern segregationists. Its appeal had to credibly speak to the main themes and concerns in American political culture in order to transform them. This southern racialization of the GOP was a necessary component of the subsequent rise of the Right, but not a wholly sufficient one. Goldwater's huge loss in the general election demonstrates that while conservatives had found a workable racial language for southern successes and Republican Party control, they had yet to be embraced by American voters.

4

"YOU ARE SOUTHERNERS TOO": THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS OF GEORGE WALLACE

The Goldwater campaign of 1964 galvanized the modern conservative movement within the Republican Party. But as Lyndon Johnson's historic landslide election demonstrated, the Right was far from claiming any national victories. Over the course of the 1960s, however, a racial, anti-statist populism emerged that spoke not just to diehard defenders of Jim Crow or to committed political conservatives, but to broader segments of the public which, confronted with political upheaval in the 1960s, were open to new political identifications. This new populism was pioneered by Alabama governor and segregationist firebrand George Wallace.¹

Johnson's victory in 1964 came at the height of the civil rights movement, which challenged the deeply embedded racial stratification and exclusions in American social, political, and economic life. The Johnson administration and its liberal allies in Congress attempted to manage the racial crisis through the aggressively targeted policies and initiatives of the Great Society and War on Poverty. But while most white Americans believed in the Democratic rhetoric of inclusion and equality, many were hesitant about the changes necessary to raise the economic and social status of African Americans. These new divisions over race also added to the emerging split in the Republican Party along the seams of its liberal and conservative wings, leaving even more Americans increasingly unsure about their own partisan commitments.

Wallace charged into this open political moment as contradictory figure whose paradoxes were legion: as the simultaneous embodiment of the "av-