

Young Conservatives Back Agnew Over Nixon in '72

By WARREN WEAVER Jr.

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HOUSTON, Sept. 5—The Republican party's angry young conservatives disposed symbolically of their newest villain, President Nixon, shortly after midnight this morning, but they are still wondering how to handle him in real political life.

Amid chants of "Dump Nixon," the biennial convention of Young Americans for Freedom backed Spiro T. Agnew for the 1972 Presidential nomination and Senator James L. Buckley of New York as his running mate.

Of some 1,500 delegate votes, Mr. Nixon got 26 on the first ballot and 41 on the second. There were indications that the organization's leaders were pretty sure ahead of time how the vote would come out.

With the voting done, the young conservatives passed a resolution authorizing a \$750,000 campaign fund to put "a real conservative" on the ballot in next year's national election. The group's treasury is reportedly at low ebb, but the delegates seemed confident they could raise the money.

Undecided, however, was whether the effort would be concentrated on trying to replace President Nixon on the Republican ticket, to run a conservative candidate on some other ticket or—the most modest Y.A.F. goal—to keep Vice President Agnew from being cut adrift by the President.

A Warning on Alliances

The group's national chairman, Ronald F. Docksai, counseled the delegates at their closing session today to "resist making permanent alliances with any political party" and to take an independent critical stance toward "those political figures who forfeit principle for the illusory comforts of pragmatic vacillation."

Adopting resolutions yesterday, the young conservatives even refused to go along with this modest half-pledge: "We do not plan at the moment to encourage formal political opposition to President Nixon in the forthcoming primaries, but we propose to keep all options open in the light of political developments."

"That's absolutely false," a delegate shouted from the floor, winning one of the countless standing ovations accorded anti-Nixon statements during the four-day convention.

Almost the only voice raised in defense of the President was that of Senator Buckley. The Senator did not defend Mr. Nixon in his speech to the 1,000 cheering members, but at an earlier news conference the Conservative-Republican said he planned to support the President for renomination and election.

"Things are so fluid I can only talk in present expectation," he said, "but I don't think Richard Nixon is going to become so horrifying or so anti-typical that I would change my mind. He needs the enthusiastic support of conservatives."

A group of about 40 loyal-

ist delegates had formed "the Nixon caucus" and agonized for days as to whether it would be more embarrassing for the President if he was not "nominated" at all here or if he was entered in the competition and routed. They chose the second option, and he was.

Early this morning after the balloting, Mike Carr of Florida, one of the Nixon delegates, was asked why he had insisted on sticking with the President.

"I have reservations too," he replied, "but I think he's the only possible realistic alternative to the Muskies (the McGoverns and the Humphreys). And I object to the manner in which the President has been handled in this convention."

For a time it appeared possible that any political significance of the Y.A.F. nomination would be lost in horseplay. The names of "candidates" were entered, including Joseph W. Coors, the Colorado brewer; Al Capp, the cartoonist; the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy; Nobody (the chant went up, "We want Nobody"), and Representative H. R. Gross of Iowa ("In your heart you know he's cheap").

On the first ballot, however, the conservative young people turned serious and threw most of their strength behind Gov. Ronald Reagan of California (258 votes), Senator Buckley (210) and Vice President Agnew (208).

Before the second ballot, Senator Buckley's backers withdrew his name. Governor Reagan, who closed the convention with a telephone speech tonight, had made it clear he did not wish to be nominated, so Mr. Agnew won an easy victory, with the votes of Puerto Rico pushing him past a majority.

Buckley's Name Withdrawn

With some shouts and confusion, Senator Buckley was then chosen as the Vice-Presidential candidate on a motion from the floor, without the formality of nominations or balloting. The process had taken three hours and it was nearly 1 A.M.

The make-up of the slate, seemingly spontaneous, had been telegraphed hours in advance, when a copy of Mr. Docksai's speech, not to be delivered until the following day, was made available. It named Mr. Agnew and Senator Buckley as the winning candidates.

There seemed to be almost no sentiment among the members for solving their "Nixon problem" by moving behind Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama. His name was booed once on the floor, and delegates told reporters they regarded the Alabamian as too Democratic and too liberal to present an alternative.

Among the usual convention trappings were buttons that read "Nuke the Chinks" and an assortment of bumper stickers ranging from "Buckley and Reagan in '72" and "Freeze Nixon" to "Down With Hot Pants."