

By CHARLES E. GOODELL

A political party is a conglomerate of many views, cohered by traditional loyalties and fundamental unifying agreements among otherwise disparate groups. While constant compromise on detailed programs is required in any party, the survival of that party in power depends on its relevance and effectiveness in dealing with the fundamental problems of society. Today in the United States those fundamental issues minimally include the war, the economy, the environment, the cities and the civil liberties of our people. On present course, the Nixon Administration appears headed for the shoals on all these issues. Ironically, there is nothing particularly Republican about President Nixon's approach to today's critical national problems.

The party of Lincoln is now fiddling with a "Southern strategy" of sophisticated racism that appeals to the baser instincts of the American people. The Administration impounds money appropriated by Congress to cleanse the water and air, to renew our cities and to restore a momentum of progress in our nation.

Perhaps the most reverberant dictum of Republicans for the past forty years has been the danger of the erosion of legislative power and accretion of executive power in Washington. Strangely, those words now resonate in Democratic banquet halls, while a Republican Administration proclaims that only the President can make the critical decisions for peace, social justice and fiscal responsibility.

Even more strangely, President Nixon doggedly persists in defending the fallacies of policy that entrapped

this nation in war. Larger initiatives that could bring peace are immolated by a bristling, bludgeoning policy that tells the enemy unrealistically: "We remain ready to negotiate your defeat."

In 1848, Congressman Abraham Lincoln, then a Whig, excoriated President Polk for exceeding Presidential war-making powers by involving us in the Mexican War. Lincoln was subsequently defeated for re-election. In the 1850's a group known as the Radical Republicans (not Radic-Libs) urged abolition of slavery through peaceful means. They stood against excessive military expenditures and the death penalty, while favoring equal rights for women, free men, free labor, free soil. History repeats itself.

In my view, therefore, the traditions of the Republican party are on the side of those of us who advocate an open insurgency within our party.

The insurgency movement is an effort designed to influence the policies of the Nixon Administration during the next 21 months by speaking out openly now. Its chief goal is to move Mr. Nixon in a positive direction. The insurgency is not just a liberal movement. In fact, the disquiet of conscience in our country is perhaps deepest in middle America.

In Minneapolis-St. Paul, several weeks ago, more than 3,000 people attended an insurgent dinner sponsored by seventy-five prominent Minnesota Republicans.

In the 21 states I have visited since the first of the year, the expressed disenchantment with the war and other Nixon policies extends significantly to many who characterize themselves as "Taft Republicans." In Spokane, Wash-

ington, a man in his sixties spoke reverently to me of Robert A. Taft Sr., and then added that "Robert Taft would never have allowed American men to continue fighting in a war 10,000 miles away."

The purpose of organizing a Republican insurgency now is to avoid the necessity of opposing President Nixon in the primaries next year.

I, frankly, do not agree with people who say it is impossible to move Mr. Nixon in a positive direction. The recent turnabout in the Nixon Administration's approach to the economy suggests the President might abandon other equally disastrous policies.

If, however, the President is obdurate on the fundamentals which divide us, then he is certain to face primary contests in 1972. If Republican insurgency and primaries both fail to faze the President, then a major realignment of voters and parties will be inevitable.

In a few days there will be a private strategy meeting of national Republicans to discuss the several alternatives available to us. The instigation of such a meeting is multiple, not the idea of any individual alone. Included among those who will attend are Republican Congressmen, state legislators, active leaders in state G.O.P. organizations and major Republican contributors. The President must face the reality that a Republican movement is arising that wishes him to be a great and progressive President, but that will shake his political foundation if he is unresponsive.

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