

## PARTY POLITICS

# Reaganites battle for GOP power

By Christopher Buchanan

WASHINGTON

**W**HEN RONALD REAGAN'S chief political strategist Lyn Nofziger was asked recently who controlled the Republican party he responded with a hearty laugh and suggested that nobody did and nobody could.

But liberals and moderates in the party do not think it is a laughing matter. They see the supporters of Reagan's 1976 presidential candidacy gradually taking positions of importance in the party structure, both at the national and state levels.

Both sides publicly try to play down a factional split in the party. But privately Reagan backers admit satisfaction in placing loyalists in key positions.

There are some who suggest that control of the party is not that significant. John Deardourff, Ford's media architect in the general election, feels conservatives already may be the dominant force in the party. But he declared, "Whether or not the right wing controls the party is not very important. What is important is winning elections in the major urban areas of the country where the political power lies, and the right wing isn't able to do that."

Nofziger claims that Reagan's strength is "with the people" and not "in the party hierarchy." The Republican National Committee (RNC), he says, "doesn't represent a hell of a lot except itself."

Despite disclaimers of the importance of the party, Reagan activists have made several attempts to develop a strong voice in party affairs:

- They waged a strong campaign to elect an ardent Reagan supporter to the national committee chairmanship in January 1977. The attempt failed.

- In many states people who were loyal to the former California governor have been selected as state party chairmen.

- At the January 20-21 meeting of the RNC in Washington, Gloria E.A. Toote, a black Reagan supporter, tried to unseat the moderate party cochairman, Mary Crisp. Toote lost.

- Partially in response to a letter from Nofziger, RNC chairman Bill Brock hired a former Reagan field coordinator, Charlie Black, to head the campaign operations division of the national committee.

The first attempt by Reagan supporters to seize the reins of power failed when national committee members picked former Sen. Brock (Tenn. 1971-77) to head the party over Utah state chairman Richard Richards.

Brock's victory largely came because the memories of the divisive 1976 convention were still too fresh for party members to elect a chairman too closely aligned with either side. Brock, although a Ford supporter at the convention, was seen as a compromise choice because both Ford and Reagan were backing other candidates.

When Ford's candidate dropped out a few days before the balloting it became a race between Brock, acceptable to Ford supporters, and Richards, Reagan's man.

Current estimates are that the conservative wing of the party loyal to Reagan may constitute between 30 percent and 40 percent of the 162-member national committee. The committee, which sets the policy of the party between conventions and approves the party's budget, is composed of the state chairman plus a national committeeman and committeewoman elected from each state as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands.

### Brock's first year.

Since his election Brock has had the ticklish job of trying to accommodate both Ford and Reagan forces in the party.

Despite some defeats in inter-party battles the Reagan forces have made some impressive gains. It is estimated that they may control 40 percent of the RNC.

Brock's latest tangle with the Reagan forces is over the Panama Canal treaties. Some Republicans feel opposition to the treaties should be their rallying cry. Others, most notably Ford, support the treaties.

The problem arose when a close Reagan ally, Sen. Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.), requested \$50,000 from the RNC to help finance a "truth squad" of treaty opponents on a nationwide speaking tour.

Reagan was upset because he wanted money raised from a letter he signed for the RNC to be used to help defeat the treaties, one of the two stated objectives in the letter. (The other was the election of Republican candidates.)

Although the national committee voted Sept. 30 to oppose the treaties "in their present form," Brock refused the request on the grounds that party funds cannot be used for unaffiliated groups without national committee approval.

Another move by Brock that upset conservatives in the party was his selection of Mary Crisp as the party's co-chairperson. Crisp, a Ford supporter and national committeewoman from Arizona, angered Reagan supporters with her vocal support of the Equal Rights Amendment, and more directly by remarks she made in *The Columbus Dispatch* last August.

She disagreed with Reagan over what she called "this idea of purism—how pure is your conservatism?" She also attacked his political action committee, Citizens for the Republic, saying it was "draining money from the coffers of the Republican party."

The result of this unhappiness on the part of Reagan supporters was the challenge to Crisp at the national committee hearing by Toote, a black lawyer from Harlem. Toote served as an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development until April 1975, when she left over



GOP co-chair Mary Crisp (above) angered the Reaganites with some vocal criticisms and so they sought, unsuccessfully, to have her removed and replaced by one of their own.

differences with HUD Secretary Carla A. Hills. She later became a Reagan supporter and seconded his nomination at the convention.

Conservatives campaigned for Toote using two approaches. First they claimed the fact that Toote is black would help symbolize the GOP's efforts to attract more minority voters. At the same time they criticized Crisp as being out of step with the mainstream of party philosophy. The conservative weekly newspaper, *Human Events*, called Crisp "the GOP's Gloria Steinem."

When it came to the vote, however, Crisp won easily 118 to 37. RNC members, even some who might be sympathetic to Reagan on other issues, considered the Toote candidacy an unwarranted attempt to stifle critical discussion in the party.

The RNC did take the precaution of inviting black leader Jesse Jackson to give the keynote speech for the two-day meet-

ing, short-circuiting any appearance of racial motivation in Toote's defeat.

Reagan backers have gained control of eight of approximately 20 states that have picked new chairmen since the presidential election. Most of the gains have come in traditionally conservative states in the South, West and Midwest.

Gains in California and Texas are particularly satisfying to Reagan. During the 1976 campaign, the state party machinery in both states did not support him, despite his victories in both states' primaries.

It is nearly impossible to speculate on what effect this will have on the 1980 presidential elections. As far as the midterm elections, some Republicans feel that the Reagan troops in 1976 were more aggressive than party regulars who stayed with the incumbent. Their hope is that the energy that was displayed in 1976 can be transferred to statewide and local races.

(© Congressional Quarterly)

## Why Jesse Jackson went to the GOP

By Francis Ward

**T**HE REV. JESSE L. JACKSON OF the Chicago-based Operation PUSH attracted considerable attention when he delivered a major address before the Republican National Committee in late January. His appearance raised a lot of eyebrows: What was a major black political leader doing addressing a body not known for its responsiveness to black concerns?

To understand Jackson's appearance you first have to understand Jackson's basic posture as a hustler whose primary goal is to sell and promote himself and his programs. In so doing, of course, he may also sell and promote ideas and causes with some respectability or legitimacy. Just remember that the hustler mentality puts the self first and foremost, ahead of any other person or cause.

Such is the case with Jackson's pronouncements to the Republicans about their much-ballyhooed appeal to black voters, and Jackson's over-ballyhooed



Jackson basically is a hustler.

"PUSH for Excellence" program in which he's supposed to be reforming and remodeling the nation's black and poor schoolchildren.

Jackson's PUSH for Excellence and push for Republican influence (or money) have one thing in common: Both sound good, like sweet, thought-provoking music to the ears of white middle class America in this era of backlash, retrenchment and abandonment of the ideals of the Great Society.

Jackson tried to sell the Republicans on appealing for more black votes through support for the legislative goals that blacks and their allies generally favor. In explaining his GOP pitch to his Saturday morning Operation PUSH audience, Jackson also talked about how two million black voters in the GOP column could neutralize the party's rightwing and move the GOP further to the center—even slightly to the left.

It's only the consistent prodding and threat of black backlash, said Jackson, that keeps the Democrats honest.

Continued on page 18.

### COMMENT



## PANAMA CANAL TREATIES

## The battle for public support

By David M. Maxfield

WASHINGTON

**L**AST FALL AS SENATE MINORITY leader Howard H. Baker Jr. (Tenn.), then uncommitted on the Panama Canal treaties, took his seat at the University of Tennessee/Memphis State football game in Knoxville, even he must have been surprised. Above the stadium a light plane towed a banner calling upon the fans to "Save Our Canal."

Sponsored by the American Conservative Union (ACU), the streamer symbolizes the variety of direct and indirect pressures placed on senators in the treaty fight expected to catch the Senate floor soon.

Aside from presidential election campaigns and the anti-Vietnam war effort, there have been few political battles in recent years to match the national emotion roused by the pending treaties.

Since September the opposition has fought the treaties with mail campaigns, radio spots, a TV documentary and "truth squads" of Senate and House members sent around the country to apply pressure on those senators still uncommitted.

The total cost of these activities cannot be determined because many groups are involved, ranging from the American Legion and other veterans groups, to conservative political organizations, to ad hoc committees set up to fight only this issue. But the ACU alone has raised and spent \$600,000, according to its records, and another component in the fight, the Conservative Caucus, reports the collection and expenditure of \$815,000.

Viewing the position taken by a senator on the issue as a true test of his conservative credentials and hoping the controversy will help expand their own political influence, opponents are promising to fight the re-election of any members who support the agreements.

"Right now, I think we are losing," Howard Phillips, national director of the Conservative Caucus, said Jan. 16, the day Baker announced that he would support the treaties, provided they were amended to clarify key defense provisions. "But this will turn around," Phillips added, "if senators see they'll be opposed and defeated if they vote for the treaties. We're lining up candidates."

#### Playing catch up.

Admittedly playing catch-up ball for public opinion on the treaties, private groups aiding the White House are now crisscrossing the country for support. They also are organizing at the grassroots level to show crucial members of the Senate that considerable but untapped support exists for the agreements. At first the administration and supporters had focused chiefly on Capitol Hill lobbying, leaving the anti-treaty side free to cultivate local opposition.

"At a minimum our purpose is to get mail to the Senate offices," said a spokesman for the Canal Treaties, Inc., which was established in October by prominent treaty backers. "When a senator—take [John C.] Danforth (R-Mo.), for example—gets 12,000 pieces of mail against the treaties and only 200 for, he can't help but be concerned, although he may be planning to vote for the treaties," the spokesman added. "We're trying to ease that pressure."

Established to mount a "national program of education" about the treaties, the Committee of Americans for the Canal Treaties, Inc. sports a roster of well-known members—former President Ford, Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson and George Meany, among others enlisted for their opinion-molding abilities. The committee maintains a "loose cooperation" with the White House, although it is "totally independent" of its operations, according to a committee spokesman.

Because it has no connection with federal election campaigns, the group can accept contributions from corporations.



Senators Jesse Helms, Strom Thurmond and Orrin Hatch, all opposed to the treaties, hold a press conference in the Canal Zone.

Total fund-raising and expenditures to date are in the \$200,000 range, with the final amount—mainly for advertising—expected to be "under \$1 million." A television campaign is planned for late February as the Senate debate heats up.

#### New directions.

The administration's treaty fight also is aided by the Committee for Ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties. This group was initiated by New Directions, a liberal-leaning foreign policy organization founded in 1976 somewhat on the model of the well known citizens lobby Common Cause. Members of the committee include the AFL-CIO, Democratic National Committee, United Auto Workers, Americans for Democratic Action and the Washington Office on Latin America.

Focused on winning treaty support at the state and local levels, the organization was set up because treaty supporters felt, in the words of one organizer, that "nothing had happened" on lobbying for the agreements after the signing ceremonies in Washington Sept. 7.

The committee's operating budget amounts to only \$19,000 for printing costs of a booklet about the treaties and travel expenses of field organizers dispatched by member organizations to rally support for the agreements. States targeted for special attention are Texas, Delaware, Florida, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Tennessee.

New Directions, itself, however, has sent out a 1.1 million mailing to liberal cause backers, such as Common Cause members, asking that they send letters to senators supporting the treaties. Signed by New Directions chairperson Margaret Mead, the mailing cost \$137,500, with \$50,000 coming directly from New Direc-

tions and the remainder from the Democratic National Committee, United Steel Workers, Occidental Petroleum and the Communications Workers of America among other organizations.

Like the conservatives battling the treaties, New Directions is not blind to the possibility that the issue could be helpful for its organization-building, much as the Watergate scandal helped to substantially boost the membership ranks of Common Cause.

"The only way to launch an organization is by an issue," said a spokesman, noting that the canal was the first major nationally debated foreign policy issue since the group was founded.

#### Truth squads.

Opposition to the canal treaties comes mainly from conservative organizations and members of Congress, many with political ties to former California Gov. Ronald Reagan, who sparked the canal debate during the 1976 Republican presidential primaries.

Reagan backer Sen. Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.), for example, and Rep. Philip M. Crane (R-Ill.) are responsible for organizing the "truth squad" of 20 members of Congress that left Washington Jan. 17 on a nationwide campaign to "focus renewed public interest in the treaties."

The campaign was planned last September at a strategy meeting held at the Virginia home of Richard Viguerie, a publicist for conservative causes.

The "truth squad" is financed by \$100,000 in individual donations and contributions from eight conservative groups operating under the Committee to Save the Panama Canal. This is a "short-term" organization set up to avoid restrictions placed on member

groups under election, lobby and tax laws.

The eight organizations—the most active opponents in the canal fight—are: American Conservative Union, Conservative Caucus, Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, Citizens for the Republic, American Security Council, Young Republicans, National Conservative Political Action Committee and Council for National Defense.

Besides cooperating on the "truth squad" tour, a number of these conservative organizations plus such others as STOP ERA belong to the Emergency Coalition to Save the Panama Canal. Organized by the ACU shortly after the treaties were signed, the coalition continues to meet in Washington to plan strategy for the Senate battle.

Since May 1976, ACU on its own behalf has sent out 1.8 million pieces of mail aimed at raising funds to continue the anti-treaty campaign and to generate the thousands of postcards and letters pouring onto Capitol Hill. Mailing lists include the ACU's own in addition to those of the *National Review*, *Human Events* and other conservative publications.

The \$600,000 raised and spent so far by the ACU, chaired by Rep. Crane, includes \$125,000 for broadcasting a 30-minute videotape on 150 television stations in 18 states. The telecast is "self-supporting" with pledges phoned in by viewers that then pay for additional time on other stations.

The organization also has sponsored anti-treaty newspaper ads that appeared in about 30 cities, a petition drive, and a trip by Rep. Crane to Denver in October after President Carter appeared there.

In addition to its work in the anti-treaty umbrella groups, the Conservative Caucus, which "is organized at the local level" to support conservative causes, has sent out two million pieces of mail urging letters be sent to Senate and House members. This mailing was handled by Viguerie's company.

The group launched a radio-TV campaign in November, sending to 500 stations messages based on excerpts of Reagan's testimony before a Senate subcommittee in September.

On Feb. 22, it plans to sponsor a nationwide "Keep Our Canal Day" dramatized by motorists turning on headlights to show opposition to the treaties. A "voter pledge program" also is in the works. The goal is to secure commitments from 10,000 voters in each state that they will "never vote for any person who votes for the treaties."

(© Congressional Quarterly)

## Committee approves treaties

With an unexpected majority of 14 to 1 the Senate Foreign Relations committee approved the controversial Panama Canal Treaties Jan. 30. The treaties, which guarantee the permanent neutrality of the Canal and Panama's control of the Canal by the year 2000, now go to the full Senate for debate. The treaties have to pass the Senate with a two-thirds vote.

Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), the Senate minority leader, said chances of ratification were "improving daily."

Opposition continued however.

The committee voted to recommend to the Senate that the U.S. should have the right to defend the Canal after the year 2000 and in times of "crisis." The "crisis" language comes from a joint statement issued after President Carter met with Panama's leader, Brig. Gen. Omar Torrijos on Oct. 14.

While adding the article on defense rights to the treaties, the committee voted down amendments critical of Panama's stand on human rights.