

## Position Papers—1966

# The Republican Future

**“Rarely has there been such an opportunity for a major party . . . if we will forget our liberal-conservative obsessions and devise responsible, realistic programs. . . .”**

By CHARLES H. PERCY

**N**OT LONG AGO a Republican friend complained to me that as far as he could see our party had nowhere to go. The Democrats, he said, had usurped all the problems that require attention in the Sixties. I was surprised by his attitude and I told him why.

For the past several years I have been deeply involved in many of these problems, including literacy education, slum housing, and job opportunities. Consider just one of these—slum housing. More than 15,000,000 occupied dwelling units in the United States—or 27 per cent of the nation’s housing—are substandard. To understand the grim reality behind these figures, one must see firsthand how such housing affects its inhabitants.

Take a seemingly insignificant thing such as paint peeling from ceilings and walls in slum buildings. Children often put the paint chips in their mouths, and the lead poisoning which results goes undetected until the damage is done. If a child survives the poisoning—and 25 per cent who are poisoned do not—it is more than likely that he will be severely and permanently retarded.

How the peeling paint and the falling plaster, the rats, the cockroaches, the tenements without heat in winter, and the buildings where five large families share a single bathroom affect the human spirit cannot be measured or charted. But the problems of the slum are very real, and they *must* be met. They are *not* being met today. Nor are many others like them. So when I am told that there are no problems left for Republicans to solve, I cannot agree.

Rarely has there been such an opportunity for a major political party to come forward with progressive, imaginative, responsible solutions to a host of serious problems.

In the past, the Republican party too frequently has forgotten that urgent human needs cannot wait for ideological hair-splitting. Now we must make it clear that from the most wretched tenement on Chicago’s West Side to a pocket of unemployment in Tennessee, the full range of American problems and aspirations reflects the full range of Republican concern.

In the cities alone, the Republican party has an unprecedented obligation and opportunity. By 1980, it is estimated, seventy-five of every hundred Americans will live in great unbroken crescents of city and suburb. The problems that already plague our cities are multiplying much faster than the solutions. There exists no more glaring failure of government than Democratic rule of the cities, and therein lies our most significant opportunity.

Our schools are overcrowded and understaffed.

Building code enforcement is a farce. Traffic clogs our streets.

Smoke, soot, and carbon monoxide pollute the air we breathe.

Urban mass transit often is inadequate and inefficient.

Crime and corruption are the hallmarks of city life.

These situations *can* be remedied. They call for imagination and they call for leadership. There is no reason why the Republican party can’t provide both. We have long demonstrated our concern



Charles H. Percy

This is the third article in SR’s series of 1966 Position Papers, in which leading national spokesmen outline the viewpoints of major segments of American political opinion. The first two articles were “The New Left: What Does It Mean?” [SR, Sept. 24] and “The New Right: What Does It Seek?” [SR, Oct. 8]. Charles H. Percy is a former president and board chairman of the Bell & Howell Company who has served in many civic and public service posts, including chairmanship of the Ford Foundation’s Fund for Adult Education. In 1959, he was chosen by President Eisenhower to head a Republican Committee on Program and Progress, whose findings were published as a book, *Decisions for a Better America*. In 1960, he was chairman of the platform committee of the Republican national convention. In 1962 SR selected him as Businessman of the Year. He was Republican candidate for the governorship of Illinois in 1964, and now is the Illinois GOP nominee for the U.S. Senate.

for rural America. Let us now seize the banner of the city-dweller as well.

In New York, Mayor John V. Lindsay is showing what Republicans can do in the cities if given the chance. In less than a year, he has confronted the problems of his city with a vigor and imagination which are in sharp contrast to the stale approach of the preceding Democratic administrations. What John Lindsay is doing for the Republican party is almost as important as what he is doing for New York. He is proving in dramatic fashion that Republicans *care* about people—about people who live in cities, about poor people, about people who are not white.

Millions of Republicans, including many party leaders, share these concerns. Unfortunately, in recent years Republicans have not always been in the vanguard of social and economic development in this country. Rather, standing fast on traditional grounds—often on overly strict constitutional grounds—we frequently have said “no” to the present and “no” to the realities of American life in the mid-twentieth century. We have not been consistently progressive. We have not even been soundly conservative. All too often, we have been merely negative, both in word and deed.

We have taken the term “party of opposition” too literally; more often than not we have been content merely to oppose Democratic programs when we could have been suggesting constructive—and superior—alternatives. When we have proposed such alternatives, as when Senator Everett M. Dirksen shaped the 1964 Civil Rights Bill, our party has made its most significant contributions, not only to good government but to its own vitality.

In part, what has kept us from contributing enough are our differences. Like the Democrats, we are still ideologically divided. It is difficult, if not impossible, to speak of a Republican philosophy. Our party is in the midst of a re-examination of its policies and its politics. The best one can do, then, is to speak of those beliefs which all Republicans still share, and then to define what one individual Republican believes the Republican party must do and what it must be.

**I** SUSPECT that the tie that binds all Republicans is a sincere and stubborn belief in the individual—in his capacity to grow as an individual, in his right to function as an individual, in his desire to *be* an individual rather than an anonymous appendage to the faceless crowd. Too many Democrats tend to consider collections of individuals; Republicans think each individual makes a difference. Democrats see government as the most fruitful source of initiative; Republicans believe that too much government will stifle initiative.

For many years, another bond between most Republicans was their alarm at the diminishing role of state and local government. Too often, however, state and local government failed to respond adequately to the needs of the people. We listened to ourselves deplore the shift of power to Washington, when really the people had nowhere else to turn. The states were not doing their jobs; the blame was bipartisan.

Today, however, some of the states *are* doing their jobs, and most of these states are governed by Republicans. These states are moving ahead in education, civil rights, medical care, mental health, conservation, and highways. In

some cases, they are taking the lead away from the federal government; if every state did the same things, the necessity for a continuing transfer of responsibility to Washington might be sharply relieved.

Republican governors are demonstrating that the GOP is capable of serving compassionately and efficiently in administrative posts. But what should the Republican party work for in the halls of Congress and in the state legislatures? What should it stand for? What are our choices in the years just ahead?

Domestically, the most sensitive issue will continue to be civil rights. The Republican party cannot approach this issue timidly. Morally, we have an obligation to continue the work which we originally started in behalf of equal opportunities; politically, we have an opportunity to prove that we are worthy of minority trust. We must do what is necessary to guarantee the legitimate rights of every citizen, whatever his color, his creed, his cause. Every American must have equal opportunity in voting, housing, health care, education, and employment.

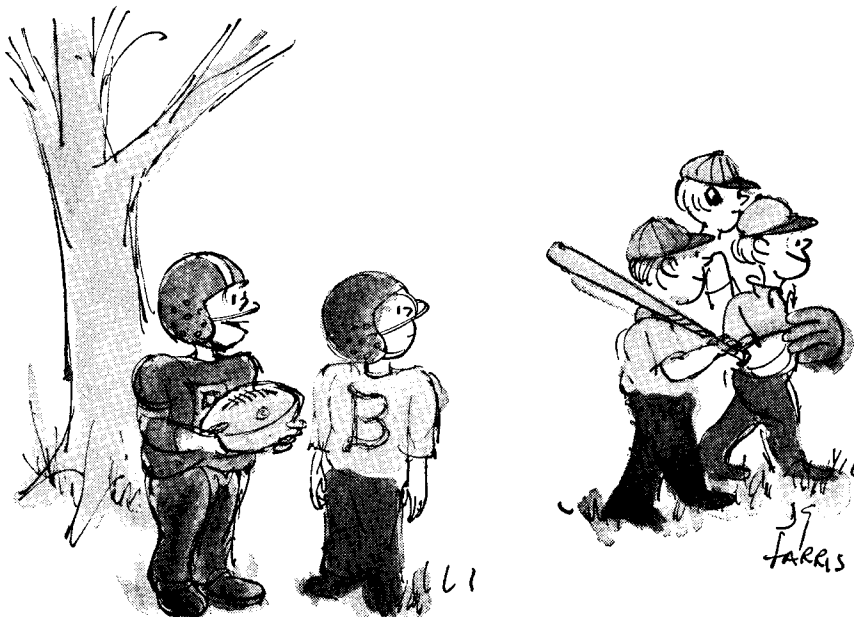
In addition to supporting legislation which is still needed, Republicans can take the lead in demanding enforcement of legislation already on the books. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, supported by 80 per cent of Republicans in Congress, has not been adequately enforced. This is a Democratic failure and a Republican opportunity.

**W**HAT of our opportunities in other areas of social and economic legislation—in housing, education, poverty, labor relations, crime, conservation, employment? Was my friend right? Has the opposition in fact usurped our opportunities for creative government in these fields?

Hardly. In our Illinois campaign for the Senate this year we have advanced a number of positive proposals. They are not perfect, and they are not perfectly refined. But they *are* constructive attempts to get at some of the needs confronting the nation. I think they represent the search for solutions which Republicans should be conducting every waking hour of the day.

In education and housing, for example, we have proposed positive, practical programs.

We have suggested the establishment of universal pre-school education as a matter of high priority. It has long been recognized that the period of greatest development in children is the pre-school period when the child learns quickly and the patterns of a lifetime are set. Today, pre-school education is available only to the rich, who can afford to send their children to private nursery schools, and to the poor, a few



*“They’re all squares. The real money’s in football.”*

of whom can send their children to Project Head Start classes in summer. I would like to see pre-school instruction made available to all children, regardless of their parents' income.

Similarly, in the housing field we have proposed a broad program to make home ownership available to low-income families in our cities. Drawing on the successful experience of local groups in Tulsa, St. Louis, and Philadelphia, we have developed a national program in which government and the private sector can cooperate to help people move out of slum housing and into their own homes. This program would make a major contribution to the redevelopment and restoration of presently declining and blighted urban areas. At the same time, it would have the effect of creating a new spirit of independence and self-reliance in the low-income families involved.

I would hope that the Republican search for solutions to domestic problems will be in this mold in the years ahead. I would hope, too, that we will try to be equally constructive in foreign affairs.

**S**INCE the implementation of the nuclear test ban treaty, American foreign policy has shown little sensitivity to the subtleties of a changing world. President Johnson, less sophisticated in foreign affairs than was President Kennedy, has been obsessed with the war in Vietnam at the expense of American relationships in the rest of the world. As a result, we are shocked at the disruption of NATO when instead we should have prepared for its evolution in the world of the 1960s. We are frustrated at the recalcitrance of our allies even though we have made little effort to involve them in our goals or to be sensitive to theirs. In Western Europe, where there had been accord with friends, there is now disarray among dissidents. With the Soviet Union, where there had been détente, today there is only impasse.

I see an opening here for Republican leadership, if only we will grasp it. Let Republicans pursue a policy directed toward the reduction of tensions among nations. In the nuclear age this must be our goal. As much as some Americans might like to pursue a holy war against Communism, the stakes in human life are too high. The only rational policy is to pursue peace with at least as much vigor and invention as we now pursue war.

Early last July I proposed that the nations of Asia convene a conference to work toward a peaceful settlement of the war in Vietnam. The enemy had clearly indicated that he was not prepared to negotiate directly with the United States. Therefore, new approaches toward ending the war were in



*"Come on, Martha, how about me?"*

order. It was unrealistic to expect Hanoi and Peking to submit the problem to a reconvened Geneva Conference chaired by the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. A different environment for negotiation was required, and perhaps the only forum in which North Vietnam and China might participate would be a forum of Asian nations. In such an environment, Hanoi and Peking would not be subject directly to the demands of either the U.S.S.R. or the Western powers.

**N**O one could guarantee the success of such a peacemaking conference, but I am convinced that we cannot achieve peace by military means alone. Moreover, it is a simplistic view of world affairs which fears negotiation with the Communists and which never really trusts our allies to support Free World interests.

I felt—and continue to feel—that the continued escalation of the war makes it imperative that we quicken and intensify efforts to seek a just peace. By bombing within 900 yards of large civilian centers, we have multiplied the risks of this war—the risk of Chinese intervention, the risk of enemy escalation, the risk of still more casualties among innocent people. If we must accelerate the war—as the Administration believes we must—then let us also accelerate the pursuit of peace.

The Republican party should continue to seek new approaches to peace in the world. We clearly need more imagination and more flexibility in our foreign policy. The Administration is not providing it. Therefore, in a two-party system, the responsibility falls to the opposition.

There are many possibilities. We can

encourage greater U.S. cooperation with the U.N. in seeking settlements of international conflicts. We can exert greater efforts for cooperative exploration of space and for a treaty to keep outer space free of military activity. We can extend the nuclear test ban treaty to include underground testing as soon as adequate detection devices are available—and we can press for the prompt development of such devices. We can negotiate a nuclear nonproliferation treaty now. We can seek agreement on nuclear-free zones in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Let us begin to develop a multinational agency through which prosperous countries of the East and West can more effectively channel assistance to the less developed nations. Perhaps there would also be value in periodic regional forums where both Communist and Free World nations could meet to deal with regional problems. This would stimulate regional initiative and tend to reduce regional tensions. Such policies should be shaped and sponsored by the Republican party. Still a minority out of power, our party has the time, the talent, and the resources to pursue new approaches.

Both in foreign and domestic policy, the opportunities for creative government are countless. The challenge for the Republican party is to seize these opportunities. If we can be responsive to the individual's needs without destroying the individual; if our responses are sensible and sensitive; if we will forget our liberal-conservative obsessions and devise solutions that are responsible and realistic—if we do these things, we can regain the confidence of the American people. If we do not, we are doomed to minority status, and we would deserve nothing more.



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## The Second Front In Vietnam

LET US TAKE a simple statement and pursue some of its implications. The statement, generally presented as a bedrock cause for U.S. involvement in Vietnam, takes this form:

"Adolf Hitler could have been stopped in the Thirties if the free nations had acted promptly and decisively. It was when aggressive Nazism discovered that the free nations were more concerned with their comforts than their convictions that Nazism made its greatest gains. If the United States had had the wisdom and courage to stand up to Hitler early enough, the lives of millions of people could have been saved.

"The world today is undergoing another test of nerve. Communist China—expansionist, aggressive, restless—seeks to take over all Asia. The initial target is Indochina; in particular, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia. If China should succeed in gaining direct or indirect control over any one of these nations, it will not stop until all four have come under its dominion. After that, unrelenting pressure will be directed against Indonesia, Burma, Nepal, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. The time to stop Communist China is now and the place is Vietnam."

This particular analysis and prescription have been expounded many times but never more emphatically than by Thanat Khoman, Foreign Minister of Thailand, during his recent visit to the United States, when he spoke in vigorous support of American policy in Viet-

nam. He declared that the United States, in defending the nations of Southeast Asia, was properly acting in its own self-interest. If it failed to act now, it would set the stage for larger conflict later.

We don't happen to agree with this particular historical analogy. There are significant differences between the situation as it existed thirty years ago and the situation today. But our purpose here is not to argue that point. Our purpose, rather, is to examine some of the implications of a policy based on the validity of the analogy. What it means is that the Vietnam war is incidental to a larger problem and purpose. But the price the Vietnamese people have had to pay for their geography is far from incidental. Whether as victims or wards, the Vietnamese have been caught up in one of history's bloodiest meat-grinders. The ar-



rival of the Vietcong has meant assassination, intimidation, raw terror. In the attempt to liberate them from the Vietcong, the Americans have rained bombs down on the Vietnamese, defoliated their crops, burned their villages. It is not easy to distinguish Vietcong from noncombatants. According to estimates, four Vietnamese have died for every member of the Vietcong who has been killed.

It makes little difference whether you are among those who give the strongest support to present U.S. policy in Vietnam or among those who are its severest critics. Both groups can recognize that we have a special obligation to the Vietnamese. Their present condition calls for a program of care and mercy—a program not less imaginative or far-reaching than the prosecution of the war itself.

Winston S. Churchill, grandson of the British war leader, recently visited hospitals in Vietnam. He reported that medical treatment is indescribably wretched. Countless thousands of civilians wounded by war are without adequate medical attention.

Representatives of the American Friends Service Committee report that thousands of Vietnamese children urgently require sustained medical care. Many of them are suffering from serious burns. Many of them need homes.

AMERICAN surgeons, sent on missions supported by private funds, report that there is a virtually endless procession of people who have been maimed and who require plastic or reconstructive surgery.

CARE reports thousands of people who are hungry and on the move.

Is this something that Americans should take in their stride? Do we make the necessary adjustment just by saying that all wars are horrible? Or do we say that nothing in our history lays more of a moral claim on Americans? The test of the United States in Vietnam will be represented not by our ability to exterminate the Vietcong but by our determination to save lives where we can, to make mercy just as central as military operations, and to put the individual human being first.

It is estimated that it costs the United States about \$100,000 to kill one member of the Vietcong. How much is it worth to us to keep people alive? Why should instant dollars be available for bombs but only pennies wrapped in red tape for medical care and rehabilitation? Why should the American people be satisfied with the explanation that the hospitals seen by Mr. Churchill are under the jurisdiction of the South Vietnam government and that it would be interference to try to set things straight? In military matters, we have no difficulty in running the war the way we

(Continued on page 78)