

The Establishment
Media has declared
the Conservative
Movement dead
repeatedly – in 1964,
1974, 1976 and 1992.
This is nothing new.

We are compiling as many quotations and stories as we can and the list is ever-evolving. If you come across any, please send them to Derek Hunter at dhunter@atr.org.

When conservatives repeatedly declare that George Bush's failures as president are the result of his having spurned their ideas and movement, they are harboring illusions born of their fleeting success under Ronald Reagan. In fact, the conservative movement that carried Reagan to victory barely exists any longer; it has dissipated into various cantankerous and confused factions; and the ideas associated with it have become obsolete, discredited, or heavily in dispute among conservatives themselves.

Conservatives' repudiation of Bush is part of their own self-denial. By pretending that he is entirely separate from them, they can delude themselves into thinking his defeat will not reflect on their own political future. But it will: Bush lacks a domestic policy, and the Republicans lack what Weber calls a "coherent national agenda," because the conservatives, who provided both policy and agenda for the party over the last decade, are no longer capable of doing so. John B. Judis, *The New Republic*, August 31, 1992. The End of Conservatism.

At one point, Anderson referred to Reagan as the "self-styled leader of the conservative wing" of the Republican party. At another, he took issue with speculation that only a conservative has a good chance of taking over the reins of the party in 1980.

"I disagree with that," he said. "I think that we will nominate a moderate Republican in 1980." Anderson Rules Out Reagan, Ford in '80, Warren Brown, *Washington Post Staff Writer*, June 6, 1977.

Rep. Louise Miller, a vocal moderate and supporter of abortion rights, credited Democrats with positioning their candidates as the agents of change. Republicans lost their chance to win back the governorship by choosing conservative Ken Eikenberry over moderate Rep. Sid Morrison, she said.

"I think you're going to see moderate Republicans who are really the majority trying to work together to put the party back together," Miller said. "You can't have single issues, whether the far right or far left." STATE REPUBLICANS BRACING FOR BITTER INTERNAL BATTLE, Mike Merritt P-I Reporter, November 5, 1992.

The size of Clinton's electoral vote victory, comparable to Franklin Roosevelt's landslide victory over Herbert Hoover in 1932 and Woodrow Wilson's defeat of William Howard Taft in the three-way contest with Teddy Roosevelt in 1912, undoubtedly will be interpreted as a call for a sharp turn away from the conservative Republican theories that have dominated the executive branch since 1980.

In that sense, the election results signaled the end of the conservative era and perhaps the beginning of another cycle in American politics and history – one that will carry the nation into the 21st Century. Charles m. Madigan, Clinton elected president, Bush defeat

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GOP DEFEAT MEANS LONG WAIT IN COLD

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The Reagan revolution ended on Tuesday, not because it was overwhelmed by a superior army of counter-revolutionaries, but because the fight had gone out of its soldiers, and its heir, George Bush, did not truly believe in it. Four years ago, Jack Kemp forecast Election Day 1992 when he told NBC's John Chancellor, "If George Bush is elected president of the United States, the Reagan revolution will be over." Ronald Reagan's biggest mistake was that of caving in to pressure from Republican "moderates" and selecting Bush as his running mate. Reagan is said to be seriously concerned about his legacy and the undoing of the economic and judicial reforms he began. But in keeping with his "11th commandment" never to speak ill of a fellow Republican, Reagan has refused all requests for post-election interviews, and a spokeswoman tells me that he probably will never do another. His silence speaks volumes. Conservative Republicans didn't lose on Tuesday. Moderates did. They will blame the "far right" and their visibility at the Houston convention for torpedoing GOP political hegemony, ignoring that it was the conservative presence and their "social issues" in the 1980s that made victory possible. It was the moderates' embarrassment with those issues that made defeat inevitable. In his new book "Nofziger," former Reagan aid Lyn Nofziger writes that, like Kemp, he foresaw disaster in the selection of George Bush as Reagan's running mate: "Reagan's handpicked successor, George Bush, has dashed whatever hopes many of us had that he would carry on the Reagan legacy." Libertarian Republicans, like columnist William Safire, who worked for Richard Nixon, says the GOP convention "was even more off-putting than the San Francisco Democratic Convention of 1984 - the one that celebrated liberal pressure groups and led to the Reagan landslide." Safire blames Pat Buchanan for declaring "religious war." The Republican defeat was not the fault of Buchanan or Pat Robertson or any other "zealot." No, the fault lies at the top. George Bush failed to convince enough people that he has a political, economic and moral center and sufficient convictions for leading the nation in each of these critical areas. Republicans are now faced with the difficult job of rebuilding their party, not on a solid foundation, but on an ash heap of their own making. The battle will initially be fought between "moderate" Republicans and the party's conservative wing. Republicans will not regain the White House, and they have little hope of new congressional victories, if they abandon the moral issues that are uniquely theirs. President Bush always seemed uncomfortable with the Reagan agenda. When he finally began to address the social issues, he seemed insincere, and people sensed it. Republicans like Jack Kemp, Bill Bennett and Dan Quayle will need to recreate their party and form a government in exile. They and other conservatives will have to repair their party's base and offer a new vision for the next century (or perhaps the next election if Bill Clinton stumbles badly, which is a real possibility). A Clinton failure is their best short-term hope of regaining what Bush has just needlessly lost. Absent that failure, it could be a long wait out in the cold for the GOP. Copyright 1992 Los Angeles Times Syndicate

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The End Of Conservatism

The Beaching Of The Republican Party

John B. Judis, The New Republic Published: August 31, 1992

When conservatives repeatedly declare that George Bush's failures as president are the result of his having spurned their ideas and movement, they are harboring illusions born of their fleeting success under Ronald Reagan. In fact, the conservative movement that carried Reagan to victory barely exists any longer; it has dissipated into various cantankerous and confused factions; and the ideas associated with it have become obsolete, discredited, or heavily in dispute among conservatives themselves.

It is not even clear any longer what it would mean for Bush to follow conservatives' advice. Should he listen to Massachusetts Governor William Weld or the Rev. Pat Robertson on the subject of abortion and family values? Should he give priority to Jack Kemp's proposals for cutting taxes or to Senator Phil Gramm's urgings to reduce the budget deficit? Should he pay attention to Representative Vin Weber's words on free trade or to Pat Buchanan's warnings about unfair Japanese trade tactics? Should he derive his foreign policy from Commentary or Chronicles?

As a generic political category, of course, conservatives have not disappeared from American politics. Indeed, there have always been politicians and intellectuals in America who could be described as "conservatives" -- from John Adams and Daniel Webster to Irving Babbitt and Robert Taft -- but until the mid-1950s there was no common body of "conservative" political ideas or any movement that was called "conservative." Instead, conservatives and the right consisted of disconnected and often feuding factions that could claim few common causes.

What has happened over the last five years is that American conservatives -- who created a coherent movement about thirty-five years ago and won national power in 1980 -- have slipped back into the chaos and impotence that prevailed before the mid-'50s. They now bear far more resemblance to the conservatives of 1952 than to the conservatives of 1964 or 1980. And that, perhaps, is the real reason for Bush's sputtering administration.

In the early 1950s the different factions that were identified with the right or with conservatives included isolationists strongly opposed to American participation in nato and to American entry into the Korean War; protectionists favoring the retention of the prohibitive Smoot-Hawley tariff; nativists, anti-Semites, and racists worried about the subversion of white, Anglo-Saxon Christian culture; anti-democratic, neo-feudal, and neo-Confederate reactionaries railing against urban industrialism; small businessmen worried that the New and Fair Deals represented the first step toward a Soviet America; libertarians distrustful of a new national security state; McCarthy and McCarthyite anti-Communists fearful that the United States was about to be taken over by the world Communist conspiracy; and Ivy League Republicans who called themselves the "new conservatives" and favored a moderate politics modeled on Burke and Disraeli.

There was an impassable gulf between the Burkean conservatism of McGeorge Bundy or Robert Taft (who sponsored a public housing bill and rejected the label "conservative") and the racist populism of Gerald L.K. Smith; but there was also a chasm between the libertarians and the McCarthyites and between the isolationists and the anti-Communist internationalists. In the 1952 presidential election, conservatives and the right were deeply split over Eisenhower and Taft. Much of the old right favored Taft while the new anti-Communists, including McCarthy, Whittaker Chambers, and Barry Goldwater, supported Eisenhower. Some Southern conservatives, concerned about the Republican Party's ties to Lincoln, even backed Adlai Stevenson. The right in 1952 was all cacophony and no melody.

Yet a decade later a powerful and recognizable conservative movement had come into being. It got its name from Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind*, but it derived its thrust largely from the efforts of an improbable group of former leftists and of William F. Buckley Jr.'s *National Review*. These conservatives located the new movement on the right wing of America's cold war internationalist consensus -- a

experimentation. Reagan's message, Podhoretz wrote afterward, was that "the decline of America ... is a consequence of bad policies pursued by the government and can therefore be reversed by shifting to other policies."

Reagan's landslide victory seemed to augur the beginning of a conservative realignment comparable in depth and scope to the New Deal realignment of 1932, but the big shift never took place. Instead, within a decade, the conservative movement ran aground. For the first time since 1960, the movement had no agreed-upon national leader. Its factions were not merely feuding but attempting to read each other out of the movement. And its ties to its popular base were becoming increasingly tenuous. Why did this occur?

Most obviously, the end of the cold war removed the movement's underlying focus and rationale. Without the priority of national defense, existing squabbles over federal spending, appointments, arts policy, and school prayer suddenly became major conflicts. More importantly, older conflicts that had been suppressed or temporarily resolved during the cold war resurfaced. Conservatives began fighting over foreign aid, immigration, Israel, and even Jewish influence in terms little different from 1948. Just as conservatives like Merwin K. Hart had tried to discredit Roosevelt's and Truman's policies by associating them with prominent Jews, conservative Pat Buchanan tried to discredit foreign policy positions by linking them to Jewish proponents.

The noisiest quarrel occurred between the conservatives and a group of traditionalists including Buchanan and Kirk who called themselves "paleoconservatives." As early as 1982, the two factions were bickering over who should be appointed to head the National Endowment for the Humanities, but with the cold war gone, a typical movement turf battle escalated into an all-out war. The paleocons accused the neocons of being crypto-socialists and of mistaking, in Kirk's words, "Tel Aviv for the capital of the United States." Neocon Richard John Neuhaus accused the paleocons of reviving "the forbidden bigotries once confused with conservatism."

The movement was further fragmented rather than unified by paleocon Buchanan's presidential candidacy this year. The neocons, backed by *The American Spectator* and leading congressional conservatives, called on conservatives to repudiate Buchanan. Human Events and some of Robertson's lieutenants from 1988 supported Buchanan wholeheartedly. Other conservative publications and organizations waffled and vacillated. In a December essay in *National Review*, Buckley acknowledged that Buchanan's statements "amounted to anti-Semitism," but on the eve of the New Hampshire primary, the magazine, with Buckley's concurrence, urged a "tactical vote" for Buchanan. The Heritage Foundation's Edwin Feulner branded both Buchanan's charges against the neocons and their charges against him "insane."

The movement was equally afflicted by the failure of conservative economics to stem the decline of the American economy. Instead of creating a healthy prosperity, Reagan's supply-side policies led to a transient debt-driven boom that was accompanied by record trade and budget deficits and by a slight drop in real wages. When the recession began, some conservatives finally acknowledged that the American economy was in relative decline but insisted that the fault lay in insufficiently or imperfectly carrying out their prescriptions. They wanted a return to the gold standard or further reductions in taxes on the wealthy.

A few others who acknowledged the decline began to embrace active government intervention in investment and trade. Conservative business groups like the Business and Industrial Council called for the government to protect American manufacturers against cheap foreign imports. The policy differences between these groups and the organizations still committed to Reaganomics loomed as large as the differences between Democrats and Republicans.

In addition, many conservative intellectuals -- and some political leaders, including Kemp -- simply refused to acknowledge that the United States was declining. *Wall Street Journal* editorial page editor Robert Bartley maintained that the budget deficits of the '80s were "grossly overrated" and that the trade deficits were "meaningless and misleading." George Gilder wrote an article for *Policy Review* titled "More Imports, Please." And many of the neoconservatives, who had been oblivious to economics, now insisted that the spread of American democratic ideas and popular culture demonstrated that America was still on the rise. Writing in *Commentary*, however, Francis Fukuyama dismissed these arguments. "As with a star that has gone supernova," he wrote, "the light emanating from the United States continues to shine brightly at the periphery of the universe, where it is observed by various Russians, Chinese, Lithuanians, and the like; but the energy at the core is rapidly extinguishing."

As Bush enters his last political campaign, he has suffered as much from the conservatives' decline as they have from his. Though Bush has hewed a largely independent course on foreign policy (where he has been most successful as president), he has shamelessly followed whatever wind is blowing the strongest on economic and social policy. Conservatives now cite his betrayal of his promise not to raise taxes as a prime example of his ignoring their advice, but conservatives were silent between June 1990, when Bush announced he was breaking his pledge, and October, when the first budget agreement was introduced. And rightly so, since they had no better answer for how to reduce the deficit.

Conservatives' repudiation of Bush is part of their own self-denial. By pretending that he is entirely separate from them, they can delude themselves into thinking his defeat will not reflect on their own political future. But it will: Bush lacks a domestic policy, and the Republicans lack what Weber calls a "coherent national agenda," because the conservatives, who provided both policy and agenda for the party over the last decade, are no longer capable of doing so.

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