

PERIODICALS

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POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

War of the Underdogs

"The Liberal Opportunity" by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. and "Race-Neutral Programs and the Democratic Coalition" by William Julius Wilson, in *The American Prospect* (Spring 1990), P.O. Box 7645, Princeton, N.J. 08543-7645, and "The Life of the Party" by Rep. Newt Gingrich, in *Policy Review* (Winter 1990), 214 Mass. Ave. N.E. Washington, D.C. 20002.

Has the United States become a one-party state? Judging by these essays, written by leading lights on opposites sides of the U.S. political spectrum, you might think so. Each bleakly lets on that the "other side" is running the show, and suggests how his team can get back in the game.

Least alarmed is Schlesinger, the eminent historian, writing the lead essay in a new journal devoted to the revival of liberal thought. History, he says, "shows a fairly regular [30-year] alternation in American politics between private gain and public good as the dominating motives of national policy." By his reckoning, the liberal hour is near again. Moreover, the end of the Cold War will dissolve the anti-communist glue that holds together the conservative coalition, which he seems to regard as a collection of kooks: "establishmentarians, entrepreneurial hustlers, evangelical zealots, libertarians, global crusaders, isolationists, anti-abortionists, the gun lobby, and so on."

Wilson, the noted black sociologist from the University of Chicago, takes the Democratic dilemma more seriously. A large part of the party's problem is that whites are deserting it, at least in national elections. Wilson argues that these voters have not turned against blacks but "against a strategy that emphasizes programs perceived to benefit only racial minorities" such as affirmative action and court-ordered busing. In addition, he believes

that these policies have aided only the most advantaged blacks. What the Democrats need now is "an emphasis on coalition politics that features progressive, race-neutral policies": full employment, job training, comprehensive health care, child care, school reform, and drug and crime prevention efforts for all.

It must warm the heart of Rep. Gingrich (R.-Ga.), the Minority Whip in the U.S. House of Representatives, to hear Democrats speaking of more "big government." But here he saves his spleen for his own party: The GOP "is about to begin its 10th consecutive year in the White House, yet it has failed to gain working control of America's governments." Why?

First, Republicans have yet to make the transition from being carping critics of government to being its proprietors. Says Gingrich: "We have not had a serious Republican effort to think through the definition of conservative government since Theodore Roosevelt." Second, "Republicans really don't know enough about America. We've never thought much about how to improve life for people who have never been our constituents." Finally, says Gingrich, after controlling the White House (but not much else) for 17 of the last 21 years, Republicans have yet to learn the limits of presidential leadership. His Democratic counterparts, who control virtually everything but the White House, seem not to have learned the lesson either.



One Man's Opinion

It is news when the head of a major polling firm declares that Congressmen are "excessively influenced by dozens of polls which they could ignore at little or no risk to their political future." That is what the British-born president of Louis Harris and Associates, Humphrey Taylor, writes in *The Public Perspective* (Jan.-Feb. 1990).

While they might not be rash enough to say so, virtually all British MPs would agree with Edmund Burke that "your representative owes you not his industry only but his judgment; and he betrays you, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion." In other words, "we the leaders are right to do what we think best, regardless of public opinion—provided, of course, that we'll be re-elected at the next election."

No American politician can afford to be so cavalier. Things are very different here. I was stunned when I arrived here in 1976 to hear Jimmy Carter win great applause when he said that this country deserved a president "as good and as wise as the American people." In Europe we hope we can find leaders who are much better and wiser than the people—much better at governing, if not better in their personal morality (which seems more important here). Why is the United States so different? Part of the explanation is historical and cultural. One can argue about how "democratic" different countries are, but there is no argument that the US is a much more populist country. There is more respect here for public opinion. Americans believe government should not just be of the people and for the people. It should be by the people.

Snake Eyes for State Lotteries

"Redefining 'Success' in the State Lottery Business" by Charles T. Clotfelter and Philip J. Cook, in *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* (Winter 1990), 605 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10158, and "State Lotteries and Crime" by John Mikesell and Maureen A. Pirog-Good, in *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* (Jan. 1990), 41 E. 72nd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Since New Hampshire inaugurated the first modern state lottery in 1964, 31 other states have followed suit. By 1988, ticket sales reached \$17 billion annually—about \$250 per household in the lottery states—and supplied about four percent of state revenues.

Clotfelter and Cook, both economists at Duke, believe that lotteries are here to stay—much as they hint that they wouldn't mind turning back the clock. But, they say, there are lotteries and then there are lotteries. Until the mid-1970s, most state op-

erations were old-fashioned raffles, "conducted in much the same fashion as in Colonial times." But revenues were disappointing. In an effort to boost sales, the states invented exciting new contests—"instant winner" games, computerized numbers games, and lotto contests with huge jackpots. Now under development are games that "bear an uncanny resemblance to slot machines." At the same time, the states began using razzle-dazzle print and television advertising to promote gambling as a way of getting rich quick.