



Neoliberals in the Wilderness

by Walter Shapiro

About the same time Charlie Peters was boldly launching this magazine in early 1969, an obscure 29-year-old conservative political analyst was putting the final touches on a book that would chart with eerie precision the rough political waters that lay ahead. The author was Kevin Phillips and the prophetic book was, of course, *The Emerging Republican Majority*. Its cover depicted Richard Nixon's 1968 triumph with the kind of color-coded map that has since become all too familiar to election night TV viewers: an uninterrupted blotch of Republican red stretching from Virginia to California. For as Phillips foretold in his opening sentence, Nixon's ascendancy "bespoke the end of the New Deal Democratic hegemony and the beginning of a new era in American politics."

How obvious it all seems now, but how obtuse we were then. Unveiling a liberal political magazine in 1969, inspired by the failures of Lyndon Johnson, turned out to be akin to starting a Republican journal in 1933 designed to be a corrective to Herbert Hoover. Laudable in theory, but a tad irrelevant during the next five terms of FDR and Harry Truman. Of course, when I joined the *Monthly* after the debacle of the 1972 election, at a time when every Volvo still defiantly brandished a McGovern sticker, there still was an unmistakable sense that the Nixon era was merely a painful period of penance before liberal Democrats would regain their rightful place in the White House. The Democrats were America's natural governing party; the Republicans were just the cynical beneficiaries of the nation's anguish over Vietnam, civil rights, and the countercultural revolt.

All through the Nixon years, the *Monthly* maintained a certain disdainful distance, as if the Republicans' handiwork was too ephemeral to be

taken seriously. The magazine was never designed as a nonpartisan journal of public administration; we regarded ourselves as a kind of teaching tool for right-thinking Democrats. The cautionary lessons about the culture of bureaucracy and the need for independent program analysis presupposed an administration that shared the *Monthly's* liberal goals. Each article was a potential object lesson for the next Democratic president. Each restatement of the magazine's Gospel was a sermon to remind the faithful of the follies that had destroyed LBJ and the Great Society. Even the sharp ad hominem attacks on liberal hypocrisy were largely a heuristic device; the unstated goal was always to instruct the Democrats to shape up so they could govern better.

After 20 years of struggle and sacrifice, after 20 years of near-miraculous survival, all the magazine has to show for its political ambitions is the false spring of Jimmy Carter. I served in the Carter administration both as press secretary to Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall and as a White House speechwriter. About the time I left the *Monthly's* scruffy quarters for a wood-paneled office with a wall of windows overlooking the Capitol and the East Wing of The National Gallery, I remember friends saying, "I'd like to serve in government someday, but I think I'll wait for a more congenial Democrat." They are, I assume, still patiently waiting.

Even now I regard those years, and the policy failures that accompanied them, with a set of conflicting emotions. How long ago it all seems—and how young we were then. Just writing these words rekindles the heady self-importance of being close to the levers of power, working just two offices away from the place where other people made epic decisions. Many of the *Monthly's* lectures on the evils of bureaucracy proved all too true; if anything, the magazine had badly understated the case. But in those days there was the beguiling sense that our time in office was virtually limitless and opportunities, even if squandered, would inevitably come

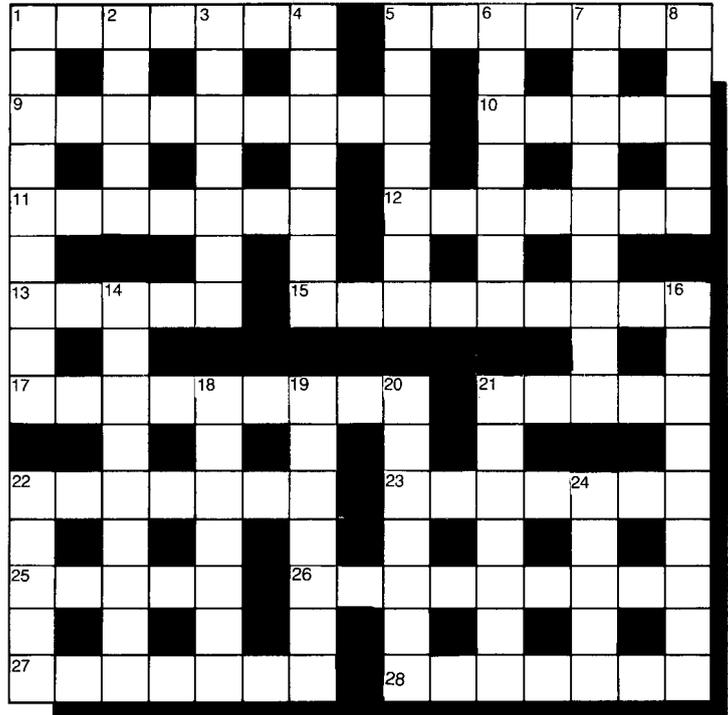
Walter Shapiro, an editor of The Washington Monthly from 1972 to 1976, is now a senior writer for Time.

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POLITICAL PUZZLE

by John Barclay

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g. (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g. USA, are treated as one word.



ACROSS

1. Congress's first step is easy rip-off. (3,4)
5. Second in line for president makes Beth err. (7)
9. Lender 199 scheme took everybody in. (9)
10. Not an upset, Dvorak coming in second. (5)
11. Very unhappy, becoming nastier. (2,5)
12. In response to gross affront, a riot developed in Canada. (7)
13. Merits snare development. (5)
15. Important tournament for citizens only? (9)
17. Change arms front deployment. (9)
21. Fix up Roman lord's house. (5)
22. Pull female back for slowpoke. (7)
23. Keep around end of November to educate for new position. (7)
25. Alert for one sign of passage? (5)
26. Throw a doll a bar for departure line. (3,6)
27. Yes-men not paying attention? (7)

28. Spin-doctors pass a week among seniors. (7)

DOWN

1. Key figure in Washington ends tripe mess. (9)
2. Expensive toy for the first of your American corporate heavy traders. (5)
3. Beachheads with no exits? (7)
4. Carefully sell ion for writer. (7)
5. Special hue? Do it to avoid attention. (4,3)
6. Recast ET actor to respond directly. (5,2)
7. To rouse tenant ire take in guests. (9)
8. Ring fly comes up for dance. (5)
14. Urge radar set up for protective force. (4,5)
16. Red sedans playing music. (9)

18. People of Southeast Asia see aims developed. (7)
19. Slow day restored tribal heritage. (3,4)
20. Men in conjunction with team spirits. (7)
21. Somewhat lame but not permanent. (7)
22. Find a way in the midst of unclearness. (5)
24. Saw promotion time. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:

