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January 28, 1983

83-15

Reagan's Social Revolution
Breathing, But Barely Alive

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)--At midpoint in his term of office, President Reagan's social revolution is all but dead.

Elected just over two years ago and aided by a new majority in the U. S. Senate and a decidedly more conservative House of Representatives, the president was expected not only to push an economic package through Congress but also to go all out for his social agenda by seeking a ban on abortion, reinstatement of group prayer in public schools and enactment of tuition tax credits.

But while his key economic package of domestic budget cuts accompanied by tax reductions sailed through Congress after intense White House lobbying, the social issues did not move significantly. Congressional insiders consider their chances in the new Congress even worse.

Among the reasons:

- Economic problems have necessarily dominated the president's agenda;
- The strength of the New Right, including the Religious Right, has been vastly overstated;
- Traditionally conservative Republicans, upstaged in Reagan's election by the New Right, are beginning to regain dominance in their party; and
- Politicians of many persuasions are catching on that the people do not want action on any of the "big three" issues of abortion, school prayer and tuition tax credits.

Contrary to the oft-repeated claim of the New Right, Ronald Reagan was elected primarily because he offered a different economic philosophy, not because the American people were ready for a social revolution. Many political observers are convinced that Jimmy Carter's campaign was doomed by persistently stubborn economic indicators such as rampant inflation and interest rates, along with the perception that the United States had been brought low by the captivity of the hostages in Iran.

Despite those two overriding reasons for Reagan's election, his most rabid supporters insisted he had been given a mandate to pursue basic social changes.

Knowing of their longstanding devotion and importance to his political career, Reagan repeatedly asked leaders of the New Right such as Richard Viguerie, Paul Weyrich and Howard Phillips to be patient, to give him time to implement his economic revolution before turning to their social issues.

But they are now realizing that just as his predecessor was plagued by intractable economic difficulties, Ronald Reagan too has had to keep fiscal questions front and center, not to mention increasingly urgent foreign policy considerations also long delayed.

Rather than rallying around the man they supported for 20 long years before he captured the presidency, leaders of the movement have turned on him. Indeed a good case can be made that from the very first month of his term, when the carping began, these zealots have been Reagan's worst enemies.

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At the heart of their misperceptions is a bloated view of their own importance to the president and to the movement he r presents. In spite of major pollsters' findings that the 1980 R agan landslide owed far more to fiscal considerations than to "moral" issues, the New Right leadership often reminded the president and everyone else that they put him in office.

To a certain degree the president encouraged that view by giving them enough visibility at White House functions to lead them on. A perfect example was the May 6, 1982, Rose Garden ceremony when Reagan announced his intention to send a constitutional amendment on school prayer to Capitol Hill. He and Mrs. Reagan were surrounded by religious leaders such as Jerry Falwell, Edward E. McAteer and a host of other figures from the Religious Right.

These people believed the president when he told them he would fight for their causes. He will not, not because he is not committed to them, but because he, better than they, knows their issues cannot win in Congress.

Descriptions on Capitol Hill of the chances for passage of anti-abortion and pro-school prayer and tuition tax credit measures now range from "not good" to "not a chance." This owes mainly to the political reality that members of Congress read election results like no oth rs.

In the House the chances for the social revolution were never very promising. Committees and subcommittees kept all New Right social causes bottled up throughout the 97th Congress. But in the Senate expectations ran high.

Just the same, only two of the big three made it past the committee stage. Neither of these, an anti-abortion constitutional amendment and a tuition tax credit bill, reached a vote on the floor. In the new Senate, while Republicans kept their eight-vote margin over Democrats by breaking even in the 1982 elections, chances for significant movement toward passage of any of the three have all but been extinguished.

One of the primary reasons is that New Right standard bearer Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., suffered a series of costly embarrassments at the polls. All five of the North Carolina congressional candidates he supported with big dollars from his Congressional Club war chest were beaten. Helms now faces an uphill battle for his own reelection in 1984.

Helms will have much less leverage on the Senate leadership this time around. Majority l ader Howard H. Baker Jr., R-Tenn., who announced recently he has had enough of the increasingly hostile environment in the "world's most exclusive club" and will not seek reelection in 1984, will be able to direct floor proceedings from a position of strength. He will not have to cut deals with Helms or other New Right senators, a number of whom also must face the voters two years from now.

Along with other powerful Senate leaders, including Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., and the venerable dean of conservatives Sen. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., Baker will insure that congressional Republican leadership is once again dominated by more moderate thinking.

Finally, politicians from various points along the political spectrum are beginning to realize that on the questions of abortion, school prayer and tuition tax credits, Americans in fact want to get government off their backs. Members of Congress, never hesitant to duck the tough calls, will be perfectly happy to oblige by leaving such issues alone.

On school prayer, for example, more and more citizens are learning that what Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment would do is return state-written prayers to the classrooms. They are seeing through the commonly stated error, repeated by the president in his State of the Union address, that "God never should have been expelled from America's classrooms in the first place." They know that unlike truant junior high schoolers, God has a perfect attendance record and that no force on earth can expel him from anywhere.

From politicians and citizens alike, then, the prognosis on the social revolution is not good. If it survives, it will be kept alive only by the life-support system of Reagan's rhetoric, by his presidential posturing.

White House, Baptists, New
Right Open War On Pornography

By Roy Jennings

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The Roundtable, a national conservative organization, opened war against pornography on two fronts at a rally attracting an overflow crowd of 1,500.

A White House staffer, a member of Congress, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, representatives of media watchdog groups and anti-abortion organizations participated in the subsidized \$10-a-plate dinner at the Hotel Peabody.

The rally was the first of a dozen such meetings planned by the Roundtable to generate letter writing campaigns against pornography at the federal and state levels.

The audience, predominately lay persons lightly sprinkled with clergy, was encouraged to write President Ronald Reagan urging him to enforce federal obscenity laws and to Tennessee legislators, asking them to enact laws prohibiting pornographic broadcasts on cable television.

The two-hour program opened with Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis and banquet chairman, flaying pornography in welcoming remarks and closed with Roundtable leaders asking for almost \$15,000 in a special offering to defray expenses of the rally.

Rogers, who was president of the Southern Baptist Convention 1979-80, focused on what he called the myths of pornography, declaring there is no way anyone with a modicum of sense can say is pornography is a victimless crime.

"We want the laws (against pornography) to be enforced. It's time we got the word out that no one has the absolute right to total free speech. And you don't have to be a Protestant, Catholic, Jew, white, black, young or old to be against pornography," he said.

Morton C. Blackwell, special assistant to President Reagan for public liaison, said the attorney general has asked United States attorneys to pay special attention to pornography cases, and the Department of Justice and the White House staff is working with anti-pornography forces to develop model state statutes.

Blackwell counseled the participants to "employ moral outrage" against the political system--legislators, judges and law enforcement. "Moral outrage can put pornography where it belongs," he said. "Everything will bow before it (moral outrage)."

Morton A. Hill of New York city, a Jesuit priest and president of Morality in Media, said pornography is a \$6 billion annual business, third only to gambling and narcotics and heavily infiltrated by organized crime.

Besides the mass mailing of pornographic materials, at least 20,000 adult bookstores with pe p shows and another 780 pornographic movie houses are operating across the country, Hill said. He added pornography also is invading television with hard core films.

"It's against the law to transmit this obscene material but the Department of Justice isn't enforcing the laws aggressively," he said. "Only the President of the United States can push the button that will bring about the enforcement of obscenity laws. It's up to you to let him know."

Rep. Mark Siljander, R-Mich., and Mildred Jefferson, a physician from Boston, former president of the National Right to Life named "secular humanism" for the pornography problem.

E.E. McAteer of Memphis, a Southern Baptist layman and member of Bellevue Baptist church, was moderator of the rally. He said other rallies are planned for Washington, D.C., Houston, Phoenix, Albuquerque, Los Angeles, Seattle, Billings, Mont., Kansas City, St. Louis, Harrisburg, Pa., Lynchburg, Va., Atlanta, Miami, and the tri-cities area of Tennessee (Johnson City, Bristol and Kingsport).

Brooks Hays Memorial Fund
Launched In Capitol Ceremony

By Robert Dilday

WASHINGTON (BP)--Accolades for a former Southern Baptist Convention president and member of Congress whose name became a "household word" marked a ceremony at the U.S. Capitol Jan. 26 establishing the Brooks Hays Memorial Fund.

The fund, in memory of the former Arkansas congressman who died in 1981, will benefit five organizations in which Hays took a lively interest: the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, Former Members of Congress and Calvary Baptist Church (all of Washington, D.C.) and Second Baptist Church of Little Rock, Ark. Hays was a member of both churches.

Sen. Dale Bumpers, D-Ark., who announced the fund, called Hays "first, last and always a devout Christian Baptist. He was a household word in our house from the time I was a child."

"Sometimes you pay a high price for principle and Brooks paid a very high price," Bumpers told the 40 journalists and friends of Hays in the Mike Mansfield Room in the Senate, "but later Brooks said it was a small price to pay."

Hays was defeated for a ninth term in Congress in 1958 after seeking to mediate a dispute between then-governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas and President Dwight D. Eisenhower during the 1957 school desegregation crisis at Little Rock's Central High School.

Former congressman Walter Judd of Minnesota, who along with Hays founded Former Members of Congress, said, "Defeat in politics is no disgrace. Default is."

Warren Cykins, a senior staff member at the Brookings Institution who was Hays' assistant in Congress, the State Department and the White House, said Hays "was always looking out for the little person...this Baptist from the Ozarks reached out and found me, from Boston and of the Jewish faith," Cykins said. "It was exciting to have such an association with him."

Sen. David Pryor and Reps. Ed Bethune and Beryl F. Anthony Jr., members of Arkansas' congressional delegation, also attended the ceremony.

Others in the audience were Hays' wife Marion; his daughter Betty Brooks Bell; and Clarence Cranford, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church when Hays was a member and president of the American Baptist Convention at the same time Hays presided over the Southern Baptist Covention.

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(BP) photos mailed to Baptist state papers by Washington bureau of Baptist Press

Domestic Hunger Resolution
Introduced In U.S. House

By Gerri Ratliff

Baptist Press
1/28/83

WASHINGTON (BP)--A bipartisan group of House members has introduced a resolution opposing budget cuts in federal nutrition programs for fiscal year 1984.

Primary sponsors of the "Preventing Hunger at Home" resolution are Reps. Leon E. Panetta, D-Calif.; Carl D. Perkins, D-Ky.; James M. Jeffords, R-Vt; George Miller, D-Calif., and Claudine Schneider, R-R.I. It is being pushed by Bread for the World, a non-profit organization that seeks to eliminate hunger.

The resolution expresses the sense of Congress that federal food programs be excluded from budget cuts so that government may respond to citizens suffering from unemployment and high food prices.

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There are reports that the president's fiscal year 1984 budget will seek up to \$1.5 billion in child nutrition and food stamp cutbacks on top of the \$12 billion reductions enacted in the 97th Congress, Panetta said at a press conference announcing the introduction of the resolution.

"Churches and agencies have been unable to keep up with the increasing demand for food," he said. "Our national conscience demands that we must respond."

A similar resolution will be introduced in the Senate by Sens. Rudy Boschwitz, R-Minn., and John C. Danforth, R-Mo., Panetta said.

In his statement, Miller said that at one time hunger in America had been eradicated. "Now the clock is being turned back. Hunger and malnutrition are returning to America."

Miller cited a recently released evaluation by the Harvard School of Public Health concluding that every dollar invested in the Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) saves \$3 in immediate hospitalization costs. Freezing the WIC program at the 1982 level will force 115,000 high-risk participants out of the program—23,000 of them pregnant women, he said.

Schneider included a report by the Food Research and Action Center in her statement showing that the infant mortality rate has increased in eight states over the last year. The study attributed a great majority of these deaths to the lack of basic foods and health care for both mother and child, she said.

As incoming chairman of the nutrition subcommittee of the Agriculture Committee, Panetta said he will hold field hearings across the country examining the causes and extent of domestic hunger and malnutrition.

At the 1982 Southern Baptist Convention, messengers passed a resolution on hunger "encouraging our elected representatives to place a high priority on the responsibility of using our God-given bounty to alleviate hunger both in the United States and abroad."

"Baptists should support this resolution 100 percent because it will have a national span addressing one of the most serious problems we are having now," said Nathan Porter, Home Mission Board national consultant for disaster relief and domestic hunger. "This resolution places our priorities back in the right perspective, putting the emphasis on social concerns rather than military build-up."