

An openly partisan look at a striking political paradox—"a radical of the Right"—by a leading journalist of the Right

"IF GOLDWATER WERE PRESIDENT"

BY WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

Editor of National Review

IT IS ONE OF THE PARADOXES of our time that a conservative Republican, Barry Goldwater, junior Senator from Arizona, has emerged as one of the few genuine radicals in American public life. A radical conservative? Yes, if he were President, he would change the face of the nation: in that sense he's a "radical". He would reorient America in the direction of minimum government and *maximum personal responsibility*: in that sense he's a "conservative". I, too, am a radical conservative, and I don't pretend to be impartial about Goldwater: I'm for him. Everyone of Senator Goldwater's domestic proposals derives from two central beliefs. The first is that the Constitution enumerates the powers of Congress and explicitly denies it the right to do the kind of thing that has been going on under the name of the New Deal, the Fair Deal and the New Frontier. Second, that human freedom is best served by keeping the government small. Senator Goldwater firmly believes that the United States is a profoundly conservative country, if only the people had a chance to get a taste of the real thing, and realized more fully where they are headed under statism. But even if Americans should reject Goldwater's brand of individualism he'd go on believing what he now believes, a set of principles rooted—he has publicly maintained—in the very nature of man. Beliefs of that

intensity are not changed by Gallup polls. Sometimes they even make friends. "I like Goldwater, as a man and as a politician," William S. White of *Harper's* wrote recently. "I wholly disagree with most of his views. But I owe a bias toward any politician so full of principle."

It's astonishing that a man holding to such rigidly conservative views should be so strikingly successful in politics almost 30 years after Franklin Roosevelt came, saw and conquered. Goldwater's emergence has a lot to do, of course, with organic political and social developments in America. Many people are disillusioned with the kind of world we live in, and seek other solutions than those that have been advanced by the liberals. But Goldwater's rise is to a considerable extent the result of Goldwater. Very few people escape from exposure to him completely unscathed. Goldwater, like Roosevelt, has a first-class political personality. And again like Roosevelt, Goldwater personifies a political philosophy, so that in backing him, his followers are able to fuse personal and ideological passions.

That is what accounts for Goldwater's success, notwithstanding a political position that can hardly be considered to be in vogue. It is generally suggested that Senator Goldwater is so conservative he's just out of this world. Senator Hubert Humphrey twitted him at a cocktail party recently. "You're one of the handsomest men in America," the Minnesota Democrat said. "You ought to be in the movies. In fact, I've made just that proposal to 18th Century-Fox."

Goldwater's enemies are legion; but they are not—yet—mortally engaged against him, nor even, for the most part, waspish in their references to him. (That isn't true of Walter Reuther and his circle, to be sure. Goldwater got fired up one day and called Reuther more dangerous

than the Communists, whereupon Reuther replied that Goldwater should be taken away in a white suit. And the colorful vendetta goes on.)

Goldwater is among the three most important Republicans in the G.O.P. "That Goldwater commands a third force," wrote one critic of Goldwater's ideas recently, "is undeniable." When last summer he, Rockefeller and Nixon posed for a "unity" photograph, arm in arm, the idea was that *all* the forces in the Republican party were present and accounted for: Left, Center and Right.

Here was a remarkably versatile man, who on Sunday could denounce Nixon as an appeaser on the scale of Neville Chamberlain, and on Wednesday, in the interests of party unity, embrace him *and* the man to whom Nixon had allegedly betrayed the Republican party. He had made his criticisms in language absolutely remarkable for its candor: but now it was time to strike camp and move on. And Goldwater is, and always will be, a member of the Republican team. Here is a key to his durability—an organizational fidelity that Joe McCarthy renounced when, after the vote of censure, he apologized to the American people for having urged them to vote for Eisenhower. It was the end of McCarthy.

GOLDWATER's attractive attributes cause the kingmakers to deplore his single and obtrusive disqualification, his "ultraconservatism"—a designation, by the way, that Goldwater deeply resents because of its derogatory overtone ("Why don't they call Humphrey, Stevenson, Williams and that gang 'ultraliberals'?"). The feeling in these quarters is that Goldwater represents a remarkable conjunction of politically negotiable assets—"if only he would drop the anti-social-security stuff," as one old pro put it.

Barry Goldwater is: amiable, good-looking, fluent, earnest, a veteran, an active jet pilot, one part Jewish, a practicing Christian, head of a handsome family, a successful businessman, a best-selling author, a syndicated columnist and a tough campaigner who won a smashing victory in 1958 when he was re-elected Senator in a solidly Democratic state, against the bitter opposition of organized labor. "He could go very, very far," the old pro mused, his face as sad as though he were looking at an uncontrolled oil gusher, spouting its black gold wantonly onto the ground.

Others point out that Goldwater *has* come very far, and quite possibly wouldn't have except for the ardent support of American conservatives. One can argue whether his stout conservatism has helped or hurt him thus far. The big question is whether the Senator might, but for his adamant conservatism, successfully contend for the Presidential nomination.

How did he get that way? He is the son of an Episcopalian mother and a Jewish father, who brought him up in Arizona, where his grandparents had settled and founded a little trading store that soon grew into a chain. When he was a freshman at college his father died, and Barry decided to quit school and tend the store, while his brothers continued their education. The three of them worked hard, and the business flourished.

The employees of Goldwater's, incidentally, have never been able to understand the bitter opposition to Senator Barry from organized labor. They earn more than the employees of Goldwater's competitors, and yet they work a 37½-hour week, and enjoy fringe benefits ranging from an employees' swimming pool to a retirement fund.

"Flying in a jet airplane from

California to Arizona as I often do," Goldwater remarks, "I often marvel at the ordeal my grandfather and his brother went through in making that trek over plain and desert—those really were new frontiers, not made on Madison Avenue. They went without sufficient food or water and with Indians harassing them all the way. But they did it, and their whole generation did it, and that's the kind of spirit that created America.

"That was a spiritual energy that came out of the loins of the people. It didn't come out of Washington. And it never will. Washington's principal responsibility is to get out of the way of the creative impulses of the people."

It's one thing to intone generalities about human freedom and the American Constitution—every politician does that as a matter of course ("Ask not what the Government can do for you," declaimed President Kennedy, a couple of days before suggesting about 37 new things the Government *could* do for us.) But Goldwater means it.

If he had his way, the farmer's checks would stop coming in, the labor union leader would face a law telling him he couldn't strike an entire industry, the businessman wouldn't get his cozy little tariff, the apartment dweller wouldn't have his rent frozen, the unemployed wouldn't get a Federal check, nor the teacher Federal money, nor the Little Rock Negroes their paratroops. It's all very well to venerate the Constitution and individual freedom where the other fellow is concerned, but Barry Goldwater is for it all the way.

WHAT WOULD Goldwater do if he were President today? The ideal candidate for public office, he wrote in his best-selling book, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, would speak to the people as follows: "I

have little interest in streamlining government or in making it more efficient, for I mean to reduce its size. I do not undertake to promote welfare, for I propose to extend freedom. My aim is not to pass laws, but to repeal them. It is not to inaugurate new programs, but to cancel old ones that do violence to the Constitution, or that have failed in their purpose, or that impose on the people an unwarranted financial burden. I will not attempt to discover whether legislation is 'needed' before I have first determined whether it is constitutionally permissible. And if I should later be attacked for neglecting my constituents' 'interests,' I shall reply that I was informed their main interest is liberty and that in that cause I am doing the very best I can."

That, in my opinion, is a staggering statement, the likes of which have not been heard from any President since Grover Cleveland.

What, specifically, would Barry Goldwater have the Government do? Here are some of his most "ultra" domestic proposals: He would 1) get the Government out of agriculture and welfare—together; 2) apply antimonopoly legislation against the big labor unions; 3) abolish the progressive income tax; 4) eliminate foreign aid, except to nations actively prepared to assist in the anti-Communist enterprise; 5) eliminate economic and cultural exchange programs; 6) resume immediately nuclear testing, and 7) "be prepared to undertake military programs against vulnerable Communist regimes"—for instance, a Monroe Doctrine for Africa imposed by the N.A.T.O. powers, and a striking force of anti-Communist Asiatics that would help pro-Western forces in lands threatened by Communist aggression.

Such a program is completely at

odds with the programs adopted last summer by both the Democratic and the Republican parties. Does it follow that Goldwater's program can never guide the country? His admirers believe that a hard dose of Goldwater could revive this country as very little else could.

It is Goldwater's program, of all those extant, that most faithfully reflects the political philosophy of the men who forged this country and hammered out its Constitution. Our Constitution was drafted by men who thought the Federal Government should have enough power to maintain order, but no more. Jefferson thought that government best which governed least.

The question is whether the insights of men like Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison and Marshall hold good for today. Goldwater thinks they do, that they have not been, essentially, invalidated; that government, unless it is kept in hand, grows tyrannical; that the diffusion of governmental power, among the respective states, is the key to the maintenance of individual liberty.

For instance, Goldwater says, "I believe justice and morality require that persons of different races attend the same school. But I'm not going to impose my ideas of morality and justice on other people. The Constitution gave me no warrant to tell South Carolinians how to run their schools." Hence he believes that it is for the individual state to decide for itself what will be its educational practices.

Social security is best effected, he believes, by maximizing the national wealth. If, to look after the very few who for whatever reason cannot survive in a free market economy, we must have social security programs, then let the individual states or communities handle them, with reference to local resources and needs. Let the citizen majority of

each state decide. Just as it is the privilege of New York State to levy an income tax, it is the privilege of Connecticut *not* to levy such a tax. "Who will say," Goldwater asks, "the government of New York is 'better,' or 'more human,' or 'more progressive,' than Connecticut's?"

"The genius of the federal system," Goldwater has said, "is that it allows the individual state to experiment. If the state makes an unwise move, the contrast with surrounding states is enough to bring quick reform. But when the decision is made by the Federal Government, binding on all 50 states, the mistake is totalized: and you lose the means by which to make your comparisons."

In foreign policy, his program is not distinctively Republican. In fact, it happens to be almost identical with the policy of Connecticut's Senator Thomas Dodd, a Democrat who votes on the other side of Goldwater on most domestic issues. Even so, it consistently reflects Goldwater's concern for freedom—here and abroad. He believes the best means of opposing communism is also the best means of effecting peace: we must fight hard, at every front, with courage to oppose Soviet advances by the threat of the use of force.

That is, at first glance, not very different from the Truman-Eisenhower-Kennedy program. But the similarities are mostly rhetorical. Goldwater would have followed MacArthur's recommendations to bomb north of the Yalu; he would right now be testing nuclear bombs, to perfect our arms flexibility. He would not have traveled to the summit, neither to Geneva in 1955, nor to Camp David in 1959, nor to Paris in 1960; nor be sending aid to Sukarno, Tito and Gomulka; nor have permitted the U.N. Army to protect Gizenga's pro-Communist regime in the Congo. "*Goldwater will end up in a pine box,*" Moscow's

Pravda thundered in a lead editorial last year, commenting on Goldwater's book. "If communism took over the world," Goldwater commented, "that's just where I'd want to be."



What will become of this phenomenon? The chances are very much against Goldwater's nomination for the Presidency—unless President Kennedy, by pursuing a hard-left policy at home and appeasement abroad, should bring the nation to catastrophe. If there is runaway inflation, if communism marches into Latin America on a frightening scale, if our alliances begin to crumble, the people may turn to Goldwater as a man offering a genuine alternative.

But if Kennedy's course is moderate, as probably it will be, Goldwater will surely be passed up by the next Republican convention in favor of a moderate, or even a left-moderate: a Nixon, a Rockefeller. Still, he will continue to exercise an important influence as, to quote *Time Magazine*, "the conservatives' most persuasive voice since Robert A. Taft."

Senator Goldwater will, then, in the months to come, act as a potent inhibiting influence on government; and on the side, as a political educator. When that political re-education is complete—perhaps during Goldwater's lifetime—a man such as he, with a program such as his, could lead the country.

On that day the faculty of Harvard University, associated in the public mind as the GHQ of American Liberalism, would undoubtedly dive for their bomb shelters, and classify themselves a Distressed Area. But it would be up to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts—not the Federal Government—to look after them.

