

## The collapse of the 'Reagan revolution'

by Richard Cohen, Washington Bureau Chief

Public and private polls initiated in mid-September have sent chills throughout Washington GOP circles, especially the White House. Signaling an immense shift in public attitudes, the most recent national poll conducted by Gallup reports a 66 percent preference for Democrats in the November elections. A similar poll conducted by Washington Post-CBS indicates a 54 percent preference, with Republican congressional candidates lagging far behind. Sources at the White House say that the most recent administration polls are even worse.

Added shock value was attached to the poll readings because both Republican and Democratic political advisers had by early August foolishly read an imminent recovery for Republican November chances based on what at that time was the continued strong personal rating of Reagan by the public. Now all that has apparently collapsed, and if the trends continue, Republicans will suffer decisive losses in November.

As of the last week in September, the President's pollsters, Richard Wirthlin, Arthur Finkelstein, and Robert Teeter, joined White House Chief of Staff James Baker III in forbidding the President to campaign in the Midwest or the northeast, where unemployment is highest and labor unions are strongest. Instead, George Bush will be promoted into the up-front advocate of Republican candidates in these hard-hit areas. In addition, a high-level in-house White House memo is said to warn the staff that polls now show that the President is "being perceived" by most Americans as "insensitive" and even "cruel." Internally, the administration is bursting at the seams with leaks from Stockman's OMB,

Baldrige's Commerce Department, and even Regan's Treasury Department, that the U.S. economy is about to ratchet down in the fall.

The pathetic, enfeebled Presidential response however was to *lie*. Nervously spouting the rehearsed nonsense that "recovery is just around the corner," the President tried to contain the devastating effect of news scheduled to be announced on Oct. 8, that unemployment would officially go over the 10 percent mark, by announcing it himself.

### LaRouche vote sent early signals

The first signs of an anti-austerity eruption occurred in late spring, when Pennsylvania Democratic gubernatorial primary candidate Steven Douglas, a LaRouche Democrat with negligible funds and under constant media attack, garnered a whopping 20 percent of the vote. Douglas's anti-austerity program was best received by minorities and union workers. In early September, LaRouche Baltimore congressional candidate Debra Freeman received 21 percent of the vote mostly from the same kind of constituency, while in a Minnesota farming district, a LaRouche candidate, Pat O'Reilly, got 37 percent of the vote in a heated congressional primary. Finally in mid-September, LaRouche New York Senate candidate Mel Klenetsky received a telling 17 percent statewide vote, and won a majority in sections of New York City (see article, page 54).

The LaRouche vote's significance was seconded by two other revealing primaries. First, the mid-August thumping of conservative Massachusetts Democratic Gov. Edward King by Kennedy-backed candidate and former Gov. Mike Du-

kakis. Second, the mid-September defeat of Reagan-tainted, Mondale-endorsed New York City Mayor Ed Koch in the Democratic gubernatorial primary to Kennedy-praised Mario Cuomo. In both races the Kennedy-supported candidates were able to spark some approximation of an old-model FDR coalition of labor, minorities, the disadvantaged and in some cases farmers.

Tapping the same constituencies as the LaRouche vote, Kennedy strategists have contoured a phony anti-austerity theme of "jobs and security"; and when Kennedy agent Tip O'Neill proposed new makework job legislation, the frightened White House immediately agreed to support it. While the O'Neill bill passed in the September House Supplemental Appropriations Bill, on Sept. 29 it failed as part of the Senate Supplemental Appropriations bill, gathering just 27 votes. Kennedy charged that the Reagan White House had covertly lobbied against the "jobs" bill and that he, Kennedy, would not rest until the measure passed.

### **The dissembling of the White House**

White House advisors have kept the full political shock of the new polls and the mass anti-austerity outburst from the disturbed President, convincing him, according to White House sources that he has one year's leeway in turning around the U.S. economy if he wants to run for a second term. The President has been told that even a significant set of November losses can be blamed on Republicans in Congress, as distinct from the White House.

Meanwhile, Vice-President George Bush and his followers have moved to create distance between themselves and the President's "Reaganism." In addition, Bush recently sent his "regrets" for a scheduled speaking engagement in tribute to Ray Donovan on Oct. 13. Labor Secretary Donovan is a favorite of the President. In addition, Bush operative Jim Baker is reliably rumored to be leaving the administration after the November electoral catastrophe; the word is that Baker aide Dick Darman will join him for the purpose of setting up a 1984 Bush presidential bid.

According to Washington intelligence sources, after the November disaster, control of the administration is scheduled to move under the full control of Secretary of State George Shultz and his confidante Henry Kissinger. Kissinger surrogate David Abshire, director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown, now a secret consultant to the National Security Council, and according to White House sources "thought of very highly there," is the rumored replacement William Clark as the President's National Security Adviser. Clark in turn will replace Baker as Chief of Staff. White House officials hypothesize that his power will outstrip his predecessors' because both White House Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver and White House Counselor Edwin Meese are both reported to be leaving by year's end. Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis of Pennsylvania will be asked after November to pull off a miracle after he replaces

Richard Richards at the Republican National Committee.

### **Betrayals and desertions**

Only a minority of Reagan's original "libertarian" New Right coalition continues to support the President. On the basis of a series of deals concluded this summer between Kissinger and William F. Buckley, the Buckylys, along with the British-run Heritage Foundation and Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, are promoting the Shultz-Kissinger takeover, while ostensibly defending Reagan. On Sept. 28 Jeffrey Hart, editor of Buckley's *National Review*, took to the pages of the Unification Church's *Washington Times* to urge that all conservatives promote Reagan for a second term. (On June 24, Hart had used the same vehicle to promote Henry Kissinger for Secretary of State.) Also, the Moonies themselves editorialized last month that Reagan is the only salvation for the New Right.

Rebellion against the White House mounted in late August and September from both Jesse Helms- and Kemp-centered elements of the New Right. Helms, who I've learned is now seriously considering running for President in 1984, has all but broken with the White House. Sources close to him say that Reagan's capitulation to tax demands by the Bank for International Settlements, the non-stop administration appointment of Kissinger people, and alleged White House desertion of "sacred" New Right social issues of school prayer, anti-abortion, and so forth have led up to the break. The Helms-White House split reached a crescendo on Sept. 24 when Senator Helms failed to get enough votes for cloture of liberal filibuster on the issue of school prayer. Helms charged the White House with sabotage while Reagan personally attacked Helms for mishandling the matter.

This open rift symptomized a much larger break with the White House by New Right "social issues" activists; this important electoral element of the old Reagan coalition is now expected to gather around Helms or break into potentially violent radical action groups. But their electoral clout compared to the new "anti-austerity" momentum is marginal. At a recent school prayer rally in Washington, D.C. advertised by its promoters to attract 10,000 people, only several hundred materialized.

More remarkable than the Helms break with the White House, was the total split with Reagan engineered by Rep. Jack Kemp on Sept. 28. Kemp along with other renegade supply-siders, joined an anti-Reagan economic front including Ted Kennedy, Tip O'Neill and Senate Minority Leader Robert Byrd. Warning the President that "jobs are the key issue" and that Reagan-Volcker monetarism will lead to an economic and electoral disaster, Kemp signed on to a Kennedy hoax, the anti-Volcker Joint Congressional Resolution. Behind the Kemp-Kennedy "anti-austerity" posture is a dirtier deal among the forces who gave the country Joe McCarthy and Roy M. Cohn; no real economic recovery program can be expected from this quarter.