

idea about what it takes to keep power in the world limited and balanced. It can't solve the "race" question, for it fails to see that people rise or fall as separate entities — given, of course, the equal protection of laws. So what is it that makes the dead corpus of "liberal" ideas persist? Fashion is what does it, and only a counter-fashion will oust the "liberals."

What Bill Buckley did in his campaign was to sneak into the affections of men in subordinate but important mass communication positions. He didn't win the top editors of the big journals or the bosses of the networks. But, by being one jump ahead of anybody else in his all-around verbal flair and in his control of his various subject matters, Bill literally forced the political scribes to abandon their stereotypes of what a conservative candidate must say and do.

He Clearly Stood for Something

The tip-off on the campaign to come was Bill's experience at the famous Holy Name Society Communion Breakfast, where he made a speech to some 6,000 New York policemen. A reporter, sure in his mind that Buckley must have said what any stereotyped right-winger would have said, missed the true inwardness of the Buckley talk, and what the reporter turned in to his

city desk got "escalated" into a defense of the Selma, Alabama, police after it had been passed through a few headlines and been copied by other newspapers. Luckily a tape of the talk existed, and Bill Buckley exploited the tape. The corrections never did catch up with the distortions, but the reporters began to get the idea: Bill Buckley could be a danger to anyone who might trifle with his utterances. Only once before in the history of modern controversy had the "liberals" encountered someone who could fight back from the record. This was when Whittaker Chambers flummoxed his fashionable opposition by actually producing the so-called Pumpkin Papers.

So Bill Buckley went into the mayoral campaign with a growing reputation for effectiveness. He was someone to be feared. When it turned out that he could also be fun, he began to steal the show from John Lindsay (who talked platitudes) and Abe Beame (who spouted statistics). The campaign ended with the tail wagging the dog, which, for headline purposes, was almost as good as a man biting a dog.

Once he had achieved a fashionable break-through, Bill showed to an increasing audience that good prose could be used to set forth good ideas. The Conservative position papers, reprinted as part of

the text of *The Unmaking of a Mayor*, will be mined for many months to come by people who are serious about schools and housing and smog and the water supply and welfare and narcotics control and crime prevention and all the other subjects that bedevil our big urban conglomerations.

A Growing Political Force

The conservatives and the libertarians are still fashionably written off when it comes to talking about the future of U. S. politics. Buckley, so it is pointed out, missed his primary objective, which was to keep Lindsay from winning. In the New York State elections of 1966 the Conservative Party, running an upstate college dean, Paul Adams, for governor, failed to defeat Governor Nelson Rockefeller. And, in elections throughout the nation, "liberal" Republicans won in Pennsylvania, in Michigan, and in Illinois.

But the movement of ideas goes on. In both the Buckley 1965 campaign for mayor of New York City and in the 1966 campaign for governor of New York the Conservative Party finished ahead of the Liberal Party, which means that the Conservative swing vote is becoming more important than the "liberal" swing vote. And, in the nation as a whole, so-called liberals such as Governor George

Romney of Michigan and Senator Chuck Percy of Illinois are turning to supporters of "independent sector" thinking such as Richard Cornuelle for practical solutions to welfare and home ownership problems. From the standpoint of economic theory, there is only a hairline difference between a Romney in Michigan (an inordinate admirer of the first Henry Ford) and a Ronald Reagan in California. Both are advocating an approach to economics that would tend to get the State off people's backs.

A Changing Trend

The measure of Bill Buckley's success both as an editor and as a political candidate is that very recent events have made the last pages of his book sound entirely too pessimistic. "I greatly regret the prospective decline of the GOP," writes Mr. Buckley, "because the alternative is likely to be a congeries of third parties, adamantly doctrinaire, inadequately led, insufficiently thoughtful, improvidently angry, self-defeating sectarian." But need it turn out that way? Isn't it more likely that the next two years will demonstrate the complete sterility of the Great Society? Money from Washington won't solve John Lindsay's problems in New York City. Rent control won't build