



Democratic National Convention

CIMUN XV

November 29th - December 2nd



1. Creating a Policy Platform

“We are summoned, therefore, to a fateful task—to ensure that the turmoil of change will prove to be the turmoil of birth instead of decay.” - The 1968 Democratic Party Platform.¹

1.1. Executive Summary

The war in Vietnam, and other political debates, have divided our country. Dissatisfaction with our party leader is widespread, even within our own party. So now, at this historic upcoming election, we will have the rare opportunity to organize the Democratic Party to satisfy our voters or our party members. We will have to make sacrifices, that is for sure, but what sacrifices are wise and which ones are reckless? We do not know. How far is too far from our status quo when rebranding ourselves for this new age? Only one thing we know for sure: the party must survive at all costs.

1.2. Historical Background

1.2.1. Party Platforms

A party platform can be defined as “a set of principles, goals, and strategies designed to address pressing political issues.” Each issue is described in its own “plank” of the platform.² Political platforms are important for voters because it gives them a sense of what the party considers the most important issues, and how they aspire to solve those problems.

Most of the times, these political platforms tend to be vague in nature so as to appeal to the widest possible spectrum of the electorate. They often contain something for almost everyone, at the expense of a clear and specific vision because, although driven by ideology, parties bow down to the practical need to build coalitions to win elections.³ In American politics, candidate-centered campaigns have developed as the norm, and this has directly impacted how vague the platform is written. Most candidates will campaign under a party label to invite people to vote for them—even if those voters know nothing else about that candidate but their party affiliation—but will rarely fully agree with what the party believes. Platforms have to be vague so candidates “can run at varying distances from the platform without having to directly contradict

¹ <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29604>

² <http://www.crf-usa.org/election-central/political-parties-platforms.html>

³ https://www.laits.utexas.edu/txp_media/html/part/print_part.html

it.”⁴ This vagueness, in turn, benefits the party because it creates a market-like system within the establishment. Each new electoral cycle tests how appealing certain ideas are to voters. The way people respond to these ideas helps determine which policies get incorporated into the platform and which are left out. Parties can be thought of as organisms that adapt to their surroundings to stay alive. For example, the 1876 Democratic Platform characterized Asian immigration as “the incursions of a race not sprung from the same great parent rock.” By 1960, Democrats embraced immigration and sought to end quotas based on race and ethnicity.⁵

According to one expert, a platform “provides the coalition members, and wannabe members, something to bargain over. Without the document, the process of defining the values, policy intentions and members of a party would be even messier than it already is.”⁶

1.2.2. History of the Democratic Party

The Anti-Federalists, the political group that would evolve to become what we now know as the Democratic Party, was founded by Thomas Jefferson in the 1790s as an opposition group to Alexander Hamilton’s Federalists. The Anti-Federalists believed the United States should be a country of yeomen farmers with strong state governments. It was in 1828, when Andrew Jackson won the presidency by a landslide after expanding democracy to all white men regardless of property ownership, that Jackson’s supporters argued they (and not the old elites) represented the popular will of the country and started calling themselves the Democratic Party.

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By the mid-19th century, the Democratic Party had most of its support base in agricultural, southern states. Democrats insisted new states should be allowed to be slave states, and a new political party, The Republican Party, sprung up in opposition. After the civil war, Democrats promised to limit federal government intervention in their states and became, because of it, effectively the only political party in the south (aided by the intimidation and suppression of black votes).⁸

⁴ O’Donnell, Lawrence. *PLAYING WITH FIRE: the 1968 Election and the Transformation of American Politics*. Penguin Books, 2018. page 333

⁵<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/2016-election/conventions/party-platform-evolution/>

⁶<https://theconversation.com/what-is-a-party-platform-and-why-do-candidates-often-ignore-them-62595>

⁷<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVWiAArXYpE>

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6R0NvVr164>

The Democratic Party changed the most in the 20th century. By 1912, when Woodrow Wilson was elected president, the party had begun to move in a populist direction, and had adopted ideas from progressive parties and institutions to regulate business and improve the life of the common citizens. In 1920, women gained the right to vote with ratification of the 19th amendment to the constitution, which Wilson supported.⁹ At the time, the Republican Party was in power, and under them, a handful of corporations and individuals (often referred to as “robber barons”) had grown enormously rich and powerful. Wilson putting into action the new democratic progressivist agenda impelled the idea that the Democratic Party was the home for Progressives and the Republican Party was the party of business. Franklin Roosevelt sealed the image of the Democrats being the party of government activism in the 1930’s when he counterattacked the Great Depression with the New Deal. Social Security, the G.I. Bill, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation were created during his administration.

By the mid-20th century, the Democratic party was split on the issue of race. By 1964, when the Senate voted on the anti-segregation civil rights act (a law that “prohibited segregation on the grounds of race, religion or national origin [in] all places of public accommodation, including courthouses, parks, restaurants, theaters, sports arenas, and hotels, [and] barred race, religious, national origin and gender discrimination by employers and labor unions”¹⁰), the progressive reformers had gained an upper hand over the anti-civil rights Democrats. The change can be attributed to Hubert Humphrey’s efforts during the 1948 national convention. Southern party elders did not want to include more than a vague call for the protection of all citizens’ rights in the platform. Hubert Humphrey and other northerners “fought for the adoption of a much stronger civil rights plank, and when the platform committee voted them down, Humphrey took the fight to the convention floor.”¹¹ He said the U.S. could not support democracy abroad while denying it at home and linked the goals of the minority plank to the party’s ideals. The minority plank was adopted and for the first time ever, the Democratic Party was not only the party of progressivism and governmental action but also of civil rights. Lyndon B. Johnson carried on with this trend by completing the unfinished work of Kennedy’s New Frontier under the name the Great Society. He declared a “War on Poverty” by creating

⁹<https://www.democrats.org/about/our-history>

¹⁰ <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-act>

¹¹<https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2018/07/07/years-ago-mayor-humphrey-changed-democratic-party/yOsHlbiY9QkoyCv4fsVlfM/story.html>

Medicare, the Omnibus Housing Act, the Wilderness Protection Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and The National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities.¹² Southern Democrats disapproved of the party's shift and began voting Republican.

1.2.2. The Democratic National Committee

"The Democratic National Committee, or DNC, was created during the Democratic National Convention of 1848," according to the party. "For 167 years, it has been responsible for governing the Democratic Party, and is the oldest continuing party committee in the United States."¹³ The DNC is tasked with planning the Democratic National Convention—a convention held every four years with the goal to adopt a party platform and nominate a candidate for the position of president and vice president—and to do so is divided into smaller committees: the Rules Committee decides the rules of the convention and how delegations and individual delegates may vote at the convention, the Credentials Committee decides who gets to serve as delegates and why, and the Platform Committee produces the policy document known as the Party Platform.¹⁴

In recent times, the DNC has enjoyed a period of relative stability. In 1964, the incumbent president easily defeated in the primaries the segregationist Governor George Wallace. The only turmoil faced that year was when Joseph Rauh "challenged the credentials of the segregated Mississippi delegation."¹⁵ He was the lawyer for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and its black delegates and believed it was wrong for there to be an all-white delegation. In the end, the all-white delegation did not lose their credentials but Hubert Humphrey did promise Rauh that in 1968, segregated delegations would not be allowed. Planks are first voted in the Platform Committee. If the vote is close enough, then the Platforms are taken to the convention floor to be debated on and then voted.¹⁶

1.2. Current Situation

¹² <http://www.ushistory.org/us/56e.asp>

¹³ <https://www.democrats.org/organization/the-democratic-national-committee>

¹⁴ O'Donnell, 325

¹⁵ O'Donnell, 329

¹⁶ O'Donnell, 344

1968 is a year of crossroads. The Democratic party has developed factions within itself. On one hand, the prolonged Vietnam War has left American voters dissatisfied with the institutions in power. The New Left and the counterculture youth (who is now coming of age and ready to vote) agree with Eugene McCarthy's vision of stopping the war at all costs. On the other hand, the party's new position on civil rights has alienated voters from the Solid South.¹⁷ They agree with Governor George Wallace's pledge of "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever."¹⁸ In the middle lies the establishment: Lyndon B. Johnson's party. These Democrats, headed by the President and the Vice President, Hubert Humphrey, both support the war in Vietnam and support the civil rights movement and have to decide what path will ensure the survival of the party.

In light of McCarthy's big win in the New Hampshire primary where he won more than 40 percent of the vote against Johnson¹⁹, he will surely be a key player during the National Convention. It is likely he will advocate for a peace plank. Adopting a peace plank would bring in the anti-war and the youth vote, and link the Democratic Party to the effort of stopping what is considered by many an immoral war. The downside to this is a peace plank could set McCarthy up as the nomination. "Nominating McCarthy would hand over control of the party to the McCarthyites. Party regulars could lose status at the local level. Incumbents everywhere would surely face primary challenges modeled after the successful McCarthy insurgency. Power would shift to a younger generation. For many delegates, that could make 1968 their last convention."²⁰ A peace plank would mean the party has accepted LBJ's position on the war is wrong, and those campaigning under the pro-war stance would be forced to either turn their back on the president and shift left or reject the peace plank. The plank issue comes down to choosing unity



¹⁷O'Donnell, 324

¹⁸<https://www.npr.org/2013/01/14/169080969/segregation-forever-a-fiery-pledge-forgiven-but-not-forgotten>

¹⁹ <https://blog.oup.com/2016/04/lbj-drops-out-1968/>

²⁰O'Donnell, 327

in the party or upholding tradition. If the Platform Committee were to lean towards creating a peace plank, to get adopted, this plank would have to feel more establishment than insurgent.²¹ Any direct criticism of Johnson would force loyal establishment members into a defensive position and vote against it.

Voting for a peace plank or a pro-civil rights plank would lose the south. Voting for a peace plank would link the Democratic party to antiwar movements such as the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (MOBE), Youth International Party (Yippies), the Coalition for an Open Convention (COC) and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Most of these groups are lead by radical pacifists or the counterculture youth. Their belief that societal values have to be rethought does not fit with our older voters who approve of upholding tradition and segregation, or believe a peace plank is appeasing the communists.²² Such planks would mean losing the south but gaining the black vote. In 1964, right before the election, “the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [...] estimated that the black electorate could number as many as 12 million. In the end, that was about how many turned out, according to census data compiled after the fact: Turnout reached 58.5 percent for an estimated black population of 20.7 million.”²³ The Party Platform must decide what plank would bring the most votes to the party and what group of people will be left on its own.

1.4. Bloc Positions

1.4.1. Peace Plank

The “peace plank” will likely call for an unconditional stop to all bombing in North Vietnam, a South Vietnamese government that recognizes the Viet Cong, and a “swift conclusion” to the war.²⁴ A high-profile coalition in favor of a peace plank could include a lineup of antiwar regulars including Ohio Congressman John Gilligan, McCarthy staff, and loyal Kennedy family friends—Blair Clark, Joseph Rauh, Frank Mankiewicz, and Ted Sorensen—along with a group of Fulbright’s antiwar senators.²⁵ Each faction will likely push for their own version of the peace plank: Ted Sorensen could advocate for a mild draft that will not scare LBJ or Humphrey, but

²¹O’Donnell 334

²²O’Donnell, 334

²³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/17/upshot/black-turnout-in-1964-and-beyond.html>

²⁴ <https://isreview.org/issue/60/1968-democrats-and-antiwar-movement>

²⁵O’Donnell, 334

McCarthy won't want this as his whole campaign has been based on criticizing LBJ on the war. Richard Goodwin could advocate for a strong statement for peace based on some of McCarthy's²⁶ ideas: "The war in Vietnam has been an enormous cost in human life and in material resources," McCarthy wrote. "It has diverted our energies from pressing domestic problems and impaired our prestige in the world."²⁷ The "peace plank" would be a strategic move to undermine Johnson and Humphrey. Johnson's approval rating has sunk to 36 percent, and support for his handling of Vietnam has plummeted to 26 percent.²⁸ If Humphrey were to run for president instead of LBJ due to his low approval ratings, he would be too late to participate in the primaries. The McCarthy Campaign would see Humphrey as the tool of a rigged system that could hand him the nomination without his running in a single primary²⁹ If Humphrey's delegate lead was the work of party officials unaccountable in any way to the electorate, a peace plank could give McCarthy's anti-war campaign an advantage.

1.4.2. Pro-Vietnam War

The most prominent argument in a Pro-Vietnam War plank is that according to General Creighton Abrams, a bombing halt would increase the enemy's capability by 500 percent. Johnson's plank would argue the peace plank would cost American lives.³⁰ Those in favor of Johnson's plank include Hubert Humphrey, Mayor Richard Daley, and Congressman Hale Boggs.

Johnson has felt no need to soften war policy to help Humphrey and himself win the antiwar crowd. LBJ has insisted his VP sell the Johnson war policy³¹ instead of appealing to uncontested delegates who might vote for a peace plank. In 1964, Hubert Humphrey and Eugene McCarthy were both candidates for the position of vice president.³² Eugene McCarthy declined the offer, but still, some



²⁶O'Donnell, 343

²⁷ <http://press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/465036.html>

²⁸ <https://blog.oup.com/2016/04/lbj-drops-out-1968/>

²⁹O'Donnell, 324

³⁰O'Donnell, 343

³¹O'Donnell, 324

³² <http://www.pulitzer.org/article/hubert-h-humphrey-man-who->

establishment members see the upcoming feud between McCarthy and the Johnson-Humphrey ticket as a petty retaliation for the events that happened in the last election.

Mayor Richard Daley is an important man to appease. Illinois is a swing state with 27 electoral votes. The votes Daley's machine deliver in Chicago often decide the outcome in Illinois. Crossing Daley could mean taking the election away from the Democrats.³³ Daley is ruthless and popular with law-and-order voters who disapprove of protesters and violent manifestations. Daley is unconditionally loyal to Johnson. Although he personally believes in stopping the war in Vietnam, his loyalty to the president is more important.³⁴ The two politicians need each other and have a special bond. Johnson, in his Great Society programs, provided Chicago with millions of dollars that really enabled Daley to turn the city around, In return, Lyndon Johnson, encouraged the myth that Daley had elected Jack Kennedy.³⁵

Additionally, the chairman of the Platform Committee, Congressman Hale Boggs of Louisiana, is an LBJ loyalist ready to shut down the peace plank.³⁶ He and Senator Jennings Randolph of West Virginia, an influential member of the platform committee, have a good relationship with Johnson and are often relied upon with confidential information. Chairman Boggs has the power to deny spots on the platform-drafting committee to leaders proposed by the peace group.³⁷

1.5. Discussion Questions

1. What is the future for the Democratic Party?
2. What voting demographic will bring in more votes to keep the party afloat?
3. Should people be loyal to the establishment or is it more important to follow their own personal morality?
4. What is the best way to end an unpopular war? Escalation or de-escalation?

1.6. Key Terms

³³O'Donnell, 322

³⁴http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1996-09-16/news/9609160088_1_mayor-richard-j-daley-loyalty-president-johnson

³⁵<https://www.wbez.org/shows/eight-fortyeight/taped-conversations-reveal-special-relationship-between-richard-j-daley-and-lyndon-b-johnson/2da1929a-c239-4604-8870-95344e85bd56>

³⁶ O'Donnell, 341

³⁷ O'Donnell, 343

1. Counterculture

- a way of life and set of attitudes opposed to or at variance with the prevailing social norms.

2. Dixiecrats

- A group of Southerners who in 1948 walked out of the party's national convention and ran their own candidate for president on a segregationist States Rights ticket that year.³⁸

3. The Great Society

- a domestic program in the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson that instituted federally sponsored social welfare programs.

4. Minority Plank

- An opposition plank proposed by a small group of politicians with the hope of it gaining popularity and have it voted as the party's official plank.

5. MOBE

- The Spring Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, which became the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, was a coalition of antiwar activists formed in 1967 to organize large demonstrations in opposition to the Vietnam War.

6. New Left

- a radical leftist political movement composed largely of college students and young intellectuals whose goals included racial equality, de-escalation of the arms race, nonintervention in foreign affairs, and other major changes in the political, economic, social, and educational systems.³⁹

7. Party Plank

- any one of the stated principles or objectives comprising the political platform of a party campaigning for election.

8. Party Platform

- a document stating the aims and principles of a political party.

9. Progressivism

- Support for governmental involvement in social reform.

³⁸ <https://www.history.com/topics/democratic-party>

³⁹ <http://www.claremont.org/crb/article/the-old-new-left-and-the-new-new-left/>

10. SDS

- Students for a Democratic Society was a student activist movement in the United States that was one of the main representations of the New Left.

11. Solid South

- the politically united southern states of the US, traditionally regarded as giving unanimous electoral support to the Democratic Party.

12. Yippies

- The Youth International Party was an American radically youth-oriented and countercultural revolutionary offshoot of the free speech and anti-war movements. They employed theatrical gestures, such as nominating a pig as a candidate for President in 1968, to mock the social status quo. They have been described as a highly theatrical, anti-authoritarian and anarchist youth movement of "symbolic politics."

1.7. References

- http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1996-09-16/news/9609160088_1_mayor-richard-j-daley-loyalty-president-johnson
- <https://blog.oup.com/2016/04/lbj-drops-out-1968/>
- <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2018/07/07/years-ago-mayor-humphrey-changed-democratic-party/yOsHlbiY9QkoyCv4fsVlfM/story.html>
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- <http://www.ushistory.org/us/56e.asp>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/2016-election/conventions/party-platform-evolution/>
- <https://www.wbez.org/shows/eight-fortyeight/taped-conversations-reveal-special-relationship-between-richard-j-daley-and-lyndon-b-johnson/2da1929a-c239-4604-8870-95344e85bd56>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVWiAArXYpE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6R0NvVr164>

2. Topic 2 - Arrangements for the August Convention

2.1. Introduction

With the August convention looming in the near future, and the twin chasms of the War in Vietnam and the issue of race and civil rights threatening to split apart the country and the party, it is very important to consider what measures should be taken to ensure the safety and security of the delegates as well as the public image and political power of the Democratic party.

2.2. Historical Background

On October 21, 1967, 100,000 protesters marched on the Pentagon in the first national anti-war protest. They were met with a force of 300 U.S. Marshals and 5,000-6,000 Army troops armed with rifles and bayonets. As the protestors made their way to the Pentagon, and the two groups began to clash, a riot erupted. As both demonstrators and government officials tired, the melee turned into a sit-in, and when the permit expired at midnight, Marshals arrested demonstrators

by the hundreds. 682 people were shoved into makeshift hearing rooms and charged with disorderly conduct.⁴⁰ If they are not afraid of marching on the Pentagon, the International Amphitheater in Chicago certainly will not deter them. A horde of anti-war leftists surrounding the convention could be a disaster and would almost certainly permanently tarnish the reputation of the Democratic Party in the eyes of the nation.⁴¹

The end of segregation and the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, meant to dismantle the policies of the Jim Crow South, stand out as major milestones in the march toward equality, but were a costly political move for the Democratic party. The so-called “long, hot summer of 1967” marked a series of 159 violent race riots in nearly every major city across the United States, including in Chicago.⁴² As a result, President Johnson formed the Kerner Commission to investigate the causes of the riots. In late February 1968, the Kerner Report (officially called the Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders) was released, finding that the predominant cause of the violence was frustration among black Americans at the lack of economic opportunity afforded to them, as well as under-representation in media, law enforcement, and politics.⁴³ Ultimately, they concluded that America was moving toward “two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.”⁴⁴

The ability of a bad convention to doom a presidential candidate cannot be overstated. In 1964, the Republican National Convention saw a media firestorm descend on San Francisco as reporters cornered the delegates and broadcast the division between the right-leaning and moderate conservatives nationally.⁴⁵ Goldwater may have won the nomination, but he went into the general with a damaged persona. Let the '64 RNC serve as a lesson as to how a convention out of control can doom a decent candidate from the outset.

2.2. Current Situation

⁴⁰ <https://www.usmarshals.gov/history/civilian/1967b.htm>

⁴¹

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2018/08/24/a-party-that-had-lost-its-mind-in-1968-democrats-held-one-of-historys-most-disastrous-conventions/?utm_term=.3a1c17b8f19e

⁴² <http://theweek.com/captured/712838/long-hot-summer-1967>

⁴³ <http://www.baystate-banner.com/issues/2008/02/28/news/blackhistory02280890.htm>

⁴⁴ <http://www.eisenhowerfoundation.org/docs/kerner.pdf>

⁴⁵ <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/1964-republican-convention-revolution-from-the-right-915921/>

The Tet Offensive of late January, a complete military disaster for the U.S. and South Vietnamese forces, has led to the rising perception among the American public that the war is unwinnable.⁴⁶ The anti-war left has grown significantly as a result and calls for peace have already empowered primary challenger Eugene McCarthy, whose strong showing of 42 percent in the New Hampshire primary is a clear sign that a very sizable and vocal portion of the party wants an end to the war.⁴⁷ President Johnson, and his re-election campaign, will clearly have to contend with the ball-and-chain of Vietnam.

The civil rights movement is also extremely active. Rampant poverty and racism continue to make life hard for African-Americans. In Memphis, a strike among predominantly African-American sanitation workers is in progress, with demonstrators refusing to separate the racial dimension from the negligence the city has shown them. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., a predominant figure in the movement, is expected to visit Memphis in the coming days.⁴⁸ The power of the civil rights movement, in conjunction with anti-war protesters, to disrupt the convention proceedings cannot be ignored.

Of course, given that the Democratic party doesn't have a paramilitary wing, cooperation and coordination with the Chicago City Council and the Chicago Police Department will be crucial to ensuring that protesters around the hotels and convention center do not turn into rioters. If communication between the DNC and CCC falters, events are likely to get out of hand. Without the support of the CPD, protestors are sure to run wild, and the Republicans will be able to ride their "law and order" platform to the White House. If the CPD aren't reined in, however, a police riot could turn Democratic voters against the party.⁴⁹ Aside from keeping calm outside the convention, precautions must be made to keep the delegates safe. Most of the delegates will be staying in the Conrad Hilton hotel, and their protection is of the utmost priority.

2.4. Discussion Questions

1. What steps should the DNC take to limit potential violence near the convention?

⁴⁶ <http://www.chicago68.com/>

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2018/03/12/eugene-mccarthy-vs-lbj-the-new-hampshire-primary-showdown-that-changed-everything/?utm_term=.0079e5ae86fe

⁴⁸ <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/memphis-sanitation-workers-strike>

⁴⁹

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2018/aug/19/the-whole-world-is-watching-chicago-police-riot-vietnam-war-regan>

2. How can any potential disruptions in the party be confined to the convention floor?
3. How can the DNC coordinate with the Chicago City Council?

2.5. Key Terms

- Tet Offensive
- Anti-War Left
- Long, Hot Summer of 1967
- Kerner Commission / Kerner Report
- International Amphitheater
- Hilton Hotel
- Chicago City Council / Chicago Police Department

2.6. Resources

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3. <http://theweek.com/captured/712838/long-hot-summer-1967>
4. <http://www.baystate-banner.com/issues/2008/02/28/news/blackhistory02280890.htm>
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6. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/1964-republican-convention-revolution-from-the-right-915921/>
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