

tions and the ability to persuade people that those positions are correct. Republicans must neither waiver from their bed-rock positions nor fail to convince a majority that those positions most benefit Californians. Loss of support proves Republicans are doing a poor job of persuading, not that their agenda is wrong. But like a pilot with vertigo in the fog, Republicans try to compensate for their errors by compounding them. Either we pull out of the tailspin now, or we crash.

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SHAWN STEEL

Would Reagan Approve of the Horowitz Plan? Inspired by California Republicans' incredible 1998 losses, David Horowitz analyzed what Republicans do wrong. Strategic failure? Bad message? As Horowitz puts it: Republicans play politics like gentlemen; Democrats play for keeps. Some of my colleagues embrace a suicidal "rather be right than win" mentality.

The battle is for the unwashed Middle. Democrats do better identifying with these voters. The Middle isn't ideological. It reads and thinks little about politics or politicians. Ronald Reagan was able to pierce its ambivalence. California Republicans are not, for three reasons:

1. Republicans often appear insensitive, arrogant, and paternal. When our gubernatorial candidate opposed bilingual education reform, hesitated on fixing affirmative action, and attacked the voters for supporting marijuana decriminalization, he made the Middle suspicious enough to doom Republicans.
2. Democrats swiped popular conservative issues. Few politicians work harder or with such concentrated discipline as Gray Davis. He follows the polls. The Middle wanted a responsive governor, efficient government, an absolute commitment to crime protection, and more disciplined schools. Gray talked the talk.
3. Democrats are more comfortable among minorities. Republicans stage election-year love affairs with minorities only months before voting. Democrats run year-round operations in all minority communities. It's big news if a GOP Assemblymember manages to hire a Vietnamese-speaking assistant. The legislative Democrat-to-Republican ratio in minority staff is 20-to-1: Bustamante, Villaraigosa, Jackie Speier, Kevin Murray, Barbara Lee, Thomas Calderon, and John Chiang were all staffers, trained in the Dems' farm team. Our Party must build beyond the white community. Our minimal 10-year goal must be to gain the allegiance of 70 percent of the Asian community, 50 percent of the Latino community, and 25 percent of the Black community. Also, last year's trends showed highly-educated people and high-income earners, regardless of race, less likely to vote Re-

publican. Republicans alienate if they appear preachy. Republicans' message will inspire conservatives and reach the Middle when they learn to communicate about eliminating the under-class, radically improving schools, creating safe streets in the inner-city, and consistently fighting taxes.

Horowitz reminds us of Reagan's art of political warfare, lessons Republicans have forgotten. Reagan positioned himself as an outsider and a non-politician, with an enormous impact on the Middle. He never appeared angry or hateful, petty or mean-spirited, enjoyed a good, genuine sense of humor, and compromised every day of his life. And yet, he single-handedly defeated the Evil Empire by speaking the truth.

And Reagan ordered his priorities. He defeated the Evil Empire, though it created the world's largest government deficit. He restored military superiority, but at the cost of expanding the welfare state. Defeating communism came first. We should rethink our priorities and communicate to win.

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STEVE BALDWIN

The problem with many 1996 and 1998 Republican California campaigns was not the emergence of the Latino constituency or the rise of union power (which is actually declining). It was weak Republican candidates who allowed themselves to be defined by consultants based exclusively on polling data, focus groups, and the proverbial wet finger in the air. The farther Republicans moved away from being the Party of less taxes, less government, less laws, less infringement of peoples rights and freedoms, the less they were Republican. As Democrats stole and borrowed Republican ideas and Republicans leaned increasingly toward more moderate ("compassionate") stances, the more blurred the voters' eyes became. After all, voters were trying to focus on what the parties stood for, if anything.

Democrat campaign operatives trying to recover the "Reagan Democrats" who had defected in previous presidential elections concocted a Democrat Party shift toward the center — even, incrementally, towards conservatism. They had to, because, under Reagan, the *country* had moved towards conservatism. But the idea of growing the *Republican* Party by making it more liberal is a recipe for disaster especially among people with principle. It is swimming against the Reagan tide, not with it, as the Democrats have been doing.

In practice, for example, a candidate who says he is personally pro-life but running as a pro-abortion to increase his chances of being elected is a liar and should be exposed and defeated, not for being "Pro-Choice," but for being dishonest.

Republicans must become the standard bearers of truth. It

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