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The 1994 U.S. Midterm Elections: Significant Shift or Temporary Turmoil?

The U.S. Democrats suffered a devastating defeat in the 1994 midterm elections. For the first time since 1952, the Republicans won a majority of the seats in both houses of Congress. In the House of Representatives alone, the Democrats lost over 50 seats, the worst result for the party since 1946. Among the losers were some of its most senior and powerful politicians, such as Speaker Thomas S. Foley of Washington, House Ways and Means Committee chairman Dan Rostenkowski of Illinois, and Texas Representative Jack Brooks, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee and a fixture on the Hill since 1952. Other prominent Democratic casualties included Governors Mario Cuomo of New York and Ann Richards of Texas.

No one watching the tallies come in during the early morning of November 9, 1994, could doubt that a power shift of major proportions had taken place. The Republicans were predictably jubilant, one strategist exulting that "60 years of Democratic dominance of American politics, established by Franklin D. Roosevelt, have been effectively ended by two years of Bill Clinton." A respected historian was hardly less dramatic, viewing Election Day as "potentially one of the most important days in 20th century political history." The results could mean, he concluded, that the country is "headed back into a period of Congressional dominance and Presidential weakness such as we had in the late 19th century."¹

The natural disaster metaphors were ubiquitous in the media. Even sophisticated journalists seemed at a loss for words, reduced to using clichés such as "landslide," "earthquake," and

"tidal wave" to describe the outcome. Not only was the catastrophic terminology pervasive, it appeared uniformly inadequate to accurately depict the shock many were feeling. Commentators felt compelled to elaborate, calling it an earthquake "of epic proportions," or a landslide "of historical magnitude." To be sure, the 1994 midterm elections in America were remarkable.

How could the Republicans make such a startling comeback after having lost the 1992 election to Bill Clinton? What accounts for the failure of the Democrats to capitalize on their control over both the legislative and the executive branches of government during 1992-94? And for how long can the GOP realistically expect to maintain its new status as the majority party in American politics? We will explore these questions further after an overview of the 1994 campaign.

The Congressional Campaign

On September 27, 1994, more than three hundred House Republicans – candidates and incumbents – assembled in front of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. for an unusual political event. Standing before twenty-three television cameras, Republican staffers, and incidental tourists, the speakers competed in deriding President Clinton and his Administration, criticizing the institution they had served in for years, and generally declaring the nation on the edge of disaster. Representative Dick Arme of Texas stated that the Congress in which he had served for nine years was "corrupted by absolute power."

His colleague Newt Gingrich of Georgia, a congressman of fifteen years, was no less adamant in his criticism of the powers that be. He painted an apocalyptic picture of America, proclaiming that the nation was in deep trouble with

"twelve-year-olds having babies, fifteen-year-olds killing each other, seventeen-year-olds dying of AIDS, and eighteen-year-olds getting diplomas they can't even read." What was needed to rescue the republic, Gingrich declared, was revolutionary change, meaning the end of the forty-year Democratic control of Congress, the rejection of the policies of the Clinton Administration, and an array of reforms intended to make Congress more accountable.²

Gingrich specified the GOP demands in the form of ten legislative proposals, none of which was new and most of which were controversial. Among them were proposals to cut House committee staff members by a third; impose a three-fifths-majority requirement for the passage of any tax increases; cut spending for welfare programs and discourage teen pregnancy by prohibiting welfare to minor mothers; institute a tough crime package with "effective death penalty provisions"; offer constitutional amendments to mandate a balanced budget and to give the President a legislative line-item veto; and to have a first ever vote on term limits "to replace career politicians with citizen legislators." What was new, however, was the idea to put together these promises in a document called "Contract with America," which all of the assembled Republicans solemnly signed. Such a program had not been presented before in a congressional election.³

The idea of a contract was a team effort conjured up by Gingrich, Armev and Republican pollster Frank Luntz. Before it was presented on the steps of the Capitol, all ten proposals had been thoroughly test-marketed like a new breakfast cereal. Luntz, who established his name recognition by advising the political spoilers of the 1992 campaign, Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan, was instrumental in laying out the campaign strategy. Luntz brought together the most negative and hostile voters he could find to fashion a list of proposals and slogans certain to be popular among the electorate. The assembled voters were asked such questions as: Which issue should be ranked first, stiffer enforcement of the death penalty or welfare cuts? Which cover design would be more of a page-turner? Are party labels so discredited these days that even a GOP

campaign document should not contain the word "Republican"?⁴

To understand the Republican Contract, one must first understand that the GOP of the 1990s is a different party than it was in the 1980s. The policies of the Reagan-Bush era were designed to benefit the traditional Republican constituencies: business and the more affluent in American society. Allowing them to keep more of their money (e.g., in lower business and capital gains taxes) would theoretically encourage them to reinvest in the economy, thus creating the "trickle-down" effect that was the lynchpin of Reaganomics. The failure of trickle-down economics to produce the desired effect, combined with the realities of electoral politics, led this decade's GOP to forgo, temporarily, their historical interest in fiscal matters in favor of a more populist agenda. Recognizing that suburban Americans constitute a majority of the active electorate, the Republican leadership turned their attention to mapping a strategy that would appeal to the interests of these largely white and middle-class voters.

Poll after poll has confirmed the people's dissatisfaction with the "deadlock" and the powers that be in Washington. In the mid-1960s, for instance, no less than 75 percent of those surveyed trusted government to do what is right all or most of the time. Only 19 percent shared this opinion in January, 1994. When asked which power center or actor really controls the federal government in Washington, 57 percent replied "lobbyists and special interests," while only six percent named the President, and 16 percent the Democrats in Congress.⁵ Other polls showed that a mere 13 percent of the American people believed that the national legislature was worthy of respect, and that 63 percent said the country "was off on the wrong track."⁶

In an effort to capitalize on these worries and concerns, the Republicans tried to nationalize the 1994 elections by turning every race, including state and local ones, into a referendum on Bill Clinton. The Contract proved to be an ideal tool for exploiting the populist anger among vast segments of the electorate. Prior to its publication, polls showed that all across the country Republican challengers were beating most Democratic

incumbents no matter how famous or how long they had been in Congress. In Massachusetts, Senator Edward Kennedy had become the epitome of Bloated Washington, running barely ahead of wealthy novice politician Mitt Romney. In Tennessee, incumbent Senator Jim Sasser, chairman of the Budget Committee, was trailing William Frist, a Nashville heart surgeon so new to politics that he had not registered to vote until 1988. In New York, three-term governor Mario Cuomo was threatened by an unknown state senator, George E. Pataki, and in California, Senator Dianne Feinstein ran even with Michael Huffington, a Texas multi-millionaire whose leading idea was that the government should not do anything (leaving it unclear why he wanted to serve in Washington in the first place).⁷

At this stage of the campaign, in late September, it looked as if the GOP were on the verge of reversing former Speaker Tip O'Neill's famous "law" – that all politics is local. The very foundation of O'Neill's dictum – the ability of incumbents to bring pet projects back to their home districts – seemed shaken. President Clinton's approval ratings hovered in the 40-45 percent range, suggesting that he had made few converts after the 1992 election. When the GOP Contract was published, the Democrats welcomed it with open arms, thinking it constituted a major strategic blunder. They saw it as a return to the Reaganite ideas of the 1980s, and as an opportunity for their own candidates to go on the offensive. Clinton himself, in a speech before a working-class audience in Dearborn, Michigan, asked voters to reject going back to "trickle-down economics," i.e., the combination of tax cuts and defense increases that Democrats blamed for running up the national debt from \$1 trillion to \$4 trillion in twelve years. The Democrats believed that the Contract provided their candidates with a chance to shift the national conversation away from the perilous subject of Bill Clinton to a clear-cut choice between two opposing philosophies. In a contest between the discredited policies of the past and their own vision for the future, the Democrats thought that they could reverse the disastrous poll numbers and perhaps even maintain control of Congress.⁸

The problem with this reasoning was, of course, that once the election had effectively become nationalized, there was no way of getting around the fact that the Democrats had effectively controlled Congress for 40 years and that Bill Clinton had been in the White House for two years. If a majority of the eligible voters were in an anti-government mood, intent on blaming Washington for all the nation's ills, they also knew where to vent their anger. One-party government, lately an oddity in the nation's capital, had been given a chance in 1992 and voters were clearly unimpressed. Candidates naturally took note of this fact, turning the election into one of the nastiest in recent memory.

Political ads on television are but one of the indicators of the tone and characteristics of a U.S. campaign, but they are nonetheless important.⁹ During the 1992 New Hampshire primary, candidate Bill Clinton made a TV ad featuring a man unable to pay for heart surgery for his ailing two-year-old son. "There's something wrong," Mr. Clinton said, "with a government that can't open its heart to help a father care for a young child whose heart is already broken." His opponent, President George Bush, ran ads touting his plan for quality schools, job training, and health care for all. In 1994 those kinds of ads, aimed at the compassionate voter and implicitly advocating government activism, were rare to nonexistent. Acutely aware of poll numbers showing that voters were disgusted with the political system, candidates marketed themselves not as compassionate reformers but as tough-minded outsiders.

Senator Ted Kennedy ran attack ads for the first time in his 32-year career, using laid-off workers to criticize the business practices of his Republican opponent. Governor Pete Wilson of California accused his Democratic challenger, Kathleen Brown, of being soft on rapists and child molesters. Florida Republican Jeb Bush, son of the former president, aired ads in which a mother blamed Democratic Governor Lawton Chiles for how long it had taken to execute the murderer of her 10-year-old daughter.¹⁰ It was a given in most of these ads that Washington was bad, the source of flawed values and wrong, if not dangerous, thinking. Local values, on the other hand, were inherently good, particularly

those stemming from an agrarian, small town mindset. The result of all these ads was, in much of the country, a relentlessly grim campaign, leaving commentators worried about the health of the nation's political dialogue.¹¹

As the campaign drew to its close, it looked as if the Democrats were making a last-minute comeback. A mid-October survey of registered voters had found that 52 percent were more likely to vote for a GOP candidate in the coming elections, whereas only 40 percent said that they would back a Democrat. About a week before Election Day, however, another poll indicated that the Democrats had bounced back and had a 49-46 percent edge over their opponents. Tony Coelho, former congressman and special adviser to the Democratic National Committee, was confident that the party's strategy was working. "This was looking like a blowout," he said in late October, "but it's now a contest and still may turn into a more normal year."¹² "Normal" in Coelho's terms meant that the Democrats could hold onto Congress and limit losses to traditional off-year levels, i.e., about four seats in the Senate and 15-25 in the House. Party activists were further encouraged by a late boost in President Clinton's approval ratings. In a final eight-day swing around the country the president campaigned vigorously for candidates in tight races by lambasting the Republican Contract and the party's "radical attack on Social Security."¹³

The November Elections

Mr. Clinton's efforts were to no avail. His party's strategy proved to be flawed at best, futile at worst. The attempts to use the Republican platform as a weapon against the opposition's candidates failed. In the 435 House elections and 33 Senate contests, voters responded by giving the Republicans a resounding victory.¹⁴ One simple fact says it all. While Democratic incumbents lost virtually across the board, not a single Republican incumbent in any House, Senate, or governor's race was defeated. In House contests, the GOP achieved victory in 52 races against Democratic incumbents or for open seats formerly held by Democrats. In addition, the Re-

publicans won 16 open House seats formerly held by their own party, leaving them with a total of 230 seats as opposed to the Democrats' 204 (one House member is an Independent, Bernard Sanders of Vermont). The results left the Democratic president with no option but to engage in, for the first time since 1948, a period of cohabitation with a Republican Congress.

The Republican gains came in every region of the country, but they were particularly spectacular in the South. Nineteen of the 52 House seats Republicans won came in 13 Southern states, the 11 states of the old Confederacy plus Kentucky and Oklahoma. In 1990, Democrats in those states outnumbered Republicans in the House of Representatives by 83 to 46. Now, by a clear 73 to 64 margin, Republicans outnumber Democrats, giving the GOP majority status among Southern congressional members for the first time since 1872. The shift that began during the Eisenhower Administration and gathered momentum under Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan is now complete. The conservative voters of the South, who had traditionally cast their votes for the Democrats, have now switched party on a grand scale. Today Republicans hold fewer House seats in their ancestral home, the Midwest, than they do in the South, a region in which they were largely irrelevant for the better part of a century.

Georgia is perhaps the ultimate example of the Republican tide. In the beginning of the 1990s, its Congressional delegation included nine Democrats – eight white and one black – and only one Republican, the man who was to become the next Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich. After a 1992 Congressional redistricting, the state had seven Democrats and four Republicans. Now, Georgia has seven Republicans and four Democrats, three of whom are black and one white. Similarly, today there are Congressional delegations in Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and South Carolina where Republicans outnumber Democrats roughly two to one. There are multiple reasons for this dramatic turnover, including the complex and changing currents of culture, values, and racial composition. Another factor is Congressional redistricting,

Table 1. How Groups Divided in the Vote for the U.S. House of Representatives in the 1994 elections.

% of the 1994 total		Democratic %	Republican %
79	White	42	58
13	Black	88	12
5	Hispanic	70	30
1	Asian	*	*
49	Men	46	54
51	Women	54	46
5	Not a high school graduate	68	32
22	High school graduate	52	48
32	Some college education	47	53
22	College graduate	45	55
19	Postgraduate education	54	46
Standard of living is ...			
21	Getting better	66	34
55	Staying the same	50	50
23	Getting worse	37	63
Today's vote for House ...			
28	Was in support for Clinton	95	5
31	Was against Clinton	7	93
38	Has nothing to do with Clinton	52	48
18	Liberals	82	18
48	Moderates	58	42
34	Conservatives	21	79
35	Republicans	7	93
24	Independents	44	56
41	Democrats	90	10
Voted in 1992 for ...			
45	Clinton	87	13
37	Bush	11	89
12	Perot	33	67
The country is ...			
37	Going in the right direction	76	24
59	Off on the wrong track	33	67

*Insufficient data.

which has facilitated the election of black representatives in the Democratic Party but also helped to re-create the GOP as the party of the white South.

In the Senate, which the Republicans have led for only 10 of the 62 years since 1932, the result was a net gain for the party of eight seats, giving it a 53-47 majority.¹⁵ The GOP won all nine open Senate seats (those where incumbents were retiring), but they beat only two Democratic incumbents who sought re-election, Senators Jim Sasser of Tennessee and Harris Wofford of Pennsylvania. Wofford was defeated by Rick Santorum, a lawyer and Republican congressman who at the age of 36 became the youngest member of the Senate. There were a few bright spots for the Democrats, including Senator Charles S. Robb's defeat of conservative GOP candidate Oliver North in Virginia and Ted Kennedy's come-from-behind victory in Massachusetts. Dianne Feinstein also held on, although narrowly, to her seat in California. However, Republicans more than offset those results with victories in Maine, Ohio, Michigan, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Wyoming, Missouri, and Arizona. Of the 22 Senate seats in the deep South, the Republicans now hold 14 – a change of historic proportions.

Exit polls laid bare the scale of the GOP triumph. Republicans scored their biggest gains among independents and male voters who favored the GOP's candidates in much higher proportions than they have in years. Fifty-six percent of those who identified themselves as Independents voted for Republicans, whereas 44 percent voted for Democrats. People who voted for Ross Perot in 1992 backed Republicans by a two-to-one margin. Among men 54 percent chose the Republican candidate for House, while 46 percent voted Democratic; the figures were reversed for women, however, leaving an eight-point gap between men and women in voting for House candidates. Since 1980, men have consis-

Data were collected by Mitofsky International based in questionnaires completed by 5,260 voters leaving polling places throughout the country on Election Day.

Source: *The New York Times*, November 10, 1994, p. B4.

tently been more likely to vote Republican, but the 1994 gender gap is the largest measured in the past eight Congressional elections.

The Republican Party also drew significantly from suburban voters, who now hold the key to political power. In the three previous elections white voters split evenly between the two parties. In 1994, however, almost six in ten whites voted for the Republican candidate, giving the GOP a 16-point edge among the racial group that constitutes 84 percent of the electorate. Black voters continued to vote overwhelmingly Democratic, but they represent only 11 percent of the electorate (see table 1).¹⁶ What these post-election surveys demonstrate is the erosion of the Democratic middle-class base, and that the party faces an arduous task if it is to reclaim its majority status in 1996.

The Democrats' election debacle extended to the statehouses across the nation, where the GOP won a majority of governorships for the first time since 1970. The old gubernatorial balance of power was Democrats 29, Republicans 19 and Independents 2. After November 8, Republicans hold the governorship of 30 states, Democrats have 19, and an Independent has one (Governor Angus King of Maine). Republicans seized Democratic-held governorships in New York, Texas, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico, and Wyoming, while they retained California, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Minnesota, states with large electoral votes that are crucial for the outcome of presidential elections. Not since 1968 have seven of the country's eight largest states been led by Republican governors. Among major states, only Florida remained in Democratic hands, although Lawton Chiles held on by only a razor-thin margin. State legislatures, furthermore, which had been predominantly Democratic since the 1930s, became almost half Republican in 1994. The GOP picked up over 450 seats in state legislatures nationwide, thereby shifting a comfortable 64-31 lead for the Democrats to a narrow 49-46 margin (with three ties and one unicameral legislature).¹⁷

The voters' frustration and impatience with entrenched politicians also showed in the results of the innumerable ballot initiatives around the

country. For example, the people of seven more states voted in favor of term limits for members of Congress. Most of the proposals set a maximum of two terms for U.S. Senators and three for House members.¹⁸ Twenty-two states have now voted to impose term limits on Federal lawmakers, despite several questions about the legality of such restrictions.¹⁹ In addition, Georgians voted to establish one of the nation's toughest criminal laws, mandating life in prison for two-time violent felons. And in what was the most publicized ballot measure of all, Californians overwhelmingly approved a new law cutting off most public services (including nonemergency medical treatment) to illegal immigrants. The initiative, called Proposition 187, passed by a margin of three to two despite protests from minority groups and civil libertarians who feared that such a ban would increase discrimination against ethnic minorities.²⁰

Projections showed that for the first time since 1970, more Republicans than Democrats voted in the midterm elections. Voter turnout was nearly 39 percent, up from 36.5 percent in 1990 and the highest off-year voting since 40 percent of eligible voters cast ballots in 1982. These are hardly impressive numbers, however. Of the 260 million or so people who live in the United States, only about 133 million are registered to vote; and of those 133 million people, only about 50 million actually voted on Election Day. That means about one in five – or roughly 20 percent of the eligible electorate – voted Republican, with slightly less than one in five voting Democratic. Three out of five voters thus stayed at home, an ominous fact which does not bode well for either of the major parties.²¹

What Do the Elections Mean?

How can the electoral outcome be explained? Traditional economic explanations no longer suffice. The U.S. under Bill Clinton has experienced high economic growth, low inflation and unemployment, and a falling federal budget deficit. Less than two weeks prior to the election the Commerce Department reported that gross domestic product grew at an annual rate of 3.4

percent in the third quarter, making it the strongest annual performance in a decade.²² Such economic realities normally favor the party in government. Not so this time.²³

Other explanations are thus needed. There is no apparent shortage of them. They range from those focusing on widespread voter disgust with government to the plights of economically insecure Americans, who are easy targets for anyone promising to put more money in their pockets through big tax cuts. Perhaps the most common explanation is the one which views the GOP's electoral surge as a repudiation of President Clinton and an endorsement of the party's election platform. This is a popular thesis among conservatives, who argue that Clinton has been too liberal, abandoning his moderate "New Democrat" proposals in favor of an old Democrat, "big government" agenda. In particular, they have mentioned his support for gay rights and the failed health care plan as examples of the gulf between a White House awash in liberal dogma and traditional middle class values.²⁴

The problem with this line of reasoning is that it puts too much emphasis on ideology. Exit polls do not indicate that most voters were moved by purely ideological factors. Instead, voters blamed a host of factors for the failures in solving the nation's problems. In fact, more voters said that special interest groups, Republicans in Congress and Democrats in Congress were at fault than the Clinton Administration. Although voters clearly wanted to send a stern message to lawmakers in Washington, there is scant support for the argument that they were endorsing the GOP agenda in the process. Surveys show that the overwhelming majority of voters had neither heard of the Republican Contract, nor had they relied on any of its provisions in making their choices.²⁵

A more plausible explanation, we believe, is that voters rejected the Democrats less for ideological reasons than for the perceived inability of the party to govern effectively even when it controlled the White House and both Houses of Congress. As Benjamin Barber has argued, many of Mr. Clinton's problems during his first two years in office arose from the inability of the Democratic Party to control its members in an

era when candidates are individual political entrepreneurs and can get re-elected without the help of an incumbent president. "Party loyalty among politicians and party identification among voters have reached an all-time low," Barber correctly notes. Consequently, Clinton could not get his own party in Congress to pass health care reform or campaign finance reform, both of which were vital parts of his 1992 election platform. Clinton was arguably more successful in passing legislation concerning crime and free trade (NAFTA), for instance, but he could have achieved neither without Republican support. Apparently, the failures of his Administration outweighed the successes in the voters' minds.²⁶

In addition, the Republicans ran a much stronger campaign than the Democrats and fielded many attractive candidates for offices from coast to coast. The GOP leadership succeeded brilliantly in framing the elections as a referendum on what was wrong with government. Once it had managed to set the agenda, with feeble initial opposition from the governing party, the Democrats were in trouble. Democratic incumbents, some of whom had been in Congress so long that their desk chairs were form-fitted to their bottoms, proved ideal targets for aggressive Republican challengers.

Equally important is the fact that in 1994, for one of the few times since World War II, Republicans often fielded better campaigners, particularly in key seats. For the first time ever, they had candidates on the ballot in every Congressional district. Compare this with the Democrats, who did not field any candidates in 36 districts. And in many races, the best potential Democratic candidates chose not to run. The ultimate paradox of the 1994 elections, then, is that the party whose core philosophy is opposition to government now controls much of the government at every level.²⁷

We would also like to point out an economic factor frequently overlooked in the discussions of growth, low inflation, and low unemployment cited at the beginning of this section. While national economic figures concerning inflation and unemployment have looked encouraging for some time, average real per capita income in the

United States has been stagnant for nearly two decades. As the wealthiest Americans became even wealthier during the 1980s and early 1990s, their incomes inevitably raised the average figure. Those in the middle and lower classes, however, have been losing ground.²⁸ This grim fact is reflected in exit polls, where six out of ten voters worried that the economy "is in bad shape."²⁹

The demands of global competition have led to extensive corporate downsizing, and the Information Age shift from manufacturing to services has resulted in an entire class of threatened workers.³⁰ Americans are working harder, but feeling less and less secure. The assumption, born in the economic growth of the post-war decades, that a family's circumstances would improve with each subsequent generation is in real jeopardy for the first time.³¹ No doubt such concerns influenced voters at the ballot box.

A New Era of Instability

When an election of this magnitude takes place, politicians and pundits alike often go to the history books in search of a fitting parallel. Has anything like it ever happened before? Yes, it has. Some Republicans have taken to comparing 1994 to 1894 when the GOP, in a period of virtual economic collapse, gained control of Congress and did not let go until 1930. Democrats, on the other hand, prefer the analogue of 1946, another midterm election in which they lost 54 seats in the House and 13 in the Senate. Only two years later, President Truman and the Democrats won an astonishing 75 seats, the largest turnaround in modern Congressional history.³²

We find these parallels neither particularly relevant nor convincing, reflecting as they do more a wish for historical antecedent than an exercise in serious analysis. It appears, however, that the old Democratic coalition, based on urban ethnic machines, minorities, labor unions, and the Southern vote is gone. But it is still unclear whether it has been replaced by a new Republican majority, capable of governing the country for a decade or more. It may well be that neither party is strong or cohesive enough these days to put together a lasting governing coalition,

thereby opening up the possibility for a new independent candidate in the 1996 presidential contest.

The 1994 elections, as John Judis has pointed out, are likely to usher in an era of more instability and greater political turbulence in the United States: "Both parties are likely to remain in the minority while more and more Americans cast about among third parties or abandon politics altogether."³³

Erik Åsard – Barbara L. Nicholson

Notes

1. R.W. Apple Jr., "How Lasting a Majority?," *The New York Times*, November 10, 1994, p. 1. Quotes from William Kristol, conservative activist who heads the "Project for the Republican Future," and from historian Michael Beschloss.
2. Michael Kelly, "Clinton's Escape Clause," *The New Yorker*, October 24, 1994, pp. 42-43 (quotes).
3. Ibid.; "The Republicans: New Majority's Agenda: Substantial Changes May Be Ahead," *The New York Times*, November 11, 1994, p. A10 (quotes). The Contract was also published in the popular magazine *TV Guide*.
4. Michael Weisskopf, "Republicans Try to Harness the Power of Pique," *International Herald Tribune*, October 28, 1994, p. 3.
5. Kevin Phillips, *Arrogant Capital: Washington, Wall Street, and the Frustration of American Politics* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1994), pp. 6-8.
6. "Wireless File," USIS, American Embassy, Stockholm, October 19, 1994, p. 2; David S. Broder, "Clinton, on a Limb, Invites Comparisons With Reagan," *International Herald Tribune*, October 13, 1994, p. 3. Richard L. Berke, "U.S. Voters Cynical and Dispirited," *International Herald Tribune*, October 11, 1994, p. 3.
7. R.W. Apple Jr., "Prospects 'Bleak,' Democrats Concede," *International Herald Tribune*, October 3, 1994, p. 3; Kelly, "Clinton's Escape Clause," pp. 44-46; David E. Rosenbaum, "No Clinton Waltz in Tennessee Race," *International Herald Tribune*, October 19, 1994, p. 3; Stephen Engelberg, "Huffington, the Outsider, Seldom Attracted Raves In His Earlier Ventures," *The New York Times*, October 29, 1994, p. 9.

8. Kelly, "Clinton's Escape Clause," pp. 44-50; Broder, "Clinton, on a Limb, Invites Comparison With Reagan," p. 3.

9. For a recent analysis and assessment, see Darrell M. West, "Television Advertising in Election Campaigns," *Political Science Quarterly*, No. 5, Winter 1994-95, pp. 789-809.

10. Howard Kurtz, "Campaign TV Ads Turn Raw: Surly Voters Reject 'Soft and Fuzzy Stuff' of '92 Races," *International Herald Tribune*, October 12, 1994, p. 3 (quotes); Bob Minzesheimer, "Executioner's song is heard in governor races," *USA Today*, October 28, 1994, p. 2A.

11. Robin Toner, "In a Cynical Election Season, The Ads Tell an Angry Tale," *The New York Times*, October 24, 1994, pp. A1, 9; Robin Toner, "Bitter Tone of the '94 Campaign Elicits Worry on Public Debate," *ibid.*, November 13, 1994, pp. A1, 14.

12. "Democrats Battling Back," *USA Today*, October 28, 1994, pp. 1-2 (quote); Kelly, "Clinton's Escape Clause," p. 52. Among *likely* voters, however, the late October poll showed the Republicans with a comfortable 53 to 43 percent lead.

13. Stephen Labaton, "Bolstered Clinton Campaigns for Allies," *The New York Times*, November 1, 1994, p. A10.

14. The election results are assembled primarily from the November 9-13, 1994 editions of *The New York Times* and the *International Herald Tribune*. In addition, we have relied on Michael Kelly's "You Say You-Want a Revolution;" *The New Yorker*, November 21, 1994, pp. 58-60 in particular.

15. The election results actually gave the Republicans a 52-48 majority, but the GOP picked up a fifty-third seat the day after November 8, when conservative Alabama Senator Richard Shelby announced that he was switching parties. Later another Democratic Senator, Ben Nighthorse Campbell from Colorado, also defected to the Republicans, giving the party a comfortable eight seat majority in the Senate.

16. See also "Portrait of the Electorate: Who Voted for Whom in the House," *The New York Times*, November 13, 1994, p. 15.

17. The GOP showed a net gain of 104 seats in upper chambers or Senates and a net gain of 355 in lower chambers or Houses at the state level. Largest swings were in North Carolina (25 House and 13 Senate) and Washington (25 House).

18. The new votes for term limits came in Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and Nevada. Republican leaders stated promptly that

within 100 days after the new Congress convened, they would seek a vote on a constitutional amendment to set term limits for Congressmen, in keeping with their "Contract With America." However, when such an amendment was introduced in the Spring of 1995, it failed to get the necessary two-thirds majority in each house.

19. The issue of term limits seems to have been a factor in the remarkable defeat of Speaker Tom Foley. Mr. Foley, who became the first Speaker since 1860 to be ousted by the voters, opposed term limits in his home state of Washington and was characterized during the campaign as a creature of Congress with little interest in local issues. Timothy Egan, "Foley, Defending Congress to the End, Concedes Historic Defeat by a Newcomer," *The New York Times*, November 10, 1994, p. B3.

20. Pollsters and pundits seriously misread voter sentiments on Proposition 187. In the weeks before the election most statewide surveys in California showed that there had been a sharp falloff in support for the initiative. No such thing was reflected in the final voting. What seems to have happened is that many Californians, uncomfortable at being considered racist, simply lied to pollsters when asked about their position on the issue. B. Drummond Ayres Jr., "Minority Groups Joining in Debate Over Immigration," *The New York Times*, November 1, 1994, pp. A1, 11; *Public Affairs Report*, Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, Berkeley, No. 1, January 1995, pp. 5, 17.

21. Another alarming fact for the established parties is that the number of people considering themselves as Independents continues to increase. In 1994, the nation as a whole identified itself as 37 percent Democrat, 35 percent Republican, and 28 percent Independent. Surveys published in the Spring of 1995 showed that 57 percent of those interviewed wanted a third party to compete with the Democrats and Republicans. Karen De Witt, "Suburbia's Emerging Political Clout May Redefine the Rules," *International Herald Tribune*, December 20, 1994, p. 3; David S. Broder, "A Lot of American Voters Want a New Lever to Pull," *ibid.*, April 19, 1995, p. 9.

22. Lawrence Malkin, "U.S. Economy On Track for Best Growth In Decade," *International Herald Tribune*, October 29-30, 1994, pp. 1, 4.

23. Cf. Eric Pianin, "What Does He Have To Do? The rising economic tide doesn't seem to be lifting Clinton's ratings," *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, October 24-30, 1994, p. 6.

24. Harvey C. Mansfield, "Real Change in the USA," *Government and Opposition*, No. 1, Winter 1995, particularly pp. 39-41. Cf. Kevin Merida, "Revisionist Democrats Put the Blame on Their Liberalism," *International Herald Tribune*, December 29, 1994, p. 3.
25. Richard L. Berke, "Victories Were Captured By G.O.P. Candidates, Not the Party's Platform," *The New York Times*, November 10, 1994, pp. B1, 4; Richard Morin, "Myths and Messages in the Election Tea Leaves; One Thing is Clear: The Republican Agenda Did Not Get a Mandate From the Voters," *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, November 21-27, 1994, p. 37. Even after all the publicity following the midterm elections, 72 percent of those polled said that they had not read or heard anything about the GOP Contract, and 65 percent said they still did not know enough about its chief architect, Speaker-elect Newt Gingrich, to have an opinion about him. Maureen Dowd, "Public Is Unsure of Republican Policy," *International Herald Tribune*, December 16, 1994, p. 3. Cf. *Newsweek*, January 9, 1995, pp. 20-21.
26. Benjamin R. Barber, "Letter From America: The 1994 Elections – Herbert Hoover Redux?," *Govern-ment and Opposition*, No. 2, Spring 1995, pp. 156-157.
27. David E. Rosenbaum, "G.O.P. Unleashes Its New Weapon: Winning Candidates," *The New York Times*, November 13, 1994, pp. 1, 3.
28. Cf. Kevin P. Phillips, *The Politics of Rich and Poor: Wealth and the American Electorate in the Reagan Aftermath* (New York: Random House, 1990); Kevin Phillips, *Boiling Point: Democrats, Republicans, and the Decline of Middle-Class Prosperity* (New York: Random House, 1993).
29. Anthony Lewis, "Economic Discontent Fuels Voters' Anger," *Charleston (WV) Gazette*, November 12, 1994, p. A4.
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31. Cf. Isabel Wilkerson, "Paradox of '94: Gloomy Voters In Good Times," *The New York Times*, October 31, 1994, pp. A1, 10.
32. Joe Klein, "The New New Deal," *Newsweek*, December 26, 1994, pp. 27-28.
33. John B. Judis, "The New Era of Instability," *The New York Times*, November 10, 1994.

Kants politiska idéer och deras betydelse för 1809 års män

Inledning

Så här i EU-debattens tider får vi ofta lite parentetiskt läsa att redan Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) var för ett enat Europa och så nämns *Zum ewigen Frieden*. Mindre ofta belyses i detta land Kant som politisk filosof i sin helhet. Detta är lite besynnerligt med tanke på att det borde vara ett näst intill naturligt steg att söka sig till honom då marxismen hamnar i blåsväder. Kants politiska idéer förtjänar uppmärksamhet av flera orsaker; bl.a. kan de betraktas som den teoretiska grundvalen för det moderna rättssamhället, som fundament för liberalismen (Popper 1984:136f) och kommunismen (Vorländer 1926, Buhr/Oiserman

1976) samt som viktig inspirationskälla för moderna politiska filosofer som Hanna Arendt, John Rawls, Karl Popper och Herbert Marcuse. Ur svensk författningssynvinkel torde Kant vara av största intresse med tanke på vilken betydelse hans idéer hade för några av "1809 års män". Jag skulle till och med vilja gå så långt att säga att dennes betydelse var avsevärt större än Montesquieus, men mer därom längre fram. Två ytterligare motiv, måhända idealistiska, att läsa Kant idag vore tron på upplysning och tron på den eviga freden. Nedan ska jag med utgångspunkt i Kants politiska skrifter samt med hjälp av sekundärlitteratur göra ett försök att ge en översiktlig introduktion till Kants politiska system. Syftet är helt enkelt att väcka intresse och nyfikenhet för en filosof vars idéer är minst så begrundsvärda idag som då de skrevs för tvåhundra år sedan. Mina hänvisningar till Kant har jag inte gjort till det otympliga standardverket *Immanuel Kants Werke* (Cassirer 1912-18) och