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For N.Y. Party
Rep. Party
1960

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: THE REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION

The following memo is confidential and reflects only the writer's point of view. It serves to explore an idea which the writer has been developing for some time.

A common criticism of the Republican Party, by both Republicans and others, is its apparent inability to successfully dramatize its achievements and to vigorously attack the Democrats' weaknesses. In the current New York scene we are treated daily to new scandals in the Wagner administration and renewed internecine warfare within the Democratic Party, but nary a Republican comment is heard. Instead, the Democrats are on the offensive, attacking the Rockefeller tax proposals and other programs which the Republicans have failed to sell or explain to the public.

The Moore Committee, which so many hoped would put the party on the offensive, has retreated into an academic ivory tower, and has refused any comment on its charter reform activities since June. Even the work of the State Investigations Commission seems to have misfired, and to bear no relationship to the 1961 Mayoralty Race. Basically, the Republican Party, the State Administration and the individual Republican leaders seem preoccupied with efficiency and obscure problems of state and municipality. They appear largely oblivious to the political possibilities in cultivating by legitimate means the public opinion of our State.

Good government may be good politics, but it certainly isn't if it isn't effectively presented. Nor is it good politics to be constantly on the defensive, subject to irresponsible attacks

by low-grade politicians. It is the thesis of this memo that our party needs new tools with which to wage the war of persuasion and attack on the one hand, and to aid in developing the party goals on the other. The writer recommends forming a New York State Republican Association to provide a new means to develop, promote and propagandize the viewpoint of modern Republicanism throughout the general public, and to create a greater awareness of the need for a better image throughout the Republican Party.

The idea of a Republican Association is not new. It was proposed in a somewhat different form by Mr. Russell Davenport in 1950, when a group of Republicans from the Eastern States formed an organization called "The Republican Advance". This group was merged into the "Draft Eisenhower Movement" and lost its identity. The British experience with the Conservative Alliance also serves as a predecessor to the concept of a Republican Association.

In order to be successful, this group will have to be capable of thinking in a practical way, capable of understanding the machinery of the party and of the government, and capable of focusing on the issues challenging the party and its various levels of government. This group will also have to have the talents of speaking, writing and convincing by the many media of communication existing at the present time. If this group is to be effective, it will have to be an official Republican organization sponsored by the Governor and the Republican State Committee.

The writer visualizes this organization as being the third dimension of the Republican Party. The other two existing dimensions are considered to be the official party machinery on the one hand and the candidates and the State Administration on the other.

This new dimension would become a means of drawing into effective service many dozens of capable, intelligent persons who find no place in the State Government Administration nor any place within the confines of the State political machinery. These people are limited to brief experiences of political activity in support of individual candidates and have no home or no means of expressing their continued interest in their party.

The Republican Association as visualized by the writer could easily become a national organization. However, it would seem desirable to develop it and bring it to initial success within the State of New York. It would seem that such an organization should be developed as a Membership Corporation with a recognized relationship to the State Committee. If it develops successfully, it would be beneficial to have local chapters using recognized relationship to the County Chairman. However, such formalities are not essential at the beginning. It is extremely important, however, that the Association be inter-racial, including the many capable members of the various ethnic groups which at the present time find no home in the Republican Party, notwithstanding their continued loyalty to the party. The Association should make a special effort to recruit professional, academic and newspaper people, as these are some areas in which our party is relatively weak. It is the writer's opinion that the Association should be organized without public announcement and that it should make its first public appearance with a concrete project, appearing full grown on the public scene.

An organization such as the Republican Association has many uses within the State of New York. It would be extremely useful during the legislative session as a vehicle for developing new

legislation and goals at the direction of the Governor, creating public sentiment for that legislation (as well as distracting overly energetic pressure groups) and in interpreting and propagandizing the constructive results of the legislative sessions. The Republican Association would provide the Governor with an entirely new means of mobilizing public opinion by drawing upon the talents of the individual Republicans in a new framework. The Association would offer the citizens of the State of New York a way of becoming involved directly in the governmental processes.

The possibilities of using the Association during elections are immense. This will be particularly true during the 1961 mayoralty election and the 1962 gubernatorial election. Again, the Association will offer the individual citizen the possibility of entering the process of our democracy, this being through the electoral process. An immediate activity which could be handled is the immense amount of research which must be done on the misgovernment of the City of New York by the Democrats.

The means at the disposal of the proposed Republican Association are many. The Democrats are quite adept at the process of publicity, the Republicans are not. As a party, we have tended to put a priority on efficient action and a penalty of propaganda. By creating the Republican Association, we would create a party organ which could conduct forums, produce radio programs, provide speakers and encourage writers to contribute to the many intellectual periodicals now majorly dominated by the Democrats.

The advantages of the Association to the party are obvious. In addition, it should be pointed out that the Association could add element of serious intellectual concern to our party image. Too

often we have been accused of being the party of negativism. The Democrats have successfully pinned anti-social labels on our party, when in fact the greatest advances of the common man have been made under Republican administrations.

If such a plan as this receives the approval of the Governor and the party leaders, the first step in its implementation will be the formation of a five-man steering committee. The committee should be responsible for creating the organizational structure, obtaining the initial membership, and developing the first program. This first program is important as a vehicle for launching the Association.

Once launched, the Association will have to be integrated into both the party and the State Administration, to be of maximum use. Acceptance of the Association concept by the personnel of the party and the administration will greatly facilitate this integration. However, they should not monopolize the Association, as one of its major benefits is the power to draw new ability and manpower into service of the party.

To summarize, it is felt that Governor Rockefeller and the Republican Party have a serious lack of means to publicize their goals and achievements and attack the Democratic weaknesses. A new organization is proposed to study the current political and governmental issues, to develop means of communications, and to serve as source of information, propaganda, and political offensive. This Republican Association would be part of the Republican Party, a third dimension, adding new personnel and new abilities to the present structure of the party.

There is a note of urgency about the need. Serious consideration should be given this proposal.