



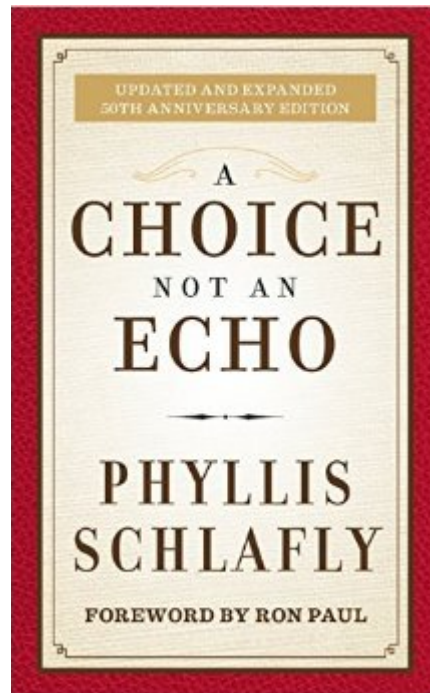
Written by [Steve Byas](#) on December 16, 2014

## A Choice Not an Echo, Fifty Years Later

Fifty years ago, Phyllis Schlafly revealed in her book *A Choice Not and Echo* how certain Republican “kingmakers,” using, as she put it, “every trick in the book,” dictated the nominee of the Republican Party for president “just as completely as the Paris dressmakers control the length of women’s skirts.”

In her 2014 update to the book, Schlafly demonstrates that not much has changed, as Republican candidates for president have remained nothing but an “echo” of the New Deal Democrats, rather than offering a meaningful alternative.

Schlafly self-published the original book in 1964 with the goal of breaking the hold of the liberal “Eastern Establishment” over the Republican Party. She hoped that the party would nominate Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona instead of one from the string of “me-too” candidates which had been offered for decades. The book, the first of 19 books Schlafly has authored, eventually sold three million copies, catapulting her into the national limelight as a conservative icon. She later founded a conservative grassroots organization, Eagle Forum, and she is credited with leading the charge against the so-called Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A.). Schlafly argued that the amendment would have resulted in a massive transfer of power to the federal government, particularly to the federal courts. Schlafly’s Eagle Forum, along with the John Birch Society (JBS), are the two groups most responsible for putting the brakes on the proposed Convention of the States (COS). Eagle Forum and the JBS contend that such a convention could not be limited, and is therefore not worth the risk, despite any good that could come from it. They have made the case that the COS could backfire upon conservatives, leading to





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fundamental changes in our form of government.

Former Congressman Ron Paul wrote in the foreword, “*A Choice Not an Echo*’s account of how a small group of powerful kingmakers stole the Republican presidential nominations of the 1940s and 1950s will resonate with grassroots activists who today are fighting similar battles with the Republican Establishment.”

This is because, while it was “bloodied” in the 1964 campaign in which Goldwater won the nomination, the party establishment was unfortunately *not* vanquished.

Schlafly traced the control of the Republican nomination by these kingmakers back to the 1936 campaign and Kansas Governor Alf Landon to Goldwater’s triumph over them in 1964. The update of the book continues the story of their dominance up to today, and their efforts to tap one of their own for the 2016 election.

In 1940, the leading candidates for the Republican nod were Thomas Dewey of New York and Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio. Or so it seemed. Taft was the son of President William Howard Taft (1909-1913), who had gained the wrath of powerful banking interests for his opposition to the creation of the Federal Reserve System. This led to the kingmakers of his day successfully orchestrating his defeat in 1912 to Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt. In her book, Schlafly gives the story of how a Tammany Hall Democrat, Wendell Willkie, was hand-picked to stop Robert Taft’s nomination by the Republican Party in 1940.

Willkie had never lifted a finger for the Republican Party, and was even a member of the *Socialist Club* while a student at Indiana University. Before running against Democrat President Franklin Roosevelt in 1940, Willkie was even a Democrat Party official! But then, several popular magazines, including *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Time*, *Fortune*, and *Life*, began puffing Willkie, a lawyer and wealthy utilities company executive, as a potential Republican candidate. Only seven weeks before the Republican National Convention, the Gallup Poll had Willkie at only three percent support among Republicans.

One week before the convention opened, a lavish dinner party was held, sponsored by Ogden Reid, publisher of the *New York Herald-Tribune*. Several prominent guests were there, including a senior partner of J.P. Morgan, Thomas Lamont; Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador to the United States; and Republican hopefuls Willkie and Taft. All but Taft gave speeches supporting American entry into the war in Europe. Schlafly wrote that Willkie was “all out for war.”

Finally, Taft rose to speak. Perhaps this was his chance to make himself acceptable to the powerful elites who greatly desired American involvement in the European war. Perhaps they could even forgive him for having a father who had opposed their creation of the Federal Reserve System, if he joined the chorus for intervention. We will never know, because Taft made it very clear that he was opposed to the U.S. getting involved in a war “to beat a totalitarian system in Europe” if the result would be “socialism here when it is all over.”

Shortly thereafter, the *Herald-Tribune* threw its support to Willkie, even calling him “Heaven’s gift to the nation in its time of crisis.” Willkie beat out Taft for the nomination, but went on to lose to Roosevelt. The next two presidential contests (1944 and 1948) featured New York Governor Thomas Dewey as the Republican nominee, who lost both campaigns.

Finally, in 1952, it seemed that conservatives would finally nominate Taft. He was leading his main



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opponent, General Dwight Eisenhower, as the convention approached. However, pro-Eisenhower operatives orchestrated rump meetings in Texas, Georgia, and Louisiana, wherein *Democrats* picked Eisenhower delegates to oppose the duly elected Taft delegates. This eventually led to a narrow Eisenhower nomination. Readers are encouraged to read Schlafly's account of how the kingmakers basically stole the nomination from Taft and handed it to Eisenhower. Taft blamed his defeat on the "power of the New York financial interests."

Schlafly is too restrained in her criticism of President Eisenhower, excusing his less-than-conservative presidency to his inexperience in politics. However, Senator Barry Goldwater summed up Eisenhower's "Modern Republicanism" as little more than a "dime store New Deal."

After Goldwater took the 1964 nomination, defeating the kingmaker's choice of New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, the Establishment Republicans, including Rockefeller and Mitt Romney's father, George Romney, then governor of Michigan, basically abandoned Goldwater in the general election. This contributed to Goldwater's defeat to President Lyndon Johnson that November.

The remainder of the book details the continuing battles between the grassroots conservative Republicans and the Establishment Republicans, the latter of whom were called by various names, such as "compassionate conservatives." While Schlafly has mostly kind words for President Ronald Reagan, she does not for the "me too" Republican presidents such as Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and the Bush father and son team. She also tells how the kingmakers backed the unsuccessful candidacies of Robert Dole, John McCain, and Mitt Romney. The chapter titles "Seeking a New World Order, 2004," and "Establishment Strikes Out Again: 2012," are good examples of the low view Schlafly has of the pitiful choices the Republican Party has tended to offer the electorate since her original 1964 book.

Schlafly was particularly critical of the second George W. Bush inaugural in 2005, and his call for "ending tyranny in the world." As Schlafly rightly retorted, "Bush had revealed himself as a thoroughgoing internationalist." Despite occasional setbacks, the globalists who have dominated *both* major political parties for most of the last century have continued to place their candidates at the top of the tickets of the Democratic and Republican parties.

While some might question a statement here and there in the book, Phyllis Schlafly has clearly earned the admiration she has received from constitutional conservatives since she first brought us *A Choice Not an Echo* a half-century ago.



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