S to the NEWS
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FUTURE OF CONSERVATIVES

Conservatives are currently agonizing over what course of action they should take for 1976. At their national gathering in Washington a few weeks ago, they appeared to be about evenly divided between Republican Party loyalists and those who want to go the new party route.

There are good arguments on both sides. The state laws are rigged against the emergence of a new party. The difficulties of getting a new party qualified, on the ballot, and fa1rly counted in the next election, are matched only by the difficulties of recapturing the Republican Party from the Rockefeller-Kissinger group now in control. Then, there is always the possibility that -Mm inflation and unemployment may have so damaged the Republican Party that the nomination is not worth anything anyway.

And yet, everyone knows that the majority of voters rejected both parties in the last election, and are out there waiting for new leadership. If we could get away from party labels and ideological epithets, the majority of voters would quickly line up on the same side of the issues as conservatives: r a strong national defense, for lower taxes, for cutting down on foreign and domestic giveaways, and for a stricter morality in handling crime and education.

Yet, the conservatives are so engulfed in hesitation and indecision that they are the Hamlet of current politics. To be a Republican or not to be a Republican, that is the question. Indecisive

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figures such as Hamlet never won a battle, an election, or **ftoc** **kllr:XKXXlXit** a fair lady. The rewards of this world to to the fearless and the daring.

The greatest newspaperman it has been my pleasure to know, the late Richard Amberg, publisher of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, used to keep this motto hanging in his office: "Courage is a virtue which the young cannot spare. To lose it is to grow old before your time. It is better to make a thousand mistakes and to suffer a thousand defeats, than to run away from battle."

Some people say that the trouble with conservatives is that they are too negative. Now, there is nothing wrong with being nega tive about evil. Seven of the Ten Commandments of God are negative. Two-thirds of the Declaration of Independence is negative. Eight of the ten Articles of the Bill of Rights are negative. It is good to be negative about corruption, sin, and oppressive government con trol of our lives.

The trouble with conservatives, however, is that they are nega tive about tactics and about the possibility of victory for their cause. They start from the assumption that they are only waging a holding action against the inevitable tide of Socialism that is engulf ing us.

Conservatives of little faith are **in** striking contrast with the Communists. The best thing they have going for them is their unshaken faith in the dogma that history is on their side, that the world tri umph of Socialism is inevitable, and that they are only giving history a little shove in working for Socialist goals.

Unless conservatives rekindle their faith in ultimate victory and their courage to act no matter what the odds, they will continue to play the role of Hamlet in American politics.

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