

GOP platform revives 'Contract on America'

by Edward Spannaus

Despite all of the effort of the Republican convention planners to provide a warm and fuzzy image in their made-for-TV San Diego extravaganza, the reality of what voters could expect from a Republican regime is found in the party platform, which was adopted on the first day of the convention. The prime-time version of the convention dripped with motherhood and babies, minorities and inclusion; the backroom platform reeked of the same anti-government, budget-slashing, take-from-the-poor and give-to-the-rich policies which made Newt Gingrich an object of derision to be hidden away, off prime-time.

The news media claimed that Pat Buchanan and the Christian Coalition were banished from the podium but got their way with the platform, but that was only a half-truth: The real story is that the 1994 Gingrich-Phil Gramm "Contract on America" was pulled out of the trashbin and dressed up as the 1996 Republican Party Platform. And, as *EIR* has shown, the "Contract," on which the platform is modeled, incorporated numerous features of the 1861 Confederate Constitution, such as its prohibition of internal improvements, the dismantling of federal power, and the supremacy of states' rights.

Even worse, the foreign policy side of the platform—when it's not blaming the "new world order" outlook of George Bush on Bill Clinton—reads as if it were written at 10 Downing Street.

To some degree, one is justified in asking: What does it all matter anyway? To a large degree, the platform is an exercise in self-delusion and hypocrisy. Even though Bob Dole asserted that he had not even read the platform, and that he was not bound by it, the platform provides an indication of what this country could expect if the Democratic Party fails to retake the Congress this fall.

Reinventing the 'Contract'

Every element of the 1994 Contract with America is incorporated in the platform. Those elements of the Contract which were passed, such as welfare "reform," restrictions on *habeas corpus*, and ending farm price supports, are praised, and those which were blocked in Congress in 1995-96 are run up the flagpole again. For example, the platform promises:

- a Balanced Budget Amendment;
- capital gains tax cuts and other tax reductions for the wealthy;
- a requirement for a super-majority to raise taxes;

- cuts in entitlement programs;
- immigration "reform";
- litigation "reform," i.e., making it harder for the average citizen to sue, including restrictions on product-liability lawsuits;
 - changes in the "exclusionary rule," which restricts the use of evidence in criminal cases obtained in violation of constitutional rights and protections;
 - to eliminate federal agencies such as the departments of Commerce, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, and Education, and privatizing others.

In some respects, the platform goes well beyond the Contract with America. For example: With respect to immigration, the platform would repeal part of the post-Civil-War Fourteenth Amendment, and would declare that children born in the United States are not automatically citizens, unless their parents are legally present or long-term residents.

With respect to labor, the platform promises support for state right-to-work (anti-union) laws, and to destroy the Davis-Bacon Act and other laws which ensure union-level wages in government-funded projects.

In certain respects, the most radical plank of the platform is its attack on judicial review. This revives the battle that raged in the early 19th century, when the proponents of sectionalism and slavery refused to accept the right of the Supreme Court to invalidate laws and actions which violate the U.S. Constitution. Nothing is more fundamental to the existence of the United States as a constitutional republic than the principle of judicial review; without this, the Supreme Court is powerless to enforce the Constitution as the supreme law of the land.

The foreign policy sections correspond precisely to British policy and to British attacks on the Clinton administration. Major emphasis is put on the "Atlantic Alliance" and NATO, shorthand for reestablishing the special relationship with Britain. In that light, the platform's section on Bosnia is particularly hypocritical: It denounces Clinton for subordinating U.S. policy to the UN by not lifting the arms embargo, while never mentioning that the most adamant opponents of lifting the embargo were our British and French NATO allies!

In every area of the world where Clinton has broken with British geopolitics and attempted to pursue an independent policy (the Middle East, Bosnia, Northern Ireland), his administration's policy comes in for attack. He is criticized for not pushing human rights hard enough, but also for using human rights to interfere with trade policy. He is attacked for "interference" in Israel. Of all the British trademarks, the most blatant—straight from the House of Lords—is the accusation that the "Clinton administration has even failed to rally the world against the [nonexistent] slave trade sponsored by the government of Sudan."

If the domestic side of the platform should bear the Confederate flag, the foreign policy side should be flying the Union Jack.