

# Blind hysteria: Yahoos dominate in frayed GOP

by Michele Steinberg

A much-loved anecdote from American history recounts how Republican Party founder President Abraham Lincoln responded to one of his generals at a moment of high tension during the American Civil War. In a popular version, the general tells the President and assembled colleagues, "Let us pray that God is on our side." And the great President replies, without a bit of sarcasm, "No, sir, rather, let us pray that we are on His side."

That is not the outlook of today's "self-righteous right" in the Republican Party. Today, even after being badly rejected by their voter base in November 1998 for their campaigns of hate, and incessant attacks on President Bill Clinton, the politics of the Republican Party resembles an epidemic of road rage more than a serious political organization.

Despite losing two pro-impeachment House Speakers—Gingrich and Bob Livingston; losing a significant number of seats in the 1998 Congressional elections; and losing the impeachment vote, even failing to muster a simple majority in the Senate, the GOP remains in the grip of radical zealots who continue to anchor their policies around one thing only: their obsessive hatred of President Clinton. The latest harangues involve accusations that the President sold out the national security of the United States to China. There is even propaganda coming from some GOP circles that a new impeachment effort should be launched—this time for Clinton's China policy. And, there is a clear drive to create a McCarthyite "red scare" against China, Russia, and other nations with which President Clinton is attempting to build cooperative relations.

## Tectonic fault lines

According to sources, the Republican Party is on the verge of civil war, pitting the "moderates" against the "religious rightists" and other fanatics. At a recent Republican National Committee meeting in Washington, D.C., GOP Chairman Jim Nicholson reportedly admitted he is afraid that the party is on the verge of collapsing into an internal policy war that could damage its chances in the year 2000 elections. And, with a large number of well-financed Presidential candidates—eight at last count—many of whom are competing for the title of "true heir" to Ronald Reagan, the party could disintegrate into nothing more than a collection of battling warlords.

Among the more public indications of these fault lines are the following:

- Paul Weyrich, head of the Free Congress Foundation and a founder of the so-called Christian Right, who recommended the name "Moral Majority" to its founder and leader Jerry Falwell, upset the post-impeachment apple cart when he issued an open letter warning the religious right that they have *failed* in politics, and had better find another way to rescue America from cultural barbarism.

- The GOP in California, which commands the largest number of convention delegate votes, is in disarray, and is losing 415 members per day, according to one Republican moderate. In late February, the Republicans met in Sacramento, to discuss strategy for regaining their hold in this strategically critical state—especially important now that California has moved up its primary date to March 7, 2000, shortly after the New Hampshire primary. As Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) is quoted, "Whoever carries California, in my view, will be the nominee of the Republican Party, without a doubt."

Significantly, neither Texas Gov. George W. Bush nor Elizabeth Dole showed up at the Sacramento convention, apparently fearful of being "sullied" (in the words of the *Washington Post*) by the party's in-fighting over abortion. Among those candidates who did appear—Steve Forbes, Alan Keyes, and Gary Bauer—all insisted that the GOP had to uphold the "pro-life plank" or lose the unity of the party.

- A stinging exposé by columnist Calvin Thomas and Ed Dobson, two other founders of the now-defunct Moral Majority, in the recently published book *Blinded by Might*, said that, along the way, their movement "lost the true Christian mission." The book triggered a violent reaction from some of the Right's icons: Falwell issued a press release saying that he will refuse to discuss the book under any circumstances; Rev. James Kennedy, radio evangelist, immediately rescinded an invitation to his old friend Thomas to speak at this year's conference on "Reclaiming America for Christ"; and Rev. James Dobson, religious broadcaster and head of Focus on the Family, was so angry that he wrote Thomas a note "saying, effectively, don't ever call me again," according to the *Washington Post*.

- Two of the leading GOP Presidential candidates, Elizabeth Dole and George W. Bush, shunned some of the religious right's biggest names, such as commentator Phyllis Schlafly and Rev. James Dobson, and did not even bother to show up for a "candidate interview" organized by these and other leaders of that faction which was once considered too powerful to ignore. The candidates who did show up, afraid to risk the wrath of this right wing, were Dan Quayle, Forbes, Keyes, and Bauer.

- A coalition of moderate Republicans, the Main Street Coalition, has been formed. It blames the religious right and "get Clinton" fanatics for the 1998 election losses, and is pushing for a moderate perspective to develop an agenda for the GOP, including the choice of the year 2000 standard-bearer. Of particular concern to the Main Streeters is the fact that Congressional Republican candidates, such as Sens. Al

D'Amato (N.Y.) and Lauch Faircloth (N.C.), were defeated in the November 1998 elections because they had nothing to offer but obsessions over "hot button" issues, such as supporting Kenneth Starr and his pornographic reports of the Tripp-Lewinsky tapes.

These public developments corroborate reports coming to *EIR* from Republican Party grassroots activists all over the United States, who say that there is a raging battle ongoing for control of the local party machinery, between the moderates and the radical right. In California, the battle over who will become chairman of the Republican Party—largely being fought out around the abortion issue—is more intense than any election race between a Democrat and a Republican.

### Attacks on hypocrisy

On Feb. 16, four days after the House Managers failed to remove President Clinton from office, Weyrich wrote in an open letter, entitled "A Moral Minority": "I know that what we have been doing for thirty years hasn't worked, that while we have been fighting and winning in politics, our culture has decayed into something approaching barbarism. We need to take another tack, find a different strategy. . . . Politics has failed because of the collapse of culture. . . . The culture we are living in becomes an ever-wider sewer. In truth, I think we are caught up in a cultural collapse of historic proportions, a collapse so great that it simply overwhelms politics."

In a more sophisticated and honest statement than found in years among the religious right ideologues, Weyrich identifies the little-known "Frankfurt School"—where political correctness originated in studies carried out on how to make communist revolutions succeed in the West—as responsible for the takeover of the United States by an "alien ideology bitterly hostile to Western culture" (see Michael Minnicino, "The New Dark Age: The Frankfurt School and 'Political Correctness,'" *Fidelio*, 1992).

Some in the GOP reacted with disgust or ridicule to Weyrich's letter. Just a few days later, at Reverend Kennedy's conference in Florida, Weyrich was attacked by name for his "pessimism" about the culture war. There, the 1,600 or so loyalists rallied behind Kennedy and their favorite son Bauer, former leader of the Family Research Council, based in Washington, D.C.

Weyrich's letter touched some raw nerves, because in the November election, one might say, "reality struck." Soon after the election, the ultra-conservative (though hardly religious right) *National Review* reported that pollster John McLaughlin had found that "two million fewer conservatives voted this year than in 1994, while the number of moderate voters increased by a like two million. Low turnout is supposed to benefit Republicans. But this year's overall turnout was lower than in 1994, and its makeup shifted. . . . Two million fewer Republicans and five million more Democrats voted in 1996 than in 1994." And, shockingly, "many conser-

vatives who *did* make it to the polls . . . were more likely to support Democrats." The Republicans had lost 13 points in their share of the religious conservative vote from 1994 to 1998. And, despite the millions of dollars poured into their coffers by the religious extremists, 22 of their 28 "favored sons" lost their elections to Congress!

But this overwhelming evidence that the right-wing agenda is *losing* seems to only make the ideologues more stubborn. In a pair of articles in *National Review* in March, author Ramesh Ponnuru says, "What GOP agenda? For reasons [of] tactical mistakes, escapist misadventures, factional infighting . . . conservatives now enjoy less influence on the party's agenda than at any other point since the mid '70s." He warns that the question is not one of controlling the Congress *after* the 2000 elections, but "whether they can keep control of the Congress *until* 2000." Ponnuru keenly observed, "Who says conservatives lack self-confidence? Having impeached Bill Clinton, they have moved on to . . . impeaching the entire country . . . for the failure to demand Clinton's head on a pike."

### The new McCarthyism

But, like a cornered rat, the frayed, fragmented GOP is extremely dangerous. Controlling the Senate and the House by a small margin, the radicals in the GOP have decided to adopt as their agenda a new McCarthyite "red scare" against China and Russia.

When several of the extreme right's attack dogs in Congress—Chris Cox (Calif.) and Tom DeLay (Tex.) in the House, and John McCain (Ariz.), one of the GOP Presidential contenders, in the Senate—decided to launch the campaign to sour U.S. relations with China, they first turned to the right-wing religious extremists to hammer on the human rights issues against China. When President Clinton continued to defend a strategic partnership with China, these forces jumped on press reports (leaked from the still classified Cox Committee report on China) that U.S. weapons research laboratories have been compromised.

Immediately, several of the Presidential candidates, led by Bauer and Forbes, demanded the resignation of National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, Clinton's one loyalist on the Al Gore-dominated Principals Committee, as responsible for the alleged Chinese "espionage" scandal.

Well-informed Washington sources report that the GOP radicals in Congress, still floundering after the conclusion of the impeachment trial, have chosen national security as the issue with which they think they can get a leg up on President Clinton and the Democrats. But, as shown by the GOP failure to rally a unified vote on deploying U.S. forces to the Balkans, even this issue divides the party deeply.

But the process of "God's lobbyists" going "international" has only just begun, according to William Martin, author of the 1996 book *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America*, and resident at the James

Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University in Texas.

In the Spring 1999 issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine, Martin says that Bauer is already pushing an international agenda that will focus on legislation such as the International Religious Freedoms Act, which would block U.S. relations with as many as 80 foreign countries which the "Christian Right" claims are persecuting Christians. Their ability to control tens of millions in contributions to candidates guarantees that they will be able to strongarm the moderates. Martin says that the "evangelicals" claim an almost divine right to run U.S. foreign policy, and "to carry their message, as Jesus instructed, 'unto all the world.'"

### Gore and Bush

The only thing that may unite the GOP at present, is their assessment that they *must have* Al Gore as the Democratic Presidential candidate in order to have any chance in the year 2000 elections.

The biggest lie pushed by the British-allied Wall Street forces in the Democratic Party, and the biggest mistake being swallowed by some naive forces in the Democratic Party, is that Gore is needed as the "heir apparent" to Clinton, to defeat the well-funded "front-runner" George W. Bush.

The truth of the factional madness of the Republican Party is that the anti-U.S. financier faction that Democratic Presi-

dential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche has dubbed the British-American-Commonwealth grouping, controls the Republican agenda, especially on two issues: the impeachment and continued legal vendetta against President Clinton, his wife, and supporters, and on the international war-drive that both the so-called "compassionate conservative" Bush and the religious right represent.

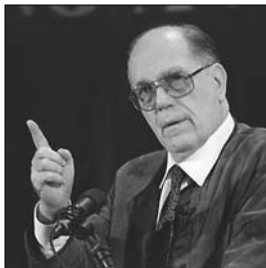
While Bush may refuse to attend a "Christian Right" Reverend Dobson interview, refuse to issue a statement that is "pro-life," and try to apologize to the "mainstream" for being perceived as forcing his own religion down the throats of the American people, these actions are just window dressing. As the son of former President Sir George Bush, Bush's foreign policy team is the group that "writes the script" for the evangelicals and warmongers in the Congress. As early as 1979, televangelist snake-oil peddler Falwell dictated that every patriotic American bow down to the interests of the state of Israel. The Anglo-Zionist faction that has virtually controlled Gore's treason against President Clinton, has moved a significant part of its operations to Texas, where they have joined the Bush machine.

The GOP disarray and defections mean that it is highly likely that the Democrats can regain the House and Senate in the 2000 elections. But, with Gore trailing, or even plummeting in the polls against either Bush or Elizabeth Dole, it is clear that the Democrats will only win if they dump Gore.

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