

# Buchanan Campaign May Fuel Voter Revolt

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On Aug. 12, just hours before he delivered his acceptance speech as the Reform Party's Presidential nominee, Patrick J. Buchanan held a press conference at which he was asked to comment on Lyndon LaRouche's call for convening a New Bretton Woods conference to reorganize the bankrupt global financial and monetary system. Buchanan replied to a crowded room of reporters, "I agree with Mr. LaRouche that the dollar has some problems and the European currencies are going into the bucket, and we clearly need some form of monetary reform."

The Buchanan comments offered a brief moment of gravitas near the end of a five-day political brawl that saw fringe elements of the Reform Party splinter off into what even the Buchanan-bashers at the *Washington Post* had to concede was a "rump convention."

The splinter group, representing, at most, 20% of the 400 official delegates, and an additional 1,000 party supporters who showed up in Long Beach, California, chose Natural

Law Party transcendental-meditation kook John Hagelin as their alternative nominee, at a location across the street from the Long Beach convention center.

Lenora Fulani—a New York City-based, self-described Marxist lesbian psycho-therapist, and an avowed enemy of LaRouche—tried to hijack control of the Reform Party by initially backing the Buchanan candidacy, but suffered a further blow to her political status, when she failed to win the Vice Presidential slot on the Hagelin ticket. She lost to a Silicon Valley dot.com millionaire by a nearly two-to-one margin in the delegate vote.

The main impact the splinter group may have on the November elections is as a sabotage factor, blocking Buchanan's efforts to rapidly secure the \$12.6 million in Federal Election Commission money given the Reform Party candidate by reason of the party's success in the 1992 and 1996 elections, when Ross Perot won more than 5% of the popular vote. If the Hagelin gang files a Federal suit, that could delay release of the funds to the Buchanan campaign. Combined with the Establishment media "brownout" of Buchanan's efforts, this could have a crippling effect, which is something that *both* Republican Party nominee George W. Bush and Democratic Party nominee Al Gore would like to see.

## Third Party Breakout

While Buchanan has been given scant media coverage, Ralph Nader, the Green Party Presidential nominee, is basking in media attention, which has the Bush forces smiling from ear to ear. If Nader takes 9-12% of the vote in California, the Bush campaign believes, their candidate can beat Gore in that crucial state and all but guarantee a rout in the Electoral College.

Underlying the support for Buchanan and Nader—which could reach critical mass in November, perhaps even throwing the election into the Electoral College—is voter fury at the two major political parties, which have "morphed" into one single policy bloc, representing the interests of the wealthiest 20% of the population, at the expense of the overwhelming majority of Americans. In the last two Presidential elections, the Democratic and Republican parties combined were unable to draw 50% of the eligible voters to the polls.

While Nader is enjoying media attention and, reportedly, covert financial backing from some of Bush's wealthy friends, the same Establishment media fear the implications of Buchanan's breaking out of the bounds of containment. Unlike Nader, who is about as dynamic as a dishrag, Buchanan has the capacity to draw enthusiastic support—particularly if he gets into the Presidential debates. This could hit both Bush and Gore, as part of Buchanan's "appeal" is to the blue-collar "Reagan Democrats," who are legitimately angry at the impact that the North American Free Trade Agreement and other free-trade and globalization policies have had on their standard of living.

Buchanan could become a lightning rod for the growing anti-globalization, anti-free-trade majority of working fami-



*Reform Party Presidential candidate Pat Buchanan.*

lies—but, ominously, there is a danger that this could also turn into a nasty anti-immigration and neo-isolationist movement.

## The Speech

This complex of factors was evident on Aug. 12, when Buchanan first made his remarks about LaRouche's New Bretton Woods call, and then delivered his acceptance address. The speech captured the complex and contradictory appeal of candidate Buchanan:

"I began my campaign, 18 months ago, in a tiny steel town in West Virginia called Weirton," he told the crowd. "Even though the U.S. economy was booming and U.S. companies were crying out for steel, Weirton Steel was laying off workers, and Weirton was dying. Why? Because cheap steel was being dumped into the United States from Russia, Korea, Brazil, and Indonesia so those bankrupt regimes could raise the cash to pay off the international banks. The workers of Weirton and their families were being . . . sacrificed to the gods of the global economy."

Appealing to the anti-globalization mood of many working-class voters, Buchanan railed, "We will reclaim every lost ounce of American sovereignty. We will lead this country out of the WTO [World Trade Organization], out of the IMF [International Monetary Fund], and I will personally tell [UN Secretary General] Kofi Annan: Your UN lease has run out; you will be moving out of the United States, and if you are

not gone by year's end, I will send 10,000 Marines to help you pack your bags."

On China: "As for Communist China, we will no longer accept one-sided trade deals, where we buy 40% of their exports and they buy 1% of ours. And I will tell them: Fellas, either you stop this persecution of Christians, and these threats to our friends in Taiwan, and rattling missiles at the United States, or you fellows have sold your last pair of chopsticks in any mall in the United States."

While playing to the sentiments of the China-bashers, on the one hand, Buchanan was direct and to the point in his opposition to the war against Yugoslavia and Iraq, and similar "drive-by shootings of cruise missiles" elsewhere around the globe: "Saddam Hussein is another wicked tyrant," he said, "who has launched aggressive war and murdered his own people. But who has killed more innocent Iraqis? Saddam Hussein, or U.S. sanctions? When Madeleine Albright was told on a television show that a UN study had found that 500,000 Iraqi children may have died because of our ten years of sanctions, Albright said: 'We believe it was worth it.' Worth it? When did the greatest nation on Earth start waging war on children? . . . Talk about arrogance of power! George III could not have said it better. Friends, I am ashamed to say it, but we have begun to behave like the haughty British Empire our fathers rose up against and threw out of this country."

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