
II. Organizing for Victory

How Abraham Lincoln Created The Republican Party

by Robert Ingraham

Sept. 3—In 2012, on the occasion of his 90th birthday, Lyndon LaRouche delivered a talk, wherein he stated his view that the “two-party system is dead.” How to interpret that pronouncement?—then delivered near the conclusion of Barack Obama’s first term, and now today amidst the violence of a fascist insurrection in the United States and the escalating coup attempt to remove Donald Trump from the Presidency.

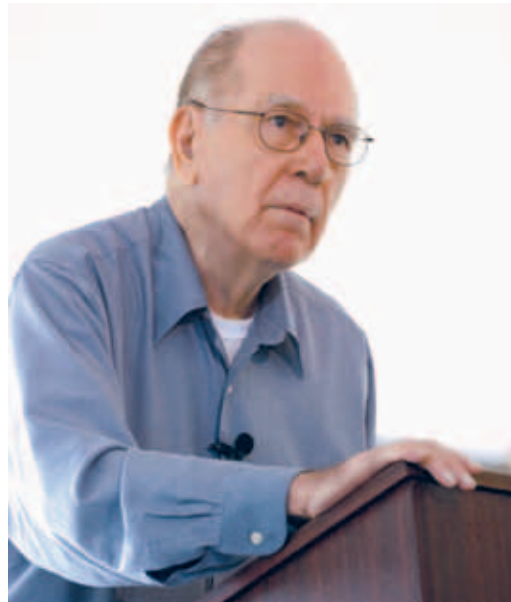
Although many Democrats still refuse to accept the truth, between 2009 and 2012 Barack Obama had continued, *in toto*, the strategic and economic policies of his predecessor George W. Bush. To be fair to Obama, this presidential subservience to the diktats of London and Wall Street did not begin in 2009. From 1989 through to 2017—under George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama—any substantive differences between the Democratic and Republican parties—in the White House and in Congress—disappeared, particularly after the 1998 impeachment of Bill Clinton.

What emerged in those years was a consensus among the elites of both parties around two axiomatic priorities. Primary was absolute fealty to a neo-liberal financial and economic policy, including the outsourcing of U.S. manufacturing and the “financialization” of the economy. This resulted in the disappearance of millions of American manufacturing jobs, the elimination

of critical R&D and machine tool capabilities and the explosion of financial speculation, culminating in the financial collapse of 2008. At the same time, a policy of military adventurism was launched, including the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the expansion of NATO, British/U.S.-sponsored imperial regime-change operations, and continuing through to Obama’s relentless drone strikes and his “Asia Pivot.” Most of this was aimed at the military encirclement of Russia, later to include China. This financial/military consensus, which destroyed the lives of tens of millions both within and outside the United States, continued to the end of the Obama presidency, and as LaRouche identified, this signaled the end of the two-party system as it had existed in the post-World War II era.

Then came the election of 2016. During this past four years we have witnessed the efforts of Donald Trump to overturn this consensus: to free the United

States from the grip of supra-national institutions, end the policy of regime-change warfare, rebuild the manufacturing and industrial capabilities of the nation and relaunch America’s manned space program. This has pitted Trump against entrenched political interests in both the Democratic and Republican parties. It has also made him the hated target of the London/Wall Street elite, and—as has been extensively documented by *EIR* and LaRouche PAC—a conspiracy to destroy Trump’s



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

Lyndon LaRouche on his 90th birthday: “The two-party system is dead.” Round Hill, Virginia, September 9, 2012.



White House/Shealah Craighead

President Donald Trump at the United States Military Academy at West Point, viewing a statue of Douglas MacArthur, June 13, 2020.

Presidency and remove him from office was undertaken even before he was sworn in as President.

Witness the support given by Democratic Party honchos and the mainstream media to the fascist insurrection in cities across the nation. Witness the open support for Joe Biden by the Bush family and their lackeys such as Colin Powell. Witness the hatred against Trump displayed by failed Republican Presidential candidates Mitt Romney and the now-deceased Sen. John McCain. Witness the current faction within both the Republican and Democratic parties determined to sabotage the President's efforts to negotiate peaceful relations with both Russia and China. This is a cross-party coalition determined to terminate the Trump Presidency and return to the "consensus" of 1989-2017, only now with a heavy dose of Green Malthusianism and more aggressive actions against Russia and China.

Turn now to Trump's June 13, 2020 speech at West Point, to his July 3, 2020 speech at Mt. Rushmore, and to the proceedings of the recently concluded "working class" Republican National Convention. What Donald Trump has initiated, through his own personal efforts, is a battle to create a new political coalition across America, to transform and re-create the Republican Party around new, or—better stated—old principles; to expunge the influence of the Washington Consensus and create a mass-based party committed to saving the nation. In some ways, this bears a striking resemblance

to Franklin Roosevelt's creation of a "new" Democratic Party in 1932, but for Trump, the model is not FDR but Abraham Lincoln. Consider Trump's words at Mt. Rushmore:

Our Founders launched not only a revolution in government, but a revolution in the pursuit of justice, equality, liberty, and prosperity. No nation has done more to advance the human condition than the United States of America. And no people have done more to promote human progress than the citizens of our great nation.

It was all made possible by the courage of 56 patriots who gathered in Philadelphia two

hundred and forty-four years ago and signed the Declaration of Independence. They enshrined a divine truth that changed the world forever when they said: "... all men are created equal."

These immortal words set in motion the unstoppable march of freedom. Our Founders boldly declared that we are all endowed with the same divine rights—given [to] us by our Creator in Heaven. And that which God has given us, we will allow no one, ever, to take away—ever.

Seventeen seventy-six represented the culmination of thousands of years of western civilization and the triumph not only of spirit, but of wisdom, philosophy, and reason.

Cynics might scoff at these remarks, offering derogatory insults against both Trump and America, but the theme which Trump developed at Mt. Rushmore is precisely the basis on which Abraham Lincoln organized the Republican Party between 1856 and 1860. *Precisely* the basis. That is the subject of this report.

The Collapse of the Old Order

On May 30, 1854 President Franklin Pierce signed into law the Stephen Douglas-sponsored "Kansas-Nebraska Bill." This legislation repealed the 1820 "Missouri Compromise" and introduced the new doctrine of "Popular Sovereignty," whereby all U.S. terri-

tories, between the borders of Mexico and Canada and from the Mississippi to the Pacific would now be open to slavery. With this action, the Whig Party, already on its last legs, disintegrated and vanished; but the Democratic Party also fissured and fractured, as the implications of the new doctrine became clear. The political “consensus” and established party allegiances of the previous 20 years were overthrown. To make this explicit, consider the following statistics:

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

	1853 (33rd)	1855 (34th)
Dems	157	82
Whigs	71	0
Free Soil	4	0
American (Know-Nothing)	0	51
Independents	2	0
Opposition (no party)	0	100

The 1855 “Opposition” Congressmen included former Whigs, disaffected Democrats, Free Soilers, abolitionists and others, all now operating independent of any organized political party. They were not unified; they held different—sometimes diametrically opposite—views on a number of issues, but all recognized the threat to the nation that had now been unleashed.

When news of the adoption of the Kansas-Nebraska Act reached Illinois, as Abraham Lincoln later reported, “We were thunderstruck and stunned.”

During the early months of 1854 efforts were made in several locations, including Ripon, Wisconsin and Jackson, Michigan to organize a new “Republican” party. The meetings were small and composed, almost exclusively, of abolitionists from the old Liberty Party and the Free Soil movement. This was a start but not nearly sufficient for the challenge ahead.

In the summer of 1854, the Kentucky abolitionist Cassius Clay delivered a speech at Springfield, Illinois. Abraham Lincoln was in attendance. Clay called for “an organization of men, of whatever politics, of Free Soilers, Whigs and Democrats, who should bury past animosities, and

unite in hurling down the gigantic evil which threatened even their own unity.”

Later that year, on October 3rd, at the state fair in Springfield, Stephen Douglas gave a long speech in defense of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Lincoln was put forward by members of the audience to deliver the response. There is no record of his remarks, but according to an eyewitness report:

The effect of the Springfield speech upon his hearers was wonderful. Herndon, his partner, says: “The house was as still as death. Lincoln’s whole heart was in the subject. He quivered with feeling and emotion.” Loud and long continued applause greeted his telling points. At the conclusion, every person who had heard Lincoln felt that the speech was unanswerable.

Thus began Lincoln’s 1854 campaign for the U.S. Senate and his leadership in creating what would become the Republican Party. He followed Douglas to Peoria. There Douglas spoke for three hours in the afternoon, and Lincoln again followed in the evening and spoke for three hours also. Here, as in Springfield, he carried the audience with him. In his Peoria speech, Lincoln asserted:

Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man’s nature, opposition to it in his love of justice. These princi-



Photo by Mathew Brady

Stephen A. Douglas sponsored the Kansas-Nebraska Act, opening all U.S. territories to slavery.

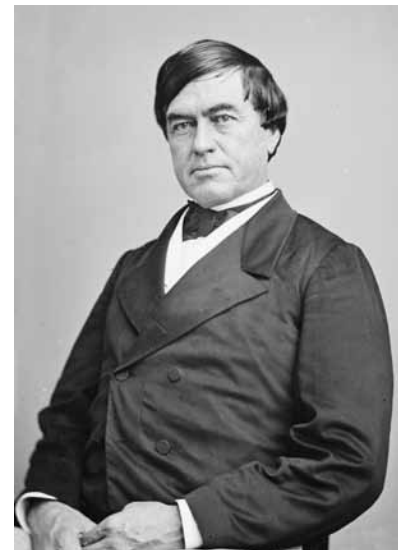


Photo by Brady-Handy studio

Cassius Clay called for unity to “hurl down the gigantic evil” of slavery.

ples are in eternal antagonism; and when brought into collision so fiercely as slavery extension brings them, shocks and throes and convulsions must ceaselessly follow. Repeal the Missouri Compromise—repeal all compromises—repeal the Declaration of Independence—repeal all past history, you still cannot repeal human nature. It still will be out of the abundance of man's heart that he will declare slavery extension is wrong; and out of the abundance of his mouth he will continue to speak.

Lincoln followed Douglas all over the state, attending his rallies, intervening, challenging him and giving speeches of his own. Lincoln's friend and biographer, Isaac Arnold, later stated that:

[Between 1854 and 1856, Lincoln] plead the cause of liberty, not only the freedom of four millions of slaves, but the fate and perpetuity of the Union and the republic hung on the result. His speeches were great battles fought and won.... Whole counties were sometimes revolutionized by one of his great arguments.

Following Lincoln's October Springfield speech, his friend Owen Lovejoy, together with Ichabod Codding (both abolitionists and Congregational ministers) organized the first meeting of the Republican Party of Illinois, but at this time Lincoln would not yet openly affiliate with them, considering their membership too narrow.

In February 1855 the state legislature met to choose the new Senator. Lincoln led in the voting, but stood no chance of achieving a majority. He then directed his supporters to back Lyman Trumbull, an anti-Douglas Democrat, in order to block the election of Douglas' protégé James Shields. Trumbull was elected, and two years into his term he switched his party affiliation to Republican. In 1860 he backed Lincoln for President, and in 1865 he authored the 13th Amendment, freeing the slaves.

Creating the New

By 1856-1857 the nation was in a severe economic recession. At the same time, the murderous attempt to force Kansas into the Union as a slave state was underway, as armed gangs were sent across the border from Missouri to kill and drive out settlers who opposed slavery. The Know-Nothing movement emerged, organized itself as the American Party, and began to win elections. Although the movement is known today primarily for its opposition to immigration and Catholicism, the Know-Nothing appeal was actually based largely on economic issues. When they

took control of the Massachusetts legislature in 1855, they passed a series of laws which opposed slavery, expanded the rights of women, regulated industry and railroads, expanded funding for public schools and local libraries, and improved the status of working people.

Yet the Know-Nothings could never be more than a minority party, much as the radical abolitionists.

On the 29th of May 1856, a convention of the people of Illinois who were opposed to the extension of slavery met at Bloomington, for the purpose of organizing a new political party.

In attendance were Whigs, Democrats, Know-Nothings, Free Soilers, members of the old Liberty Party, as well as large numbers of Germans, Swedes, Norwegians and Irish. After hours of deliberation, the convention seemed hopelessly divided, with sharply conflicting opinions, and a Resolutions Committee, which was assigned to come up with a set of principles for the new party, was deadlocked. In desperation, delegates sent for Lincoln to address the convention.

In his speech, Lincoln stated that the only way the delegates might find unity was to base themselves on the principles of the Declaration of Independence and hostility to the extension of slavery. This would define the principled foundation for the new party. Lincoln proposed:

Let us, in building our new party, let us make our corner-stone the Declaration of Independence;—



Photo by Mathew Brady

Sen. Lyman Trumbull, who backed Lincoln for President in 1860.

let us build on this rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against us.

Later, in reporting on Lincoln's speech, one of the delegates wrote:

Never was an audience more completely electrified by human eloquence. Again and again, during the delivery, the audience sprang to their feet, and by long-continued cheers, expressed how deeply the speaker had roused them.

Following Lincoln's speech, the Convention adopted the following:

Resolved, That we hold, in accordance with the opinions and practices of all the great statesmen of all parties for the first sixty years of the administration of the government, that, under the Constitution, Congress possesses full power to prohibit slavery in the territories; and that while we will maintain all constitutional rights of the South, we also hold that justice, humanity, the principles of freedom, as expressed in our Declaration of Independence and our National Constitution, and the purity and perpetuity of our government require that that power should be exerted, to prevent the extension of slavery into territories heretofore free.

Lincoln continued to travel and to speak, both in Illinois and in neighboring states. At the first national Republican Convention, held at Philadelphia in June 1856, Lincoln finished second in the balloting for Vice-President, receiving 110 votes. The declaration of principles adopted at the convention was substantially the same as that adopted only weeks earlier at the Bloomington, Illinois meeting.

Battling for Victory

On March 6, 1857 the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the Dred Scott decision, denying citizenship to all

black Americans and implicitly threatening the north with the spread of slavery nation-wide. The ruling was promptly endorsed by Stephen Douglas. In Illinois, Lincoln delivered the official Republican reply, and by the end of the year, he began to mount his second campaign for the U.S. Senate, this time against Douglas himself. In June 1858, the Illinois Republican state convention met at Springfield, and unanimously nominated Lincoln as their candidate for Senator. Accepting the nomination, Lincoln stated:

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: If we could first know *where* we are, and *whither* we are tending, we could better judge *what* to do, and *how* to do it. We are now far into the *fifth*

year since a policy was initiated with the *avowed* object and *confident* promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only *not ceased*, but has *constantly augmented*. In *my opinion*, it will not cease until a *crisis* shall have been reached and passed.

A house divided against itself cannot stand.

I believe this government cannot endure permanently half *slave* and half *free*. I do not expect the Union to be *dissolved*,—I do not expect the house to *fall*, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become *all one*

thing, or *all the other*. Either the *opponents* of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its *advocates* will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in all the states, *old* as well as *new*—*North* as well as *South*....

Two years ago the Republicans of the nation mustered over thirteen hundred thousand strong. We did this, under the single impulse of resistance to a common danger, with every external circumstance against us. Of strange, discordant, and even hostile elements, we gathered from the four winds, and formed and fought the battle

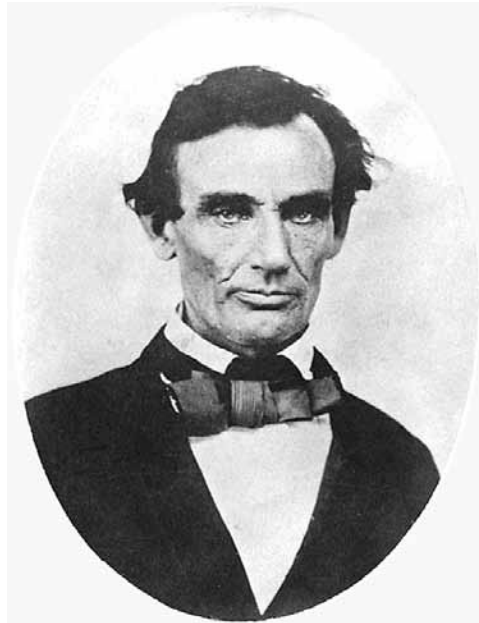


Photo by Calvin Jackson

Abraham Lincoln, on October 1, 1858.



Painting by Robert Marshall Root

Abraham Lincoln debates Stephen Douglas in Charleston, Illinois, September 18, 1858, in a campaign for U.S. Senate. He reduced the issue of the election to its most essential moral imperative: "Is slavery wrong?"

common right of humanity, and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says: "You work, and toil, and earn bread, and I'll eat it." No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation, and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men, as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle.

through, under the constant hot fire of a disciplined, proud, and pampered enemy. Did we brave all then, to falter now, now when that same enemy is wavering, dissevered, and belligerent? The result is not doubtful. We shall not fail—if we stand firm, *we shall not fail*. Wise counsels may accelerate, or mistakes delay it, but, sooner or later, the victory is sure to come.

Throughout 1858, everywhere that Douglas went, Lincoln followed him, either giving a speech after Douglas, or the following day. After several weeks of this Douglas gave in and accepted Lincoln's proposal for a series of seven debates,—the famous Lincoln-Douglas Debates. Altogether, it was six weeks of intense campaigning, with Lincoln giving 63 speeches and traveling over 4,000 miles by train, boat and carriage. In the official debates, Lincoln started slow, but by the sixth and seventh debates, he was in complete control. At the final debate, in Alton, he reduced the issue of the election to its most essential moral imperative:

Is slavery wrong? That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles right and wrong—throughout the world. They are two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the

Because the Democrats still controlled the Illinois legislature (which at that time chose the state's U.S. Senators), Lincoln narrowly lost the election, but the eyes of the nation were on Illinois, and Lincoln was immediately propelled into the ranks of leading contenders for the 1860 Presidential nomination. By 1858, many of the leading Democrats of Illinois,—men who had opposed his Senate campaign in 1854 like Norman Judd, Jon Palmer and Lyman Trumbell—were all Republicans and backing Lincoln.

In 1859 Lincoln published the Lincoln-Douglas Debates—"Political Debates Between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen Douglas, in the Celebrated Campaign of 1858, in Illinois"—and this sold briskly throughout the nation. That same year, he campaigned for Republican candidates in Ohio and Indiana, giving speeches in Dayton, Columbus, Hamilton, Cincinnati and Indianapolis. Newspapers, including the *Lacon Gazette* (Illinois), *Sandusky Commercial Register* (Ohio), *Olney Times* (Illinois), *Rockford Republican* (Illinois), and *Reading Journal* (Pennsylvania), issued the first calls endorsing Lincoln for the Presidency. In February 1860, Lincoln accepted the invitation from Henry Ward Beecher to speak in New York. The speech was printed in four New York newspapers and then reprinted as a pamphlet. Then Lincoln spoke in Concord, Manchester, Dover and Exeter, Rhode Island and Connecticut, speaking in a different city every day for two weeks. The rest, as they say, is history.

The Lesson To Be Drawn

Popularly, the story of Lincoln and the Republican Party is usually presented as the last successful effort to create a “new” political party within the United States. But such statistical analysis misses entirely the crucial point.

By 1854-1858 it had become clear to millions of Americans that the “consensus,”—or “arrangement,” if you prefer that term—that had ruled the nation for more than 20 years had broken down. The policies of the Whig Party now bore very little resemblance to the intention of Alexander Hamilton. The Whigs and northern Democrats had step-by-step acquiesced to the ultimatums of the south for the continued expansion of slavery. The economic crisis of 1856-1859 had hit working families the hardest, both in the cities as well as among family farmers. Women and children were being murdered in cold blood in Kansas. The continued existence of the nation as anything that bore even a faint resemblance to the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution was doubtful. And neither of the two parties offered leadership or solutions.

Lincoln, and those who allied with him, built a new party out of the wreckage of the American political scene, recruiting from Democrats and Whigs alike, as well as others who had already abandoned those parties—from farmers and city dwellers, from small businessmen and manufacturers, from Germans and Irish, from Protestant and Catholic. And they did it on *principle*,—as Lincoln stated in 1856:

Let us make our corner-stone the Declaration of Independence;—let us build on this rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against us.

Yes, it was new, but it was made possible by a return to the founding principles and intention of the nation.

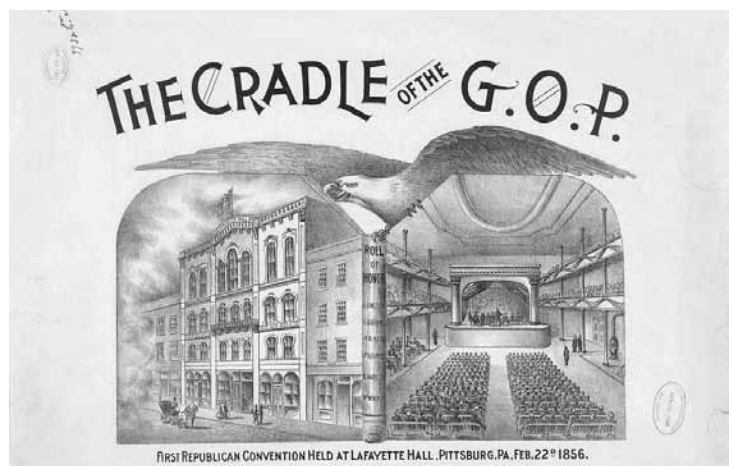
Today more than half of the American population are either not registered to vote, or registered with no party preference. Trust in the two major parties has reached an all-time low. The old constituency organizations, through which people could make their voices heard in the political arena—such as trade unions, farm organizations, churches, and the like—have all declined in influence, as the national parties have become more and more captives of Wall Street and Silicon Valley money. The chimerical “Hope” promised by

Obama in 2008 vanished long before he left office.

The American people have been betrayed and abandoned by their political leaders, and they know it.

In Donald Trump’s speeches he talks a lot about American history, and he mentions many different individuals. But he returns again and again to Abraham Lincoln. Perhaps it is no accident that he visited the Lincoln Memorial during the inauguration ceremonies in January 2017. And with Lincoln’s principles to guide him, he is now battling to radically remake, or re-create, the Republican Party.

It was Democratic trade-union voters from the rust belt that gave Trump the election in 2016. Today, even the



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Lafayette Hall in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, site of the first Republican convention in 1856.

fake polls are forced to admit that his support among black and Hispanic voters is at a record high for a Republican President. Unlike the Democratic Convention which displayed a Monster Mash of failed political cadavers, the Republican Convention presented the testimony of working-class voters from every walk of life. Campaigning for the “Forgotten Man” was not a campaign slogan. Trump is recruiting the former blue collar and ethnic base of the Democratic Party into his movement.

We are in the midst of a convulsive political realignment; yet, we are not observers to these developments. Think of yourself as being present with Lincoln at Springfield in 1854, Bloomington in 1856, or Alton in 1858. Think of yourself as a participant in those events. Think of what your responsibilities would have been in the fight to save the nation. Think of what was at stake then,—and what is at stake today. That is the mindset and dedication required in the weeks ahead.