

tivities like the Mexican bailout, Ron Paul will be the first to expose them.

No wonder the establishment is terrified, and no wonder his victory in Texas has excited the passions of every American who cares about the future of the country. ■

What Went Wrong?

by Paul Gottfried

Pat Buchanan has ceased to be a "viable" presidential candidate, and it may be possible to speculate about the reasons for the collapse of his populist bid for the presidency. For the Buchanan faithful the end came cataclysmically in March, after winter successes in Louisiana, Iowa, Alaska, New Hampshire, and the Missouri caucuses. By mid-February, it seemed that the expected forerunner Bob Dole was on the skids, and TV announcers were stressing that the Republican nomination was wide open. Buchanan was listed as a serious contender along with Dole; while Lamar Alexander and Steve Forbes (after unexpectedly strong showings in Delaware and Arizona) were also given a shot at the brass ring.

After a poor showing in Arizona (where he finished third) and an even more dismal performances in the front-loaded large-state primaries on alternate Tuesdays in March, Buchanan was technically all but out—Dole by then having captured almost one thousand primary delegates. By the third week

of March Buchanan, then the only contender against Dole left in the Republican primary race, no longer spoke of winning; nor did he proudly introduce his wife Shelley as the "next first lady." Instead he was telling CNN and Brian Lamb of CSPAN that he was "going to the convention no matter what." Buchanan also let it be known that he would fight for a "conservatism of the heart" and that he would continue to champion American workers and unborn babies.

In assessing this debacle, it is important to note the candidate's conspicuous strengths. Unlike the other candidates, Buchanan has been defiant in expressing politically incorrect views. On immigration, foreign aid, the right to bear arms, and the media's tendency to

glorify homosexuals and feminists, he has loudly and repeatedly proclaimed unorthodox views in the presence of cheering crowds. He has also aroused enthusiastic support, what the media calls "fanaticism" in those whose views it despises or fears. Buchanan's backers contrast dramatically to those of Dole, who seems, for the most

part, the constituency of big business and party patronage. Though in the South the party regulars have been able to keep most of the Christian Right in line, the Dole campaign continues to look as if it stands for nothing. And this impression is confirmed by the party leaders who have dutifully endorsed Dole as "the man who can beat Bill Clinton" or "save the party from extremism."

Unlike Buchanan, moreover, Dole does have a congressional record, and that record indicates the lack of any consistent principles, except for remaining a political player. It is hard to believe that Dole opposes affirmative action as a mat-

ter of conviction: he voted for it in 1991 and is now trying to obtain as a running mate Colin Powell, an unmistakable advocate of both affirmative action and the present abortion laws, which Dole pretends to oppose.

Despite his strengths, Buchanan has showed weaknesses as a campaigner, and though not the only reasons for his electoral failures, these defects should be duly noted. One, he oversimplified complex and controversial social issues by reducing them to slogans in stump speeches. Thus he spoke out against immigration without availing himself of the statistical information that might have made his correct stand even more convincing. Again, he took the right stands on judicial activism and gay rights without providing cogent data or well-reasoned arguments even in his TV appearances.

Two, Buchanan should have engaged Jewish liberal and neocon adversaries more sharply on the outrageous charge of anti-Semitism. Rather than hoping it would go away, he should have made an issue of the charge itself, getting his Jewish supporters to speak out on his behalf and demonstrating the real motives behind the repeated accusation: scaring off oppositions to Zionist "extremists" and tarring opponents of the gay agenda with the anti-Semitic brush.

Throughout the campaign Buchanan seemed to be pursuing a hand-to-mouth strategy, using his candidacy to speak from the heart and to mobilize the faithful without anticipating probable obstacles. Having been savaged by the liberal and Zionist press in 1992, he should have prepared himself to counter predictable attacks. Buchanan's only response was to soldier on, in the vain hope that the attacks would stop. In the end, they wrecked his candidacy, by making even some uninformed conservatives think that Buchanan was Adolf Hitler reincarnated.

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After all, this was the comparison that official conservatives Bill Safire, George Will, and Charles Krauthammer belabored daily. Buchanan should have stressed that those who had warned against trivializing Hitler and the Holocaust were now invoking both regularly to scare off critics of AIPAC. Anti-Hitlerians, he should also have said, were calling people Nazis for holding the same views on immigration expressed by America's founders and by most of our past presidents.

Buchanan, furthermore, showed inconsistency in attacking big government while calling for policies that would have aggravated the problem. Though he complained bitterly of administrative and judicial overreach, his stands on abortion, social welfare, and managed trade were not likely to reduce that overreach. More likely, as Lew Rockwell observes, they would have strengthened the hands of federal judges and federal administrators, if Buchanan were free to enact his Christian Right-populist agenda.

An attempt must be made to push back to the hand of the managerial therapeutic state, because it brings increasing power to an increasingly unaccountable political class. Though Buchanan may understand this, he is also entrapped by his own blue-collar and Christian Right constituency. To keep this following, he praises imprudent things, like working for a (fortunately unpassable) constitutional amendment banning abortions and providing Medicare benefits that can only come from increased federal taxation.

Having pointed out the problems in how Buchanan and presumably his sister Bay ran his campaign, it also seems to me obvious that Buchanan would have lost even if he had acted in a more informed fashion. His social positions, even when he began to moderate them, were clearly out of line with the policies of the managerial therapeutic state and its apologists.

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against Buchanan, by *Newsweek* and by George Will, was that he wanted "to go back to the 1950s." The fellow genuinely believes in gender roles, heterosexual marriage as a social norm, and pre-1985 levels of immigration based on clear national interest. Such views have now become not only socially unacceptable but also proof of an unredeemed fascist nature. They fly in the face of government action and journalistic sermons, and all respectable conservatives, unlike extremists, have gone with the managed flow.

As for Dole, his was at best a pyrrhic victory. The price he will have to pay for the continued good will of the media is continued evidence of his nonextremism. Henceforth he will have to be on guard lest he fall into Buchananite rhetoric, in pursuit of Buchanan voters. Bill Safire, moreover, has warned Dole not to invite the anti-Semite Buchanan as a speaker to the San Diego convention. Other journalists have gone even further, demanding that Dole and other "moderate Republicans" expel Buchanan from the party.

Al Hunt and David Broder have also proposed that Dole name Powell as a running mate in order to underscore his moderation. With some luck these journalists may be able to arrange a presidential contest that excludes the Right entirely. In that situation Clinton and Dole will fight for the loyalty of people Broder and company approve of, without looking for support to "extremists."

The rub is that Dole may need precisely those extremists to create an electorate different from that of Clinton. But as soon as he tries to reach for it, the press will in all likelihood Buchananize him: emphasize

ing the similarities between Dole's insensitivities and those of the American Adolf Hitler and reminding Dole of his sudden affinity for a figure whom until recently he too had denounced as an extremist.

Dole will be hoisted on his own petard, and this may happen even if he gives the talking heads what they want. Then he would go down to defeat as a big-government, socially "moderate" Republican appealing to an essentially Clintonian electorate. This strategy would play into the hands of third-party "extremists," who would rally social conservatives and Middle American radicals. This populist insurgency might not lead immediately to a victorious presidential party, but it would weaken the already threatened legitimacy of the two major parties. And it would provide a continuing focus for an anti-establishment politics of the Right, though one that would have to define itself coherently in order to become a credible ruling coalition.

The Buchanan debacle also confirmed the obvious in terms of the neo-conservatives as the kept opposition of the Left. Throughout Buchanan's campaign neoconservative journalists and politicians led the pack in going after Pat. The remark by Safire on "Meet the Press," that Buchanan rated a 5 to Hitler's 10 as an anti-Semite, was utterly demagogic. It prompted even *National Review*, which usually avoid any dis-

agreement with the *Commentary* crowd, to publish an editorial denying that Buchanan was anti-Semitic. *NR* observed that all the statements used to prove that Buchanan is anti-Semitic have been grossly decontextualized or based on Buchanan's correct observations, e.g., that John Demjanjuk was not Ivan the Terrible.

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Buchanan had *never* been a Holocaust-denier and has supported the present government of Israel as much as he was critical of the former one. But of course proving the obvious here is beside the point. Like their liberal allies, the neocons hate Buchanan, and any stick will do in going after him, particularly one associated with the unspeakable Nazis (who now live on as liberal-neocon replacement for Satan).

Yet the neocons gained nothing by their recent hysteria, except for allying themselves more closely with their true base on the Left. By now it has become impossible to find anything of importance that distinguishes the neocons from the center-Left, save for their hard line against the Middle East peace process and their occasional waffling on affirmative action. The presidential candidates they backed, Alexander and Powell, ran to the left of Dole, and the alacrity of neocon journalists in rallying to the socially liberal Powell shows how little they really think of even the few socially conservative stands that they took or pretended to take in the past.

By now even the dissembling seems to have passed. The neocons are no longer trying to hide their neo-conservative identity. Jack Kemp has come out openly for minority quotas; and neocon journalists thunder against the arrogance of Southern whites who believe they have the right to fly the Confederate flag.

Bill Kristol, and presumably his office-hungry family, found no problem with Colin Powell's liberalism, but they are terrified by Buchanan's views on immigration. The ultimate meaningfulness of any neocon-liberal distinc-

tion broke through during the "Capital Gang" last week when Bob Novak complained to Al Hunt about the lack of a conservative presidential candidate. When Hunt asked Novak whom he wanted to see run, Novak responded "Bennett or Kemp." Hunt smiled benignly at Novak in a way that told it all. Novak's "conservative" Republicans were precisely those candidates whom Hunt the liberal found most acceptable. ■

The Cuban Fifth-Column

by Greg Pavlik

United States foreign policy is in a rut. Despite constant media aggravation from our neoconservative imperialists, the public wants nothing to do with foreign entanglements.

Americans reacted to the downing of two Cessna airplanes of the Cuban exile group "Brothers to the Rescue" with a yawn...as well they should have. The interesting thing about the Cuban incident is that it appeared at first as if the Clinton administration might respond rationally, and either downplay the incident or ignore it altogether. That would have been the appropriate reaction: after all, it was really none

of our business. Worse still, evidence quickly accumulated to suggest that the Cuban government was intentionally provoked by Brothers to the Rescue in order to aggravate hostilities between the Cuban and

American governments. Cuba had repeatedly warned both the exile group and the American government that the fly-over pamphleteering of Brothers to the Rescue would not be tolerated.

Besides, what do you imagine would be the end result if Castro, after inveighing for years against the U.S., allowed Cuban "civilians" to fly into U.S. air space and drop pamphlets calling on the people to rise up and install a government friendly to Cuba. After the Cuban pilots disregarded warnings from air traffic control to leave U.S. air space, how many seconds would it take before they were blown out of the sky? The question is ridiculous only because everyone knows that the planes would have been shot down long before a single pamphlet had been dropped. The planes could have been flying bombs, after all.

This is a rather obvious point, and after the shooting things looked as if they might be swept under the rug. Two days later, Clinton was still debating whether the United States should respond at all. Then came the Cuban exile community, beating the drums for the punishment of the Cuban government. The Clinton administration caved in shortly thereafter and decided to push for broadened sanctions against Cuba. The reason? The heavy Cuban influence in the electorally-crucial state of Florida—where Clinton had lost narrowly in 1992.

Clinton was promptly out-pandered by Clinton's likely Republican challenger Bob Dole, who lamented that it's "a shame that President Clinton's weak actions today did not match his tough rhetoric." Of course, draconian attempts to punish Castro typically mean starving the Cuban people into submission, an immoral policy that's yet to demonstrate its efficacy after 40 years of effort.

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