

# Buchanan outlines fascistic platform at Reform Party convention

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Patrick Buchanan outlined the extreme right-wing politics upon which he intends to base his campaign for US president in an acceptance speech Saturday night before his supporters at the Reform Party national convention in Long Beach, California. Pro-Buchanan delegates had unanimously nominated the longtime Republican operative the day before, two days after blocking opposing delegates from being seated at the convention.

Those opposed to Buchanan—mostly supporters of Texas billionaire and party founder Ross Perot—held a separate convention, nominating Iowa physicist and former Natural Law Party candidate John Hagelin and Silicon Valley millionaire Nat Goldhaber as their presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Charging that Buchanan violated party rules, Hagelin's supporters have filed a lawsuit with the Federal Election Commission and are seeking to prevent Buchanan from receiving the \$12.6 million in federal campaign matching funds that go along with the nomination. The anti-Buchanan Reform organization and its candidates share many of the right-wing positions of the Buchanan faction.

In his remarks Saturday night Buchanan appealed to religious backwardness and xenophobia and invoked policy standbys of the right wing such as tax-cutting and eliminating “big government.” He called on “homeless conservatives” inside the Republican Party, frustrated with Bush's efforts to distance himself from the religious right and mute the party's attack on abortion, to join the Reform Party. “The Republicans are running away from life,” he said, “but as long as there is life left in me, I will never run away [from America's unborn children]—because their cause is my cause, and their cause is God's cause,” Buchanan declared.

At the same time Buchanan sought to find wider support with a pseudo-populist appeal aimed at sections of the middle class and working class affected by corporate downsizing, economic insecurity and falling living standards. Exploiting the fact that neither of the major political parties addresses these issues, Buchanan said, “Beneath our surface prosperity, there is a deep anxiety among our people, a foreboding within our people that was ignored at the festival in Philadelphia [the Republican national convention].”

He blamed this not on the profit system—which he has defended throughout his entire political career—but on what he called the “sellout” of American economic and political sovereignty by Washington politicians. Referring to West Virginia steelworkers who had lost their jobs because of cheaper foreign imports, he said American workers had been “betrayed by Clinton and sacrificed to the gods of the Global Economy.”

Workers, he claimed, could only defend themselves by standing up for American culture and “independence” against international financiers and “global government” institutions like the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations, which, he said, had corrupted the Democrats and Republicans. Employing rhetoric laced with anti-Semitic undertones, he declared, “There has to be one party willing to drive the money changers out of the temples of our civilization.”

Next Buchanan, who wrote speeches for Nixon during the Vietnam War and Reagan during the US military buildup against the USSR, attacked US sanctions against Iraq and the war against Yugoslavia as examples of the “arrogance of power” and US efforts to build an “empire.” He attacked these military interventions from the standpoint that they served the interests of the United Nations and the “New World

Order,” not the vital interests of the US.

“We will no longer squander the blood of our soldiers fighting other countries' wars,” he said. Buchanan later made it clear that he was entirely in favor of preparing military action against what he considered serious enemies of the US, such as “Communist China,” which he said was persecuting Christians, flooding America with cheap goods and “rattling missiles at the US.”

Denouncing the Democrats and Republicans for conspiring to “kill our beloved republic,” Buchanan said, “We will reclaim every lost ounce of American sovereignty. We will lead this country out of the WTO, out of the IMF, and I will personally tell [UN General Secretary] 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 you ten thousand Marines to help you pack your bags.”

To the cheers of the predominantly middle-class audience, he promised to impose a 10 percent tariff on imports and end all taxes on small businesses.

Following calls for the elimination of federal agencies such as the Internal Revenue Agency and the Department of Education, and for returning prayer to the schools, Buchanan launched into a tirade against immigrants. He related a story about an elderly woman in Arizona who was besieged by criminals—by implication, Mexican immigrants. He denounced “the cowardice of politicians who refuse to do their duty and defend the borders of the United States.” When he became president, Buchanan declared, “all US troops will come home from Kosovo, Kuwait and Korea; and I will put them on the borders of Arizona, Texas and California; and we will start putting America first.”

Before his speech, Buchanan's running mate, Ezola Foster, a leader of the campaign for anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California, denounced the presence of “foreign flags in our classrooms, not the Old Glory.” She excoriated the issuance of ballot instructions in languages other than English, and said, “Our constitution says: ‘We the people of the United States of America,’ not ‘We the people of the world.’” She was continually interrupted by chants of “USA, USA!”

Like his counterparts in Europe—such as Haider in Austria and Le Pen in France—Buchanan seeks to exploit social discontent over economic pressures and the indifference of the political establishment in order to advance fascist politics. He takes to the extreme the

logic of economic nationalism as promoted by the AFL-CIO trade union bureaucracy and political figures such as Green Party presidential candidate Ralph Nader, as well as various “anti-globalization” protest organizations. To the extent that such forces champion national sovereignty and the national state as antidotes to the power of transnational corporations and banks, they provide ideological fuel, wittingly or unwittingly, for the fascist politics of Buchanan and his ilk.

This outlook is based on the false claim that American workers have a common interest with their “own” capitalist class—by virtue of their common nationality—and serves to block a unified international struggle of the working class against the global corporations.

For all of the complaints from the anti-Buchanan faction of the Reform Party, from its very foundation the Reform Party's politics and class character propelled it in a right-wing direction. Billionaire Ross Perot, who collaborated with Buchanan in the campaign against the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada, founded the party on the basis of economic nationalist and pro-capitalist politics. While criticizing the most obvious aspects of the corruption of the political system, the Reform Party defended the economic and class foundations of that system.



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