

Romney outlines right-wing agenda in acceptance speech

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31 August 2012

Mitt Romney officially accepted the Republican Party's nomination for president on Thursday evening, in a speech before the national convention in Tampa, Florida. The speech concluded a three-day convention during which the Republicans put on display the right-wing program upon which they are campaigning.

The Republican platform is significant not simply for what it says about the party—a deeply reactionary organization—but the entire American political system. Amid the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, the ruling class, represented by both big business parties, is moving to escalate attacks on the working class.

In terms of policy, the main focus of the Republican campaign is the “economy”—i.e., demands for further corporate deregulation, the elimination of all constraints on profit-making, and the dismantling of Medicare and other social programs to further enrich the financial aristocracy. The Obama administration has pursued these policies over the past four years, and the Republicans are working to shift the political debate even further to the right.

Romney, a former CEO of an asset-stripping firm with a personal fortune of some \$200 million, cynically expressed his concern for high levels of unemployment, declining wages, and record poverty. This comes from a candidate who personifies Wall Street speculation and

is on record declaring that he is “not concerned about poor people.”

To supposedly address the economic crisis, Romney outlined a five-point program that includes: the ending of restrictions on energy corporations; “school choice,” i.e., the further dismantling and privatization of public education; a harder line on China and other competitors of US capitalism; a massive program of austerity; and the reduction of taxes on businesses.

Romney repeated Republican calls for repealing and replacing “Obamacare,” the health care reform that the current administration initiated to cut health care costs for business and corporations. Invoking the specter of Greece, where austerity measures dictated by the banks have thrown the country into Depression-level conditions of poverty and unemployment, Romney said: “We will cut the deficits and put America on the path to a balanced budget.”

In his speech on Wednesday, vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan elaborated on this theme, declaring, “In this generation, a defining responsibility of government is to steer our nation clear of a debt crisis while there is still time.” He called for limiting federal spending to 20 percent of GDP, which will require massive cuts to social programs—in fact, the virtual elimination of non-defense discretionary spending.

Neither Romney nor Ryan spelled out the devastating impact their proposals would have on Medicare. Instead, they have criticized the Obama administration over its \$700 billion in cuts to the health program for the elderly, claiming that their alternative will “save”

Medicare. This involves the transformation of the program into a subsidy for private insurance—a program that is, in fact, similar to Obamacare’s own “universal” health care, in that it requires individuals to purchase insurance from private firms.

Little was said by Romney on foreign policy, aside from a brief attempt to outflank Obama on the right in support for Israel and hostility to Iran and Russia.

The *New York Times* pointed to the basic unanimity between the two parties on the expansion of American militarism, writing: “For decades, starting after the Vietnam War, the Republicans were able to present themselves as the tougher party on foreign and military policy. Mr. Obama has robbed them of that by being aggressive on counterterrorism and by flexing military and diplomatic muscle more successfully than President George W. Bush.”

A notable feature of Romney’s speech and of the entire convention was the heavy dose of identity politics, particularly Romney’s insistence that he favored greater access for women to positions of power and privilege. “Half of my cabinet and senior officials were women,” he said, “and in business, I mentored and supported great women leaders who went on to run great companies.” Amid ever greater social inequality, such appeals have become an institutional element of American politics, not limited to the Democratic Party.

In general, if the Republicans can present themselves as offering something better for the American people, it is because of the record of the Obama administration, which has been one of complete subordination to the dictates of the financial aristocracy. If anything can be said to be true in Romney’s remarks, it is his comment that “You know there’s something wrong with the kind of job [Obama has] done as president when the best feeling you had was the day you voted for him.”

To the extent that such comments resonate, it only underscores the complete disconnect of the entire political system from the aspirations of masses of people.

Apart from this, Romney’s speech, like the

convention as a whole, was filled with the vacuous sophisms and insipid rhetoric that are universal in American politics. The speech was broken up by chants of “USA! USA!” from the assembled gathering of right-wing delegates, the semi-fascistic detritus of American capitalism.

The initial media reaction was to praise Romney’s remarks, declaring it a “defining” speech, even “the best of Romney’s career.” The festival of reaction that is the Republican National Convention is thus presented as some sort of great and legitimate component of the American “political debate.”

The Republican convention is to be followed next week by the Democratic Party Convention—at which a somewhat different, though no less thorough, lying will be on display.



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