

Ron Paul's Party

WHILE TWITCHY COPS and party hacks congregated in St. Paul for the Republican Convention, 12,000 Ron Paul supporters assembled for the Rally for the Republic in Minneapolis. The counter-convention featured a dozen speakers—from libertarian luminaries Bill Kauffman and Lew Rockwell to ex-governors Jesse Ventura and Gary Johnson—plus musical acts Sara Evans and Aimee Allen (the freedom movement's answer to Avril Lavigne, with more talent and less tolerance for the Bilderberg Group). Barry Goldwater Jr. introduced Paul's keynote.

John McCain's big tent across the river brought together hawks of all persuasions, from Joe Lieberman to Sarah Palin to Rudy Giuliani. The Connecticut senator, as staunch an advocate for military adventurism as abortion, got a prime-time speaking slot. A certain pro-life, antiwar Texan was *persona non grata*.

"We offered our services. We would have been glad to have an opportunity, we would have been pleased to participate," Paul said. But "that wasn't available to us." McCain did not want his primary challenger even to be seen. "We had thought we would be able to go over, but my floor privileges have been strictly limited," Paul revealed. "They've given me a pass that is second class."

That pass required that the congressman enter and leave only by a certain door, be chaperoned by a McCain flack, and not bring any staff. Paul had no intention of attending under those conditions. Yet he didn't get mad—he got even. "We still have enough freedom in this country to get involved and become the party," he said, "and that's been our approach rather than complaining about it."

"The Republican Party ought to be welcoming me because I appeal to young people," Paul contended. Indeed,

one of the most remarkable things about Paul's presidential campaign was its ability to energize youth around the unlikeliest of causes: "One of the most exciting issues that we talk about with young people is monetary policy."

Even more than the Iraq War, the Federal Reserve stokes the passions of Paul's supporters. During his keynote, the Target Center shook to chants of "End the Fed!" Months earlier, during a Paul appearance at the University of Michigan, students burned Federal Reserve notes—money, or Uncle Sam's facsimile thereof.

Impressive as the rally was, even more portentous may have been the 600 activists who turned out for training put on by Paul's new organization, the Campaign for Liberty, in the days before. They sat through ten-and-a-half hours of political boot camp on Aug. 31 and another eight hours the next day. This was a promising start for the Campaign for Liberty, which aims to do for the small-government, antiwar side what the Christian Coalition did for religious conservatives in the early 1990s.

Yet it has tensions at the philosophical level. One activist observed that there seemed to be many "paleoconservatives" in the group's leadership, while much of the grassroots were "anarcho-capitalists." Paul recognizes the fault line. "I have many friends in the libertarian movement who look down on those of us who get involved in political activity," he acknowledged, but "eventually, if you want to bring about changes ... what you have to do is participate in political action."

The Campaign for Liberty's organizers emphasized that though there might be few candidates Paul supporters can get behind, there are always ballot issues and legislation that the grassroots

can organize to stop—tax hikes, gun registration, municipal bonds. Yet the great causes that animate the Paul coalition—war and monetary policy—are national. Paul is 73. If he doesn't run in 2012, where will his supporters go?

One man eager to take up his banner is former Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura. "I wrote the book *Don't Start the Revolution Without Me*. Well, I'm here," he announced, hinting that "in 2012 we'll give them a race they'll never forget." The former pro-wrestler was charismatic—and kooky. He teased the 9/11 "truther" contingent in the audience by asking why Osama bin Laden had not been formally charged with the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center. That way lies madness. If Ventura is the future of the Paul movement, it will go the way of the Reform Party.

A better prospect for 2012 might be the rally's other ex-governor—Gary Johnson of New Mexico. He doesn't have Ventura's presence, but he's witty. Describing his opposition to mandatory-helmet laws for motorcyclists, he said, "We have an organ donor shortage. If you want to ride your motorcycle without a helmet, go ahead." Johnson is even more of a non-interventionist than his admirers had suspected. "We have a military presence in 155 countries," he said, "We need to embark on a process of getting those 155 countries unoccupied, à la Ron Paul."

The Rally for the Republic made plain that Ron Paul Republicans will have no truck with McCain or Obama. But is there any other politician they can support, besides Paul himself? More than just their movement is at stake: Paul's revolution might be the last chance in a generation for sound money and a non-imperial foreign policy. ■

Four More Years

Both parties remain in thrall to the Bush Doctrine.

By Tony Smith

FIVE YEARS AFTER the invasion of Iraq—arguably the most momentous mistake in the history of American foreign policy—what have we learned? Maybe nothing. The current administration is still mired in the mindset that brought about this calamity, and for all their attempts to distance themselves from an unpopular president, have John McCain or Barack Obama really renounced the Bush Doctrine?

Issued in a series of speeches and documents during 2002, the Bush Doctrine was the most complex and coherent of the many presidential statements of its kind. Its grand design rested on the conviction that America's military primacy conferred a right to reorganize hostile or failed states into free-market democracies. The result promised to be an enduring world order of peace in freedom under American leadership. The doctrine legitimized the invasion of Iraq, but its goal was global dominion.

This bid for world hegemony rested on three propositions. First, the world can be divided into democracies and tyrannies, with the former being repositories of virtue and the latter home to all that is evil. Second, the United States holds the key to a peaceful order applicable to virtually all peoples and places, and a conversion from tyranny to freedom is an operation the U.S. can conduct. Third, where possible to expand the world's zone of peace, the United States will act with force multilaterally to take over hostile or failed states or preemptively and unilaterally if so obliged. To win the peace that follows

the victory of arms, the U.S. is prepared to occupy foreign peoples for their own good as well as our own.

The Iraq War put those tenets to the test, and the verdict is in: we do not have the power—and may not have the interest—to sponsor democratic governments wherever they are lacking, and a modern form of progressive imperialism aimed at reconstructing post-conflict states is far more likely to turn nationalist forces against us than to rally international opinion in our favor.

The question, then, is where John McCain and Barack Obama stand. Will they extend or eliminate the Bush Doctrine?

With the Republican candidate, there is little doubt. Since 1993, McCain has been chairman of the International Republican Institute, a part of the National Endowment for Democracy. Under IRI auspices, he was intimately involved in efforts to advance democratic ideology long before Bush gave any thought to such matters. Neoconservatives like William Kristol preferred McCain in the 2000 Republican primaries for just this reason.

He has chosen as his top foreign-policy adviser Randy Scheunemann, once a board member of the neoconservative Project for the New American Century. Scheunemann also helped create the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq (among whose members were Sens. Joseph Lieberman and John McCain), participated in the drafting of the 1998 Iraq Liberation Act, joined the Project for Transitional Democracies, and was

briefly a consultant to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on Iraq policy.

Given his background and contacts, there should be no surprise that McCain endorses all three elements of the Bush Doctrine. He entitled his article in the November-December 2007 issue of *Foreign Affairs* "An Enduring Peace Built on Freedom," writing, "The protection and promotion of the democratic ideal, at home and abroad, will be the surest source of security and peace for the century that lies before us." Accordingly, McCain would create a global League of Democracies to deal with human rights and democracy promotion worldwide through military means. In Asia, our natural allies would be market democracies, "But until China moves toward political liberalization, our relationship will be based on periodically shared interests rather than on the bedrock of shared values." Given Russian revanchism, "we need a new Western approach" to handling Moscow, including reinforcing the solidarity of NATO and expelling Russia from the G-8.

McCain's March 26 speech to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council displayed an especially militant commitment to the Bush Doctrine. America should organize "a global coalition for peace and freedom. . . . We must help expand the power and reach of freedom, using all our many strengths as a free people." Looking at the Middle East, he declared that while Turkey, Israel, India, and Indonesia are democratic, "Iraq and Afghanistan lie at the heart of that region. And whether they eventually become stable democra-