

Elephants & Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

Does Dem platform mask hidden agenda?

Compared to Democratic Party platforms of the last several elections, the one that will be presented to the party's convention in July is a relatively mild piece of work. No calls for a nuclear freeze or drastic cuts in defense spending; no endorsement of gay marriages or weekend furloughs for murderers.

Its worst feature is its labeling of South Africa a "terrorist state"—a grossly irresponsible act, which was compounded by Mike Dukakis's public denunciation of Angolan UNITA head Jonas Savimbi during his visit to Washington. It's being justified as a necessary concession to Jesse Jackson.

The platform's vagueness fulfills the instructions of chairman Paul Kirk, who wanted to avoid the usual super-liberal pronouncements that had helped defeat the Democrats in four out of the last five presidential elections.

Its main virtue, in the eyes of many Democratic politicians, is that it says nothing that can get them in trouble with the electorate. As Rep. Tom Bevill, a conservative Democrat from Alabama, put it, "No member of Congress has ever been defeated because of what he didn't say."

But what the platform doesn't say is exactly what voters should be concerned about. It's no secret that policymakers across the spectrum have agreed that a sharp reduction in American living standards will be the order of the day, and that while there may be slight differences in tactics be-

tween a Bush or a Dukakis administration, their overall policy thrust will be the same.

Coalition government

Does the Democratic platform's fuz-ziness hide a hidden agenda? No doubt; and one clue to that agenda can be gleaned from the policy outlook of the platform's chief architect, former John F. Kennedy speechwriter Ted Sorensen.

Currently an attorney with the prominent New York law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Sorensen laid down his prescriptions for the United States in a 1984 book, *A Different Kind of Presidency*, which called for a "government of national unity" that could foist politically unpopular measures on the population.

Such a "bipartisan 'grand coalition' of national unity" would be able to shield legislators more effectively from constituency backlash, Sorensen argued, because both parties would be represented in the government, and would be publicly committed to its program.

This government would include a President and Vice President from opposite parties; a cabinet and sub-cabinet equally divided between the two parties; a Presidential Advisory Council of elder statesmen; a National Council of Economic Cooperation and Coordination "harmonizing the practices of private interests"; and a joint executive-congressional delegation to the U.S.-U.S.S.R. arms talks.

The administration would voluntarily promise to serve one term only, which would make it even more immune to political pressures.

Political immunity is precisely what such a government would require to survive, given the kinds of policies Sorensen said it should effect. Among them:

- Drastic cuts in the U.S. budget, affecting both military and social spending.

- A series of international agreements to enforce this austerity, under which the United States would surrender what's left of its national sovereignty in economic matters. These "may require . . . some restrictions on [America's] freedom of action. But many governments borrowing from the International Monetary Fund . . . have . . . accepted temporary restrictions, some of them vastly unpopular, on their economic conduct. The United States and other industrialized nations . . . should similarly be able to accept some self-discipline for the common good."

- The establishment of tripartite committees of labor, government, and industry, which would coordinate economic policy under the direction of the national economic council; that is, fascism.

- In the strategic policy realm, the national unity government should strive for major new arms agreements with the Soviet Union, including a START pact. To show its good faith, it should "halt the production, testing, and deployment of strategic nuclear weapons (including the MX missile and the B-1 bomber), the production of plutonium, and the testing of anti-satellite and other space weapons, and comply with . . . the unratified SALT II treaty."

Sorensen's proposals for government restructuring may seem wild at first glance, but there are plenty of people in the elite who believe this is the way to go. Indeed, Congress has already established a National Economic Council, and, even if the precise details of Sorensen's "government of national unity" don't come into play, government by non-elected "commissions," armed with fascist policies, is definitely in the works.