

GOP freshmen in the footsteps of Chairman Mao's Red Guard

by Mark Sonnenblick

Just prior to the 1994 elections, Newt Gingrich and his Conservative Revolution cohorts from the GOPAC political action committee brought all of the first-time Republican congressional candidates in to Washington, D.C. At a Capitol Hill ceremony, each and every one of the candidates stepped up to a table and signed an oath to uphold, *not* the U.S. Constitution, but the Contract with America, the GOPAC-tailored blueprint for austerity, tax breaks for the rich, and the dismantling of the federal government. It was a show of glazed-eyed "party loyalty" that would have made China's Mao Zedong smile. A prominent German daily would later describe the GOP Contract zealots as the "Red Guard," a reference to Mao's death squads who imposed a decade of terror upon China, and executed an estimated 10 million of their countrymen.

Several months after the signing ceremony, following the GOP congressional sweep in November 1994, the 73 victorious freshmen members of Congress paraded from the headquarters of the British intelligence-spawned Heritage Foundation to Capitol Hill in another display of "night of the living dead" solidarity with Chairman Newt.

On only a few rare occasions in their intervening year in Congress, have any of the freshmen broken ranks with Gingrich and the rest of the Conservative Revolution hawks in the GOP House leadership. Even on those rare occasions, for the most part, the freshmen have chastised their leaders—especially Newt—for straying from the pure path of "the revolution" on behalf of some pragmatic short-term goal.

"Ideological adherence" to the goal of bringing down the very foundations of the U.S. constitutional system was, after all, what this freshman class was groomed for—in many cases, through years of indoctrination, via GOPAC audiocassettes, videos, focus groups, training sessions, and even classes on "how to talk like Newt" (see *EIR*, Jan. 12, 1996, "Tavistock's 'Anticipatory Democracy' in Action: Newtzi's GOPAC").

Introducing the class of '94

The Republican class of '94 is a coalition of hand-picked die-hards, one-third of whom cut their teeth in state legislatures, where they were trained by GOPAC. The remainder were screened and trained through their involvement in a

range of conservative "single issue" movements, all bankrolled by the same small grouping of right-wing money-bags and lobbyists from the big liquor, casino gambling, and tobacco firms. One-third are long-time activists in the Christian Coalition, whose president, Ralph Reed, Jr., started out in politics as a Gingrich campaign staffer. Four freshmen are medical doctors who decided to go to Congress to fight against universal health care coverage. A dozen emerged from the National Rifle Association, militia, and "wise-use" swamp.

Two of Newtzi's young superstars, David McIntosh (Ind.) and John Shadegg (Ariz.), come from Mont Pelerin Society-linked think-tanks, the Hudson Institute and Goldwater Institute, respectively. John Ensign (Nev.) perhaps epitomizes the new breed Republican. His family owns gambling casinos and he managed them. Zach Wamp (Tenn.) is a former cocaine addict.

Among the Red Guards, there are some with real blood on their hands. Joe Scarborough was elected from Pensacola, Florida, thanks to the publicity he received by volunteering to represent his friend Michael Griffin, after Griffin murdered a local abortion doctor. As soon as he got to Congress, Scarborough organized a caucus of the most violently anti-government newcomers.

Although self-portrayed as political novices, more than 70% previously held elective office; and the majority of the freshmen are lawyers, former congressional aides, or other types of "insiders."

When it comes to voting, the claim of diversity really ends. The first-termers voted with Speaker Gingrich 92.3% of the time during 1995, and not one gave him less than 83% backing.

Some among the freshmen are peddling a brand of regionalism that smacks of outright secessionism. Helen Chenoweth of Idaho recently told *The American Enterprise* magazine: "What I'm seeing is a new division between the cowboys and the city slickers. We can almost divide it [the U.S.] at the 100th meridian."

The magazine prompted, "Do you see any prospect, if this doesn't change, of a secessionist movement arising in the West?" Chenoweth answered, "It must change. . . . The West was not settled by wimps and faint-hearted individuals. And they're not going to give up the west that easily."

Plum committee postings

Gingrich has packed the most powerful committees with his Red Guard. He placed Enid Waldholtz (Utah) on the Rules Committee, seven newcomers on Appropriations, six on Budget, and three on Ways and Means. This violation of seniority permitted the Speaker to ride roughshod over Republicans who were inclined to balk at his revolution's excesses.

The new members were also given chairmanships of a couple of subcommittees. Hudson Institute privatization zealot David McIntosh became chair of the National Economic Growth, Natural Resources, and Regulatory Affairs subcommittee of the Government Reform and Oversight Committee.

The freshmen were given their own formal leadership—selected for loyalty to the Speaker. Their president is Roger Wicker, who has been a Gingrich loyalist since GOPAC helped elect him to the Mississippi State Senate in 1986.

The most rabid Red Guards formed a misnamed “New Federalists Society” to be the vanguard of the “permanent revolution.” Led by Sam Brownback (Kan.), John Shadegg, and Joe Scarborough, a dozen of them huddle at 7 a.m. thrice weekly.

While ripping apart the federal government in the name of “decentralization,” Gingrich has deployed his shock troops to achieve an unprecedented degree of centralization of power in his own hands. The Speaker's Advisory Group is his command and control body. The Speaker's Office says this group has no formal existence, nor a defined membership. It informed *EIR* that the most frequent attendees at meetings called by Newt include:

Tom DeLay (Tex.): the Majority Whip.

Dick Armey (Tex.): House Majority leader; the most “schooled” of the free-market fanatics in Congress; former distinguished fellow at the Fisher Institute, a Mont Pelerin front group,

John Kasich (Ohio): A former counterculture freak, who still takes pride in the fact that he's the “only member of Congress ever to be thrown off the stage at a Grateful Dead concert.”

Robert Walker (Pa.): Newt's best friend in Congress since they became back-bench rabble-rousers in 1978.

Bill Paxon (N.Y.): Chairman, National Republican Congressional Committee.

Dennis Hastert (Ill.): House Republican Deputy Whip.

Sen. Paul Coverdell (Ga.): A 20-year associate of Gingrich from Georgia.

Sen. Connie Mack (Fla.).

John Boehner (Ohio): Gingrich's pit bull on the House banking scandal and head of campaign to elect him Republican leader.

Jim Nussle (Iowa).

The Red Guard sees enemies everywhere, not just on the Democratic side of the congressional aisle. Since their January 1995 inauguration, the Red Guard has spent as much time targetting the 35-50 moderate Republicans in the House and

the 15 in the Senate. These are seen as the key obstacles to trashing government, because they deprive the Newtzis of a veto-busting majority.

Golems

The Old Testament speaks of golems, made of clay, who return to bedevil their makers. The image may fit the monster Gingrich has unleashed. Once programmed and wound up to mindless intransigence on an issue, even Gingrich has trouble turning off his zombies.

On Jan. 5, when Gingrich realized that his keeping the government closed was playing in Clinton's favor, he decided to beat a tactical retreat. He demanded loyalty on a Jan. 5 resolution to partially reopen the government. The vote was 401-17. The 17 “nay” votes included Democrats Sam Gibbons and Alcee Hastings (Fla.), who voted against the resolution because it would have only partially reopened the government. The GOP intransigents included Joe Barton (R-Tex.), once Gingrich's top GOPAC ally in Congress; “free market” purist Peter Hoekstra (R-Mich.); Jay Dickey (R-Ark.); and 13 Republican freshmen. The freshmen were: Bob Barr (Ga.), Steve Chabot (Ohio), Helen Chenoweth (Idaho), Greg Ganske (Iowa), Lindsey Graham (S.C.), John Hostettler (Ind.), Steve Largent (Okla.), Mark Sanford (S.C.), John Shadegg (Ariz.), Linda Smith (Wash.), Mark Souder (Ind.), and Todd Tiahrt (Kan.). In a later vote, the House voted to fully reopen the government.

The following week, Gingrich exacted revenge by cancelling campaign fundraising stops scheduled for sophomore Dickey and freshmen Chenoweth, Hostettler, and Souder. Souder shot back that association with Gingrich was “absolutely a political liability” for him and that for Gingrich to appear with him at a fundraiser, “is probably not a net gain, even for the money.”

Gingrich's vengeance disconcerted the Red Guards, who were shocked at being spanked for refusing to retreat. Columnist Robert Novak described the punishment as “perhaps the biggest political error of his speakership.” Paul Weyrich, Newt's conservative godfather, delivered an indictment of his protégé in a Jan. 17 *Washington Times* op-ed entitled, “A Bit of Advice for the Speaker.” Weyrich, who, 25 years ago, convinced Gingrich to mask his New Age program under a “conservative” cover, charges him with being tolerant of Senator Hatfield's voting down the Balanced Budget Amendment, while punishing the freshmen for sticking to their guns. He reminded him that conservatives twice saved his re-election. Weyrich concludes that the media “portrayal of you as a cry-baby . . . will prevail if you persist in going down this path.”

Weyrich reminds Gingrich that “if there are no members of the House who are more hard-line than you are, then you will take all the heat that comes from being on the point. If you, on the other hand, can point to members who want to do a lot more than you do, you will be in a much better negotiating position with your opponents.”