

The big news of the Republican National Convention is that the Reagan Revolution and the conservative movement are alive and well, while liberalism is politically dead. Just compare the Republican Party Platform with the post-Convention interview given by Michael Dukakis' closest adviser, Paul Brontas.

On ABC's "'This Week With David Brinkley,'" Brontas was pressed again and again to admit that Dukakis is a "'liberal.'" He pointedly refused to accept that label because, Brontas said, "'it carries a lot of baggage.'" Indeed it does. That's why the Democrats are all running away from what is now called the "'L'" word.

As Republicans rolled into New Orleans for their Convention, the question most frequently asked by inquiring reporters was, Is this the end of the Reagan era? Is the conservative movement finished?

A concerted effort was waged to try to get conservatives to say that George Bush is not their favorite candidate, and that the conservative era was just a flash in the pan that depended on the charisma of a Hollywood actor who is now taking his last curtain calls.

That was just wishful thinking on the part of some closet liberals. Lowell Weicker and his friends who grandstanded on the tube against the Platform couldn't even muster up enough Republican delegates to file a minority report.

The same people seemed determined to get George Bush to disassociate himself with Ronald Reagan in order for Bush to be his "'own man.'" That advice comes from those who are no friends of George Bush. The best way for Bush to win is to promise to continue the Reagan economic agenda.

The centerpiece of the Reagan Revolution was restated in the Republican Party Platform like this: "'The best jobs program -- the

one that created more than 17 million jobs since 1982 -- is lower taxes on people.''

The Reagan Administration cut the top marginal tax rate from 70 percent to 28 percent, stimulating the longest peacetime expansion in history. The Reagan tax reform took millions of low-income families off the tax rolls and doubled the personal exemption for all taxpayers, spouses, and every child.

It is fundamental conservative ideology that government didn't work this economic wonder; the people did. In the words of the Platform, "'Republicans got government out of the way, off the backs of households and entrepreneurs, so the people could take charge.'"

The result was that "'we are in the midst of the longest peacetime expansion in our country's history.'" The stunning historical fact of the 1980s is that "'from freedom comes opportunity; from opportunity comes growth; from growth comes progress.'"

Liberal reporters kept dogging conservative delegates with questions based on the reporters' definition of what they think conservative goals are. Conservatives certainly have a full agenda, but everything else together doesn't add up to as much as the fundamental conservative idea that the world is a better place when the work ethic is honored and taxes are cut so that people can spend more of their own money, invest their savings as they choose, and direct their present and future without government dictate or compulsion.

The number one issue of this and nearly every other campaign for national office is (BF)jobs(end BF). Jobs are essential to family integrity, community welfare, individual well-being and self-esteem, and national prosperity.

So the political question becomes, how best to stimulate more jobs? For years, starting with Roosevelt's New Deal, continuing with

Truman's Fair Deal and Kennedy's New Frontier, and flowering under Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, the liberals' answer to that question was higher taxes and more government programs. The essence of liberalism is being liberal with other people's money.

The 1988 Democratic Party Platform is still pushing the politics of the past. It talks vaguely about "creating good jobs at good wages through a national reinvestment strategy to construct new housing, repair our sewers, rebuild our roads and replace our bridges." It's clear that the Democrats think of jobs only in terms of government jobs for which higher taxes are the essential prerequisite.

The crucial issue is as clearly drawn in 1988 as it was in 1984. George Bush and the Republican Platform stand in concrete against tax increases. "Read my lips ... no new taxes," Bush said in his acceptance speech. The Democratic Party Platform's code words for tax increases are "investment through innovative partnerships and creative financing mechanisms." Translated, that means ingenious ways to pressure the American public into accepting tax increases.