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We the People...

Opinion/editorial by Edmund G. Brown, Jr.

The lights are dimming for Democracy. The Party's convention platform committee met here in Washington last weekend to consider amendments and vote on a platform draft for the 1992 presidential election. Taking refuge in gooey, imprecise language and cryptically calling for "a third way," the committee, under the corporate sponsored umbrella of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), revealed its intentions by what it excluded from the tax far more than by what it included. Absent was any recognition of the dangerous concentration and abuses of political and economic power of the past decade.

In contrast to the Party's traditions over the last 100 years, today's Party apparently is expected to be without concern over the massive wave of mergers and acquisitions that have left many of our corporations so burdened with debt that plant closings, cruel layoffs, depressed wages, and reduced research and development resulted. Yet, there's not a word in the platform about the need to enforce the federal antitrust laws that have been virtually shelved by the Republican regime of George Bush.

The Party now overlooks the corporate crime wave that has seen billions of dollars looted by financial institutions. The platform is at loss for words about stopping the dangerous levels of corporate criminal activity in environmental, consumer, and workplace sectors. Comprehensive corporate crime proposals were voted down with extreme prejudice.

While properly focusing on the need to reform the poverty welfare system, the platform committee ignored a far larger dollar amount devoted to Washington's corporate welfare budget. These corporate entitlements - bailouts, subsidies, loan guarantees, giveaways, and bargain basement leases - distort investment flows, coddle poor management and discriminate against businesses that are standing on their own feet - all at enormous expense to the taxpayer.

Although all kinds of studies show Americans to be upset and exploited by marketplace abuses, the platform committee refused mention of any consumer protection plank. Ask anyone you know if they think that auto insurance abuses, contaminated drinking

(more)

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