
Democratic Party

A challenge to the Jerry Brown machine

by Andrew Rotstein

Because the California Democratic Primary and ensuing 1982 congressional elections are broadly viewed as a bellwether for the 1984 presidential campaign, Gov. Jerry Brown, a presidential hopeful, needs a clear victory in his June 8 primary bid for the Democratic senatorial nomination to prove that wide support exists for his ultra-liberal, environmentalist zero-growth kookery. But as of this writing, Brown has had to keep looking back over his shoulder at a challenger, William Wertz, whose support has been growing stronger by the day.

Wertz, for several years the West Coast coordinator of the multi-candidate National Democratic Policy Committee, has a sizeable machine to call upon in the NDPC's 6,000 members in over 100 chapters throughout California. His goal is to produce a mandate for the NDPC's four-point emergency program—water projects, nuclear plants, low-cost gold-backed credit, and Third World development—and, he states flatly, to end the political career of Jerry Brown.

Wertz strategists are now talking of pulling together the ingredients for a real political upset. A fundamental economic breakdown is beginning to make itself felt in California, after eight years of Brown's no-growth economic administration, which killed both water-development and nuclear-power projects. This has created openings for the Wertz campaign, especially among labor. Over 30 trade-union officials, primarily building trades and teamsters, have bucked the state AFL-CIO leadership by endorsing Wertz.

The Brown machine is based in Charles Manatt's chairmanship of the Democratic National Committee, in the state's Democratic Council, and in Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda's "Campaign for Economic Democracy" organization. They are already disquieted by the results of the Pennsylvania gubernatorial primary, where NDPC Democrat Steve Douglas, like Wertz a "political unknown," won 147,000 votes (20 percent statewide, 35 percent in Philadelphia) on a program identical to Wertz's.

The Brown machine is also running Tom Hayden for State Assembly; on that front, too, they are showing signs of wear under attack from the Wertz forces.

The NDPC has pulled together a broad coalition to oppose Hayden and his "economic democracy" euphemisms for zero-growth socialism. "Hell no, we won't go—for Hayden!" chanted over 50 picketers—who modified Hayden's own 1960 chants as they marched in front of the former SDS leader's campaign headquarters in a recent demonstration.

"Those LaRouche people are giving Jane Fonda fits," commented a trade-union leader, referring to NDPC founder Lyndon LaRouche. "They're forcing her to dig deep into her pocketbook." According to articles in the *New York Times* and elsewhere, funds for Hayden's campaign and other CED activities like campaigning for Brown have had to come from Jane Fonda's exercise salons and sales of her *Workout* book.

Other picket lines have been thrown up at the site of Hayden's new home by Santa Monica and Los Angeles building trades councils. The house is being built with non-union labor.

The anti-Hayden sentiment spills over into anti-Brown sentiment; even the scandals surrounding the two are the same. DNC chief Manatt and Mickey Cantor, Brown's campaign manager, were caught building their new law office with non-union labor—with the result that chunks of Brown's nominal labor support are threatening to desert him. "If something isn't done about this," said one union president, "we may have to reconsider our endorsement of Brown."

The challenger's prospects began growing late in the fall, when he blanketed the state with a pamphlet, "The Campaign for Economic Democracy [Hayden's]: Brownshirts of the 80s," whose impact was to define the primary campaign's issues in advance. The pamphlet defined the character of the Hayden-Brown apparatus as "authentically fascist" in both economic- and social-policy terms. A Republican primary candidate excerpted portions for circulation under his own signature. Now, Wertz has issued a half-million copies of a leaflet naming Brown as an advocate of genocide. Wertz has denounced the British and called for the invocation of the Monroe Doctrine, making much of Brown's support for the British colonial adventure in the South Atlantic, a precedent for NATO's "population-reduction wars" in the Third World.

On May 22 and May 27, Wertz appeared with LaRouche in half-hour television spots in San Francisco and Los Angeles, generating dozens of supportive calls from viewers of all political persuasions. He has now purchased \$15,000 worth of one-minute radio spots.

Although Jim Jones People's Temple is no longer around to provide bodies for counting in the Brown vote, Wertz strategists fear vote fraud. Although he has raised over \$150,000, the *Los Angeles Times* omitted him from a candidate-financing article, and from an opinion poll—characteristic preparation for vote-theft.