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## Interview: Steven Douglas

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# How the NDPC won 20% of the vote in the Pennsylvania primary

*Steve Douglas, candidate for governor in the Pennsylvania Democratic primary, was interviewed by EIR two days after an election in which, as reported by the Philadelphia Inquirer, Douglas "posed a strong challenge to Rep. Ertel," the party leadership-backed candidate. Douglas ran with the endorsement of Democratic Party national figure Lyndon LaRouche. Excerpts of EIR's interview with Douglas follow.*

**EIR:** Your vote on May 18 is probably the most significant vote that a candidate backed by the National Democratic Policy Committee has received so far. How did your campaign achieve this?

**Douglas:** The 35 percent vote I won in Philadelphia and the 20 percent of the vote I received statewide was a vote that was generated as a result of the grass-roots organizing effort of thousands of people who were going door to door in their neighborhoods, at their places of employment, at their local clubs, getting out upwards of a half million pieces of campaign literature. All this literature addressed the fundamental question of how to reindustrialize Pennsylvania, how to restore the state as one of the country's industrial powers. The NDPC chapter chairmen in the state played a crucial role. The platform was focused on issues bearing on the economy—how to bring down interest rates, rebuild the railroads, build infrastructural projects, like the interconnecting waterway from Pittsburgh to Lake Erie, and the Tocks Island dam on the Delaware River—and on the issues of drugs and education. This was the key to the vote.

The other factor was that I was the only candidate putting forward a definite program, the concrete steps by which the state's economy could be rebuilt. The campaign took place in a policy vacuum.

**EIR:** You also went on television on the weekend before the election with Lyndon LaRouche, isn't that correct?

**Douglas:** Yes, in the eastern part of the state, and on that half-hour spot, I spoke for ten minutes on the issues I just mentioned, and Mr. LaRouche addressed the vital strategic issues which confront not only the citizens of Pennsylvania, but every other American citizen. He

spoke in particular on the Malvinas Islands crisis and the Tory takeover of the United States in Washington through the auspices of traitors such as Alexander Haig. The combined effect of the organizing around policies to rebuild the state and Mr. LaRouche's addressing the broader issues of the current crisis—including something that is on everyone's mind, the fear of war—had an enormous impact on the population of the Greater Philadelphia area, and that, I think, was reflected in the voting on Tuesday.

**EIR:** In Philadelphia, you took 18 out of 66 wards. What exactly was the constituency of those wards, and what would you say that reflects politically?

**Douglas:** The composition of those wards is exactly the composition of the machine that the late William Green, Sr., ran in the city. That is not the current Mayor Bill Green, but his father, and the mayor certainly does not do justice to the great work in the Democratic Party his father did. But these wards reflect exactly the composition of the machine that Bill Green Sr. put together, which was otherwise the hallmark of the Daley machine out in Chicago, or in broader terms, the machine that FDR put together as the backbone of the Democratic Party. The 18 wards that I did carry in Philadelphia were split nearly evenly between white and black blue-collar constituents, and several of the wards had significant Hispanic communities that turned out in sizable numbers. This gives the lie to the claims that many people are trying to make in an effort to destroy the Democratic Party that voting is strictly along racial lines. The older Green's machine was a black and white ethnic alliance based upon continuous economic development. And that's what we have.

Another theme I developed in the campaign which certainly struck a chord in these communities was my attack on the Wharton School plan to turn Philadelphia into a so-called international city, a service-sector city, in which industry, manufacturing, and so on would be dismantled and be replaced by luxury hotels, office buildings, pleasure palaces, condominiums, and real estate speculation. The once great industrial centers of Phila-

delphia and Pittsburgh are on their way to becoming the Sodom and Gomorrah of Pennsylvania, under the guidance of the Wharton School and their so-called post-industrial society orientation. And that is the outlook espoused by political front-men like Mayor Bill Green.

**EIR:** Green Jr. is something like Mayor Jane Byrne of Chicago. What do you think his chances are when he comes up for re-election next year?

**Douglas:** That is very hard to say at this point. Two of the major candidates backed by former Mayor Frank Rizzo in this election appear to have been defeated, although Representative Smith is contesting his election. The press is saying this means a waning of Rizzo's popularity and fortunes, and he, of course, is rumored to be planning to announce his candidacy for Mayor.

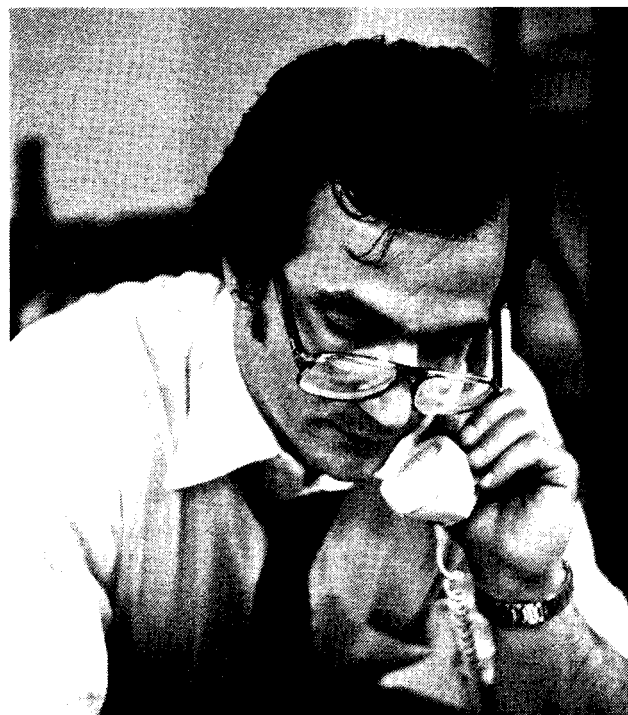
What this means for Bill Green remains to be seen. But certainly the message delivered in the primary was that people are looking for institutions, new faces, and policies through which they can realize their aspirations for progress, for education, and for ridding their communities of the drug plague.

**EIR:** It is unusual for a gubernatorial candidate to be addressing issues of foreign policy, such as the Malvinas crisis, or national issues, such as Volcker's interest rates.

**Douglas:** In my campaign, I stated that the governor of the Commonwealth is responsible to direct himself to any and all problems that affect the well-being of the citizens of the Commonwealth, and that is the way I ran my campaign. The Malvinas question and the Tory takeover of America are every bit as real a threat to the people of Pennsylvania as the problems that are generated from within the Commonwealth itself. Any candidate or holder of public office that is not directing himself to all these issues is simply acting irresponsibly at best.

**EIR:** What do you think the vote for you in an industrial state like Pennsylvania implies for the AFL-CIO, whose president Lane Kirkland has basically been running a protection racket for Paul Volcker?

**Douglas:** This is a resounding rejection of the post-industrial policies Kirkland is promoting, and is a resounding rejection of Kirkland's fronting for the high-interest-rate policies of Volcker. In my campaign I made it a point to inform people that it is Volcker's high-interest-rate policy that is responsible for the collapse of the state's capital-goods industry. With all the lifeblood Volcker has sucked out of the Pennsylvania economy, he has established himself as the biggest bloodsucker since Dracula, and furthermore, since Governor Thornburgh has donated this lifeblood so willingly to Paul Volcker, one would have to wonder if he thinks he is the governor of Pennsylvania or of Transylvania. This was a polemic that struck home to many people.



*Steven Douglas*

NSIPS

The vote indicated that what blue-collar workers, small businessmen, farmers, and ethnic and minority groups want to do is to build, build, build. They want to rebuild the economy, they want to leave a developing economy for their children and grandchildren.

Volcker has turned the steel-producing valley of Western Pennsylvania into a death valley. It looks like what parts of Central Europe must have looked like after World War II. Unemployment among steel workers is running three times the rate of national unemployment, and there are numerous companies that closed their doors just in the course of the campaign.

People realize that the stop-gap measures that have been proposed by various politicians are not answers. Nor are plant buyouts the answer, where people take wage cuts and give up their pensions in order to buy the plants. As many people recognize, that is the same ploy Mussolini and Hitler used to loot labor and destroy the economies of Germany and Italy during the 1930s. Many of these people who are being thrown out of work right now are the ones who put their lives on the line fighting fascism in World War II, and do not want to see fascist economic measures introduced here in the name of saving jobs, and they don't even do that.

**EIR:** Did you run up against people who were absolutely opposed to what you had to say?

**Douglas:** No. Most people were very much in support. Occasionally you would run into a drug freak or two, and, I am pleased to say, they would be upset about my

war on drugs campaign. Occasionally I would run into a fruitcake from the Jerry Brown wing of the Democratic Party. Just as med flies descended on California, some of the Jerry Brown fruit brigade have unfortunately spread.

**EIR:** Then you would say that the institutional issue—the willingness and courage of people to build new institutions—is decisive, especially since you weren't endorsed by Charles Manatt or Bill Green or the other honchos of the current Democratic Party leadership.

**Douglas:** That is correct. And let me emphasize that I did not seek their endorsement. I had been in favor of an open primary. At the Feb. 22 state committee meeting, where the issue of endorsement was taken up, I argued for an open primary. I felt that an open primary would be the best way to begin rebuilding a grass-roots force that could ensure that Dick Thornburgh, the Carter-Volcker Republican, would not be returned to office in the general election in November.

Congressman Ertel had the Democratic leadership's endorsement as of Feb. 27. I hoped that by conducting my campaign as if it had been an open primary, he would be encouraged to do likewise. And I was encouraging Ertel to adopt all the points of my platform, just as I would like nothing better than to see Ertel pick up points of that platform now and defeat Thornburgh.

Besides, we must do something now about the economy, before the general election. We cannot wait until January.

**EIR:** Speaking as a past NDPC coordinator for Pennsylvania and Ohio, what will be the impact of your campaign on the NDPC and the movement being built in this country around Lyndon LaRouche's leadership?

**Douglas:** I think it will have an enormous positive impact which will result in the rapid acceleration of the growth of the NDPC, not only in the states of Pennsylvania and Ohio, but across the country.

Many people in the state, and I know from their having congratulated me already, are very pleased with the vote results, because they demonstrate that there is a significant and rapidly growing constituency in this country for industrial and scientific progress and excellence in education. This need only be tapped by Democratic Party candidates and we can rebuild the party to make it the institution that can ensure the country recommits itself to progress.

This campaign also strengthened another institution, and that is the trade unions in the state—the building trades and steelworkers especially—that want to defend the state against austerity, and which have been historically the motor for progress. Aside from the NDPC—when people see how large the constituency support is for LaRouche's program to reverse the depression, the other vital institution that has been strengthened is the good, pro-growth trade unions.

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