

# NAACP leadership wanly backs Clinton

by Bruce Director

On July 12, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) kicked off their 1992 convention in Nashville, Tennessee with a pep rally for the newly announced Clinton-Gore Democratic presidential ticket, but many of the 15,000 delegates were less than enthusiastic about supporting the executioner from Little Rock, Arkansas.

Benjamin Hooks, the outgoing executive director of the NAACP, made it clear from the beginning that he expects blacks will give the Democratic ticket "unprecedented support." Hooks played down expected opposition from the black population to Gov. William Clinton's practice of using public executions to advance his election campaign. The NAACP has traditionally been opposed to the death penalty. Retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, an outspoken opponent of the death penalty, was formerly legal counsel for the NAACP.

## FBI, ADL given convention role

The NAACP's willingness to sacrifice its traditional commitment to civil rights for pragmatic alliances with the establishment was also evidenced by the fact that for the second year in a row, the FBI and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), both bitter enemies of civil rights, were allowed to play a prominent role at the convention. This is particularly ironic, since the ADL has publicly declared that the black community is riddled with anti-Semitism.

At his farewell press conference, Hooks was asked by *EIR* if the NAACP had changed its position on the death penalty in order to win support for Clinton. Hooks claimed that the NAACP was as opposed to the death penalty as ever but indicated he was willing to downplay the issue, saying that blacks were more concerned by black-on-black violence. Hooks said he would make his opposition to the death penalty known to Clinton, but he admitted he had not brought it up for discussion with the governor when he saw him the day before.

Hooks, who is originally from Tennessee and is a good friend of both Sen. Al Gore, Jr. and his father, former Sen. Al Gore, Sr., put on a big rally on Saturday July 11, the day before the convention was officially scheduled to begin. The rally amounted to a coming-out party for the Democratic ticket. The audience was made up mostly of local Gore supporters as most of the delegates hadn't even arrived yet. After warming up the crowd with 20 minutes of "We Shall

Overcome," Clinton and Gore gave carefully orchestrated speeches about unity, which were laced heavily with anecdotes from Clinton about growing up poor in Arkansas. The pair was generally well received by the audience.

This institutional support for Clinton was contrasted to the reactions of individual delegates who were not as eager as Hooks to accept the Clinton-Gore ticket. As the delegates left the pep rally, LaRouche '92 organizers distributed close to 1,000 copies of Lyndon LaRouche's statement "Death Penalty Is Barbarism." This provoked a frenzy of activity from Clinton's people to protect their carefully orchestrated media opportunity.

## Litmus test for the election

On Sunday night, over 2,000 leaflets, the LaRouche statement, and a special leaflet addressed to NAACP delegates were distributed in front of the hall where Hooks was to give his farewell address. The leaflet, entitled "Clinton Must Renounce Death Penalty, Stop Execution of Barry Lee Fairchild," stated in part, "There is a litmus test in this year's election, but it is not the one Bill Clinton and his Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) cronies would have you believe. Clinton and his Trilateral Commission backers claim he is bringing the Democratic Party back toward the 'center,' to the 'moderate mainstream.'

"It should be clear to delegates at this convention what that means. They are appealing to the die-hard believers in the Old Confederacy, to the Jim Crow racists who used to run the Democratic Party in the South, to 'come back home.' In fact, what they are doing is imitating George Bush. Clinton is trying to out-Bush Bush! And his choice of Al Gore as his running mate demonstrates why some say that DLC really stands for Democrats who Love the Confederacy!" The leafletting from the previous day had already had its effect. Some delegates took the leaflets asking, "Is this the LaRouche leaflet attacking Clinton?" After most of the leaflets were distributed, the security guards threw the LaRouche and Clinton leafleters out.

Not all the NAACP leaders were as cavalier as Hooks. About 15 NAACP officials signed the anti-death penalty resolution to the Democratic Party including Dr. William Gibson, the national chairman of the NAACP.

As a growing number of delegates turned increasingly toward LaRouche in a reaction against the pro-death ticket of Clinton-Gore, LaRouche's enemies went into action. On the third day of the convention, the ADL-linked Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR) held a seminar for delegates ostensibly on voting registration drives. This seminar was used by the CDR representative, Loretta Ross, to spread the ADL's lies and slanders against LaRouche, accusing LaRouche of being a racist. Ross cited pro-drug propagandist Dennis King as her source.

Also on the third day, the FBI held a workshop on "hate crimes" statistics, a project originated by the ADL.