

Why Not an Open Democratic Party Nominating Convention?

by Our Special Correspondent

Today the Democratic Party stands at the brink of its own destruction, unless the forced march of its delegates to nominate Al Gore next month is replaced by full and open debate on policy.

The Gore-run Democratic National Committee (DNC) plans to hold the most controlled Convention in U.S. history, in Los Angeles on Aug. 14-17, to assure Gore's nomination — despite reactions ranging from apathy to dislike of Gore by delegates themselves, and in complete violation of the “open debate” tradition in the Democratic Party. The scripting of Gore's nomination will be something between a “Nuremberg rally” and a bizarre coronation that turns the Democratic Party of Franklin Roosevelt into a second Republican Party.

An exaggeration? Consider:

- For the first time in modern Democratic Party history, there will be no open microphone on the Convention floor.
- The DNC has decreed that no floor demonstrations will be permitted, no debates will be held, and there will be no discussion of the Democratic Platform whatsoever.
- The convention will be held in an area which delegates can only come or go to by bus. Every delegate bus will have two Los Angeles sheriff's deputies on board.
- Hotels housing convention delegates were told they had to sign a contract with the DNC to rent no meeting rooms to anybody during the period of the Convention without the approval of the DNC.

Why won't Gore let the delegates speak? What is he afraid of?

On July 20, the DNC got a healthy whiff of how the attempt to shut down all opposition is seen from the outside, when U.S. District Judge Gary Fess upheld the American Civil Liberties Union, and ruled that the attempt to create a “no access zone” around the Democratic Convention by

erecting a 10-foot-high fence, is “violative of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.” So, indeed, are all the DNC's paranoid dictates.

Why is the DNC so worried about the Los Angeles Convention, when its horse has already lost the race? If Gore is “victorious” in stopping all opposition, Gore's nomination will elect Bush, and the damage will be a defeat for him as well as for many Democratic candidates for other Federal and state and local races.

What is most feared now by the Gore operatives, is a coalescence of opposition against the DNC's belated draft platform of July 6, which the *Washington Post* characterized as “more like a traditional Republican declaration” than a Democratic platform. That platform, in fact, has since been withdrawn from circulation, including from the Democratic Party's website, because of opposition to it. A second drafting session has been set for Cleveland on July 29.

The resistance to the Republican-like positions of the DNC is centering around the circulation of the “Proceedings of the Ad Hoc Democratic Platform Hearings,” which will reach 1 million Americans — and all Democratic delegates — before the Convention. These proceedings are being circulated by delegates, by Democratic legislators, local elected officials, labor, farmer, and minority leaders in increasing concentric circles of activity. In every place where there is dismay at the direction of the party, the platform is a “life raft” picking up disgusted activists, and showing them how the party can be saved. *After* the Democratic Convention, 5 million more copies of these proceedings will be circulated for that purpose.

This 100-page pamphlet is the transcript of June 22 hearings chaired by 11 prominent state legislators from across the United States, and former U.S. Senator Eugene McCarthy,

on the economic, health, and justice crises in America. That prestigious panel heard testimony from Democratic Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche, Democratic elected officials, trade unionists, minorities, and others for platform planks representing the interests of the traditional Franklin Roosevelt constituencies.

Are Unions Anachronisms?

The way the Democrats can win the election is to rebuild the FDR coalition. Gore's apparatus is doing the opposite.

The Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), which Al Gore boasts of founding with DNC kingmaker Al From, declared in the most recent issue of *Blueprint* magazine, that "Unions are often thought of as anachronisms. They had a role to play in the old economy, but not in the new." On July 15, Al Gore appeared before the DLC and praised it as the main group which will forge the path into the 21st century. The *Blueprint* article says that unions must "adapt" to the new reality by "drawing on the rich legacy of craft unions . . . like the guilds from which unions first arose"—a period in American history when only a tiny number of the labor force could earn a living wage.

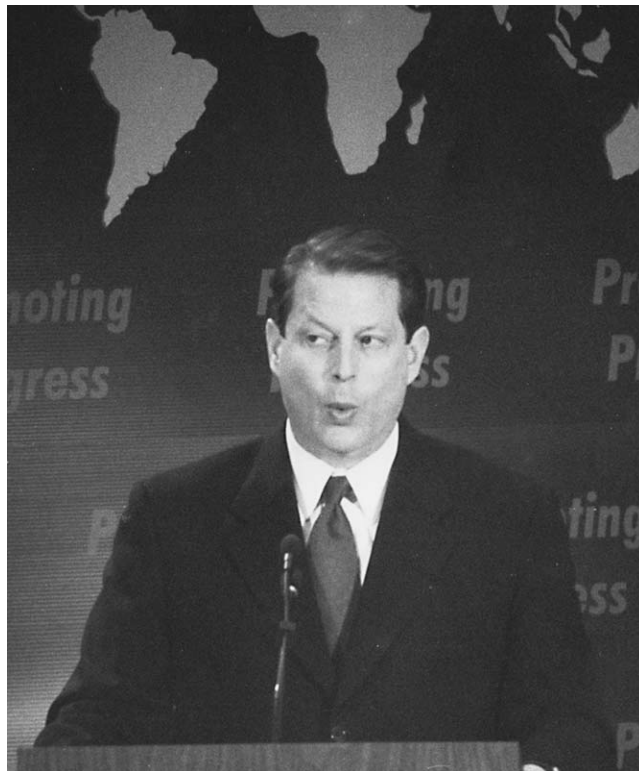
The DLC's mid-July meeting publicly proclaimed that today's Democrats are "a new party"—interested in only the wealthiest 20% of the population. Even professional unions such as the National Education Association have reacted against the DNC's plank of merit pay for teachers and "school reform"—i.e., the right to fire so-called "bad teachers"—which will be used against all teachers. Teachers traditionally make up 10% of the Democratic delegates.

Fight at State Legislators Meeting

The fight to rebuild the FDR coalition was taken to the National Conference of State Legislators meeting in Chicago on July 16-19. The "New Democratic" policies have made this body—which includes every state legislator in the United States—more Republican than Democratic. George W. Bush addressed the delegates, while Gore didn't show.

The 1,000 state legislators attending, along with the 4,000-plus lobbyists there, received the Ad Hoc Platform Hearings transcripts. While many Democratic legislators started out saying that they couldn't oppose Gore because that would elect Bush, it became clear to them that *supporting* Gore and his anti-FDR policies would in fact elect Bush. After all, the same argument urging lock-step support for Democratic candidates Walter Mondale and Michael Dukakis was used in the run-up to the Democratic Conventions in 1984 and 1988, respectively—and both lost massively and predictably. Dukakis beat out Gore for the 1988 Democratic nomination; Dukakis's 1988 election tally would beat Gore's in 2000.

Democratic legislators knew nothing of the DNC's platform, and were enraged at its attacks on their constituencies. Many agreed to circulate the pamphlets by the hundreds to



At the Democratic National Convention there will be no open microphones, no floor demonstrations, no debate—no discussion of the Democratic Platform of any kind. What is Al Gore so afraid of?

their constituents.

On July 19, the Gore-founded DLC held a luncheon for state legislators, addressed by DNC Chairman Joe Andrew. Andrew is directly responsible for awarding Lyndon LaRouche's 22% of the Arkansas Democratic primary vote to Gore, and for refusing to recognize LaRouche's candidacy.

When Andrew attempted to paint Gore as fully in the tradition of FDR, a LaRouche representative intervened: "How dare you talk about Roosevelt—you are taking his name and his memory in vain." When this person was removed, a second said, "Gore is no better than Bush. You are a liar and a racist. You threw 53,000 votes [LaRouche's Arkansas total] in the trash can. You are going to get Bush elected doing this." The luncheon—intended for pre-screened ticket holders—quickly ended, with Andrew reeling.

Meanwhile, amid the "Keystone Cop" measures to keep Democrats behind "Born to Lose" Gore, the onrushing financial collapse looms. A government which lies, in order to pretend that the inevitable is not happening, is, like Babylon's doomed Belshazzar, a regime which triumphs in insisting that it has prepared no measures for dealing with onrushing reality. This is the reality which the Ad Hoc Democratic Platform Hearing pamphlet addresses, and this explains its wide circulation, which is only being increased by the Gore forces' repression of all dissent.