

Dems Take to the Hustings, To Revive the Party of FDR

by Marla Minnicino and Rochelle Ascher

A growing number of Democratic constituency leaders, most of whom participated in the June 22 Ad Hoc Platform Hearings facilitated by the Presidential campaign committee of Lyndon LaRouche, are coming forward in public forums and on the airwaves as leaders of the “real” Democratic Party of Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Their determination to speak out on the issues of concern to the 80% of the Democratic Party ignored by putative Democratic Presidential nominee Al Gore, stands in stark contrast to what the Gore-controlled wing of the Democratic Party is doing, in squelching debate and forcing through policies such as “free trade” and support for the death penalty—policies which are the antithesis of everything traditional Democrats hold dear.

The tool which these party leaders, primarily state legislators and other elected officials, are using, is the Proceedings of the Ad Hoc Democratic Party Platform Hearings, held in Washington, D.C. All were panelists or participants at the hearings, which heard testimony from activists seeking fundamental reforms in the areas of agriculture, labor, health care, education, law and justice. (Highlights of the hearings appeared in *EIR*, July 7; for copies of the full proceedings and a 90-minute video, contact LaRouche’s Committee for a New Bretton Woods at 1-800-929-7566.)

The common view of this emerging leadership grouping, many of whom share LaRouche’s insistence that the “fundamentals are not sound,” contrasts sharply with the line of the Gore loyalists in the Democratic Party who would rather cling to the sinking hulk of the Gore machine, than steer the party back toward its traditional roots. The Gore-pushers are working hand-in-glove with a small clique in the Democratic National Committee (DNC) which has refused to recognize LaRouche’s candidacy, and which stole outright the 53,000 votes LaRouche won in the Arkansas primary. The Arkansas

results, had they not been usurped by Gore, would have entitled LaRouche to a small fraction of the delegates to the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles on Aug. 14-17.

The theft of LaRouche’s votes and the lying and racism of this small cabal in the DNC, have further catalyzed this nascent Democratic Party leadership core into motion. The thug methods of the Gore camp in trying to pressure these legislators to break with LaRouche’s policies, have only fueled their determination to restore the party to its own roots, now represented by the LaRouche wing of the party, rather than by Gore’s minions.

Although the panelists have not all endorsed LaRouche’s candidacy, they recognize the imminence of the financial crisis as LaRouche has forecast, and understand the necessity for a New Bretton Woods financial system, as the only way to address the economic crisis in the United States and internationally.

Call for an Open Debate

To this end, several of them have taken to the hustings, speaking at town meetings convened by the LaRouche movement in their own or other states, or have spoken out in radio interviews. State legislators taking this aggressive approach are Rep. Erik Fleming (Miss.), who served as chairman of the Ad Hoc Platform Hearings; panelists Sen. Joe Neal (Nev.), Rep. Harold James (Pa.), Rep. Ed Vaughn (Mich.), Rep. Perry Clark (Ky.), and witnesses Theo Mitchell, former State Senator from South Carolina, and Joe Jones, City Councilman from Cleveland, Ohio. Several others are reportedly planning to join in and many are distributing the Proceedings booklet.

On July 4, Representative Fleming and Senator Mitchell participated in a dialogue on National Urban Radio, along with LaRouche’s National Spokeswoman Debra Hanania-Freeman. The two men ruthlessly took on the excuses of Dem-

ocratic Party officialdom about excluding LaRouche, and the real issues of the day — poverty, Nazi “health care,” and rampant injustice in the judicial system. When host Bev Smith brought up the typical argument that Democrats have to support Gore, as the lesser of two evils, Fleming and Mitchell would not capitulate. Mitchell explained that there would be no “sit-down” with Gore, because Gore would never do it. “They don’t want me or you at the table, and that is what this is about,” Mitchell said. Fleming added, “LaRouche didn’t start this. All he asked for, all Bill Bradley asked for, was an open campaign, an open debate. But Gore knows he could never get the nomination that way. So there isn’t any election, and anyone who is going to L.A. should be prepared for a coronation, not a convention.” Both men reported that the DNC had refused to allow them to testify at the party-approved platform hearings held in St. Louis on July 6, despite their years of public service.

At town meetings organized by the LaRouche movement, Michigan State Rep. Ed Vaughn, who formerly chaired the state Legislative Black Caucus, and Nevada State Sen. Joe Neal, who currently chairs the Nevada Legislative Black Caucus, were equally direct on the issue of the Democratic Party’s thuggery. Vaughn reported privately that the Gore campaign in Nashville had called his office, and asked, “Is it really true that Representative Vaughn has endorsed Lyndon H. LaRouche for President?” Vaughn instructed his aide to inform them that it “emphatically” was.

At a town meeting in Detroit, Vaughn presented the Ad Hoc Platform Proceedings as the “hammer” to break open the Democratic Party for real policy debate. He told the audience how LaRouche and the “forgotten 80%” of the party had been snubbed by the Democratic Party leadership. Now, you all need to read this, he said, pointing to the Platform Hearings booklet, but “since none of you read—you say you will, but you won’t—we are going to go through this together right here in this meeting.” Copies of the booklet were passed out, and Vaughn went through them, page by page, beginning with the videotaped speech by Lyndon LaRouche and covering each session, from the economic crisis, to health care, to constitutional law and justice. “During these ‘tremendous economic times,’” he said, “where . . . everybody assumes the system is okay, well . . . think back to the Roaring 20s. Everyone was happy, everyone was giddy, . . . you had the flappers. Think of Lyndon LaRouche trying to warn people that doom was impending. Would they have believed LaRouche? No, they sure would not have! Then came 1929, and the bust came: a massive depression.” He explained how President Roosevelt had gotten us through it, as a model for what had to be done now. “If a million copies [of this booklet] are to be distributed,” said Vaughn, “your job is to disseminate this information to others, so you all have to take copies of this to get it out to a million people. Now, you have no excuse, as you know what is in this book.”

At a Philadelphia town meeting on July 26, State Rep. Harold James used video clips of the hearings to highlight

some of the key issues of concern to Democrats — AIDS, the racist corruption of the criminal justice system, the death penalty, and the drugging of children with Ritalin. He said that it is because of the abuses in the criminal justice system that he is committed to opposing the support for the death penalty by the Democratic Party. He urged people to read and subscribe to *EIR*, and to distribute the Platform Hearings booklet.

At a July 24 town meeting in Las Vegas, State Sen. Joe Neal emphasized that the Ad Hoc Platform Hearings were vitally necessary, since there is a farm crisis, a health-care crisis, an economic crisis — yet the only concern many people have, including elected officials, is to make money. If you are not out to help those who most need it, you are not serving the nation, he said.

The high point of his presentation was his description of the Democratic Party as it was, and what it has become. He said that in 1992, he was asked to serve on the national Democratic Platform Committee by the Clinton campaign. He said that he had many serious disagreements with Clinton, especially on the death penalty, but was told that that was all the more reason for him to serve on the committee, since the purpose of the hearings was to discuss these issues. He contrasted this to Gore and his campaign staffers, who have decided what can and cannot be discussed within the Democratic Party. Senator Neal said, “Only those views desirable to certain people will be heard.” He said that Supreme Court judges had ruled that the Democratic Party is a private club, and that this is no different than the “Jaybird” white Democratic primaries of the 1920s and ’30s.

He reported that he had received calls from the Gore camp and the DNC. “We are concerned about these Ad Hoc Platform Hearings,” an official of the Gore campaign in Nashville told him. Senator Neal’s response to the call was, “I stand by this hearing. I understand Dr. LaRouche wants 1 million copies of this platform printed and circulated before the Democratic Convention. And the idea of the million pamphlets is to restore the party to the FDR tradition. Why would the DNC panic over this? What’s wrong with this? I think this is a good thing!”

The fight to restore the soul of the Democratic Party was the topic of a July 26 interview with Representative James and Debra Freeman on WHAT, the largest black talk radio in Philadelphia. James referred to his efforts to meet with DNC Chairman Ed Rendell to discuss the exclusionary tactics against LaRouche, but to no avail.

The mobilization to take back the Democratic Party is being spearheaded by the distribution of 1 million copies of the Platform Hearings booklets. Over one-half million have gone out, as we go to press, and copies, along with a video, have been sent to all National Convention delegates. Panelists and testifiers at the Hearings are taking bulk copies of the printed transcript to distribute to their political networks. Even delegates to the Democratic National Convention who do not necessarily agree with LaRouche, are agreeing to read and distribute the pamphlet. Clearly, a revolt is in progress.