

California results confirm NDPC impact

by Stephen Pepper

Some people are fortunate in their choice of friends; LaRouche Democrats of the National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC) have been extremely fortunate in their choice of enemies. Without the spectacular reactions of Adlai Stevenson in Illinois, for example, the victory of two candidates supporting Lyndon LaRouche for secondary statewide offices in the Illinois Democratic primary would hardly have occasioned worldwide headlines. Without the personal commitment of Texas Democratic State Chairman Bob Slagle to defeat the NDPC's candidate for county chairman in Bexar County (San Antonio), Don Varella, the fact that Varella finished first with 38% of the vote, would hardly have required a special meeting of the county executive and the presence of the second in command of the Democratic National Committee.

Now comes the California results, and the debacle suffered by Orange County chairman Judge Bruce Sumner in the 40th Congressional District makes everything that came before, including Custer's Last Stand, look like a victory in comparison.

Sumner's decision to enter the race as a write-in candidate against the NDPC-backed Art Hoffman turned what would have been a minor victory for the LaRouche Democrats into a major national test. After the Illinois results, Democratic National Committee chairman Paul Kirk ordered a search-and-destroy mission against NDPC candidates with the result that the Orange County Democrats "discovered" that not only had they neglected to run against the Republican incumbent, Bob Badham, but the LaRouche Democrats had filed in that contest. At this point, Sumner and his county executive embarked on the ill-fated write-in campaign, thus compounding an error of omission with an error of commission.

Sumner and his people devoted over \$100,000 to defeat Hoffman, and ran against him as they had never run against their Republican conservative opponent. The result hardly justified the means. Hoffman, who spent \$466, campaigned on the issues, and according to the official canvass came out ahead with 15,138 to 14,876 votes or a margin of 262 votes. As soon as the result is certified by the secretary of state, Sumner has vowed to ask for a recount.

Whatever the final outcome, Sumner and the regular organization have acted deliberately to give the campaign international significance. On the night of the election, erroneous reporting had appeared to give Sumner the victory.

Imprudently, the judge congratulated himself on turning back the LaRouche menace, and declared the outcome a "repudiation of Lyndon LaRouche." The judge was reversed in his judgment by an appeal to the voters, but neither he nor any of his collaborators have now acknowledged that the new result is a confirmation of Lyndon LaRouche. Indeed, three days after the election, when the corrected results became known, former Orange County chairman Richard O'Neill said that the nomination of Hoffman would not embarrass the Democratic Party, "Since we already won on election night. . . ."

Debate with LaRouche

This statement tells much about the outlook and purposes of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and its assorted local followers. The actual result is less important than the perception of the outcome, not only in the local arena, but even more significantly for national and international consumption. This became clear in the debate that the Sumner forces requested take place before the election between their man, and Lyndon LaRouche, one of the founders of the NDPC, and the only announced candidate for the Democratic nomination for the presidency in 1988. By this means, Sumner the Democratic nomination for the presidency in 1988. By this means, Sumner deliberately chose to make the election a referendum on LaRouche.

In the debate, the strategies of the contending parties became crystal clear. LaRouche, in agreeing to the debate, had insisted that it focus on issues, and not retail warmed-over press garbage regarding LaRouche or his movement. In keeping with this format, LaRouche addressed the strategic crisis exemplified by the threat of Soviet takeover of the Middle East, and his own support for Prime Minister Shimon Peres's call for a Middle East Marshall Plan. On the domestic side, he hammered away at the impending banking crisis.

For his part, Sumner, having agreed to the issue-oriented format, promptly tore up his agreement, and embarked on a verbatim reading of drug-pushing scribbler Dennis King's pastiche of LaRouche's views clipped and pasted from various sources. Whereas LaRouche's intent in agreeing to the debate was explicitly to alert and prepare the electorate for the crises our nation faces, Sumner's was to give the impression that he was taking on LaRouche. When asked afterward why he did not address the issues, Sumner admitted, "If I had done so, I would have made LaRouche look like a moderate."

What lies behind this perception game is the DNC's commitment to protect the drive by the liberal establishment to achieve a "New Yalta"-style agreement. LaRouche and the NDPC are recognized worldwide as the principal opponents of this policy. To avoid giving renewed credibility to LaRouche and his supporters is the exclusive policy goal of the DNC, and therefore any and all lies or manipulations are justified in the short term.