

Elephants and Donkeys by Stephen Pepper

GOP prepares raid as Democrats self-destruct

President Reagan traveled to Chicago during the week of Aug. 12, to support GOP candidates in Illinois, and to raid the Democratic Party for voters, especially the 20-30% who support Lyndon LaRouche and his candidates' movement.

A *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter asked Reagan the set-up question about LaRouche, to which the President replied, "I'm not here to do battle with him." Then after a ritual sentence distancing himself from LaRouche positions, Reagan delivered the punch line that voters who objected to the ultra-liberal line of the Democratic leadership, should "play it safe and vote Republican."

Reagan was inviting the Democratic voters who have consistently turned out for LaRouche-backed candidates, to switch in November. Meanwhile, the Democratic National Committee has been busily "writing off" this constituency, by repeating with self-hypnotic regularity that the LaRouche movement is both insignificant and the greatest menace the Republic has ever faced. Democratic National Chairman Paul Kirk and his henchmen ritually call LaRouche neo-fascist, neo-nazi and neolithic, and tell voters that if they vote for LaRouche-backed candidates they are ignorant or crazy. No wonder that a third of the regular Democratic vote is ripe for a political raid. Reagan's remarks sig-

nal that the Republicans are readying just such a coup.

Fight for the Senate

These developments may very well determine the outcome of the November fight for the U.S. Senate. It appeared a few months ago that the Democrats were in an overwhelming position to take control of the Senate, but now the situation has changed. The most recent evidence of this is the vote in the Democratic primary in Oklahoma, where George Gentry, the LaRouche Democrat backed by the National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC), won 33% of the vote—157,440 votes—in the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate against nationally known Rep. Jim Jones of Tulsa. Gentry ran ahead of his state-wide total in Jones's home town. Democratic pollster Kenneth Bailey said Gentry's support was a protest vote against Jones "that may signal trouble for his fall campaign."

Had they understood the political disaster they have just suffered, the Democratic leadership would now be moving heaven and earth to bring Gentry and the 30% he carries into the party fold for the fight in November. Instead, the state party chairman, Jim Frazier, decided to insult the electorate, and dismiss the Gentry vote as "a reflection of totally uninformed voters." GOP Senator Don Nickles's seat was one of those targeted by the Democrats, but there is no chance with a significant part of the Gentry vote disaffecting.

Georgia is another good example of the phenomenon. There, Jerry Belsky, the NDPC Senate candidate, ran an exemplary campaign on the issues, and thoroughly exposed the policies of Sen. Sam Nunn, whom the ex-Carter aide, Ham Jordan, was extolling. Belsky zeroed in on Jordan as a

warmed-over Carterite pretending to be a conservative.

The results in Georgia produced two surprises, both in part attributable to the NDPC ticket. Jordan was unable to force a run-off against Rep. Wyche Fowler in the Democratic U.S. Senate primary, and Julian Bond lost to John Lewis in the 5th C.D. race. Belsky ran well in rural counties where Jordan had to produce huge pluralities to overcome Fowler's hold on Atlanta. The turning point for Bond was his willingness to cross a picket line honored by Lewis. The NDPC candidate in the 5th C.D., Andy Rotstein made this a major issue.

The NDPC's Georgia Ag Commissioner candidate Billy Odom, garnered over 100,000 votes (18%) against long-time office-holder Tommy Ervin. Odom actually carried one county. This result is almost exactly the same as the vote won by LaRouche Democrat Noel Cowling in his race for Ag Commissioner in Texas against Jim Hightower, the Democrats' national spokesman on agriculture.

In Georgia, the Democrats are hoping to unseat the GOP's Matt Mattingly, by no means a brilliant Senator. But the pattern of protest reflected in the NDPC vote and influence exposes their weakness. A similar situation has arisen in neighboring Alabama, where Republican Sen. Jeremiah Denton is the target. But in both states the party has closed ranks against "outsiders," officially declaring membership in the NDPC incompatible with being a Democrat. In Alabama the party excluded a former Republican as its standard-bearer, and has suffered a major setback in the Senate race as a result.

The 30% NDPC vote is the key to the November contests. Either the Democrats break the liberal tyranny over the Party, or the Republicans are likely to retain the Senate.