

LaRouche backer now top Democrat in Houston

by Mel Klenetsky

Harris County, the most important electoral county in Texas, on March 8 was the site of a 9.999 Richter scale political earthquake, analogous to the political tremors that hit Illinois in March of 1986, when two LaRouche Democrats won their primary fights for Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of State.

Claude Jones, an associate of Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, won the position of chairman of the Harris County Democratic Party from incumbent Larry Veselka. That victory may prove to be the most interesting and decisive development in the entirety of "Super Tuesday" electoral events, when 20 of the 50 U.S. states held party caucuses or primary elections to nominate the Democratic Party's candidates for the November 1988 U.S. general election. For the Republican Party, the number of states participating in such elections on "Super Tuesday" was 17.

At 11:00 p.m., the evening of Super Tuesday, Claude Jones, surrounded by supporters at his office, began to hear the news that he had taken the lead from his political opponent, incumbent party chairman Larry Veselka. The phones soon started to ring off the hook with reporters calling in for comments from Jones. Earlier votes showed Veselka with a slim margin, as the poorly turned out, wealthy white districts reported their results first. The black precincts and poorer white districts, where a high voter turnout came out for presidential hopeful Jesse Jackson, started to report their results later. Jones soon developed a decisive lead.

Jones: We have to beat Bush

Almost 54,000 votes came in for Jones, allowing him to beat out Veselka handily, 51% to 49%. The next day, before

a packed press conference that included Houston's three major television networks, five radio stations, the *Houston Chronicle*, and the *Houston Post*, Jones outlined his strategy. "We have to beat George Bush," the Republican Party front-runner, Jones announced, "and I can help do that in two ways."

First, Jones explained how his association with LaRouche would help in this process, especially with the recent revelations that have come out in the Boston trial of LaRouche and several associates, who face politically motivated "obstruction of justice" and "credit card fraud" charges. Jones reported that documents released to the defense attorneys in that case show that Ollie North, Richard Secord, and other Irangate figures were involved in investigations and possible sting operations against LaRouche and his associates because of their opposition to the Contra policy. One of the defense attorneys, Dan Alcorn, also indicated possession of a document which shows that Bush headed up a special situations group for which North was the executive secretary (see article, page 61).

Next, Jones promised that he would embark on a voter registration drive for Harris County to ensure that 350,000 Democrats will vote in next November's election. Jones highlighted the success of the New Hampshire voter registration drive that LaRouche Democrats carried out, where more than 25,000 new voters were registered between December and February.

George Bush is from Houston and was chairman of the Harris County Republicans, amplifying the significance of Jones's remarks. Equally important is the political and dem-

ographic weight of Harris County, the county that includes the city of Houston and is the third-largest voting district in the country. Harris County turns out one of every four Democrats who vote in Texas. In simple terms, Texas is a "must" state for Democrats in the November presidential election, and Harris County is a "must" county. With so much at stake, it wasn't long before the howls and desperation tactics of the Harris County Democrats came to the fore.

Shenanigans

As of this writing on March 10, certain sections of the Harris County Executive are planning to strip the chairman of his powers, effectively denying the voters the candidate of their choice, even before Jones assumes office. The moves that the Executive Committee appears to be planning are reminiscent of Adlai Stevenson III's actions in Illinois two years ago. Stevenson, the winner of the 1986 Democratic primary for governor, committed political suicide when he dropped off the Democratic ticket, refusing to run on the same ticket with LaRouche Democrats Mark Fairchild and Janice Hart. Stevenson formed a new party. He subsequently lost the general election by a landslide, and all accounts are that the Democratic Party of Illinois has yet to recover from the Stevenson debacle.

On Friday, March 11, the Harris County Executive will hold a meeting to canvass the vote. The Executive Committee is made up of about 540 precinct chairmen, from the State Senate Districts in the County. The executive director of Harris County, Bill Ramsey, and Barbara Stanley, the former chairwoman of the Harris County Democrats before Veselka, are planning to ram through a proposal at the Friday meeting, which would strip the elected chairman of his powers and place those powers in the hands of the secretary-treasurer, a position appointed by the Harris County Executive Committee. The plan is to give that position of secretary-treasurer back to the defeated Veselka!

Veselka, Stanley, and Ramsey are all part of former Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby's political machine. Not only would Jones and those that voted for him be disenfranchised, but the secretary-treasurer position, of late most often held by activists from the black community, would be summarily taken away from that constituency, merely to serve the whims of the defeated Harris County Democrats.

Harris County chairman-elect Jones approached the election in an entirely different way than Veselka. Veselka, according to Jones, prided himself on being a technocrat, not endorsing any of the 1986 congressional candidates, nor the 1988 presidential candidates. Jones identified himself with LaRouche, campaigned every day in the district, and constantly emphasized the issues of economic growth. Jones pushed the LaRouche emergency economic reconstruction program, including a call for a \$26 trigger-price oil tariff. This economic growth perspective also recognized the im-

portance of a Moon-Mars colonization program as a science-driver for the economy, an issue very important for the aerospace-rich Houston economy.

In terms of the potential efforts by the Harris County Democratic leadership to strip the chairman of his power, Jones revealed that there was a great deal of anger, on the streets, against those editorials and claims by various party officials that the voters only voted for Jones because of his "Anglo-Saxon" name. "The Democratic Party is courting disaster," Jones exclaimed, "This is one of the most economically stricken areas of the country. It's a turnkey county and a turnkey state. The Jackson victory, just like my own, was designed to stick it to the leadership. The talk on the street is of cheap Bull Connor and Dixie Democrat tactics when people hear of these attempts to steal back my chairmanship."

Jones said he will protect the mandate that he received from the voters, with legal action, if necessary, and cited both the Voter Registration Act and the civil rights laws as precedents for dealing with this type of autocratic "Bull Connor" tactics—named for the infamous sheriff in Selma, Alabama who brutalized the civil rights movement.

Super Tuesday's inconclusive results

Regardless of the outcome of the Harris County chairmanship fight, LaRouche Democrats have once again emerged on the political scene, defining the most vital issues of our times, while every other candidate expresses more concern with contentless sloganeering.

George Bush was the big winner on the Republican side, winning 507 out of a possible 753 delegates. He now has 702 delegates toward the 1,139 needed for nomination. The minute that Bush's victory was apparent, polls immediately showed that he would do far worse than his chief rival, Sen. Robert Dole, running against the Democrats. Former Nixon speechwriter William Safire, when asked if Dole should resign from the race, noted that Irangate could quickly change what appears to be a Bush shoe-in for the Republican nomination for the presidency.

The Democrats, on the other hand, are clearly headed for a brokered convention. The three top winners on Super Tuesday were Dukakis, Jackson, and Gore, winning 382, 368, and 325 delegates, respectively. Dukakis now leads the pack with 456.5 delegates toward the 2,082 needed for victory. Jackson, Gore, and even Gephardt are not very far behind. Super Tuesday has made a brokered Democratic Party National Convention a certainty. The pattern of voter response continues to show major disenchantment with the choices that the Paul Kirk-Armand Hammer-controlled Democratic Party leadership is putting up. Only 30% of the Maryland voters turned out and 20% of the Virginia voters, a pattern of low voter turnout seen throughout the country.

Voters were unenthusiastic, and Democratic candidates had little recognition, since with the sole exception of La-

Rouche, they are all using bite-sized media slogans to capture votes, rather than developing and presenting the ideas and programs that the nation would need to follow, if it is to survive and flourish. Money spent on television media time paralleled the results, with the exception of Jackson. Dukakis spent \$3 million, Gore \$2 million, Gephardt \$1 million, and Jackson \$100,000 on Super Tuesday. Jackson's vote is clearly a "stick-it-to-the-leadership" vote and Gore's great breakthroughs, winning out over Gephardt, obviously came about because he was able to borrow \$1 million out of the \$2 million that he poured into television. His fundraising efforts thus did not represent an increased base of support. Days before the election, citizens did not even know who Gore was, let alone that he came from the South. The candidates themselves resorted to negative ads to discredit their opponents, never stopping long enough to develop any kind of policy for dealing with the multiple crises that face the country.

LaRouche takes issues to the nation

Super Tuesday continued the same dog and pony show that has characterized the presidential race to date, with the exception of Lyndon H. LaRouche, the one candidate who has addressed the issues, with two major nationally televised half-hour broadcasts. LaRouche, in his first broadcast of Feb. 4, outlined a step-by-step policy for ending the depression, utilizing the best of the tried and tested methods that were applied during the FDR administration from 1939 to 1943. LaRouche developed the specifics on how \$2 trillion, at 1-2% bank lending rates, lent through the private sector, would rejuvenate industry, agriculture, infrastructure, and exports. LaRouche's second broadcast developed the importance of an Apollo-style Moon-Mars colonization project to establish a permanent human colony on Mars by 2027, both from the standpoint of the scientific and economic benefits, and reviving a sense of cultural optimism in the country.

For many years, LaRouche has attacked the post-industrial drift of the financial and economic policy of the Eastern Liberal Establishment. He has gone after Soviet agent-of-influence Armand Hammer and the grain cartels, while calling for a parity price for agricultural products. In his recent tours of Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana, LaRouche reiterated his several-year-old policy of a \$26 trigger-price tariff for oil. LaRouche, at Houston and Dallas political rallies in early February, developed the need for protecting our domestic oil supplies for national security purposes. He also emphasized the need for restructuring our oil imports to rely on Mexico, Venezuela, and the Caribbean Basin, rather than the Middle East, for any excess oil needs that domestic production cannot meet. These and other policies are part of a well-defined, clearly elaborated economic and debt restructuring policy of LaRouche, detailed in his first television show, with comprehensive documentation and elaboration in numerous campaign publications.

Echo effect

Other presidential candidates, seeing the impact that these ideas have had on the population, started to sloganeer, using the sound of these concepts, not the content, to garner votes.

Starting with the first caucus, Arizona governor and presidential hopeful Bruce Babbitt suddenly started to attack the brutalizing policies of Armand Hammer and Iowa Beef, wholly owned by Hammer. Jesse Jackson also went after Hammer in Iowa. Picking up on the populist appeal of these issues, Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) came into Monroe, Louisiana, March 4, two days after LaRouche had had a two-and-a-half hour campaign rally at the local American Legion Hall, meetings with black ministers and farm leaders of the area, and extensive local press coverage. Two of his major points were an attack on the grain cartels and a call for an oil tariff. One day later, Jesse Jackson came into Monroe, attended a farm auction, and also attacked the grain cartels. When Jackson came into Texas, he called for Venezuela and Mexico to be exempted from an oil tariff and brought into a hemispheric oil partnership.

Gary Hart, early in his campaign, called for an oil tax, as part of a revenue generation plan and a national energy policy, rather than the domestic industry-stimulating and national security policy that LaRouche developed. Gephardt and Jackson, much later, developed aspects of the LaRouche policy, more as a slogan than a policy, to appeal to Southwest voters as the Super Tuesday races unfolded.

On March 3, LaRouche had a full half hour nationally televised broadcast on ABC-TV, entitled "The Woman on Mars." The broadcast developed the importance of a Mars colonization program for scientific, economic, and moral reasons. LaRouche had developed this policy in 1985 and has been publicizing his program ever since. Up until the Texas primary, no candidate had a space program. Gore claimed to be the only candidate with a space program, conveniently disregarding LaRouche's extensive writings in this area. Gore's proposal, however, called for replacing the NASA leadership and whittling down the program—hardly a space program. Days before Super Tuesday, Gephardt visited NASA headquarters in Houston and suddenly discovered space, calling for getting the space shuttle back on track and a Mars mission program.

More important than the parroting of LaRouche's programs by other candidates and the way his policies have shaped certain sloganeering by the so-called major candidates, is the content of LaRouche's policies, the only programs presented that can deal with the crises. LaRouche has been predicting that "the second shoe," after the Oct. 19 "Black Monday" stock market collapse, will soon drop, at which point his policies and candidacy will be more widely perceived as a viable and necessary option, that the Democratic Party's brokered convention in Atlanta, Georgia in August, will have to deal with.