

Police-state tactics rule Democratic convention

by Webster G. Tarpley

Democratic Presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, speaking at a press conference in Atlanta, Georgia on July 19, denounced a "pattern of gestapo tactics by Paul Kirk and the Democratic Party leadership" to prevent LaRouche's name from being placed in nomination for the White House before the Democratic National Convention. LaRouche cited a "blatant pattern of goonery" to intimidate party delegates signing petitions circulated by the LaRouche campaign to permit the candidate to address the convention and the nation on prime-time television. LaRouche said that, in order to protect his supporters from police-state reprisals by Kirk and from "FBI sting operations," he would not submit his signed petitions. "Unless and until Paul Kirk and/or some other credible party authorities repudiate these tactics and disallow these tactics, I shall not submit those names to the convention, because I will not subject these delegates to that type of police-state tactics," LaRouche stated. In the event, only Dukakis and Jesse Jackson were nominated for the presidency.

LaRouche pointed out that Kirk did not believe that LaRouche might receive the Democratic nomination, but rather, feared that LaRouche's appearance on the podium "will blow the lid off the convention" so that "it will no longer be a controlled convention." Otherwise, he noted that the proceedings were a "meaningless sideshow," "about as interesting as dishwater." He described the Atlanta proceedings as a "George Bush dirty trick against the Democratic Party."

LaRouche warned that the dragooning of the Atlanta convention foreshadows the character of a Dukakis administration. "If this convention produces a ticket tainted by a police-state philosophy, then that police-state philosophy will carry

over into the administration that might result," LaRouche said. It would be a "government prone to dictatorship."

The candidate characterized Republican presidential contender George Bush as "a zero" and Democratic nominee Dukakis as "a minus sign." The two are a "couple of dunderheads who make Herbert Hoover look good." With the major party tickets offering a "collection of nincompoops," LaRouche noted that "we are headed into the worst crisis of the century," a "situation worse than the 1930s, with the danger of world war not more than two years ahead." "The next President will have to face this crisis. The American people have tolerated this double zero option, and therefore the American people will suffer acutely if either of these two zeros is placed into office. . . . They will deserve it, but I will try to save them from it," LaRouche said.

LaRouche developed these themes in addresses to caucuses of the Maine and Kansas delegations. He told the Maine caucus that "after the hoopla, we are going to have to face the facts of the real crisis. We have a major economic crisis, a food crisis, a foreign policy crisis. We are going to have the second Great Depression." He predicted that U.S. food deliveries to the U.S.S.R. will become a possible *casus belli* in the context of collapsing food production: "It may come down to them or us, in terms of who eats." He called on the Maine Democrats to rebuild the party and "organize local club houses." He told the Kansans, "We must eliminate the insane Reagan economic policies" and turn away from "20 years of mistakes" in which the Democratic Party has also shared. He stressed the need to "get the right people into Congress" in November, a job to which he pledged to devote

his energies over the coming months.

The struggle between hundreds of LaRouche supporters and the Kirk party leadership was completely blacked out in coverage of the convention by rigidly censored and controlled electronic and print media. These media offered instead the images of Jesse Jackson, the unworthy symbol of a widespread protest movement, playing out his inevitable parabola from bluff to capitulation and "unity" with Dukakis and Kirk. Instead of lentils or a mess of potage, Jackson was given a chartered plane, some seats on the Democratic National Committee, a liaison with the Dukakis camp, and an American Express Gold Credit Card with Dukakis picking up the tab.

The media focused on Jackson's demagogic convention speech, depicting his poor and humble origins at the same time that top Democratic officials are preparing to carry out the program of Felix Rohatyn of Lazard Frères for a "hundred days" of genocidal austerity to be inflicted on those whom Jackson sought to dupe. Jesse's metaphor was the crazy quilt; he was shown up as a leader of shreds and patches. Jesse got nothing: His platform planks on taxing the rich and no first use of nuclear weapons were voted down, and his call for a Palestinian homeland not even brought up for a vote. Even his speech was pushed late into the evening, out of the prime time he had demanded: It was a shutout.

The media proffered the lethal banality of the keynote address by Texas Treasurer Ann Richards, who slyly portrayed the Democrats as the party of leadership for sacrifice and offered nothing for the depression ravaging her state. Then there was a Grand Guignol of political monsters whom most Americans have been trying to repress: The "rehabilitated" Jimmy Carter was there, praising Gorbachov and calling for party unity. (Only Mondale remained in Siberia.) Chappaquiddick Ted Kennedy was there, with a litany of "Where was George?" Then there was the soporific nominating speech by Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton, a panegyric to the biggest monster of them all, Governor Dukakis, who carried a roll-call majority to win the nomination, even though many of his delegates had been locked out of the hall by the fire marshal. The nomination of Dukakis was made unanimous by Willie Brown, speaker of the California Assembly, a supporter of drug legalization, while Speaker of the House Jim Wright looked on.

Gestapo methods

The reality of totalitarian regimentation began at the Atlanta airport, where kapos loyal to Kirk acting as monitors and flank guards herded the delegates through the arrival lounges and baggage claim areas and instructed them to ignore LaRouche supporters circulating presidential nominating petitions.

Claude Jones, Democratic County chairman of Houston, Texas, and a LaRouche backer, was circulating petitions among members of the Texas delegation at the Atlanta Air-

port Marriott Hotel, when he was spotted by Larry Veselka, the man he ousted from the county chair in March. Jones was then accosted by a hotel official, who ordered him to leave the hotel. When Jones asserted his right as an elected party official to talk to delegates, he was surrounded by a seven-man goon squad of local police and hotel security men and forced to leave the premises.

When LaRouche campaign representatives approached the Illinois delegation to request that their candidate address the Illinois caucus, state party central committee member Skip Schwerdepfeger incited the manager of the delegation's hotel to call the police, to have the LaRouche supporters arrested. Two men and one woman were handcuffed and held in a squad car for half an hour before being released. LaRouche volunteers were also ousted from the hotel where the Michigan delegation was lodged.

On the final day of the convention, LaRouche organizer Judy Hodgkiss was harassed near the convention by a provocateur. When her husband Mike Hodgkiss came to her aid, he was arrested for assault by the Atlanta police. The provocateur, who was also jailed, turned out to be a certain Hipple, an official of the Democratic National Committee responsible for credentials questions. Gargantuan efforts were made by the Kirk forces to intimidate delegates wanting to nominate LaRouche. Violet Panozza of the DNC staff told the Indiana delegation that the LaRouche camp was gathering fraudulent signatures and misrepresenting itself as a part of the Democratic Party. She demanded that any delegate who had signed a LaRouche petition step forward. When none did, she continued to denounce LaRouche before a television camera crew.

The Presidential Hotline, a computer bulletin board functioning during the convention, carried an item quoting "a high-ranking Democratic source" asserting that signatures on the LaRouche petitions "were forged and/or people did not realize what they were signing." State parties have been explicitly warned they should be prepared to receive phone calls from their whips in case these signatures are invalid, the news item concluded. Several state delegations were given an escalated form of the same message, being told that all signatures on LaRouche petitions would be exhaustively checked. Then, the DNC went on, those signing for LaRouche would be obliged to sign an affidavit affirming one of the following three alternatives: The signers could say they had not signed, or that they had not realized they were signing for LaRouche, or, most ominously, that they had not realized the consequences of signing. Leaders of the Arizona delegation discussed requiring all delegates to provide a handwriting sample in advance to allow any signatures on LaRouche petitions to be checked.

In the Pennsylvania delegation, according to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, it was Congressman Douglas Walgren who took the lead in denouncing LaRouche and warning the delegates not to sign. Other serious cases of harassment and

intimidation were recorded in the Minnesota, Wisconsin, California, New Jersey, Missouri, and Florida delegations. Some delegates were told that if LaRouche addressed the convention, Bush would win the November election. Others were simply told that they would be killed if they signed.

During the course of the convention, LaRouche supporters gave delegates copies of a presidential campaign platform written by their candidate, entitled "Mastering the Grave Crises of 1989-1992," as an alternative to the anodyne Ted Sorensen platform approved by the DNC. Delegates were also provided with copies of a leaflet issued by the National Democratic Policy Committee, discussing the implications of Dukakis's 1978 nervous breakdown for his qualifications for presidential office.

Top-down control

Otherwise, the convention was an exercise in Potemkinism. Chairman Kirk had deliberately chosen to hold the convention in the Omni Center, a hall that is about half the size of the site of the party's 1984 meeting in San Francisco. As a result, it was physically impossible to accommodate all the delegates, to say nothing of the alternates, on the floor at the same time. On the first day of the convention, Kirk railroaded the credentials committee report and the rules through on a voice vote with only a tiny fraction of the delegates present. On the night that Dukakis was nominated, hundreds of delegates were locked out, among them keynoter Ann Richards, Carter crony and Jackson adviser Bert Lance, and Congressmen Peter Rodino and Les Aspin. The absence of so many delegates was simply disregarded when the vote was taken, pointedly underlining that the individual delegate vote was worth absolutely nothing in Kirk's totalitarian world.

Outside of the Omni Center was a "free speech area," a parking lot where fringe groups were allowed to make protest statements. The largest force here was several hundred members of the pro-terrorist and proto-terrorist New Alliance Party with its presidential candidate, Lenore Fulani, representing a regroupment of the countergangs of the last two decades.

Inside the convention there was total top-down control of the proceedings in a mindless media choreography. After Jackson was nominated by Machinists' Union boss William Winpisinger and seconded by state legislators Maxine Waters and Olga Mendez, there was a demonstration in the hall that lasted all of four minutes. In previous conventions, it might have lasted from a half hour to an hour, but now it was halted on signal. The Dukakis lockstep was handled by his floor manager Tad Devine, who manipulated the proceedings from a mobile communications trailer outside of the Omni, where more than 20 operatives worked a phone bank like Wall Street traders. "It's all a little bit like a play," remarked the Duke, as he viewed his own nomination on television.

Dukakis personally exhibited the frozen emotions suggested by his mental disorder. Appearing at a DNC tribute to

his wife Kitty, he remarked that he was sorry "to have to hit and run," a singularly infelicitous gaffe, given his brother's death as a result of a hit-and-run accident. He warned his aides not to refer to him as "Mr. President," lest they "put the evil eye on me," opening up a line of interesting speculation on what particular brand of satanism Dukakis may subscribe to. The wooden aspect of the man already referred to as the "Sominex candidate" is increased by his advisers, like campaign manager Susan Estrich, who, when she was working as issues director for Ted Kennedy's 1980 bid, earned herself the sobriquet of "the gas chamber."

Dukakis delivered his acceptance speech amid orchestrations by Hollywood producers that were frankly reminiscent of Dr. Goebbels. His cousin Olympia purveyed excruciating clichés, followed by a melodic prelude sung by Neil Diamond, a Las Vegas crooner. And there was Dukakis, pontificating that the election would be about competence, not ideology—after all, he had balanced 10 budgets in a row—and invoking the "spirit of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson," a pair of incompatible ghosts if there ever was one. The rest was simply a tedious catalogue of Republican failures that Dukakis affected to view with alarm, from drugs to the public debt, but never the shadow of a program, never a hint of what to do—that would be left to Rohatyn, once the suckers had bought the package sight unseen.

Previously, Sen. Lloyd Bentsen of Texas had been nominated for the vice presidency by acclamation, completing the shutout of the Jackson forces, who had talked of nominating Rosa Parks, a living symbol of the civil rights movement, in a sign of protest against the arrogance of the Dukakis camp. Bentsen delivered the obvious attack on the horrors of Reaganomics, with embroidery like the following: "America has passed through its ultimate epoch of illusion, an eight-year coma." Those over 40 were distracted by an uncanny similarity between Bentsen's speaking voice and that of Gabby Hayes, an actor who used to play the role of the old coot in cowboy movies.

At the very end, there were Mike and Kitty, along with Kirk, Byrd, Wright, Bob Strauss, Tony Coelho, and other assorted pols swaying back and forth to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," sung by the proverbial fat lady.

Bush's campaign manager Lee Atwater, interviewed by convention anchormen, tipped his hand concerning the rhetorical strategy of the Bushmen. Atwater suggested that the Democrats were nominating not a ticket, but a troika, prominently featuring Jesse Jackson along with Dukakis and Bentsen. All three are the same on the issues, Atwater argued. During the convention, at least one public opinion poll showed Bush taking a narrow lead over Dukakis. Usually the hype of a nominating convention would give Dukakis a boost in the polls. Because of the governor's boring and forbidding personality, however, we may witness the opposite effect, perhaps to be counterbalanced by Bush suffering as a result of his own media exposure at the GOP convention in August.