

LaRouche campaign at center of battle for Voting Rights Act

by Michele Steinberg and Marla Minnicino

Thirty-five years after the Voting Rights Act was signed into law by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, the “new millennium” racists in the Democratic Party around Vice President Al Gore, former Democratic National Committee (DNC) Chairman Don Fowler, and current DNC Chairman Joe Andrew, threw the landmark civil rights provision out the window, with the help of Stone Age Supreme Court Justices Antonin Scalia, William Rehnquist, and Clarence Thomas. On March 27, at the request of the DNC, these Justices ruled that the Democratic Party can act as a “private club,” and can *refuse* to count the votes of Democratic voters, if the choice of those voters—in this case, 1996 pre-Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche—doesn’t please club leaders.

On Feb. 21, one of the great heroines of the fight for those voting rights, Mrs. Amelia Boynton Robinson, who has endorsed LaRouche for President in 2000, told a Presidents’ Day international conference of the Schiller Institute and International Caucus of Labor Committees in Reston, Virginia that the pen which President Johnson used to sign the Voting Rights Act, was filled “not with ink, but with the blood” of those who had died or had been wounded in the civil rights battle.

As reflected by Mrs. Robinson’s recent remarks and activities, the insane actions of the DNC and the Supreme Court against the Voting Rights Act have triggered a renewed fight among civil rights veterans to defend those rights, and significant support for the candidacy of LaRouche, who now remains as Gore’s only opponent. African-American leaders, including the most distinguished leaders of the 1960s Civil Rights movement, have stepped forward to demand justice for LaRouche, and are putting the DNC on notice.

The fight comes to Virginia

That fight came to the fore in Virginia on April 6, when, at a press conference in Norfolk, State Delegate William P. Robinson (D-Norfolk), a prominent African-American leader, blasted the state party leadership, and called for LaRouche to be included in the April 15-17 Virginia Democratic Caucuses. Robinson’s press conference was attended by Associated Press, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, the *Virginian Pilot*, and a local television station.

Robinson scored the exclusionary tactics emanating from the DNC, and “endorsed by the state Democratic Party in Richmond,” that have *removed* LaRouche’s name from the ballot as a candidate for the Democratic nomination. Robinson said:

“After careful review of the proposed ballot issued by the Democratic Party for use in the Virginia Democratic Caucuses, we find the aforementioned ballot remiss in one important area. It fails to list the candidacy of Lyndon LaRouche. This deliberate omission must be reversed before the voting commences on April 15.

“If we are to have a party that is both ‘inclusive’ and ‘democratic,’ this tactic of ‘exclusion’ . . . must be firmly rejected.

“The charges against Mr. LaRouche that he is racist, anti-Semitic, and not a *bona fide* Democrat, are preposterous. We have had years of experience dealing with Mr. LaRouche . . . and find these allegations worse than baseless. To our mind, the treatment being meted out to Mr. LaRouche and his delegates conjures up the image of Fannie Lou Hamer and the Mississippi Freedom Democrats. We found the behavior of the Democratic Party then to be reprehensible, and find it equally repulsive today.

“Also, we find the exclusion of Mr. LaRouche . . . to be



The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the Democratic Party is a "private club," thereby nullifying the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Shown here: During a voter registration drive in Selma, Alabama, which sparked the movement to enact voting rights protections, a sheriff moves to arrest black protesters. Inset: Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonin Scalia.

in strict violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Mr. LaRouche has strong support in the minority community; to bar minority voters and delegate candidates . . . casts a shadow on the legitimacy of the entire election.

"If the Democratic Party, both nationally and here in Virginia, is to carry the election this fall, we must reject these 'divide and rule' tactics. We must unite all forces that have 'walked the walk' within all precincts of our own party on all issues of policy and personality. Only then can we regain the moral high ground and carry our party to victory. Now is the time to correct an egregious error by placing the name of Lyndon LaRouche on the Democratic ballot in Virginia."

Robinson was not alone. His statement was co-signed by an impressive group of elected leaders, labor officials, and civil rights, grassroots, and Democratic Party leaders, including State Sen. Louise Lucas (D-Portsmouth); Norfolk Southern Christian Leadership Conference President Anne Thornton; former member of the Virginia House of Delegates W. Ferguson Reid; E. Martin Jewell, former chairman, Richmond Crusade for Voters; Lorene Safavinia, Hampton Democratic Committee; Etta Johnson, former Secretary-Treasurer, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Norfolk; A.C. Palmer, Executive Board, Portsmouth National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Reginald Malone, Richmond School Board; Sequoia Jenkins, Chairman, International Association of Machinists, Local 97, Norfolk; Darold Kemp, Training Director, Operating Engineers Local 147, Norfolk; Ron Toran, Manager, Independent Classified Employees, Norfolk; and Dallas Proax, President, Transportation and

Communications Union Local 1090, Roanoke.

The news of the press conference and statement is expected to send a shock wave through the Democratic Party bureaucracy, both in the state, and nationally. Also attending the press conference with Robinson were Safavinia and Johnson, co-signers of the statement; Margaret Stanton, a nationally recognized freedom fighter who personally rescued thousand of Jewish families during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands; and Stuart Rosenblatt, representing the LaRouche campaign.

When asked if he was endorsing LaRouche for President, Delegate Robinson made it clear that he is not endorsing anyone, but did not rule out a future endorsement. He emphasized again, however, that by excluding LaRouche, the Democratic Party is eroding its own power.

The other speakers wholeheartedly endorsed LaRouche, and indicated that they will be fighting through the April 15-17 Virginia caucuses to become delegates for LaRouche. Johnson emphasized that she and others had aggressively campaigned for civil rights, and that some had died for those rights. She was appalled by the Supreme Court decision and the denial of ballot status for LaRouche. "If they don't reverse themselves on these issues, they should change the name of the party," she said.

The LaRouche vote in Pennsylvania

The Norfolk press conference came just two days after LaRouche got more than 32,000 votes, 4.6% of the vote statewide, in the April 4 Pennsylvania primary. Prior to the elec-

tion, a 30-minute television advertisement about the economic collapse, entitled "Captain Alan Greenspan and the Great Steam-Boat Race of Y2K," had appeared on Public Broadcast Stations in five cities in the state; and on March 31, LaRouche had also addressed more than 200 supporters at a Philadelphia town meeting, which was hooked up by phone to town meetings in cities in Texas, Wisconsin, and Virginia, and also broadcast on LaRouche's campaign website (www.larouchecampaign.org) (see article, p. 67).

In many parts of Pennsylvania, especially black and working-class areas, LaRouche garnered far more than 5% of the vote: In York County, he polled 9.1%; in Philadelphia County, he polled 6.6%; in the town of Chester, he received 18.43% of the vote, and in nearby Darby Borough, LaRouche received 12.96%. (It should be noted that Bill Bradley's name remained on the ballot with Gore and LaRouche, even though he has withdrawn as a Presidential candidate.)

Results in Texas

Results in Texas, where the Democratic Party held Senate District caucuses on April 1, one day after LaRouche's town meeting webcast, were also significant.

The Texas Democratic Party was explicitly told by the DNC *not* to authorize delegates for LaRouche. But with the pressure of reality, strongly felt by poorer Texans living under the austerity regime of Gov. George W. Bush, and with the

total failure of Al Gore as a candidate to address *any issues*, the strong support for LaRouche made itself felt. In precinct caucuses, LaRouche delegates were elected to the state Democratic convention, which is scheduled for June 9-10.

This victory required no small amount of confrontation with the state leaders. And one of the most powerful weapons in the fight for LaRouche's votes was the presence of four members of an international delegation of observers, who, backing up the effort first launched at the Michigan caucuses in March, were there to record the truth about the treatment of LaRouche's campaign in the U.S. elections. Forming the Texas observers delegation were: Marino Elsevif, a prominent attorney and human rights advocate from the Dominican Republic; U.S. civil rights heroine Amelia Boynton Robinson; Dr. Christopher A'Tang from the Social Democratic Front of Cameroon; and Dr. Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa, former President and former Attorney General of the nation of Uganda. The observers at the Texas caucuses, as those who monitored the Michigan caucuses, will be issuing a statement of findings that will be delivered to official human rights bodies around the world, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

In Senate District 17, the caucus chairman at first told LaRouche delegates who had been elected at a precinct caucus that they could only register themselves as "uncommitted," and not as LaRouche delegates. Delegate Harley Schlanger, who is one of the national spokesmen for the LaRouche campaign, challenged state party officials about these "jaybird" rules: "We were elected at precinct caucuses as LaRouche delegates. Are you going to disqualify those elections? Are you going to *disqualify* those precinct elections?" When a Democratic Party goon waved around a newspaper article about the U.S. Supreme Court ruling, Schlanger said, "Are you going to hide behind the robes of Rehnquist, Scalia, and Thomas?" Ultimately, LaRouche's name was allowed. At Senate District 13, after an aggressive intervention by LaRouche delegate Michael Maddi, the caucus parliamentarian admitted that the exclusion of LaRouche violates party rules!

But, even as some headway was made in Texas, DNC puppets in South Dakota were declaring that LaRouche will *not* be on the ballot at the April 7-8 caucuses, despite the fact that LaRouche supporters had elected a 13-person slate at the March 25 Senate district caucus, where they reportedly had as many Democratic participants as Gore!

With the caucuses and primaries remaining, there is a good chance that LaRouche, in any fair election, will garner hundreds of delegates, and will open a debate inside the Democratic Party that could revive the legacy of Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy. To do that, will require the American people to stop acting like sheep and *vote*, and not leave the business of governing to only the wealthiest 20%. That, is the LaRouche campaign's "secret weapon."

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