

EIR Campaign 2006

TEXAS DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

The Fight for the Future Of the Democratic Party

by Harley Schlanger

The business-as-usual atmosphere which generally characterizes the race for state chair in the Texas Democratic Party was shattered this year, as an angry insurgency has broken loose in the party. This was reflected in the balloting at the state convention in Fort Worth the weekend of June 10-11, in which a run-off was forced between the “establishment’s” choice for chair, Boyd Richie, and former State Rep. Glen Maxey.

Driving this insurgency were Lakesha Rogers, a member of the LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM), and Charlie Urbina-Jones, a labor lawyer from San Antonio. While Urbina-Jones fought to make the party both more inclusive, and more combative against the faction of so-called “moderate” Democrats, which has presided over the catastrophic collapse of the party in Texas, it was up to Rogers and the LYM to put the programmatic issues on the table. It was the combined vote for Urbina-Jones and Rogers in the chair’s race which led to a run-off, as neither Maxey nor Richie, the other two candidates, achieved a 50% vote in the first round.

Throughout the weekend—and especially in their speeches to the more than 6,000 delegates and alternates to the convention on June 10—Rogers and the LaRouche activists put the party on notice. They insisted that the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) operatives, who have dominated the party in Texas for the last two decades, and have played a crucial role in undermining the party nationally, be booted out, starting with Felix Rohatyn.

Rogers, LaRouche, and the FDR Legacy

Rogers’ speech, and those of the three who placed her name in nomination, were well received by the delegates (see

full texts, below). “I’ve taken on the fight,” she stressed, “which is necessary to adopt the principles to take the country back to the ideas and the legacy of Franklin Roosevelt.”

Rogers was interrupted frequently by applause, as she gave a stirring call to make that FDR legacy come alive again for the voters of Texas. Her appeal for a policy of outreach especially resonated, as many of the delegates were voicing similar concerns. For example, many of them who are members of the graying Baby Boomer generation, have been asking why there are so few youth involved in the party.

There was a crescendo of applause as she described how to address this, to return the Democrats to majority status in Texas: “I want to let you know, I am an organizer. After graduating college, I found that our generation had no future. We’re not trained in skilled labor, our productive capabilities are falling! We’re losing our labor forces right now.”

She finished with a rousing call to action: “You and I, together, will take this party back. We’ll take it back to the people, and we’ll make sure that *we win the fight* to take Texas back ‘Out of the Bushes and Into the Future!’ And we are going to do it *without DeLay!*”

Rogers’ speech was the culmination of a two-month organizing drive, which was launched following a discussion between this author and Lyndon LaRouche about how to reignite in the Democratic Party the “spirit of 2005,” when Congressional Democrats successfully mobilized to turn Bush into a premature lame duck. That mobilization keyed off LaRouche’s exposure of the role of Synarchist banker George Shultz in pushing the hapless Bush to back a Chilean-style privatization of the U.S. Social Security system. Demo-



EIRNS/Christopher Landry

Kesha Rogers of the LaRouche Youth Movement addresses the Democratic State Convention in Fort Worth on June 10. Her campaign for the party chairmanship sparked an “insurgency” against the “New Democrat” opponents of the FDR legacy, who have ruined the party over the past two decades.

crats, with the open support of some Republicans, rallied the population to defend Social Security, which had been instituted as part of FDR’s New Deal. This was a major defeat for Shultz’s Wall Street pirates.

Instead of building on this victory, leading Democrats pulled back in early 2006, putting pragmatism and personal ambition ahead of defending the general welfare. Felix Rohatyn—like his old collaborator Shultz, a Wall Street Synarchist fascist, who came from the same Lazard Frères investment bank which supported the fascist movements in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s—emerged as a leading figure in the Democratic Party, both through his role with the DLC, and as a Wall Street moneybags for candidates who shared his hostility to FDR.

Rohatyn, using the DLC as a base of operations, has attempted to sabotage the efforts of LaRouche and his co-thinkers in the party to remove Dick Cheney and the neo-cons from the White House, putting out the line that it is better to leave Cheney in office, to run against him! Rohatyn has simultaneously attacked LaRouche’s efforts to pass legislation to save the auto industry’s machine-tool sector, working instead as a paid operative for Delphi and General Motors in dismantling the auto industry, outsourcing its jobs while preaching that globalization is unstoppable and good for the country, and that a return to the policies of FDR is unacceptable.

LaRouche said that Rogers’ campaign would offer Texas Democrats a rallying point, to go against the DLC subversion of the party. Many Texas Democrats, who had once played a leading role in winning the legislative battles for the New Deal, and who had seen their state develop as a result of such

policies, have been thoroughly disgusted by the party’s recent submission to the “New Democrats.” The so-called New Democrats have been instrumental in destroying the legacy of FDR, with their anti-government, pro-free-trade rhetoric.

The growing groundswell against them was intersected by the efforts of Urbina-Jones to turn this year’s convention into a referendum. “*Ya basta!*”—“enough”—was the rallying cry for those who have had their fill of the “Bush-lite” turn of the Texas Democratic Party.

It was in this environment that Lakesha Rogers’ campaign provided an additional spark, and served to clarify the reasons why an insurgency was necessary.

Unity Around Principle

The underlying issue, which was voiced by Urbina-Jones, and, to a lesser extent, by Maxey, as well as by a large number of delegates, is that the party has been going in the wrong direction for the last two decades. The party should concentrate on jobs, health care, basic economic issues—the usual Democratic Party “red meat”—but there was a strong response to Rogers’ insistence on going beyond the rhetoric.

First, it is essential that the allies of Shultz and Cheney be driven out of the Democratic Party. What good is it, she and other LYM members asked, if Cheney were to be removed, but Shultz’s longtime collaborator, Rohatyn, remained a leading figure shaping the direction of the party?

Secondly, Rogers emphasized that the Democrats must go deeper than seeing the fight as “New Democrat” versus “New Deal.” The real battle is over fundamental principles of economics, understanding the difference, for example, be-

tween the foolish “pay as you go” budgetary axioms, and the creation of Federal credit, which FDR used to build infrastructure and create jobs, to get the U.S. out of the Great Depression, and John F. Kennedy did to fund the space program. There were many animated discussions at the Rogers’ campaign booth in the exhibition hall, as Democrats stopped to engage in in-depth dialogues with the contingent of LYM members.

This battle was made concrete by the circulation of the LaRouche PAC “White Paper” on Rohatyn’s role in dismantling U.S. industry (see *EIR*, June 16, 2006), which was grabbed by delegates, along with LaRouche’s Emergency Recovery Act of 2006.

This programmatic perspective was reflected by a number of the speakers, with many calling for policies for the “common good” and the “general welfare,” and repeated references to FDR. Barbara Ann Radnofsky, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, invoked John F. Kennedy and the Moon mission as an example of the kind of policies needed today, to inspire a new generation.

The additional factor, which represented a real change at this year’s convention, was the growing recognition that LaRouche has been right, about the economy, and about the Democratic Party. There were many who stopped at the Rogers’ booth to talk about past run-ins with LaRouche, to say that they met LaRouche at a meeting, or a conference, or remembered him from his address to the state convention in 1980. His involvement in the party was referenced by former chair, Bob Slagle, who silenced a few hecklers when LYM member Natalie Lovegren nominated Rogers. Slagle, who served as the chairman of the convention, insisted that the party respect the rights of LaRouche and his presence at the convention. His statement was met with applause, and the response from the delegates, from then on, to Rogers and her supporters, was quite enthusiastic.

One leading Democrat remarked that LaRouche had been right in the 1980s, when he warned of the danger of fascism in America. “We didn’t acknowledge him then, but now, it is clear. People are hurting. We need his voice.” Another senior Democrat was more succinct. In speaking of the highly visible presence of Rogers and the LYM, he said, “LaRouche is back, bigger than ever.”

The convention ended on a high note. While Boyd Richey was elected chairman on the second ballot, he ended the convention saying that he has gotten the message, and that he intends to work with Maxey, Urbina-Jones, and Rogers. In a post-conference letter he sent out widely, he wrote, “I also want to thank Glen Maxey, Charlie Urbina-Jones and Lakesha Rogers—for running constructive campaigns that emphasized your ideas about how we can improve our Party. I look forward to working with you as we strive to . . . turn out the winning margin in November.”

Rogers replied immediately, pledging that she and the LYM, and Lyndon LaRouche, are ready to take on that task.

Nomination by Natalie Lovegren

Hello, my name is Natalie Lovegren. I’m from South Texas, the Rio Grande Valley, a strong Democratic area. I am proud to nominate Kesha Rogers for the position of Texas Democratic State Chair. Kesha is here as a leader of the LaRouche Youth Movement [a few boo’s from the audience]. Now, a few of you may—. [Bob Slagle, a member of the party’s Executive Committee who chaired the session, interrupts and takes the mike.]



Slagle: Now, hold on. I was run against by a LaRouche candidate everytime or almost everytime I’ve run, or run for reelection. We believe in free speech in the Democratic Party. Please don’t boo, because I’ll have—[loud, sustained applause] because if you do I’ll have to add back time, and I don’t want to do that. Thank you for your courtesy.

Lovegren: A few of you may still be stuck in the ’80s and believe slanders about LaRouche, but some of you may remember the 1980 Democratic State Convention in San Antonio, where LaRouche addressed the convention; he was brought in by Texas farmers and he warned that if we moved away from the FDR tradition, and abandoned labor, abandoned farmers, abandoned small business, we would become a minority party.

Now, Kesha is part of building a youth movement to revive that legacy, to revive the Franklin Roosevelt legacy, and to rebuild the nation, through a new mission orientation around scientific and technological development, around creating jobs through mass infrastructure projects for water, power, transportation. Kesha understands that it is the responsibility of every elected official, every representative of our republic, to look to those in the greatest need and the poorest condition, and fight to uplift them. [applause] Her campaign represents mass outreach to old and new voters, to revive that principle, the principle of the general welfare, the principle of the common good, to revive that principle in this state. Kesha represents the dignity, and the commitment to principle that is greatly needed to lead this party, and it is my honor to nominate and support her. Thank you.

Second by Michael Maddi

I second Lakesha Roger’s nomination, as a member of the Baby Boomer generation that now is *misleading* the nation. Kesha represents not only the youth who look for real leader-

ship from the Democratic Party. She also represents those Democrats of my generation who know that the party must reject the post-industrial ideology of the 1960s that infected our generation. This ideology has led us into the pit of globalization and free trade. Right now it is causing the shutdown of our auto industry and its essential machine-tool capacity, and the highly paid skilled jobs associated with it.

Kesha has been an active Democrat as a grassroots organizer and precinct chair for several years. Kesha says it's time to return to the tradition of FDR, and industrial production, and skilled jobs, and decent wages. She is calling on Democrats to get behind a program for the poor and middle class, students, and the elderly, the lower 80% we have largely abandoned as Democrats. This is an organizing strategy that will bring former Democrats and disenchanted voters in general, back to our party. That's how we will win in November and in 2008.

Fellow delegates, vote for Kesha today and follow her "Out of the Bushes, Into the Future"!



district, not a stone left unturned, that we did not go into; whether it was door to door, or on the traffic islands, we were educating the population about the evils of Tom DeLay.

Now, leadership, on the other hand though, is not just telling people how bad things are. We have to have a solution to the problems. We have to go in, and demonstrate to people that there are real solutions to this crisis we face as a nation, and Kesha Rogers has demonstrated, time and time again, that she's willing to fight for a real transformation, against globalization and free trade.

We're going to "Get Out of the Bushes, and Into the Future," with Kesha Rogers.

Thank you.

Lakesha Rogers

'Out of the Bushes And Into the Future'

Speech to the Convention, June 10.

Hello Democrats, my name is Lakesha Rogers, and I am running for your Democratic Party Chair. I am running because this nation is in great danger. We are in danger right now, of losing our great nation, losing our Constitution, and losing the principles which shaped this great Republic! We're losing those principles, because thugs like Dick Cheney, Tom DeLay, have destroyed our country, and the values which we represent. We have to take them back! This is why I've launched a campaign with the slogan, "Out of the Bushes and Into the Future." And those of you who know what that means, know that we must fight *now*, to take Texas back, and take this nation back. [applause]

I have fought, in the Democratic Party, and been a Democrat for the last 29 years. I'm 29 years old. I started as a precinct chair for many years, and I've taken on the fight which is necessary to adopt the principles to take the country back to the ideas and the legacy of Franklin Roosevelt; to those ideas that were once shaped by great leaders such as Henry B. Gonzales and Ralph Yarborough, who understood that we have to stand up to the devices of those of Wall Street and the financier interests, those who are now trying to come in and hijack and cripple the Democratic Party. Those like Felix Rohatyn, who want to destroy our party, and individuals who want to make sure that we don't have a nation any longer.

I want to let you know that I have led the fight on the ground to build a groundswell in the Democratic Party, to bring the fight back to the people once again. We cannot be

Nomination by Dennis Daulton

Hello there, my name is Dennis Daulton, and I am glad to nominate Kesha Rogers for the Democratic State Chairmanship.

At age 18, I joined the U.S. Navy, and I did this for two reasons. First was to serve my country, but second was to gain the leadership skills necessary to be a Democratic candidate, who could win and lead this nation to victory [applause]. Well, I did get elected as a Democratic candidate to the precinct chair, now twice. But, the leadership skills I've learned have come through organizing with the LaRouche Youth Movement, organizing on the streets of this nation, talking to the population about the necessary economic reforms that our country needs, to survive.

We organize mostly on college campuses, organizing around the FDR tradition, industrialization, infrastructure projects. But we have battles with these students, battles over ideas, ideas that will shape this country's future.

Now, Kesha and I came up, we cut our teeth in our fight we waged against Tom DeLay in the 22nd Congressional District [cheers, applause]. There was not a corner of that

