Fear of LaRouche grows among state Democratic Party officials

by Mel Klenetsky

Stock brokers and arbitrage agents are not the only ones, these days, who are regularly dropping their teeth and reaching for the Pepto Bismol. It appears that a whole number of Democratic Party state chairmen, together with the Democratic National Committee, headed by Paul Kirk, have joined the ranks of insomniacs, tossing, turning, chewing rugs, climbing up trees—all because presidential hopeful Lyndon H. LaRouche has begun to qualify for the Democratic primary ballot in their states.

The secretaries of state in New Hampshire, Massachussetts, Virginia, and Arkansas have officially announced that LaRouche's name will appear on the Democratic Party presidential primary ballot. To date, LaRouche has also met the requirements in Illinois, Texas, and Missouri. He is expected to file in more states.

LaRouche's name has not been placed on the ballot automatically. In many states, some combination of decisions by the secretary of state and the party chairman or a presidential selection committee decides who shall be granted ballot status, based on some form of criterion relating to "national recognition."

Rhode Island, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee did not automatically place LaRouche's name on the ballot for 1988, despite the fact that a *Time* Magazine poll of May 1986 showed that Lyndon H. LaRouche had higher national name recognition than any Democratic candidate except Gary Hart and Jesse Jackson.

In Georgia, scores of supporters sent letters to the secretary of state's office urging that Mr. LaRouche's name be placed on the ballot. In Florida, the secretary of state included LaRouche's name, but a majority of the presidential selection committee, which includes both party chairmen, the Florida speaker of the House, the president of the Senate, and the minority leaders of the Florida House and Senate, voted to delete LaRouche's name.

In Virginia, the Democratic Party's state chairman placed all other Democrats on the ballot, but excluded LaRouche. He was the only candidate on the ballot who had to submit petition signatures, in this case 25,000, double the legal requirement, to qualify. In Tennessee, the coordinator of elections told the LaRouche campaign that, "Mr. Crowell," Tennessee's secretary of state, "at his sole discretion, as is his right, has decided that Mr. LaRouche is not recognized by the media."

In Rhode Island, Secretary of State Kathleen Connell's office told LaRouche's campaign headquarters that the decision to exclude LaRouche was based on discussions with the state and national Democratic Party.

While these examples begin to demonstrate a definite pattern, or more precisely, a conspiracy to keep LaRouche away from the electorate, the Democratic Party chairs of Virginia, Texas, and Illinois came forward with statements, made to the press, that amounted to announcements of the conspiracy, and admissions of a complete disdain for the electorate and any party claim to fairness and openness.

On the day that the Virginia secretary of state announced that LaRouche had qualified for the ballot, Larry Framme, the Virginia state Democratic Party chairman, lamented, "The Democratic Party has no use for Lyndon LaRouche. I wish we could keep him off the ballot. But the Constitution does not allow it." Virginia Democratic Party officials, present for the secretary of state's announcement, were annoyed that the LaRouche petitions had caught them off guard, and that the law prevented them from excluding LaRouche.

In Texas, the executive director of the party, Ed Martin, had the following comment. "We tried to figure out a way to reject his filing, but it was a valid check."

Too popular to be a candidate?

Perhaps the funniest and most extreme situation is in Illinois, where LaRouche's petitions are being challenged for having *too many* signatures on them. In March of 1986, two LaRouche Democrats, Mark Fairchild and Janice Hart, defeated party regulars in the Illinois primary for the positions of lieutenant governor and secretary of state.

At that time, the Democratic Party leadership, with a tremendous amount of coolness and aplomb, proceeded to shoot themselves in the foot. Adlai Stevenson III, the gubernatorial candidate, resigned from the party, formed a new Solidarity Party, and ran on his own ticket into devastating defeat. The Democrats refused to replace his vacant slot. Naturally, Republican incumbent Governor Jim Thompson

sailed home with an easy victory.

And this time around? It's *déjà vu*. Victor Demuzio, Illinois Democratic Party state chairman, and Joseph A. Cari, Jr., general counsel to the Illinois party, are currently on the verge of aiming a loaded pistol right where Adlai aimed it in 1986. On Tuesday, Jan. 5, the Illinois Democratic Party formally objected to presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche's state nominating petitions, saying that had he filed too many signatures! State law requires candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination in Illinois to file 3,000 to 5,000 signatures, but petitions for LaRouche had 5,381 signatures.

Political pundits in Illinois, laughing at the quandary that Demuzio and others found themselves in, noted that the Democrats did not file challenges against several other Democratic presidential candidates, even though they, too, had filed more than 5,000 signatures. Cari said that the state Democratic Party had no plans to check the other candidates to be sure that they hadn't filed too many signatures, "because they're Democrats." "Lyndon LaRouche is not a Democrat. . . . We do not want any of his followers infiltrating the Democratic Party," as Cari put it.

LaRouche associate Sheila Jones, the Midwest coordinator of LaRouche's campaign, had the following to say: "I will laugh myself to sleep at the idea that the reason that they want to kick Mr. LaRouche off the ballot is because he has too much support. Anyone is a Democrat who says they want to run on the Democratic ticket. The point is that, if, in fact, that's what they say . . . then the question I would raise is what's the difference between what the Illinois Democratic Party is doing and what the Soviet Union is doing to those they view as Soviet dissidents."

LaRouche's presidential petitions are not the only thing that has Demuzio and company running around like headless chickens. The 1986 Hart and Fairchild victories, in the estimation of Democratic National Chairman Paul Kirk and Victor Demuzio, brought national disgrace to the Democratic Party. Warped as this perception may be, Victor and his merry band spend all their waking hours making sure that LaRouche Democrats do not, somehow, sneak onto the ballot.

One of the most comical situations was the challenge by Demuzio and Cari to approximately a dozen or so candidates who filed petitions to run for various Chicago and downstate Central Committee positions on the Solidarity Party banner, the party that Adlai formed in 1986 after refusing to run with Hart and Fairchild. Legal counsel Cari is of the firm belief that "the LaRouchies," as he puts it, are waging political warfare against the Democratic Party, running candidates on the Solidarity Party banner so that that party will continue to exist and continue to be a thorn in the side of the Illinois Democratic Party.

Demuzio's fears are partly based on the fact that Alderman Edward Vrdolyak used the Solidarity Party as his vehicle for an unsuccessful bid against the late Mayor Harold Washington last April. Vrdolyak is the former chairman of the powerful Cook County Democratic Party. His disputes with Washington led to his resignation as Democratic chairman. Vrdolyak switched parties and is now a Republican, further dividing what was once considered the strongest Democratic machine in the country.

One more footnote to the Illinois story: Jack Davis, a Republican candidate for the fourth Congressional District, recently challenged the nominating petitions of a LaRouche Democrat, George Laurence of Romeoville, even though Laurence was not opposing him in the Republican primary, but was running in the Democratic primary. Laurence's opponent in the Democratic primary was George Sangmeister, the same candidate that LaRouche backer Mark Fairchild had defeated for lieutenant governor in 1986. Davis finally dropped his challenge to Laurence, after making much political hay about the fact that Sangmeister had not issued a challenge to Laurence of his own.

Demuzio's nightmare, a LaRouche candidate behind every bush, appears to have spread to Virginia as well. Virginia state chairman Larry Framme is considering challenging every single candidate for State Assembly and Senate who is not known to the regular machine.

Actions such as these show only the bankruptcy of the current leaders of the Democratic Party, who fear, to the point of obsession and desperation, the mere appearance of LaRouche Democrats on the ballot—who fear, in short, the voters.

FEC shenanigans

Those are not the only efforts to make LaRouche's campaign as difficult as possible. LaRouche filed with the Federal Election Commission for matching funds on Nov. 18. The delay in responding to that filing by the FEC meant that North Carolina and South Dakota could not put LaRouche on the ballot, since qualifying for matching funds was the requirement for gaining ballot status in those states.

The same Federal Election Commission rushed Gary Hart's application through in only three working days, giving him plenty of time to meet the South Dakota and North Carolina deadlines. Hart had made his application to the FEC in late December, weeks after LaRouche.

Laughable as the Illinois and other situations may be, the fact remains that LaRouche's efforts to gain access to the ballot are being stymied in every way possible, in total violation of the U.S. Constitution, by a conspiracy of Democratic Party and government officials at the national and state levels. LaRouche himself noted the raw politics of the situation, when he stated, "There is a very interesting irony. The Democratic Party is insisting, on the one hand, that I am a fringe candidate. They are simultaneously insisting that I represent a great danger that must be headed off at the pass, lest I repeat another Illinois victory."