

A Life Well Lived

by Harley Schlanger

Humanity lost an impassioned fighter for the Good on Oct. 7, when Mervyn Dymally passed away, at the age of 86, but his life can serve as an example for the ideal of “Principle above Party,” which Lyndon LaRouche has been emphasizing, as the exemplary ideal if we are to save our nation.

Mervyn was born in Trinidad in 1926, and developed a deep antipathy to the British Empire as a child. He spoke of seeing newsreels of World War II in the movie theaters, and laughingly recalled joining in with the crowd in booing Winston Churchill, and cheering for Franklin Roosevelt, whenever they appeared on the screen. Although he was not politically inclined when he first moved to the U.S. after the war, he said that the image of FDR as the wartime leader, but also as a man of compassion for the poor and underprivileged, made a profound impression on him, and moved him toward a life of political service, as an FDR Democrat.

He was first elected to the California State Assembly in 1962, and then to the State Senate in 1966, serving for eight years. His time in the California State Senate—the first black state senator—coincided with the two terms Ronald Reagan served as governor. Mervyn often spoke of how, despite significant disagreements on “issues,” he was often able to work with Reagan to craft compromises, on such difficult budgetary questions as health care, education, and social services. “Reagan had fixed views,” he said, “but, as governor, he knew that he had to be concerned with the lives of all Californians. We were able to work together, because we shared a commitment to the American dream, that was more important to him than party purity.”

He contrasted this with the current batch of Republican conservatives that he encountered when he ended his retirement in 2002, to return to the Assembly, during the Schwarzenegger years, when partisanship and fixed ideology led to gridlock in California (and nationally). He said they called themselves “Reaganites,” but they did not know the real Reagan. When these Republicans



LPAC-TV

Mervyn Dymally's life exemplified the ideal of “principle above party,” in his long and distinguished career as a political leader. He is shown here in an LPAC interview on Aug. 19, 2010.

tried to cut a program that paid for burials of children in the foster-care system, to “save money,” he shamed them into backing down, by asking, “Has California come to this? Is this the dream of California?”

Fighting for Economic Justice

After four years as California’s first black Lieutenant Governor, 1975-79, he was elected to Congress, serving from 1981 to 1993, eventually becoming the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). While in Congress, he continued his fight to extend the civil rights movement to one for “economic justice,” as championed by Martin Luther King. This included battles in the the Congress for health care (he became an opponent of Obamacare, which he called an “insurance bill”), education, and inclusion, and demanded that the CBC take up the cause of African and other developing nations. His first encounter with the Schiller Institute in Congress was on the matter of economic development—he often said that he learned from us that the International Monetary Fund was an extension of British colonial policy, and that is one of two concerns which attracted him to the LaRouche movement.

The other concern was the unconstitutional “Operation Frühmenschen,”¹ which he exposed from the floor

1. Frühmenschen was an FBI sting operation targeting black elected officials. The literal meaning of the German word is “early man.”

of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1988. He had been the target of Frühmenschen attacks, as Lieutenant Governor, and again, as a Congressman. After watching the demise of his friend, Speaker Jim Wright (D-Tex.), who was run out as Speaker by the same methodology as Frühmenschen, he decided to retire, leaving the House of Representatives in 1993.

His active relationship with the LaRouche movement began in 1994, with our mobilization around the Schiller Institute hearings on Department of Justice fraud, including Frühmenschen and the LaRouche case, and soon expanded to regular, open collaboration. He spoke at many of our events and town meetings in California and Houston, Texas; attended national conferences in Northern Virginia; and joined with us to campaign against the Austrian fascist, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, becoming one of the few elected officials with the guts to call Arnie a “fascist.” He met several times with LaRouche, describing him once as the “most righteous man that he knows in politics.” He was very enthusiastic about the development of the LaRouche Youth Movement, and often gave his time to

work with our younger members.

In short, he was a man of principle, who picked his fights wisely, who could be ruthless when necessary, and who often used humorous irony to disarm his opponents. He was generous toward his fellow man, giving his time even as ill health encroached on his energy. When King-Drew Hospital was shut down, depriving Los Angeles of its most important urban teaching hospital, he worked tirelessly to establish a nursing school there, which is now known as the Mervyn M. Dymally School of Nursing.

Mervyn’s life of public service was inspired by his commitment to continuing the “American dream” for future generations of Americans, while extending it to the rest of the world. In our last discussion, he spoke of his anger about President Obama’s drive for war in Syria, agreeing that this could trigger World War III. Although saddened by what he considered the failure of Obama, and worried about the blind loyalty to austerity among Republicans, he remained hopeful, to the end of his life, that the American ideal would continue to guide our nation into the future.

Seven Necessary Steps for Global Economic Recovery

A 40-minute feature video presenting Lyndon LaRouche’s Emergency Program to End the Global Depression

<http://larouchepac.com/node/19282>



5. IMMEDIATE NATIONAL MOBILIZATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NAWAPA PROJECT



1. FORCED RESIGNATION OF BARACK OBAMA & IMMEDIATE PASSAGE OF GLASS-STEAGALL



3. FOR LACK OF REAL ASSETS REMAINING, ISSUE HAMILTONIAN CREDIT FOR NATIONAL PROJECTS



6. ENGAGE LATENT LABOR FORCE FOR SUBSIDIARY PROJECTS SUCH AS TRANSPORT AND NUCLEAR



2. DIVISION OF FICTITIOUS FROM REAL LIABILITIES ACCORDING TO GLASS-STEAGALL STANDARD



4. THE ONLY BAILOUTS WILL BE HONEST BAILOUTS FOR THE BANKRUPT CITIES AND THE STATES



7. EXTEND COOPERATION INTERNATIONALLY TO MEXICO, CANADA, RUSSIA, CHINA AND OTHERS