

# Latest primary results show NDPC's nationwide strength

by Stephen Pepper and Marla Minnicino

In primaries held on June 3 in California and Iowa, and in the Idaho primary held May 26, the National Democratic Policy Committee showed again that it represents a solid core constituency of 25-50% of the Democratic Party. Electoral results in New Jersey and Alabama, while not equaling the gains in other states, also represented solid achievements for the LaRouche candidates' movement.

In five southern California congressional districts, NDPC-backed candidates ran from 23% to better than 50%. Art Hoffman, candidate in the 40th Congressional District in Orange County was winning the election in unofficial returns with 15,089 votes compared with a total of 14,685 polled by the local party chairman, Judge Bruce Sumner.

In the hotly contested Hoffman-Sumner race, the official canvas was slated to take place on June 9. Sumner jumped the gun and claimed victory based on press accounts of the vote, with media throughout California and around the country reporting that LaRouche backed candidates had won no nominations in the current primary series. Hoffman has repeatedly announced that he awaits the result of the official vote canvass.

Elsewhere, Maureen Pike in the 39th CD (Fullerton) received 38% of the vote, Alex Maruniak in the 41st CD (San Diego) received 40%, George Hollis in the 45th (Coronado) won 23%, and Paul Jeffrey (La Verne) got 24%.

Even more indicative of the NDPC inroads were the results in two races against incumbents: Ruth Williams running against Ron Dellums in the 8th CD in Berkeley took 18% of the vote with 14,252 votes, while Kevin Zondervan, in a race against Mervyn Dymally in the 31st CD in the Los Angeles area polled 16%. In the 16 congressional races that NDPC-backed candidates contested, they received 115,000 votes, 65,000 of which were cast in the five southern California races.

Sumner is the chairman of the Democratic Party in Orange County. He had fancied himself something of a giant-killer and decided to challenge to debate Lyndon LaRouche, an announced candidate for President who helped found the NDPC. LaRouche, who has urged leading figures in the Democratic Party to get out front in promoting debates on the issues—particularly on strategic matters and questions of the economy—promptly accepted, as long as the debate focused

on issues, and not on a rehash of slanders originating with drug pushers.

The debate was organized by satellite hookup and was witnessed by reporters from the Associated Press and Cable News Network. While LaRouche addressed issues such as Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres's proposal for a Marshall Plan for the Middle East, Sumner used the debate exclusively to slandermonger. Nevertheless, the effect of the debate went far beyond the immediate primary contest, since it provided LaRouche, described as "statesman-like" by reporters, one more opportunity to shape the issues that will dominate elections.

As for Sumner, he has been closely linked through his law firm to underworld figure Sidney Korshak. Korshak was the principal connection between Teamster pension funds and Las Vegas crime figures involved in casino gambling. When Hoffman first brought up these charges, Sumner did not respond, but simply acted as a megaphone for drug-lobby lies about LaRouche. It was after Hoffman and Sumner themselves appeared on a radio debate, that Sumner decided to try to gain national prestige by taking on LaRouche himself. In this, he miscalculated badly.

## PANIC takes on liberals

The California results confirm the trend that first emerged in Illinois and continued in subsequent primaries. Especially after the Illinois victory, the gains by the NDPC have been made in the face of a firestorm of slanders and Democratic Party dirty tricks. In Texas, Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Idaho, the NDPC-backed candidates established a solid record of winning at least 20% and as high as 42% of the official vote against non-incumbents. In California, the result exceeded any previous primary record.

The NDPC's strength in California is due in part to the drive to place a referendum on the November ballot which would mandate a public-health approach to AIDS, in which most, if not all, of the LaRouche candidates participated. Sponsored by the Prevent AIDS Now Initiative Committee (PANIC), the drive was led by Brian Lantz, the NDPC-backed candidate for U.S. Senate on the Democratic side, and Khushro Gandhi, president of PANIC. Candidates, supporters, and grass roots organizations throughout the state

gathered nearly 700,000 signatures to put a referendum on the ballot seeking to apply standard public-health measures against AIDS. This approach challenges the entire gay rights/civil liberties establishment which has made the cause of the AIDS virus their own. As a result of the petition drive, a vast constituency was built for policies of the type advocated by the NDPC-backed candidates, with the result that a larger vote than ever before turned out to support them.

The political map in New Jersey was also indelibly altered by a slate of 13 NDPC-backed congressional candidates running in the June 3 primary under the banner of "FDR Democrats." The LaRouche candidates' promise to "jail a drug banker," and their call for an investigation of First Fidelity Bank for drug-money laundering was not welcomed by state Democratic Party officials, who have historically operated in league with organized crime layers. For this reason, party bureaucrats teamed up with the local office of the dope-linked Anti-Defamation League to pump a variety of anti-LaRouche slanders into the press. As in Texas, where a similar operation was mounted, voter turnout was depressed and discussions of policy issues were kept out of the electoral process.

Nevertheless, LaRouche Democrats running in blue-collar districts of the central, industrialized portion of New Jersey polled 10-20%. Anne DeGennaro in the 6th CD polled 16% against incumbent Bernard Dwyer; Annie Hart in Newark came in third in a four-way race, which included incumbent Rep. Peter Rodino and a candidate backed by Jesse Jackson. In the 5th CD, which includes Bergen and Passaic counties, NDPC candidate Denise Ham would have defeated political unknown Vernon Jolley, had it not been for the aggressive anti-LaRouche effort. In rural Sussex County, where the slanders had not penetrated, Ham polled 60%. LaRouche candidates also did well in races for state and county Democratic committee.

The impact of the LaRouche slate was not lost on Rep. Robert Torricelli, who faced NDPC slate leader Elliot Greenpan in the 9th CD. Though Torricelli helped lead the slander drive, he told an election-night audience: "It's important that the Democratic Party does not conclude that our struggle with the LaRouche extremist [sic] organization is over. This is but a single contest in a much longer competition for the future of the party."

In Alabama, where LaRouche Democrats are just beginning to make an impact on electoral politics, NDPC-backed candidate Steve Arnold polled close to 9,000 votes statewide in a four-way primary race to oppose Republican incumbent Sen. Jeremiah Denton. Arnold gained the respect of many party members based on his approach to policy issues, which urged a strong defense gear-up for the United States and repeal of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget-cutting legislation. Arnold and 5th CD candidate Zachary Taylor Wakefield headed a slate of LaRouche Democrats running for party and municipal posts in Alabama, among them well-known civil-rights activists Rev. Houston Anderson and Amelia Boynton Robinson.

The leadership of the Alabama party, fearing that the LaRouche Democrats might tap into the state's "forgotten voters" (once, George Wallace's base of support), disqualified LaRouche Democrat Glenn Thompson from the race for Madison County Executive Committee, and tried a variety of other operations to discredit the slate. A mysterious "endorsement" of Arnold by a Louisiana Ku Klux Klan member appearing in the local media was immediately denounced by Arnold as an "FBI Cointelpro operation." Arnold plans to announce that the LaRouche Democrats are "here to stay" in Alabama, and will field a full congressional slate in 1988.

Three NDPC-backed candidates in Iowa's June 3 primary, put the LaRouche wing of the Democratic Party on the ballot in that state for the first time. Juan Cortez, a 69-year-old retired postal worker and civil-rights activist, led the slate in his race for the U.S. Senate seat now held by Republican Charles Grassley, polling 16%. Running with Cortez were Harry Clark, a farmer, who ran for Congress in the 4th CD, and Anne Meskiman, also from a farm family, running in the 2nd CD.

Cortez's campaign sent a shock through Iowa's entrenched Democratic leadership. Cortez declared that a citizen candidate could still win elections in this country by "standing up for the truth," without "backing by millionaires." Since Cortez, Clark, and Meskiman were long-time Democrats, party officials could not successfully label them "outsiders" or "kooks." An article in the *National Catholic Register* called Cortez "a model Catholic" because of the dignity and courage which have characterized his work for human rights throughout his life. Nevertheless, Iowa state party chairman Art Davis spent considerable time and effort in an illegal "stop Cortez" campaign, which included drafting a little-known Des Moines attorney, John Roehrick, to run against him.

### **Idaho: 40% for LaRouche Democrat**

Results in the May 27 Idaho primary again showed that when given a choice, voters will respond to programmatic issues. Even without a campaign war-chest and with just a handful of volunteer campaign workers, NDPC congressional candidate Joseph Stewart polled a hefty 40% of the vote. Stewart was running in the 1st CD against party-endorsed William Currie, a liberal Republican turned Democrat who recently led a drive for the secession of northern Idaho, Montana, and Washington!

Despite a post-card mailing to registered Democrats from Idaho state party chairman Mel Morgan advising them to spurn the LaRouche candidate, almost half the district's Democrats voted for Stewart. Furthermore, LaRouche Democrat Marvin Sawyer ran unopposed for a seat in the 13th legislative district to qualify for the November ballot.

In other May 27 primary results, LaRouche supporter Rev. Lamar Keels won the Republican nomination for Congress in the 1st CD of Arkansas. Keels will campaign against incumbent Democrat Rep. Beryl F. Anthony.